

License to Stalk

***the true story of a war
on terror secret agent***

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With thanks to Dreamstime and Alessandro De Leo
for the cover image photo.



Introduction

to the 2013 edition

It is now a total of six and a half years since I wrote this book. Looking back, it is clear to me, as a former secret agent, that the new world order initiated post 9/11 has come through the baby steps of its first raw infancy; the period which we might call the ‘war on terror’.

In many respects we have gotten a little wiser. Indeed it is somehow comforting to look back on that time and see it has past. The head of the terror network, long since rendered inoperative is dead; al-Qaeda is much weakened. Furthermore the war-mongering Bush administration has been replaced by the good news story of President Obama. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have at least quieted down. Moreover the horrendous terror attacks of 9/11 and the bombings in Madrid, Bali, London and elsewhere can now be seen through the healing lenses of time, scant consolation though it must be to those directly involved. Indeed it is enough to think of all these dreadful incidents and wars and feel compelled to offer up a prayer – to a God we probably don’t believe in – and beg for a small shred of mercy for the victims and their poor families.

So yes things may have improved. Yet then again in some ways they are worse.

Indeed as the Arab Spring is underway in the middle east not only do we see chemical weapons killing civilians young and old in Syria, but also that terrorist attacks (and indeed extremist attacks) are on the rise with places such as Mumbai, Nairobi, Boston and indeed London recently targeted. The threat of a terrorist attack is, according to some, ever more likely.

In this context wide-scale surveillance strategies employed by the secret service have recently been revealed by both the Guardian and the Washington Post to be in operation (something which, I hasten to add, as a former member of the secret service, are absolutely imperative to counter-terrorism operations). Indeed the

whole question of bugging, surveillance, video monitoring and phone-hacking have all come into the public's consciousness over the last several years.

It is one of the ironies of our time that this book was banned by the (then Labour) government who wanted to bring freedom of speech to places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. This was ostensibly on the grounds that it was a 'book of purely fictitious events', although in reality the boys in the quarrel-chamber wished to dodge the bullets that would inevitably fly their way, should the revelations of this small missive find their way into the public domain.

However, more alarming is that this memoir was denounced by both the Guardian and the Washington Post as 'lacking real substance in its allegations'. Indeed, I was written off as a deluded madman and Don Quixote, 'seeing knights where there were windmills and intrusion of privacy where there was only solid spy work.'

It is not my intention with this brief introduction to ring my own bells and sing my own praises. I long ago was humbled into realising that truth does not usually out and that good men die dishonoured before their good names can be brought back to the unblemished white of our once imagined Heaven. In this sense I have been fortunate. Nevertheless it would be a lie to say I didn't feel a small sense of vindication at seeing how the widescale intrusion into people's lives – which I spoke of at large in this book six years ago – has finally been (to some extent) acknowledged by the wider public. There follows in this book further (and indeed more shocking) revelations on this score.

With all this in mind, I hope you enjoy the book. To your health and well-being; and a peaceful, democratic, violence-free world.

Secret Agent X, *November 2013.*

Prologue

Britain, 2007, morning. A typical day, a typical scene, a typical British city. It's 9.15 am. A bus carrying civilians is making its way into town. On board are the usual suspects: women with buggies, old ladies off to town for the day, a handful of children late for school and a somewhat irate bus driver attempting to drive through the chaos of the inner city traffic. Yet into the mix of this oh so typical scene, this everyday, innocent picture of western life, the hands of fate are about to throw a curve ball.

The bus stops to pick up two men. The first a young Asian man carrying a rucksack would seem to be student; the second, a slightly older man, dressed in shirt and tie and carrying a newspaper, would appear to be some sort of white collar worker. Both men sit down.

The civilians on the bus appear unconcerned by the entrance of these two newcomers. 'Ordinary people' they say to themselves, 'it's no big deal'. Perhaps that's for the better, perhaps it's for the worst, I don't know. But the fact of the matter is, is that onto this ordinary bus, carrying ordinary citizens about on their ordinary daily rounds there has stepped on a very dangerous newcomer. For the

man with the rucksack, he who might well be a student, is in fact a suspected *suicide bomber*.

The bus drives on. In the midst of old ladies gossiping, of the driver cursing, of toddlers bawling and being reprimanded by their mothers and of school children acting up and fooling around – in the midst of all this, the suicide bomber silently sits himself down. What is in his head only he himself knows. He hates the people on the bus, hates the children, the toddlers, the mothers, the old ladies too. He hates our culture and every value we hold dear.

And he is one up on his innocent victims. They have no idea what he intends, have no comprehension of their impending doom. The bomber knows all, he is king of the bus, he is the man in control. Is there any hope for the innocent civilians? Is there any glimmer of optimism in this bleak picture here portrayed?

Well, hang about. One person on the bus knows the true state of play, is in fact one up on the terrorist himself. For the man in the shirt and tie who got on behind the bomber is in truth no white collar worker: no not at all; he is in fact a secret agent.

The bus continues onwards. The suicide bomber is completely oblivious of the anti-terror operative. He sits on the window seat on one side of the bus; the secret agent sits on the seat directly behind him, but next to the aisle. The situation is incredibly tense.

Whilst the terrorist in front looks out the window – seemingly lost in thought, his rucksack lying next to him – the secret agent appears to be leaning over the back of the terrorist's seat, leaning toward him, not exactly directly looking at the suspect, but he has his hand resting on the back of his seat, raised most peculiarly as if it's pointing at the suicide bomber; and moreover he has his hand mysteriously up his sleeve. What is the significance of all this? Simple: the secret agent has a gun concealed in his sleeve and trained directly on the head of the suicide bomber. With one straight shot he can take him out.

But the situation is complex. The secret agent has been monitoring the suspect and some of his cell mates over the course of weeks. He believes the suspect will strike at some point in the very near future; it could be today; then again maybe not. However he also knows that the suspect is possibly going to make contact with other cell members today, bigger fish in the organisation perhaps.

If the secret agent takes out the suspect now and it turns out he has no explosives in his bag, and that today was not in fact the day, then he's in trouble. For not only might he then be accused of shooting an innocent man and raising the temperature with the Muslim community; but he's also lost the trail to which the suspect might have been leading him too. Indeed, if other unknown members of the cell now get wind of what's happened, that one of their cell has been taken out, then there is no telling what they might do.

I need not mention here the events of 7/7. When four suicide bombers killed 52 people on London's public transport system and left many others maimed and injured. But then who could ever forget the innocent Brazilian man shot dead two weeks later on a tube, mistakenly identified as a suicide bomber. Recurrences of both situations can never be allowed to take place.

So the bus journeys on. In a climax of tension the suicide bomber starts to unzip his bag as if he's going to take something out. The secret agent, calm of

mien though he may appear; casually leaning over the back of the suspect's chair as he is; lost in his own thoughts as it might appear to the other passengers on the bus, is actually immensely terrified, his finger nervously on the trigger. Should he shoot? Should he wait? He is unsure. He is so, so nervous. What should he do?

The events above are a typical example of the sort of scenario that secret agents like myself face on what is almost a daily basis. Although it is certainly not my intention with this memoir of mine to be in any way alarmist, the situation I have just outlined for you is a very, very common one, and there are nine or ten cities in Britain in which this type of scene will play itself out on a weekly basis.

And as a secret agent it's my duty to monitor suspects and thwart any would be plots. The white collar worker persona that I took on above is just one of many such aliases I may assume in my work; an alias I might take on today and have done with on the morrow. For reader, you have entered the shady and secretive world of the double agent and spy; an exciting and dangerous underworld wherein no-one is above suspicion, neither friend nor foe.

My goal? My secret mission? In a word protection. Protection of our national integrity, of Queen and country, of civilians great and small, of liberty and freedom of speech.

I need not say more as to the identity of those who would wish to destroy the ideals of this just and glorious nation. The times in which we live, where terror screams at our faces from anon; where the villains are not soldiers clad in the uniform of our foe, but everyday citizens living in our midst; where individuals may rise from our very own ranks and wreak havoc on a grand scale – the times in which we live are indeed fraught with danger and peril. National security has never found itself so high on the political agenda, the nation has never found herself in so much want of protection. To this end am I engaged.

But the face of the enemy being anonymous, and the strategies of our foe lowering to such deceitful depths; their employment of the most advanced and sophisticated technology available; and the evolution of a terror organization that has merely the loosest of hierarchies, so that individual terror cells may sprout up anywhere, and where lone assassins may conceive their own ill-thought out schemes and enact them of their own accord, with little or no direction from their superiors – these stratagems have made inroads into our kingdom, and though they have not yet brought us to our knees, make no mistake about it, we are in trouble.

But do we run? Do we hide? Do we take two steps back every time the enemy attacks? The answer is no we do not. We brace ourselves like men and we stand and fight. And we fight on the enemy's terms.

Accordingly, so soon as 9/11 took place and the war on terror began, the government commissioned the set-up of a new and top secret spy school, specifically geared toward tackling this most recent spate of attacks.

Well-funded from the off, its sole responsibility and aim has been to breed individuals, experts in the most advanced arts of espionage, elite professionals dedicated only to their duty, who are able and willing to take all manner of risk to life and limb, in their one pursuit: the busting of those furtive and dangerous citizens who are secretly aiming to do our nation down, and the thwarting of their evil schemes and stratagems that they would fain carry out upon our civilization.

Believe me, we are probably the most advanced spies ever trained upon this planet. Our organization sits right at the very top, commanded and controlled by the most important and influential people upon the planet. If you're thinking we're some branch of MI5 or the CIA, or that we're beholden to petty rules and regulations and the laws of government like they are, then think on dear reader.

I'm telling you this whole thing goes much higher, higher than you can ever imagine. We are the true secret agents of our time, we the real players in the fortunes of man, we the actual big brother of the land. And unlike our lower ranking brethren, those puppet-people at MI5, who often get parking tickets and speeding fines and don't even have license to tickle, we really do have carte blanche to do whatever the hell we want.

Thus are we trained, by the greatest living experts in this field; rigorously do we apply ourselves to the studies of all and sundry pertaining to espionage and double agency; many hours do we dedicate to studying the traits, practices and whims of our foe; minutely do we examine the information we have so far gleaned on the enemy; astutely do we come to recognize the signs of would be malcontents, do we come to know the ins and outs of the enemy's network.

We are learned in all manner of disciplines from psychology to engineering, from religion to chemistry, from philosophy to computer science. We are fluent in dozens of languages and are masters of performance and impersonation. We are educated in the arts of self-defence, martial skill, weapon-handling, poisoning and subterfuge. In all our endeavours, be they physical or mental, theoretical or applied, we relentlessly engross ourselves.

The academy is no place for the weak of heart. It is the breeding ground for the most exceptional of agents. Study is constant, training eternal, practice essential. One hundred times over do we go through drill after drill after drill – so that we are as best prepared for the real-life challenges we will face from our foe.

In due course we are toughened up both physically and mentally, molded and worked into star secret agents, taught and disciplined to the heights of perfection. Along the way, those not adequately adapted to the lifestyle of the spy, those amongst our ranks who are maladept at a certain skill, those of our brethren not able to ace and thrive in the adversity of the academy pressure cooker are thrown out. In this way only the strongest survive, only the cream of the crop come to fruition, only the elite make it into the dangerous and exciting world of espionage.

On completion of our training we are released into the general populace, like so many tadpoles from the frog spawn of their parents. And hereafter we set about our mission as solitary individuals, having little or nothing to do with the agency that spawned us, just as the tadpole is disowned by its parents. For the times in which we live call for such extreme measures: the enemy has only loose and weak affiliations; so too then do we. Any link, no matter how tenuous, connecting me to my employers, could seriously jeopardise my mission and cause untold numbers of casualties, not to mention that I might be killed, tortured or beheaded in the process. Therefore it is imperative that we act alone.

Our time for release having come, our mission being so engrained upon our minds and souls, we say goodbye, perhaps for the last time, to our trainers and teachers, and thereafter we set about our work, diving alone into the murky underworld of the terror network, our prime directive being to safeguard national

security at all costs. We have access to funds enough from which to live on, we have access to certain key technologies, and we have access to specific and new bits of information as regards the foe; but otherwise we are alone; totally and essentially alone.

And if you're wondering dear reader, what became of the suspect on the bus, let me tell you. The answer is, this time I did not shoot. Nor either did the suspect detonate himself. But I'll lay my cards on the table now: don't expect that this sets the tone of the book. On the contrary, if I happen to believe I've got a suicide bomber on my hands in future, then you can bet your bottom dollar, I'll have no hesitation in firing – it's my job to.

* * * * *

Call me X. My real name? I cannot reveal it. Date of birth? Unknown. Place of birth? Access denied. Nationality? XYZ. Parentage? Sorry, I'm unable to answer that. Appearance? Next question. Affiliations? None. Other information? Top secret. Modus operandi? Whatever the hell gets the job done.

So much for introductions reader, now let me get down to business. In writing this brief memoir of mine, I wish to give you a glimpse, albeit a rather fleeting one as it may be, of the exceptional operations of the new breed of secret agent. Anyone who's picked up today's papers or watched today's television will no doubt have read or seen something relating to the war on terror and the associated media frenzy over the possibility of a terrorist attack.

In many ways the public is much in the dark over this, and doesn't know what to reject as over-hyped nonsense on the one hand and what to believe as the grave yet undoubtable truth on the other. Are plots thwarted on a daily basis? Are the powers that be working around the clock to stifle would-be terror attacks? Is the government doing enough? Are they well-informed enough? Or are they in the dark?

It is with these questions in mind that I write this small note. In it reader I hope you will find some answers to these questions. I hope you will come to see that we do in fact know a lot, and that we are in fact doing much to combat the terror threat. You know hopefully, by the time you've come to the end of this memoir, you will feel a lot more secure about your future, will be able to sleep soundly at night in the comfort of your own home, and will be glad that such men like myself – individuals, bent only on the safeguarding of the nation – are willing to go to any length, any extreme, to ensure that the temperate and peaceable realms of our homeland remain civilized for years to come.

But along the way I also want to debunk some of the myths concerning spies. Needless to say countless volumes of works have arisen over the past decades claiming to be accurate portrayals of the world of espionage, to be based on documented fact, and to be autobiographical in nature. Such books, when read closely, turn out to be nothing but clap-trap and invented nonsense, and – for those like myself who are real-life spies – nauseating at every turn.

The obsession with thrilling chases between enemy agents, with ridiculously nifty devices of espionage and murder, with cryptic clues lending a faux sense of mystique and Sherlock Holmes-like intrigue, with bad guys melodramatically jumping out of every corner, and with a plethora of scantily-clad women seducing

spies at every possible opportunity and with gratuitous sex scenes filling up every other page – all of this, entertaining as it may be, is complete and total rubbish, and if I was a librarian I'd shelve these books under fiction with a capital F.

Renowned spy writers such as Fleming or Le Carré have gained bloated celebrity on the back of books composed of utter lies and do-dah that they claim to be authentic. In this memoir I intend to be faithful only to the truth, to write things only as they happened, and to see things only as they are. Anyone who thinks it's otherwise should get real. Forget Fleming, forget Le Carré, forget James Bond: this is the real story of a real spy. As such I intend to tell it.

So then to the beginning. Not much can I relate to you reader of my early life or upbringing and education. To cut to the chase: I was four years at the academy. Therein did I so excel myself as to not only make the cut, but also to distinguish myself as valedictorian. Such honours, however nice, held no value for me though: it was in the field that I wished to gain recognition. Thus I was released, set free into the world, to mingle with the populace at large and to fight the war on terror. And so have we arrived at the beginning.

One thing I'll say at this early stage is that you can look forward to seeing me undertake some very dangerous undercover operations; shocking and risky missions, wherein the art of playing the part well is essential for success. Stay tuned for these.

You know reader, perhaps you've seen me around, although you would never have known it. Perhaps I was the waiter, who silently and deferentially served you that meal you had the other day with your partner. Perhaps I was that man on the tube – the one who sat next to you, who just looked bored out of his brains and desperate to get off. Perhaps I was the mime artist who stood statue like in the middle of Trafalgar square seemingly there only for your better entertainment; or perhaps I was the police officer, decked out nicely in his crisp blue uniform, who paid you a house call last week. You never know reader, perhaps we're already acquainted. Perhaps you'll even see yourselves depicted in this book.

1

Having talked so much of this being a real-life memoir without hype and typical spy dramatics, let me now go back on my word and introduce a horrifying and alarming sequence of action, that would have no place in this book, other for the fact that it *did actually happen* and that it is the starting point for our story. Of course the fact that one of the most dramatic incidents in the book happens now, so that later developments could be considered a letdown, is testament to the fact that this is a story ground in reality and not manufactured by Hollywood script writers following a well-trodden formula.

One autumnal morning I found myself seated at a table, in a downtown internet-cafe, taking in some brunch. I'd been carrying out a covert operation here over the past several weeks. A potential plot to blow-up shoppers was in our midst

and I'd come here to keep tabs on the suspected ringleader who worked here as a waiter. In fact it was he who had served me my coffee.

The information was good, my sources solid, and the accusations well founded and yet I couldn't help doubt somewhat if the plot was credible or what we spies call a castrated cat operation, a plot established by copy-cats without the balls or the wherewithal to carry it out. It was much more likely the latter.

Three weeks ago as I was monitoring an internet chat room discussion in which I posed as a Muslim radical, I heard talk of a plan to detonate bombs in major shopping areas around town. I was able to trace three members of the discussion group directly to this cafe. Setting myself up as a coffee swilling internet surfer, and all the while keeping my ear to the ground, I soon identified some potential suspects.

It transpired that the waiter, when I ran his details through the computer, had already been identified on what I'll refer to only as the black list. You needn't ask too many questions about this black list, but needless to say, contrary to any government rhetoric, such lists exist. And yet for all of this I couldn't help have my doubts. Intuition told me these people were talkers not terrorists.

The information regarding the nature of the explosives to be used was contradictory. Though I'd heard (to be frank, wild) rumours indicating that a plutonium based compound was being prepared, the RNO – a made up acronym for obvious reasons – was stating that a shipment of ketrosyl-14, a dangerous explosive, often employed as a 'starter fuel' in homemade bombs, had gone missing from a Russian ship bound for Britain, and moreover the containers were rumoured to be being shipped directly to this town. But on the other hand it was reported that an Iranian based firm were bringing in shipments of the deadly anthrax, and, through a London-based Saudi intermediary, were selling the stuff on to local terror groups. Now though the whispers I'd heard were very much to the point that the terrorists were going to blow up shoppers rather than poison them, still I didn't want to be caught off my guard, and moreover I'd heard mention of the deadly anthrax amongst some of the suspects.

Again though, and I think this is a point worth reiterating at the outset of this novel, how to separate credible intelligence from chit-chat? My gut here told me this was chit-chat. In fact, it's a universally acknowledged truth, and backed up by my experience, that those Muslims who let's say have some sympathy with al-Qaeda, without wanting to be terrorists themselves, are encouraged to indulge in chit-chat as a way of confusing the secret services.

The suspect, an IC3 male (an IC3 male is the code we secret agents use to describe a man of Afro-Caribbean origin) looked just like a normal waiter, a teenage kid trying to make it in this world, a minor gangster who wore his cap to one side and was predisposed to chill when he wasn't working. I just wasn't convinced he was a terrorist (despite his name being on the blacklist). He didn't seem to fit the profile. And yet today he wasn't here. So where was he then?

And then a wave of information came through to me and suddenly, boom, everything changed.

There were three important pieces of intelligence.

One, there had been a – relatively credible – post on an Islamist website stating that today would be another 9/11.

Two, and more alarmingly, the RNA were reporting that a suspected terrorist arrested today had mockingly laughed his way through an interview, refusing to say anything except that a certain celebrity was going to go down.

And three, a home-made bomb, engineered using the stolen ketrosyl-14, had been identified as being secured in a blue-plastic bag with a distinctive brand name on it.

Now, you're probably saying to yourself reader, no big deal. And I would agree, each piece of evidence is flimsy in the extreme, though anyone who understands anything about the nature of our job understands that all the evidence is rather flimsy. But taken together they amounted to something, not least because of what I knew and what I had witnessed.

I knew precisely that that certain celebrity was now signing books in a shopping mall not five minutes from here; and I had seen a man pass something to a blond girl who had been in here two minutes earlier. What had he given her? A blue-plastic bag identical to the one flagged up by RNA.

I immediately took to my heels in pursuit of the woman.

Now you might say, aren't you being alarmist here? Answer, Yes. However, it was my duty to be so and my duty as well to now make a phone call.

'Request armed police and the bomb squad' I whispered into my mobile phone as I went in pursuit. By the answers I was given, I realised that I wasn't being alarmist at all.

They were already on their way. Someone else had called them too. At this point as I raced toward the shopping centre, desperately looking for the whereabouts of the blond lady, I saw two other undercover agents racing, as though their lives depended on it, toward the mall.

You won't see this every day, believe me. This is an utterly rare occurrence. Of course we didn't acknowledge each other – we never do – and in fact one of the ironies of this situation was that, since both men were Asian – indeed many of the new recruits are, as they are better able to infiltrate the Muslim community – the shoppers, rather alarmed that something was afoot, maybe thought that these were the bad guys. By the way, by this time police sirens could be heard, it was an incredible din. I had never till then witnessed such a scene, and as those two agents disappeared into the mall yet another two came flying around the corner.

Meanwhile I'd located and caught up with the blond lady. She was at the top of the escalators of the department store wherein was the celebrity. I felt I had to track the blond girl and stay with her. Of course I was completely convinced that she didn't know what was in that package. Because the facts are reader: *women are not terrorists*. The odds of my having a female suspect on my hands were very, very slim.

Trifling as it may seem, given the tension I was enduring, as I got nearer to her I could see (and smell) her (scented) blond hair falling down upon her shoulders and denim jacket; I could see the red and white striped bag that she carried on her shoulder, and in which was the package; and I could see her tight, jodhpur-like black pants, that were in fact so tight that her peachy backside was shown off to good effect and which also made visible the silhouette of her underwear.

Funny how you see and recall all these details even though in the most adrenaline-packed situation. Twice as we marched she made to subtly lift up her

knickers with her hand. Evidently they were chafing her (they were really quite tight). I couldn't help think that if her backside was getting clammy, and her knickers cloying her as a consequence, then this might all be due to nerves, and she was anticipating her upcoming deed. Though of course truthfully, these knicker-tugs of hers were all complete red-herrings; for I suspected only too well, that she didn't know the contents of the package and was herself an innocent bystander.

Upstairs in the department store it was immediately apparent where the celebrity was. I saw him signing books at one end surrounded by an enormous queue of (mainly) women. He had body guards around him and I saw how two of the secret agents were whispering to them. I spotted the other two agents at opposite ends of the store. If you looked closely you could see they had concealed weapons in their coats. Who were they aiming for? What was their information? It seemed, according to how they ignored her, that they didn't know the blond girl was a suspect.

I also, although I couldn't exactly confirm this at the time, caught a glimpse of what appeared to be two snipers on the roof of the building opposite to ours, with guns trained, through the windows, into the shop store. I say this with extreme caution, because I can't be sure that's what I saw.

In fact sightings of such anti-terror snipers have usually been restricted to the realms of internet conspiracy theories peddled by madmen. Indeed as a secret agent myself I am totally in the dark about such things: like many things in the secret service we are simply not told. Many secret agents believe these snipers to be apocryphal. I will simply say that in the heat of the moment, that was what I think I saw, although the distance was maybe such that my eyes deceived me.

The blond lady now entered the (absolutely huge) lingerie section. It seemed to take up nearly a third of the upstairs floor-space, a veritable kaleidoscope of colours and sizes, silks and cottons and frills. Fearing to enter this *exclusion zone*, I kept a very strict eye on her from my lookout in men's underwear.

She appeared to be browsing and as she was I decided enough was enough and took the bold step of entering the women's section and got up right behind her. Finally she selected the bra she wanted – it was a silky-purple one with half transparent cups – and headed to the till.

However by this time, by a slight of hand, I had removed the blue plastic bag from her bag and had it in my hand. I now took it and headed for the escalators.

My mission was to get out of the shop, and then the mall, as casually as you like, take the suspect package away and head for an open space, most probably along the nearby canal. The bomb squad can sometimes be ten minutes in arriving and I couldn't hang around. There was almost certainly a timing device on this thing and my belief was that it wouldn't be long before it went off. I considered evacuating the mall but that would just be chaos. Also, knowing the strength of the bomb, it could be irrelevant.

My heart pounded as I went. I descended the escalator and then walked through the haberdashery section – containing, amongst other things, vases, plates and cutlery – on my way out. Then it was that I realised I'd been spotted stealing from the blond lady's handbag.

'There he is' shouted someone 'stop that man!'

I got slightly anxious and two security guards eyed me and came over to me; and in the most shocking, terrifying and awful moment I saw my escape plan crumble into pieces.

BANG!

A horrible, thunderous noise erupted loudly in my ear. It was a terrible, shocking sound.

Everyone in the shop stopped to look in terror. There was an audible tension in the silence.

I was taken in to the arms of the security guard.

The vase I had knocked over, that had been the cause of the bang, lay in smithereens before me.

Meanwhile, though I fain would hold onto it, the security guards seized the blue-plastic bag they'd accused me of stealing.

Lacking all the precaution I had used in handling it and waving away my protests as meaningless, they opened it up and got a massive surprise. They were absolutely gob-smacked.

'Stealing women's lingerie?' they said, holding up a jaguar-skin patterned bra.

Like a man possessed I rifled through the rest of the bag, looking for any other suspect material. There was none.

'Seems like we have a bra-stealing pervert thief, here' said one of the goons laughing.

I held my head in my hands, ironically playing very much into the role of a, caught-in-the-act, knicker-thief, as passers-by threw disapproving looks at me and the blond lady, who seemingly had been about to exchange the bra, was given her possessions back.

I was taken away by the police.

2

The mishaps of the morning and the false leads that I'd foolishly followed had borne no fruit vis-à-vis the plot to blow up shoppers and in being side-tracked – in following the tall, leggy blond – the suspects had most likely played me for a fool, given that the intelligence about the blue-plastic bag was later traced to a source close to them. It was also likely that several other pieces of bogus intelligence were disseminated, thus explaining the appearance of several operatives at the mall.

It was a classic time-waster maneuver on the part of low-level al-Qaeda sympathisers with no real links to terrorism (although all of this sort of business is encouraged from the top), the kind of thing that agents like myself are sick of dealing with and which, for various good reasons, goes unreported in the press.

I was taken into police custody, then released without any charge, given apologies from the arresting officers, given tea and cake by the superintendent and I received a surreptitious note with the words 'not stealing bras again are we XI' from an unknown superior at HQ, who gets sick of getting agents out of scrapes like this, but still has the sense of humour to have a laugh whenever possible.

Meanwhile I should briefly say something about the events at the shopping centre. Many passers-by had witnessed the arrival of the running secret operatives and a handful of people were talking about the possible sighting of snipers. These rumours were soon quashed. According to the misinformation, the undercover operatives were simply undercover police involved in an operation, whilst the snipers were the figment of the imagination of excitable people (as well they might have been). Any journalists who happened to sniff around the story were discouraged from it, and very soon the whole incident was consigned to a couple of lunatics talking rubbish on internet forums.

The events of the day had been a total farce. Nevertheless, even though I'd wasted a good deal of time in pursuit of the blond lady, even though I'd been led to the women's underwear department like a fish washed ashore, I had followed, to the letter of the law, the doctrines, dictums and decrees of my teachers back at the academy, and had been perfectly in the right in tracking the blond lady to (what I then suspected) would be a potential scene of carnage.

Ultimately there was nothing more sinister to her visit than a mere bra exchange. Nevertheless, in the interests of national security it had been my undeniable duty to follow her, and had the grave and venerable gentlemen, the wise and incorruptible chiefs of operations, the heads of staff back at the academy, been privy to my actions they would have awarded them, with an immediate surety and conviction, a straight ten out of ten.

Reader you might be wondering at this point where is this tale headed? The title of this book is *License to stalk*, a title which you might think was first muted as a way of 'getting the lads on board' for what otherwise might be a fairly tedious and factually based, difficult-to-sell treatise on spying. In fact it is meant in a much more philosophical light.

You will see me in this book, and I will tell it honestly and to your face, *stalking people*. There can be no other word for it. This is what it essentially amounts to, even if we offset it by the fact that I'm gathering intelligence for national security or thwarting terror plots. There can be no spying without stalking. There can be no intelligence gathering without intrusion of privacy. These are the facts and I'm telling them to you.

The previous chapter probably seems bizarre. A high stakes possible 9/11 scenario petering out into an arrest for lingerie theft. My editor himself asked me what the hell was the significance of this first chapter? Following a woman into the underwear department of a large shopping store is hardly the meat and bones of a thrilling spy story. Yet the justification of the first chapter is very simple.

For one thing it is relevant because it actually took place. Secondly it is the beginning of the story. But most importantly I wished to include it out of a desire to show the public just how much in the dark we spies sometimes are.

You know I'll be the first to put my hand on my heart and admit that in following an English woman into an underwear department with no bigger motive than to carry out a bra exchange, I was incredibly foolish. (And you may even construe the events as being a bit perverted as well, I can see that much reader.) However my point is this: in so many ways we are very much pawing in the dark with the war on terror so that inevitably there are many occasions where we are led up blind alleys and get caught up in the most ridiculous of farces.

However, that said, with the beginning of this chapter I now intend to pick out from my experience those incidents of more consequential import. Believe me, the heat is about to be turned up in this chapter as I relate a very dangerous mission of mine. And really, if you're thinking reader, like my editor had the audacity to suggest, that this is perhaps going to be some sort of pervert's confession, thinly veiled as a spy narrative, and with a hidden women's underwear agenda on hand, then you can think on. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone who's expecting such a tale should stop reading now. I'm about to begin a very serious narration.

Returning to my home I set about catching up with the latest information. Connecting to the RNO website I discovered some updated news pertaining to the shipments of anthrax and ketrosyl-14.

It was now being reported that a quantity of both substances had been found and pictures of each were now being displayed online. I downloaded both photos. The anthrax was being stored in little red tubes that bore the letters S.A.N.C. in white letters on the front. What the significance of those letters were no-one knew, but if you opened up the tube, inside there was a knotted condom containing the stuff.

On the other hand the ketrosyl-14 – which is white – was being packaged in bubble-wrapped parcels, and surprisingly to look at it, one was struck by its immediate resemblance to a drug package, as though it were a little vile of cocaine. In fact the same was true of the anthrax. This was surprising since it meant the traffickers ran the extra risk of being pulled up under suspicion of drug-running, so making their lives that bit more difficult.

Anyway these then were the images I saw. However the significance of discovering the remaining batches of each was now being stated by RNO: earlier on in the day a Saudi man had been detained under the terrorism act for trafficking the ketrosyl-14 packages. As yet however intelligence were unable to link him to his sources or his customers. RNO believed the packages had been shipped out to a terrorist organisation in the town of Z (where I operate), and if the packages could be recovered, the powers that be were hoping to trace them back to the Saudi man and so turn up the heat on him in the hopes he would give up the Iranian firm. Yet so far intelligence had been unable to make the link.

Also, in a surprising parallel of these events, a young home-grown terrorist had been detained, with intelligence believing him to have been involved in the theft of the Anthrax based compounds. So far he hadn't cooperated with the security services and again they were hoping that packages of the substance could be recovered with the view to arresting terrorists lower down the food chain and getting them to rat on their superiors. But again no such packages had been found, and convinced as the security services might be about who was doing what in the terror network – and despite what you might read about in the press concerning tough anti-terror measures – without any solid evidence both suspects would be walking in the next twenty-four hours.

I made a study of both photos. Reader I should stress again the images before me: the red coloured tube with S.A.N.C. written on it and with a condom of anthrax inside; and then the white, bubble wrapped package of ketrosyl-14 that looked exactly like a vile of cocaine.

I really should stress the importance of these articles. (Okay I'll level with you reader, spy though I may be, I'm no good at telling these spy narratives. My editor tells me I should insert some clues early on in the narrative so that later on people can say 'ah yes we saw that earlier' or 'A-ha! I knew it was *that* that he found in the drawer' etcetera. All I'm saying is remember these objects because they might just be important later on. You know if you've got a bad memory perhaps you should write them down on a piece of paper or something – I don't want you to be disappointed later on.)

(Of course they may not be important at all, so don't think that by me going on about them I'm somehow spoiling the narrative and giving you too many clues. I *could* just be putting them in for red-herrings. All I'm saying reader is please, remember these articles!) (Also I hope you realise at this point how easy it would be for a secret agent to mistakenly find evidence of terrorism, when really it was only evidence of minor drug trafficking.)

That afternoon I made preparations for the evening. Word had it that conspirators were gathering at a fast food restaurant in town, and I'd heard whispers to the effect that a plot to blow up shoppers was being drawn up, although it wasn't clear at this stage whether this was related to the (deliberately bogus) one earlier in the day.

Of course it was very probable that it was just another castrated cat operation. According to my sources – which I came across on the internet – the burger joint was a hotbed for a small minority of the city's discontented youth and I'd been given to understand that malcontents were amassing therein, and supposedly discussing some desperate plan.

After all this talk I'd decided to take a look for myself, and see if there was any substance to the rumours. We spies are given a lot of over hyped information so that if a Muslim burps on one side of the town, you can swear on your grandfather's grave that via the Chinese whisper rumour mill, you'll be given leads from the other side of town indicating that a Jihad is in the pipeline. However, I had ascertained that two black-listed hate preachers had been seen here over the past few days and so it really behoved me to check this place out.

I'd made up my mind that tonight there'd be one more fly on the wall of the burger bar. You've guessed it reader, yours truly would be there in position, a mere civilian chomping on a French fry and sucking milkshake through a straw, a nobody minding his own business and seemingly oblivious to any hushed and excited voices that plotted thereabouts.

In the meantime I recharged my batteries and made myself some dinner. Afterwards I set out to leave. But just as I was on the verge of crossing the threshold it suddenly dawned on me whether I hadn't left a hob on? Please reader, don't say that a spy would never be concerned with anything as mundane as having left a hob on.

As I've tried to make clear from the off, we spies are human beings like everyone else, and this is a *real-life* story. If you want fantasies and lies and everything hunky-dory, then for heaven's sake go and watch James Bond! As it happened though, I was worrying about nothing. A thorough scrutiny showed that all of the arrows on each of the six knobs were pointing upwards: the cooker was switched off.

What a perfect November night awaited outside. I walked quietly and alone through the empty streets, took a ride on the bus and found myself before long in the town centre. There was a magic in the air. I felt excited: excited by the night and excited by my mission.

On arriving at the fast food joint, and stepping through the entrance, the dark, cold and quiet surroundings of the night gave way to the gaudily illuminated cafe-interior, its warmth, smell of food and the funky disco tunes. But more so than these changes of scenery, was my attention attracted to one particular person, a girl of some nineteen or twenty years, who sat at a table by herself opposite to the entrance, and who had looked up anxiously upon my arrival inside, given me the once over, and then looked away.

Though it might seem ridiculous my suspicions were immediately aroused. What was the significance of that look? Who was that girl? Hadn't I seen her somewhere before? What was she about? What motive had drawn her here on this dark November night? I had a hunch she was somehow up to no good, and I've learned over time to trust my intuition. This will seem almost like insanity to the ordinary person, but you should never ignore your sixth sense. The best illustration of this, is of course the story about the policeman, during World War two, who suspected a dog (a dog!) of somehow being up to no good, ignored his intuition as being absurd, only for the dog to detonate twenty minutes later.

Ordering my food and sitting down, I so arranged it that I sat in a corner of the room, adjacent to the girl, so that looking ahead as I did, and appearing to mind my own business, I could all the while monitor her out of the corner of my eye. She sat there angrily and huffily banging away at the buttons of her mobile phone that she held out in front of her. She didn't seem to be having any food.

On the table in front of her lay only her handbag. She simply sat there looking at the phone – evidently reading some message – a silent anger enrapturing her being. Once she looked my way and we made brief eye-contact – she threw me a terse, snarling glance – but I just affected to look away disinterestedly, in the manner of a man who wanted to know nothing of her or her problems. She was dressed up as if on a night out.

Thus did things play out for some twenty minutes or so when the introduction to the restaurant of a new dramatis persona, brought an unexpected twist to proceedings and made me doubly suspicious of the wrathful-eyed female.

The newcomer was none other than the IC3 male. The match-chomping waiter who had been absent from the cafe this morning. I couldn't believe it! (See now what I told you about trusting your sixth sense?) He didn't recognise me, indicating to me that maybe he wasn't involved in this morning's time wasting plot. This was something of a surprise since he most definitely was on the black list. It struck me that maybe, the al-Qaeda sympathisers from the cafe knew of the presence of a secret agent around them but not that it was me specifically.

No sooner had he entered, than the female looked wrathfully askance and refused to make eye-contact with him as he hastily swaggered up to her; and she picked up her handbag and stood up as if to go. She was stopped momentarily, however, by the IC3 male who would fain stand in her way.

'Hey babe' he said.

'Don't babe me! Where've you been you bloody fool? I've been sat here like a lemon, for the past two hours' shrieked out the female in a loud common voice. She was heedless of all and sundry around her. But so too was the male.

'I had to work late didn't I, you stew-pid bloody cow. How the bloody hell am I meant to get here two hours ago if I only finished working five minutes ago?'

'You could ave messaged me you stew-pid sod.'

'I did message you, you stew-pid cow.'

'No you bleedin well didn't, you lying bastard!'

'Look, do I bloody well need this hassle after a hard day's work? I wish you'd bloody well calm down. I is here now isn't I.'

But she refused to answer and looked away; she was having none of it and evidently wanted to go.

'Let's get some food' said the IC3 male. 'I ain't had nuffin since dinnertime. I is starvin.'

'I ain't haven nuffin to eat' replied the female peevishly. 'I is going straight home.'

'Oh Diendron! Where the bleeding hell are you goin?'

'I is goin home, that's where I is goin, Leroy.'

He attempted to hold her where she stood, but she wanted to be away so badly that he had to let go his grasp and release her, otherwise she would have screamed and kicked up such a fuss, as to put the male under the accusing eye of all the eaters in the restaurant. Indeed everyone had been taking note of the scene, and the IC3 male, who seemed now to be aware of this, had been unwilling to push his luck with the stubborn and fiery female. She now trotted off in her high heels and exited the restaurant.

After a moment's pause in which the IC3 male appeared to reluctantly come to the irritating conclusion that there was nothing for it but to go after her – he shook his head from side to side in disbelief and annoyance – he too took to the street and followed her. As for the secret agent – watching events unfold from the sideline as it were – he just calmly remained sitting where he was a few moments longer; nonchalantly swilled back the last of his coffee; rose and carried and emptied his tray into the waste disposal; and then with cool and dignified bearing went in pursuit of the two suspects.

3

When I exited the fast food restaurant and found myself once more outside, I was immediately hit by the cold, dark night; and the magic of it, its dark potency, added to the coffee I'd just drank, seemed to rouse me to a new level of awareness. Oh what a night! What an exciting night! What a mission lay ahead of me!

This is why I became a spy reader, this is why I enrolled in the secret service, this is why I was four hard years at the academy. Some people like to be indoors on a night like this, sat in front of the TV and fire. Not so yours truly. Never would

I trade in my 24/7 secret vocation for a more sedate and easy lifestyle. Never till I die. This is what I was made for, this is what I was born to do.

And now it was essential that those two suspects be pursued. Accordingly, wherever they were headed so too would I follow. To what villainous den would I be led to on this dark November evening? Wherein were the three of us headed? I did not know. The thrilling excitement of the venture lay in the total mystery of my destination. Oh to where were we three headed? To what dark and dangerous shores? Oh mysterious dark night of espionage!

Yet for all this exhilaration I was as cool as a sniper in going about my business. I'd given the suspects a good head start, yet I wasn't in the slightest bit concerned about losing them, and, with deliberate calm and surety, looked about me from the burger bar street entrance.

There they were, yonder. At three o'clock, trooping down a slope in the street, illumined under the bright orange street lamps that shed their light and shone in the puddles. The female in front, marching away in her high heels, her handbag carried to the side, in that manner peculiar to women when they're upset. Angrily marching, yet at the same time attempting to retain a dignified bearing. And the male in pursuit behind her, his baseball cap worn with the peak out to the side, trying to catch up and plead with her.

They were some thirty or forty metres off. I popped a chewing gum into my mouth and then crossed the road and essayed to make up some ground. Turning a corner they went out of sight. I held my nerve, stayed calm and kept up my pursuit. Turning the corner myself I spotted them – now only some twenty metres off – standing at a bus stop. Slowing my gait, and affecting to mind my own business, I pulled up and waited at the bus stop as well.

Apart from myself and the two suspects there were two other people waiting for a bus. The suspects sat down on the little bench; I stood to one side, my back against the bus shelter. The row had gotten to the stage where the female was keeping her mouth shut. The male was trying to reach her, trying once more to explain the reason for his lateness; but the female was having none of it and sitting there in a huff, shunned his eyes and his entreaties.

Standing coolly to the side and apparently gazing at the building in front of me in absent mindedness, I summed up the situation: evidently we were going somewhere on the bus. Three buses passed this stop, the R6, the R17 and the 822. If I was to track the terror suspects I'd have to get off at their stop.

However it *wouldn't* be necessary to know what that stop was called, because the buses in the town of Z, operate a £1.20 for all stops policy. It would simply be a case of putting my money, which I had ready in my hand, into the hopper and then taking a seat.

Having said that however, it was usual to state one's destination anyway, regardless of the £1.20 for all policy. Yet strictly it wasn't necessary. Nevertheless in order not to arouse suspicion it would be a good idea to repeat the destination, that the two suspects would be stating; and to be able to do this it would be a good idea to get on directly after them. Fortunately for myself I was directly behind them as things now stood.

Time wore on. The suspects continued to argue, the female piping up once more after her quiet spell, because the male had finally opted for a silent approach, and

now that he was paying her no attention the female had gotten all vocal, taking umbrage at all the wrongs put her way, and maintaining the argument by herself for a while. The male merely sat there indifferently. Yet once as the argument abated and the female fell silent, her eyes happened to alight on mine once more. She shot me a contemptuous look, but also I felt that in her glance, she was trying to suggest that I was some sort of weird pervert.

You see she remembered me from the burger bar and was stupid enough to suspect that my reappearance now was somehow suspicious, and didn't simply pass off my presence here as a mere coincident. Anyway her glance was only momentary – I saw the thought fleeting across her mind – and thereafter she turned away and resumed the row. For my part I affected a scowling 'don't be so stupid' kind of look, and pretending to be slightly annoyed by this suggestion, I turned my eyes elsewhere and minded my own business.

After some ten minutes the bus arrived. Now I had expected the suspects to be third in line, with myself immediately behind them, and the two civilians, who'd gotten here ahead of us, in poll position. However the suspects, having no regard for the laws of the land, disrespectfully pushed their way onto the bus first.

The two citizens robbed of their rightful positions were incensed by this anti-social behaviour and looked at me appealingly. In response I gave them a sympathetic look in which I said 'what can we do about such people?' The upshot of it all was that there was now no way I could get on behind the suspects without upsetting those two citizens further and without arousing suspicion. Accordingly, they boarded before me and I was unable to catch the destination of the suspects.

In fact not only was I too far distant, but the lady in front of me, one of the two who had been cheated of their place in the queue, passed some ironic comment to me about this town having gone to the dogs and that there were too many chavs for her liking; and listening to this as I did, I was not privy to the intended stop-off point of the suspects.

Those two meanwhile had headed off right to the back of the bus. I stepped on after the lady ahead of me, and, though I could have copied her destination I didn't, scared that she might then take it as a conversation starter and begin bugging me with all sorts of questions about where I lived. Instead I simply made my face look gaunt and tired, my eyes lacklustre and indifferent, and placing my money in the hopper gave off the impression of one who doesn't say much. The driver was just as carefree in fact, speaking not a word and asking of me nothing, so that all came off well.

I made my way up the aisle. The suspects sat right at the back, the IC3 male putting his feet up on the adjacent seat and making himself at home. I sat down a few seats to the fore. The bus drove off.

During the whole journey I sat gazing out the window, lost in my own little world as it were. Of course I leant a keen ear to the conversation of the suspects. Typically when I'm tracking people on a bus like this I can go one better, and, by positioning myself both behind the suspects whilst at the same time on the opposite side of the aisle to them, study all their movements in detail under the perfectly reasonable auspices of staring out of the window next to me, when in fact I'm really studying their reflections in the glass. But the suspects had second guessed me on this one and set themselves up at the back. Though naturally I'm

not suggesting that they'd sussed me, reader; on the contrary it was as clear as day to me that they were totally innocent of what I was doing.

Fifteen minutes of the journey having passed, I started to become extremely anxious and full of nerves. At any minute I expected that we would be alighting. It was like waiting for your execution to be called. Don't be surprised to discover that a spy can be overcome by nerves reader. This isn't Hollywood it's real-life; and precisely the sort of person who takes up the profession of spy, the type of individual who hankers after the excitement and exhilaration of a dangerous life is precisely the sort who would get butterflies at a moment like this.

Looking out of the window I hadn't a clue where we were. It was so bleak and miserable, we had travelled a long way from the town shopping centre and were evidently in a bad district of the city. Irrationality starting to get the better of me, I had to look around to check that the suspects were still sat there and that they hadn't already got off. But they were there, the female sitting huffily apart and looking out her window; the male, slouching in his seat and with his feet up, nonchalantly and arrogantly staring ahead of himself, like the chief male that he obviously was. I gazed once more out of the window, my heart beating ten to the dozen. And then 'ping!' it finally happened.

The stop sign rang and illuminated, the two suspects came past me with the female in front, and the bus began to slow. Waiting till the very last minute – I was decidedly wary of arousing their suspicion now – I stood up just as the doors were opening. As I took to my feet my legs seemed to turn to jelly, it was a real effort just to walk and my heart felt as though it would pound out of my chest. I was so anxious. But adrenaline taking me on, I raced down the aisle and alighted just in time. The suspects being already ahead of me I now allowed them to double their advantage, by pausing at the bus stop and reading up on the timetable for returning buses.

Yet, after a critical period had elapsed, it was essential to get back on their trail as this was no time to lose them. Where the hell on God's green earth were we come to? It was such a desolate place.

Tower blocks seemed to rise up everywhere, there was an iron-railed fence enclosing a derelict factory directly opposite me, and, as I looked down one pot-holed street that bordered the factory fence, there was, in the middle of the road, a loud gathering of youths; with one kid on a bike circling round and round the others in the centre, who seemed to be burning a fire in a dust-bin.

I heard their shouts and cries come to me on the cold crisp air. Crumbs this was no easy neighbourhood that was for sure, and I felt ill at ease and out of my comfort zone. I whispered up a little prayer. I was terrified and felt like chucking in the towel. Dear God, what awful mission had brought me here?

But being well-trained and inured to nerve-ridden adventure I continued my mission. The two suspects were some thirty metres in advance of me, but I realised that that distance was now far too big and could potentially jeopardise the entire operation. You see not only were the streets now become very short, and forking at every turn, so that I might easily lose sight of the suspects; but being now residential in nature, if the suspects turned a corner suddenly and went indoors to their home before I could see, they would be lost without trace.

Therefore with much haste did I now reduce this dangerous distance down to a much safer fifteen. Thus we walked on, myself edgy beyond belief. And now the pendulum swung the other way: I was far too close, far too close, dear God I was far too close! If they turned round now I'd be sussed straight away, I felt sure of it.

I backed off a bit and increased the distance. And truly I now found myself playing this very dangerous game of cat and mouse, maintaining an optimal distance to my charges, and ever and anon fortune's weeble wobbling one way then the other.

We passed under a railway bridge. It was sheer night underneath, dank and smelly as a sewer; and as I walked through, all of a sudden, and out of nowhere, I got the shock of my life.

Shit! I had stumbled on something.

I had tripped over two people sitting on the dark floor of the underpass – they had only become visible to me at the moment I had stumbled. They were either junkies or homeless people – I could not tell. But God, what a shock! Oh! Christ!

Yet I recovered, having made no obvious exhibition of my surprise to the suspects. Exiting the underpass a tower block rose high above us and we seemed to be on the road to it. For some reason I felt sure that we were heading there.

It seemed that we were anyway. However things now became not only critical but they took a terrible turn for the worse as fortune's weeble decided to wobble over and fall down upon her head.

The IC1 female had turned around and seeing me yet again had grown suspicious. She still wasn't on good terms with her man, but my seeming intrusion into their lives superseded this, and she brought herself to a halt and looked back at me, gently putting her hand on her man as she did so, to indicate that he should stop walking as well. He didn't know what this was about and was quite angered with her.

I walked on, attempting to appear oblivious and unconcerned, but my eyes now met those of the female and she wasn't going to remove them. I looked away and continued walking, under the heavy fire of her glance. Secretly I realised I'd screwed the mission up. Any second now I'd be level with the suspects; after that ahead. Surely it was all over. The female kept keen eyes on me whilst I looked ahead ignoring her. But as I drew level with the pair, she voiced her concerns.

'Are you followin us or somin?'

Immediately the male took the most cursory of glances at me – he took me for a complete nobody, but at the same time he was the sort who was respectful enough to care only for his own business and to leave me well alone – and then started berating the female.

'You stew-pid bloody cow! Of course he's not followen us! What the bloody hell are you on! Fuck me, you are stew-pid.'

'Well how am I supposed to know? I fought he was followin us' pleaded the female, full of embarrassment at her mistake.

By this time, having made a show of throwing off the allegations as stupid absurdity, by merely making another of those 'Dear God, don't be so stupid' faces, I had walked past the suspects; and indeed I now desired to make a show of getting ahead of them so as to refute the allegations of the girl. Although of course

in doing this, my only option though it were, I was messing up the mission all the more.

My prospects appearing fairly bleak now, I was almost certain the mission was at an end. However continuing as I did, ahead of the suspects and scarily into the unknown, walking the plank over this God forsaken neighbourhood, I now found myself approaching nearer and nearer the tower block. Was it there that the suspects were headed? It seemed a good possibility, yet I didn't know and sure as hell couldn't turn around and look to see if they were behind me. No, I had to walk on now and pretend I was not at all interested in them. With fading hope I found myself on the path to the tower.

I began to be overcome by the most fearful trepidation. The tower was so, so huge, the inhabitants presumably all bad, and I couldn't help feel that from all of those windows of the tower block, row upon row upon row of them, set like so many eyes upon its front, there looked down so many unfriendly faces.

In the midst of all this fear, in the paranoia of all those imagined eyes scornfully staring down at me, I now had to somehow find the entrance, and then make an entry – a matter which much concerned me, as I expected that I would only be able to enter the building with a key or swipe-card or with the knowledge of a code-lock. Moreover it was probable that all my efforts to enter would perhaps be in vain; since I was working under the proviso that it was here the suspects were headed.

I should say a little about my presence in this neighbourhood.

From my facial features and the clothing I wore it was abundantly evident that I had no business being in this area this late at night. The best alibi or story that I had invented as a standby on my way here was that I was come to visit a prostitute, although this struck me as an excuse I'd fabricated based on watching too much TV. Moreover I would not, if I had to speak, affect a common accent. This was partly because it would be difficult to do so, but also because, in comparison to my garb and mien it might only arouse suspicion yet further. Thus I was very much a fish out of water as I walked along the outskirts of the tower block.

Desperately trying to look confident I headed toward what seemed to be an entrance. Yet when I reached it I found it only to be some sort of false-entrance, like a fire-escape door or something, and I foolishly tried to open it but to no effect, making a complete idiot of myself in the process, and believing the whole tower block to be watching me as I dithered.

My body language was awful and I felt that a million eyes were upon me. However gaining courage and thinking a little I realised that I had nothing to lose now, and that two options lay ahead of me: I could either fumble around the building looking for an entrance, like a little lost lamb looking for its mother; or I could adopt plan B. I decided on plan B.

Immediately pulling out my mobile phone, I dialled an imaginary number and bought myself a few seconds in which I pretended to concentrate and await the person I'd dialled to pick up, but during which time I was actually making a reconnaissance of the surroundings. And at this moment lady luck chose to smile sweetly upon me, and in the shape of the two suspects trundling up the path to the tower, presented me with a gratuitously golden invitation to enter the tower

block tenement. You see as I'd dialled up, I'd turned around to face the way that I'd come, and there in the darkness were the two suspects. They saw me again, but now that I had the phone to my ear, it was as if I wasn't alone, and with this as protection the girl dared give me no more than a cursory glance. She really seemed crestfallen and peeved by her foolish accusations against me. Yet also confused: since she had believed there was some substance to her allegations – I almost felt sorry for her.

Now it seemed the suspects – as of course would be expected – were not going to go down this false little path I'd taken. Instead they followed a different one and I knew that they were headed for the entrance and that moreover they'd have access through any security system. At this point I began the mobile phone conversation.

Although I'd ruled out the adoption of an accent suited to these parts, I did intersperse my words with much French; it being necessary to act annoyed, angry and altogether upset because for whatever reasons of the human psyche this was the best way to blag it. It was essential to make out that this was the last place on earth I wanted to be. As I began the imaginary conversation I took up pursuit of the suspects.

'What the hell is this fucking place!' I said disparagingly. 'For Christ's sake! How the fuck am I meant to get into this fucking shit hole!'

Speaking loudly and with real annoyance, and feigning to be oblivious to everything around me, I was now close on the heels of the suspects – I was deliberately following them, in order to make an entrance and they knew it! – and with the mobile phone and imaginary conversation as my armour I realised I could now get as near to them as I wanted.

Continuing to curse and swear and sound hacked off I was right up their backsides as they say – and though they turned to look at me, I steadfastly kept my eyes averted, looking strictly to one side as one does when one is on the phone. In this manner did we reach the door, with those two now *knowing fine well that I was following them*, in order to gain the access to the building that otherwise I wouldn't have had.

The girl in front having typed in the code and released the door lock, she stepped inside the building followed by her man, who now, all because of the imaginary mobile phone conversation, believed me to have legitimate business herein and held the door for me till I took it and entered as well. As he held the door for me he tried to make eye contact with me – I think he felt sorry about the accusation the girl had made (he seemed like a sensitive person – as indeed terrorists often are) – but I ignored his glance, didn't say thanks at all, and continued to angrily berate the imaginary nobody at the other end of my phone. We waited for the lift, which after a few minutes came, and then stepped aboard.

What a turn around of events! Ho! From the doldrums of despair when I'd believed that I'd bungled the operation, I had turned proceedings on their head, and hurling fate aside with Herculean bravado and a Trojan horse, I had rescued the mission. Give me five dear reader! Hey ho for secret agent X! And now with ever expanding confidence I decided to pile on the bull shit and make my mission that bit easier.

As we were waiting for the lift I had ended my invented phone call. But I'd found that moment at the bottom, stood next to those two, a daunting time indeed and

felt naked and alone in the ensuing silence. On entering the lift the female had pressed the floor twelve button. Growing increasingly cocky and wanting to rid myself of the silence, I had then, as an affected response to this action, dialled up once more and pray asked ‘what fucking floor is it again?’ to which I replied after a brief pause, ‘Hmm, it’s fucking floor fifteen is it. That’s alright then.’

When we arrived at floor twelve and those two got out, yours truly was still engrossed in his phone call. Though it was foolish that I should speak with a person I was about to see in the flesh, the suspects appeared unbothered by this. Anyway they walked out of the lift; and, when they turned a corner and went out of sight, I held back the door that was closing on me, exited the elevator and tiptoed around the corner.

I saw the suspects before me along the corridor, and watched on as they unlocked and entered one of the flats. With stealth I approached the door. Thus had I been brought to the fox’s den.

4

There was a smell of cooked food – Indian or Chinese – wafting along the corridor. Kneeling down on my honkers I slightly opened the letter box of the door and peered inside.

The brightly illumined flat was in stark contrast to the dingy corridors and dark night outside. As I peeped into the interior I saw a living room ahead of me: it seemed to be the main room. However leading from it was an entrance on the right, not very far from the front door where I now stood; and this entrance connected the living room with another room – perhaps a kitchen – from which I heard the excessively loud voices of the suspects.

The row had rekindled anew since they’d gotten inside, and the female was absolutely going off her rocker. Though I could hear their voices, I couldn’t see the suspects. If they were tucked away inside that off-shoot room then now would be an excellent time to enter. And as I stood there on the threshold I realised that now was my chance to sneak in; but for the moment something just held me back.

Now was the time to stand up and be counted. If I’d made it this far through this bleak and foreign land, there was no point in now turning round and going home with the runner’s up prize of having reached the dragon’s den but not having entered. Recalling my oath of allegiance to Queen and country and dwelling but just a moment on the countless civilians whom I was sworn to protect, I gained new courage. And presently I heard voices, as if a gang of youths were advancing along the corridor. My fate was sealed. If they saw me thus, loitering in the vicinity, the game would be up. It was now or never. The window of opportunity was set to close and I had to skip to it.

The door was of the type that anyone can open provided it’s not locked – a great help here though this is not just a stroke of luck and later in the book I will explain to you exactly why. Grabbing onto the door handle with an incredibly,

tight, tight fist; and with the slowest and slowest and yet strongest of movements, I gently, gently, gently pulled down the handle.

Without sound it got to the bottom, and at this point, with just the slightest of clicks, the latch retreated itself so that the door was ready to open. My palms were absolutely soaking, yet even so I grasped tightly as could be onto the handle in order to keep it right down and therefore soundless, as I now, slowly but surely, pushed back the door.

At this point of intrusion I acted with authoritative assuredness as if I was doing nothing wrong. If my entry was to be witnessed by one of the suspects or some other inhabitant then I wanted to be caught looking as if I had rightful business herein. Of course in lots of ways it was all academic: if I was caught I was caught. But I didn't want to appear as though I were sneaking about.

As it turned out however, my entry was anonymous, the occupants in the off-shoot room being engrossed in their row which now blazed in ever-glowing glory. Cautiously treading past the entrance communicating the kitchen and living room, I delved yet further into the heart of the living room.

Though I'd crept along the walls so soon as I'd entered the flat, and though I now found myself hugging the wall of the living room, still I felt myself far too much exposed in here and determined to head for a much smaller room whose entrance was to be found down a little row of steps on the further side of the living room.

Thus did I descend and occupy this smaller room (there were three rooms altogether down these stairs, but this was the only one with an open door). I switched the light on: apparently this was the girl's bedroom.

In gaining this position my first reaction was to sit down on the girl's bed, in order to rest my feet for a second, not only after the lengthy walk, but also because what with all the adrenaline, and their predisposition to turn to jelly, they were really quite fatigued.

The bed lay against one wall of the rectangular room, and as I sat there facing the opposite wall in which the entrance way onto the stairs and the living room was placed, I could look out and keep watch on the suspects if they left the kitchen and entered the living room. For the meantime the row had taken a new twist with the female slapping the male very hard – it sounded so awful that I almost felt it on my face – and then breaking into tears herself, with the male cursing at having been hit.

The layout of the room was as follows: on the wall opposite to where I sat and adjacent to the door there was a wardrobe; whilst on one of the side walls there was a chest of drawers come dressing table and on the wall opposite to this were some shelves. In several locations on the wall hung posters of almost naked men, with greased-up oily torsos and mere thongs for underwear; in fact one, who flaunted his clenched posterior to the camera was completely in the buff. All of these men were of Mediterranean complexion and unshaven: evidently she liked a bit of rough.

Spread all over the dressing table, on the shelves and on different parts of the floor were to be found a myriad of girly knick-knacks: hairbrushes, combs, scissors, nail files, little mirrors, little boxes containing I don't know what; an endless, endless supply of bottles, cans and pots of lotions, perfumes, sprays and

all sorts of miscellanea. There were dirty towels on the floor, dirty clothes surrounding the little wash basket that stood in one corner, with a hair dryer lying next to it; there were teddy bears and dolls sitting on the shelves, and in general there just seemed to be a whole load of everything, messily dispersed about the room and cluttering up the floor space.

Not only was the room messy but it didn't smell too good either. There was an unmistakable odour of cigarette smoke and on top of this a scent of perfume. Yet though they did their best to mask it, an insidiously foul smell lurked beneath them: a cheesy-fishy-shitty smell, the sort that would be best at home in a toilet. She obviously didn't care to air her cosy little den that often, if at all, and though it is her right to have it in whatever way she wants it, and though it's none of my business whatsoever, still, if I had have been here in any other capacity than that of spy I would have given her a good little lesson in hygiene.

Be things as they may I now availed myself of the opportunity to thoroughly search the room and try and find any evidence that would incriminate the suspects or give clue to any plots they were hatching. Accordingly I set about searching through her things.

As I went, I could hear the suspects in the other room. The female had had a good, good cry now, and not only was the argument long since gone by, but also her tears were nearly spent as well. She just kept up a light sobbing, the male was soothing and comforting her, and though she still softly rebuked him for his misdemeanours, it was evident that she wanted to make it up to him now and return to normal.

Meanwhile I'd decided to check underneath her pillows. These lay on her bed along with a small red cushion in the shape of a heart and also a little soft puppy toy. Lifting these aside I held up the top pillow to search for any little keepsake she might be hiding underneath it. The pillow was awash with long hairs – in fact they were all over the flipping room – and as I went about my work they seemed to attach themselves to my hand. Yet on inspection of the lower pillow I could see nothing but a few old snot rags and the girl's silky pyjamas. To be sure, I lifted up the pyjamas and unfolding them, held them up and scrutinized them – there were no clues to be had here.

Growing ever more dubious over the culpability and involvement in the terror ring of these people – I was beginning to have doubts about the leads on the IC3 male and was suddenly struck by the fact that these people, who were almost certainly not terrorists, were probably not even sympathisers, chatterers or castrated cats – I now decided it was necessary to rifle through the female's drawers. I opened up the top drawer, and although on the surface it contained nothing but underwear, I knew that this would be an ideal place to stash some secret documents or a weapon; or, more pointedly, a little vile of poison or an explosive compound.

Desperately I felt my way through the soft satin lingerie, with intensity and heavy breathing did I let my fingers run through all the silks and frills of the drawer. You see I'd suddenly been overcome by the terrifying and stressful, yet all the while very real conclusion, that these two people had no involvement in the terror network whatsoever and that I'd been totally deluding myself in tracking them back to their den. Oh what had I been thinking of in coming here?! Thus I

was desperate to find some piece of evidence to allay these fears and this accounted for this excitement and heavy breathing of mine.

I continued searching. And then incredibly – and to my absolute amazement, for I'd really begun to doubt myself – bingo! I'd found something.

Much to my relief I'd discovered a very illuminating piece of evidence, that more than justified my presence here. (You see now reader what I mean about a sixth sense and the fine line between justified surveillance and unwarranted stalking?) Right at the back of the drawer was it positioned, surrounded on all sides, and covered, by an assortment of knickers. I scrutinized it carefully.

Reader, I'll say this much, you've seen it before earlier in the tale. (And if you can't remember what you've seen, I told you, you should write these things down. Don't blame me if you're puzzled now. I tried to flag up everything earlier on.)

By God that made a connection. Yes indeed. Holy-hell this really was evidence pulled out of the top-drawer. It was very conclusive. I reached in to pick it out.

Yet just as I was about to get my paws on it, the hands of fate through a double six, and sent events spiralling in a new and dangerous direction.

The suspects were approaching the bedroom.

5

With much haste I shut the top drawer and sought out a hiding place. I considered getting into the cupboard, but thinking on all that banging of doors that it would involve, I quickly opted against it and decided instead to conceal myself beneath the bed.

It was one of those ones with two metal supports underneath; otherwise there was only space between the floor and mattress ledge. I essayed to get myself underneath, attempting to get in through the gap between the two 'bed legs', although this proved difficult as not only was this aperture small, but in addition, the female had lined up various pairs of shoes just underneath the bed and blocking this entrance.

Nevertheless I made it through and got myself into position under the bed, lying on my back and looking upwards at the strong iron mesh-work, through whose holes I could see the mattress. My first sensation as I got underneath was the incredible quantity of dust present: it seemed to go up my nostrils and to settle at the back of my throat.

The two were now inside. Looking out I could see their legs; they were evidently facing each other and very close.

'Hey baby.'

'Hey baby.'

'Look I'm really sorry for bein late un everythin. I's real sorry girl. You knows how much I luv ya. You knows your ma little bunny babe.'

'I knows it babe, I knows it. I is really sorry un all for shoutin at ya like that. A knows you couldn't help bein late. It aint your fault it's that geezer you work for.'

'Hey shush little honey-bun, let's not talk about that.'

‘Come on then babe shut the door would ya.’

And with that the IC3 male went to shut the door and the two suspects, after having started some serious kissing, took up position on the bed.

If you’re expecting, dear reader, a prolonged and detailed description of the amorous amelioration of those two suspects into one; of the grunts and groans and sighs and screams of those two antagonists as they slalomed their way to oblivion; of an accurate account of the ventures of the metaphorical salmon as he entered the estuary and swam upstream, then think on. What people get up to behind closed doors is none of my business, and although I promised at the outset to depict only the truth herein, I would also like to think that upon these pages you’ll find the stamps and hallmarks of honour, discretion and integrity.

You know now perhaps, as I’m lying beneath a bed of lust, is as good a time as any to touch on some issues concerning the amorous adventures of a spy, that I’ve been wanting to get off my chest since I began writing this memoir.

Of course Hollywood would have us believe that secret agents fall out of one bed straight into the next, are ever and anon seduced by a scintillating spectrum of femme fatales, and are constantly in the clutches of a fresh and gripping passion d’amour.

In fact if you sit down with your calculator, and add things up, you’ll find that the average fictional spy amasses such a yearly tally of notches on the bedpost that it runs into the thousands. This is complete ridiculous nonsense and smacks of the utter absurdity and disengagement from reality that some authors suffer from. Honestly speaking reader, hand upon my heart, I’m not sure I can even say I’ve made love to twenty women over the past year, I really can’t.

Thus did the pack unfold itself: those two love birds atop, gripped in the passions of nature; yours truly underneath dealt a joker, and staring straight up at the bed, the strong iron cross-work bending and bulging at different times as the mattress and its adherents shifted their weight from side to side, now diving up, now diving down. Irrational or not as it may have been, I was terrified lest one of those bulges should prove too much for the iron-mesh-work, and that the mattress, encumberants and all, would come crashing down on my face and crush me.

Of course at present the oscillations of the bed were very much at a minimum. To speak accurately it was more like a slight shifting of the mattress. Though I had certain sounds and exclamations to indicate the current state of play up top, the mattress in itself, to one who knew how to interpret its signs, provided an accurate and detailed translation of events, and allowed me to deduce the location, around the metaphorical baseball pitch, that those two protagonists were at.

However as I sat there studying the mattress, it all of a sudden came to pass that I desperately needed to sneeze. It must have been the dust.

I tried to call it off. My eyes squinted, my nose puckered, my mouth was open and piranha like. I was holding it back. Had I held it back? It seemed to be going away. Yes, it had gone away. I was very relieved.

But then no, it was coming back. It was coming. I couldn’t hold it back. Desperately I reached my hand into my pocket for a hanky, intending to carry out a small scale, noise-limited nose blow and thereby call off the sneeze. But I was out of luck. I had none.

With desperate fervour, I anxiously felt about me for some sort of substitute hanky. Putting my hand just out from under the bed it alighted on some sort of clothes item draped upon one of the many high heels. It was washed through with a deep seated warmth; yet after this initial sensation the item felt silk-cold to the touch.

Grabbing it urgently and taking it up I realised that it, or rather they, were a pair of the girl's knickers. And not just any pair either. That warmth which I alluded to indicated that they'd just been worn. It dawned on me immediately that they were the pair that she'd just been wearing and that, contrary to the practice of copulating with knickers around ankles, that I thought common amongst these folk, they had in fact been taken off and thrown aside. Crumbs!

They were the last thing that I would wish to employ as a substitute tissue. Yet what might not happen if the suspects detected me? What about the evidence in the top-drawer? Honestly it didn't bare worth thinking about.

No, no, no, this was no time to be squeamish. There was no other option but to make do with the materials in front of me; otherwise I would be sneezing my way into the arms of the enemy and almost certain death.

With much haste I desperately stuffed one end of the panties down my throat, now changing tactics and deciding that by chewing on them vigourously I could call off the sneeze in a perfectly silent fashion. Meanwhile I held the other end in place over my nose, bracing myself for an imminent, low-key, muffled sneeze should the chewing fail to do the job.

I bit my teeth gnawingly into the now drool soaked panty material in an effort to hold back the sneeze. I was really clenching my teeth and chomping into the scrunched up knickers in an effort to restrain it. Tears were streaming in my eyes, my face was ecstatic. Yet there was no way it could be held in check. The sneeze was coming. It couldn't be stopped. This was desperate. I had to brace myself.

Accordingly, with this makeshift anti-sneeze knicker-device apparatus in place, I carried out two controlled sneezes of minimal impact each.

In the necessity of having to thus employ the panties, I'd not only felt their warmth and clamminess upon my face but I'd also tasted them and smelled them to boot. Honestly speaking, from this preliminary taste, touch, smell analysis, I'd have to conclude that they were soiled with the entire spectrum of stains; with the juices of love that may flow out from a girl's front side eventually giving way to the residue of that which flows from the neighbouring vent or backside. Of course I'm not complaining about this reader, it's all part of my job. Had the successful completion of my mission required that I feed from the toilet bowl of that suspect female, then, you bet your life, I would have done it.

Time began to elapse and the action up top was heating up. We were really getting into the swing of things now. Yet deciding that for a spy there's no such thing as dead time, I set about looking for further evidence and clues that might be available under here.

My hand alighted on a bag directly next to me that was placed in line with the head of the bed, and just upstream as it were from the row of shoes. Putting my hand inside I first of all withdrew what appeared to be a can of hairspray. Evidently this was the girl's bag. Having another go at this lucky-dip, I pulled out some type of book.

Now this indeed was interesting. I well-thought it could be a log book detailing various plans and plots or perhaps even listing contacts in it, names and numbers of other cell members. Yet in fact it turned out to be none other than a school history book. Even so I thought I'd give it the once over, just in case it was secretly the transport of some ill-intentioned note or message. Browsing through though, I couldn't find anything incriminating. Yet all the same it appeared to be a most fascinating book.

It was about World Wars I and II and the interim between them. Actually you know it's really quite an absorbing subject if you get into it, I mean the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the forces of history, the involvement of Whoa there boy! Steady on up there! The mattress was getting bloody close, we were really going for it up-top there. The tadpoles were getting into their starting blocks.

I returned to my book – the mattress was now undulating with extreme force and because I was so scared it would come crashing down on top of me, I tried to divert my attention by reading. To return to my thoughts: truly it is a remarkable and engrossing period of history to study. The book began with the causes of World War I and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by the Black Hand.

Was that the real cause of the war? Not only historically but philosophically it's a very stimulating question. I remembered full well having studied it at school. If I recollect correctly I was fourteen at the time, it was a year ten topic. Yes, it was all very interesting at the time hang on a minute? the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand? the Forces of History? a year ten topic? Only fourteen at the time? But this book had come from the girl's bag?

Suddenly the awful truth had dawned on me. Believe me reader I immediately wanted to throw up and would have happily done so had it not jeopardised the mission. I couldn't believe it. That girl was fifteen at most; and that male – that monster, that pervert – was molesting and raping her.

Though previously I had viewed their antics through rather easy going goggles, at that very moment my gut instinct was to jump out and arrest that monster, even though it would be compromising the mission to do so. But in the larger picture of national security, rape of a minor was precisely that – a minor crime – and my directive was clear: I had to turn a blind eye.

But then no. No, no, no, no, no. Not on my watch it wasn't going to happen. Fuck the rules! Sod those heartless bastards with their desk jobs back at the academy, those pen-pushing fuck-faces, who would relegate to petit criminality the disgusting assault of that pervert on a juvenile. Fucking sod them! Though it broke the oath of allegiance that I'd sworn to Queen and country to do so, such an oath at a time like this was meaningless, and I felt duty bound by my conscience to intercede.

There are times in life when we must act according to higher feelings alone and throw all else to the wind. Otherwise we are mere robots, automatons without heart, following the letter of the law like so many pawns of inconsequence on the checker board of life. Though I was no sex crimes expert, I knew exactly what was going on. The mattress undulations spoke volumes: the action up top was rapidly running away to its climatic conclusion. It was now or never then. Someone had to

play chaperone: fate had bestowed that role upon me. The game was up, it was all over now: it was time to get out and blow the whistle.

With one hand on the side of the bed I hurriedly raised myself up and with much haste and in a breathless, enervated state – I was in a right tizzy trying to stop this shocking sex crime – started to make a speedy exit from under the bed.

Yet in an unforeseen twist, I was about to cross paths with the foxes of fate.

Bang!

In my haste to get out I'd cracked my head straight against the side of the bed.

'Argh you bastard! That hurt! Bloody metal!' I cursed inwardly. I lay reeling under the bed, clasp my head in pain and rubbing it, after having fallen, after the bang, back down to the ground.

Whilst I lay there in pain, half knocked out and senseless, to add insult to injury the crime up top was completed in a climatic undulation of mattress and squeaking springs.

As I lay there recovering, the after undulations steadily subsided and petered out, as if the life was slowly draining from that beast with two backs that had fought with such ardour yet had ultimately been defeated in a desperate struggle of love and death. All soon gave way to silence. Love's labour had been consummated up top; her slaves presumably lay there spent and corpse-like.

I had been too late to prevent the rape of that girl. Yet with the crime now committed, there was little point in crying over spilt milk or blowing my cover over sown oats. I lay there angrily, rubbing my head, and waiting on the next move of the suspects.

It's a well-documented fact that in the aftermath of love making, one partner will reveal to the other some secret very close to their heart. I now leant an ear fully expecting that the male might give up some info to the girl. I listened carefully. Finally the silence was broken.

In a powerful and superhuman outburst the male delivered up, as an encore to his amorous acts, a masterful wind-breaking concerto; which, like one of those musical pieces that stops and you think it can't go anywhere, suddenly plumbs new depths and climbs the musical scale once more.

Though you know actually, as much as I suspected it was the male who'd committed this last atrocity it's not really my game to jump to conclusions or to stereotype or to fit people up. No, we're taught at the academy that this sort of 'profiling' is not on. Keeping an open mind, it could well have been the female who carried out this musical encore.

Some ten minutes had elapsed when all three of us were startled by the arrival through the flat door of some other personage. The suspects up top began to stir themselves, and from their dialogue, I gleaned that it was the girl's mother. Evidently this was in fact her flat, and not that of the girl as I'd originally thought it to be. Without knocking on the door she entered the room.

Though the suspects had roused themselves, though I could see their legs dangling over the bed and though they were in the process of redressing themselves, still they didn't seem to be in any real hurry to do so and didn't strike me as at all bothered about being caught out by the mother like this; but equally for her part, the mother, as she stood there at the door – I could see her legs, and hear her voice – was completely blasé as she found the suspects sat upon the bed

like so, getting dressed. Clearly she condoned the crimes of that pervert and paedophile. She was an accomplice and accessory. Good God! What den of iniquity was I come to tonight!

I should elucidate briefly the fate of the sneezed-on, drool soaked panties. Though I feared that in replacing them upon her midriff, or even just in picking them up, the female might grow suspicious, I feared even more that if I held them back, the female, in her search for them, might look down beside, and then indeed under, the bed. As I didn't want to be flushed out at this late stage, I'd decided, after wiping off the gooiest parts of the sneeze and attempting to dry out the worst of the drool, to replace the panties in their previous position.

However all went by smoothly. The female – though she manifested some minor shock and disgust at picking up the panties and finding them so soaked with my drool and smeared with my warm sneeze residue – appeared only to pass these unpleasantries off as her own doing, as the fruits of her own exhilaration and lust, the sweat of her labours and the sauces of her loins.

With one more exclamation of wonder – and a thrill I think too: I got the impression she was quite proud of this bogus evidence of her own state of excitement and womanly prowess – she tossed them to the corner where the wash basket stood, and there falling short of their intended goal, I saw them land on the floor next to the basket.

Those two suspects now exiting the room – the girl's mother having gone out before them – I heard their voices in the adjacent rooms and from the smell that wafted my way got the impression that they were preparing dinner. As far as I was concerned the mission was over, my work here for tonight was complete. I was keen to get out now and return home. Yet with those three present in the flat, affecting an exeunt would be difficult.

In order to facilitate the successful completion of my mission, I took up the girl's hairspray – that which was in her bag – and sprayed it repeatedly in quick sharp bursts at the fire sensor that stood up high on the wall. (The spraying noise was not loud enough to be heard by the other three: they were caught up in the din of their meal preparations and conversation.) Within a few sprays, the alarm was going off ten to the dozen in the most incredible outpouring of noise and urgency.

It made you want to jump out of the building head first. And it was much to the angry chagrin of the occupants. The curses and exclamations of those three in the outer rooms – exasperated at having to have their meal interrupted and at having to troop down those interminable stairs and go out into the dark, cold night – as well as of their neighbours roundabout could be heard. No sooner had the alarm sounded than a chorus of voices, testily berating the fates, was audible.

For my own part I knew that I'd acted in good faith. Crime though it may be to set off an alarm like this and call out the fire brigade, it was necessary in the higher workings and greater good of the secret service – bearing in mind the crucial piece of evidence that I wished to carry out of here unhindered. No, I was totally justified and national security superseded and excused the wolf-crying crime of setting off the detector.

Eventually, with much reluctance, the mother and the two suspects left the flat and I was free to make my escape. However just before leaving I made once more for the top drawer of the girl's dressing table.

Opening it up, I pulled out from the back, with very safe-handling, that damning piece of evidence that I'd discovered earlier on, that testified not only to the ill-intentions of the suspects, but also proved that my hunches had been 110% correct, and that in following the suspects back here I had not been out of line. Holding the said piece of evidence in my hand, I paused for a second to peruse it. After eye-balling it for a moment or so, I shook my head from side to side in disbelief. I couldn't believe it! I really couldn't. Sometimes reality is stranger than fiction.

For its safe and effective transport out of here and back to evidence control, I unbuttoned and unzipped my trouser front, and, expanding the elastic lining of my underpants, popped the piece of evidence in beside my manhood.

Please reader, don't think that this is some sort of perverted party trick on my part. If you've got any doubts as to this you're obviously very much out of touch with the world of espionage. Every operative, good or bad, employs this method of concealing objects, so don't go thinking I'm some sort of deranged pervert. Every trafficker, every hustler, hell even the lowliest of the lowest police officer knows this trick of the trade.

Re-zipping my pants I left the flat. Soon I was amongst the hundreds of other residents trooping down the stairwell, in the all-deafening din, and making my way into the dark night outside.

The fire alarm had really flushed them all out, and to see the entire contents of the tower spewed out onto show – a dangerous assortment of tough guys, junkies, and chavs; neo-Nazi skinheads, migrants (Chinese, Indians, Africans), hard faced women and villainous-looking children – scared me just a tad.

Nevertheless, keeping my head down and avoiding eye contact, I exited the building and making my way past the chagrined yet excited residents, standing about the building talking to one another, some of them in their dressing gowns, I finally broke free and made it back onto the road that headed out of here.

Oh what a feeling! What a feeling of freedom and release! Oh glorious sensation of being free, of having gotten off scot-free with my act of espionage; and all the while the vital piece of evidence tucked away nicely in my underpants.

As I walked on along the street with new found energy, I once more went under that railway bridge and as I came out the other side saw two fire-engines flying my way. As a sign of good faith I signalled to the drivers with my thumb the direction of the tower block; but they just looked at me scornfully as if I was a nobody. Well that's fireman for you. They think they're God's gift to this country. What a bunch of trumped up superheroes they are! Actually they only work about four days a week or something and that's mainly spent in playing ping-pong and lying on a bed masturbating over pictures of naked women. Part-timers! The work of the spy is never-ending; it's a 24/7 affair.

I phoned in an important message:

'713 this is alpha-935. Evidence located in case 42a. The baby has been born and we don't need a midwife.'

I continued on my way.

When I got to the bus stop I found that no buses would be running now until the morning. I would have to walk it.

Some four and a half hours after leaving the tower block, and 2:36 a.m. by my watch, I made my way, foot-weary and exhausted, hungry and in need of rest, back into my house, and off the dark, cold streets of the night.

Heading straight up to bed, I undressed down to my underpants, and pulled out the piece of evidence. Taking a few moments to look it over in wonder and amazement again, I then placed it beneath my pillow for safe-keeping, and with my head then placed above it as lock and key, I switched off the bed side lamp and fell asleep.

Reader your curiosity is peaked? You wish to know precisely what that damning piece of evidence was? Let me put you out of your misery.

It was a ladies bra. But not just any old bra. It was a jaguar patterned bra: exactly the same as the blond lady had tried to exchange earlier in the day.

6

The events of the preceding chapter had left me with a bitter taste in my mouth.

Accepted, in my role as secret agent it had been my undeniable duty to track those two suspects, and I had been obliged under oath to enter into their den of vice. Nevertheless the horrific scenes of rape and paedophilia which had played themselves out not a cat's whisker away from where I lay, and the revelation of the IC3 male as a fiendish baby-raper, molester and sick-in the-head pervert had shocked me to the core. Though I had attempted at the time to intercede on behalf of that innocent child, and though I was ready to follow my gut instinct and blow my cover and arrest the IC3 male, ultimately I had been too late.

To that end I felt myself somewhat sorry and sobered: where I might have intervened, I'd allowed the victim to be taken; and just as I'd once watched on as a cat attacked a mouse; and just as I'd then considered stepping in and rescuing the mouse but hadn't; and just as I'd sat back and witnessed the mouse's demise; and just as come the finish I had been overcome by remorse and sorrow, and my breast burdened with woe – so too did I feel now.

Though I hadn't committed any crime, I could really have prevented one and in sooth I felt myself guilty. For the road to hell is paved with good intentions and 'he who sleeps whilst wolves devour is hand in glove with Lucifer's power'. Though it will shock you to hear it reader, I felt as though I myself were some sort of sick pervert. Though in my heart of hearts I knew I was entirely blameless, still I gave free rein to my gnawing inner conscience and let it accuse me of all manner of sick thoughts. The whole crime lay heavy on my mind and recurred to me in macabre nightmare visions, replaying time and again the sickening seduction of sordidness as the IC3 male stuck two fingers up to the teachings of Plato.

Night after night I would wake up panting and anguished, my body drenched in sweat and bodily juices, thinking of that act of sexual perversion, of that innocent, fifteen year old nymph-girl being ridden by the IC3 male to the gates of hell; and in a terrible metaphorical moment for me, as if Satan himself were chiding me for my

part in the crime, I found myself on top of the female and inside her body, gorging myself lustfully on Lucifer's grapes. Oh what shocking visions! Truly was the crime something like a millstone around my neck, my skeleton in the cupboard. I should have interceded, I should have damn it!

In terms of my mission, to a large extent that had been a success. The trawling up of the jaguar-patterned bra, its reappearance in the hideout of a black-list terrorist was surely no coincidence. True it was not conclusive evidence of any real crime, but it was nevertheless an important link in the whole puzzle of events, an irrefutable footprint in the muddied dirt tracks of the terror network; an alimentary canal linking cell to cell.

Moreover it brought back to the forefront of events, and in dramatic fashion too, the blond female – she of the bra exchange – who had heretofore been thought of as nothing more than a mere puppet. Suddenly she sprang up centre stage, and the re-emergence of the bra shed new and dangerous light on those surreptitious knicker tugs of hers, originally dismissed as only a natural consequence of wearing tight panties. Not so indeed. They'd been dangerously revealed to be symptomatic signs of someone with adrenaline rushing to their backside – in a word someone with a plot up their sleeve.

Yet more than this my secondment of the jaguar bra, was also solid evidence that I'd been present at the suspect's flat, and if the crows flew south and we failed to pin any terror charges on the IC3 male; if he was able to slither and slip through the net of niceties in the law and dodge old Bailey's hammer, then we could use the molestation of a minor – with myself as eyewitness and the bra as testimony – as leverage.

In order to quench my anger at that fucking bastard I oftentimes played out in my mind a little scene in a police interview room wherein I questioned the IC3 male. He'd be sat down on one side of a table, slouching as usual. I'd be stood up, leaning against the wall on the opposite side of the table, with one foot raised off the floor and my sole resting on the wall. I'd have my arms folded and I'd be saying very assuredly to the IC3 male that he was guilty and that he was going down.

For his part he'd just be slouching there, curling his lip, nonchalantly moving his head from side to side saying 'I don't know nuffin boss'. Losing patience with his indifferent attitude and allowing myself to get carried away by disgust at his crime, I'd suddenly burst into a rage and shout 'stop calling me boss, you little scoundrell' And now that he was enervated by my raised voice, I'd quietly calm down, and slowly but surely, withdraw from my top pocket the jaguar bra, saying 'what can you tell me about this then son?' I imagined the look of shock and disbelief on the face of the suspect, his unbelievable dismay that I'd borne witness to his act of perversion; his horror now he knew that he'd been found out.

And I didn't let my thoughts stop there. Time and again I imagined dishing out a good hiding to that sick pervert, venting my spleen at his disgusting depravity. I envisaged stripping him naked and letting him rot, cold and hungry, in a God-forsaken cell; and with relish I would return between-times to my captive, and, squaring it with the duty-sergeant who knew the full extent of that son of a bitch's atrocities, gain an entry and give that monster a good beat down, giving his naked buttocks a good whipping and playing games with him. I even considered giving

him a taste of his own medicine. All of this I fantasised in order to assuage my anger and keep my demons at bay.

Reader you're probably thinking at this juncture, given all that you learned in the previous chapters about this country's ongoing problem with deranged madmen, you're probably thinking 'thank God this guy's got a gun'.

Now I would love to say to you 'have no fear, I have a gun, in fact I have many guns, I have a whole arsenal of guns'. Unfortunately, I have to tell you this: *I don't have a gun.*

I know, I know, you don't have to tell me that this is lunacy, that it's criminal that a man such as myself shouldn't be allowed to carry a gun. I know. *It is health and safety gone stark raving mad.* It is an unfortunate sign of the times in which we live and yet it is a reality. Don't blame me reader! Go and complain to your MP is what I say, sign the petition.

The secret service asserts in its *infinite wisdom* (italics denotes sarcasm) that 'it is now considered more dangerous for home-based counter-intelligence operatives to be armed' and other rickety-rash, higgledy-piggledy pish-pash and that the fear is that 'a weapon may end up in the hands of a madman'.

What piffle! Piffle made up by desk-bound, pen-pushing, politicking nobodies who've never worked on the front line in their life. It's all about appeasing human right's activists, lunatic liberals, gays, lesbians and Muslims and pays scant regard to the front line terrors experienced by men like myself on what is almost a daily basis. What has happened to this country!

Excuse the rant, but I think it's well merited. I repeat I don't have a gun.

Now, on the count of three, I'd like the nation to breathe a collective sigh of relief.

You see, here's the thing: I have a gun.

Of course officially I have to say that I don't; but like any secret agent worth his salt, I got my hands on an illegal weapon, in my case buying it bit by bit over the internet and then assembling it myself. It is the same weapon that you saw at the beginning of this tale; and the same one that I will be using, in the name of justice, later on. Keep watching for that, nandy-pandy liberals!

After my hard work of the previous chapters I deserved some rest; and so I took a few days off and caught up with some of my favourite television.

When people ask me the question 'what was the greatest sequel never made?' I always respond 'Attack of the Dolphin head Zombies part 9'. How on earth anyone can believe that an eight film franchise is enough screen time to really cover all the key ideas and fundamentals of this genre-changing, grounded-in-reality, cinematic series, is beyond me – I hear your snoots of derisive laughter reader as I mention all this; it's a perfectly natural response to foolishness in all its guises (in this case in the form of Hollywood producers). It was this that I settled down to watch now, turning all the lights off and sitting in the dark in my underpants, and repeating the lines before the actors had a chance to say them. Of course I love any type of police drama, be it action-romp or detective series, and I love a good terrorism programme (fact or fiction) as it gets me really pumped up for my day job.

I watched much TV and relaxed, then, the following day, carried out some 'surveillance'.

Through my binoculars, I watched as a blond woman came out of her house in her dressing gown and put the bin out, then went back into her house, went upstairs and started undressing, before entering the shower.

Now you're probably saying to yourself reader, 'hang on a minute this sounds like out and out perversion. Sure X, your previous antics were all fully justifiable and only a fool would misinterpret them as being perverse. But this! Come on man!'

An explanation is in order.

Women have often been described as the devil's own children and, though this is ridiculously absurd as a generality, I think here we have a case in point.

It may come as a shock to you but I have been accused of being a stalker.

'Why? How? On what evidence?' I hear you say. To all of these there are no answers my friends, but that's the day and age – regarding stalking – that we're living in.

What I can tell you is that there's a woman who has it in for me, someone who I've never met, but who I presume is rather put out by the fact that I, a secret agent, pay her no attention and has as such resorted to these conniving tactics. That would seem to be the most logical conclusion. Anyway, she succeeded, on the flimsiest of evidence, of getting a restraining order against me.

Now reader if you know anything about these things you will know that I can't go within 100m of her. If I do, secret service connections notwithstanding, I could end up in prison. All very well you might say, just don't go within 100m of her.

But here's the thing: what if she comes within 100m of me? I mean deliberately, something which I suspect she is capable of and something which would put me in prison and satisfy her insatiable hatred of me.

Of course, you might think, I should just accept this. But I mean how stupid would that be? Accordingly I hatched a plan.

My main aim is to know where she is at all times. Hence the binocular surveillance, hence the small video monitoring system I covertly set up in her house and which I monitor on a regular basis, especially at night when I come home from work. Hence the word surveillance in quotation marks as, unlike the other operations carried out in this book, it is not inextricably linked with the war on terror. Happy now reader with this rationale? Crumbs, and I know a lot of men will readily agree with me here, but in our modern world the assumption is always that you're a pervert until proved innocent.

I know this isn't really the time and the place, but new stalking laws have become absolutely ridiculous (although I'm not saying they aren't needed in some cases or that in days of yore many a woman had no powers with which to combat stalkers, this is of course completely true). But, and it's a big but, I think they've just gotten a little out of hand with some women using these things to get back at men who have wronged them and with others using the 'I've been stalked routine' as a badge of honour.

I digress, and it's silly of me to make generalisations about women (the majority of whom I believe to be good hearted and who wouldn't make up unfounded allegations against men). Still come on ladies, throw me a bone, you might at least confess that there are some amongst your brethren who abuse the stalking system. Though on second thoughts, re-reading what I've just said I see I am

letting my experience with one (admittedly evil) woman, turn me into a misogynist. Moreover let's not forget *there are many real stalkers out there*.

But the machinations of the terror network being non-stop around the clock, I necessarily had to shelve these thoughts and continue with my investigations. The plots to blow up shoppers still occupied me; but I had divers ongoing operations and sundry other leads to pursue.

In particular it turned out that today I could capitalise on the weather and consolidate some surveillance work that I'd been sitting on over the past several weeks. In consequence of this work and as a climax to it, I now found myself standing just across the road from 43 Rose Ash Gardens, clipboard in hand, dressed in a suit and a long black overcoat, and absolutely soaked to the skin by the rain teeming down from the heavens. An explanation is in order.

7

A month or so ago, it came to light that some very disturbing activities were afoot at the local university. The press was full of horror stories of brainwashing, bamboozling, shit stirrers spreading their propaganda and indoctrinating young students into the evil realms of al-Qaeda. Moreover rumours abounded that several senior lecturers had been implicated in a plot to manufacture home-made bombs.

The whole story had created quite a stir and caused alarm to the general public. Personally I'd followed its development with avid interest: both BBC News 24 and Sky News devoted much coverage to it, and they'd even been in town to film live raids by the anti-terrorist squad on the houses of known suspects, in which masked men with machine guns jumped out the back of a van and infiltrated a house of terror.

It was all very compulsive viewing. In fact, as demanded by my anti-terror training, it was necessary that I recorded these live raids; and every night I sat and watched, desperately scrutinizing the images to see if I could detect anything unusual, that the police in their haste – and, I might add, less well-trained and frankly incompetent powers of deduction – had missed. In addition I bought all the newspapers, and consuming up every last detail of the story, gauged myself on it, as every secret agent ought to. Further, by cutting out all the articles related to the story, I created a little file which I kept in my bedroom at home – this is standard: I do it for all my cases.

Yet in the midst of all this very evident terror and obvious culpability of the suspects, the whole thing had turned pear-shaped, and the police had been confounded by the terrorists and were unable to lay their hands on any bomb equipment after the raids. And to rub salt into their wounds the terrorists began proclaiming their innocence and got off scot-free from the accusations, implicating the police as blundering ignoramuses.

Though I couldn't help but second that sentiment vis-à-vis the police (as a secret agent it's my duty to despise that legion of blundering fools – every one of us

in the secret service does. You know since time immemorial we've had the plodders botching up our secret operations spectacularly – see later chapter for evidence of this) still, I was disgusted and horrified by the slickness of the terrorists.

In one particular case I remembered that a suspect had refused to submit his DNA for elimination in a bomb-making case. In the eyes of the law that was his right, yet this very act, though it spoke a thousand volumes of his guilt, led to his release and thwarted the operations of the police. And what really got me gnashing my teeth was that, what with all the media hype *criticizing* the raids, the police had now less power to enter suspect's houses.

All of these happenings spun around in my mind and I was profoundly influenced by them. Yet in the ensuing days the story just seemed to go out of the news. You might be surprised reader, but actually some of a spy's best information comes from watching the TV.

Yet often when I try to access the latest situation on the terror front, by tuning in to say News 24, I find myself thwarted, bored and angered, by a lengthy feature on the financial markets, a whole load of incomprehensible gobbledegook on the ups and downs of the Dow Jones and the Footsie one index. I don't know what those fools at the BBC are playing at sometimes, I really don't. They obviously think these mindless facts and jargon concerning shares are more newsworthy than the war on terror.

This is outrageous. What we need is a 24 hour TV station dedicated solely to the war on terror. I mean for Heaven's sake how many times can a spy watch the same damned video of masked men with guns jumping out the back of a van? It's ridiculous. I want to be able to watch fresh and exciting scenes 24/7. Having to watch boring nonsense about financial games of chess instead, just compounds the crime. Argh, but will anybody listen to *me*, the voice of reason?

Anyway precisely this was happening now – the story of the university bomb-makers and the terror raids was being displaced by the more *absorbing* business news. Angrily I connected to the internet to check out the current terror threat to our nation, something I do compulsively when I'm at home: yet surprisingly we were only on medium alert. Pah!

Frustrated as I was by the lack of media coverage on the story, and angered by the suspects escaping the hands of justice, I found myself one night watching the video once more, the one where masked men jumped out the back of a van. And the images left me feeling pumped up and ready for action.

Walking up and down across my room, in front of a blackboard on which I'd hung all the newspaper cut-outs related to this case, and on which lay my chalked scrawling, testament to my furious brain-storming on events, I mused on the slyness of the terrorists and the indifference of the media in just letting the story run cold. Then interrupting my walk, I stood still, and, looking into the distance put the piece of chalk to my mouth and stared with concentrated expression ahead of me.

Speaking slowly and with that sure confidence that distinguishes a man of espionage I said 'okay boys so you think you've got one over on the powers that be. Well then, I think it's about time I mounted my own little operation. (I emphasize the word little reader, because I meant it in an ironic sense.)

Accordingly the next day found me undercover at the university and with ear to ground I soon got word – from very secure sources, which I cannot here reveal – that one Dr Rashid Khan, a lecturer in chemical engineering, was running a bomb-making ‘factory’. Although at first sight he appeared a classic text-book case terrorist, a closer inspection revealed a very shocking truth. According to an informant near to him, Khan was little more than a supplier and the terror ring was being orchestrated by a mystery man known only as ‘the hand’.

I was told by a third party that I would be able to speak to ‘the hand’ in a certain internet chat room. And that evening, logging in under the guise of a Pakistani-born malcontent, I got chatting to him. And by playing my cards right I obtained access to his website. When I got there I was quite shocked.

The hand turned out to be an IC1 Englishman, Dr Mark Blackmore. This was a real surprise. A white terrorist. Browsing through his website the main thing one was struck with was the anti-war polemic. He gave his views on the invasion of Iraq – there were page after page of his thoughts – and I was able to corroborate from running through local archives that he had been one of the chief protesters in the anti-war campaign, had taken part in countless demonstrations and marches, often appeared on local radio discussions, and was generally held in high regard as a spokesman on human rights.

There were links from his site to anti-war petitions, petitions to end Guantanamo bay etcetera, and also to activist groups like Liberty. Though people spoke highly of him as a determined pacifist, and though there was nothing in his website to indicate that he supported terrorism, from what I had learned at the chat room and university he now appeared to be employing a more hands on approach to making his point heard.

I very quickly made it my business to learn more of Dr Blackmore. It transpired that he had recently been on a visit to Iraq for a few months purportedly on humanitarian grounds. He was a GP at a small town on the outskirts of our city, called Thornley. Reading various reports of him he couldn’t have appeared more of a mild-mannered man, decent, kind and honest yet all the while passionate about his cause.

However after having studied him a while I began to see that underneath all his civilised geniality, there lurked an anti-western sentiment, a deep, deep resentment to the ways of the west, and this tied in with what I’d learnt about him from speaking to him as ‘the hand’. A very well practiced persona did he have, that of an easy-going, eternally nice, forever pleasant and good humoured man with a humane and moral stance against the Iraq war. Yet the real truth was shocking and I couldn’t help shake my head at the sheer two-facedness of this creep.

You know reader if there is a moral to this story it’s that appearances can be deceptive. Believe me in my business, I’ve learnt this the hard way over time. The deceitful depravity of this type of person gives me the willies, and truly speaking I often have trouble sleeping at night. What I wouldn’t give to be once more innocent like you reader; you who do not know the dark side of the world, you who perceive only the lighter side of citizens, and not the dark beast of madness that lies within. For yours truly, seeing on a day to day basis, the devilishly perverted nature of everyday people masquerading as innocent goody two shoes – it’s a real shocker I can tell you.

Such then was the character of Dr Blackmore. Logging onto his website, and opening up the link which said 'Personal', I had been able to learn that he had a wife, a son and a daughter. My first thought was one of immense sympathy and well-founded concern for those poor women. Dear Lord to have to live with such a madman! His wife was named Eleanor and the daughter Eustacia. There was a photograph of the whole family and others of only Eleanor and Eustacia. I printed all of these photographs out and studied them carefully before adding them to the file.

Yet what I really wanted to know was the address of Dr Blackmore. I intended to pay the Blackmores a house-call, to see if I could find any evidence of bomb-making or the like, while he was out at work at his surgery. But his home address proved an elusive piece of information to obtain.

I thought about going to the surgery and then following him home. But there were complications here, for one thing I don't have a car – we spies are not given sufficient funds to have one. I thought about making the trip out to Thornley. Perhaps I could hire a taxi and follow him home in that? But then on such a long journey, he would know we were tailing him, the taxi driver would grow suspicious and I didn't want to alert Blackmore to the fact that we were onto him. I mean it would be a risky thing to undertake. Then again it was a possible plan of attack.

However perhaps there was a simpler way. I fished about for an easier alternative first. I carried out protracted searches on the internet under the keywords, Blackmore, Mark Blackmore, Eleanor Blackmore, Eustacia Blackmore, and even Shilton Blackmore, their dog. But the best contact details I was able to procure were simply email addresses.

Then I had an idea. Contacting the surgery at Thornley, I posed as a patient of Dr Blackmore, who wished to thank him for his kindness in treating me when I had been ill, by sending a bouquet of flowers to his house. Making up a woeful tale of tragedy from which I'd had the fortune to recover, I piled on the bull shit and took the secretary into my confidence. It seemed my ploy was working.

However she told me it was not the policy of the surgery to give out contact details like this and that if I wanted to send a bouquet to Dr Blackmore then I could simply send it to the surgery.

I was going to have to do some hard thinking and some spy work worthy of distinction, if I was to procure his address. Thinking it over, I did have his email address. Surely that was something. Yet how can one convert an email address to a house address? You know perhaps I could sell him something over the internet, send him an email offering him a bargain of some sort, and if he hooked onto it, he would have to mail me his address so that I could deliver his goods.

Yet what could I sell him? What do people buy over the internet? What about flogging him a book? Something medically related or perhaps about the war on Iraq. I could offer it to him at an incredibly low price.

Yet might he not smell a rat? He was a devious one reader make no mistake about that and he would surely see straight through such a scam. Especially since I would have huge problems in making myself look like a legitimate bookseller. I would have to have credible web pages, photos of this, that and the other, information on the company, policies and procedures bulloni, a logo, a customer helpline and the ability to transact money using credit cards. Urgh!

No, no, no. I would, in essence have to set up a small business in order to make it all look above board and kosher, and I just didn't have the time or resources for that. And in any case would he really choose to trade with me instead of just using Amazon or another big name? I might sell him stuff at a give-away, it's true, but even so I had my doubts. No, it was all a bit of a feeble ploy really; and as my mind ran over other products I could sell, I realised I'd be running into the same problems.

To all appearances there was nought I could sell him or them that wouldn't require setting myself up in a legitimate business. I mean people are just so demanding and in control when they're buying stuff. Whoever it was that said 'the customer is always right' was spot on; and probably they meant it not as a rule under which to work but simply as a truism. Huh! The trumped up arrogance of people when they're buying things. As if they were the queen of Sheba.

No, I could imagine the arrogant response that would be given to my honest bargain sales – they'd simply dismiss them. What I needed was to sell them something where there would be no questions asked.

And then it struck me. Bingo! That was it. I could sell them something blue, something X-rated.

No sooner had this idea lit up in my head, than my thoughts immediately fell upon the teenage daughter. Given the age she was at, given her lack of freedom in the world, I felt sure she would be the best person to target, the one most likely to respond to the cheap give away of X-rated goods. I would probably be wasting my time with Blackmore or his wife, but the teenager was a worthy target.

Yet what was it that I should offer to sell her? What X-rated merchandise could a teenage girl be in need of? It came to me straight away: a dildo. I keenly set about typing up an email to Eustacia, offering her a twelve inch dildo for a mere £1.99 and going to great lengths to assure her that it would be delivered absolutely top secret and that there would be no chance that anybody, for example her parents, would find out.

Yet halfway through it suddenly struck me that Eustacia might not have a credit card of her own, so that she'd be unable to carry out the transaction. That was ironic indeed, since I didn't want her money at all. I would be happy to give the dildo away.

Could I do that? Just send her an email offering to give her a dildo for free? No, that would be too suspicious. However perhaps I could offer it as a prize for, I don't know, a completion of a survey or something? I thought it through.

Eventually I had the plan thought out and decided to put it into motion. The following is the message I sent:

Dear Miss Blackmore,

Would you like a free twelve inch vibrating rubber penis absolutely free of charge? If so, simply send us your address and we'll send it to you within two working days.

Worried that others might find out about what's being delivered? Have no fears. Here at We'll make you vibrate we have a very strict policy of product confidentiality. All packages are discretely enclosed in parcels bearing the

hallmarks of book/stationary packages. We absolutely guarantee you that nobody will get to know what's been sent to you.

Simply mail us your address, and when you've received the product – and, we hope, enjoyed it! – do us the favour of filling out a simple questionnaire concerning the efficacy of the vibrator, e.g. whether you liked it, marks out of ten, how it could be improved etcetera. We'll send you the survey in due course.

Anyway we hope to hear from you soon, Miss Blackmore, and don't have doubts, just give it a go! It couldn't be easier.

Yours Sincerely

The crew at *We'll make you vibrate*

Thus did I set out the bait-mail. Yet when I was done and I'd read it over, I couldn't help but feel as though I were a pervert. Naturally there was no substance to that feeling, and I was simply acting in the greater interests of national security. However, those inalienable facts notwithstanding, to an onlooker who wasn't aware of my double agent's agenda, it could be construed that I was sending perverted messages to a teenage girl.

And how old was Eustacia after all? I really didn't know. She looked very young. I don't know, perhaps she was fourteen or fifteen. Perhaps only twelve. Granted, those cold-hearted automatons, my superiors back at headquarters would have tick-boxed the plan without hesitation. But not being a robot myself, I had serious reservations.

Saving the email I once more trawled through the personal pages of Dr Blackmore. And with closer scrutiny I deduced that Eustacia must be at least sixteen. Ha! So she was no little innocent after all! I now gave the plan the green light: in sending Miss Blackmore the email I would be doing no more than washing up one more grain of sand on the shores of her corruption.

The email met with a speedy response as the dirty minded Eustacia soon replied to me, desperate to get her hands on the give-away, X-rated goodies. I now had the address of the Blackmores.

In fact now that I had it, was there any real need to send her a dildo? If it didn't arrive what was she going to do? Complain to her parents? Hardly. In this way, by not sending the dildo, I realised I might lessen any accusations of pervert levelled at me, albeit absolutely hollow ones at that. I was quite relieved.

However it suddenly struck me that the email could well have reached its way to the father; by some sort of filter device, or even by a guilt-stricken and frightened Eustacia herself. In that case it was perhaps he who had replied to the email. Possibly out of the hope of fulfilling his own perverted fantasies, but more likely out of the realisation that someone, i.e. yours truly, was attempting to gain information on him (to a paranoid and secretive mind like his the email was a clear rouse to gain the Blackmore address). As such this very request for the dildo could in itself be a test. If I failed to deliver the father might get suspicious. Thus I had no other option but to send her (or him as the case may be) a vibrator.

Of course you'll be thinking to yourself dear reader that I'm now going to describe to you some desperately embarrassing misadventure wherein I sally out to procure a dildo. But such a scenario was not necessary. There were two dildos already in my bedroom at home, though of course I'd obtained them in very

innocent ways: one was a leftover from a mission I'd undertaken as an undercover sex-worker; the other hauled in as evidence in the raiding of a suspect house.

As I sat there putting the parcel together, I took up the dildo – the one I intended to part with – and gave it a whirl to see if it was still in working order: bzzzzzz! It made the sound of an electric toothbrush. It was raring to go!

8

In the proceeding weeks I had made a reconnaissance of 43 Rose Ash Gardens, the home of the Blackmores. On weekdays when the doctor was at work, it appeared that his wife was home alone and as I walked past their window along the street, I saw inside Mrs Blackmore sitting in her living room, knitting and watching TV. And now I had returned in the guise of a charity worker, equipped with badge and a false registration number, and bearing a couple of printed sheets carrying the stamp of our registered charity, all of which I'd downloaded from the net.

I was all ready to make an introduction into the Blackmore household some two weeks or so ago; but calculating spy that I was, I'd decided to wait until a day when it chucked it down. And today such weather had arrived. Then let the mission begin. Soaked to the skin I crossed the road and rang the doorbell of number 43.

The door eventually drew back. It was Mrs Blackmore.

'Yes' she said pleasantly.

'Oh hello there, my name is Mark Shilton, I'm calling on behalf of the charity *Romanian Orphans: Action Response* or ROAR as we like to call ourselves, and what it is, is that all we're basically doing is just knocking on people's doors and telling them a little bit about the charity. We're not so well known in fact, but as I'm sure you've guessed from the name madam, what we basically do is help out orphanages in Romania.

'We make runs there, taking over second-hand cots, beds and clothes and what have you and we also run a variety of schemes with some orphanages in Bucharest whereby you can sponsor a child or even perhaps adopt one. Now I haven't come here expecting you'll adopt a child or anything as drastic as that, so don't be thinking I'm just gonna come here and drop a little baby off at your door with a whole load of dirty nappies or anything crazy like that, but basically what we're looking for is for people to sign up to give, I don't know, just a few pounds a month, nothing that'll break the bank or anything.'

'Oh? Yes of course, you can sign us up for a few pounds a month, I dare say we can afford that' she said amiably.

'That would be really excellent madam, very kind-hearted of you indeed. If only there were more like you. Right I'll just get out my.....perhaps I'll lean against this wall whilst I'm writing, if you don't mind.....just so as I've got something to write on.....there it's no trouble, anyway I'll manage.....'

'Look son, why don't you come inside and write it out, otherwise your sheets are going to get soaking wet; good grief it's awful out there.'

'That's very good of you madam. I didn't like to ask. Urgh! I've been out in it all morning. However before I enter I'm legally obliged to show you my identity card here' (I raised my card up from where it dangled on my waistline and flashed it into her face). 'Basically this just says who I am: Mark Shilton. My identity number: IB410; and the charity who I'm with: ROAR; and then here, if you take a look at this form which I've got.....hang on, just a second.....' (I dug out the sheet from my folder) 'which I've got here, you'll see there's a name and telephone number that you can contact if you like, just to make sure I'm not some weirdo whose come to burglarise your house or something.'

I said this last bit jokingly. During all the discourse I gesticulated much and kept flashing my badge in front of Mrs Blackmore's face and then removing it. I think she thought me a bit weird and nervous, but basically a decent guy. She looked at me kindly with the quiet seriousness of a middle-aged woman, and smiled on me with one of those sincere sad-smiles that one makes by simply raising the corners of one's mouth.

And in terms of believing me to be who I really was – Mark Shilton – she was completely sure and wasn't interested at looking in detail at my card. It was obvious to her that I was genuine. And she trusted me implicitly. She was not the sort to play Sherlock Holmes or Miss Marple, or expect to find a double agent at the door. No she was a very calm and down to earth person, very real, very time-worn and experienced; very Chekhovian in that respect, and as such she didn't question my identity. This was real-life after all not daytime TV.

'Do come in' she said finally, and I followed her into the hallway where I took my shoes off, explaining to her that I didn't want to muddy her carpets.

Thus did I gain an entry into the Blackmore's household. As I dallied in the hall removing my shoes I could hear Shilton barking in a backroom. And as I happened to glance up the stairs I thought I saw at the top a pair of dark solemn eyes fixed on me.

It must have been Eustacia. I had studied her person in the photos. She had a wan face, dark hair, and dark eyes with big dark rings underneath. She didn't smile, seemed always huffy and out of sorts and her body was so skinny that it was tempting to think she was anorexic. She had obviously wanted to see who had come to the door. I felt her eyes staring at me from her hidey-hole upstairs.

I proceeded into the dining room with Mrs Blackmore and we sat down at the table.

Mrs Blackmore was a lot like her daughter in that she never seemed to smile radiantly or be happy; but she was more mature than Eustacia, and much more ready to be amenable. I've got to say, middle aged women are often very trusting of me and think butter wouldn't melt in my mouth. It's inherent in their good nature I guess that they'll open up the door to me, like Eleanor had done, and believe me to be an innocent child.

But also I think their willingness to be kind to me stems from a guilt complex: if her daughter was anything to go by, Mrs Blackmore had probably been something of a huffy bitch in her youth; so that when time had passed and she'd matured somewhat and drank from the cup of happiness that finally came her way, she

probably felt herself guilty at having once been a bit of a nasty pasty; and when one such as myself steps up at her door, baby-faced, slightly meek, and plain of face, she would immediately grant me a hearing.

If there's one thing I've learnt reader, it's that people with a guilt complex are easy to dupe. Because they're so concerned with their own role in affairs they can't read other's true intentions. Eleanor was so ready to believe me the goody-two-shoes-geek she'd once wronged, and exorcise her guilt by doing me a favour, that she had taken her eye off the ball.

Of course as a secret agent I'm not complaining about this at all; if people are willing to grant me such easy access to their homes than that's fine with me. But there are bad men out there, housebreakers, thieves and more especially perverts and it's worrying to think how easily that sort might gain entry to your house. Warning to middle aged women: be more suspicious!

I explained to Eleanor some more concerning the charity's aims and we started filling out the form.

'So if I could just have your name madam.'

'Oh Eleanor Blackmore....E L E A N O R Blackmore – you know how to spell that?'

'Yes I think so.'

'I hope you don't mind my asking but what was your name again?'

'Oh Mark Shilton.'

'Oh!' said Eleanor smiling surprisedly to herself.

'Why, what is it?'

'I thought that's what you said when you first arrived. I was immediately struck by it. It's just that my husband is called Mark and Shilton is our dog's name. It's a funny coincidence.'

'It is indeed' I said and laughed pleasantly and philosophically.

'Well it's very noble of you to do charity work at your age. Are you a student? I thought you were. And you do this in your spare time do you? Well I wish my children were more focused like you. I've got two of them: my eldest John is at university, and then Eustacia is just in sixth form. John seems interested in nothing, barely calls and only comes home once in a blue moon. And as for Eustacia, well the less said about her the better. Teenagers! What would we do without them.'

I laughed pleasantly and knowingly as if I appreciated the irony of Mrs Blackmore's words.

'No really' she continued 'it's refreshing to come across someone like yourself who has a focus in his life. Young people today seem interested in nothing but drinking, clubbing and goodness knows what. They don't seem to care about anything. It's quite reassuring to find that they're not all bad; that there's some like you who are putting their free time into making a difference in other people's lives; someone who is caring and kind. And really compared to my son and his friends who don't care for anything but cars and late night drinking sessions it makes a change to find a young man so pleasant and considerate. If only more young people were like you, were as responsible and pure minded.'

Her words reader, not mine.

We continued to fill out the forms. Then suddenly the door burst open. I turned my head over my shoulder to see who it was.

It was Eustacia. She'd come down to see who was here evidently. Yet by the time my eyes had fixed on her face, she'd already taken a look at me, and unimpressed, and refusing to make eye contact with me, held her eyes huffily elsewhere. Looking tired, bored and out of humour, she started talking to her mother. She wanted to go to a party tonight though it transpired she was actually taking a day off school through illness.

'You're not going to the party tonight and that's final Eustacia. If you're not fit enough to make it into school again, then you're not fit enough to go to the party.'

'Oh but mum!' she pleaded.

As they discussed this I looked around the room. My eye alighted on a book shelf, and as is my wont when I enter other people's houses, I always take a look at the books on their shelves. I couldn't help but notice that there were, amongst others, many Ruth Rendell crime novels and also a copy of Chekhov's plays.

You know I can't express more, how it is that the majority of people are so like Chekhov in their outlook in life. I mean there was no way in the world that Mrs Blackmore would have suspected me of being an impostor – she was so inured to reality. It's the way people are. But I'm not suggesting that movements in the theatre have a profound influence on the behaviour of our society, so that with the advent of Chekhov our outlook on life is rendered more calm and dispassionate. Not at all. To be sure I'd bet my life that that Chekhov book had not been read; whilst on the other hand that Mrs Blackmore loved her Ruth Rendell murder mysteries. Yet in the real world she suspected no-one and behaved with commendable lack of suspicion.

You know as we're on the subject I might as well state my disappointment that nobody really seems to care about, appreciate, or understand Chekhov. You know plain and simple truth, unrobed from all its wrappings, appears too difficult a thing for people to 'understand'. I mean to make someone look simple, simple truth directly in the eye is as difficult as getting them to eat five fruit and vegetables a day. When all is said and done people want entertainment when they read or watch theatre, I mean.....reader you are saying to yourself 'what is this madmen going on about? What on earth would a secret agent know about Chekhov or about the theatre?' Well, find out in the next chapter.

Eustacia was a rude little hussy that was for sure. She finished speaking with her mother and exited the room. Shilton continued barking somewhere as we continued filling out the forms.

Eventually, after a further five minutes, all was done and I stood up to leave.

'Well thanks once again Mrs Blackmore, and for inviting me in as well, that was very kind of you.'

'Oh that's no problem. Here you've forgotten your clipboard' and she passed me the item I'd accidentally left on the table.

At this point Eustacia re-entered and wanted to speak with her mother.

'Mrs Blackmore' I said, 'I know it's perhaps a bit presumptuous of me but.....it's just.....well.....you wouldn't mind if I just used the toilet quickly would you?'

'No of course not son, it's just upstairs, second on the left.'

'Thanks' I replied and made of in that direction. Eustacia now took up the argument with her mother; she was determined to bug her about going to the party.

The time for action had arrived.

Having engineered for myself a brief one-to-one meeting with the upper portion of the Blackmore household, I had to be very, very quick in probing its interior. The egg-timer of opportunity had already been turned over and it was time to stick the toast in and set the table.

My thoughts ran as follows: if Blackmore's bomb equipment was in the house then his study would be the most obvious place of concealment. My first port of call would be there; after that his bedroom. On reaching the landing, I found that all doors were shut, bar that of the bathroom. Hastily I stepped forward and shut it, stepping back again on the instant.

Eustacia and Eleanor continued to argue downstairs. Now I'd been told second on the left. In my guise as nervous and bumbling charity worker, I could be stupid enough to misunderstand that instruction and mistakenly end up in another room.

Yet could I keep going in and out of rooms until I'd struck upon the study? There was no time to think. Taking complete pot luck I picked the first door on the left. If it wasn't Blackmore's study then it would most surely be his bedroom.

I entered. It was neither: Eustacia's bedroom lay before me.

I cursed my bad luck.

Desperately disappointed though I was, I decided to enter. For not only did I not wish to keep fumbling through all the doors, but also it had suddenly struck me that the father might well be devious enough to hide his equipment here.

Come to think of it, this had been the last place I'd thought of looking and the father was no fool. Yes indeed, how obvious it would be to leave his stuff lying in his study. I had almost fallen for the sucker punch and foolishly snatched up the golden casket whilst overlooking that of humble wood. Thus I entered the teenager's bedroom.

Time was of the essence. Breaking almost into a run, I dashed to the most probable place of concealment, her chest of drawers, that which had borne so much fruit in my previous escapade. Opening up the top drawer, it turned out to be full of her underwear.

With feverish haste I ran my hands through it all, carefully feeling my way around, squeezing the knickers and bras tightly in the palms of my hands (in order to discover any concealed objects), and conducting a thorough, knicker by knicker, bra by bra inspection of the girl's entire draw. Definitely she was more a lady of cotton than of silk.

As I frantically continued the search, I found my hands alighting on, and getting entangled in, the girl's hairs. Long straight fibres that magically attached themselves to my hands; but also shorter, stronger ones that assuredly had fallen off nobody's head. What they were doing in a clean underwear drawer I couldn't fathom. Whatever the case may be, I tell you it was no pleasant mission this. Horrible little hairs! But don't baulk at it reader; such is the work and woe of a secret agent.

And then amazingly, as my hand probed deeper and deeper into the dark inner reaches of the drawer, it fell upon something of import: it was a gun.

It was wrapped up in a pair of panties, stashed at the back, and then buried underneath two or three other pairs of knickers, making it abundantly clear that it had been deliberately hidden. It was long, bulky and heavy. A colt? A Glock? A 9mm? What type of gun was it?

Pulling it out, I learnt to my astonishment that it wasn't in fact a gun reader.

Rather, it was my old friend Mr Dildo.

Flipping heck he'd been worn down! She'd lost no time in setting him to work over these last few weeks. What slave driver she obviously was. Poor Mr Dildo! I switched him on. Nothing. His battery had completely conked out. He was spent, the poor thing.

Well I never! She'd been hard at it, the sly little madam. Huh! And what cheek then had she had in not replying to the survey I'd sent her. And it was no laughing matter either. I'd devoted a good whack of my precious secret-agent's time to compiling that little document, asking a whole host of questions about the dildo and her sensations and generally making it look authentic. And she hadn't bothered to reply. Really, it makes me quite angry to see how some people will waste the time of the National Security Agency.

Yet above all these thoughts, what really struck me as strange was that she'd received the dildo at all. Suddenly I was overcome by a very powerful feeling of disgust and sickness. And as I looked around the room, as I saw her little bed, her little teddy-bear sitting on her pillow, as I saw in short the innocence of a teenage girl's bedroom spread before my eyes, I shuddered at the dark and dangerous thoughts that were racing through my mind. Reader, an explanation is required.

No sooner had I dispatched my original email to Eustacia, than I was immediately struck by the realisation that my plan would never work. You see, I was convinced that the X-rated email that I'd sent her would be filtered out by some sort of safety device, that a (seemingly) respectable family like the Blackmores would surely have, and that presumably the email would find its way to Dr Blackmore.

Or even, I thought, the daughter might simply show the email to her father out of a fear of being naughty. So there was almost a 100% probability that the email would end up in Dr Blackmore's hands. That I did receive a response, at first surprised me. Then I thought, well, if it is Dr Blackmore, then probably this is a test, as I've already alluded to. Yet the fact that the (well-used) dildo was now in the drawers of the teenage girl, begged a lot of questions of the relationship between father and daughter.

As I glanced around the room, I was filled by an awful foreboding. Call it a hunch, call it an intuition, call it the uncanny sixth sense of a wise and well-trained spy; but however you like to view it reader, the fact was, was that I felt sure, I felt absolutely certain, that amidst these four walls of apparent innocence there lay a dark and terrible truth. I recalled Eleanor and her evident cooling off toward Dr Blackmore. Yes, I was convinced of it: the father was having the daughter.

However for the meantime I had to toss these thoughts aside. The sands of time were speedily subsiding and my mission gaped fruitless in front of me. With expert

and experienced hand I continued feeling my way around the back of the drawer. And then bingo!

To my utter amazement, lightening had struck twice in exactly the same place. At the very back of the draw, and surrounded on all sides by panties, there lay a ladies bra. It was so charming and colourful, having a bright yellow background across which there flew a little swarm of pink butterflies, neatly spaced out in formation. The pink butterflies had emerald-green wing tips. Truly it was very, very nice. And of the finest silk as well. A real rarity for Eustacia.

Lifting this treasure of temptation out from the back of the drawer, I was able to eye-spy the object that it concealed, the object which my hand had first fallen on, the object of massive interest.

It was a little jotter, a log book of some description. I picked it out and took a quick flick through its pages. Yes, this was what I was looking for. It bore names, addresses and better still, scores of entries, plans, plots and what have you. I immediately pocketed it.

Having combed, probed and conducted a systematic sweep of the top drawer I now shut it. Deciding that the lower drawers were unlikely to yield yet more evidence, I now focused my search elsewhere. Following my instincts I rapidly found myself next to Eustacia's bed.

Yet just as I was standing over her pillow, and on the verge of raising it to see what was hidden underneath, a ghost-like figure appeared in my peripheral vision.

Looking toward the door, I got the absolute shock of my life. Eustacia was standing at the entrance, watching me.

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How she'd got there unnoticed was a mystery. She was slight of frame and light of foot that was for sure. Yet for how long had she been there? Had she seen me appropriate the log book? I turned to face her, smiling. Her dark miserable eyes were fixed on me accusingly.

Good God she frightened me. Her pale, unsmiling face, her piercing unfriendly look. Had she caught me in the act? I didn't know. Yet as the fates debated my future on high, all I could do was to assume a very friendly, smiling face and simply said 'I was looking for the toilets. First on the left wasn't it?'

For response, she merely kept her sinister eyes wrathfully upon me for a moment more; and then pointing her hand back through the door in the direction of the bathroom, whilst at the same time averting her face to one side so that her eyes looked in the opposite direction, did she thus show me her contempt.

She was an ireful girl indeed, and by saying nothing and keeping her mouth shut she really scared the shit out of me. Yet all the while I kept up my smiling, bumbling, nervous alias. And as I left her room I tried to smile pleasantly at her as way of apology; and ironically too, endeavouring to intimate that it was just one of those things, quite funny if you thought about it, that I'd ended up in her

bedroom, instead of in the toilet. But she held her eyes of contempt averted all the while. She was mistress here directing me outwards; as humble nobody I made an exit.

Luckily however the fates appeared to have favoured me; apparently she hadn't been standing there so long as to have seen the log book seconded. Rather she was simply annoyed that I'd invaded her quarters. She hadn't however questioned why I had been in her room.

Yet it was as obvious as an orange in a lemon basket that she didn't believe me when I said I was looking for the toilet. Not at all. But nor either did she suspect me of being a highly trained secret agent.

Instead, she'd wrongly concluded me to be some sort of weird pervert who'd come to have a look in her room. That was precisely it: she thought me to be some sick creep who'd wanted to take a nosy in her bedroom for his cheap kicks.

As things stood – although there was of course no truth in her miscalculated deductions, and although I don't particularly take kindly to being labelled a pervert (I'm quite sensitive on this score actually) – still, as things stood it was very much in my interest to play into that role, and just accept the accusations. Provided that she didn't believe me to be a highly-skilled operative of espionage, come here to clue myself up on her errant father, then all was well. In the grander scheme of national security and world peace I would be willing to live with such ill-founded accusations of depravity, bullets to the arm though they were.

The conclusion of my mission however, had now been determined for me. There was no possibility of now entering Blackmore's study or bedroom, without arousing suspicion. To that end I would have to abandon the search for bomb-making equipment. Yet still I had one more oil-well of evidence to pump.

I was about to get access to the bathroom. Moreover I would be locked alone inside, able to act askance of big brother's eye, and free to ferret out anything I desired. True I didn't hold out hope of finding the sought after bomb-making apparatus therein. However, perhaps I could still implicate Dr Blackmore in a more indirect, yet at the same time very illuminating, way.

My mind ran back to the stories in the paper and the terror suspect who'd refused to give DNA. If I could get my hands on a sample of Blackmore's DNA, and sneak it out of here, and send it off for examination, then there was a very real possibility that, linking him to the fingerprints we already had, we could mount, with 100% certainty, an armed raid on his house. I felt that if I were to do this then my mission would qualify as a success.

Entering the toilet I locked the door. No sooner had I done this than bingo! I saw ahead of me a sure source of DNA. On a shelf overhead the wash basin, stood a toothbrush holder. Eh voila! Dr Blackmore's toothbrush drenched in DNA: a damning piece of drool-soaked evidence.

Walking across to the holder I picked it up. Now I should say that there were three brushes in the pot, yet I knew this to be his – not for nothing was I crowned valedictorian reader. For not only was it blue (a man's colour) but also the head of the brush contained bristles that were very much sprayed out to the side and gnawed at, compared to the other two, whose bristles stood neatly and politely upwards.

Yet the most overwhelming evidence manifested itself in the bristles themselves; for embedded in these well-chewed and abused unfortunates, lay a massive piece of cornflake, very substantial evidence, I think you'll agree reader. Thus was I convinced I had Dr Blackmore's toothbrush.

I was on the verge of securing it in my underpants; yet for its better protection, and to seal in the drool DNA evidence and the prime piece of incriminating cornflake, and also to avoid exposing such an awful specimen to the nakedness of my slave to Venus, I thought it best to wrap it up in something. To my side I discovered a wash basket full of the Blackmore's dirty laundry. A garment of some sort would serve as an excellent container.

Throwing my hand in perchance, I picked out a pair of dirty ladies underwear. I immediately tossed them back in, like an angler, returning to the water, a baby fish.

You ask for why dear reader? Let me tell you. It was a reaction, albeit irrational, to the accusations of pervert that Eustacia had silently levelled at me back then.

I know what you'll be thinking reader, you'll be thinking 'oh come on X don't take it to heart', or 'come on secret agent X, get a grip would you man'. I know only too well reader that those accusations were neither here nor there and that in commandeering some dirty knickers in this way, in order to facilitate the mission, I would only be doing my duty. I know it reader I know. Yet still, call me oversensitive if you will, but I wouldn't be taking any dirty knickers, not today.

In this respect I'm quite unusual for a spy. You know the majority of my colleagues, either as a result of their oversexed natures or simply out of sheer perversity, will not miss a trick or overlook any opportunity to get their hands on women's underwear. No sir. They're a right bunch I can tell you. And I'll even go one further and intimate to you reader, that there are some amongst my calling, who may be out there at this very moment, who abuse their role as secret agent to satisfy all sorts of perverted desires. I'm warning you dear reader, be very, very wary. Keep an eye out the next time you're taking a shower or sitting on the toilet! You don't know who might be watching you! (I'm joking of course.)

In any case I was definitely not going to dirty my reputation with dirty knickers. Accordingly I now pulled out a pair of tights – Eleanor's, Eustacia's, I couldn't tell, for tights shrink up when they're not being worn. Wrapping up the toothbrush in one leg I then placed it in my crotch. The tights would serve their purpose well, the closed off nature of the legging, ensuring that if the prime piece of evidence – the undigested cornflake fragment – did dislodge itself in transport, then it would fall harmlessly into the insides of this garment.

I now decided to beat a retreat. I had the evidence I wanted. It would be sent off immediately to evidence control and I envisaged the ensuing armed raid on the Blackmore household.

However when I thought of armed men entering in the middle of the night and of bullets flying everywhere in the dark, I couldn't help spare a thought for poor Mrs Blackmore. She was an innocent bystander. Yet the police would simply storm into her house taking no prisoners.

I was rightfully concerned for her. She could wind up in a body-bag. Well not if I was going to have anything to do with it she wasn't. Not if secret agent X saw to it, she wouldn't.

I knew that if I could convince the powers that be that Mrs Blackmore was not in any way culpable, it would be very much in their interests, given the media hype surrounding these raids, to safeguard her person. All that was required was to inform them of her innocence.

To do this I now delayed my exit, and returned to the wash basin. I had decided to also acquire a sample of Eleanor's DNA, so as to eliminate her from the investigation. Although I might take her toothbrush as well (it didn't come with cornflake, yet that didn't matter so much) that would never do. Two out of three toothbrushes lost without trace would be bound to create suspicion.

No, it would have to be something else. My eye now alighted upon a little bin next to the toilet. Perhaps that might contain a used plaster or something. Anyway it was worth a rummage round.

Opening up the bin, hey presto! I'd happened upon a large stash of very suitable evidence: bloodied tampons. Excellent! That would be just the ticket. It would testify to Eleanor's unsullied reputation. I picked one out – a good one with lots of blood on it – and after stashing it in my underpants, headed for the exit.

Yet just as I was set to open the door, it suddenly struck me that Eustacia might have befouled that tampon. It could be her dirty-work that I was housing and I had no desire to save that little hussy's bacon at the expense of Mrs Blackmore's. Thinking it through however, was Eustacia a tampon user?

Honestly speaking, even though I've bedded hundreds of women in my time as a spy, I'm not altogether certain what the heck a tampon is or whyfore it is of necessity. And pray tell me but what is the difference twixt it and a sanitary towel? Actually, dear reader, you'll have to pardon my ignorance: when I say a tampon was travelling in my underpants it may well have been a sanitary towel. Though on consideration, I think it must have been a tampon, though you'll know better than me reader. It was a white plastic tool with blood on its head.

Yet could it have been Eustacia's device? I didn't know. I know that you have to be a certain age, in order to become a tampon user. Was Eustacia old enough? Moreover I knew that it was related to pregnancy.

Now hang on a minute, for if Eustacia was pregnant – and that was a real possibility given that her father was having her every night – then that would surely mean that those bloodied tampons were hers and not Mrs Blackmore's. In any case there was a chance that she could have soiled the tampon.

No, no, no, this was not the road to go down. The tampon did not bare the evidence I sought. It was fished out of my pants and demoted once more to bin duty. I'd have to get my mittens on something else.

Time was now very much against me. The soldier boys of suspense were being buttered up downstairs and if I didn't step to it misgivings would arise and I'd be forced to eat my way through horrible hard boiled eggs. If I wanted yoke to stream down the side of this mission then I'd have to unearth some evidence in a flash.

There was nothing for it but to appropriate an item of Mrs Blackmore's clothes. Now as much as I'd have preferred to stow away a jumper or some trousers say, the bulk of such items; the circumstance of them not being particularly endowed with DNA evidence (the academy teaches us that they are essentially useless in this respect); and also the task of judging if they belonged to Mrs Blackmore; not to mention the fact that people always realise if a jumper's missing – all of these

considerations meant I'd have to steal something else. And I'm afraid to say I could see which way the wind was blowing.

Dr Schneider, the forensic scientist back at the academy, always used to proclaim that socks are good, tights are better, but if you could bring him back a pair of knickers or two then you'd made his day. Now as for the tights which I already had, I could use them. Yet stretchy as they were, who was to say whether they were Eleanor's or Eustacia's? I could take socks but then I *didn't* know the respective shoe sizes of the ladies.

However I had made a mental note – as all men do – of their respective bum sizes: Eustacia's was a very slim, slender and typically teenage derriere; Eleanor's was more peachy and filled out, more mature and milfy. Thus it would be a breeze to match up panties to people.

Digging deep, I picked out a pair of knickers. Precisely, it was a thong and as such I threw it back. For this breed of underwear does not yield enough evidence (and criminals well know this, with many terrorists opting to wear a thong precisely because of their lack of incriminating marks). I recall once that secret agent Y brought into Schneider's lab a ladies thong, in the sure confidence that he'd wrapped up the case. Only to find out, from the testy, irate forensic expert, that there was very little evidence he could extract from it. In the end the suspect was released without charge. I wasn't going to forget that lesson now.

And next I selected a second pair. Eye! Eye! This seemed the ticket. They were a big airy pair of white bloomers. And on the inside? Yes! They bore the full spectrum of stain from backside to front side, a good spattering of bodily fluids.

You know taking a closer look, I could see exactly why the wise-old Schneider favoured knickers. They were an absolute gold mine of evidence. Very, very conspicuous. I could see them being held up in court now as prime evidence and with gasps on all sides and the heads of the jury nodding in unison.

Yet thinking it over, on many occasions in the past – when I've foolishly worn white underwear – I've washed them, only to discover that, though they smelt fresh, the stains were still present. Now although it was unlikely that clean underwear had made its way into the dirty pile, this wasn't the time to take any chances. If these bloomers had been washed then they were totally useless as evidence. Accordingly, I raised the knickers to my nose.

Had they been washed? Decidedly, no they had not. Excellent! I now had my DNA sample.

Yet as a matter of thoroughness, I determined to ensure they were really Eleanor's and not Eustacia's. Though I might hold them out and take a gander, to do the job properly I essayed to get into Mrs Blackmore's knickers (as I thought them to be), putting them on over my trousers of course.

If they were too tight they were Eustacia's; if they were too baggy they were Mrs Blackmore's. Stepping into them I pulled them up: my hunch had been completely correct – they were Mrs Blackmore's.

I unzipped my pants and so made safe the evidence. I now made to leave.

And yet just as I was going a thought went through my head. It was a piece of wisdom, taught to us at the academy by one of the old time spies from the cold war, a venerable and wise, lion-headed, old chap. I heard it ringing in my ears now.

‘Sometimes’ so it went ‘in the heat of battle, when an agent is involved in a mission, his mental capacity becomes impaired.’

Now, although I was fairly certain my mental capacity was in no way impaired, as a professional I heeded the advice. Strange as it may be, in the heat of battle I could have miscalculated and mistaken Eleanour’s underwear for those of Eustacia.

But the solution was simple. I could carry out the test at home, in the peaceful surroundings of my home when my thoughts would be calm and collected. To that end I now returned to the wash basket and took a pair of Eustacia’s fine little garments, and, after smelling them, and satisfying myself that they were soiled, popped them into my pants.

I now exited the bathroom and walked downstairs.

When I reached the bottom, I began putting on my shoes. Mrs Blackmore once more appeared, too polite to pass comment on my lengthy time out in the toilet, and serving up a few closing words to me. She was about to open up the front door, when it opened up of its own accord: enter Dr Blackmore.

He smiled affably at me and then looked questioningly at his wife, as if to ask who I was? It was the first time I’d seen him in the flesh. He couldn’t have been more the embodiment of good grace: charming, refined and friendly. Yet I sensed a dark aura about him as though cloaked in his projected persona there lurked gross evil.

Mrs Blackmore made eyes at him to intimate that she would tell him whom I was later. Something was up with Eleanor – she seemed embarrassed and troubled. There was something like confusion in her eyes. She seemed as if she would fain say something. Her husband couldn’t fathom what was up and frankly neither could I. Yet finally I came to realise what was bugging her.

Her eyes had been furtively glancing at my crotch, and looking down I saw my fly was undone and my pants on show! I zipped up and as I did so I made a devilish face at Dr Blackmore. For with my shoes off as they were and with Mrs Blackmore looking troubled and guilty as she did, I wasn’t going to let slip an opportunity to wind Blackmore up.

‘I was just getting to know your wife’ I added suavely, with arch meaning, in the manner of James Bond.

I was conspiring with circumstance to paint a picture of just having slept with his wife. Though I was playing Russian roulette with fate somewhat, and though it would have been better for my mission that I simply made a quiet exit, I couldn’t resist winding that greasy piece of terrorist scum up.

There’s an unwritten rule amongst secret agents that we should take every chance to taunt our enemy in a sexual sense. Truly it goes against the grain of good solid working practice, but it’s one of the few treats we allow ourselves, along with the seduction of women, in an otherwise Spartan life.

It’s just a game we spies play. And I thought I’d played my hand quite well here. I had expected to induce anger and rage in that devious and dastardly old dog. Yet, you guessed it reader, the two faced slime ball was as cool as a cucumber. He didn’t get worked up at all, but just attempted to smile pleasantly at me, somewhat puzzled and confused as if I was some deranged and weird nobody. That’s terrorists for you.

I finally made an exeunt and returned home with my goodies. I should tie up some loose ends.

In the first place as regards Mrs Blackmore's kind donation to ROAR, I transferred her details onto an internet site for that very same charity. As such they now claimed the £2 a month that Eleanor had been kind enough to donate.

As for Dr Blackmore's toothbrush, I decided against taking it to Schneider at evidence control – at the time, heavily caught up in a separate case as I was, I didn't want to risk any communication with headquarters – and instead wrapped it up, cornflake and all, in a well-sealed parcel and posted it anonymously to the police, simply with the words 'Dr Mark Blackmore's DNA sample, don't botch this up boys!'

However, in the end, I decided against similarly submitting Eleanor's panties for inspection. This was because, on reflection, I was conscious of the fact that they probably bore Dr Blackmore's handprints. True the Blackmore's sex life had to all appearances kicked the bucket. But men are men after all, and probably Blackmore's hands, much to Eleanor's annoyance, would have been trying to get into those knickers.

As such they would bare the DNA fingerprints of a known terrorist. Sending them off to the police now would only drop Eleanor right in it. It would be as good as personally painting a target right across her breast. No, I wasn't going to set Mrs Blackmore up, not at all. Thus it was best to hold onto her panties for the meantime; they were best secure with me.

Incidentally, my intuition as regards distinguishing Eustacia's and Eleanor's knickers had been totally spot on, and was testament to my good judgement under pressure. I needn't have doubted my senses (although I'm not saying I was wrong to do so; I had been perfectly in the right to question it as any professional spy worth his salt ought to).

I carried out a similar, knicker-identification test at home, this time trying to force my way into the little pair of panties; and, though I ultimately succeeded, the tight cotton bit into my groin clearly signifying that they belonged to Eustacia. Having no further need of them, I simply locked them away in a cupboard.

As for the log book that I'd found in Eustacia's drawer, that, in the end, turned out to be nothing more than a teenage girl's diary. Though I realised this some few pages in, I nevertheless regarded it as my duty to read it through to the end, just in case.

She was evidently a young girl unable to cope with the world and her diary bore testament to a very deluded mind with a very deluded sense of reality. Moreover she had some very deep and dark fantasies as well – I'd always fancied that behind her cold and miserable exterior lay a very dark and passionate girl – and frankly I found myself extremely shocked by what she'd written, none of which could I here repeat for fear of causing offence. (I guess this reiterates what I said earlier about appearances being deceptive.)

And the dildo, or Thumper as she called it (she'd given it a pet name!) became much involved in recent weeks, and she referred to it excitedly as, and I quote, 'my lovely piece of cock'. Further, I found that my hunch had been absolutely correct: she was a tampon user. But in all of these writings of hers I found nothing to

indicate that her father was sleeping with her. Obviously she was frightened to say so.

This last issue was what bore heavy on my mind. There was a wealth of evidence, indicating the perverse relationship between father and daughter. Yet all the same, was that really any of my business? Surely I just had to forget about it and get on with my next mission.

And that I would have done, had not my thoughts wandered to the instance of the fifteen year old girl molested right in front of my face, by the IC3 male. I hadn't intervened that time and felt dreadful afterwards. Was I just going to turn the same indifferent eye on this case?

Spurred on by these thoughts, and realising that by saving Eustacia I would in some way redeem myself, I gave an anonymous tip off to social services, telling them that at 43 Rose Ash Gardens, Dr Mark Blackmore was sleeping with his daughter, one Eustacia Blackmore.

In this way did I feel myself absolved in view of the incidents of the previous mission, and did I finally come to exorcise my demons on that score.

10

Heretofore have I detailed a strict and accurate narrative of the truth. In doing so, dear reader, I hope I've presented you with an absorbing and instructive insight into the current world of espionage.

Yet what's that I hear? Is it the murmur of dissenting voices? Could it be the sound of the critics up on high, sharpening their guillotines? Oh what's that I hear floating on the wind? Pray tell me your objections reader? Oh I see!

So you find this true narrative too drab and dreary to be of any interest: too much a Chekhovian chronicle of truth than a right good rollicking yarn of Ruth; too much the stoic's spinach story than the entertainer's knicker-bocker-glory; pale and stale as a dishwater ale, a green bean, 'it's good for you', unsalted tale. No party, no peach, no sex on the beach, no fun in the sun nor a nefarious nun, a tale of the ordinary and not well-spun, a drip-dreary misery as difficult as Nietzsche.

Oh I understand, reader, I understand. But you see it's not my habit to sauce up the salmon or mustard the beef; sex up the celery or make tasty the leaf. No I'm committed only to the truth, though there's some who won't like it.

Yes, I can see the newspaper reviews before me already: 'too routine and humdrum: didn't hold my attention.' 'The author makes the mistake of relating every detail, of what is, in truth, a very boring story.' 'Just another spy narrative.'

Well if the truth is not your beverage of choice, then, dear reader, up sticks and go drink elsewhere. For as landlord of the 'The Truth Alone' it is my obligation to serve only real draughts. Humbugs and porkpies we don't provide. If that's what you're hankering after then you'll have to go abroad.

Yet hang around reader, for at the 'The Truth Alone' we well know the proverb 'sometimes reality is more interesting than fiction'. Indeed I shall shortly relate to

you a true tale of the most shocking and scandalous nature. Believe me the events of which I am set to speak of, constitute a tale of terror of the most appalling description. It is a tale which I hold by the tentacles already to unfurl before your very eyes; a tale that has been boiled in the most sulphurous of cauldrons, half-baked in the arid air of atrocity, and put out for general consumption with an anti-puke potion as hors d'oeuvre.

The foibles of fate were set to turn against me and pawed at, held up and finally consumed by Godzilla's God I was about to get lurching up in the most sickening of circumstances. The tide of the terror network was set to overrun the land; and in a desperate effort to avert her waters, I was to swim out to her centre and be swallowed up in her depths.

In my role as secret agent I was to ride head first into the enemy's lair, straight into the loving arms of my sworn foe. But never would I there venture for all to see. No, my mission would be in disguise. This tale then concerns a very, very dangerous undercover operation, in which my skills as an actor would be tested before the eyes of a gun-toting audience.

Reader, I think that before I begin the narrative, I should, since this will be the first big-time undercover operation that I've mounted thus far, shed some light on how we secret agents undertake them. For starters I should say a little as regards drama's high regard in the academy curriculum.

Given the immense importance of spinning out spies capable of going undercover for weeks, months or even years on end, in the most dangerous and life-threatening of circumstances, you'll not be surprised to learn about the bulk of time allotted to the thespian arts. Thus a fresher will find that a third of his or her time will be devoted to taking up acting classes, with Stanislavski's 'An actor prepares' being required reading (you see now why it is that a spy is well-versed in Chekhov and the theatre).

Meanwhile a sophomore will be undertaking a part in the academy production of Hamlet or the Pillars of the community. Finally, in years three and four, undergraduates will be sent out into the real world to perfect their identity-assuming arts. This will involve posing in a variety of roles, for instance a policeman, a banker, a waiter etcetera, in situations which are purely non-critical, so that if the student blows their cover for whatever reason, they'll land on the safety mat of the classroom.

Yet above and beyond this, some students actually find themselves thrown into performances of one kind or another. Thus a student may well be dropped in at the deep end, and asked to assume, at the very last minute, a role in the latest west end production, the actor or actress that they replace happy to take the night off for once; and this task being something of a major test.

Indeed secret agent Z once famously pulled on the mask and played the phantom of the opera one night, being so well-received that the producers would fain keep him on. In addition to this some students will even land bit part roles in current TV shows, minor parts it's true, but nevertheless you will have seen them – an extra here chatting in the bar of the Rovers Return, another there perusing the vegetables in the market place of Albert square.

In fact it's common knowledge – in spy circles at least – that those in our ranks, who fail to make the grade, who aren't up to scratch, usually end up in the world

of entertainment. The best known of these spy-flops is probably Roger Moore; who went on, of course, to play James Bond.

Before becoming an actor he was enrolled as an undergraduate in the British secret service – I'm going back along way now. But he didn't make the grade – he flunked weapon handling, was out of his depth with intelligence gathering and the like and was kicked out of the (old school) academy after the second year.

True, he went on to have a brilliant acting career. But personally I can't ever sit through a James Bond film without thinking of him as a loser and an academy drop out. Whenever I think of him, the words *delusional* and *fantasist* immediately spring to mind.

So much then for the academy's theatrical training scheme. You won't be surprised to learn that many of my teachers were products of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and some even TV stars as well.

The lecturer who taught us acting theory in semester one had once played a drugged-up, psychopathic rapist in Inspector Morse, who attacked and murdered young women. He taught us three essential rules needed to pull off a good performance. The first of these was 'always remember that you're in character 100% of the time'. The second was 'study the role' and the third was 'act out of hours'.

For this latter he recommended falling into character twenty-four hours a day; whilst for his second dictum he insisted on a strict regime of research. He told us to go apart and contemplate the role and to develop a series of drills to be gone through to become your character. He had followed these precise ideas in order to prepare for his role as the rapist. And I mean he was so thorough.

The rapist was a dustbin man; therefore my mentor worked for six weeks as a dustbin man beforehand, getting up at five o'clock every weekday morning to do so, and working overtime as well. Attention to detail was the key he said. And when back in the comfort of one's own home, then play on said he. What would the rapist have for tea? What would he watch on the TV? Would the dustbin man sleep in his underpants or in the nude? For how long would he brush his teeth? Would he go around checking all the electrical sockets were switched off before sleeping? How would he go to the toilet and so on.

In this way did one become one's character completely. And it had worked out perfectly for him. I mean that horrific and frankly vile opening scene was incredible.....ugh!.....to see the two police inspectors discover the blood-soaked, chewed up corpse of the former dustbin man and rapist – Good God it was horrific!

And my mentor exuded such pathos as he lay there corpse-like, it was marvellous darling. And the moral of the story was 'study the role'. You see the secret to his success was that he insisted that one should assume one's role even when it wasn't necessary. In this way did one become one's character completely. Of course some people will pooh-pooh all this and say it's just method acting. But let them make a snooty face, I don't care. What is important is that it gets the job done.

Thus did I learn my three basic rules of acting: 'always in character', 'study the role,' and 'act out of hours'. And so too do I apply myself. It's necessary for the success of my missions. All I'm saying reader is don't be surprised or shocked to

see me getting into character, in this tale or in the future. I might say and do things that might shock, but remember they're not my words or deeds. To quote a quote: 'I am not I'.

To return then to the plot. Having put to bed the Blackmore case, and, I might say, having single-handedly served it up on a plate for my old friends the plodders, I now took on some new cases. Yet it would be a re-acquaintance with an old foe that would spark the astonishing sequence of events that I am about to relay.

Villainy knows no rest. Evil springs up eternal. The IC3 male was up to his old tricks again and it was a good job that I'd been keeping him under surveillance. Though I hadn't returned to the devil's doorstep, I did keep tabs on him at the cafe – I monitored him from another cafe on the opposite side of the street, not wanting to bump into him again.

He kept up his persona of cafe hand homeboy, Mr nonchalant, Mr easy-going, Mr I couldn't care less. The rape of a juvenile obviously didn't weigh heavy on his mind. Bastard!

Anyway, there was much activity afoot at his bar. Late night drinking sessions, hushed up, surreptitious little chats, plotting and scheming, members of the cell going out back to do goodness knows what. All the usual suspects were there, people who I'd been watching for a while, players who were on the black list.

Yet there was a new kid on the block. He turned up one day and greeting the members of the cell with handshakes and back slaps, was soon sat down and chatting with them, thick as thieves. He was a swarthy man, handsome, tall and well-built, with sort of dread-locked black hair and black stubble. He immediately aroused my suspicion.

His name was Angelo. That much I knew. He was an immigrant to all intents and purposes. Otherwise I was in the dark except that he was something of an out-fielder in the homey's organisation. Though I'd marked his card on his first visit, on the several occasions when he'd re-materialised I'd let him be. He always smiled and laughed a lot, played cards and wagged with his cronies and affected the persona of a happy, relaxed man.

Yet in his reappearance today and his suspicious activities I was forced to follow him. This is what happened: as Angelo was set to part company with his peers, the IC3 male bade him into the dark inner recesses of the cafe; and watching closely I witnessed the IC3 male handing a secret package to Angelo, who stashed it away inside his jacket. Angelo, then leaving the little den of thieves to its own devices, stepped onto the high street and started walking away.

Secretly I took up pursuit. He was a good distance from me and had no notion that I was tracking him. Thus with stealth did we travel. We made a long tour across the town. Trekking first through the shopping area, we now found ourselves walking through an area given up to cinemas, restaurants and other venues of recreation. Where were we going then?

We departed the entertainment complex, crossed the river over a bridge, and finally mounted a little cobbled back alley, leading up and away from the river. And now it dawned on me just where we were headed. We were on course for what might be said to be the city's red light district.

It was only three o'clock in the afternoon. As such it bore a deserted look, sleeping away the hours until it would come alive tonight. We walked past some bars – all were just about empty, save for a few hangers on.

You know I'd been here before. As part of an ongoing investigation into a terror ring that was fronting as a house of prostitution, I'd been brought to these seedy shores and had had to pay a visit to the dancing girls at Madame La La's. I'd interviewed a go-go dancer, Peepi, a young girl of Polish extraction.

She'd pointed the finger at one Dan 'the mask' Madison, a small time wheeler dealer, a second hand car salesman by profession, a would be big time Mafia boss, but merely small fry in the world of organised crime. Although I was sceptical at first, on closer inspection Madison turned out to work for Ali bin Ahmed Al-Fulani, an Algerian born business man owning a string of disreputable night clubs throughout town, including Madame La La's. In the end Madison had turned out to be doing shady business with the Al-Fulani organisation.

It appeared now that Angelo was about to enter Madame La La's. This was a very unexpected turn of events indeed. If Angelo was some kind of go-between between these two cells of terror then that suggested that the IC3 male was working for Al-Fulani. Perhaps the IC3 male was a lieutenant in the Al-Fulani organisation. Al-Fulani was then the head of the monster. The IC3 male only a hand.

As such I'd now been brought to the dragon's den. And if that meant heading into Madame La La's, and getting mixed up in the sleazy world of lap-dancing and seducing naked women in the pursuit of evidence, then it was my oath bound duty to follow Angelo in and do so. It seemed I would be going undercover into a strip-joint. Oh well, such are the woes of a secret agent.

Yet in an incredible twist of events, Angelo didn't enter Madame La La's, but walking straight past it, instead entered 'the Mediterranean Boy'.

I was instantly rooted to the spot in horror. I couldn't believe it. Good God I was shocked. I held my hand to my mouth to stop myself from spewing up. And then before you could say 'do you want any action love', I had turned around and was walking back through town, homeward bound.

No way Jose was I entering 'the Mediterranean Boy'. Fuck those rat-faced, lily-livered old men back at headquarters, who would court-martial me for not following Angelo in. Fuck them. Those cold-hearted sons of bitches who would have an agent do goodness knows what dark and dangerous deeds all in the name of national security.

'Well not this time!' I said bitterly. 'This is one mission I won't be undertaking.' There was no chance of me entering 'the Mediterranean Boy'. For it was, if you haven't already guessed it reader, a gay bar.

11

I'll state my views here and now regarding these sick perverts reader, and I'll do so without reservation. In this day and age where everyone seems bent, on

mincing their words vis-à-vis homosexuals, where manly love and sodomy are looked upon as a private affair and not the sick, community-violating crimes which they assuredly are, I find myself a rather lone voice in the liberal library of shushed-up opinions.

These disgusting bastards, these filthy rats that seem to plague our once great nation, to infest every dirty corner of our land – good God, how loathsome they are to me! Personally, if I was PM, I'd lock all of these sickos up for life. And I'd deny them their rights and simply strip them all naked and shut them up in a big cell together; and I'd tie them up and go around whipping their naked buttocks; and I'd even make them fight, gladiator style, but only with their bare hands, and all just for my own personal entertainment. Honestly I don't know what I wouldn't do to them, I really don't. Yet in this day and age these thoughts are mere dreams of mine.

Speaking of dreams, so diseased has our world now become, that I often have homosexual related nightmares.

Once I was walking down a street and, I don't know, but I'm convinced I'm being stalked by a man. Anyway I turn up this blind alley way, when all of a sudden, from out of the dustbins at the top, a policeman jumps out. And at that moment the stalker appears to my rear in the alley entrance. 'Officer' say I 'thank God! This man is stalking me. Please help.'

However in a terrible moment for me, the policeman just stands there with his hands on his hips and laughs cynically to himself. And then he whips out his truncheon. Clearly he and the stalker are working as a team. And before long those two have put me on the spit roast.....and then I wake up in a cold sweat.

Another time I'm walking down a street and all of a sudden a white van pulls up out of nowhere, screeching as it does. And before you can say abracadabra, a team of masked homosexuals have jumped out the back of it, and, carrying me off the street and throwing me into the lorry, kidnap me back to their castle residence where I'm tied up naked and thrown in a dungeon, at the mercy of those dirty-minded henchmen of Hades who proceed to practice upon me all of their deepest and darkest fantasies.

But my worst and most recurrent vision, is one in which I'm standing on the shores of North Africa all alone save for my Moroccan princess. She's wearing one of those veils, the sort the Turkish delight girl once wore, and she's smiling coyly and making eyes at me with a seductive intent. I say 'ooh! You're lovely you are' and then I pull off her dress and find to my utter bewilderment that it's actually a Moroccan boy.

Now though my first cerebral sensation is one of disgust, from somewhere, I don't know where, I come over all lust insatiable, as though the devil is in me, and with an excess of abandonment I jump on top of the boy and have passionate sex with him like there's no tomorrow.

Such a shocking and awful dream! What power it has to so put the frighteners on me. Every time it airs its graces I wake up shaken to the core. And many a night have I spent, after having awoken at that depraved denouement, shuddering and terrified and left begging the question, does this mean I'm gay? Perhaps, you've dreamed these demonised seduction scenes yourself reader and have asked the very same question 'does this mean I'm gay?' And with sleep now shipwrecked

on the shores of shame, and with a heavy mind, I have hooked up to the internet in the vain hopes of finding an answer to my question and of settling my fears. And luckily, thank the Lord, I was able to discover that *it doesn't mean I'm gay*.

What these things are usually accredited to are what experts term a *lone spirit* (some authors say *free spirit*). Basically it's a manifestation of a non-corporeal entity (most likely a spirit of the dead) which lives as a pseudo-poltergeist in your bedroom. (For example it could live in a pot or say a dirty tea cup, where it feeds on the sugar water leftovers in order to obtain its energy.)

The lone spirit is free to enter into your head and because it can't have dreams of its own accord, it of necessity has to forage into the minds of others and there live out its fantasies. And that these are often gay-related or just in general of a sick and twisted turn makes sense because the majority of lone spirits belong to dead people who were of such a salacious mind as to preclude the possibility of their entering into the afterlife.

To be frank though, although it bears out the fact that I'm not gay, and though I admit that often I do feel devil-possessed when I have these visions, I've got to put my hand on my heart and say that this theory seems just a little *far-fetched*. But there are alternative explanations out there. More simply, it could just be a gang of gays doing a Ouija board on you.

Such then being my views on sausage-smokers, I'm sure you can appreciate, reader, why I aborted the mission to the Mediterranean Boy. However when I reached home and sobered up somewhat after the initial shock that Angelo was a scrum-half, I was harassed by nagging doubts and misgivings and I felt guilty for my neglect of duty.

Thinking on the droves of citizens whom I had sworn to protect, I envisaged the torrents of terror and carte-cartel of chaos calamitaire that might suddenly sweep fourscore through our realms and bring this nation to her knees. The kingdom all gone to pot, the fish done to a crisp and pepper on the chips, Nelson's head in the back of a van and halfway to Albuquerque; London bridge aflame and Big Ben's hands running in reverse! Plus hordes of savage barbarians marauding through the land, raping, pillaging and reciting Shakespeare backwards!

I foresaw passengers stranded at airports, the entire flight schedule up the crap shoot, planes plying the loop-de-loop, the devil doing the vida loca, children and parents screaming at each other, the poor souls unable to fly away on their package holidays to Magaluf and Ibiza.

I saw the Queen, woken up at four o'clock in the morning and given bad news by a grave and venerable old servant. Two of the corgis were down. Poisoned presumably. Rushed off to hospital in a black hack.

The Queen's safety hanging in the balance. Her majesty with tired and careworn face, annoyed at having been disturbed in her slumbers, yet concerned for Trixy and Dixy; worried, sobered, grave, being handed a cup of coffee by her servant and watching late night reruns of *Isabella: the dog that learned to count* and *Big Brother Extra: watch the contestants sleep*. Was I really just going to stand back and allow all of this suffering to happen?

Had I just forgotten the God damned oath I'd sworn? Had I just dishonoured my badge, and cast asunder my duty and allegiance all because I was too precious to enter a gay bar? Did I think that the role of the spy was to pick and choose the

missions that suited him? Was I not willing to roll my sleeves up and get my hands (and whatever else) dirty in the name of National Security?

I'd made a mistake that was for sure. Accepted. Now how to redeem myself? Get back on Angelo's case.

Thus would I have to go undercover as a homosexual and sally forth into a gay bar. Yet I immediately calculated that my mission would involve a lot more than just heading to the hideout of the homophiles and playing the role of a chip-pepperer.

One of the very first principles that I remember being taught at the academy, one of the most essential dictums that they drill into you, is that to enter into the confidence of the enemy, is to first enter into their bed. Hence the well-known phrase 'sleeping with the enemy'. Of course by and large it's believed, by general consensus, that this entails male versus female love, with a spy seducing a woman, who, in the aftermath of their passion, and in the ensuing peace that descends after their amorous embraces, gives up all the details he wishes to know.

Principally this idea of romantic fiction has infixed itself on the public's mind through the numerous clap-trap spy thrillers doing the rounds that claim to be authentic and in which spies bed women as often as Englishmen miss penalties. But in the real spy world and what those books have a strict, mums the word policy on is that sleeping with the enemy can also (and indeed more frequently) mean man on man love-making.

As a dedicated recorder of the truth it's my duty to describe it to you reader, even though detractors will say that horses might join hooves and do the hokey-cokey. Believe it or not, but many a secret agent butters himself up and sets out to seduce terrorists and vice versa, with the terrorists tarting themselves up for a good time in the hopes of pulling an agent and gleaning some info. Of course the notion of sleeping with someone so as to gain the secrets of their heart in the aftermath of passion is well known to all humanity. Yet the experts at the academy were at pains to point out that in fact something like 90% of all credible evidence is gotten in this way.

Thus it would be essential to make Angelo my bedfellow. It would be a risky mission, I'd be going to the Mediterranean Boy as bait, and there was every chance that amongst all those perverts I would be raped. But I was steadfast in my determination to complete my mission, and come what may I had resolved to sleep with that tadpole-drinker. Though I might baulk at it, my recent lapse at not initially entering the Mediterranean Boy bore heavy on my mind, and I was absolutely determined to brace up and to face up and to do whatever was demanded of me; to do anything to prove my duty to Queen and country.

If it meant seducing Angelo so be it. If it meant going back to his place for coffee so be it. If it meant him sticking his cucumber up my backside then I was up for it; if it meant waking up the morning after exhausted, lying next to him in bed, my head resting on his naked, bronzed, hairy chest then so be it. Whatever it was going to take I was going to do it. I would present him with the full banquet – hors-d'oeuvre, main course and desert – and say bon-appetit! Whatever he would do with me, I would bend over for him. Whatever the role demanded of me I would yield. Nothing was off limits.

And so having made my resolution I now set about getting into character and doing some role-play and rehearsal.

At nine o'clock the next morning I rang the hairdressers. Goodness me reader! What a piece of luck that was! They'd had a cancellation. I got an appointment to see Tony at eleven. I'd read my stars this morning. They had promised I'd be in luck. Well I never! Fancy that! And they had also said that 'I'd be whisked off my feet by a dark and handsome stranger!' Ooh! Did they mean Angelo? Fingers crossed!

For breakfast I just had half a low fat yoghurt – I was watching my figure. After that I settled down to watch morning television and really enjoyed it. But at twenty past nine I suddenly realised I'd have to get a move on. The appointment was at eleven, which meant I'd have to leave at ten to eleven. That only left an hour and a half in which to shower, do my hair and make myself decent. Accordingly I set about my toilet, singing along to songs as I went:

'It's raining men, Hallelujah, it's raining men, every specimen, tall, blond, dark and mean, rough and tough and strong and lean, it's raining men.....' Boy, I love that song!

When I arrived at Antonio's Salon, I was received by a young man, evidently gay. He led me through to a little waiting room. As I followed behind him I thought that now would be a good time to grab his backside.

To that end I now raised my hand and touched it, slowly letting my hand run across his derriere. He turned around surprised and a little unsure as to whether his senses were deceiving him. I simply looked the picture of innocence not wishing to reveal that I'd just stolen a fondle of his bum. Somewhat confounded he walked on. He told me to sit down and that someone would be with me in five or ten minutes. In the meantime would I like a coffee?

'Oooh yes please' I said campily. 'Oh how I like my coffee rich and strong.....just like my men; and big and black if possible!' I added with smut.

He looked at me rather strangely. You know I was going to have to work on the innuendo. And that arse grab as well, that had been completely out of order. I was really overplaying my character. I was doing a Stanislavski. It needed a more subtle, a more Chekhovian approach.

The hairdresser gave me a very gay haircut: the middle of my hair was up and ran backwards sort of like a Mohican. It was all fancy and permed and had blond streaks in the front. Personally I thought it looked an absolute disaster. Dear Lord what had he done? But this was the fashion I was told and I'd been determined to look the part. I stayed on after the haircut – I was treating myself to the full works.

A facial for starters, with the soothing and calm hands of Leonardo buttering me up and making lovely my mien: then with a face of green paste and two cucumbers for eyes, I was taken to a little bed and there laid to rest by the ever gracious Antonio, who proceeded to rub me in oil and massage me to seventh heaven.

Later I had my legs waxed and thereafter did I seek to bronze myself Mediterranean by lounging on a sun bed. At two o'clock in the afternoon, sauced up and beautified to a crisp, I quitted Antonio's, and after stopping off to buy some gay clothes at the shopping mall, returned home.

In the afternoon I chanced to iron a shirt. However just two seconds to the bad I felt myself bored, tired and listless and as if I was about to blackout and fall backwards and faint on the floor. I was desperate to quit. Man, I couldn't take it any longer!

Yet from somewhere, God alone knows where, I found the resolve to carry on. I was determined to do the job properly, and to get into character. Accordingly, though it pained me immensely, I stuck the ironing out, and, some two and a half minutes later, *the shirt was ironed*.

After that I rang mother just to see how the poor old dear was and to catch up with all the gossip. Finally it was dinnertime – vegetarian lasagne with salad – and I ate and watched the soap operas with avid interest.

I went online, in a bid to practice under the anonymity the internet provides.

There was a dating website for gay men and I looked at a lot of profiles. I started emailing some of these guys, especially the younger and more naive, since I felt that I, like them, was new to this, and that they would be least likely to detect any errors I might make that would reveal me to be a secret agent.

'Don't worry if you're only fourteen' I wrote 'that's not a problem. So you're obviously having some issues about your sexuality – that's normal, but remember so is being gay.

'Think of me as a kindly uncle who's ready to help you with any problems you might have. Let's develop a friendship, an exchange of ideas, something romantic, platonic, profound and intellectual. Speak to me, don't be shy, there's nothing to be ashamed of.

With love X.

P.S. Let's get fucking! Meet for cock fun anytime, any place.'

I was pleased by the authenticity of my messages, inspired as I was by those I had read. Yet frustratingly, I didn't get any replies.

Finally the day arrived when I was to go to the Mediterranean Boy and see Angelo. I was dressed up to the nines and stood before the mirror. Wow I was stunning. Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the gayest of them all? As I saw myself there all sexed up and spanking, pristine and pan-caked, prickling pour amore, I irresistibly began a striptease. Slowly but surely I danced out of my gear.

When I was down to only my underpants I stopped. And half threatening to whip this last garment off, I looked into the mirror with a slutty, teasing and coy expression. Would I take them off? Give the men what they wanted? I simply smiled coyly into the mirror and putting my finger to face wagged it from side to side as if to suggest to the men who were watching me that they were having naughty thoughts and that I was no naughty boy. But I did it all in a coy manner, and frankly I was loving it.

I was having, on this fateful day however, a slight problem with wind (of the hard-boiled egg variety). Now I know what you're thinking, you're probably saying to yourselves, especially the ladies (though I wouldn't rule out the possibility that men have developed man-crushes on me as well) 'X we loved you up till now, you were so saucy and dashing and bold, so noble and courageous etcetera, etcetera. Don't go telling us about your egg-wind for Heaven's sake, you're ruining our bedroom fantasies.'

I know James Bond never talked about such things but this is one of the realities of being a spy, and something which, if not properly controlled, can give you away when you're in deep cover, the enemy being able to sense these things aurally, nasally and indeed – if a spy is performing amphibious operations – visually.

In fact there's one well known story of how a flatulent spy gave himself away by unleashing extraneous gas during a spying mission in Moscow. He was caught and sentenced to hard labour in the Gulag for his crime, the Soviet authorities, once they'd gotten wind of his actions, determined to make an example of him.

He was punished for what they described as 'one of the most atrocious acts ever committed by the British secret services' and they almost declared war on Britain three days later, because of this 'ill-thought out and unbearable action, deliberately taken with a mind to oppress the Russian people'.

Further, in a breathless communique to the British they rather hysterically likened the incident to 'the treatment meted out to the Jews by the Nazis' to which the British high consulate responded with contempt claiming 'they were deliberately exaggerating and should calm down because it was a very minor occurrence.' The Russians responded angrily saying that 'the people of Russia didn't consider it a small act, that you [the British] didn't experience it, and how would the British like it if a Russian spy did the same thing in your backyard?'

The British responded by saying 'it happens here as well in Britain, we know fine well the Kremlin sends KGB operatives here to commit exactly the same devious and monstrous acts and that they are, moreover, carried out with exceptional arrogance and indifference. The KGB's reputation for being a dark and dirty organization is well-merited, as you well know sir.'

Finally the British authorities distanced themselves from the reckless spy, saying that 'we can't be held accountable for an individual who carries out such acts of his own volition. Don't try and blame us, because we are not responsible. In fact by apportioning blame to the British it's clear you're trying to deflect from your own culpabilities.' Furthermore, he added that (in response to Soviet threats of aggression) 'it would be ludicrous to go to war over one minor incident like this.'

Moreover the Americans joined in, angrily denouncing what they saw as 'the two faced hypocrisy of the Soviet elite' who on a trip to the White House 'had blatantly and without guise gone around committing these very same acts' right under the noses of their American hosts so that 'even after they had gone, there lingered in the air, a sense of having been infringed upon.'

The spy in question, when he was finally released and returned to the British authorities, started to complain to them, but they claimed to have no knowledge of him or 'his despicable and evil act committed on foreign soil'. They labelled him a deranged madman and when he continued to kick up a stink they professed 'only our profound and deepest sympathies for our Russian allies' and recommended that he 'seek medical help'.

However secretly he was given a medal for 'a very well executed and brave deed' and the Queen herself, when he supplied her with first hand evidence of what he'd gotten up to, was said to be delighted, and couldn't stop laughing to herself, so impressed was she by his cunning wickedness.

Anyway I hoped I wouldn't be similarly compromised today. I left my house and was soon on the street.

Yet no sooner was I out on the town, in my poncy clothes and with my ridiculous haircut, than I felt the biggest fool walking the streets. What an embarrassing mission this was. I was convinced I looked the very picture of ridiculousness. And people were staring at me, weren't they? Or was I just being paranoid? How I would have loved to have just gone back home and had a quiet night in monitoring internet chat-rooms. Or even out following suspects. Anything but this.

Yet I had to remember all the while that I was merely undercover and that really I was a secret agent bent on safe guarding national security. And moreover, as time wore on and I became more at ease in my outfit I started to think that actually I *did* look quite good. There was a new gay boy out on the lash and I imagined all the admirers that would be drooling over me (even though I'm not gay reader).

When I reached the door of the Mediterranean Boy my heart was doing the fandango, and I would fain be off at any cost. Yet it was imperative to enter, the mission was all important. National Security was sacrosanct. Lives depended on it. It was time to pluck up the courage and enter the bar of the bag pipe-blowers.

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As the new boy on the block, I anticipated that on making an entrance, a crescendo of wolf-whistling would greet my ears. With trepidation, I stepped inside the Mediterranean Boy.

Yet when I was through the doors of this devil-den, not only were the whistles not forthcoming, but I didn't cause much of a stir. The place just swung along as usual as if nothing out of the ordinary had taken place. True, the bar was not at present well stocked with punters; but from those few fags here already, I received little if no attention, as though I were a mere nobody. Fucking Faggots! You'd think reader that when a young man enters a boy-bonkers bar, the least he could expect, the least token of chivalry he might count upon would be to be politely smiled at. Not so in the Mediterranean Boy. There were no gentlemen here! What a dump!

Hurt and saddened by this lack of attention I decided to cheer my flagging spirits up by buying myself a liqueur. Reader, I'll level with you, I hate the taste of beer, it's horrible puke, but liqueurs – I do love them. Thankfully in the role I was now playing, in which it was essential to abstain from beer, I could have myself as many liqueurs as my heart's desire.

The pub being pretty much deserted as yet, I was served so soon as the bartender saw me waiting. Although a man, he was half way to having a sex-change, embracing a period of transition on the road to womanhood. He had breasts in place, wore lipstick, and dressed as the ladies do; and yet he was forty

and over, very much a man in build, with butch shoulders and stubble in abundance.

It struck me as odd that such a man as he – who so assuredly bore the traits of Adam – should wish to be woman. And the road ahead would be difficult. It would be a big task to render him all-woman. But he was evidently a very troubled soul and had sad, sad eyes. He was quiet and barely spoke when you ordered. Yet at the same time he was very humble and polite. I sat myself down.

You know about this time last year, the Mediterranean Boy had found itself in the media spotlight and in the public eye, as, in a series of police raids, it was found to be a major site of drug-dealing. Since then new owners had taken over and they'd cleaned the place up. Still it was possible that some plain clothes officers might be here undercover, fighting the war on drugs. In fact it was well known that the drug dealers had been busted by an undercover, who had installed himself as bartender for a few weeks, prior to the raids.

Well, I didn't suspect that was the case here – bunch of perverts though they are, the man in transition was surely no police officer. Nevertheless it behoved me to be suspicious. Who knows, an undercover could be useful to me.

Of course personally, if I was to mount a drug busting operation in a pub like this I'd do so in a much simpler way: I'd set up a hidden camera in one of the toilet cubicles.

Contrasted to the hassle involved in going undercover as a bartender – first having to gain the trust of at least one of the bosses, not knowing exactly if they themselves are involved in the drug trafficking; having to work long hours as a bartender, which might mean weeks of build up; the need to be unknown to the public as a police officer; and then the fact that ultimately you've still got to keep your ear to the ground in the hope of picking up some clue – contrasted to going undercover where the problems are aplenty, the act of merely positioning a camera in a cubicle is child's play.

One simply enters the pub, pays a visit to the little boy's room, and, in the sealed off surroundings and privacy of the toilet booth, one is afforded ample time in which to install the device. No-one except yourself need know about it, the owners are not informed, no-one is tipped off or alerted and it's labour saving and time effective. You simply return home, and, taking up position on a nice comfortable sofa, and with food and drinks on hand as you work, watch for crimes to happen.

And to be sure, in a bona fide den of vice like the Mediterranean Boy, you can rest assured you'll be watching all sorts of dirty deeds and hanky-panky, every minute till the cows come home. In fact in recent years installation of hidden cameras in public toilets has fast replaced the old ruse of going undercover in many instances. And back at the academy, some of the experts were now saying that at any time, something like 30% of all public toilets are bugged in this way.

Of course the government, councils, and powers that be would decidedly rubbish this as half-baked shepherd's pie. As they do all else they wish to hush up. Frankly reader I would never believe a word they say. It's all just so much bull-shit on a plate. Crime prevention and National Security are the top priorities, and if toilet-bugging is an easy means to an end then beyond doubt it will be employed.

I sat sipping my liqueur for some while. The place had livened up a bit since I first arrived. There were many men of middle age; non-descript men whom you wouldn't have down as cock-kissers on the outside world. Also quite a collection of little queens – teenage boys, skinny as hell, wearing the tightest little t-shirts and jeans imaginable. And finally the odd drag queen to complete the pack, a few men with painted faces and lipstick, decked out like whores.

Would Angelo be here tonight? I had inquired after him at the bar and the man in transition had told me that he came most nights and would probably be here this evening. I waited and fretted somewhat. Then toward the close of an hour or so, in an amazingly heart-throbbing moment, in walked the man himself.

Wow! He was so cool. He was the chief male. He was as cool as a cat as he sauntered in. He immediately went and joined two other guys stood chatting on the other side of the room. They shook hands with their friend, evidently delighted to see him. He had such magnetism. I mean he was the main, main man.

Okay the moment was come. It was time to serve up my salmon and pour on the sauce. I was set to introduce myself to Angelo. With legs full of jelly I stood up, and, draining back the remainder of my liqueur, made my way to the bar, where hopefully my prey would be heading any second to order a drink. I was so nervous I could hear my heart thudding.

Shortly Angelo approached the bar. As he looked up he saw me there, leaning back against the counter and my eyes absolutely glued on him. I was making come to bed eyes. It must have been so obvious to him that I had designs on him, as he walked toward the bar; that I was on offer to him as it were.

He saw all of this and not knowing what to make of it, averted his eyes. He was holding back a smile. He clearly thought I was being a bit obvious, advertising myself as I was. Yet also I could tell he was pleased, he was flattered. I mean he wasn't going to say no was he, if it was being served up on a plate to him like this.

Moments later he couldn't help but look at me again – I'd stubbornly refused to let his eyes go, even when he shunned my gaze – and now looking at me fully, slightly puzzled, slightly pleased, a broad smile broke out over his face.

'Hey Angelo, buy a boy a drink would you' I said pleadingly, making eyes at him. He was somewhat taken aback by the fact I knew his name and was unsure of who I was.

'Look' he said slowly 'have we met before?'

'That's a corny chat-up line' I said archly. 'Do you think you're going to get me into bed with that old chestnut?'

'No, no' he said emphatically. He was a bit taken aback by my saucy and presumptuous tongue, yet he was laughing and smiling all the same.

'No' he continued 'it's just, I don't know, you seemed to be looking at me there, I just...well I guess it just seemed.....how do you know my name?'

'Your name? Per favore Angelo! Who wouldn't know the name of the best looking, most desirable male about town? Which boy wouldn't have heard gossip of Angelo, the swarthy, bronzed and dapper gentleman, he of the majestic moustache, the Mediterranean grace and the eau-de-cologne? Which single and unbetroth male hasn't teetered and giggled over your hunkiness, hasn't gone abed dreaming of your steamy love making, would not take himself out on a night like

this in hopes of finding himself enraptured in your strong embraces? Oh the dashing Angelo!

'Well' he said, laughing to himself and somewhat surprised by my words yet flattered. 'Well' he said most amiably 'I guess I can buy you a drink. What's your poison?'

'Poison?' I said archly 'you're trying to poison me are you? Slip a little something in my drink, and the next thing I know I'm back at your house being raped and molested? Is that your game plan Angelo, is it?' I said flirtily.

'Look' he said with a tone as if to deny my allegations 'I'm just trying to buy you a drink.'

'Well provided you know a drink's only a drink' I said leering at him. 'I don't like to sully my reputation. I'm no easy conquest you know. Don't be getting any dirty ideas into your head, my little teddy bear. If you're gonna bed me it's got to be done right. I'll have to learn you Angelo, train you up in the amorous arts, educate you in the language of love.'

'I'm no pushover make no mistake of that' I continued. 'I like love-making to be a long drawn out affair. It has to be a real marathon of passion. It has to be done right my man, it has to be perfect. If I am going to come back to yours tonight, I want you to give me a lesson in love making that I'll never forget. I want you to put on a show for me. Oh! My stallion Angelo, what a night lies before us! Now please baby, buy me an extra-large liqueur.'

We got the drinks, and I persuaded him to come and sit at my table, which he did, after explaining the situation to his friends across the room; who after gaining this information, leered across at me with grinning and one-track minded countenances. When their seedy eyes fell on me thus, I affected to look away haughtily. I was come for Angelo and nobody else. Anyway I thought those homosexuals just a little too presumptuous.

Angelo took a seat next to me. The conversation calmed down after my ice-breaking intro and I could see he was quite keen on me. We got talking. By the by Angelo asked me if I liked football.

'Yes of course' I replied 'all those fit men running around in shorts, all those lovely bums and thighs and calves. Ooh yeah I love football. But you know I just can't understand the offside rule.'

'Can't understand it?' said Angelo smiling 'but it's so simple?'

In reply to that I simply shook my head mincingly like a girl. Yet my eyes said it all: they were gazing right into Angelo's, looking deep into his; and I had such a coy, feeble little expression, as if I was totally helpless and couldn't understand the offside rule.

'Look' said Angelo smiling – he knew this was all part of the flirting, and that he was on to a winner – 'look' he said 'I can explain it to you, really, it's not that hard. Look here' and he picked up a newspaper from off an adjacent table, and, borrowing a pen from someone sitting nearby, commenced to drawing a football pitch.

'Okay' he began. 'Look at this. Now let's suppose that these four dots represent the defenders of the defending team and this round thing the ball...' and so he went on.

He went to real pains to explain me the rule, during which time I affected a very concentrated expression looking down at the paper. Yet in-between times I stole a glance at him and our eyes made contact. Sometimes I gazed into his eyes questioningly, a little perplexed; other times with more of an open and amiable look as if I was examining them. All the while Angelo kept explaining the rule – I could see it was really important to him, he did enjoy playing teacher like this.

We were sitting, by the way, very snugly together on a bench, and our legs were warmly touching, and I was sort of leaning into him. He had dared to raise his left arm so that it rested on the back of the bench above me, though as yet it wasn't around me.

As he explained I affected to try and concentrate very hard, and I gave serious glances; and as he explained I nodded between times as if I was understanding. But towards the end, as the explanation became more involved, I started to throw cunning little glances into his eyes. My eyes were full of mischief as though they would fain burst into laughter.

When he got to the end, Angelo was quite pleased with himself, for, according to the nods and yeses I'd given him, it would appear that he had succeeded in teaching me. Finally he said 'do you understand now?'

I was just thoughtful a moment and sort of unsure of myself. Then biting my bottom lip, as if I was naughty and would he forgive me for being so dim?, I made coy and sorrowful eyes at him and threw an arch glance deep into his eyes. 'No' I said, upon which I broke into a little giggle which I stifled by raising my hand to my mouth.

Angelo somewhat angered, though not deeply, threw down the pen and said it was hopeless. And just to placate any anger I'd aroused in him, and also to hide my embarrassment and at the same time show how hopeless and feeble I was, I nestled my head into his arms and chest as though I would fain lay down there forever. I guess for the less discerning amongst you, I should at this junction point out that I well understand the offside rule, which is of course exceedingly simple. Read between the lines reader!

I felt myself on the precipice of achieving my aim, and that any moment now, Angelo and myself would be in the back of a cab heading home for a night of ponce-passion, succeeding which he'd cough up any information he had. I was really surprised at how easy it had all been.

Making signals to him that I was popping off to powder my nose, I stood up, and having walked halfway around the table, bent over it – so that I displayed my cute little ass to the cast and crew of the Mediterranean Boy – and grabbed his cheek and playfully tugged at it a second, a reminder of my intent.

The whole pub saw the spectacle and as I walked with womanly dignity away to the toilet, I knew the eyes of the Mediterranean Boy rested upon me. Yet I affected not to notice, to look ahead with a haughty, mysterious visage and too resent the attention afforded me.

All was swimming along nicely then, or so would the fates have it appear. Yet in the time it took me to urinate away some excess liqueur, the script-writers upstairs had upped the dramatic beat, and, introducing a new character to the plot, swept the story across the stage with myself left a mere spectator.

As I came out of the little-gays room, the most dreadful scene unfolded before my eyes: in the seat I'd just vacated some ponce was seated with his tongue down my Angelo's throat. The bitch! How dare that little man-eater steal him from my loving arms like that!

Yet I had to concede they were going for it quite badly. Angelo as well. He was no passenger that was for sure. I watched this nightmare unfold itself, watched the man-eater reposition himself so that he straddled Angelo, watched as he grabbed his face lovingly, and, consumed by a tornado of passion, went about applying himself to his lover's lips with total abandonment of inhibition. I walked a few paces over to the bar, and asked of the man in transition, whom the mystery boy was.

'It's Rico, Angelo's boyfriend' said he simply.

Though it pains me to admit it reader, Rico was better looking than me. In fact he was a stud-muffin sail away stunner. I was miles out of his league. He had a gorgeous face, strong shoulders and chest, and a peachy backside.

Yet the worst horror of all was that he was kitted out in garb similar to mine, which he wore with such amazing ease and grace, unlike me, 'an ape in a harlequin's jacket – a jay in borrowed plumes', whose clothes seemed to hang from me as if they were embarrassed to be associated with me. Not only that, but his haircut was exactly the same as mine, with his looking precisely as it should do, precisely as the model sported it, when the hairdresser at Antonio's had shown me the photo of the kind of style we were aiming for.

He was that very model. Whereas my interpretation of the haircut was more in the fashion of a duck's backside. Bastard! What a position I was now in. How was I to compete with that bitch? And guess what reader, he was younger than me as well. Oh so young! How was I to steal my way into Angelo's heart now?

Looking over at Rico and Angelo tongue-tied, I thought about my options. Yet as I contemplated my next throw of the dice the sands of circumstance were shifting at my feet, and I was about to be sucked asunder and spewed out upstream, only to find myself fished at from a new and irritating angle.

Two men who had previously been propping up the bar around the corner had made the bold step of coming to chat me up. They introduced themselves.

In response I merely looked annoyed and huffy, but said hello anyway in a half-hearted attempt to be polite. But I couldn't help being irritated. I was annoyed to be thus courted by these two losers, who thought they had a chance with me. How presumptuous! I could see they did genuinely believe they were in with a shout.

You know I knew it only too well that they would never have dared approach the handsome Rico or some such other belle of the ball. But they *had* approached *me!* What a cheek! I could see it, it was written all over their dirty faces, in their body language, and in their conversation, that the only thing on their mind was getting me into bed.

They thought I was easy as well! An easy conquest, a cheap bit of sex with no personality, a mere sex toy that could be had if they wanted. I'd never been so insulted. This was a disaster. I was being pulled into the league of also-rans, dragged away from the sexy world of Rico and Angelo, plunged into the miserable underworld of the leery-eyed losers.

Neither man was particularly handsome or had anything to recommend them. Only one of the two spoke to me while the other kept stum and looked in another direction as if he wasn't interested. The first one talked non-stop to me and didn't let me get a word in. Nor would he make eye contact with me, but always looked askance. He was so nerve-ridden with all his stupid talking, that I felt like punching him in the face.

But it was in not making eye-contact with me that I felt myself suffering the greatest of insults. It suggested that deep down he despised me, or despised his own desire for me; and I very much got the impression, that although pulling me would be something of a coup for him, he still considered me a plain Jane. I was never to be the rent-boy he dreamed of. Rather, he held me for an easy lay, a nobody he might satisfy his dirty lust with, and then, when morning came and he regretted his actions, dump me without a second thought. And this really riled me. Since, how fucking stupid was he to not realise that I had no intentions of sleeping with him whatsoever!

I'd never been so angered. And it was an absurd situation. Here I was politely talking with people who I'd rather have nothing to do with; and yet he, the talkative also-ran, couldn't seem to see the bleedingly obvious reality of events that in no way in this lifetime would he and I be getting it on. He just persisted with his dull and boring rambling – I wanted to tell him to shut the fuck up! – never looking me in the eye, and all the while it was so transparent, through all his verbal diarrhoea, that all he had in mind was sex.

Ugh! The piece of low-life crap. I was so put out and infuriated by all of this and frowned my contempt and annoyance at him; but these gestures as well were wasted on him. He just couldn't interpret or even see them. So convinced was he that he was going to have me that he was unable to see what was clear as day. I just couldn't believe it. What could I do with a man like this? He just couldn't read the signs. I felt like screaming and shouting 'go away you pervert!'

As for the second guy, he had originally kept his mouth shut and looked away, and as such I had not minded and even quite liked him, as he evidently wasn't as pathetic and one-track minded as his friend. Yet unbelievably, he too was ill-intentioned, but simply shy.

From time to time I caught him trying to make eye contact with me. I would look at him back, questioningly, puzzled as I was, and he would then look away. And then again he would steal a glance at me and try to make contact, and then look away. These irritating little eye-balls of his were then cast into new light, when – in trying to talk sensibly and seriously to the stupid and talkative also ran – I happened to mention that I lived in a small house and the man who'd so far been silent then burst in with 'I bet it's a nice cosy little house you've got eh? I'd love to see it' with the obvious and smutty undertone, suggesting that we were going to go back there for some hanky-panky.

Stupid and false sentiments! What pathetic little remarks! I really felt like going over and slapping his stupid face. He was so contemptible. Why couldn't he just speak normally? Why was he so nervous? They were both so nervous, whereas conversely I'd never felt so myself, so at home, so at ease, so in control. I could see the entire game plan, the big picture. They could only see the move in front of them, the run to first bay.

Having had my fill of these imbeciles I tried to ram it into their thick skulls that I wanted nothing to do with them. And now at this point, Rico and Angelo had stopped kissing, presumably to come up for air.

I took a look at Rico, though he didn't really look at me for he was very haughty like that. Handsome as well. For a moment as I looked at him, something occurred to me. In fact I had been struck by Rico the very first time I saw him.

Didn't I recognise him? From the terror network? From the black list? Or maybe – and this was my best hunch – wasn't he a police officer? Here undercover. Was that a possibility? I was momentarily struck by the thought.

Meanwhile I noticed some very Asian looking men enter the building and disperse, one of whom talked to Angelo. Now this was suspicious, for several parcels were exchanged between them, and the newcomers seemed like they were *in business* with Angelo. I made a mental note of them, seeing how they appeared to be involved in some sort of shady dealings here and perceiving that they were somehow in league with Angelo.

Angelo and Rico were very much in love. I clearly meant nothing to my beloved and yet somehow I had to get him into bed. I chided myself that I had so easily let him slip out of my arms. But putting these thoughts to one side, I now decided to go out on a limb and chance my hand on a rather desperate plan of action.

Making eyes at Angelo whose attention I had caught – he was looking my way as Rico was engrossed in a conversation with someone else – I made it plain through my come to bed eyes and my momentarily pursed lips, that I meant business; and when I believed he'd got the message I then set off walking towards the toilet. The last thing I saw before entering was Angelo – looking me in the eyes with a serious countenance as if he understood my offer – drink up and then stand up.

I entered one of the cubicles. I didn't lock the door, but merely leaned my body against it. I kept my ear on alert awaiting the magic knock. I had already stripped off my shirt; my naked torso would be waiting to receive the kisses of my lover. I was so nervous! I knew it was now or never.

I waited in semi-silence, the noise of the bar dimly making its way in here. And then it happened.

He entered the toilets, and by pressing on the cubicle door persistently, made it known to me that it wasn't just someone wishing to toilet, but rather someone who knew I was in here waiting for them, and who desperately wanted to join me in the passion of love making. Come in, come in, my dear man, let the orgy commence.

Yet in a dramatic twist of events, as I opened up the door I saw the face of none other than the talkative also ran.

'What are you doing you dirty man!' I shouted, venting my anger on him. He was beside himself intimating to me to shut up, but I kept up my outburst as he tried to enter.

The irritating pervert had obviously seen me go to the toilets and had come in in order to try his luck. The gay tried to make his way into the cubicle and he touched my naked breast. Slamming the door, I trapped and justly injured his breast-groping arm. Annoyed and thwarted I put my top back on, and exiting the cubicle, started berating that stupid fucking pervert once more.

'I don't know why you can't just get it into your head, I *don't* like you. I came here for Angelo, it's *him* that I fancy' I said slowly and patronisingly. 'I wish you

would fuck off you dirty-minded man' and with these words I now took the rather satisfying liberty of smacking him across the cheek. It really stung him, and he was left there confounded and confused and stroking his sore face. With dignity I returned into the bar.

But when I got there I could no longer see Angelo and Rico.

'They're gone!' said the bar man in his placid voice.

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'That's great, that's great' said Angelo to Rico. 'This is really good.'

'Oh help me!' shuddered Rico in response as he achieved orgasm.

'What's that smell?' said Angelo a little later.

'What smell?' said Rico.

'That one' said Angelo 'it smells like hard boiled eggs.'

They were in bed together in the dark. I, having gleaned their general direction from the barman, had caught up with them, followed them back and gotten myself into position under their bed. But that wind, which was proving a real problem, had come back to haunt me.

Rico got up to open a window.

'That stinks!' he said, having finally gotten wind of the problem. He was blaming Angelo.

'It's not me!' decried he. 'You're playing double bluff! I know your game.'

'It's not me!' retorted Rico laughing. They each blamed the deed on the other.

The love making continued.

I was thankful for the open window, because the stifling heat had really been getting to me, jammed up against the radiator as I was. My plan was at present to spy on Angelo, and when the chance came, take a butchers around his flat; the ploy to seduce him having been put on the back burner for a while.

Underneath the bed I found a baseball bat. It seemed, according to a theme their conversation touched on later, as I lay listening under the bed, that this area was prone to burglars and that they feared, moreover, an unprovoked homophobic attack. Why do people who make entry into their houses so unbelievably easy, then go and complain about intruders?

Shortly, I got out my phone camera, and, raising it above the parapet of the bed, centred it on the two love birds and began to record.

Now I know what you're thinking reader. You're thinking 'X is making this video in order to obtain something by which to blackmail Angelo later on. It's a classic 'sex scene of an enemy' scenario. Angelo in bed with a man could cause serious damage for him if his big-cheese al-Qaeda buddies find out about it. He would then become a useful informant for you, being forced to eat out of your hand and do your dirty work.'

Now to some extent you would be right, although in general the reason for these videos is simply to satisfy the whims of the senior bureaucrats back at the academy, since according to the *Common operational procedures and practices*

handbook 'a spy is expected to make records (including those of a visual-technological persuasion) in an attempt at transparency, the documenting of all missions being essential and indeed possible in the digital age, and contributing to the accountability of the profession.'

Of course, you're probably thinking, if that's so, how come you didn't make any videos on your previous missions? Well rest assured reader, I did. I just didn't tell you about them. And don't think I'm one of these lazy spies who never reviews their tapes and just dismisses their existence as bureaucratic nonsense. I'm not. In fact so dedicated am I, that I often go to bed studying them.

Meanwhile I was getting very agitated. Anyone who has ever lain next to a boiling radiator with no ability to turn it off will know the bull-like rage that overcomes you as your blood literally begins to boil. I felt I could have killed someone; accordingly I had no option but to start stripping down, removing my outer layers.

At one point a conversation broke out upstairs and Angelo said 'I'm going back to the Mediterranean Boy later, in order to see my new boy.'

My heart became excited. So he did like me! I was momentarily reprieved. The plot to win my way into his bed had been given a new lease of life.

After the love making had died down, both Rico and Angelo fell into slumber. By this time I was down to my underpants so overbearing was the heat.

A little later, Angelo got up to leave.

'I'm off to see my boy' he said to Rico before he left, raising my spirits once more.

Rico murmured an assent. I decided to let Angelo go, and, once he'd departed, follow him out and magically meet him on the street.

Five minutes later, with only Rico and I now left in the house I decided to leave. And yet in a bizarre twist of events, I tripped getting up from where I had been hidden, the sleeping Rico awoke and found someone in his flat, and taking me for an intruder, tried to attack me.

I couldn't convince him of my innocence and so, in the dark, the fight was on.

So had it come to this: a semi-naked wrestling match. In fact, pervert that he was, Rico was totally in the buff and had no shame in accosting me thus. But what that flasher didn't know, was that I was an expert in Greco-Roman wrestling – the academy champion in fact.

I was determined to have him. And my blood was really pumping now – to see that boy, who had so casually stolen my man taking his aggression out on me – and I was up for the fight. However he came at me with fists and it was my first intention to check these. Accordingly, I managed to catch hold of both his arms in my hands; and though he struggled to release them, I had him.

To now minimise the risk of being hit by a flying punch, if he managed to free one of his hands, which he was threatening to do so at any second, or by a kicking leg, it was now my aim to get my body very close to Rico's. I wanted to get right on him and so grapple with him and make it a pure wrestling match as it were.

He struggled but I had him now; and so as to build on my advantage and double my gains, I now decided to let gravity assist me. Accordingly I charged him downwards to the floor.

I was now on top of him and it felt really good. He was lying on his back on the floor, I was on top, and we were – for want of a better phrase – in the missionary position. Pinned as he now was I had an advantage. Yet with my hands in place restraining his fists, how was I to make it count?

I decided to use my mouth and plant some bites on Rico. I went for his neck. Yet I feared biting him too hard: it could be dangerous and after all I didn't want to seriously injure him. Thus I didn't bite too hard, but kept it softish, just pecking at him.

When I'd done with his neck I moved onto his shoulders and his chest and quickly set about biting every single spot I could; and finally remembering how once when eating chocolate I'd bitten my lip and it absolutely pained me, I decided to do the same to Rico's lip.

Through all of this that little hussy was rustling and wriggling about but I was determined to pin him and have my way. We were both making grunting noises, were both so possessed by animal passions, and as we grappled and struggled we both groaned for breath. I could feel Rico's cold naked body beneath me and my groin fell right on his.

Yet in a moment of desperation Rico got one of his hands free and I was now in a spot of bother. However to stop the possibility of him throwing a punch I immediately threw myself at him, and got our bodies even tighter together. I was really on top of him, desperate to keep him pinned down with my body and tried to hug him for dear life to stop him using that loose fist.

Rico clasped his free arm over my shoulder and around my neck in an effort to control me. I essayed to keep him down, yet with superhuman strength, he managed to so get the better of me as to spin me over and get on top of me. Thus I found myself underneath Rico, his weight pressed against me, my buttocks pressed down on the cold panels of the floor. 'Ooooh! Ooooh!' I moaned what with all the exertions.

We were very much tight together, I was hugging him around the neck and shoulders, very, very tightly for fear that if he broke loose now, he would be able to punch me, and would altogether be in a very strong situation as I lay prostrate on the floor.

Now the situation became critical. My arms were tiring and I felt Rico was going to break himself, back first, out of my embrace. I could feel his back and shoulders pressing upwards against my arms. He was gaining strength and breaking free of my embrace. I had to do something.

The worst of the situation was, was that holding Rico's neck and shoulders as I did, I was *not* embracing him at his centre of gravity. Not at all. In fact as he struggled out of my arms I was fast only holding onto his head, whilst the whole of his lower back and lower torso was totally free to do as it pleased and force his body out of my embrace. It was necessary to correct this bad positioning of mine.

Accordingly I allowed one hand of mine to let go of his back and placed it further down across his naked ass. Don't baulk at this reader. My wrestling coach back at the academy always used to tell us that the best way to control a protagonist, the region in which his centre of mass seems to be concentrated, is his buttocks.

My plan was working. He was trying to free himself and as such his buttocks were moving outwards. But with superhuman effort, I desperately grappled with it, pushing it, pushing it, pushing it so that it came right back in, so close in fact that our groins were touching. I felt greatly relieved by this. Though his soft, peachy bottom wriggled and moved up and down in my hand I firmly held it in position.

Of course reader, it hasn't slipped my attention that in all of this touching of naked flesh, all of this grasping of bottoms, all this body to body communion, all this groin on groin action, it hasn't slipped my attention that that sick perverted homosexual Rico was getting his cheap kicks. Actually it pained me to think that this was probably his idea of a good night. And as he grunted and panted and got aggressive, I really believed that he was probably just going through with all this just to satisfy his own depraved and disgusting dreams.

In fact Rico had been tugging at my underpants throughout and though at first I had been generous enough to pass this off as a mere tactic of his, in the heat of battle, I soon came to realise that he was titillating himself with this act, and obviously had a thing for my butt.

However, it was to my credit that I didn't grow enraged at this but rather used it to play to my strengths. I finally got back on top again; and when I did, I so conspired, with the help of a free hand, to wriggle out of my pants, thus distracting that pervert with my lovely backside and so taking his attention away from the fight. Moreover by removing my pants I had taken away a point of grip from my protagonist. Thus on two levels, both physical and psychological, it had proved an incredibly cunning ploy.

Yet the revelation of my naked backside, and his lecherous hands upon it, finally lead me to extreme rage and anger.

However this spurred me on to new feats and sustained me with new energies. Now it's a well-known fact in wrestling circles – anyone who's ever participated in the sport will immediately concur with me – that if you are pinning your opponent it's a hundred times better if they're lying on their stomach than on their back. (They can't hit you except with an ineffective back hand in this position.)

And this was the position I now had Rico in. I had grappled him into it with the sort of manoeuvre a professional would have been proud of, the likes of which had seen me crowned academy champion. As I lay on top of his naked body, with my groin placed astutely over his centre of mass, his buttocks, I felt very pleased and satisfied and in control of things.

Yet Rico was no push over and with incredible tenacity attempted to wriggle free. Primarily he did this by raising and wriggling his backside. His upper body was totally pinned by mine, so that my head rested in the back of his head, and I had his perfumed, silky hair in my face, and my chin in the nape of his neck.

Through his butt he was trying to affect an escape. I had my groin over it, and with this, and only this – my arms were up top pinning down his – I was desperately trying to steady it as it moved from side to side and up and down.

You know he was really generating some power with it and thrusting it into my groin. But my groin was equally ready for the fight and would fain force his buttocks back down firmly into the floor. The ensuing fight was desperate: but eventually I won the day, my groin pressing his naked buttocks down flat against the floor.

In this position did we now lie, both of us exhausted and taking a rest for a second, that homosexual Rico momentarily conquered, and the feel of his cold, naked body satisfyingly beneath me.

I decided that as Rico now lay underneath me, it would be a good idea to carry out a little test that I'd wanted to do all evening. I should explain.

As I mentioned earlier it hadn't failed to escape my suspicions that Rico might well be an undercover police officer. Presumably that was why he was mixed up with Angelo – he was investigating him. Now if this was true then I would be able to order him to relinquish his mission, and let me have Angelo for the night; moreover he could give me some information and help me out.

However I couldn't broach this subject to Rico without revealing who I was; and if it turned out that Rico was just a ponce after all then I'd have blown my cover for nothing. However I had designed a test to see if Rico was a true gay boy or not. And now as he lay there recovering, it seemed a good time to carry out said test.

Accordingly, I furtively placed my hand underneath his groin, and touching his humongous testicles, I put my hand on his manhood. I held it momentarily.

But the response was positive: it grew in my hand. So he was a gay after all. He wasn't an undercover. There was no possibility of collaborating with him.

Yet in fact later on, when I thought about it, I soon realised that this was a stupid test (the *heat of the moment, mental faculties impaired* adage springs to mind again).

Because if you think about it reader, even if he was an undercover police officer that wouldn't rule him out as a gay; the two are not after all mutually exclusive; in fact thinking it over, there's a definite correlation there.

The fight came back to life with new ardour soon after, and growing wearied, I felt my ability to resist Rico dissipating.

He got himself on top again and I simply lay there on my back on the floor whilst the man on top of me did as he pleased. *I couldn't resist him anymore.*

Losing my strength I decided to try and appeal to his sympathy instead. He was gay after all, he probably loved flowers and babies and was a vegetarian. It wouldn't be a hard ploy I fancied.

I started moaning and groaning to try and pretend that I was hurt; and I shut my eyes as if I was scared; and I started panting as if I was out of breath; I even started screaming. All of this play acting I thought Rico would never fall for: I'd thought he'd see straight through it. Yet incredibly, as he was atop of me and grappling to get his arms free, he actually took all of these little signs for real; he was completely convinced by all my moaning and groaning and screaming. (I was just faking it!)

He was such a fool. He truly believed it and started making grunts of pleasure as if he was finally winning. I couldn't believe how easily I'd duped him. And from time to time I opened one of my eyes and coldly inspected his face. He was so engaged in his animalistic passions, he had no idea I was duping him like this.

A malicious little grin came over my face. This was so easy. As I lay there on the floor, the devil got up inside me, and I just wanted to moan and groan all the more, he was such a dupe; and I piled on the fake screams as though I was in agony. What a fool Rico was to believe it all.

However he didn't seem to have any sympathy with me, something which I feel proves that homosexuals are not all lovely, meek vegetarians who love babies and flowers, *as they would fain have the world believe*, but actually vicious, self-centred thugs without a streak of human decency in them.

However I was to be rescued from another source.

Prising an arm free, I picked up the baseball bat, which, at that moment, lay to hand at the point where the fight had wriggled to. I whacked him over the head and that was goodnight for Rico. 'Bloody homosexual' I said as I angrily got to my feet.

It was then that I realised the severity of my injuries. Rico had really given me some blows and my head throbbed and ached. The brutal bastard!

Yet thankful to have gotten that monster off me, I now decided to make my way out of the flat and get back to Angelo. However, now that I was in his flat, with Rico unconscious, it behoved me to have a look around.

I did so, and sitting down at the computer, accessed several secret files, hidden away in secure places. 'Hello' I said coolly and cynically, like an action hero, perceiving that I had discovered bona fide evidence of terror plots.

However just as I was saving these files to my memory stick, disaster struck.

The bell rang. Someone was outside.

I hoped they would go away but they were very persistent and kept calling out 'Angelo!' Meanwhile I heard the murmuring of Rico coming back to consciousness in the bedroom.

As I froze momentarily, the stranger now surprised me further. As I considered my next move, I decided to go and spy on him from the living room window. But that was when everything went wrong.

The stranger, also coming to the window, peered in at me and smiled. I was doomed.

Should I be found here like this, secretly in the home of a known terrorist, accessing his data files, having beaten up his partner, there would be only one conclusion to make: it would be obvious that I was an anti-terror agent. That would be especially true if this new stranger were a terrorist himself; but even if he wasn't, and even if he didn't know of Angelo's terror background, any information he would tell him, about my visit here, would be curtains for me and my operation vis-à-vis Angelo. It should be noted that Rico had never seen my face, having fought me in the dark. But this newcomer had gotten a good look at me.

The most ironic thing of all was that I hadn't beaten down Rico because he was a terrorist and I was an anti-terror agent. No, that had merely been a collateral damage of my mission. Yet if that stranger at the door was a terrorist then, should he find Rico like so, he would no doubt conclude that I was here on an anti-terror mission.

Conversely if he wasn't a terrorist, he might make the miscalculated deduction that I was a homophobic housebreaker who liked beating gay men: such a conclusion, although it might provide me with cover, would however, inevitably bring an end to the mission and my hopes of getting near to Angelo.

The stranger would not go away. Rico persisted to moan. I thought long and hard. Finally I had a solution.

'Hello darling!' I said opening up the door two minutes later, having come from the bedroom where I'd been tying up some loose ends.

I explained that I was Angelo's new boyfriend and that he, unfortunately for me, was out.

'It's a pity' I said, looking the newcomer, who was middle-aged and apparently gay, saucily in the eye 'because I was getting' I said rubbing my body, covered only by a skimpy towel 'very, very horny.'

And so we ended up in bed and my plan worked perfectly. I had calculated that by not only assuming the role of Angelo's new boyfriend, but by having a secret romp with 'Angelo's best friend' as he described himself, I would get him to leave here with such a burden of guilt on his conscience, that he would never want to talk to Angelo of me, or my time here, again. It would be as if this whole incident had never taken place. It was a great plan and I patted myself on the back for it, saying 'more quick-thinking by the mysterious man of espionage'.

Thus did I end up in bed with this homosexual, fate having allowed me no other option.

Afterwards I couldn't help playing into the role of Angelo's boyfriend and made clever allusions as to how you can never trust someone in bed, looking my bedfellow keenly in the eyes as I said this and suggesting, with a great sense of wit, that maybe he was not who he said he was. But instead of catching on to the idea that I was actually a secret agent up to no good, he just rolled over and started trumping.

I lit a cigarette and coyly made veiled references to my cunning ploy, double-entendre's about my clever scheme that wouldn't have been out of place in a James Bond film or a Shakespearian tragedy for that matter. But, and maybe it's the sign of the times we're living in, he paid no attention to any of this, and soon was snoring and dribbling in the land of the dead. How frustrating it is when no-one appreciates just how clever you've been.

I had successfully gotten myself out of the lion's den by offering my sexual wares. And yet, as much as I had led him on a little, in my role as spy, I really felt he had gone to town on me and taken things way beyond what I had offered or indeed what any normal person might reasonably expect. It was only later that I would realise the full tragedy of what went on, but deep in my soul I knew what had just occurred.

I had been raped.

I had been raped and yet my mind was so concentrated on the mission that I refused to accept the horror of what had just happened to me but instead, with incredible dedication to duty, I played into the idea that I was quite enjoying it and brought out more of this gay boy's sperm on several later occasions, applying myself orally to both his penis and his anus, hoping this would be enough to convince him I was no anti-terror agent.

The sexual acts I performed were manifold. It was an incredible feat in the line of duty, something which ordinary citizens will cringe at undertaking, but something for which I applied myself rigorously. It was a brilliant example of the kind of terrible, and deeply unholy situations we spies find ourselves in – my actions bore all the hallmarks of courage and bravery – and it is through deeds

such as this that commendations, from her Majesty herself, are given out. I had gone above and beyond the call of duty.

The worst thing was of course, was that that pervert had really enjoyed it. I couldn't help feeling a little bitter about the affair and when the post-traumatic stress set in weeks later I would often be horrified by the sheer depravity of this type of person. Though you're probably thinking the medal I was given from the Queen was enough to offset all this (wrong reader, I never received such a medal), even if I had, and as I'm sure other rape victims will testify to, nothing can make pure a once corrupted body.

I lay in the bed recovering.

Rico had been conveniently shut up. Or so I thought.

'What's that noise?' questioned my bedfellow as we heard banging from under the bed, like a gagged and bound man trying to signal his presence by knocking against the radiators.

'It's just the central heating system' I remarked coyly as James Bond would. See reader, us real-life spies like to act up as well you know.

Packing his equipment away, the fun and games now over, my bedfellow made to leave.

As he left, the wriggling body of Rico could be seen vaguely under the bed; my bedfellow looked perturbed at this but I explained that he was a consenting gimp that we kept here gagged and bound.

'He's *bound* to come in *handy* later on' I said quipping with James Bond style double entendre.

My bedfellow, who seemed very worried about what he had seen, left shortly afterwards and soon after so did I.

I decided to get back on the trail of Angelo and to that end returned to the Mediterranean Boy. But speaking to the bar tender there I was told that he was long gone, although 'his boy' was still here. I realised – God how deluded I can sometimes be – that I was not his boy; rather his boy was one of those Asian looking men who I'd seen earlier on.

I looked at this chap and he smiled at me when I caught his eye. I decided it was worth a shot at investigating him, given he was obviously in cahoots with Angelo.

He spoke virtually no English, seemed to be an illegal immigrant and he smiled a lot and wanted to see I had money, and I soon realised that I'd probably found a weak link in the terror chain and that this bitch could be mine for a price. Accordingly, I took him home, with the idea of getting information in return for the money he obviously needed.

But he refused to talk and growing angry with him I tied him up, stripped him naked and got out a whip. He moaned in agony as I struck him and kept saying 'is this giving you pleasure sir?' I couldn't stand this sarcasm, the sarcasm of the criminal who torments his tormenter, and I shouted back for him to answer the God-damned questions but he always said he didn't understand.

I resorted to various tactics, sticking first dildos and then bottles up his backside, but all to no avail. Alas for the God's smile on thee not!

Growing angrier and angrier I stripped myself naked and started to involve myself in a sexual act with him.

Now I know what you're thinking reader, that I was doing this simply to make another video by which to implicate this (obvious) terror suspect in a homosexual relation, something which would be anathema to his peers. Yes that is correct, it is the true and bona fide answer. And yet, and yet, and yet.....I have to confess that maybe it was more than that.

It is quite possible, though I put it out there as a theory only, that post-traumatic stress, induced by my despicable rape at the hands of that filth-monger gay earlier on, was somehow, without my really knowing it, playing a part now in my actions. Just vaguely the thought went through my head, as I steadfastly made love to this man, that maybe, just maybe, there was more to my actions than mere National Security. Maybe, maybe not. I don't know. It is a measure of how honest I am that I should mention it. Other spies hush these things up and don't recognise their darker nature. Is it true? I can't say. But I throw it out to you as a possibility, an idea, a theory.

Moreover it may have been that the earlier blows, inflicted on my head by that sausage sucker Rico, had left me mentally impaired; indeed at various points throughout the night I had wondered if I wasn't becoming a bit deranged.

In the end I got no information and yet this snake had the cheek to ask for money at the end of it all. I punched him in the head for his insolence and he eventually scuttled off.

I had failed in my mission to know the contents of Angelo's heart. Moreover the illicit files from his computer turned out to be red herrings (put there by him deliberately, one imagines, to distract terror agents from the real gold); however they were indeed of a criminal nature, depicting various acts of intercourse between homosexuals all of which, much to my chagrin, I felt obliged to watch out of a sense of duty.

However that said I *had* gotten close to him and made some progress, and more than that I had several videos of him and his cronies in compromising positions. I had made some gains and would take up the good fight against him once again in the future.

To tie up some loose ends.

I finally received a response from a fourteen year old boy who liked my email and wanted to meet me.

I immediately wrote back to him, telling him it would not be possible, given that it was no longer necessary for me to 'research my part'. I forgot all about it.

However I later had second thoughts.

Although at this juncture I need not continue with my role, still it could be relevant for the future and moreover, I didn't like to arouse suspicion, on the part of this boy, that I was a secret agent. Thus I made it my duty to meet him.

We met, though I made it clear from the outset that it would be a purely innocent encounter given the circumstances of his age and so forth.

But then, was that how a homosexual would really behave? I didn't want to undo all my hard work at the end of an exhaustive (and very successful) mission by failing to dot a few Is and cross a few Ts. Accordingly we got down to some funny business.

However I was later overcome with horror that a teenager should consort with a grown man in this way. True he had made his own choices, but still, I felt it my

duty as an adult to try and intervene and help him. I know many people out there have the attitude that you shouldn't be an interfering busybody (and normally that's the philosophy I subscribe to) but here (for once) I believed I was just in following my instincts.

The boy and I had been involved in a gross act of perversion: but, and I reiterate this again, *homosexuality is not a life sentence*.

There was every chance, if he got help now, that he could receive treatment and perhaps be cured of his sickness. Accordingly I left an anonymous message with his parents, telling them that their son had been involved in filthy homosexual behaviour of the most deviant kind and that they needed to treat him ASAP. Moreover, as a method of reinstructing him, I let it be known to his friends, via the internet, that he was a rampant homosexual. Peer pressure, though at times a little excessive, is nature's way of helping us.

He was found hanging several days later, proof that cowardice is rampant amongst homosexuals, thus supporting the theory that they don't belong in the army.

You're probably thinking at this moment why I haven't touched on my post-traumatic stress after being raped, and that it wouldn't be over-indulgent of me to make some mention of it, although it's for exactly that reason – the fear of being accused of being a writer of self-indulgent nonsense – that makes me shy away from the subject. However I feel the voices of interest pipe up and ask me.

As with all these things I demonstrated a remarkable ability to heal. Not because I wasn't injured (indeed I was, severely so, both mentally and physically) but rather because I have always had a positive attitude to life and all it throws at me, even if those things are rankly unjust.

However, I wouldn't be human if from time to time I didn't flare into a rage at the sickness of that animal who had violated me. What he did to me was beyond the pale and yet hearing the tales of others, who had been violated in various circumstances, gave me pause for thought and made me re-evaluate all the anger I felt. Sometimes you've just got to get things into perspective I guess.

As I listened to manifold stories at the rape recovery meetings I started going to, I began to see that this nation has become a complete bunch of whining victims. God, the victim culture! And I'm telling you this as a rape victim myself. This is from the horse's mouth.

Women, and they were mainly women, so don't call me a misogynist, complained at length about things which were virtually trivial in comparison with the sickening abuse I had received. It really left me quite speechless. In the end, I gave up on the meetings, feeling they demeaned those of us who have been raped and obfuscating black and white cases (like my own) with various others of a greyer hue (like those of many other, frankly non-credible, victims).

I gave up, got back on the horse, and I dare say some of those other so-called *victims* could have taken strength from my lead. At the end of the day rape is a violation of the body; but it is not the end of your life. I thanked God for small blessings.

14

The mission to the Mediterranean Boy had been an eye-opener and I bore the bruises of war. Moreover as time went by I suffered from delayed stress and anguish.

I'd gone out with the intention of bedding Angelo in order to gain the secrets of his heart and I'd ended up at his home giving a master class in Greco-Roman wrestling before succumbing to the blows of a deranged Nancy boy that left me with headaches for days to come. After that I had been raped by an opportunistic homosexual. However as promised in the previous chapter, I don't wish to go on about this, knowing fine well how irritating the, me-me-me victim culture is becoming.

However we must talk about other things, namely the violence handed out to me at the hands of Rico.

I went to the hospital about my physical injuries and although at first the doctors had feared I might suffer some sort of brain damage, that I might in consequence be one musician short of an orchestra, that I might lose my marbles or become deranged, mad or even deluded, I knew that mentally I was absolutely fine – completely *compos mentis* – and in due course the doctors came to realise this and discharged me. However the pain that Rico had afforded me was very real, and I was much disgusted at the violent nature of his conduct.

Yet the worst horror of all was not the physical beating; the scars would after all heal themselves. Worse were the psychological scars I'd suffered, the humiliation, the depravity I'd been witness and subject to both during the fight and in the gay bar beforehand. In the name of National Security I'd gone to the Mediterranean Boy. And I'd thrown myself without reserve into the role of homosexual, and gone to extremes and suffered incredibly in the midst of filthy perverts, and all to no avail.

Let's be clear about this. After I'd had time to reflect, I realised I'd gleaned not one bit of information vis-à-vis Angelo's involvement in the terror ring. Not a sausage. (Yes, the video tapes were important reader, but not that important.) True, I had correctly fingered a terrorist. Yet if the big chiefs upstairs at headquarters learned of my ill-fated mission and got wind of my desperate, yet ultimately pointless acts of depravity, there was a good chance I would lose my badge. I'd seen people kicked out for a lot less.

To this end I was much chagrined. For it wasn't as if I'd shirked my responsibilities. On the contrary I'd embraced my mission and fully played up to what the role demanded of me. And to think what I'd let myself go through: I'd been eyed up and hit on and had my breast groped by aged perverts; and I'd found myself stripped naked and accosted by the insufferable Rico, who under the guise of wrestling with me, made untold assaults upon my person.

He had caressed my backside, touched my groin – in short that filthy animal had lustfully attached himself to me and stopped at nothing to gorge his perverted thirst and satisfy his sexual appetites. He had touched every part of my naked body and fiendishly fed thereon.

Moreover, in the sickening den of depravity that the Mediterranean Boy was, I'd had to endure the trauma of aged and drunken perverts leering at my body, gorging their seedy and sin-ridden little eyes on my buttocks, and some of them had gone so far as to have a secret grope of me, revelations that I only allude to now, having been too ashamed to mention them in the previous chapter.

Thus had I found myself, a well-respected secret agent, an inestimable pillar of the community, a clean minded man of integrity bent only on safeguarding the citizens of this nation, leered at, groped and abused – in what frankly amounted to sexual harassment – and treated as though I was a mere sex toy. Is this how people repay me for my devotion to Queen and country? Sick perverts!

What filthy rats they had been to so treat the cream and pride of the secret service. You know my hatred towards homosexuals had doubled, if that was possible, after the events in the Mediterranean Boy (I'm sure you can appreciate reader just how it is that one's bad experiences lead one into prejudice); and frankly I felt no real obligation to safeguard the lives of those odious, sub-human filth that dwelt there; and frankly, if in some deluded moment of madness, that madman and sicko Angelo was to bomb the Mediterranean Boy, then I'll admit to you reader, I would be the first to cheer.

Yet the worst offender of all had been Rico. And ironically, though I'd completely recovered from the physical beatings he'd given me, and was as sound as a pound vis-à-vis my mental health, the sickening acts of depravity that he'd enacted on me came back to haunt me night after night.

For in testing his true identity – gay or as I'd then hoped, straight undercover cop – and in placing my hand on his manhood to verify his true person, that dirty minded ponce had taken the opportunity to titillate himself and had immediately 'lit up' in my hand.

The horror of that incident was like a heavy cloud upon my sky. Night after night I woke up having relived in my dreams that awful, awful moment in which his penis had excitedly inflated and started throbbing like a little bird come to life in my hands. It was so consistently in my mind and time and again I lived out the moment when I held it; no matter how hard I tried it was always in my hand and it became harder, and harder and harder to focus on something else.

It was always in my dreams and no matter how hard I tried I just couldn't seem able to shake it off. I really thought I was scarred for life. You know I've got to say that, supposing I was a homosexual – 'nonsense!' I hear you say reader – but just supposing for a second I was; well if someone tested me like that, some stranger that I didn't know, I would never allow myself to get carried away like that, never ever. Yet that depraved faggot Rico had no self-control and got his cheap thrills in any way he could.

And then we come to the rape, which had I have been a maudlin, indulgent, violin-playing whinger, like so many of the people I met at rape victims anonymous, would mean that the rest of this book would be dedicated to my own personal self-pity, with other anti-terror related activities relegated to an appendix. However, I limited my anger on this score to phoning up national radio, and, revealing to them that I was a rape victim, loudly denounced gray-area rape victims for being so neurotic.

This book then proceeds onwards with the plot and should you wish to know more of my coming to terms with the sexual assault inflicted on me, as well as the horror of coping with the suicide of a young boy, (which wasn't entirely unrelated to what I had (quite rightly) done), and which formed a wound on my poor conscience; as well as the horror of trying to sexually torture a terrorist (who incidentally enjoyed it and laughed in my face, with his smart alec responses) – anyone wishing to know more of this can read my blog *I'm a rape victim with courage* dedicated to my thoughts on these matters.

So time's river swept me along and to new shores did it bring me. And soon my energies were directed into negotiating new and exciting missions.

Reader I should commence this next episode by first offering up an apology for the chapters just gone by. The sickening and shocking acts of depravity described therein are not at all to my taste either, as I'm sure they're not to yours. Yet in my oath bound commitment to the truth – I promised you at the outset a true narrative – I had to put it into print.

There is many a twisted pervert out there, and, just as a natural historian cannot sweep under the rug the savage acts that go on in the darkness of the jungle night, so to I, as guardian of the truth, cannot skip over the actions of that diseased part of our society, homosexuals. However, it may gladden your heart to know that the narrative I'm about to begin, is, in content, a lot more light hearted.

It all began when I was drinking a cup of coffee in the basement floor cafe of a local shopping centre. I was actually just recharging my batteries on route to an obbo I was mounting in the north-western district of the town. Yet it was whilst thus revitalizing myself that I became caught up in a totally different plot altogether.

A few tables away from me a couple, man and wife, were sitting down having a bite to eat. Twenty or thirty-somethings it seemed, average people, just like you or I reader, who'd obviously been out shopping on this Saturday, and were now recuperating at the cafe. Pleasant, everyday citizens going about their business.

Yet some people cannot tolerate the happiness of others, cannot incur the pain of being ignored by them and barred from their world; and whenever they see happiness spring up their immediate desire is to cut it down. I'm talking of course about the terrorists. For in the midst of those two innocents, and though they did not know it, there was an ill-scheming madman at work.

He sat a few tables away. He was of Asian origin. And if you think I'm 'profiling' to so suspect him of terrorism reader, then you're absolutely spot on. Don't believe any police propaganda or government rhetoric. Don't swallow any lies that the media serves up. *Everybody* profiles. Hell, even a traffic warden's cat knows how to profile.

Yet above and beyond his ethnic identity, I had overwhelming evidence of his ill-intentioned designs. For his eyes which were dark and very suspicious kept glancing over full of hate towards that happy couple. He was very cunning as well: he didn't look continuously at his intended victims, but spent long intervals looking away. Yet from time to time he stole a glance at them and in his eyes I saw disaster for the couple. In fact I was completely convinced he was going to kill them.

Dear God what an age we live in. It sends shivers down my spine to think of all the terrorists in the world. What hordes of deranged scum bags there are out there, lurking in the shadows. And I knew fine well what that bastard was thinking. He *hated* that couple, hated them. He was cut out of their world. As I sat there I simply shook my head in disgust at him: he had come to a cafe all on his lonesome and was drinking coffee by himself. What a loser! He was evidently on the fringes of society, unloved, disliked and to all intents and purposes a rank and file no-hoper with women.

He evidently had problems with those two love birds. He was really put out. He had major *jealousy* issues with them. Ha! How these terrorists hate it when two people kiss in front of them. Ha! How consumed by envy they are! And I could see he loathed the female. Ugh! He couldn't stand her at all. She was anathema to him.

Of course it's well documented that these terrorists have got *major* problems with women, especially *our* western women. I felt desperately sorry for that poor girl; really, really sorry for her. *Poor thing*. And I didn't know what that loner-lunatic might do to her and her husband.

Accordingly, as he got up to go there was no other option left me but to follow him – my obbo would have to be put on ice for the interim. As we walked off I said to myself dramatically 'here we go-go'.

It seemed strange that the terrorist was heading away from his intended victims. But the minds of these people are so cunning, pernicious and difficult to scrutinize, in fact so completely crazy and deluded, that I could only conclude that he had some elaborate scheme in mind. It was my duty to pursue him and so I did.

Yet as we went up a level on an escalator and entered a shopping mall, huge crowds of people, mainly football fans who were being spewed out of the nearby stadium and heading to the underground bus station, came walking in the direction opposite; unable to ride the wave of these people I was pushed aside and in doing so I lost sight of the suspect. I couldn't fight my way through, I just couldn't. The last view I had of the suspect was of him mounting an escalator on the other side of the mall.

Eventually I broke through the crowd. Yet not only had the suspect given me the slip, but he'd also gained valuable time on me. Damn! Damn it X you fool! You should have gotten closer man! Should have tracked him with greater care. I'd seen him disappear up the escalator – I had to get a move on in that direction. Accordingly I broke into a run across the floor of the mall.

Reader, I'll level with you, this chase I was now involved in – this is one of the most exciting events in the world of espionage, one of the reasons I signed up. And it's not really about the thrill of the chase. It's more about all the people who are watching me and wondering who is that mysterious man? What on earth is his business? And so too now as I found myself racing at break neck speed, my jacket flying back off my body, my face bearing a concentrated and serious expression, my whole being bent on my mission of catching up with the suspect.

As I thus ran, in the midst of numerous shoppers, some in the mall, some on its escalators, all of whom were just *ordinary* citizens, going about their *ordinary*, everyday lives, I felt myself really special and important. I knew that the eyes and

attention of all the shoppers, going about their shopping would be on me, though I did not deign to look them over, but rather focused on my mission. I knew they'd all be asking themselves 'What on earth's going on here?' 'Who is that man chasing?' 'What is afoot in our midst?' 'Who is that man? He looks so important. Is he a secret agent?' And I knew that especially the women would be thinking to themselves, who is that man? He leads such an *important* and *exciting* life. Wow isn't he dashing! What a mysterious man!

Thus am I forever pleased to be caught up in such a chase, to show off just for once my incredible athleticism and Hollywood-style heroics, to give the average Joe Public, and more especially the ladies, a glimpse of a real-life James Bond. As I ran up the escalator, there was an elderly lady standing on the left side and in my way. Now I'll tell you dear reader, I've seen policeman in their chases literally run into, bump over, and frankly leave for dead, old ladies who stand in their path. Not so with yours truly. I never forget, no matter how exciting events may be, my courtesy and my honour. And so it was now.

As I approached the old dear I slowed down, and putting one hand authoritatively on her shoulder declared 'Madam, please, allow me to pass'. She seemed a bit put out by it all and looked at me strangely as though I was a weirdo. I do get some bad reactions like this. The general public are never so courteous to me as I to them. Nevertheless I ran on.

When I reached the top I first ran one way and when I could not see the suspect, I skidded dramatically to a halt and set off in the other direction. Eventually I skidded once more to a halt, when again I could not see the terrorist in that direction either. He was gone damn him!

He'd gotten away. I'd lost him completely. 'Holy shit' I shouted to myself in the mall as passers-by looked on, thinking 'is this guy really a secret agent?' 'The fucking terrorists!' I shouted, giving them a little clue, and then taking out my mobile, I sent a verbal message to HQ.

'713 this is alpha-935. The cat is out of the bag, repeat the cat is out of the bag. Return to the Lion's den, show me dealing' I said as people round about looked with uncertainty at me. I know it's very vain of me reader, but I do feel proud at such moments, talking this kind of sophisticated, classified spy-lingo, that is so highly coded it's essentially the same as speaking a foreign language. Yes, especially proud as the mall-shoppers looked at me in deep admiration and envy and I pretended to be indifferent to their looks and hushed whispers.

The son of a bitch had slipped through the net. What was I to do now? What might that villain not do to his victims now that I'd lost him? Without hesitation I had immediately surmised that the terrorist was escaped and now proceeded with haste to retrace my steps.

You see this is what we're taught at the academy: if you lose the suspect, your first duty is to safeguard the intended victims. Your first thought is to them, and in any case, since they are the target of the terrorist, by sticking close to them you'll soon be back on his trail. Thus with speed did I run all the way back to the cafe, and there panting and out of breath, I saw, much to my relief, the happy couple, uninjured and still at their meal, totally oblivious of the true situation of events.

They sat there having their dinner. Thank God they were safe. Thank God. And they looked so innocent; so oblivious to the fact that some strange man had ill-designs on them. I resumed my seat. Under my watchful eye they were now very safe indeed. I wasn't going to let them out of my sight. Wherever they went so too would I. For tonight and for the meanwhile they were to be treated to – as they fully deserved to be and were entitled to – her Majesty's royal protection. If only they knew I was going to keep an eye on them; if only they knew! How pleased they'd be. Yet I had to recognize that I'd be an unsung hero yet again.

Some twenty minutes later we left the cafe and headed to the bus stop. From their conversations, I had learned that we were heading home – they were both quite tired, and just wanted a cosy, relaxing night in together in the privacy of their own home. It would just be the three of us then.

Honestly reader I feel like that oftentimes myself you know. Some days it's all you can manage to just have a quiet night in by yourself. I could really appreciate where these people were coming from. Thus I'd be in for a spot of house-sitting.

When we reached the bus stop I started to think things through. Was it really very likely that that terrorist was going to come back and get them? Hardly! I mean come on! Yet there was a possibility. As such I was oath bound to protect the victims. However small the odds might be, I wasn't going to chance having two dead bodies on my hands. No sir. I had to stay with them and escort them, it was my duty to do so.

Yet it would be a long and probably uneventful night ahead of me then. It would be a real bore. I was desperate to be back out working on the dangerous and exciting obbo I was mounting. I didn't want to be wasting my time away on house-duty, it was such a chore.

Yet as I looked at the innocent and happy little faces of that couple, I shook my head wistfully. There was nothing for it but to protect them, the poor little souls. If ever they found out that I'd shirked my duty to them, I knew they'd never forgive me. Ultimately I had a responsibility to them and as such I had to go home with them. It was what, had they known what peril they were in, they would have wanted.

Yet house-sitting like this is such a bore and every secret agent knows it. We always have a joke about it back at HQ but honestly it's the pits. In an amusing anecdote, secret agent Z had to house sit for a couple who were decorating their house, so that he literally had to watch paint dry. But the worst of it was, was that he was there for three whole weeks! And in the end it turned out that nothing happened. Such stories are numerous. I wondered what was in store for me tonight.

By this time we were seated on the bus, yours truly insinuating himself (after a bit of well-disguised seat swapping) behind and to the left of the happy couple. By listening into their conversation it transpired that we were getting a film out for the night and having a takeaway. Well it might not be so boring after all.

I should say that in tracking the couple thus far, I had very much held myself back. Obviously they *weren't* a flight risk; they had nothing to run from. The female had clocked me once at the cafe, but only in absent-mindedness I thought. And principally the couple were caught up in their own affairs and took no heed of me. I hadn't been eye-spied as I trailed them to the bus stop, nor at it either.

In order to avoid being silently clocked by the female again when I walked onto the bus, and indeed to cast asunder any conceit that I was 'stalking' them, when the bus arrived and I saw those two stand up and ready themselves to get on it, I then deliberately, and with seeming oblivion to aught else, played the part of an anti-socialite, bent only on getting himself onto the bus and out of the cold; and jumping the queue, and overtaking my charges, I pushed my way to the front.

A few good citizens complained, but for reply I merely mimicked them and shouted 'get a life granddad!' and made them out to be boring stooges. I don't know whether the happy couple witnessed this; but if they did it would surely show that I was in no way following them. And I wanted to get my shots in early; because I knew that when I left the bus I would find myself all alone and unprotected and indeed I would then be following them. When that time came I would need to rely on such antics as I'd just performed, in order to dismiss, as dip-shit, any suspicious looks I might receive from the couple, particularly the female.

Of course you might well ask it reader, but for why since I'm only providing them with protection, could I not just inform the couple of my presence instead of – in inverted commas – 'stalking' them like this. The reasons for this are manifold.

Supposing I was to tell them. I'd then have to tell them the whole truth and nothing but. There would be no chance of spinning a yarn and serving them say, a half-truth explanation for my intrusion into their lives, because then they'll probably just suspect that I myself am some weirdo who's doing strange and suspicious things to them.

So I tell them the truth. What's their reaction? They have a panic attack. They go absolutely mental. Moreover I can't just tell them on my own. Again because they'll suspect me. Instead I'm going to have to phone my boss up and get him to come out here, perhaps with yet another colleague, in order to explain the situation. That's wasting the precious time of superiors of great import to National Security, men and women who are busting a gut, working around the clock to prevent terror attacks.

And believe me they'll be there all night explaining. For the shocked couple want explanations. They want to know what the hell's going on, they want answers. And then their curiosity being peaked, they want to know every bleeding detail of every foiled terrorist attack that ever took place and all the inside gossip regards the war on terror.

I'm going to have to have a team of trained counselors on hand to help the couple cope. Then one way or another it's leaked, perhaps by the couple themselves or their family and friends, but whichever way the devil dances, before you can say scoop, the media's on the door step thrusting their microphones up every orifice. Suddenly we're surrounded by camera crews, reporters, etcetera, yours truly has got his face all over the papers, my cover's blown, everyone knows I'm a secret agent, and the media is going cock-a-hoop and doing the funky chicken. There's national hysteria – an innocent couple to be attacked in their own home by a terrorist – is this an isolated instance or is it a regular occurrence?

I'll tell you the answer to that reader, with a very alarming statistic. One out of every ten people has been watched like this in their lives, with secret agents

visiting one household in every average street in a period of less than a month. (Believe me I've been on many of these missions.)

Have you any idea then of the national panic that would ensue if each and every one of these cases of *potential* terror plots came to light? There would be pandemonium. Not to mention the horrific costs in time and manpower that it would throw down the shit-shoot. Clearly the best tactic is to do things in the dark, utilizing only the resources of one secret agent.

I should say a little also about the rules and regulations set up by the secret service that govern these house-sitting expeditions. Simply it's a remark about the eating requirements of the spy and the lore of 'scrumping'.

Spies are *not* expected to take along their own food, and, in the case that a spy is forced to spend 'a lengthy and protracted period' at the house 'he or she may' – academy lore, article 371, sub-section b – 'proceed to acquire, without fear of charges of criminality, any such portions of food and drink that they deem necessary to maintain themselves in a healthy and productive state of operation, provided said morsels will not be easily seen to have been taken by the house occupants, or to arouse suspicion in any way shape or form.'

Thus would it be tonight. I was in for a fairly long stay and therefore might expect to feed myself at my charges' expense. And it seemed we were going for a take away. I might be able to scrounge some of the left-overs. It wasn't as yet clear what they had in mind, but personally I fancied a Chinese.

The bus stopped and we alighted. We were in a fairly respectable middle-class neighbourhood. I need have no fears tonight. As we began to walk along the street I kept some twenty metres or so to the rear. It was dark and that was a help. When we had gone some few hundred metres to the good, the couple crossed over the road and entered a brightly illumined shop: it was the movie-rental store.

I waited outside. Ha! I wondered what they were going to get? I hoped it was something good. Something to while away the wee hours. I popped a chewing gum in and waited casually. But after a few minutes had passed it struck me that perhaps I should really be in there big-brothering them. However, were I to make an entrance into the store, I would risk blowing my cover to some extent. But then hang on, maybe the terrorists were in there waiting for them?

I suddenly had a presentiment of something, a sinking feeling. And now that I looked up at the shop owner's name it said 'Ahmed Ali Khan!' Shit! I'd been caught napping. That was it. The terrorist knew who his people were and *that* was why he'd let them go earlier; he knew where they lived for he resided in their neighbourhood! Shit, I'd better get in there.

However when I entered the couple were fine. They were perusing some films on one wall. At the counter, and watching on, was a young man of Asian origin. We eye-balled one another and then I took to looking at the movie selection.

So did we proceed, the couple searching on one side and yours truly stood behind them, looking at the movies on the opposite wall, with his back rather foolishly turned on both his protectees and the shop owner. It was a mistake and I was going to realise it. For in an incredible French kiss of fate the most dramatic events were about to take place, and the evening was set to plunge into a terror of terrors.

15

In the bowels of the movie store, my worst nightmare was about to unfold.

A shocking incident of the most horrific import was set to take place.

As I here set it down in ink, the sheer horror of what occurred is almost enough to make me faint. My pen quivers as the hand that holds it shivers in nervous recollection. An awful tingling sensation goes down the back of my spine.

It is taking incredible feats of courage for me even just to relay this part of the story to you.

In an awful turn of events, the male picked up a film case and said ‘that’s meant to be quite good.’

‘What is it?’ said the female questioningly. ‘Atonement? The quintessential English film? Five stars?’

Oh my God this was awful. No! Oh please God no! Spare me! Oh my God what a horrible twist of events!

It was so, so boring. Was I going to be forced to sit through that? Argh no! No! Please save me! Aaaaaaargh!

In fact I will tell you reader, although I may be giving away top secret information and compromising National Security to do so, but a favourite measure of torture, used by the British secret service is to make suspects sit through endless repeats of films of this ilk. In fact al-Qaeda’s leading operative in Europe was forced to watch Atonement on a loop.

Being at the holding centre at the time myself, I heard his screams of terror – the horrific ‘Noooooo! Noooooo! Nooooo!’ still haunts my ears to this day (I’ve never witnessed such fear of anticipated horror on the part of man) – and I recall how the guards just laughed cynically to themselves and gave no mercy.

I know al-Qaeda have committed atrocities, I know this man was as close as you can get to pure evil and I know that we have to do something to make suspects talk; but still, sometimes I think that we have become as bad as them, that the fear of terrorism has turned us into savage animals. It is of deep regret to me that I didn’t intercede on this man’s part, enter the cell and say ‘enough! The line must be drawn here. Starve him if you must, waterboard him if you really have to, but please, he’s still a human being, our brother after all, don’t make him watch that God-awful film.’

The torture of victims in this way is orchestrated from on high and is *completely systematic*. Typically a detainee may be left to watch the film for as long as seventy-two hours in a row and in some cases the torture can be heightened on the whim of the (often malicious) evidence gatherers. I have heard stories – although it’s not officially sanctioned – of anti-terror agents bringing copies of the book version of Atonement into the cell and making suspects read it, even reading it aloud to them themselves in cases where suspects are unable to endure any more.

Alarming and dehumanizing as all this clearly is, it will of course be justified in terms of foiled terrorist attacks and saved civilian lives. All the same, a part of you

dies when you see the high-price, indeed the cost of human suffering, that we are forced to pay for all of this.

And there is often one final turn of the screw for those unfortunate victims of this brand of torture. Just when all films and books are taken away and the suspect is breathing a sigh of relief, various members of the secret service – up to as many as ten of them – will now enter the cell, and, ignoring the suspect, start up a series of conversations with one another, going on about how brilliant *Atonement* is, both in book and film form.

It is an act of unspeakable cruelty. The suspect, who just can't believe his ears, who can't tolerate this utterly false version of reality – the sheer injustice of it chokes him – will now start lashing out (often violently) unable to fathom the reason for this misrendering of the facts, before finally giving in to hysteria, banging his head against the wall in agony, and accepting that he must be mad.

I feel, when the war on terror ends and the dust finally settles, we might all look back on some of the things we did and say 'my God, was I really so cruel?'

Incidentally, although this peculiar and twisted form of torture was (and is) carried out on British soil, the CIA were (and are) behind it, and, though you'll hear nothing but denial on this score, they were getting their orders directly from President Bush.

If you didn't know it already, that man is pure evil. I'd love to make *him* watch *Atonement*. Ha! The very thought of it cheers me up. Of course in reality if it were to happen, he'd probably only become a Martyr for his sufferings.

Anyway it looked like I was in for the same. That would be too much punishment. Too much. I would never survive it. No siree! What on earth was I to do?

Yet in the depths of this deepest darkness, riding through the valley of death as I now was, and stunned by my horrific fate, my spy's aptitude for quick thinking had already conjured up a counter attack option, and, before I was fully conscious of it, I already found myself fighting back.

Desperately I scoured the DVDs around me. But nowhere was I able to see what I so feverishly sought. What the heck kind of movie store was this? There were eight of them made. How on earth could the proprietors not stock one *Attack of the Dolphin head Zombies* film? Fools! They were missing out on a little gold mine there. I kept searching. Then bingo! I found something. Yes! The perfect anti-dote to *Atonement*.

In the meantime the couple had just about decided on *Atonement*, and, getting dangerously close to the counter, the wheel of fortune was spinning ominously away from me. It was now or never. 'Then let's do it!' I said silently to myself.

Walking over to the couple, I immediately burst in, and gesticulating excitedly, began speaking.

'Have you seen this? This is the best film ever. Honestly it's just so good. You'll laugh, you'll cry. It's the ultimate feel good film. I've seen it thirty-seven times. It's simply wonderful.'

The happy couple were somewhat taken aback by my little intrusion and were unsure of what to make of me. But they could see that I was insisting and out of politeness they had to listen to me. (But I had no scruples on this score; for I was doing them a favour by recommending this film.) The male now took it from my

hands, the female standing behind him and not daring to take her eyes off me; she was scared somewhat and scrutinized me as if I was strange.

'Cool Runnings?' said the male. 'What's that?' I explained to him that it was the *true* story of the first ever Jamaican Bobsleigh team.

Now if like him reader you haven't heard of Cool Runnings, it's because one, you're an ignoramus, and two, there is a conspiracy to keep this true story away from the public, in order to perpetuate the myth that *black people can't bobsleigh*.

In fact they can, as evidenced by this incredibly realistic film, in which, the first ever Jamaican Bobsleigh team has to come up against the brutality of the Nazi regime, by competing against their inherently racist bobsleigh team at the 1988 winter Olympics.

The male, scouring the DVD, seemed unsure of himself. Yet happily I thought he might bite – you know he was a really reasonable man, and listened to what I had to say. That was unusual. For once I felt I was being treated as if I wasn't a complete nobody. They were unsure. The female had reservations. They talked it through. Hummed and hahhed. I stood there like a salesman eyeing them expectantly. Then finally I broke in and clinched the deal.

'That Atonement that you've got there' I interjected 'that is the most dreadful rubbish, I've ever seen in my entire life. It's good for nothing except if you were hoping to cure your insomnia.'

And with that, Atonement was dumped unceremoniously back on the stack. They were going to give Cool Runnings a whirl. Mission complete! Give me five reader!

I think however that it wasn't so much the substance of my sales-pitch that had got the evening back on track but rather my intrusion upon their lives that had made up the minds of the couple. They evidently regarded me as a weirdo. Especially the suspicious female who eyed me warily. And I think in the end they'd just wanted rid of me. Yet they had known I was going to insist on Cool Runnings and not wishing to hurt my feelings and not having any definite idea of their own but wishing me gone, they'd snatched at the bait. Then to intimate that they wanted rid of me the male said 'cheers mate!' and stuck his thumb up at me and put on a false, clenched teeth smile. Even so I thought them – and particularly him – quite nice people.

Nevertheless I waited in-store to see them hire it. For if they saw me leave they might take that as a signal that they could re-choose according to their own ideas. However with yours truly present and correct, they'd be morally obliged, sensitive, educated, middle class people that they were, to hire Cool Runnings in order not to upset my feelings.

In time, after one of our earth hours had been consigned to the annals of history, I found myself in the house of the two suspects. The female was upstairs bathing, the male had popped out for a takeaway. Of course if you have to ask reader why it was I wasn't going to sally out with the male and protect him as he went for food whilst leaving the female home alone then ye obviously know nought of the rules of chivalry.

To pick up on an earlier point: in days of yore, secret agents were often left flummoxed and locked out, unable to enter suspect's houses because of the old-style doors that only opened from inside. Which was why the government so

arranged it as to make it a policy to have in place these modern doors, that open from outside and allow access to citizen's houses.

Thus obtaining an entry into the house of these people, as with the gay-boys from the previous narrative, had not been difficult. Of course it requires skill and a bit of timing, but I guess I should once more reiterate the fact that, in a middle class neighbourhood like this, you can very much count on the residents to be respectable and to curb any suspicions they might harbour.

Indeed it's well known in spy circles that if say a neighbour was to see me entering this couple's home, 99 times out of 100, said neighbours would let me be, and simply chide themselves for being so fantastic, for trying to play Miss Marple or Sherlock Holmes. In terms of their behaviour in *real-life*, people can be relied upon to be honourably unsuspecting. Very down to earth. And that's a bonus for us spies because it allows us to go about our business unhindered. I mean people just don't believe in intruders, burglars or secret agents, in the same way they don't believe in ghosts or UFO's.

I had a look around the joint, with that distinct smell in my nostrils, the smell of another person's home, the smell of foods and bodily odours gone by. Such a lovely house and a lovely sitting room in particular. Everything was so finely decorated. They had a beautiful white leather sofa, a homely artificial fire-place, bookshelves, a flat-screen TV – in short it was a most charming little pad, I was really quite envious.

On the mantel piece stood a photograph. I walked over and took it up: a wedding snap of the happy couple. So they weren't living in sin after all. I was quietly pleased about this, so many couples dispensing with the marriage vows these days as if it were only madman's mumbo jumbo. But this pair were well-bred.

You know I was really taken by them. As I stared wistfully at the photo and around the living room I was slightly tinged by regret that I'd never chosen to marry. Damn, I'm so hopeless at relationships! I guess there are just too many temptations for a man such as myself. I mean don't get me wrong reader, I was born to *live the life*, as we spies say, and as such I'm wed to my profession. But every once in a blue moon I'm just that bit touched by regret. I mean they seemed such a happy couple; and contrasted to my life with all its countless one night stands, shallow affairs with women I barely know, the sheer *loneliness* of sleeping with strangers, so that it's one girl one day and another girl the next, the joyless and numbing sensation of constantly having sex, sex, sex, sex, sex – at times I do feel a tad envious of those in married wed-lock, regretful that I never chose to enter into the sanctity of domestic bliss.

I had a butchers in a second room, a kitchen that adjoined the living room. I should say reader that all of the three rooms on the ground floor, the hall, living room and kitchen, each of these communicated with the other, so that if you were in one room you were, so to speak, only one throw of the cluedo-dice away from being in any other. In the kitchen a big bowl of red grapes brooded. There were so many in fact, that surely to goodness my hosts would be none the wiser if a few went AWOL: accordingly I helped myself.

Mmm! They were lovely. I had a few.

I had some more. You know that's the thing about grapes, they exploit man's improvidence. They're just so moreish. And boy, were these good ones. Amen to that. Yet now I was in danger of plundering the lot. A barren twiggy patch had arisen where once there'd been a bounty of grapes. 'Slow down! Slow down!' I said to myself.

To help me achieve this last aim I made a game of throwing the grape air bound and catching it, cool as you like, in my mouth.

Then here we go! Would you launch the first grape please! With eyes heavenward and mouth agog I tried to take it. Drum roll.....Yes! Success! Give me five reader. It went straight in. Direct hit! A hole in one!

I grew cocky. Taking up grape two, I braced myself. I released the grape. Here it came.

Nope! Not this time! It was an undignified moment for the secret agent as it hit my bottom lip, fell onto the floor, and rolled away across the linoleum. I went to retrieve it. Urgh! It had picked up a hair on its dirty travels. I didn't fancy eating that. Popping it back in the bowl I took up another. I was determined this time to recreate the form I'd shown in my first, inspiring, successful, dolphin-like grape catch. Once more I braced myself. I threw. And this time?

Nope, it just bounced off my lip once more. I picked it up, returned it to the bowl and took a fresh one. I was determined to make the grade this time. The skill had eluded me twice now, and my confidence draining away, that first circus catch seemed a long lost memory. Had it been nought but a fluke? I was determined to quash such talk. So I waited nervously to throw.

Yet suddenly, in an incredible twist of events, the front door opened. The male was back. I could smell the food. He shouted upstairs to the female. It was time to take up position.

Yet I just had time for one more throw of the devil's dice: I was determined to prove my grape catching skills.

But I'd have to step to it – the male was coming. It was now or never. Accordingly the grape was tossed. I looked up with face intent. Drum roll please..... Here it came!

But the trajectory was all wrong – I'd rushed my throw and had had to scuttle a bit across the floor to try and catch it. Nope. Nope, nope, nope, nope. It bounced miserably off my lip and rolled across the floor. Bastard!

I didn't like to leave things on that sour note. But there was nothing else for it. The male was entering the kitchen. There was no time to pick up the grape. Reluctantly I departed and scampered into the living room as he came into the kitchen.

I sat myself down, in the position I'd spied earlier, sitting with my knees crossed behind a chair on the far side of the living room. It was a good position from which to operate. I was hidden from view from any wandering eyes in the kitchen; and hidden also from the greater part of the living room. Only if one of my charges chanced to come up close to this unappealing corner of the room would I be betrayed. And on top of that it was dark in the living room with only the lamp atop the TV currently switched on.

Was that pizza I could smell? Yes, it seemed we were having a pizza. Well, that really enraged me. You see reader I'm allergic to both cheese and gluten.

Although this is a book about the secret service and not a vehicle to express my views on various personal issues of wider social import, still I can't help vent a little anger at how difficult it is for people like myself to simply live in this world. Good God what problems we have. I mean how could I now nourish myself? By eating what they were offering I could die! Of course I'm not criticising those two, it wasn't their fault. It is of course the greater fault of society at large that they were totally uneducated in this respect.

In terms of enlightening people I will tell you that Chinese would have been a much better, *everyone is included* option. (Although some people will claim to have MSG issues with Chinese, I can tell you that there is no scientific evidence whatsoever for MSG allergies or intolerance; and that *so-called*, in inverted commas, 'MSG sufferers' are just a pathetic group of fake whingers.)

I think it's important that the wider public do become educated on this score, learn a little about how poor people like myself suffer on a daily basis, and learn that in this world we should all be considered as equals no matter how bad the hand that nature has dealt us, is. I hope, through my words here, that I may have aroused some sympathy in your heart for the dairy/gluten intolerant community.

Having said all that and to show you that I'm also willing to compromise and adapt, I decided that today I would just have a 'cheat day' and eat some pizza. Although I'd fancied Chinese, and although they might have bothered to bring me some egg fried rice, I do like pizza and was licking my lips at this special occasion when I would finally get to eat some again. Mmm! It smelt delicious. The couple entered the room and with the pizza on the coffee table set about serving it up.

I think I'll stop referring to them now as the 'couple' or the male and the female and start making use of their names, that within the course of the evening I learnt. The female was called Tinka (equally Tinky, Tinks and even Tinkabell, or *my little bit of Tinka-totty*, pussy-slut, slag-bag, or the rather rude *Tinka the stinker*). Now that Tonka (Tonks, Tonka-baby, Tonka-truck, Tonka-the-Stonka, Big-boy-give-it-to-me) had come home pizza-laden, Tinka was back downstairs. She had indeed been bathing, as her wet hair and rosy cheeks, as well as her scented strawberry odour bore testament to. And she was changed into her pyjamas.

She was really so lovely: the pyjamas were cute as kittens, being silky in composition and bearing row upon row of little yellow teddy-bears waving and smiling at you, and set upon a blue background. Charming and eloquent were the little slippers that befitted her tiny feet: they were pink and affected to be little baby-hippos. Moreover her hair, her yellow curls, wet from her soaking, really became her. Indeed all dressed for bed as she now was, tired and with a sleepy little face, she looked the perfect picture of an adorable little housewife. Not even a sultan himself could have demanded more.

The contours of her body, her backside and her breasts were shown off to good effect by the tightness of her pyjamas. Don't get me wrong reader, she was no oil painting, no glamour model, no perfect ten. She would not have been every man's cup of tea; her nose was somewhat too large; her cheeks were a tinge too rosy; and her ears stuck out like those of a rat – probably I'd have rated her at something like seven out of ten, or perhaps even push the boat out to a seven and a half,

when pyjama-clad as she now was. However my point is that to one such as myself who likes a woman not to be perfect (she was far from it), but to offer a few flaws (she had many), and to one such as myself who appreciates just what kind of a magic-crystal-gem of a princess the fortunate Tonka had on his hands; to one such as myself, Tinka was the picture of loveliness.

Tonka for his part was tall, more so than Tinka, and well-built as well, with broad shoulders. Generally he seemed quite an easy going man, nice, polite and courteous when it was expected of him, silent and non-communicative when he was relaxing. He didn't smile much – nor either did Tinka, in fact during the whole evening neither of them were given to smiling a lot – but he was well-mannered and pleasant, just as when, at the movie-hire store, he'd had the decency to listen to what I was saying.

With the pizza home and Tinka downstairs we settled ourselves down for the evening. Tinka and Tonka sat themselves upon the two-seater settee, at the other side of the room. The pizza was laid out on the coffee table in front of them, and it smelt absolutely delicious – fingers crossed they'd leave me some. It was a twelve inch, deep pan, all-star selection pizza, with ten slices each different, one a Margarita, another ham and pineapple, another pepperoni etcetera. To wash the pizza down there was a bottle of coke with two glasses, and for nibbles a bowl of salted chipsticks – I would make several successful raids on these throughout the course of the night.

The DVD was soon readied and with yours truly in position behind his chair, able to see both Tinka and Tonka and the TV screen, we all settled ourselves down for an enjoyable night in, myself keeping one ear to the ground in case of any attempted terrorist intrusion.

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The film began: Cool Runnings. This would be my 38th viewing. Yet still there would be surprises.

Throughout the whole film I sat there with an expectant happy face, equally ready to laugh or cry. As each scene played out I kept wanting to turn to the couple and make sure they were concentrating. I kept wanting to say to them 'just watch this next bit, just see what happens here'. Or, 'this next bit coming up is so funny. You'll not want to miss this. Pay attention now.'

Moreover I kept wanting to give them little explanations, concerning things they might not understand, things which I myself had not understood on earlier viewings. And as different actors and actresses made their appearances, I kept wanting to tell them in what other films and programmes they had previously been in. To say 'oh, that's such and such out of XYZ.'

All of this I wanted to do but tonight I would have to take a vow of silence. I'd have to content myself with simply glancing over at those two to see if they were following; and I was desperately hoping, I was beside myself in anticipation, I was just about dying to hear them laugh and really enjoy themselves and get into the

spirit of it all. The bottom line was that I'd recommended the film to them. At the end of the night I wanted them to say of me 'well, thank goodness we bumped into that chap in the shop. He knew what he was talking about. I really like him.'

The early scenes played out, those two with faces full of pizza. In contrast to many films of its era *Cool Runnings* stands out for both its hard-hitting, gritty depiction of everyday Jamaican life and its steadfast commitment to the truth. Friends of mine have been to Jamaica and indeed it's true, 95% of the inhabitants are to be found there in a constant state of happiness – like all black people they're always smiling – down at the beach, partying, relaxing, eating pineapples and Jerk-chicken.

In storyline and scope *Cool Runnings* is an action packed and adventure orientated tale, peppered here and there with some well-timed comic moments. Though it contains brief scenes of violence and nudity one of the film's strengths is that it works on two levels; so that it is not only suitable for children and people from mental homes with the sensibilities of a ten-year-old, but also for those of marked intelligence, up to and including myself.

Yet beneath its action packed and humorous exterior, *Cool Runnings* is at its heart a story of courage and of strength, a story of hardship and endurance, a real coming of age film, and in its moral message – that newcomers should be welcomed with open arms and embraced as brothers – is both a heart wrenching tale of human perseverance and a tragic depiction of man's inhumanity to man. It is a tale rich in metaphor and carries, just like *Schindler's list*, a dire moral warning, a warning from history, but also is testimony to successful endeavour through belief in self.

Moreover, by showing that John Candy, a fat white man (and disgraced bobsleigh cheat), can successfully manage a team of Jamaican reggae boys, it is proof not only that the races can work together, but that in doing so they excel. Indeed the four blacks and their white coach are a blatant metaphor for the five fingers, that Booker T. Washington spoke of, that come together 'as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress'. In addition it also shows that Nazis and Jamaicans can mutually respect each other, as when the chief Nazi bobsleighter begins the applause for the fallen Jamaican heroes.

In his book *Cool Runnings: Assuming gender and cultural identities*, Professor R.L. Walton talks about the 'change in sexual politics that followed the release of the film and the revolution in cinematic culture that accompanied the presentation of Jamaicans as free-speaking, diaspora-defined, culturally-assumed entities, (*the we*), who were able to think for themselves, as opposed to the programmed, liberally-constricted, non-assumptive protagonists who previously characterised Hollywood scenes (*the they*).' He defined the role of women in the film as being *trans-inter-genderal*, a term which refers to the reclamation of the language of offense, aimed at women, being used by them, which in turn supports the feminist theorem of second-gender-reconciliation, first proposed by Renault in his paper, *Gender-political-cultures in first generation gender-biased societies without cultural-constraints or trans-cultural expedients*.

In other ways, *Cool Runnings* is the complete film. The directing is snappy, the acting first class. Watch out for a tour-de-force performance from Leon, as the quietly impassioned, track-tripping, sprint-losing would be Olympic champ, whose

dreams are crushed early on as he crashes out of the Jamaican sprint trials like a moron, and who then has to face up to the reality of life as a bobsleighter. Or from Rawle D. Lewis, as the psychologically scarred youngster Junior, who shuns his Jamaican identity, but in the end learns to be proud and passionate of his yardy-heritage by having a fight with a white person.

Incidentally, at its core, *Cool Runnings* is a subtle commentary on the, then current political strife in Jamaica, and carries strong political overtones, so that *Cool Runnings*, which is, by the way, an allegory of the Christ narrative, was banned after its first airing in Jamaica.

Yet it is in its dogged depiction of the truth that *Cool Runnings* wins the day, and its director Jon Turteltaub, was rightly given much credit for not giving in to Hollywood theatrics. Of course if the big cheeses at Walt Disney had have had their way, the film would have been rewritten according to sentimental tastes, and in true fairy-tale style Jamaica would have won gold in world record time, the chief-Nazi would have been struck down by lightning instead of having to learn to accept the Jamaicans for what they were, and the shades of grey character depicted by John Candy would have been miraculously exonerated as a bobsleigh cheat.

In its depiction of the truth did *Cool Runnings* win so many admirers; and I would like to believe that in penning this short memoir I've managed to capture that same spirit of reality herein. In short a five-star, highly recommended watch, though purists will want to brace themselves for some rather bizarre, albeit comical misuse of the English language.

Yet some ten minutes had elapsed and those two hadn't once laughed and simply sat there with miserable faces eating their pizza. I was really quite annoyed by this. And I was hungry too. Good Lord I wouldn't have minded a slice of pizza. Those two horses had already scoffed nearly three slices each. And they did their eating accompanied by some of the most disgusting noises known to man – that's all I could hear, as it drowned out the talking on the film.

Horrible, horrible noises. Really loud chews, like horses, absolutely disgusting. Like two pigs quaffing up porridge: a splurge of inhuman slobbering noises. I was so incensed by this loud eating, so irritated by these revolting sounds, that in an uncontrollable burst of anger, I started mimicking them, but exaggeratedly and really loudly.

'Slop-plop-plop!' I mimicked in a dog-style voice, angrily spitting drool out of my mouth as I did so.

'What was that?' said Tinka.

'What was what?' said Tonka.

'It sounded like someone chewing, over there.'

'Over where?'

'Over there in the corner.'

'It's just us eating our food,' said the lazy Tonka. He was too engrossed in his pizza to care.

They waved away as nothing, the noises that I'd made. They couldn't really be bothered and lazily sat on the couch, straight-facedly engaged in quaffing up their pizza. But God how I could have strangled them for those eating noises!

Events wore on. Still Cool Runnings had not invoked a single laugh or smile. Then Tinka, finishing a slice stood up, and hungrily grabbed a new one from the table. She took one bite.

‘Ugh!’ she exclaimed ‘what’s that?’

The offending piece of pizza was taken up calmly by Tonka, who scrutinizing it, declared ‘it’s an anchovies slice. Leave it, it’s horrible.’

‘You’re telling me’ said Tinka. ‘That was revolting’ and she replaced the pizza slice, bitten as it was, back in the box, trying her hand at another piece, which this time proved to her liking.

As the evening wore on and those two became stuffed and sated, the eating came to a full stop. At the end of play there remained but two full slices of pizza, in addition to the bitten into, much maligned, anchovy slice. After feasting those two now adopted a new, cosier position on the couch.

Tonka remained seated where he was; but Tinka now lay down and rested her feet on the couch or more exactly on Tonka’s lap, whilst her head fell back on a cushion which she had placed atop of the settee end. She was clearly fatigued.

Her slippers, that were now dangling from her raised and stretched legs, wouldn’t stay on her feet; so that they were removed on her request, by the ever sedate Tonka, as he sat there with her legs in his lap. The pair were now cosily snuggled up together, and with the ceasing of the eating noises, I felt we were all ready to start afresh watching the movie. We sat still and listened.

But some five or ten minutes later those two were in a conversation. It started with a kiss, as Tonka, leaning over, planted a little peck ‘smack’ on Tinka’s lips. Actually, though I was annoyed by this interruption, it was a beautiful little kiss. They were such a lovely little couple. It was a very loving kiss with both parties, once the deed was done, staring for a moment deeply into each other’s eyes, and touchingly and thoughtfully examining one another. Then this brief bout of affection gave way to conversation.

‘Shall we try again tonight?’ said Tinka.

‘Yeah’ said Tonka indifferently and casually, now resuming his seating position after having leant over for the kiss, and staring at the TV. But Tinka’s eyes remained on him with a thoughtful womanly look. It was so typically a woman’s look. What was she thinking? What was she going to say? There was a silence. Tonka looked at the telly, not at Tinka. Was he in trouble?

‘We’ve been trying for three weeks now’ said Tinka.

‘It’s not that long’ said Tonka, with just a hint of guilt in his tone.

‘It is!’ said Tinka decidedly, who then staring foxily and saucily into Tonka’s eyes – who by this time had turned to face her as if he was in trouble, like a little boy – broke out into a subtle and arch smile and said ‘it’s you Tonka-boy; you’ve lost your spunk. It’s too much beer and pizza that’s what it is. You’ve gotten lazy!’

‘How’s that?’ said Tonka defending himself. ‘It takes two to tango, that’s what my mother always used to say, it might well be at your end that things are faulty.’

‘It’s not me!’ said Tinka adamantly.

‘Why not!’ said Tonka raising his voice (but the whole argument was in good humour).

‘Because’ said Tinka, half giggling at her own ego-driven, illogical argument.

‘Oh because. I see’ said Tonka sarcastically. ‘That’s women’s logic for you.’

'Hoy!' said Tinka rising from her lie down and giving Tonka a little girly slap on the arm.

She resumed her position. The conversation came to an end. There was a silence. Both watched the TV.

Time elapsed and Tinka grew thoughtful.

'Tonky-babes?' she said eventually, slowly and subtly, half smiling. There was an unmistakable tone in her voice that indicated she was going to ask Tonka to do her something that he probably wouldn't want to do.

'What?' he said as if harassed – he could see she was going to request something of him.

'Why don't you wear the mask tonight darling?' she said saucily, looking into Tonka's face.

Mask, dear reader! What kinky device was this! What saucy shenanigans played themselves out under this roof? Hey I'll tell you, you do get to learn some interesting things as a spy. What a nice little couple these two seemed to be to the outside world; yet what devious little devils they were behind closed doors!

In response to Tinka's request and as she looked mockingly and archly into his face, Tonka merely remained focused straight ahead at the TV, not impressed and refusing to listen to Tinka. 'No' he said emphatically 'I'm not wearing that.' He was very final in his statement and remained sedately watching the TV. Tinka kept up her arch smile, keeping her mocking and loving eyes on Tonka.

'Go on!' said Tinka encouragingly, 'just give it a try!'

'No!' said Tonka emphatically, and very, very adamantly, not turning to face Tinka. 'I'm not wearing that stupid thing, and there's an end of it.'

As Tonka steadfastly refused to turn and face Tinka on the matter, she decided to put her little demands to a halt. There was no way in this world that Tonka was going to be moved on this score. Make no mistake about it, he *wasn't* going to wear the mask. That was final. And it wasn't up for discussion either.

He kept his eyes fixed on the TV, somewhat aggrieved by Tinka's demands. And slowly she, realising that it was hopeless, sank back into her lying position and watched TV too. But dear me reader, what kinky little games was Tinka thinking of. The dirty minded little madam! Yet still I did like her a lot.

Some few minutes later Tinka piped up once more.

'It's so funny' she said 'now that we're trying it seems impossible. To think how much I used to worry when I was younger.....do you remember the 'week of agony?'

'I'd forgotten about that' said Tonka slowly, and coming to recollect the incident.

'It was like the end of the world' said Tinka, 'it was sheer hell, and what relief in the end. Do you remember I got an E in my German exam on the same day and my mother couldn't understand why I was so happy. And we went and had a drink in the back garden of the Ox and Cart, and it was so pleasant just to sit out there and relax in the May sunshine. Like we were free again, like at the end of a bad dream. And then we set up those rules! Do you remember, to govern all future intercourse! Ha! Ha! Ha! What stupid rules! It seems like such a distant memory now, like another lifetime ago.'

'Yeah' said Tonka wistfully, not looking at her. 'God that seems like an eternity ago.'

'I think I might go and see the doctor?' said Tinka some five minutes later.

'Why?' replied Tonka.

'To see if he can tell me what the problem is.'

'I don't know what you're getting so worried about; we haven't been trying for *that* long; in fact I'd forgotten that we *had* been trying.'

Tinka was not best pleased with this last comment. You shouldn't have said that Tonka! She blew a little huff out of her mouth and sitting up and setting herself apart from Tonka started scolding him for not listening to what she had been saying for the last year or so, for not caring, for not taking an interest. But it didn't last for long. And soon she piped down, though sat apart huffily.

The evening wore on. In time those last two bits of pizza were eaten up.

Bastards! To be honest I don't really think Tonka and Tinka needed to eat them; they just ate them because they were there. Ironically it was shortly after this that they both left the room, letting the film run on as they did so. They each went upstairs to use the toilet, Tonka first going into the kitchen.

I found all this really annoying. For they had left the film – which frankly they weren't watching very intently – right at the point where coach John Candy, who had lined up a little row of snowballs for himself, with the intention of good-naturedly snow-balling the Jamaican bobsleigh team, finds himself, much to his chagrin, second guessed by that little posse of homeboys who ultimately end up snow balling him. What a brilliant scene! Yet those fools were going to miss it.

Well hell, not if I had anything to do with it. Accordingly I stood up and going over to the TV, pressed the stop button on the DVD player. Hopefully they'd just think it was a mechanical fault.

Whilst I was up my eye fell upon the coffee table and the food thereon. Damn! I would have loved to have had some pizza. But that was no more. Except that bit of bitten-into anchovy slice. Could I take that?

I'll level with you reader, I love anchovies they're absolutely gorgeous. I can't understand why everybody hates them. Yet surely if I took that slice of pizza they'd get very suspicious. But then I was so hungry, I hadn't eaten since dinner time. And it was affecting my mood as well. I'd been irritable earlier on when I'd gotten angry over the loud eating noises. That was no good. No, I had to have something to eat.

However I couldn't just take the slice. They'd know. Hang about though. There *was* a bite already in it. And *conceivably* that bite could get bigger. True I'd be getting a taste of Tinka's saliva into the bargain as well; but I didn't mind that – at least it wasn't Tonka's. Thus I set about taking a bite of pizza.

Yet I got carried away – it was just so delicious – and by the end it bore a very large bite indeed. Oops! Would I get away with that? I didn't know. We'd just have to see and find out. I scrounged a handful of chipsticks and returned back to my base behind my chair where I tucked into them.

But they were so salty, and what with those salty anchovies as well, I had to get up again to get a drink of coke. Yet when I got to the table I didn't know how I should drink it. There were two empty glasses on the table and a moral dilemma presented itself to me.

I was happy to share a glass provided it was with Tinka. I didn't want any of Tonka's horrible spit on my glass. But I couldn't work out which one was Tinka-

baby's. As I was thinking it over, my hand involuntarily picked up some more chipsticks and put them in my mouth. That's the thing about chipsticks: they're so moreish. Yet as I was doing so I heard the unmistakable noise of those two returning down the stairs. Throwing caution to the wind I simply picked up the coke bottle, whose top I'd already unscrewed, and took a *direct* swig. Hastily I resumed my position.

The two returned, and, though they demonstrated some curiosity as to why the DVD had stopped and though they said to themselves that they each thought it had been left running, they nevertheless brushed it aside and sat down once more, able to see the hilarious snowball scene that I'd saved for them.

However some short while later Tinka burst out into indignation.

'What's that?' she ejaculated.

'What's what?' said the uninterested Tonka. He just wanted an easy life. He was watching the TV half comatose; and sometimes Tinka got a bit too overexcited for his liking.

'That!' said Tinka emphatically, pointing in front of her.

'What!' said Tonka a bit irate.

'That! In the coke bottle. It looks like a chipstick floating on the surface. That is *minging*. Tonka you are such a pig.'

Tonka was summarily slapped quite hard.

'I've told you not to drink out of the coke bottle. That's just so disgusting. You men are horrible.'

'I *haven't* been drinking from the bottle!' said Tonka adamantly and quite worked up now. He was desperate to protest his innocence. 'I haven't been drinking from that bloody bottle! Don't blame me!'

'Argh well was it me was it?' said Tinka sarcastically.

'Well it wasn't me! That's all I'm saying.'

'Horrible. Absolutely horrible' said Tinka with disgust.

During this conversation I somewhat sank into myself and involuntarily tried to hide my guilty person, even though of course I was not visible to them.

'Go and fish it out' said Tinka continuing.

'No, I'm not getting it out.'

'Well is it just going to stay there?' said Tinka irate.

'Well I'm not going to fish it out' said Tonka.

'Well is it just going to sit there all night' said Tinka testily 'because *I'm* not going to do it.'

In an outburst of energy, Tonka, deciding that he wasn't going to get any rest unless he dealt with the offending chipstick, stood up and took the bottle out to the kitchen. He had tried to brush off Tinka's whinging; but in the end there was nothing for it but to submit.

Some few minutes later he returned and placed a chipstickless coke bottle on the table. Tinka, from where she lay her head on the couch, looked up at him with loving eyes; but Tonka pretended not to notice and slightly huffily sat down on the sofa and looked straight at the telly.

However Tinka was pleased with him and wanted to reward him for his duty and melt his huffy heart. With loving yet saucy eyes fixed on him, she slowly repositioned herself and with little girly strokes of her hand on Tonka's person,

contrived to snuggle right in beside him; and with arms around his shoulders and neck, started pecking at him.

Tonka for his part was at first unmoved by these embraces and looked stubbornly ahead; but soon he yielded to those soft kisses of Tinka's, and in a short while the couple were very intimately arranged indeed, with Tinka sat crossways on Tonka's lap. And so a passionate bout of kissing took place.

But this last was really horrible. It sounded disgusting. You know I hate it when this happens, when you're trying to watch a film, when people who also should be watching the film start kissing right in front of you. And what horrific noises. Slop-plop-plop! It was the eating of the pizza all over again.

It began to develop into more as Tinka brought Tonka's hand onto her lady part and then, in complete contradiction to how I thought it would have behaved a lady like her to behave, went for his 'cock' and started arousing it.

I have to say, if there's one thing which really gets me about modern Britain it's the rise of the ladette culture, where young ladies seem to think it's okay to act like a man in terms of their sexual behaviour, so openly, aggressively and brazenly without any sense of shame or regard for the people who are watching them. Call me old fashioned but should women really behave like that?

Okay accepted, though I don't think there is any real truth in it, these *views* on women *might* be regarded as sexist; and you're right reader I'm not chastising Tonka for behaving in a very similar way. So then let's widen up the argument. Why is it in our modern society that people are so overtly sexualised and shameless?

Of course one thing you're probably thinking by now reader is 'good God, are we really going to watch on as yet another couple have sex?' And I would have to agree with your sentiment and fain ask of the protagonists 'why on earth must you people constantly perform sex in front of me?' Having seen all these things first hand and then written a book about it, it does rather beg the question what kind of a nation have we descended into?

Anyway enough already say I. I've had it up to hear with watching other people have sex. Believe me reader I cut out lots of sex scenes in writing this book, so count yourself lucky you don't have to go through everything that I've endured. It was no picnic that's for sure.

In time it died down and faded away and the happy couple, somewhat sated, were left restful and at peace in each other's arms, the lovely little Tinka still sitting on Tonka's lap. They were watching the film again.

I decided at this juncture to undo my belt.

This is a typical habit of mine, and, wishing to relax and feeling it an injustice to have to curb my usual behavior and methods of relaxing just for the sake of those two (ungrateful hosts who weren't ever going to acknowledge my service to them); and not wishing to sit there imprisoned and bound and restrained – as though I were a criminal reader! – I took the liberty of unbuttoning it.

That done I now decided I could go the whole hog and strip down to my underpants, something which I find very relaxing and something others of you will no doubt be doing at this very moment, so pleasant is it. It was a very natural thing to do, it made me feel as if I was at home in my own house, and was something which I well could have done earlier had not a (misplaced) sense of

modesty bred in me a certain reluctance. Yet I had totally merited this one little pleasure, was perfectly within my rights to do so, and it was one small repayment, made by a (generally ungrateful) nation, to a secret agent who had done so much for them.

Then it was that I suddenly thought I heard a banging noise upstairs.

I didn't know what it was but it alarmed me; and soon the three of us would find ourselves involved in a painful and horrific incident. There was to be more terror inflicted here than I could ever have imagined.

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I heard the banging noise upstairs again. I didn't know what it was. Those two didn't seem bothered by it. Perhaps it was just the wind blowing in through an open window or something. I resumed watching the film.

Oh excellent! We were just coming up to the fight scene in the bar where Junior realises what it is to have pride and passion, what it is to be Jamaican; and then determinedly heads to the bar to attack the Nazi bastards. Oh! What a scene!

Yet hang on a minute, what was that banging upstairs? Was that really just the wind? Tinka and Tonka seemed unconcerned, sitting there cosily in each other's arms. Yet it sounded more than just the wind to me. Could it be the terrorists? Perhaps I should take a look? Yet I was happy just sitting here watching the movie and I was desperate to see the fight scene. I didn't want to miss *that*. If it *was* the terrorists, they'd come at the wrong bloody time.

I was torn between my duty and my love of Cool Runnings. Those two didn't seem worried at all. No it was nothing, I thought. I was worrying myself over nothing. Wasn't I? Well I'd better keep an ear out all the same. I strained my neck and listened. I listened intently. And then in the most disturbing and frankly awful occurrence the most dreadful and disastrous of sounds broke out on my ear.

In a loud, unchecked, and violent outburst Tonka broke wind. 'Pffppffurgh!'

Argh! That was horrible! What a rude and unflattering accostation of the senses. What a foul noise. He'd executed it with complete freedom and lack of consideration for those of us around him. And he simply remained sitting there, half-comatose as he was, his unmoving face watching the TV. He didn't care to apologise nor either did he make any acknowledgement of the crime, nay act of terror, that he'd just committed.

He obviously thought it just par for the course whereas Tinka to her credit, sitting on his lap with her arm around him as it were, immediately burst out with womanly complaint at him, and reprimanding him with the words 'Hoy! That was *not* nice!' proceeded to give him a girly slap on the arm.

Moreover, after the two or three elephants it took, after the initial explosion, for the first wave of toxic gases to reach her nostrils and enter up her nose, she resumed her censoring with redoubled ardour, now that she realised the full horror of the detonation, and the fallout with which she would have to live.

'Argh! That is horrible' said Tinka.

Tonka, in response to this, merely twitched his nostrils thoughtfully a second, and then concurring with her, said, matter-of-factly and without smiling 'yeah it is.'

I was really quite shocked by all this behaviour. You know it was one thing to do what Tonka had done. And you know if he had have apologised for his actions, or even just burst out into uncontrollable laughter, I might have been able to forgive him. But the way he just sat there stubbornly, unsmiling, half-comatose, watching the movie as if it was his right to just do such things without explanation or apology; such a graceless and uncharming act as that, as if it was his God given right and in front of a lady – well I wasn't very impressed by these goings on at all.

Furthermore Tinka, though she'd immediately censored Tonka with womanly dignity for his ill-conceived acts and dirty pleasures, and though she'd shouted at him and slapped him, and re-censored him anew when she'd got wind of its dirty impact – still, Tinka hadn't made any effort to remove herself from the vicinity of Tonka's lap, and remained thereon, lazily reclined in his embrace, and, dare I say it, exulting in the forbidden pleasure of the glorious aftermath of Tonka's emission?

I was quite disappointed in her. Really I was. Though she vainly protested, she hadn't put up much resistance, and remained lying there in the hefty fumes. For my part, I at least had the decency to move myself a few paces further still from the point of explosion, and, pinching my nose between my thumb and forefinger, made a face. You know I was really beginning to go off this couple.

Some twenty minutes later, the room in a really breathless state, so that I wished I'd brought my gas-mask with me on this mission, Tonka stood up and went upstairs to the toilet, switching on the hall and living room lights as he went. That was long overdue as far as I was concerned: the room smelt like a petrol station. Tinka remained alone on the couch, now lying flat out on her side so that she still faced the telly. You know I was glad to have this little bit of time alone with her. Just the two of us, with the antisocial Tonka having now removed his offending person.

You know I was tempted to just get up, go over to Tinka, tell her how nice she was, tell her how much more I appreciated her than Tonka did, and tell her that I was much more civilized than he and that I would never – never ever – commit such horrible acts in her presence if I were her husband, even if we were married for one hundred years. I had so much respect for her. Not like the incorrigible Tonka. I felt sure she would have exchanged Tonka for myself in a heartbeat.

Yet I could not blow my cover. Fate had outlined an alternative destiny for me; never would I get to meet the charming Tinka. But to be sure she was a lovely girl, and please dear reader, excuse any unflattering allegations that I may have levelled at her earlier regarding both her sexual behaviour and her indulgence in Tonka's wind.

She was ever so charming as she lay there. She was really tired and sleepy. And she had a way of pouting and expressing her unhappiness, that far from being obnoxious, was very winning in the way that she did it. I studied her as she lay. She scratched herself a bit. Well, that wasn't so pleasant. But on the whole she was a lovely girl.

She scratched herself some more, with intensity. Evidently she was quite itchy. But anyway she soon gave it up. You know she was really a very charming, charming girl, the sort that.....hang on. What was she doing now? Her nose was twitching. And then she started to pick her nose.

She started by making an initial reconnaissance with thumb and forefinger, the latter positioned outside her nose on the skin, the former travelling inside. She carried out some initial feelings; grasping about at different locales, testing the waters, and surveying the potential bounty. Then having decided on the best point at which to quarry it, her thumb settled itself into position and the plunder was removed.

She gave it the once over with her tired, unsmiling and unimpressed eyes, lying on the couch as she was, whilst toying it around in her hands to better inspect it. Then growing tired of this, she proceeded to roll it about in her hands to disenable the stickiness of it, just as one can so do with a scrunched up piece of cellotape in order to de-sticketize it. Finally working it toward the end of her thumb, she flicked it, subuteo-style onto the carpet. But these misdemeanours aside, she was a lovely girl.

We continued to sit and watch, whilst Tonka remained upstairs toileting. Yet as we were silently engrossed in watching the movie the most incredible and truly shocking twist of events was about to occur, events that would send utter terror and mayhem through the souls of the sleepily reclined Tinka as well as the caught-off-his-guard secret agent who sat complacently akimbo in his hidey-hole.

The evening had so far flown by without incident and lay before us tranquil as a lake. Yet the fists of fate were determined to mix it up and hurl into sleeping beauty's bosom the most mischievous of missiles, the terrifying impact of which, I can still hear to this very day. The walls of Jericho were about to come crashing down.

I should say that I had very much ceased thinking of the terrorists by this point and was much engrossed in watching Cool Runnings. For her part, Tinka, though she wasn't particularly engrossed, looked at the TV; and lying down as she was, the doorway behind her lay very much in her blind spot, so that should a terrorist enter, they would be able to sneak right upon her, and catch her unawares. And now indeed someone did enter.

Now I thought that was a bit odd, because I hadn't heard Tonka come downstairs. Yet someone was entering. However watching Cool Runnings as I was and becoming foolishly complacent about my house-sitting duties, I simply brushed aside this peculiar fact, told myself not to be silly, and presuming the newcomer to be Tonka, sat and continued watching the movie.

I should say that in any event I couldn't have really looked up at the entrance from my position without giving myself away. At best my view away from the telly, encompassed the couch on which reclined Tinka, and a little of the hinterground.

Now in retrospect, that is where I should have been looking, at that hinterground; in that way I would have seen the intruder just before he reached Tinka. In addition I should have readied myself for action. Yet I did neither of these things, and assuming that the footsteps merely marked the return of Tonka, sat complacently watching the TV. I should have known better.

In the most ear splitting shriek, and the loudest of girly screams, the downstairs lights – with the exception of the TV lamp – went out and I was soon horrifically shocked into the knowledge that Tinka was being attacked.

Momentarily all hell seemed to break loose. I didn't know what was going on. My immediate gut reaction was to jump out, blow my cover and arrest the terrorist before he could kill Tinka. However, highly trained as I am, I made, before springing out, a momentary eye-clock of the situation. And the most shocking and enervating scene met my eye.

Tinka, still lying on the couch, her screams going ten to the dozen, was being attacked and throttled by the terrorist. The terrorist was giving no quarter, he was almost on top of her and frankly it looked like, as well as wanting to kill her, he was going to molest and rape her. But the most terrifying sight of all was the terrorist himself.

Believe me in my time I've seen some frightening things. I've seen men in balaclavas rape and assault screaming women. I've seen teenage girls bound, gagged and sodomised by men dressed as elephants. But this took the biscuit. The terrorist had so arrayed himself, he was so fantastical, that he seemed to have stepped straight out of your worst nightmare.

It was so macabre; and truly when I first caught a glimpse of him, I didn't think it *was* a terrorist, but genuinely believed it was a mythical and demon-like, half man, half bull creature. It had the legs of a man but the head of a bull, with huge horns on it. And it was careering into the screaming Tinka, making mooing noises and going absolutely berserk and crazy as if, in some nightmare moment for the poor girl, it was going to have her.

I was so shocked and overcome by these nightmare visions, that at first my courage failed me, and I was terrified to step out and try and tackle the half man, half bull creature. Good God I was terrified. I hid behind my chair in fear.

Yet I got a hold of myself, gained courage and decided to save the helpless Tinka.

However just as I was about to jump out with the words 'Noooo! Terrorist bull-man!' the whole thing was revealed to be an elaborate hoax.

It was a kinky sex game between Tinka and Tonka. Tinka, suddenly bursting into loud tittles of laughter, escaped the clutches of the evil bull-man-terrorist, who now, Scooby-doo style, removed the mask and revealed himself to be none other than the flatulent Tonka. Ah ha! So that was what all this was about.

Tonka looked pleased with himself. So it had all been a rouse. He *did* like wearing the mask after all. He had tip-toed downstairs and fooled Tinka. Nice one Tonka!

To justify my momentary fear, I must tell you reader that I've been charged by bulls on several occasions in the past and have nightmares to that effect. In fact in one powerful and recurring dream, I find myself running across a desolate farmer's field at twilight, chased by a bull; and as I begin to lose my breath and my feet become quagmired in the mud and I just can't run anymore, I find myself stumbling and falling over; and then painfully and horrifically the bull, who's now caught up with me, proceeds to sit astride of me and sets about satisfying his bodily lusts; raping me whilst mooing his head off.

It is a terrible nightmare and though not an *excuse* for my lack of action, it is an *explanation*. Of course you're probably thinking that, in the end, it was right for me not to have jumped out, given that it wasn't a terrorist and that I would have just blown my cover, and that it was my sixth sense at work that held me back. Though I'm not one to make excuses or justify ill-conceived behavior, I came to realise, shortly afterwards reader, that you would in fact be right with that hypothesis.

Tinka was absolutely beside herself with laughing. What a shock she'd had. Oh! What a shock! She recovered from it, panting, extremely excited, thrilled to the core and laughing. Oh it had been a good one. What a fright she'd had! What an adrenaline rush.

She was so grateful to Tonka for it. So, so grateful. She felt thrilled and alive. And Tonka knew it. He knew he'd gotten into her good books now. He'd worn the mask. Tinka was so delighted. Stepping over to him, she put her arms around him as if he was really special, and gave him a long and passionate kiss. You could see how bright and alive her eyes were.

After a few moments of this kissing, Tonka said 'shall we go upstairs?'

Tinka considered. She'd been so thrilled by Tonka's little ploy, so, so thrilled. She obviously felt quite in the mood now. And Tonka deserved a reward as well.

Yet with typical womanly anticlimax, she just said 'no, I've got a headache actually' and resuming her previous sleepy and sedate bearing and her tired facial expression, sat down with the words 'let's just watch the rest of this. We'll go up after that.'

'How long's left?' asked Tonka.

'I don't know' replied Tinka, 'have a look would you.'

Tonka went over and examined the box.

'There must still be half an hour left yet' he said.

'Well, let's just sit it through to the end' said the disciplining Tinka, 'I don't want to have wasted our hard earned money.'

'No' agreed Tonka. He sat back down.

Tinka now made an effort to concentrate on the film.

Yet after just a few minutes, she blew a huff and said 'this is absolute crap. I told you we should never have hired it. I don't know why you let yourself be pushed over by that weirdo at the movie store.'

'What was I meant to do?' protested Tonka. 'He wasn't going to let me *not* take it. And anyway' he continued 'you didn't have any suggestions to make.'

'He was a right weirdo. Gave me the creeps' said Tinka, making a face. 'It makes you wonder what kind of people are living around here. Who do you think he was?'

'I don't know' said Tonka watching the TV 'some sort of weirdo or deranged nobody. I don't know. He was probably on drugs.'

Bastards! That was the final insult of the night. So that's what they thought of me then was it? Huh! Tonka thought I was a nobody after all! What the hell had I been protecting these stupid fucking people for?

Ungrateful rats! Not only had they quaffed up all the pizza by themselves, but they'd also made disgusting eating and kissing noises, scratched themselves, picked their noses and broken wind with utter freedom, played kinky sex games, accused me of being a weirdo and a nobody, and in the worst insult of all, not only

had they not enjoyed or even laughed once at Cool Runnings, but they'd also slated it as crap! Frankly I would have liked to have gotten out and boxed their ears. Ungrateful scum!

Yet as the film wound to a conclusion, and the Jamaicans – who crash in their final race thus shattering their Olympic dream – carried their broken bobsleigh, coffin-style, over the finishing line, to the spine-shivering clapping of the, now repentant, chief-Nazi bobsleigher, and just as a tear came into my eye (as it always does) in response to this beautiful little scene, I decided to give this couple one more chance to redeem themselves.

However when I looked over at the couch to see if they were moved by this touching scene, I saw them both with eyes shut and mouths agape, fast asleep and looking like a pair of stupid goldfish. Well, with some people I just give up. There's nothing you can do for them.

When they woke Tinka was quite angry.

'What's that smell?' she said.

'What smell?' said Tonka.

'That!' exclaimed Tinka enraged. 'It smells like hard boiled eggs. God you stink!' she said whacking Tonka and presuming the flatulence to be of his doing. I laughed to myself happily at this point. It served them right.

To cut a long story short, we were soon heading upstairs for bed. I let those two go up first, going into the kitchen myself to get something to eat.

What a fucking mess the kitchen was! The bloody pigs! How was I supposed to come and prepare a meal when it looked like a bomb had gone off in here? Answer me that reader.

Dishes everywhere, sauces slopped all over the work surfaces, a sink blocked up with crockery so that it was impossible to begin a clean-up operation. Opening the bread bin, I found, as I had well suspected I would, moldy bread. A rummage around the fridge revealed a base full of rotting vegetables and out-of-date fish, and delving into the fruit bowl I discovered that, beneath the surface of fresh specimens, a lot of moldy produce was hidden. There was grime on the benches and on the floor.

One point which I'd like to make concerns kitchen bins. Tinka and Tonka had a small pedal bin, with a plastic carrier bag inside, instead of a bigger, and especially designed, bin liner. Now, environmentally friendly though they may be, small bins with plastic bags inside are a pet hate of mine, primarily because they're always full. Moreover when you empty it and put a new plastic bag in, the bag doesn't assert itself and assume the bin-position as a specially designed bin liner would do; rather it just meekly falls to the bottom so that the rubbish goes onto it rather than into it.

It drove me bloody wild! That plus the tomato sauce that was all over it. Furthermore, when I chanced to lift up the plastic bag I found beneath it a cesspit of grime and germs all swimming around on the base of the bin. Why it is that people can't keep a bloody kitchen clean I do not know; and how I was supposed to go about cooking (a well-earned) meal in this mess, God alone could tell me.

Angered, I nevertheless wiped down a few benches with a cloth and some detergent, and after that set about cooking my meal. Of course I had to specially wash some cutlery just to eat it with, couldn't find a suitable bowl in which to

scramble the eggs and by the time I sat down with my full English breakfast I said to myself 'why do I bloody bother!' Moreover there was jam in the butter, the salt cellar was dirty and the kitchen table needed a wipe.....and on and on and on.

Afterwards it was almost impossible to move onto cheese and biscuits (which, out of a sense of *fitting in and adapting (to other people's ludicrous notions on diet)* I was bravely willing to eat, despite the fact that it would probably kill me) because the biscuits, which were on the stale side to say the least, kept breaking when I would fain butter them and I eventually gave it up for hopeless. Moreover there were no after dinner mints.

I later scrounged an apple, a bag of jellies and from a biscuit tin, hidden in an inner recess of a high up cupboard – I had to use a chair to stand on – I picked out three fancy-patterned, albeit slightly stale party rings.

Not satisfied with this measly bounty I made a protracted search of all cupboards and carried out a routine sweep of the kitchen, finding within minutes a barrel of speciality Belgian chocolate biscuits. However, though the picture on the box promised much, I discovered to my disappointment that the top-most layer was fairly threadbare, there being only three dark chocolate pretzel shaped horrors and a stale looking digestive left.

Moreover when I dared to break the etiquette of processional biscuit eating by proceeding unlawfully to the second layer, I found myself second guessed, presumably by the naughty Tonka, who had already launched an earlier and presumably surreptitious raid on this reserve selection, in order to extract all the white chocolate based biscuits.

Fortunately though, I later stumbled upon a tin of newly opened Quality Street; and taking pains to remove all the caramel barrels and all the toffee pennies so that the cracknels and coconuts and other despised chocolates were much in the ascendancy, I was able to thereby exact some revenge on my hosts for their earlier meanness with regards to the pizza. Moreover with this thought still strongly in my mind, I made a point of eating some ice-cream directly from the tub and when I'd had my fill, I licked the surface of the remainder before refreezing it.

After dinner I wound down by playing with a little golfing set, in which you have to put a ball into an electronic hole that spews it back out at you. I also set up the play station and played computer games for an hour or so, though to be honest reader they weren't particularly good ones. All of this down time, had my superiors back at HQ have known about it, would have pleased them immensely, for I'm such a workaholic and they've always encouraged me to relax more.

With my rations in my pockets I headed upstairs.

Now, I'll tell you dear reader, I've known spies who wouldn't have thought twice about getting into bed with those two, planting themselves right between the sheets. Not so yours truly. As far as I'm concerned what people get up to behind closed doors is none of my business. Accordingly I entered, through a shut door, a room on the opposite side of the landing to that occupied by the couple – I could hear them snoring – and with good fortune discovered it to be a spare bedroom. I'd be kipping down here for the night.

I had some difficulty in getting the television set to work – it had something of a dodgy aerial. Yet in time all was well, and, lying back on the bed with the remote control in my hand, I flicked through the channels.

But what bloody sods these remote controls are! And why are people so flipping lazy about changing the dud batteries? Irritated, I took the old ones out, and, after foraging about for spare ones, finally replaced them with batteries that I removed from the smoke alarm in the upstairs landing. Hey presto! It worked perfectly.

In the course of things, at around midnight, NEWS 24 came on. I watched this for a while, now standing up with concentrated expression to see if there was any news vis-à-vis the war on terror. I kept watching. And then in the most dramatic piece of news reporting that I've ever seen, the most incredible and amazing story broke out on TV screens across the country.

Reader, I cannot describe the astonishing and adrenaline-pumping events and my reaction to them without a shudder running down my spine. Reader you'll never guess the utterly incredible and absorbing, gob-smacking news that was breaking.

Brace yourself for a shock.

In a dramatic and protracted bulletin – it totally consumed the whole news output – it was reported that the Dow Jones had fallen by ten points on the FTSE 100 index.

Oh my God! What amazing and incredible news! What a dramatic twist of events reader! Clutching at my heart in mockery as if I was having a heart attack, I collapsed backwards onto the bed in pantomime style. What a bunch of fools there are at the BBC, bringing us this meaningless financial information. The Dow Jones fallen by ten points! The FTSE 100 index! My God reader! My God!

Growing wearied by this I decided it was time to get some shut-eye of my own. Yet, after drinking all that coke I was desperate to relieve myself. However I couldn't go and use the bathroom, without fear of waking the couple. Accordingly, I fished around for a container of some sort in which to pass water.

What could I find? You know often when secret agents are caught out like this, they'll water the plants. Another oft used receptacle is a cat or dog litter. And that madman secret agent Z – God love him, the fool – says he always relieves himself in a fish tank if possible. But there were no such devices here. I looked on the shelves.

Bingo! There were some mugs. One of those would do. I took one up and began urinating therein.

Yet as ever when I've done this in the past, I completely underestimated the volume of urine I was producing. It's because we're – I mean humans – not used to collecting it like this so that we have no built-in intuition as regards *urine capacity estimates*. The mug was getting dangerously full, and not only did it threaten to overflow, but its ever increasing weight, held up precariously by my aching and wobbly left hand – my right was directing the show – was a dangerous burden to live with.

Switching to automatic pilot – possible because the supply was strong – I freed up my right hand. And then in an incredibly adroit manoeuvre I was able, without spilling a single drop, to pick off from the shelf another of the mugs and place it just on the periphery of my cascading waterfall, so that it was waiting in the wings as it were. Then in a second deft movement, I now completed my exploits by pushing the substitute mug into the line of fire so that it *superseded* the first mug and stole from it, diverting the urine from its intended target.

This latter task accomplished, I now returned the first mug to the shelf, and, as we readied for landing, took over the helm once more. A safe-pair of hands were once again required at the controls.

As the supply began to phase out the second mug now started to fill, and I had some concern that it too might exceed capacity. Yet in the end the source dried up, and, much relieved, the two mugs together proved to be sufficient receptacles.

With care I placed them back on the shelf. I did consider drinking my urine as way of eliminating any evidence of my presence. But I'd done that once in the past and ended up throwing it up all over the walls and carpets of the house of the people I was then protecting. However I wasn't really worried. Judging by the dust in this room I got the impression it wasn't much used by Tinka and Tonka. It could be ten or twenty years down the road before they ever discovered the urine in their decorative mugs. By that time all would be long forgotten.

Stripping down naked – it was a humid night and I needed some air – I got ready to bed down under the sheets.

However before this I put my hand surreptitiously under the bed, and, after feeling around for a few minutes, I fished out a porn magazine. You might be impressed by my spy's intuition in this case, but don't be reader, for every house has one or more of these items and usually they're concealed in the most obvious of places.

Of course you're probably shocked, that someone like me, a dashing secret agent who constantly makes love to a very large variety of women, ever needs to debase himself in this way. However I am human and I include this part reader to make you feel better about yourself and to give you a chance to connect on a human level with one of your idols.

Of course the thought has crossed my mind that readers of this book will have masturbated to my very words, so enraptured are they by my heroic person. Naturally you may think I'm referring to women, which of course goes without saying, but knowing how easily men develop a man-crush on me, I'm also alluding to you gentlemen, with one hand on your book and the other on your manhood, sitting there multitasking. Perverts! All of you!

We don't need to go into further details save to say I ejaculated, all over a picture of a brunette, after a lengthy decision making process in which I had to decide who I would go to orgasm with, and in which I gave all the contestants, who are all winners in my eyes – the standard of porn was very high – a chance to impress me as I stroked my penis. But there could only be one winner. I came on her breasts, shut the magazine and replaced it, and instantly went to sleep.

At 5.30 a.m. in the morning, the first dim light of day beginning to appear through the curtains, I awoke, still heavily drowsed, and made my way sleepily downstairs. I stopped to brush my teeth for four minutes in the downstairs sink and with my travel toothbrush, not liking to venture abroad with the night's bad breath. My work here was done – I'd house sat for the mandatory twelve hours – and convinced now that the couple were safe and would face no terror attack after all, I exited the house and walked back along the deserted streets, all the way to my home.

I arrived there at approximately 8.30 a.m. and when I got there gave myself a pat on the back. Thanks to my diligence in duty, Tinka and Tonka were still alive and well.

18

Thus far reader I've treated you to a select choice of isolated episodes, typical everyday adventures in the life of a spy. Admittedly it's been fairly run of the mill stuff – well done if you've got this far and a slap on the wrists if you've been skipping the boring bits.

However the commencement of this chapter marks something of a turning point in the tale; from here on in, all the subsequent chapters are building toward the climax of the dramatic conclusions that would seal my fate and send shock waves across the nation. Reader hold onto your hat; for with this chapter we kick off the most astonishing sequence of events and begin the treacherous and nerve-thrilling descent into the maelstrom.

I'll warn you now reader, if you don't want blanched locks get off now. The adrenaline filled and enervating scenes that follow may be too much for some spectators and as such the final installment of this small memoir comes with a severe warning.

The nation's pots were set to boil and bubble and a fever pitch was to grip the homeland; and in the fires of terror and epidemics of panic and hysteria that followed, and in the midst of media hype and frenzy and a nation all gone to pot, I popped up centre stage. So then to make a start, a beginning. The beginning of the end.

Each and every citizen of our nation and indeed divers others of our global village will well recall that fateful day on which a terrorist plot to fly planes into the houses of parliament was thwarted at the very last minute. There was an absolute media bonanza. The story was given top priority. There was blanket box round the clock coverage. News was on every channel. Bulletins overran. The timetables were completely disrupted. Daytime television was cancelled. My God it was terrible!

Without let up, every TV and radio station dedicated themselves to non-stop news and all concerning the thwarted terror plot. BBC2 became BBC NEWS 24; and even *they* tossed aside the boring business news – finally realising that nobody cares about it – and concentrated solely on the war on terror.

I looked on the internet: it was the same here. The thwarted plot. How many planes were involved? Were there really ten or eleven? Some commentators were suggesting fifteen. My God! What terror!

I checked the government terror alert warning.

In an amazing thrill of excitement, I realised we were on the highest state of alert: an attack was imminent. In the past 541 days we'd never ever attained that level. Never. I usually check the sight maybe twenty or thirty times a day but I'd never, despite dreaming of it many times, ever seen this level before. 'Yes!' I shouted punching the air. This was exciting. Good Lord, things were hotting up.

The papers were full of it as well, with highly-intelligent, evidence based, forensically-extrapolated pictures showing the planes flying into the government buildings in a mass of flame and explosion. I bought all these papers and read avidly. I watched non-stop news on the telly. I couldn't get enough of it. There was so much speculation. And there was national hysteria.

There were talks of a nuclear dirty bomb being driven in a van into the city of London; of a plot to release poisonous chemicals into the water system; and of a fresh wave of attacks on the London underground. Everyone was going crazy for it. I watched the coverage day and night.

London seemed to be where it was all at. I wanted in on the action. I knew I had to go there. It was my duty. To all intents and purposes the citizens were giving in to panic and hysteria. Armed police were patrolling the streets. Everybody was on tender-hooks. And not only was there danger on the part of the madmen who would fain attack the city; but a more subtle yet very tangible threat came from the very citizens themselves.

They were so edgy, nervy and overwrought, that they might, with only the slightest provocation, panic and cause a stampede. This is the very real danger of terrorism, its precise goal in fact. To make ordinary people so terrified that out of nervous agitation they'll cause their own deaths.

You see, with all the coverage terror gets in the news, there are some people out there who get all worked up and excited by it: they are the real danger. Thus did London find herself surrounded on all sides by madmen on the one hand and excitable fools on the other. It was an absolute chaos, it was an accident waiting to happen. It was a mere straw pull away from a devastating Kerplunk! It would only take one more imbecile to upset the apple cart now. Accordingly I had to get there, and position my calm and stabilizing influence in the midst of all that chaos.

Yet how did all the goings on in London connect to the cases I'd already been investigating? I just couldn't see the link. It was one o'clock in the morning. I had NEWS 24 on in the background. I had my third cup of coffee in my hand. I marched back and forth excitedly in front of the blackboard, which was covered with all my furious scribbling, all my thoughts as to the plans of the terrorists.

Yet what did it all mean? I paced around the room. On the bed in front of me there were numerous newspaper articles and clippings, photos of suspects and the evidence I'd thus far gathered including the jaguar patterned bra and Mrs Blackmore's soiled bloomers.

How did *they* fit in with the foiled terror attack? It didn't make any sense reader! I scratched my head in bewilderment. There was other evidence as well: a suspect's pair of false teeth; the most God-awful and foul-stenching soiled nappy that I'd taken from the home of a known terrorist; a balaclava that I'd pulled off an escaping suspect; and other things beside.

Yet as I looked over all these clues and thought about the goings on in London, I just couldn't seem to see the link. And then in an outburst of anger I threw my coffee cup at the blackboard which duly smashed sending coffee and fragments of crockery flying all over the place. 'God-damn it' I shouted. 'I haven't slept in days.'

Recovering myself, I braced up and began soliloquising. 'The IC3 male, he's *obviously* the key. Yet what the hell have you got on him? A jaguar bra? A lousy

jaguar bra? Huh! If you take that into court a jury will just laugh at you! God-dammit, get a bloody grip!

I continued to soliloquise on the case. Then finally, in an amazing moment, I managed to put all of the pieces of the puzzle together.

Reader I am no Sherlock Holmes. And yet in this instance I'd made a deduction so intuitively brilliant that I don't think it is unfair to draw this comparison. Suddenly it all made sense. The jaguar bra before me, the soiled knickers of Mrs Blackmore, the false teeth, the IC3 male. The key link was the Al-Fulani organisation that I hinted at earlier. Got it yet reader? Slow coach!

I am not going to tell you directly, but in the time honoured way of these matters, I now switched on the TV news and watched intently, hoping to prove my case not by an explanation but by predicting an event. (It's staring you in the face reader!)

A reporter was standing outside Oxford Circus; it seemed a fairly usual bulletin. The newsreader was asking him about the current state of affairs; the reporter responded that all was returning to normal. And yet as these precise words were coming out of his mouth, in an incredible soul-shaking moment, my prediction was proven in full.

In the background, in a momentary appearance, a figure walked behind the reporter. 'There you go!' I screamed in triumph. Having recorded the bulletin, I rewound the tape a few minutes later and intensely watched it again.

There! There it was! Right in the top corner of the screen. I pressed the pause button. There, right behind the reporter in the top left hand corner of the screen. I couldn't believe it.

It was the IC3 male, walking from right to left across the street. I took a closer look. Yes! It was definitely him.

Although it was difficult to make out his face, there was a very subtle clue, that wouldn't have been obvious to most people, but which a well-trained spy like myself saw all too well, and which made it clear that it was in fact him: the baseball cap on his head was worn with the peak to the side and *not* to the front. Now how many IC3 males wear their caps like that! Suddenly everything made perfect sense.

My mind was completely made up now. I had to get to London. My business was there. In her hour of peril my nation needed me at her heart and soul. The end was nigh. Doomsday had arrived. The apocalypse was coming just as Nostradamus had predicted it.

Of course the explanation as to how I'd correctly predicted the IC3 male's appearance at Oxford Circus stems from the fact that Al-Fulani, as alluded to earlier.....but hang on what's that reader? What's that you're saying? 'Don't patronise us with a (well-intentioned but totally superfluous) explanation of your deductive reasoning because, not being stupid ourselves and the puzzle not being particularly taxing, we've already worked it out bozo!' Okay, okay have it your own way reader. I'll move on.

I was so excited about my upcoming mission. I decided to go the following morning. Accordingly I set about packing up some belongings in a suitcase. As I thus laboured, I played my CD, *Ultimate Inspiration Tracks*, selecting only 'the Final Countdown' (the Eye of the Tiger track had been over played and kept

slipping). I played it at full blast, over and over again all night – I had it on repeat – and thus did I come to get really pumped up and ready for the mission.

‘It’s the final countdown da da der der, da da der der der, da da der der.....’

Oh what uplifting, awe-inspiring music! ‘It’s the final countdown.’

It truly was the final countdown. The world was coming to an end. I was so excited about going to London and foiling the terror plots. I was going to be a hero. I packed up into the suitcase all of the evidence I’d thus far collected. It was going with me. Yet when I’d finished packing I was in no mood to sleep. I was just so wound up. I watched that video again – the one where the masked men jumped out of the back of a van and raided a suspect’s house – and feeling so inspired by it I took out the balaclava from my bag, and putting it on, and holding a cardboard cylindrical tube in my arms as a substitute rifle, walked around the house shouting ‘Armed Police! Armed Police!’ Finally at five o’clock I got to sleep.

I awoke at seven. By 10.30 a.m. I was on the train headed to London. I was immensely excited. London here I come.

Yet just before we head off to the capital, we need to take care of some other business.

Do you remember the Evil woman from earlier on? The one who was trying to get me arrested for stalking? Well, on that very morning she was up to her old tricks again.

Instead of just going into the shower like any normal woman would, she felt it necessary to perform a striptease and dance her way in; something which anyone with a long-range visual-enhancement aid, who knew her habits and whereabouts, could easily have seen. Throwing down my binoculars I immediately took up my camera.

You’re two steps ahead of me reader, I know, so try and reel in that smug, know it all smile, and let me explain things to the one or two slow learners who we have in our class. Of course I was recording these antics on video, not, as a half-wit might imagine, to titillate myself with, but rather to testimony the fact that she’s a wanton tease and hussy with a need to seek attention. I well imagined showing this evidence to an old judge, who, smiling and laughing to himself, would be convinced of the two-faced game she was playing with me.

Of course above and beyond this evidence, a more striking issue in my defence is the fact that it would be rather strange and rather perverse of me to be stalking a 65 year old woman! I mean please, can you see how badly that would reflect on me reader?

True, Barbera (as she’s called) has a great body for a woman of her age – firm breasts, a tight bum and she’s kept her frontage in good nick – but I find it incredible that a woman of her years even has the audacity to suggest I’m harassing her. I mean if I was interested in stalking a woman don’t you think I would go for her neighbour – a 25 year old red-head by the name of Susan, who wants to be a glamour model (and quite frankly deserves to be), who readily showers with the curtains open, unlike Barbera who usually draws the blinds. It makes no sense whatsoever.

And if I am such a peeping Tom why hasn’t Susan complained about me? Is it because she’s a nicer person than that evil woman; a consequence of her greater experience in life as compared to that silly deluded old bat. And I mean crumbs, if

I was stalking her, don't you think her dog would have noticed by now and raised the alarm? Sebastian, like all these dogs is highly trained. Not just for seeing his mistress across the road. No, for general protection as well.

And, dear deluded old woman, why would a serial peeping Tom not have been fingered by a school of teenage girls just across the road from you – a school, reader, full of lovely, nubile, young women (there are seven of them all together), frolicking around in the playfulness of youth. How could it be that a brazen pervert like myself could not only circumnavigate the attention of those girls, but also of their helpers, therapists and counselors, indeed the man who drives the bus taking them from school to asylum. Do you have any answers old woman?

Or as to why, if I'm such an outrageous pervert, I've been cleared countless times (so many times reader!) in a court of law of being what you say me to be? Or why it is that if I am such a two faced pervert not one witness (not one out of hundreds! apart from you!) has been able to give a credible 'beyond reasonable doubt' testimony of my despicable antics? Or why it is that a petition signed by local women to have me removed from the neighbourhood, was utterly rejected and derided by a majority (an overwhelming majority!) of enraged residents (from all the neighbouring communities in our district God bless them) as complete and utter nonsense, all of whom to a woman 'beseeched' our local politician with 'a plea of mercy' to 'let him remain where he is currently active; because if you relocate him there will be hell to pay'?

However reader I'm about to surprise you. And for those of you who were smugly smiling because you were two steps ahead of me a short time ago, I'm about to wipe that damned smirk off of your face.

You have been subject to a hoax, from the outset of this novel.

There has been a subtle, subliminal message all throughout this work: I have been painting myself as a pervert.

Now the obvious, oh so very obvious explanation – a trap which all of you have fallen into I'm sure – is that I *am* a pervert. You couldn't resist could you. It's so satisfying to paint another person as being sexually deviant. But let me throw out a theory for you.

Suppose a general secret agent – and let's not mention any names but keep this all hypothetical – wanted to keep people away from his real identity. Suppose he found that living in a local community he drew gossip about what he was up to from his neighbours. And suppose he wanted to deflect this gossip, misdirect it, and send out disinformation. Suppose he wanted to demonstrate to the public a rationale for the constant presence of the police at his house.

Do you see what I'm getting at reader? And one more thing, let me just throw it out there as a suggestion.

What if he needed to speak to the police and the authorities really quickly and his only way of doing that, without arousing suspicion on the part of enemy-agents monitoring him, was to commit a crime and be arrested by the police. A crime such as stealing a bra from a shopping mall. Ring any bells dear reader?

So that throws everything into a new light then doesn't it.

Or *does* it? You see this is the world of the secret agent. How can you tell the difference between information and disinformation? Especially when they're mixed together in a blended soup? Don't you see reader, you start off believing orange is

orange. Then somebody comes along and says you've been brainwashed, in fact it's not orange it's red. So you believe it's red. Then that someone is revealed as a manipulative brainwasher. So in fact it was orange all along. Or was it? The only satisfactory conclusion you can make at this point is that the waters are muddy and it could be either orange *or* red.

Anyway I digress. But remember reader the moral of the story: don't trust everything I'm telling you. I could just be stringing you along, manipulating you here and there and baiting you into my honey-traps in order to satisfy the whims of my own particular desires.

Let us return to my train journey to the nation's capital, where, with excitement in my heart, I intended to travel, in order to fight the war on terror.

In times like this the nation expects much of her secret agents; so was I readied. Yet in an amazing anticlimax, I found the train on which I was travelling not only fairly empty, but those few citizens who were on board seemed quiet and sedate, and, acting calmly and indifferently, were totally unexcited about the war on terror. Didn't they know the end of the world was coming? Was I the only one who felt excited about it?

I had expected to be engrossing myself in conversation with eager fellow travellers, excitedly talking about all the possible outcomes and speculating about what the terrorists were going to do to our nation. Would there be a dirty bomb? A poison attack? I had expected that we would split up into groups and go around searching the train for terrorists. And what about the plan to release snakes that the media had often speculated on? For God's sake could there not even be some snakes on the train?

It was *probable* that there were terrorists aboard the train: that was certain. And they were intending to destroy us Kafirs in a Holy War. Had these people on the train not been reading the papers? Had they not followed the news as I had? They were calling us the infidels and speaking of our deaths as blessed to Allah. The terrorists were everywhere and it was very likely they had snakes. People should have been bothered.

Yet instead, as I looked around the train carriage all that met my eyes were passengers quietly engaged in this and that: some reading novels and magazines, others typing away on their laptops, others looking calmly out the window. I felt really put out. I was so excited and didn't want to read a book or anything else so boring. I wanted action. I felt as if I were the only person alive, as I intently watched other people absorbed in their own little worlds, working like robots or reading without a care. I was really very, very disappointed. What a boring anticlimax.

I was so fidgety and after sitting in my seat for some three or four minutes I became so bored and beside myself that I had to get up and walk around, and made a little excursion to see if there was any action going on, on the train.

You know I'll level with you reader, I'd gone to bed the night before in the quiet knowledge that there would be many women on the train, who seeing that I was a secret agent, would be desperate to try and seduce me. In that way had I hoped to pass the time of the journey.

Yet as I walked along the carriages, the women didn't even deign to look at me but were in fact just sedately, with indifferent faces, reading their books or their

gossip magazines or hammering away typing things on their mobile phones. Why weren't they looking at me? Why weren't they excited and thrilled to see me? Didn't they know I was a secret agent? Did they not crave some excitement on this otherwise boring journey? I couldn't work them out at all.

I walked back and forth repeatedly through the carriages and not once, on any of the many times I passed them, did they bother to look up from their magazines and make eye contact with me, or give me any indication that they wanted to make love to me. It made no sense whatsoever. Were they all lesbians or something? I couldn't make head nor tail of it.

You know actually reader, you might well be asking yourself what a man like me, a real-life Lothario, is doing hankering after some action. And in truth it's a fair question. Believe me in my time I've gotten rather sick of women falling in love with me and rather fed up with riding old Randy's red horse. Yet fate is cruel and it's hard for a player like me to escape the amorous advances of the fairer sex.

You know some days I can't even walk down the street and give a girl a smile without her reading a whole lot more into it. Deluding herself that it means I love her, reading all sorts into an unconscious action I never thought twice about and inventing a love interest when none such exists. Truly it happens all the time. One day you might accidentally look in the direction of a woman, and the next day she's round at your house, talking about 'us', talking of 'our relationship', crying that you've treated her so badly and begging you to marry her.

Honestly it's no joke to have strange women who you've never met suddenly enter into your life. Constantly throughout my time I've been harassed and bugged beyond belief, by the opposite sex. I've had women stalking me, women watching me, women breaking into my house at midnight. I've come home to find crazy females sitting in my seat, wearing my clothes, reading my books, and making up stories about my love for them. I've had women ringing me up at midnight, women superimposing my face on their wedding photo and then showing it off to their friends. I've had women in cafes talking about me for hours on end and pretending they've slept with me, gossiping about the size of my penis and breaking into smutty laughter when I've approached.

Moreover I've had women demean me, and all that I am, by referring to me (and my endowment) with language such as big-boy, service-provider, and horse-man; I've had women taking photos of me in the buff and then swapping them with their friends; I've had women touch me and molest me, not just in confined spaces like public transport, but openly and brazenly in the cold light of day. I've had women having a secret rifle through my underwear draw!

Honestly (ignorant) reader, you might well think that this is all so many portions of strawberries and ice cream, so many strolls in the park, but it soon drives you up the wall. Having to have stalking orders put out on women, constantly having to look over your shoulder to see if a lady's in pursuit, the sheer stress of arriving home and having to check that *all seventeen pairs of underwear are still in your drawer* – honestly it's no picnic, no picnic at all.

Of course you might well criticise me for writing a book of this ilk and trying to gain public renown or become a celebrity, since such wanton attention seeking is bound to attract a new influx of stalkers of the female persuasion.

You have a point (tiresome) reader, but I feel I have to publish this book, not because it's my right (which it is) to do as I please and not be goaded into a constricted form of behaviour dictated to me by a mass of selfish, deranged lady stalkers; but rather because I owe it to the general public to tell them the truth. After all nobody else will, and I'm happy to put myself through the humiliation of being exposed to a fresh onslaught of sexual harassment, all for the good cause of the enlightenment of humanity. (You can buy me a drink later.)

All these hassles aside however, if I'm in the mood I'm in the mood; and if love's passion steals upon my heart then I always look to consummate it.

And what a bore this journey was. What sheer sterility seemed to shroud my very being. I looked out of the window. Fields went by in fresh fecundity. Cows munched the grass morosely. A solitary crow circled assiduously. A row of houses flew past, with windows enflamed in morning glory. A horse watched wistfully. Inside the train a man typed repeatedly. A wasp buzzed incessantly. The drop-down tray, trapped in its latch on the seat in front of me, rattled relentlessly.

A mobile phone rang rhythmically. A watch signalled the hour abruptly. A man read a book absorbedly like a bee with his head in a flower. A drinks trolley was wheeled through, squeezing its way down the aisle like an Indian running the gauntlet. As it moved, the glass bottles on its top chinked and sang ceremoniously like birds in the treetops. The trolley wheels squeaked in chorus. Another mobile phone announced itself annoyingly. The electronic door at the end of the corridor opened obediently and zipped back shut robotically. The toilet sign lit up engagingly. A girl walked the corridor staggering as if she was on board a ship at sea. The train quietly roared onwardly. Outside a flock of sheep eyed us sheepishly.

A mountain rose majestically. A cloud crowned it respectfully. The mountain seemed proud and fierce as if it eyed us passengers hungrily. A rain cloud rose threateningly. A cloud flew by shaped like a grand piano. Another cloud flew by shaped like an Indian elephant. The sun shone shimmeringly. The door reopened robotically. The wasp droned on droningly. A noisy silence seemed to permeate the corridor. Outside a cloud rolled by in light-darkness. It was such a foul yet fair day. The train ran on with speed yet getting nowhere.

Oh! I was so bored! Where was the excitement I craved? I couldn't sit still any longer. Jumping up I decided to walk from one end of the train to the other, to see if there was any action going down.

I left my carriage and entered the next. Anything going on here? Not really. A handful of passengers were to be seen – some reading books and magazines, some typing and others looking out the window – all very boring and sedate. I entered the next carriage. And then unbelievably, just as I'd expected to find another uneventful room full of robotic nobodies, the most heart-stopping and breathtaking scene presented itself to my visage. It truly was a sight for sore eyes.

As I was about to enter the carriage, a lady, who was sitting down reading a gossip magazine, looked up at me, and giving me the once over, then returned to her magazine. Why had she given me that look? It had been especially for me, a surreptitious communication meant solely for yours truly. Yet who was that girl? What did it all mean?

For a few moments I couldn't work it out. And then finally I realised who the girl was and fathomed the meaning of that gaze she had bestowed upon me. I was dumb struck and rooted to the spot. My heart melted and my mouth gaped. For reader the lady before me was none other than an old flame of mine.

What bizarreness! Here I was in the midst of the most incredible acts of espionage, on my way to London to counteract the terror threat and become a hero, and just when I'd least expected it, the hands of fate had so arranged it as to reunite me with an ex-lover.

What were the chances of that! Destiny is certainly a funny one, I'll say that much for her. So too had she now decided to lay on for me an amorous engagement to while away the hours. There in front of me she sat: my former bedfellow. Reader, I should sketch our back history.

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It all began, some five years back, when I was stationed in Paris. My arch-nemesis, a Russian by the name of Alexei Dimitrievich Voronin – better known as Dr Death – was planning to blow up the world with nuclear missiles. HQ had sent me to the French capital in order to thwart his plans. Along the way, as it soon became evident to me, it would be necessary to bed his wife, Sasha.

She was a charming little woman, half Russian, half French, a sassy yet very well educated madame, with long black hair and dark features. Naturally I was well up for such a mission. The key to cracking Dr Death and to gaining knowledge on his evil stratagems would be to get Sasha onside, in short to make a mistress of her.

Alexei daunted on her. She was his everything, his little sweetheart and therefore his Achilles heel. In sooth Dr Death was much of a match for me in regard to his skills of espionage, quick thinking, weapon handling and the like. But in one certain quarter was he lacking, and was no match for me: he was hopeless in the bedroom – the very place where I excelled. He couldn't satisfy Sasha. Thus seducing her would be no great problem.

Yet at first she was rather cool to my advances. Thought me too upfront and presumptuous. I harassed her day and night with protestations of my love; sent her chocolates, flowers, jewellery round the clock; even serenaded her at midnight. Eventually she warmed to me and began to quite like me. And then she went one further and fell hopelessly, head over heels in love with me.

And now I eased off a bit and played hard to get. Partly because I enjoy doing that and partly because I intended to double her ardour, and so double her love for me, so that when I did finally relent and we went to the bed chamber hand in hand, I would, what with all my extensive foreplay, multiply her satisfaction and so multiply the information that her heart would reveal.

Paris, night time, the British embassy. A function. Ex-pats dressed sumptuously. Large ballrooms, splendid furnishings, grand interiors. Lackeys circling with wine and hors-d'oeuvres. Ladies and gents talking excitedly.

Musicians playing in the background. I entered in my tuxedo. As I took a glass of wine from a humble waiter, a very scantily-clad woman approached me and making come to bed eyes at me began caressing me and kissing my neck. 'Perhaps later' I said removing her. She desisted and moved off, though still smiling coyly at me.

I sipped my wine slowly and standing alone, glanced around. I saw Sasha on the other side of the room. Never have I seen such ardent eyes fixed on me. That girl was so in love with me. Her sad puppy eyes looked lovingly into my face as if to say that she'd give up her whole life for me, there and then. But all of this I affected to find irritating and nauseous, and I shunned her. Walking up to a little group of personae gratae, standing some ten paces off, I entered into their circle, and so mingling, made it clear to Sasha, with this cruel display, that I really couldn't be bothered with her.

In the little circle of acquaintances that I now found myself with, were one tall, blond and handsome lady, a young and handsome man – a secret agent whom I knew from the academy – an old and venerable serviceman and a few other nondescript characters who I won't bother to describe. They were all very pleased to see me, especially the blond lady, and I immediately began entertaining them with a rather savage impersonation of the proconsul, a bumbling and dithering old man, who spoke horrible French, and whose eye sight was so bad and who was such an all-round fool, that he'd been caught in flagrante delicto with a teenage lady-boy who he'd mistakenly picked up as a prostitute.

'Je voulais une femme, je voulais une femme!' I kept saying in mock savagery. Everybody was in stitches of laughter. With eyes full of glee and merriment they watched me avidly as I mimicked the proconsul, who stood at the time at the opposite side of the ballroom. And the blond lady was especially enraptured with me, and egged me on in all my cruelty.

Meanwhile on the other side of the ballroom stood Sasha, alone, regarding me no doubt. I knew she would be standing by herself watching me. I knew that she would be looking over to our little clique, the blond lady laughing, the young secret agent laughing and in the middle of them all, the centre of attention, feigning to be heedless of her, yours truly, loudly and demonstrably doing a savage yet perfect impression of the proconsul, so that anyone who saw, though they would feign hold their tongue, had to burst out into uncontrollable laughter.

I knew Sasha saw all of this – this act of mine – felt she knew perhaps that it was all an act, and that truly in doing it, though I paid no attention to her, it was for her eyes only, only for her, as though she and I were the only two in the entire ballroom. And I knew that she watched. Knew also that she disliked me so much when I acted thus, when I did such impressions – she preferred it when I was sensitive – and knew also that she hated the blond lady, felt herself intimidated by her and her coarse healthiness, and wouldn't dare enter into our little corner of the soiree.

To wind her up the more, I from time to time stood close to the blond lady, and with a very straight face, whispered something into her ear, at which she burst out into hordes of uncontrollable, smutty laughter. I maintained my straight face throughout.

Yet on one such occasion, just as I'd finished whispering some dirty minded joke into her ear, so that as things now stood her face looked over my shoulder and mine over hers, I darted a very quick glance to the rear of the blond lady, in the direction of Sasha who was stood watching all on the other side of the room. It was a passionate and earnest glance and said a lot about my true intentions. That it was her, Sasha, whom I wanted. And again it was as though only herself and I were in this room alone.

Some time elapsed and I left my little circle of friends, the blond lady beaming at me as I went, and, alone, departed outside onto the terrace. It was a beautiful, still summer night. The heavens were alive with stars. The air fragrant and the evening shot through with that joie de vivre that one inevitably feels on a tranquil August night in Paris when you've downed a few glasses of red wine.

There was a terrace which eventually led down to a large garden. But I did not enter the garden but rather made my way down to a little fountain and pond at the bottom of the terrace. The soothing, soothing splash of the cascading water now peacefully lulled me, a much needed break, I have to say, from the heat, noise and din of the interior; the music and chat of the ballroom being now, only a distant sound. I was all alone. The Eiffel tower, lit up in the night-sky, rose majestically away in the distance. I sipped my wine and contemplated.

Some few moments later Sasha appeared. She was a lot smaller than me, very petite in fact, but beautiful with her dark hair and dark features, enlivened as they were with all the emotions that overwhelmed her – her deep passion for me, hurt at my cruel behaviour and terrible, terrible heart-wrenching trepidation in case I slipped through her grasp and rejected her.

'Monsieur X, you are so cruel to me tonight' said she in the most seductive voice (she spoke with a half French half Russian accent) which was yet melancholy and sorrowful in the extreme. She looked at me intently, but I didn't meet her gaze. Instead I looked ahead stonily into the distant horizon, smoking a cigarette as I did so, and blowing the smoke arrogantly into the night air. She grabbed my arm.

'Monsieur X, don't you know how you hurt me so? Is zhis anyway to treat a lady? I love you so, so much. I really do. Never have I loved a man so much. Never. Can I say wiz hand upon heart zhat I have ever loved anozher so? Can I even say zhat I have ever loved before? I cannot. Truly I cannot. I find, since I met you, zhat all my previous loves were mere shallow affairs wiz men whom I did not know.

'You X, you have taught me love. Emplanted in my heart, in my breast, transfused zhroughout my whole being, a new and rapturous feeling, a feeling of what it is to be alive, to be in love, to be content: a feeling to die for. You understand vooen X like so few men do. I would do anyzhing for you X, give up my life for you. Really, any vooan would if only zhey knew you. But you treat me so cruelly, never respond to me. Pourquoi pas my darling?

'What's the time?' I demanded, affecting to ignore her.

'Il est sept heures et demi.'

'It's about time I was going then. My train leaves at 8.15, I should get to the station.'

'Leave me monsieur X! Oh please don't do zhis to me, I beg you!' she said pleadingly.

‘Look, I really don’t have time for this’ I said irritated. ‘You’re hanging round me like a lost little puppy.’

‘Monsieur X, please don’t hurt me so, please don’t hurt me so, please don’t say such cruel things. I repeat, I love you X. I love you. More than any woman has ever loved a man do I love you. You are the one for me X, it is meant to be. Without you my life is empty. If you go I will poison myself rather than face a lifetime with the insufferable Alexei.’

‘X do you know how wonderful you are? Truly you are God’s gift to women. Never have I met a man who so understands a woman. Knows her heart and mind, knows how to speak to her inner self, a man who can touch her innermost feelings. I have never had such satisfaction in the bedroom as with you Monsieur X. Truly you know how to satisfy a woman, you understand her needs.’

‘X if you go now my life is over. I could not bare to be without you again. My heart would break and shatter if you go. Please X, I beseech you with all my heart, please don’t go! Stay here with me. Come to my bedroom please X. Stay there with me, just you and I alone, detached from the rest of the world, locked in a room alone together, making love with each other till doomsday come and the Heavens fall. Oh please X, I love you so much.’

‘Broken record, broken record!’ I replied with annoyance.

‘Oh X how can you say that to me!’

‘Look, I’m sick to my back teeth of all this’ I said. ‘I’m off.’

And with that I marched away across the terrace, and re-entering and crossing the ballroom, made my way to the front entrance, all the while Sasha, whose legs were a lot shorter than mine, scuttled after me in a desperate attempt to keep a hold of me. I reached the front entrance.

‘X please don’t go!’ she pleaded, pathetically grabbing my arm with both her hands as if to stop my progress. She leaned into me, put her head on my chest and started crying and screaming for me not to leave. But I shifted her aside and hailed a driver.

A few moments later I was in the Mercedes heading for the station. I’d allowed Sasha to come and see me off. We drove through the busy streets of Paris, the driver in front, Sasha and I sitting on the backseat. I affected to be annoyed and looked irritated out of the window, whilst Sasha, her eyes glued on me – as if she was the puppy and I the irate master – sat next to me, getting as close to me as she dared, and all the while protesting her love to me and begging me not to go.

‘Please X, I will poison myself if you go. Believe me my life is not worth living without you.’

‘Damn it man!’ I broke out angrily, addressing the driver. ‘Can’t you get this thing to move any faster’ (we’d come to a complete standstill).

‘Yes sir. So sorry sir. Three bags full sir. I’ll get her moving Monsieur X’ said he humbly. I simply frowned in response.

And now Sasha broke out into tears. She couldn’t control herself any longer.

‘Please X’ she wept ‘if you go now I will stand in front of the train. If you leave you will kill me not only in heart and soul but physically as well. Could you live with yourself after that?’

But I didn’t respond and just sat there annoyed and looking out the window. In time we came to the station and alighted. I walked across to the platform where

the train stood, Sasha following behind me. She was becoming desperate now, seeing that I was really going to go, that at any moment now I would board the train and be gone forever, leaving her all alone with a horrible, horrible sinking feeling in her stomach, the pain of which would be too much to bare.

'X don't leave like zhis. Please!' she begged, scuttling after me and grabbing a hold of me to try and thwart my progress.

'Look' I said growing angry 'I've had just about enough of this. If you don't give up your womanly whining, I'll personally see to it that you are poisoned.'

'Oh ho ho X!' she cried 'how can you be so cruel to me, my darling' and she burst into tears.

'This is sexual harassment' I said in response. 'If you don't stop stalking me and making demands on me, I'll have no other choice but to call the police.'

'Oh ho ho X!' and with these words she simply buried her head in my side and began crying. By this time we'd reached the train. I stood before the entrance, on the platform, with Sasha grabbing tight a hold of me, her head buried in my side, crying and screaming – she was in hysterics – and begging me not to go.

Strange little creature. A little bag of emotions, a little fountain of tears. Like a frantic little animal she buried her head in my chest, her beautiful soft black hair falling on my hands, so too her warm tear drops, so too her little kisses. She was like a fierce little animal in the way she clung on to me. Just wouldn't let go. Just like a little child, desperate to hold onto its mother, when she leaves it on its first day at school.

'Sasha please detach yourself from me' I said commandingly. But she wouldn't let go.

'Guard please!' I shouted, addressing a nearby train official. 'This woman is harassing me. She's aggressive and violent. Please remove her from me.'

'Certainly sir. Yes sir. Three bags full sir' he responded to me, before addressing Sasha. 'Please madam, you're not wanted here. Don't trouble the monsieur.' And stretching out his arms he removed Sasha from my person.

I entered the train. The guard held Sasha back. She was absolutely in hysterics, screaming and protesting her love for me. I now moved out of sight by standing in the gangway behind the toilet. Sasha remained outside, held back by the guard. I set about putting the next stage of my plan into motion.

Getting down on my hands and knees, I crawled along the carriage aisle, so as not to be visible, through the windows, to Sasha. Thus crawling I made it to the end of the carriage. I now stood up and walked through the next two carriages, at the end of which I then exited the train, cautiously looking back down the platform as I did so, and seeing some sixty metres off the hysterical Sasha, wriggling and squirming as she was held by the guards who kept her from getting onto the train, totally oblivious that I was watching her.

With haste I now walked across the station and positioned myself on a bridge over the railway line some forty metres or so away from where Sasha squirmed and wrestled. Some few minutes later, the train doors slammed shut, the whistle blew, and the train chugged off, leaving the desolate Sasha, now abandoned by the guards, all alone and angst to the point where she simply collapsed in a heap on the floor, and putting her head to the ground, wept uncontrollably.

I stood upon the bridge, leaning against the railing and watching the gut-wrenched Sasha abandoned on the floor. Some twenty minutes later she finally picked herself up and made her way slowly, zombie-like, out of the station. I followed her. Evidently she was walking home.

So we went through the warm Parisian night. As we walked down a busy rue, heaving with people and nightlife, I saw a woman approaching in the opposite direction, selling roses. I bought one. Then commandeering a little Parisian girl of about eight, smartly dressed in a very fetching beret, who was playing out on the street with some playmates, I gave her the rose and offering her ten francs told her to run up to that lady in front – I pointed to Sasha – and to hand her the rose with the words ‘*pour vous madame*’.

She duly did it. Sasha was somewhat taken aback. Who was it from? Yet momentarily these questions were put to one side: she couldn’t help but be joyous by the sight of the rose-wielding little girl. She thanked her, patted her on the head, yet before she had time to ask her the question ‘from whom was it sent?’ that little waif had skipped away hastily, just as I’d instructed her to.

Sasha now remained rooted to the spot, unsure of what the rose symbolized. She had a presentiment of what it portended – she knew how romantic I could be – but dared not think the unthinkable, defeated and infinitely depressed as she was. Her feelings had been crushed enough to last her a life time: she dare not hope for fear of having them crushed yet further. So she walked on, head down and despondent.

Some half an hour or so later she stood sadly and alone on the banks of the Seine. I stood on a bridge just above her, watching her absorbed in her gloom, as she looked into the peaceful and night-glossy river. I now took out my handkerchief, a special kind I always use that bore my initials, sewn in, in gold silk. And I let it drop from my hand and watched it sail, helter-skelter like downwards, until it landed right at the feet of Sasha.

I immediately ducked down behind the bridge wall. I had a small vantage point. Sasha saw the falling handkerchief. At first she seemed disinterested. Yet, after staring at it a while, she seemed struck by something, and ever so slowly – not daring to hope – she bent down and picked it up. She held it up to the lamplight and inspected it. She knew what it was. She saw my initials.

Her look expressed puzzlement and wonder. She looked around her, up to the bridge, clearly trying to fathom from whence this missive fell. Surely it must have come from her favourite secret agent, surely? Yet she dared not hope. Instead she seemed to look Heavenward, at all the stars, and murmured a soft prayer up to them. She was so sobered, almost remorseful after her sorrows. When the prayer was said she held the handkerchief to her face, and smelling it and giving up her face to the pleasant feel of it on her skin, she then kissed it, before placing it beneath her bra, and next to her breast. She walked on.

When she arrived back home, she entered silently and morosely. Slowly she took off her coat and scarf and walked forward through the hall and into the kitchen. When she got there she got the shock of her life. She saw me sitting at the table – I’d ran ahead of her and let myself in – sipping a glass of wine, and looking very suave, sophisticated and at ease, but also now looking concentratedly and lovingly into Sasha’s face.

'Bonsoir ma chère!' I said raising my glass to her.

'Oh X!' she said seductively, and running forward she embraced me. I embraced her back and we began kissing.

We broke off. She said she loved me once more. I said that I too loved her, loved her as the frozen brook loves the advent of spring, loved her as the burnished brass butterfly loves to bathe and flicker in the golden sunlight of summer, loved her as the sacred buffalo had once loved the freedom of the plains. I said that I loved only her, wanted only her and would never in my whole life make love to another woman (I had my fingers crossed as I said all this).

We looked into each other's eyes and I said passionately 'I love you, I love you, I love you'. Such insincere words yet how she took them to be so sincere. Surely a part of her knew how insincere the words were; yet another part of her felt them to be totally sincere. Truly if one is to understand an oxymoron it is here: 'I love you, I love you, I love you'. What sincere insincerity, what insincere sincerity. How funny is the male of the species when he's on for one; what funny contradictory language he spouts. We went arm in arm, tongue in mouth to the bedroom.

It was a night of deep satisfaction for Sasha. Truly were her deepest desires sated, her sexual thirst slaked and quenched, her every need taken care of, on that eventful night. Repeatedly she made love to me. Time after time I woke up in the middle of the night, only to find myself lying prostrate on the bed with the sex-hungry Sasha straddling me, sitting on my manhood and projecting at right angles to me, pounding her way to high heaven and climaxing on a crescendo apocalyptic. How many times we made love that night I cannot say. God endowed me with only ten fingers on which to count. It seemed to go on an eternity.

'Oh! Oh! Oh X! I love you X. Oh! Oh! Oh!'

She screamed my name ecstatically, orgasmically. She sounded almost pained. Truly her noise was that of a dying animal, an animal so pained, so thrilled, so in ecstasy, that to die now in full glory would be a God-send, to escape the death-like after-existence that would succeed this night of electric passion. She was like a trumpet swan, trumpeting its last as it died in a nerve-thrilling death climax.

So the night went on. The moonlight entered our little boudoir. Sasha ground on relentlessly. Had an onlooker outside looked across to the window, they would have seen, silhouetted against the white blinds, the erect figure of Sasha, upright and active, grinding her way forever onwards to satisfaction, to death, on the ride of her life. So too did she labour till the wee hours of the morning, when sated, she finally lay down and rested in my arms.

Some hour or so later she told me all the secrets of her heart. She told me the madman Alexei's hideout, his plans and exactly what I needed to do to stop him and save the world. Besides this, she told me also of how she was frightened of Alexei, how he had terrible mood swings, would often be overcome with melancholy, how he would brood and become morose, how he wouldn't say a word for weeks on end, and how he frankly terrified poor Sasha.

Also she told me of how he snored in bed, ate biscuits without a plate, drank milk straight from the bottle (making a gasping noise as he did so); mixed up crockery sets when he emptied the dishwasher, didn't wash the shower after he used it every day, and moreover, how he had painted a room in military grey and not moon grey so that it clashed with the furniture and ruined the whole room.

Furthermore he had, when feeding the cat, used a general fork, as opposed to a specially designated one, he left his toothbrush on the sink edge instead of returning it to the pot, only cleaned out the cat litter once a day, once confused a tea towel and an actual towel and almost wiped his hands on it, and sometimes didn't even bother to make his bed for several hours after awakening. Also he had once broken wind in bed! In addition he was completely hopeless sex-wise – his penis was only six inches long! – and yet all the while he thought that he satisfied Sasha, who had to fake her orgasms.

Learning all this as I now had, I decided to make an exit. At 5.30 a.m. I left Sasha asleep in bed, and departed the house to conclude my mission. Since then I had never laid eyes on her again.

20

Now I know you complained (quite rightly) about the endless sex scenes we are being *forced* to watch in this book. Well I have some good news and some bad news. Another one is on its way, unfortunately. The good news however, is that, like the very last one, it will involve yours truly. Prepare to see the master at his work once more.

Sasha had returned into my life. There she sat, on a seat in front of me, reading her magazine. Was it really her? There was a resemblance that was for sure. Yet her features seemed quite different in lots of ways, and her hair was no longer black but blonde. That was a puzzling non-sequitur?

Ah ha! So she'd dyed her hair. Obviously. And it had been five years since I'd seen her, so that, she was *bound* to look different. Maybe she'd even had plastic surgery. In fact knowing her, that made complete sense. God, how some women are obsessed about their looks! How they are willing to put themselves through the most severe cosmetic surgeries to change their appearances! It really beggars belief.

No it was definitely her, I was convinced of that. Why else had she given me that mysterious look? Call it spy's intuition, call it the sixth sense of a former lover, but to be sure it was definitely her. Yet why did she now glance at me as I stood watching her, and scowl at me and give me a suspect look as if I was just some strange weirdo she'd never met? It made no sense whatsoever reader. And why did she affect to not know me, to ignore me and read her magazine?

Ah ha! So that was it! She was *deliberately* ignoring me. She was in a *huff* with me. Now that I thought about it, it made perfect sense. After our night of passion she had probably expected that I would have stayed with her, married her in fact. In her deluded little view of the world she had envisaged herself and I a permanent item, wedded and betrothed, set up for life together, a union unto the grave, till death do us part.

Oh how she flattered herself! Ha! Strange deluded woman! As if I would have given up my freedom for her. And obviously, since I hadn't even stayed until the morning, but stole away under the cover of night, she must have been, at the time,

incredibly angered and resentful. And now she was reaping her revenge and trying to get her own back, by ignoring me, by huffily looking away from me and reading her magazine.

She was not going to acknowledge me. Well my dear, two can play that game. If that's how you want to play it sweetheart, that's fine by me. I don't have time for such nonsense you silly little girl. I returned to my seat and sat down.

Yet the tortoise of time trod onwards. Still she made no appearance. I had expected her to have given up her little protest by now, to have seen that, huff herself to eternity as she might, I would never go and yield to her little whims, that I would stonily sit here and ignore her. I had expected she would have come to me, unable to resist me and started making love to me. I'd expected the seduction to have begun at Doncaster; yet we were now at Peterborough and there was still no sign of her. What was she playing at?

I decided to take matters into my own hands. Walking back through the train I came to her carriage. Still she sat there unresponsive, reading her magazine. I stood staring at her. Eventually she looked up at me and shot me a contemptuous glance. Oh! What wrathful eyes. She wasn't best pleased that I was staring at her. Oh! Little miss Huff-head indeed.

She was well pissed off that was for sure. Looked at me as if I had no business staring at her. I had really gotten to her, obviously. And now she looked away again, resumed her reading, and in the way she went about it, her attitude was as if to imply that I was just some weird pervert whom she'd never met. Oh what contempt was I treated to reader! Ha! Ha! I was really scared (not).

Anyway if she wasn't going to kick off the action then I was. Gentlemen if you're reading please take note. On many occasion I've seen a wrathful female, wronged by her husband one way or another, taking revenge on him by ignoring him and going in the huff. And so many times have I seen the husband or boyfriend reduced to utter misery by said behaviour of their beloved, distraught to be so contemptuously treated by their princess upon the pedestal, and reduced to tears and whining, begging and pleading, all to reclaim that love that they so mistakenly wronged.

And I've seen men pile on the pleading, the begging, I've seen them desperately ply their womenfolk with flowers and chocolates, I've seen them wait on their mistresses hand and foot. I've even known men who've done the ironing for their loved one. And to all of this grovelling behaviour, nine times out of ten, I have watched on as the woman, totally unimpressed by all this sincere apology and affection, merely prolongs the torture of her man, heightens her huff, acts all unreachable and snooty, and on lots of occasions seems genuinely annoyed by this limp-wristed lackey-like behaviour of her man.

No, as far as I'm concerned this is *not* the way to act at all. In my opinion there are two ways to tackle such a situation: there's my way, which is the spy's way, and then there's the wrong way. Those men amongst you who are in the grovelling class play close attention now. You're about to be given a lesson in how to treat a huffed-up, wrathful woman.

So too did she want to play it. If she was going to say nothing then neither would I. Actions speak louder than words. If she thought I was going to play her game she could forget it. I didn't have the time or the interest. I was the master,

she the pupil. By the time I was finished with her she would be thanking me. I well knew that.

Women want a man who's sure of himself, who knows what he wants, who knows what's best for a woman, in short a leader, a man who'll force a march through life, commanding and head strong, leading the woman in tow, whose heart-glad to be swept off her feet, ordered about and given something to live for. What she doesn't want is a man who's afraid of her, a man who dares not approach but who compliments and praises her from afar. All such offerings are but bile to her. She cannot stand it.

She wants a man who thinks nothing of her, treats her uncivilly; what she hates most of all is a frightened man, the sort that cries and apologises when she huffs. No. Not for a second would I play the distraught lover, the hopeless and weeping mummy's boy begging to be back in her good graces. Not for a second. I was going to stand up and be a man, show her I wasn't to be toyed with, remind her, by force if necessary, of my love for her, and satisfy and delight her by my mastery and bull-like ability in the bedroom.

Accordingly I got up and waited in the gangway just outside her carriage. My plan was to wait for her, until she (hopefully) used the toilet, and then seizing on her, and not letting her get a word in, so make love to her as to render her sated and exulted and glad of my love.

I waited in the gangway. Would she come to the toilet? The train journey still had an hour or so to run. I peeped my head around the corner, and looking through the glass door saw her there, reading her magazine very calmly and sedately.

I continued watching her. As I did so she stole a glance upward and made eye contact with me for a moment. Blowing the huffiest of puffs, and moving her eyes away with utter contempt and an angry scowl, did she thus react to finding me once again stood staring at her. What a huffy woman Sasha was! She was really trying to make me feel dreadful by so ignoring me and acting all irate. What a wrathful woman she was. I was *so terrified*. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

I went back into the gangway next to the two toilets and started thinking. I wanted to give Sasha a real treat. Musing to myself, I suddenly recalled how Tonka had thrilled Tinka by wearing that bull mask. Now hang on a minute, didn't I have that balaclava in my bag? Might I not employ it now, when I seduced Sasha, to similar good effect? I went to my bag and fetched it and then returned to the gangway outside the toilets.

Yet I didn't put the mask on. It would have seemed strange to the other passengers. As I stood and waited I was quite in trepidation. Lots of things worried me about my plan. For one thing Sasha might not use the toilet. For another, what if a passenger went by as I went into the toilet after her? You see given that I was going to surprise Sasha and take her from behind, and given also that I intended to do it wearing a mask, she was bound to get the shock of her life and start screaming. Even if a passenger wasn't present outside the toilets, still she might be heard further away.

Moreover it was likely, given the domestic tension between her and I, that she would cry rape when I thus accosted her: this is an oft used little ploy of women, when they're in the middle of a domestic and fancy getting a bit of revenge on their

man – believe me I’ve had this one levelled at me on several occasions before, by women who I’ve upset – and I well imagined her calling to a passer-by, telling them I was assaulting her, so that I would have to relinquish my amorous embraces.

That would spell disaster. Sasha would have only more contempt for me then. No I was determined to carry out my plan successfully. I waited. I waited still. And then in an adrenaline rushed moment, Sasha appeared in the gangway and I set about my mission with incredible success.

I saw her coming down the aisle. Except for myself, the area outside the toilets was free of other passengers (there were so few on the train). As Sasha came into the vestibule I had my back turned to her and was gazing out the window. When I heard the toilet door open behind me I instantly made my move; and no sooner did she sense that I was entering the toilet behind her, than I’d already whipped on the balaclava and pounced on her like a lion; and with one hand firmly over her mouth to still her screams, and another wrapped around her upper body so that I kept in check her left arm with my left, and her right arm with my right, I bungled her forcibly into the train toilet, back-kicking the door shut when I was inside.

She’d got the shock of her life. She was desperately trying to free herself from my embraces. She writhed in my arms but I held her. Her muted screams came puppy-like from her mouth and I found my hand wetted by the condensation of her hot breath. She was absolutely unyielding as if she’d turned to stone in my arms.

With an incredible alacrity of manoeuvre, I momentarily let go my grasp, removed my hand from her mouth, and quickly spinning her around, put two arms around her upper body, so that I pinned her arms, and, allowing her only an instance in which to get off a light scream, placed my mouth forcibly on hers. I now had her in the position I wanted her: I held her in a perfect octopus-style death-grip.

My role was now dual: with my arms I had to so enwrap her body so as to still her and force her to yield; yet at the same time my arms, and especially my hands, should act as instruments of love. Thus as I held her, and forced her to yield, so too did my hands run across her back, her hair and her backside, caressing and groping her, as I turned up the frisk factor and gave in to the age-old beat of the love-fandango.

It was poetry in motion; a pure act of amore, as I felt my way around her body, touching every sacred part and electrifying her by my moves. Yet in terms of mouth to mouth action I was somewhat thwarted. For she steadfastly refused to open her mouth and let me in: the fort would not allow itself to be taken, the drawbridge would not be opened.

So in an effort to improve this situation I now allowed my arms, whilst still doing their job of holding down her arms, to take up new positions. I so placed my left arm so as my left hand could tug at her hair, and my right arm so that my right hand could wrench open her jaw. Thus labouring did I finally get her mouth open, and immediately did I force my tongue down her throat. At last I was in a position to truly make love to her; and though she still adamantly resisted, I knew it was only a matter of time before she yielded to my embraces. Truthfully it was what she wanted.

She was going to have her voluptuous consummation. I was going to give it to her.

She was the daughter of men, the flower of the earth-soil, she was the apple of Eden, the bambi snow-drop, the Lilly of the valley waiting to be plucked. He was the dark star, the potent, infinite dark star of eternity, the guiding ever-forceful love-stallion, the love-emancipator, the love orchestrator, the passionate life-bringer and love curator. He was the instrument of love: the love conductor.

She was the light star, the moon possessed nymph-lover, and she wanted his dark, dark potency, to swoop upon her soul and to drown her in ever eternal night. She wanted the electric passion of his will: she wanted it to drench her moon filled being, to capture and snow-shake her, to feed her the riches of the passion Christ.

And he was the bringer of life, the heraldic Taurus, the love-flamed horseman of the apocalypse: with his flaming arrows would he shoot her in her heart, in her bosom, in her soul, in her very seed-grain of womanhood. In her seed-grain of womanhood, in her infinite fertile moon-like fecundity did his dark electric passion touch her. In his very will did he transfuse her, transfuse her very soul, her seed-grain femininity, her love-phallic womanhood.

He was the life-giver, the Christ redeemer: through his passion did she taste the eternal snow-drop, the dark magnetic ice of the Christ redemption, the dark blood of Christ, the living embodiment of His life-blood. Otherwise would it all have been the cardboard cut-out of the old-Judas love-lore.

Truly did she now resent the old Judas love-lore. It so enraged her. It was but a dead letter. A nothing passion, a dead-wood, worm-infested machine-like love practice. It was all dead to her like so many stale sentences. She had been touched by the old dark force of the phallus, the infinite magnetic passion of the old, old dark soul. Never would she return to the dead way, the way of the *light*.

So did we get down to it. When I first entered her mouth there was a lot of banging of teeth. And it soon became evident that she'd just eaten a bag of cheese and onion crisps. What a horrible taste reader! Ugh! Fortunately for her, I was willing to overlook this. But oh what a disgusting taste! And more than that, she evidently was very lazy in the application of the toothbrush and truthfully reader I considered backing off.

But it was love that she wanted and as such I intended to service her. Yet still, as my tongue probed her tonsils, there alighted on the tip of it a soggy-feeling, cheese and onion tasting, drool-saturated, crisp fragment. Yuck! Further, I got the rather awful impression that she'd eaten eggs for breakfast. Ugh! The things we do for love eh!

Indeed, these horrors notwithstanding, I kept up the amorous onslaught. She by the way, was still unyielding. Still she made herself like a stone. Still she tried to writhe her body free. Still did she try to disengage her mouth from mine. She just would not submit, but was like a little wild animal desperate to escape its captor.

She tried tirelessly to scream through her mouth but I kept mine firmly over hers giving her the kiss of life. I held her jaw open for fear she might snap her teeth shut on my tongue. Still I probed, still I caressed, still I made love. Still she resisted, still she panicked, still she seemed fearful and desperate to get away. But

I held her, held her, and I forced her, forced my love upon her. Tongued her, caressed her hair, touched her derriere.

Yet still was she like a stone unyielding! Hell hath no fury than a woman scorned! Oh what true words did the bard once speak! I was learning the truth of that little nugget of wisdom now. Yet what a strange curious little creature. Like a wild animal, she would not yield. She was whimpering and murmuring like a crazed and frightened little animal. She seemed almost to be paralysed with fear. Her body was like a stone in my arms. She whimpered like a lost little child.

I decided to up the ante. So far I'd restricted myself to touching her back, head and booty; now I decided to get down to it. Oh come on baby! Let's do it! Let's make love my darling. Yet just as I'd moved one hand to the region above her knee, all set to slowly raise it upwards, the most amazing turn of events took place.

In the most dramatic and curious of instants, the life seemed to be withdrawn from her and she fell, seemingly inert, like a tree to the floor.

21

She fell very quickly and yet luckily for her, I caught her in my arms as she went, so that I sort of lowered her to the floor as she fell.

She had fainted. I had broken her fall and laid her out on the floor. She lay there prostrate, her unconscious face looking up at me, her eyes vacant, her mouth gaping open. I checked her pulse. She still had one. Good, good, good.

Truly this was a revolting place to make love in. For as she lay there her head was on one side of the toilet, right next to it in fact, and her blond hair rested in a puddle of urine on the floor, as too did the back of her jacket. She lay there passed out.

She had fainted. Good Lord I was good. She had swooned on me. It had all been too much for her. I was so overpowering; my love so strong, my mastery of women so complete. I thought this sort of thing only happened in books.

Honestly reader I'll level with you, in all my amorous adventures, with all my spy thrilling female seduction techniques, never have I had a woman swoon on me. Never ever. But I'd evidently been too powerful for Sasha: she had been so excited and soul-shaken by me, that the poor girl had lost consciousness and blacked out.

I knelt down on the floor beside her. 'Sasha my princess, Sasha?' I called to her. But there was no response. I wiped her brow lovingly. My first reaction was to call for help, ring for an ambulance or something. But then I imagined the following scene.

I imagined walking into hospital, a bunch of flowers in my hand, a happy smile upon my face, and entering a room where Sasha lay – now awake after her unconscious bout and sitting up in bed. I imagined presenting her with the flowers and saying warmly 'Sasha my darling, it's so good to see you back to health'. And then I imagined the scowling Sasha, irate once again, looking at the flowers and

tossing them aside, a veritable picture of a wrathful woman, huffily questioning me about my actions.

‘Why didn’t you make love to me X?’ she would say. ‘You’re so lily-livered, I want a real man. A man who knows what he wants. Not a man who *half* makes love to me; a mincing man who doesn’t go all the way. Don’t smile at me! You damned fool! And get rid of these flowers! I hate flowers. I want a real man. A man who will bully me and force me. Not some limp-wristed fool. ‘How are you Sasha?’ ‘How are you my darling?’ As if I cared for such mummy’s boy affection! You’re a fag, you are X. Get out of my sight! I want a real man, a man who goes all the way.’

So thinking I decided there was only one thing to do. We were going to go all the way and that was final. She lay there prostrate before me. Well Sasha my darling it’s what you want. Let us climax to high Heaven together.

She would wake up, be brought back to life, like the princess who slept for a thousand years, by the hot cascading juices of my throbbing manhood pumping into her body, and warmly crashing on the shores of her womanhood. I stripped myself naked except for the mask. Although I had a condom in my pocket, I *wasn’t* going to use it. I’ve had plenty of feedback from lovers in the past, who’ve complained it’s insensitive and deprives them of pleasure. I wasn’t going to deprive Sasha.

In terms of position I’d decided to start with the missionary; and if after that she still wasn’t conscious, then I would flip her over and take her from behind to see if that did the trick. I now lay down next to her on the floor and cosied into her. It was time to strip her naked. I began to unbutton her jacket.

I was now free to speak, so accordingly ‘oh Sasha, my little princess, my darling, I love you so much, I want to be with you. Let me give you some sexual healing, my love.’ So did I talk as I unclothed her, kissing her brow and lips in between times.

There seems to be a prevailing trend, in modern pornography, for men to violently make love to women with such things as hair pulling considered to be essential, and something that ‘the bitch enjoys’. Of course this sort of misogyny stinks to high Heaven and I’m happy to here furnish you with an example of firm yet fair romantic love making. Accordingly I didn’t *pull* but rather *stroked* my little princess’s hair affectionately. This is how it should be done.

Moreover the process of removing Sasha’s bra was carried out very smoothly, with expert hands so that at no point did she have to intervene and help me get it off, nor either was her bosom fair choked and strangled, punishments that some (less expert) men would seem to fain wish to inflict upon their lady-folk, in their pathetic efforts to remove this garment. With experience I simply flipped her over, and, after lovingly removing her jacket and t-shirt, I used one hand to open the bra. I didn’t bite her breasts, I didn’t drool on them; rather I toed a middle line, lovingly caressing them as though I were one of those little fish that nibbles on your feet.

‘Why does my man never do that to me?’ ‘Why do I never meet guys like X?’ I here you say enviously (and a little bitterly) ladies. Well I would love to say that there are plenty of fish in the sea and so forth. But to be honest that would be a little disingenuous, since, let’s face it, not many of them are like me. All I can say is that, if this seems a harsh reality to face up to women, imagine how depressed

your man is, facing the, inevitable sexual comparisons with yours truly. Sorry guys! Sorry if your girl ends up despising you after this. Sorry if she ends up saying my name when you make love to her tonight!

I now removed her knickers; and yet when I saw her naked womanhood in front of me I was very disappointed.

Gentlemen, I wish to put something out there, because I feel I'm not alone in this. I mean am I really the only man who regrets the bygone era of huge, hairy bushes? When a woman's part was all hair as nature intended it to be. Before me I saw a pruned and emasculated Brazilian. A little strip of hair that looked better conditioned than the grass at Wimbledon.

I was incredibly disappointed by this and rather reluctantly went about my duty of licking away at this tidy, modern, soulless incarnation of the vagina. Really it seems to parallel our dead, modern world, where for example, soulless coffee chains have replaced the good old 'caf' of yore. It's emblematic of our slavery to corporate conformity and a metaphor for a lost paradise where we freely roamed the plains of unbesmirched, unfettered nature.

Moreover women are conscripted into following this sort of fashion trend by fascist magazines and the pressure of social conformity – inflicted with a Nazi-style brutality by the media and small minded ladies locker room gossip – all of which go against the ideals of feminism (of which I, like many other men of my generation am a subscriber). Indeed the real truth here is that the people behind this fashion fascism are women. I've said it before and I'll say it again: *women are their own worst enemy*. Us men are rarely the culprits (although we always get the blame for everything (something which to be honest really irks me)). Though this book is not an attempt to bring to light certain feminist issues (or indeed – as you may cynically think – to try and curry favour with the opposite sex) it behoves me to point out certain ills in our society, and whether or not feminist groups, the *society for the liberation of women*, and shows such as *women's hour* wish to applaud my (worthy) stance (and indeed make mention of my book), I am more than willing to pen these things anyway, in the name of justice.

Anyway I should stop complaining about ladies' vaginas, since we're bordering on sexist territory here. Indeed, ultimately, irrespective of what pressures are put upon them, how women want to groom their bodies is, as fully-franchised equals of men, entirely up to them. Thus, I didn't complain, I didn't moan, I didn't spout sexist-fascism from a bygone era belittling poor Sasha for not being exactly like I as a man expected her to be; rather, in accordance with my views on feminism, I set about the task of licking out Sasha's (perfectly fine, in no-way disappointing) vagina, pleased with myself for respecting her wishes as a woman.

The G-spot was not difficult to finger, and Sasha accordingly responded, unconscious though she remained, with some deeply felt groaning. I do like it when a woman moans and groans during love-making, almost as if she's in pain. It does turn me on. That lovely whining sound of the female as if she's crying for help. That guttural shriek as if she were screaming out for someone to save her.

Finally I entered into her with my phallus and several minutes later consummated my (first) act of love.

Now I tell you that at the risk of incurring the wrath of women. For I know how your minds work ladies and I know you'll be thinking to yourselves – even if you

don't say it out loud or admit it – 'typical man. He reaches orgasm after a few minutes. How hopeless he is in bed.'

In terms of sexual politics I find such comments deeply offensive. I mean if I commented on a woman's sexual prowess in bed I would be shouted down from all sides. And yet this sort of throw away misandry (sexism against men) seems deeply embedded in our culture. When will we have equality for all, aye ladies?

Sasha had the perfect body and had given me the perfect satisfaction.

Now before you get on your high horses women or start clouding in a shame of self-loathing of your body image, I have some good news for you.

Women are constantly, due to an image-dominated media, forced to look at pictures of other women and in turn made to hate their own bodies. But what many men will attest to, and what I here repeat, is that images of super-skinny women in no way turn me on. I mean making love to such women is sickening: *it's like making love to a corpse*. No, when I say Sasha was perfect, I mean she had a bit of meat on her.

There was something to get hold of. You might be thinking to yourself that I took offence at her slightly fattened thighs or flabby backside or hips. Not at all! This is what I loved about her. Who cares if she wasn't perfect in the *media* sense? She needn't have concerned her pretty little head about such things. She was an *average* woman. She was a normal, healthy (and quite frankly ugly) woman. Who cares if she ate too much and didn't go to the gym. The fact that she was a bit of a minger appealed to me and my own insecurities.

So you see there is good news for you ladies. If a dashing secret agent prefers the larger size woman, why give a damn about what the media says? Go into your rooms now, strip naked in front of the mirror, and say 'I am gorgeous'.

'But what if I'm not good in bed? What if he expects too much from me' I hear you say ladies. Listen, put your hang-ups to one side and stop doubting yourselves. Men are a lot less fussy than you might have been lead to expect. In our eyes all women are beautiful, we're really not so hard to please. Women with anorexia, women with bulimia, women with all sorts of body-image problems listen to me now. Stop the nonsense! Eat a cake, enjoy yourself and get men purring over you.

Recovering, I now readied myself for anal, beginning with an orally applied warm up. Yet in a radical twist of events, proceedings were about to be brought to a halt.

I was suddenly given a glimpse, a bird's eye view if you will, of the true position I was in, the *true* situation of events.

Sometimes there are moments in life when we seem to almost step outside of our bodies and from a corner of the room, look down upon ourselves like a distant observer. Such a view of things did I now have, sort of like a presentiment, a strange seeing of reality, like a premonition, that all of a sudden just came upon me.

As I watched myself lying naked on top of Sasha, making love to her, I suddenly saw the true horror of the situation I was in.

That girl *hadn't* fainted because of me. She'd been *poisoned*.

Any momentary embarrassment that I might have felt – after all I'd made the admittedly deluded and rather flattering conclusion that she'd fainted due to my

sexual prowess – gave way instantly to feelings of apprehension at the peril we were in. Good God these terrorists were dangerous. They'd struck down my darling Sasha and I had been completely heedless. I have to admit it, experienced though I may be, I was absolutely terrified.

Reader, they really scare me the terrorists do, they really, really do. I could barely take it all in. Good Lord, they'd poisoned poor Sasha! I'd been caught napping. I'd never expected a terrorist attack on the train. Never. Truly reader I had lost my cool. I was sweating and out of control. 'God damn it you fucking terrorists!' I screamed, rather irrationally, banging on the door like one demented.

The terrorists were *pure scum*. I mean for God's sake there were old ladies and pregnant women on board and yet they'd saw it fit to launch an attack. I now decided to pull the emergency handle and bring the train to an immediate halt.

It was what had to be done.

I got a hold of the lever and made to pull it.

And yet suddenly a moments' thought stopped me.

How irrational I was becoming: for how would that in any way help the situation? (Think about it reader, it *wouldn't*. In fact, there's an argument to be had, that it might even make it worse.) Probably it was what the terrorists wanted me to do; a sudden halt could well allow an army of snakes to break loose on the train.

I tried to regain my composure and keep calm. The terrorists had poisoned Sasha. They had taken out my darling princess. Had they poisoned everybody on board? Had they poisoned *me*? Or had they only targeted Sasha? If they had then most likely this was a personal vendetta against *yours truly*. Jesus Christ! Shit man! Not only were there terrorists on board, but they also knew who I was. Christ almighty.

Right in the middle of love-making my worst fears had unfolded. The terrorist plot to takeover London had begun. And they'd made a start by targeting the nearest and dearest of a secret agent. Good God, if the terrorists could attack the secret service with impunity, what did that say for the fate of the nation? If this sort of thing became public knowledge there'd be pandemonium. (This was almost certainly what the terrorists had been trying to achieve. It was a PR coup waiting in the wings, I'll give them that much.) Oh Shit! I'd been caught well and truly napping.

Hastily I redressed. By this time we were pulling into Kings Cross. I was desperate to get off the train and flee. The terrorists had done all they could to Sasha – there was nothing more I could do for her. But they were probably going to kill me if they got the chance. I had to flee the scene on the instant.

Slowly I opened back the toilet door and looked out. Other passengers were right outside the cubicle, lining up next to the door, waiting to get off. To all intents and purposes they appeared in perfect health. So they *hadn't* been poisoned. The terrorists *had* targeted me personally, by proxy as it were. I closed the door and went back inside.

I waited till the train came to a standstill. Then giving the other passengers some time to alight, I slowly opened up the door once more. However prior to leaving, I knelt down over Sasha again and kissed her little gaping lips; and rubbing a hand warmly over her death-cold brow I spoke sweetly to her.

‘Come what may, the terrorists will never destroy our love, my darling Sasha. They will never succeed in keeping us apart. True love always prevails. Though fate and circumstance may strive to separate us, we will meet again someday, in happier times, believe me my little princess.’

And with these words I exited the toilet cubicle shutting the door behind me and walking warily along the corridor. Although I had feared that a terrorist might jump out on me, I made it unharmed to where my bag lay, and, picking it up, hastily left the train.

With much haste I walked out of the station and across town. In a forced march, using a *deliberately* circuitous route to try and lose any enemy agents who were on my trail, I covered some five miles in the hour. By this time I was beginning to feel somewhat safer, though truth be told, I knew fine well I was being secretly stalked by those animals.

An hour having elapsed I picked up a public phone and dialling 999, and disguising my voice with affected gruffness, stated to the operator that ‘a young lady had been poisoned by terrorists and lay prostrate and unconscious in one of the train toilets of the Edinburgh to London service that had arrived into Kings Cross at 13.03.’ With these words I put the phone down.

I now resumed my march. Truly I was panicky. I intended to set myself up in a hotel in Marylebone. As I walked I became harassed by the thought that I *too* may have been poisoned, and as yet might just not have succumbed. Informed by this, I periodically checked my pulse throughout the day, terrified lest it should start dropping and reveal to me that I too was a victim. And always as I walked, and even when I set myself up in my hotel bedroom, I had the very real sensation that I was being watched, that a terrorist lay in wait for me.

So had the new and terrifying attack upon our nation begun and I was caught up right in the middle of it. London was burning.

22

The poison attack on Sasha had left me shaken and stirred.

The terrorists had stolen a march on me, and come to London as I had to alleviate the terror threat, I’d actually been caught with my pants down, my darling Sasha first victim to their evil deeds. And if they had have wanted to have wound me up they had succeeded.

A wave of bitterness – the like of which I’d never before experienced – swept across me and I was very much a man out of humour. Surely to goodness there are standards, surely for Heaven’s sake there are rules, rules of engagement that one must adhere to no matter what war one is waging? Of course war is war. But still.....aren’t there at least some codes of honour that one should never violate? Some feeling for humanity that one must not forsake? Perhaps not. I don’t know. I don’t know. What do I know about anything.....and yet I’m sorry but there are rules and there are codes of honour.

Whilst I accept that danger to oneself is part and parcel of my profession, this targeting of one's loved ones, is a really devastating and nerve-racking, not to mention soul-destroying experience and I was suffering an agony of angst, worrying about who else of my kith and kin they might now attack. The terrorists – dishonourable scum that they are – clearly had no compunction in putting me through this ordeal. It was an incredibly callous yet successful tactic on their part, and any belief systems that I had previously held, any notions of honour among foes, had now been utterly smashed. The terrorists had attained their end.

And for my own personal safety I feared greatly. That afternoon and evening I remained locked in my hotel bedroom not daring to go out. I felt myself watched. Was the room bugged? Perhaps through the mirror on the wall I was being monitored by an operative? I didn't know.

I was terrified of the hotel staff. Indeed as I was shown to my room by a young man, I dared not turn my back on him for fear that he would smack me across the back of the head and that I would fall down unconscious. I trusted no-one, was constantly suspicious, and when I descended for dinner in the evening, I ventured only to drink a small glass of water – from a communal jug – and also a few slices of cheese, which the other guests were stuffing themselves on.

I got very little sleep during the night and was up and about, somnolently drinking coffee and inspecting the room for bugging devices. Yet I should say that during all of this stressful period I didn't lose my sense of humour. As time went on I became more and more convinced that I was being monitored through the mirror. But baring this last danger with much bravado I dared, when exiting the shower, to deliberately wave my naked buttocks to the mirror, in a nod and a wink to the terrorists that James Bond himself would have been proud of. I know that such antics may appear ridiculously Hollywood at a time like this reader, but sometimes the real spy world can be just as much fun as the films, and in any case such shenanigans help maintain one's sanity.

By the next morning I was beginning to feel a lot safer, and I felt sure that if the terrorists had followed me from the train they would have struck by now. Accordingly I ventured out into town.

I should mention that, for the better protection of my person, and also with the safety of the good citizens of London in mind, I was armed. I had my revolver down my pants permanently, for this was no time to go abroad without one (or indeed to pay attention to the plethora of utter insanities which are the British gun-laws. Some bureaucrat in la-la land is no doubt crying his politically correct eyes out over this; a bureaucrat I should add who will be the first to complain when a madman terrorises London). I felt a lot safer with this in my locker; and given that there were now terrorists – come to infiltrate the city – everywhere, madmen at every corner and crazy fools running amuck, it was vital to possess said weapon.

Yet I wanted to learn more about the poison attack and the fate of my beloved Sasha. I didn't have to wait long to find out.

Passing a newsagent's I saw the headline for the London Daily. My worst fears were confirmed. It read: 'Woman attacked by masked man in Kings Cross train toilet.' I went in and bought the paper. The following is an extract.

'Yesterday dinnertime a young lady – who for legal reasons cannot be named – was attacked and sexually assaulted by an unknown masked assailant on the

13:03 GNER Edinburgh to London route. The assailant, who accosted his victim and then forced her into the toilet cubicle where he raped her, is believed to have been frightened off in the midst of his crime and to have fled the scene on arrival in Kings Cross. The motives for the assault are unknown though police believe it was a random attack and that the victim did not know the assailant.

‘Officers were first alerted to the lady – who lay unconscious in the toilet cubicle – by an anonymous tip-off. Police are keen to speak to the informant, and are requesting that he come forward in order to eliminate himself from the enquiry. As yet police have no further information on the assailant, though he is thought to be at large and dangerous. Chief inspector Chris Armstrong said that women should be cautious and take care when out and about, though he stressed there was no need for panic. Members of the public with any information on this event should call 08.....’

The full horror of yesterday’s events had thus descended upon me. If the police were going to such lengths with this elaborate rape-assault story, if they were setting up a hotline for members of the public to give information on, then good God, the poison attack was truly a very major one. The powers that be wanted it covered up – they obviously thought it would cause hysteria if it got out – and accordingly they’d fabricated this rape story.

My friends upstairs were surely part of this. For realising that one of their own – the cream of the academy – had been targeted, they would have gone hammer and tong to sweep reality under the rug. The statement that the victim didn’t know her assailant, the words of chief inspector Armstrong, and the idea of a rapist at large – all of this spoke of a very elaborate hoax, a good deflection indeed.

Who knew what exactly, I could not say. Were the media in cahoots? Possibly. Yet it was very likely that only a few select personages at the very top knew the real truth. To be clear then the poison attack had been a very, very dangerous event, and I wondered if there wasn’t something bigger in the pipeline, some desperate scheme to poison the whole London water supply or even to release snakes on mass as the press had often speculated.

In terms of the disinformation story and the accusations of rapist and assaulter that were now being levelled at me, I was happy to accept these. For they bore no truth in them at all, they were purely fictitious. The big cheeses upstairs had decided to take this lead – so too would I now follow. It wasn’t my position to question the tactics of headquarters. If I was to be (temporarily) a fall guy, then so be it. Ultimately the allegations would be revealed to be pure, baseless nonsense, and I imagined myself receiving a commendation from the Queen for taking such a bullet in the chest for national security, and for my heroism elsewhere, and being surrounded by my superiors, who would pat me on the back and say ‘well done X, well done.’ A real sense of *esprit de corps* pervaded me.

Ironically, the Tonka inspired balaclava that I’d worn played perfectly into the notion that I was a rapist: it was a godsend no doubt to the ‘writers’ back at headquarters, desperate to put an alternative spin on events. Truly those spin-doctors had spun well, although I think I gifted them a golden opportunity by wearing the mask (though I’m not trying to gain any credit for that reader – don’t credit me with being so longsighted that I foresaw that the mask would play an ideal role in the rape-deflection story, I *didn’t*).

'Oh what a tangled web we weave' I said to myself, shaking my head and quoting the famous words of Walter Scott 'when first we practice to deceive.' I well imagined bumping into someone from the security services, who, knowing the real truth of events like I did would understand the true irony of those words, something which would have been lost on the civilians about me.

Yet for all my good will in accepting the allegations and for all my professionalism in playing along with the powers that be, still there was a small part of me that couldn't help being upset by all this slander. I know it's silly reader, I know. But I am after all human. To be labelled a pervert, a rapist, a monster (some of the tabloids were really going to town on it and calling me all sorts – scum, sicko, animal, nonce, you name it they said it); and commentators were crying out to have me hanged or destroyed for my sick crimes.

Truly I felt myself victimised. Anyone who's ever found themselves at the mercy of the press, on the wrong side of a reporter whose going to print lies to sell papers, knows how lonely and isolated I now was. To have one's actions and proceedings misconstrued, misrepresented and frankly blown out of all proportion; to be seized upon and bad-mouthed, abused and falsely portrayed by the media; to find oneself maligned, ill-treated and accused of all sorts, and to have false and evil tales made up about one, and dark shadows and aspersions cast upon one's character and integrity, all so that the media can whip up hate and hysteria toward one individual, guilty of any crime the public wishes to imagine – all of this leaves one feeling depressed, lonely and isolated, one's soul destroyed and wondering if life is worth living.

I was really losing the will to live. Believe me, this little taste of media misrepresentation that I'd experienced left me feeling sorry for all those unfortunate people who've been slaughtered by the press. How defenceless is the lone individual against the media mob. And after everything I'd been through with the poison attack and now this! Huh! I couldn't help, as I sat down on a bench reading the papers, removing my glasses, rubbing my eyes wearily and taking a long, long sigh. And shaking my head I said to myself 'what a world we live in'. And I couldn't help but cynically recall to myself Hitler's famous words: 'the bigger the lie the more people will believe it.'

But life goes on. I was here in London and intended to get on with my mission. As such I headed to Oxford Circus. According to the RNO website a trusted informant was making noises about a plan to blow up shoppers there, even going so far as to name a specific date – it was tomorrow – as to when the planned attack would take place.

Even prior to this however Oxford Circus had already become the focal point for much speculation in the press: according to rumour police had only two days earlier foiled a bomb attack there. At the very heart of the shopping scene in London, teeming with hordes of westerners, these attacks made perfect sense, and my sighting of the IC3 male at the very same location spoke volumes.

Moreover rumour ran riot over the threat of a new wave of strikes on the underground, and again Oxford Circus station had been named as a potential target. At present teams of armed police were deployed at every major tube station; and at Oxford Circus too, where they spilt out onto the streets above. Given then

all this hype, and given also the specific information on the RNO website, I made it my business to get there and see what was afoot.

As I made my way across London, the following incident occurred.

I was walking along with my head down somewhat, as is my wont, when looking up I saw a woman in front of me, with her back to me, making her way through the streets.

Now it's a fact of life that I tread with almost soundless step. And now as I found myself unintentionally walking behind this woman, she suddenly turned around and looked at me. She seemed a bit shocked, presumably because of my inherent silent approach. She gave me a quick glance as if she was scared of me, and I rather got the impression that she assumed me to be some kind of pervert – all based solely on my appearance. I couldn't help feel that she thought I was stalking her.

Anyway she turned round once more, carried on walking, and now with incredible illogic she decided to increase her pace. Now why had she done that? So as to outrun me? Honestly I don't understand. If she did think I was stalking her, why not just stop and let me get past?

She'd only buggered up the situation the more now; because her legs weren't as long as mine, so that by walking faster she merely kept in front of me. (If she'd have kept at normal pace I would have gone past her for Heaven's sake!) And now the situation got even worse as I saw her turn down the side street I was going to take.

Thus did we find ourselves in quite a deserted little by way, with myself 'stalking' her as she seemed to think. I was so annoyed with her – for conceiving such stupid thoughts, and for walking at pace as she did – that I was staring with anger at the back of her figure ahead of me, when, lo and behold, she looked around to see if she'd shaken me off, and saw my angry face. What a look she gave!

Desperately I tried to look aside, sheepishly did I look elsewhere, which ironically only made me look more guilty. She gave me one more angry and contemptuous look and then turning her head round again, stepped up the pace once more. Sick of this nonsense I decided to turn around and find an alternative route.

Any single man who's ever found himself in this silly position with a single female out alone, will know how annoying it is. Why do women always believe you're stalking them? Anyway it's not my intention to digress and pepper up this memoir with complaints against the opposite sex. Nor either do I wish to transform this tale into some kind of male chauvinistic crusade peddling the idea that everything evil in this world can be blamed on the fairer sex.

But I mean please, women, would you just take a look at yourself for once? Stop to examine your irrational behaviour?

Okay I'm sorry, I've crossed the line. This is just turning into a misogynist rant. Probably a good majority of my female readers will have read that last line and shut the book in anger. Okay I'm sorry. I feel terrible. I've spent the entire book getting the women onside, who've been excited by my romantic yet manly persona. And all for what? So I can now lose them all with some sexist outburst. I repeat again, ladies, I *was* wrong.

Incidentally, you're probably thinking to yourself that the majority of my readers are female. Let me tell you that you're wrong. It is primarily men who will be reading this *magnum opus*. Sure it would be easy to imagine that women are obsessed by me and my dashing adventures; but in fact in conceiving of such ideas you'd be guilty of equating your own man crush on me with the inamoration of a blushing woman. Believe me, women prefer their own type of literature, from the female perspective. Balanced as this account may be, making offerings to the Gods of equality as it does, there will be (trust me) a lot of women who find this book unappealing.

In fact more than that, there will of course be an angry feminist mob, who will wish to shout and scream about the book and decry what they will term its 'blatant misogyny'. Why? Your guess is as good as mine reader. They will find something in here, something small, maybe even something favourable to the female sex, and they'll misquote it, blow it out of all proportion and use it as a starting point for a holier than thou crusade against the male of the species. I'll be labelled a sickening pervert and grandiose sexist (believe me I will) whereas the reality of it all is that I will have simply committed the sin of being a man.

To prove that I'm not sexist and indeed incredibly fair, let me brush aside the comments made by several women, sitting in an outside cafe, who, even though I haven't been to London for several years, thought it fit to start gossiping, as I walked past then, about?.....the size of my penis! Crumbs how original!

It's unbelievable it really is. I fancied going up to them, all of them, and just saying 'you've never even slept with me, you crazy lunatics!' I mean imagine if the boot was on the other foot, aye. I'd be locked up just for thinking such things about the opposite sex. Anyway I ignored these dirty-minded, slanderous bad mouths and others of their ilk - London seems overtaken by them - quick to realise - and you can take note here angry feminists - that not *all* women think like that and you can't tar them all with the same brush.

Anyway let's not talk about the hypocrisy of women (we don't have all day after all) and we can keep that for another book (series of books) examining why (throughout all history) women have constantly been on men's backs, even though most of us (in stark contrast to them) have never inflicted pain on the opposite sex.

So to return with dignity to the story. In time I reached Oxford Circus and there began my reconnaissance. What hordes of shoppers traversed the vicinity! And the cars and buses too: it seemed there was a never ending flow of both. And I saw the armed police, inside and on the periphery of the station.

Given what was planned for tomorrow, I'd come to the decision that I wanted to be here. It was known that a terrorist was going to try and detonate a bomb at this very precise location, and my hunch was that it was the IC3 male himself, who no doubt intended to culminate the plan to blow up shoppers.

It seemed obvious to me anyway. I wanted to be here to keep tabs on affairs and to tackle a terrorist if he tried to detonate a bomb. When the terrorist(s) arrived, I wanted to be here to counteract his or their operations and deal with any explosives. If it were the IC3 male, then, from what I knew of him, the most likely MO was that he would leave a package with explosives inside, rather than blow

himself up. But even if that were his plan, or, (and more likely) if I was dealing with other unknown suicide bombers then I would be on hand to tackle them.

In all cases it was therefore essential that I be here all day tomorrow to keep a very keen eye on things. So too had it become my intention to take up position at Oxford Circus. Yet I couldn't just stand here as I was and wait and watch. That would be far too obvious. Any terrorist would see me a mile off. I smelt an undercover operation in the offing.

How could I blend into the background of Oxford Circus? There was no chance of acting as a shopper without arousing suspicion. For if I was to stay in the vicinity I would just have to walk in circles. No, that would never do. Then I had an idea. I'd seen it once in a film: I'd go undercover as a hot dog seller! I looked around.

Well there weren't really any vans near the underground exit. There was one a little further up. It was quite a way off actually. Nevertheless it would probably do. Accordingly I mocked up a fake CV, in which I detailed my previous employment as a fast food worker, and took it up to the man in the hot dog stand.

He didn't know what I was giving him at first, and gave me a very strange and perplexed look. He read the CV; and then coming to terms with me, he simply said 'sorry mate we don't have any jobs going here.' 'But I'll work for free' I retorted. 'Sorry mate' he replied, 'there's just not enough room in the van.' And with that I returned to the tube entrance, disappointed not to be taken on as a hot dog seller, and unsure now how I would go undercover.

I looked around. Now, there were some musicians about: a guitarist, a flute player and a trumpeter. Could I go undercover as a musician? If truth be told I'm hopeless at music. Surely to God I could never busk myself through an undercover operation? Yet it was a possibility. And frankly I didn't see many other options available.

I looked around once more. There was one other person who stood permanently at Oxford Circus, a man. In fact as soon as I'd got here I'd been struck by his presence. I don't really know how to describe him. A religious nutter? A sandwich board man, I guess. He stood on the street side, a sandwich board across his body reading 'Jesus saves', and with a megaphone in his hand he berated the passing shoppers with the news that they were all going to go to hell, had forgotten God, were soulless and sinful and the like, and would enter eternal purgatory on the second coming of Christ.

I took stock of him. Could I really go undercover as one such as he? Hardly! I was better off trying my hand as a musician. Honestly reader I just cannot understand such people at all. They're like a foreign land to me. And as a spy, as a solid and well-rounded citizen of this country, as a much respected member of society, loved and admired by men and women alike, I've got massive contempt for such fools, such losers, the dregs of life's leftovers, the unwanted waifs on the fringes of society.

I now stood not far off from this man. As he talked and the other shoppers went by I simply stood rooted to the spot with my arms folded, staring contemptuously at him, trying to understand him, but totally failing. There was merely a look of shock, incomprehension and disgust on my face. What on earth makes such people tick? Honestly I have no idea.

He shouted through his megaphone 'you're all soulless. You've forgotten the true meaning of life. You shop on a Sunday, the Lord's day....' And as he said all of this, hordes of shoppers went by. The majority quick-stepped it as they went past, and wouldn't look him in the eye, but just hurried onwards. Others shot him a contemptuous glance. I noticed that he didn't particularly like women. And for their part I saw that most of the ladies were scared of him, although a fair few as well gave him dirty looks. I wrote down a few of his phrases in a little notebook. I was *studying the role*. Yet after half an hour of this I gave it up for hopeless. I'd never be able to play the part.

Accordingly, I set about becoming a musician. I'd have to get myself an instrument, and so headed off to a music store. 'Doe, Ray, Me, So, Far,' I sang as I went, trying to get into character. But it was no good, and as I walked I thought back to my school days: FACE, every good boy deserves football, two beats in a bar? What the hell did it all mean? I had no idea.

This was never going to work. No, no, no, I wasn't going to be a musician. I walked back to Oxford Circus and looked around. Was there truly no other option than to become a religious nutter?

It was evening now. I *had* to be in position by tomorrow morning, there was no time to lose. Yet I was totally at a loss as how to blend in. I couldn't be a musician or a religious nutter. Desperately I looked around for further options. But there were none.

Unless. What about becoming an armed police? But then that would never work. The other officers would clock me immediately. True we could collaborate. I could let them know a secret agent was on hand. But then reader, you just don't know which side some of these officers are battling for, you really don't. Probably, if I got into contact with these officers, I'd only be blowing my cover. No I could see there was nothing for it: I'd have to pretend to be a religious nutter.

It was late already. I'd have to be quick if I wanted to buy a loudspeaker. I headed off to the shops and got one. Then I returned to my hotel. Frankly reader I was very depressed. I was tired and hungry after my day out, and tonight I would have to prepare for a role, which I so didn't want to do, and then tomorrow get out on the street and act up.

I can't describe the nervousness and anxiety I felt. Anyone who's ever given a talk or a presentation they didn't want to give will know how I felt now, the night before. Like a child with a part in the school play that it doesn't want to do, or like an adult going for an interview for a job they're not that keen on, this was how I now felt. I was so nervous. Yet I had to be there. National Security depended on it. Accordingly I attempted to 'get into character'.

But it was no good. I was like a fish out of water. I read through the few notes that I'd scribbled down and stood before the mirror saying 'Jesus saves.....er, er.....love good.....hate evil.....' But it was no good, my heart was just not in it. And then I had an idea.

I'd heard it said before that there are some buskers out there who don't really play an instrument but rather pretend to with the aid of a machine – a bit like karaoke. Could I do that? It was a possibility. I took out my laptop and going on the internet, started browsing for the necessary equipment.

So I searched. Yet I had real difficulties in finding what I was looking for. It was some sort of amplifier device. I really didn't know exactly. Getting nowhere with this, I began pricing karaoke machines but these were very expensive – we were talking thousands of pounds. I certainly didn't have that sort of cash to splash.

This idea wasn't going to work either, was it. Moreover now that I thought about it, I'd really have to have a busker's license or else I might get moved on by the police.

And so it was that I now became resigned to becoming a religious nutter for the day.

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That evening I made preparations for the morrow.

I mocked up a cardboard sandwich board on which I wrote 'Love Good, Hate Evil', and standing in front of the mirror, tried to get into character. Yet it just wasn't working – nothing at the academy had ever prepared me for such a role.

Disheartened I went to bed, and, anxious and apprehensive as I was, slept badly. At seven o'clock I rose and too nervous to eat breakfast, I set off to Oxford Circus downcast and unhappy. It was a beautiful spring morning, the sun shone and London was already a hive of activity.

As I alighted from the tube at Oxford Circus, I was overcome with trepidation. My palms were sweaty, my legs wobbled as I walked, my stomach churned. I deliberately chickened out at first by going off for ten minutes to the toilet. But I knew I had to get out there soon, whether I liked it or not. The IC3 male could be here at any moment.

At last I arrived at the point where yesterday the religious nutter had stood. Would he come again today? I didn't know. In any case I was here first. In the throng of people around me I now ceased walking, and, desperately trying to act calmly, laid my bag down on the ground and started to set up.

I was overcome with complete stage fright. Sheepishly I pulled out from my bag the cardboard sandwich board. As I did so, kneeling down on the floor, I tried to hide it from view, mortally embarrassed as I was. Yet when I'd finished getting it out and saw that it was time to put it on and start berating the people, I realised that I would just have to face up to the crowd. I was here and I had to get on with things.

I put on the sandwich board and turning to face the passers-by, now revealed to them what I was about. Everybody was staring at me when they went past – they were quite shocked and wanted to see what I was up to, what I was going to say. I know that my face bore the expression of one who'd thought up some clever scheme – like a wannabe playwright or singer or entertainer – and now, now that they arrive on stage and see the audience looking remorselessly at them, wishes they could go and lie down in a dark room forever. Despite all my experience I had stage fright: the reason being that I didn't understand the role and was totally ill-prepared.

There was nothing but to begin. 'Testing, testing, one, two, three....' I said, trying to sound confident but clearly belying the fact that I was terrified. Everybody was staring at me. I thought back to the guy yesterday – everybody was scared of him. The majority of people dared not look at him but hurried on by. Yet with myself nobody was afraid to look at me. Most people gave shocked, puzzled looks as if they couldn't understand what I was about. Others were truly horrified, presumably out of embarrassment for me. Anyway I made a start.

'Love good' I said reading from the script. 'Er.....em...Hate evil.....er, em.....er Jesus saves.....er....don't be a sinner.....er.....' and so I went on, repeatedly reading over the four or five set phrases I'd heard from the guy yesterday.

'Love good...' I said once more and so on. But I was giving an awful show.

For the most part I didn't look up as I read. I wasn't engaging the audience. And on those few occasions when I did dare to glance upwards all I saw were the eyes of the mob fixed on me. They were absolutely shocked. They were aghast, embarrassed for me. Yesterday when that guy had been saying his piece I'd noticed that the women either walked by terrified or shot him arrogant, contemptuous looks. I too was receiving two kinds of looks from the passing women yet they were both bad.

The majority of women were giving me a sympathetic smile – the sort where you don't show any teeth but simply raise the edges of your mouth – and in their eyes they expressed sympathy for me, as they saw me now making a fool of myself. Yet other women wore a look of absolute shock and incomprehension at what they were seeing, truly they were mortified and painfully embarrassed, and went past with mouths gaping at me.

Both of these responses were bad. They were not the responses given to a true religious nutter. If a terrorist turned up now, I'd be immediately sussed. It would be patently obvious I was not who I pretended to be. I just had to get into character. I read once more.

'Hate evil.....er...em, er.....love good.....er, em...Jesus saves.....er, em.'

But it was no good. I was dying on stage. The crowd was ruthless and I was no match for them. Despondent, after twenty-five minutes of sticking this out, I called a time out and went to a cafe to get some breakfast.

I ate my meal and drank my coffee.

'Look' I soliloquised to myself, 'this mission is going completely pear-shaped. The God-damned terrorists could be here any minute. If they see you they'll know you're an undercover. You might as well write 'I'm an undercover secret agent' across your chest.

'Your performance is woeful. Is this the same man who won an academy award for his role as the Misanthrope in the play of the same name? Is this the same actor who so successfully realised the part of Soliony in the Three Sisters? Is this the same person who claims to be a master of the undercover arts?

'Heavens above you need a kick up the jacksy. Now listen, you have got to get into character. There's no two ways about it. You have got to, absolutely got to, blend in. Now come on, make an effort.'

Yet could I do it? Surely not. However when I got back out onto the street, I don't know what it was, perhaps my full stomach and the brought-back-to-life, inspirational effect of the coffee, but suddenly I felt completely up for it.

I looked at my notes. Did I really need the script? It seemed a bit hammy in truth. A bit basic and old hat. Rather hackneyed to put it bluntly. Why not just ad lib? Surely I could be a bit more imaginative, a bit more original, a bit more up to date.

Truly, when I reached my position, set myself up and turned to face the crowd, I felt newly revived and with incredible confidence I started playing into the role. Looking at the crowd with amazing assuredness, looking them directly in the eye, I now began talking through the megaphone.

‘Alright people, listen up. Okay. Hands up everybody who believes in God?’

‘What nobody? Nobody believes in God? Alright then let me put it a different way. Hands up everybody who doesn’t believe in God. What? Nobody either? So what? You’re all undecided as yet on the God question? You’re a bit unsure? Or maybe you just don’t care? Yeah that’s it you don’t care do you.’

‘Go on, that’s it people, you just walk on by and pretend not to care, just ignore me and all that I say. I don’t know why I bother, I really don’t. You people, *you* people.’

‘You’re a right lacklustre bunch, you really are. Well I’ll tell you, don’t come crying to me when your life falls apart and you need salvation. When the apocalypse comes ladies and gents I’ll remind you all of your complete indifference now.’

‘Oh we were too busy shopping to go to church Lord, too engrossed in our material lives to care about our souls or anything as boring as that. Please Lord forgive us, let us into Heaven anyway. Go on! Pleeaaase!’

‘No!’ He will crieth, ‘I’m not having it. Go and find salvation in your mobile phones and credit cards, they’re your real Gods.’

I was very much doing the business now. Perfectly undercover. The people – the women especially – were really scared and hurried past. If the terrorists came now they wouldn’t suspect a thing. With one watchful eye looking out for them I continued my rant.

‘Shop, shop, shop, shop, shop. That’s all you people do isn’t it. Don’t you have any desire for a higher, more fulfilling life, don’t you have any nobler ambitions, than just shopping?’

‘How spiritually undernourished you people must be. Don’t you care about anything? Don’t you have souls? Go on people, that’s it, you just walk on by and pretend to ignore me. You just haven’t got the time have you. You’ve got places to be, people to see, money to spend.’

‘Oh how important are all your material, everyday cares. I don’t know how I can reach any of you. I might as well be talking to myself. Hello! Am I still here? Can anyone see me? Hello! Can anyone hear me? Testing, testing one, two, three.....’

‘Let me tell you people, let me say it to you loud and clear, just so as you can’t say later that you weren’t warned. The day is coming when He will return; and on that day the unbelievers will be destroyed. I’ll be there folks, waiting in the wings, all ready to see the look on your faces then, you indifferent cabbages. When you’re burning in the fires of hell I’ll bet you won’t have such an indifferent face then. Oh delightful day.’

‘I cannot wait. I cannot wait to see you all suffer. To see justice meted out to the sinful; to see the righteous inherit the earth. To see the stupid indifference

removed from your faces; to see you punished for your arrogance. You know I look around and I'm not impressed people, I'm really not. I look at your lives and I'm shocked and disgusted.

'So you don't want to go to church. What, it's too boring? Still you might have time for God? Oh sorry is that not cool. Oh well then forget it. Forget God that's right. He's not cool is He. Yeah that's right boys, you just go ahead and mock me. Pretend you don't care about anything boys, that's it, go on, you have a good laugh at me. A deranged fool that's all I am, isn't it.

'Been out shopping again lads eh? Bought some new trainers have you? How much did they cost you? This week's benefit money was it? Why not go and get another girl pregnant boys? That'll bring in another fifty quid a week won't it. That's a new pair of trainers every two. Go on, get on with you, you amoral scum. You Godless sinners.'

But I knew that it was with money-spending, airheaded bimbos, as opposed to benefit-cheating rude boys, that this type of religious nutter has especial problems. Accordingly:

'Well airheads, here we are. What have you got to say for yourselves then? Hmm? I put you on trial accused of the crimes of vanity, shallowness and selfishness. How do you plead? Defend yourselves. Defend the indefensible.

'Hmm? Honestly, I watch you all go by, I see you all caught up in your shallow little affairs, tootling around town without a care in the world, bearing your lingerie for all to see. I see you out shopping every day, with nothing better to do with your lives, with no spiritually-orientated desires infecting you, spending money on fancy clothes and jewellery, on perfumes, lingerie and luxury items, whilst other people in this world are starving. I see your avid and shallow interest in the hollow and spiritually empty lives of celebrity imbeciles, see your obsession with all that glitters and gold, your infatuation with all the falsity and fakery of fashion, glamour and vogue; and when I see all of this I really am disgusted that God ever created such empty-headed, shallow-minded, vanity-obsessed creatures.

'How indifferent you all are to the important things in life. How self-centred you are, how unconcerned about depth or inner beauty or what truly matters. There are people out there who are suffering. From poverty, starvation, from incurable diseases; helpless, hopeless, dejected people and to all of this you either turn a contemptuous and arrogant look or ignore it with blissful blindness. To any interest in self-development, spiritual nourishment or good works you cast only an indifferent and disinterested eye.

'Soulless, Godless creatures. Charmless, arrogant robots. How God ever created you I do not know. I think he must have ran out of souls when you lot came down the production line. Forgot to add in that vital little ingredient in His apparent haste to create so many of you. Truly there's a never ending supply of you dressed-up, made-up, brain-dead bimbo dolls. You're like a swarm of loathsome ants the way you go about your shopping.

'Probably you'll be the first creatures to emerge after a nuclear holocaust. I'm absolutely sure of it, you cack-headed cockroaches. Twenty minutes after the explosion you'll crawl out of your caves and go shopping like nothing's happened. Ugh!

‘Sometimes! Sometimes I feel so angered, so outraged to see you all passing by me with your indifferent faces, engrossed in your shallow affairs, consumed by half-wit interests, comatose by sterile gossip. I feel so irate, so alone, so utterly depressed to find myself caught up in this mob of Godless people, this horde of shopaholics.

‘People please, can we just get one thing straight, just so as to cheer me up a little in my depression. You don’t believe in God do you? I mean come on, you really can’t now can you. If you could just admit that to me it would be a start, a small mercy. I’d feel a little better. I mean surely you don’t? How could you?’

‘Let’s face it people there’s no God is there. There can’t be. And yet when I ask you this you all just walk by me and ignore me, treat me as if I’m some sort of weirdo. All I’m asking for is that you admit that you are Godless and soulless. That’s all I’m asking. But will anybody respond to me? Will one person admit that actually, yes it is true, none of us believe in God and yes we are all mindless sinners. No, the answer is no.

‘There you go people you just give me an arrogant look, as if I’m some sort of oversensitive loser who can’t cope with the world. Go on, walk on by, walk on by. Walk straight past me and don’t give a damn. Walk straight past all the homeless people you pass on your way. Men and women who’ve got no homes to go to, who are starving. You just walk on by, don’t give them any of your money, don’t even give them any recognition as human beings. Just give them a snooty, haughty look and walk on by.’

I now decided to centre the rant once more on the Sandwich board man’s favourite pet peeve.

‘And go out and shop till you drop airheads. Spend, spend, spend, spend, spend. For it is said in the Bible that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle than for a rich bitch to enter the kingdom of Heaven. And that’s why you’re spending so much isn’t it. You don’t want to be rich. Yes I understand now. It’s so obvious.

‘That’s why you spend all that money on clothes and underwear and perfumes and haircuts and beauty treatment. Oh! The endless obsession with making yourselves look good. Oh! Haven’t you people ever heard of the notion that true beauty is on the inside, that outer beauty is only skin deep? Don’t you understand that vanity is not a virtue?’

‘When I see you all obsessed with your appearances, having haircuts for hundreds of pounds, making yourselves up with endless bottles of mascara, lipstick and blusher; sun bedding at the risk of getting cancer; having your legs waxed, your armpits shaved, your pubic hair pruned; having facials and massages, being cosseted and coddled, indulged and humoured, hampered and pampered like the most precious of poodles; dressing up in fancy clothes and knick-knacks and strutting about town in high heels; showing off your lingerie to every man and his dog; wearing false eye-lashes and false nails; decorating yourselves in diamonds and gold, sporting necklaces, earrings and bracelets; splashing on perfumes like there’s no tomorrow; dressed up to the nines, swanning around town, nonchalant and oblivious, utterly unconcerned for anybody but yourselves; lazy, indolent, self-centred, uncaring robots bent on spending other people’s money and sitting at cafes and restaurants quaffing up

meal after meal and gossiping and back-biting till your heart's content; debauching yourselves with food and drink, chit-chat and cheating, sex, lust and affairs.

'Go on, that's it people, you just scowl at me like I'm some sort of weirdo. Go on with yourselves you arrogant sods, you just mock me that's it. Yes we all know what my problem is don't we people. I'm not getting enough sex am I not? Is that my problem? Eh? I'm just jealous because I'm not getting it on with all these women? A few acts of immorality on my part and that'll soon shut me up will it? What's that? I should button my lip and start having some sex of my own instead of concerning myself with other people's morals?

'Well it's not true people, it's not true. The eternal obsession with vanity will be my eternal cross to bear. You bimbos need a spiritual makeover. You need to wake up to the true meaning of life. You need to see the light. I get so depressed to see your never ending acts of selfishness and vanity. So, so depressed.

'But let me say this. All of your ceaseless lust after fine clothes and shoes, after jewellery and decoration, after lingerie, perfumes and make-ups, haircuts, knick-knacks and accessories, false tans, false nails, false eye-lashes: all of this I could forgive; all of these I could look upon as mere minor acts of vanity.

'But you don't stop there do you now? No sir. Like the vainglorious, self-centred, despicably cold-hearted creatures you always promised to be you just had to go that extra mile. You just had to step over the mark and prove to the whole world what monsters you creatures really are; you just had to emblazon, in scorching letters across the sky, your final and soul-destroying, heart-crushing acts of depravity. I'm talking of course about plastic surgery.'

'Don't get me started, don't get me started. You.....'

IC3 male at three o'clock! IC3 male at five o'clock! IC3 male at seven o'clock. Suspect appears to be carrying a package! Suspect heading for underground entrance! Suspect reaching for his pocket! Time to blow cover! All units go, go, go!

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IC3 male set to detonate, IC3 male set to detonate.....

Suspect is looking about him, touting for place to leave the package.

Prepare to tackle him.

Suspect is checking watch. Suspect is removing something from said package!

Suspect is.....meeting girlfriend and giving her a present!

False alarm! False alarm! False alarm!

Do not blow cover! Repeat do not blow cover! Suspect is embracing girlfriend and then heading back into town. False alarm! False alarm!

Suspect has disappeared. Resume undercover.

Where was I now?

'Er.....Er...Jesus saves, er.....' I was completely struggling to recall where on earth I had gotten to. I racked my brain. 'Er, em.....love good.....Hate evil.....er...'

I thought long and hard about where I had gotten to, not liking to arouse suspicion by obvious discontinuities in the tirade. Finally I had it. Sick and tired of playing this stupid role as I was, I remembered my commitment to Queen and country and reluctantly took up the crazy rant once more.

‘Plastic surgery! You revolting, despicable, soul-destroying animals. How can you go to such horrifically unnatural lengths just to look good? Ugh! Soul destroying feats of humanity! No, nothing has the power to so destroy the human spirit than to see you lot lining up to get your breasts enlarged. Ugh!’

‘Is that all that matters in life people? Breast size? Is there anything more unnatural and horrific? Do I have to look on as shallow-minded, looks-obsessed, vain and disgusting rats, with complete unconcern for the important things in life, go under the knife, are anaesthetized and sawn apart, chopped into bits, butchered and bludgeoned, plasticized and silicone-implanted, and then sewn together and stitched back up, all so that a day later they can strut around town with extra breast-enhanced arrogance?’

‘Oh soul destroying Godless creatures! Believe me plastic surgery is right up there with all the Godless and civilized brutality of the gladiator fights of ancient Rome. Oh dear Lord in Heaven! Is there anything worth living for now? To see a soulless, Godless woman, ready to part with thousands of pounds; ready to be cut up and cauterised and have unnatural junk stuffed down her breasts. To see soulless, mindless, robotic surgeons carry out operations. Trivial, stupid and pointless operations – all in the name of vanity – allowing them to rake in the cash for this much beneficial service to humankind. Soul-destroyers! Whatever happened to the Hippocratic oath! Oh! Disgraceful blot upon humanity. Oh let me curl up and die right here and now.’

‘Mrs Vain-Selfish, before you have the operation it’s my duty to point out to you that for the same money that will enlarge your breasts, and therefore make you a lot happier, you could actually feed an entire African village for three years. Feed the orphans as it were. The starving, crying orphans.’

‘Doctor, forgive me. What’s Africa?’

‘Oh it’s a continent of the world madam. All I’m saying is that instead of giving the money to me and allowing me to get that new Lexus I always wanted, you might think about alleviating poverty in the third world.’

‘But it doesn’t sound like much fun does it doctor? No I want big boobs! I want big boobs! I want! I want! I want!’

‘Right you are madam that’s that then.’

‘No, you people are soulless, absolutely soulless, that’s my conclusion. Ha! Perhaps that’s it! You people need soul surgery. You need a surgeon to fit an artificial soul inside you. Oh and a heart as well. That would be nice. No, pointless to dream of such impossibilities.’

‘Forever soulless, forever soulless. To see teenage girls desperate to get their breasts enhanced, their one and only desire in life. It would take a medical miracle to artificially implant them with a soul, a medical miracle. And have I not tortured myself, lain awake at night trying to save my soul, trying to find some reason in all this madness, praying to God for an explanation for such depraved acts of humanity?’

'Have I not beseeched him to enlighten me as to why he created such Godless creatures? Have I not prayed to him on many a nerve-exhausted and depressed ridden night and asked the almighty to destroy and send asunder these very same Godless, self-centred people, the perpetrators of these revolting acts? Indeed I have. Yet with what cruelty have I been mocked. Hath He mocked me. A woman shot at with a direct hit in the chest, saved by the armour of her sin-ridden, soulless implant! Oh dear Lord in Heaven. Is there any justice in this world? A decent woman, a soulful, honest woman would have been killed. Oh let me lie down in a dark room forever.'

So I went on into the afternoon. Truly I'd tapped into the mindset of this kind of complete weirdo, reader, and was enjoying myself engaging in the role and piling on all the bull shit. As yet there'd only been the one (false) sighting of the IC3 male. I kept a look out and continued ranting. Later:

'There you go people, shop, shop, shop, shop, shop. Satisfied with yourselves are you? What a day! Going home now are we people? Shopping finished for now is it? Where are you going to then? Off to church is it? Going to do something worthwhile, something spiritually nourishing? No you're not are you. You're going to go home and watch the telly! Gorge yourself on foolish junk.

'Mindless people. Who needs a soul when you've got a telly, eh? Ah yes! The television set! The magic box! The sheer joy of sitting in front of it and vegetating like a corpse. Despicable people. That's it, go on you mock me, that's right. I'm not cool am I, because I don't have a TV, because I'm not a slave to that good for nothing, mind-sapping brain-drain.

'You mindless, soulless garbage. I've seen how you worship TV. I've seen your Gods, the people you adore: brain-dead, vacuous, talentless TV superstars. Glitzy-glamorous, superficial and shallow, one-dimensional actors and actresses, debauched imbecile celebrities. Ugh!

'You people, how obsessed you are with celebrities. They are your Gods. Ugh! What you people wouldn't do to be a celebrity. A talentless, spiritually dead celeb, a good for nothing waste of space, a jack of no trades, a no-brainer, a time-waster, a non-living organic pile of horse-shit, with your picture all over the papers and the gossip mags; wagged about, hated and despised, doing nothing, rotting like a vegetable, in and out of alcohol rehab every week – oh that's the life you all want to lead people isn't it? Oh yes indeed.

'The sheer thrill of leading a worthless, depressing existence, chased by the paparazzi, constantly worrying about one's looks; make-upping, sun-bedding, manicuring; hair-dressing, fanny-waxing, and being poodled round the clock; getting cosmetic surgery as and when, having a nose job, a tummy tuck, a face lift and a breast enlargement; being as rich as you like and not giving two shits about the camel and the eye of the needle.

'Having the tabloids gossip about you. Oh! What a delight: 'Celebrity X had sex with celebrity Y'. What incredible news! 'Celebrity in three-way sex romp with lap dancers'. Oh what a brilliant story. Oh please I want to read about it so much. It's just so fulfilling.

'Truly reading all this is so spiritually nourishing. It's better than reading the Bible or War and Peace. Yes, what are these celebrities doing? Oh never in the world! 'Miss celebrity stupid person last night showed off her cosmetic breasts.'

Incredible news! I can't get enough of it. Oh let me see the picture of the cosmetic breasts. Oh hurray! What spiritual satisfaction. Oh and what's this? A footballer's had an affair with a lap dancer, and now she's stripping naked in the tabloids. Oh joyous story. Testimony to the human spirit. What a pure joy it is to be alive.

'Celebrities, celebrities, celebrities. Oh what Gods they are. The Holy Trinity: cosmetic surgery, TV, celebrities. Oh but to be a celebrity. Oh what an aim. What a feat to attain. Yet not everyone can be a celebrity. People, people, people hear me now: not everyone can be a celebrity; the good majority of you will have to face the awful, awful reality of being a nobody. It's true people, it's true. Yet listen to me my children, there is an alternative.

'Oh fear not my little children, there is yet hope. Take courage my little angels, brace up and have joy in your hearts, for there is help at hand for those of you even too talentless to become a celebrity. There's salvation yet. Listen, I've got a remedy for you:

'Look Mr BBC commissioner, I've had this excellent idea for a show.'

'Oh?'

'Look, we'll take ten completely boring, talentless, brain-dead imbeciles who don't have a soul and we'll put them in a big house and record what they get up to.'

'What?'

'Believe me, it'll be really entertaining watching stupid people come up with stupid ways to waste their time. It'll be spiritually satisfying to see petit bickering amongst the comatose, brain-dead, wannabe celebrities. It'll be so entertaining, please Mr BBC commissioner you'll be onto a winner with this one.'

'Oh please, don't waste my time, I've never heard of such rubbish. Really, you underestimate people if you think this sort of thing will be popular. Believe me the general public is a lot more intelligent, a lot more sensitive, a lot deeper than you give them credit for. No, this is a complete non-starter.'

'Well then I'll take it to channel four.'

'Ha ha ha! Good luck! They'll never accept it! Now what was this other idea you had – you told me you had two.'

'Yes, well my other idea was to put a cart-load of vegetables in a room, set up a video camera and record them all rotting. What do you think?'

'Sounds like a good idea actually. Yes I think you're on to something there. I'll have a think about that one.'

'Oh Big Brother. How I absolutely love it. Watching wannabe celebrities crap away their boring little lives. Oh did you see it last night people. Oh what a treat. Nobody X had sex with nobody Y. Oh what a pleasurable little scene that was. Hurray for the human spirit. It lasted all of one and a half minutes. Oh what passion! What passionate people these are. Giggling and flummoxing under the covers, consummating cupid's calling on live TV.

'Oh joy! I thanked God at that very moment for such beautiful scenes. Oh Lord in Heaven thank you so much for these wonderful scenes, thank you so much for bringing us to these marvellous times. After all that the human race has endured in its long history – struggling as a primitive primate to drag itself out of an animal existence and to comprehend a higher way of life; all the while physically and mentally pained by that tough taskmaster evolution, not sparing them all the

aches and pains of the animal existence, ruthlessly dragging man out of the mud, and pushing him to the limit of his endurance; suffering starvation, privation, drought, famine, pestilence and disease; the tragedy of holocausts and nuclear bombs, of large scale massacres and killing fields, and yet.....and yet I knew that one day we would make it, one day we would come of age, that one day we would invent the television set, and be able to watch imbeciles honking and bonking, spunking and spanking, having a quickie come-splat in the comfort of our own living rooms. Oh Lord above thank you so, so much.

‘Oh what God-fearing, soulful people there are on Big Brother. What a delight it is to watch them. Oh did you see it last night people, did you see it? Nobody Z got their cosmetic breasts out live on TV and nobodies A and B had a boring conversation; whilst nobody C masturbated herself with a dildo.

‘Oh I can’t wait for tonight’s episode. What’s going to happen next? I’ll best buy all the tabloids and read all the gossip. Wait there’s a story here. Apparently nobody X *did* have sex with nobody Y. What! I just can’t believe it! Isn’t that incredible now! And nobody B has had his penis pierced. Oh joy, joy, joy. I’m so glad I know that now, my life is complete. And listen to this. Nobody C gets sloshed every night and fulfills her spiritual life by having one night stands. Oh thank the Lord we’re alive people. Thank the Lord we’re alive.

‘Do you not care at all people? Are you genuinely satisfied with all this soul-sapping, mind-numbing media circus? This constant brain washing of the senses with the most amoral, despicable, tabloid trash? To live in a world so impure where nobody seems to give a damn about anything. Am I the only one who cares? The only one who has a soul?

I feel so depressed people, so depressed – go on people you mock me, mock me for saying it, walk on by, walk on by – but I feel so depressed to see the papers full of utter trash. To see women taking off their clothes on every other page, to hear the sordid details of pointless, joyless celebrity sex. Oh what total garbage. Let me fall down a dark well forever.

‘Is there a God? I begin to doubt it sometimes. To read a story of a woman, a poor woman stabbed to death as she worked in her shop. To read the story of this woman gone to her grave forever, leaving behind her a husband and two children. To see a photo of this woman, knifed in horrific circumstances; and to see that the press has no qualms in printing this story, to let it share a page with a picture of a *naked* woman, with cosmetic breasts, smiling for the camera. And guess what? According to her she just loves having sex in a Bentley with two men at the same time. Oh joy to hear it. Joy, joy, joy. Oh tabloids how thou hast captured mine imagination. I cannot wait to read thee and find revelation in thine scriptures. How soothing thy words are. What pure divinity ist hidden in thy pages.’

‘People how can I reach you? How can I save? How can I get you to contemplate the spiritual side of your life? Hmm? How can I get you to come to church? Oh there’s an idea. Right, everybody who comes to church this Sunday gets free plastic surgery. That’s it people. That’ll get you in in droves.

‘Roll up, roll up, come to church and get free cosmetic surgery. Jesus saves. His healing hands will fill your breasts up with silicone.

‘Miracle! Miracle! Shock horror miracle! Jesus transforms ailing A women into double D stunner! Incredible!’

‘Plastic surgery for all, for each and every one of ye humble sinners. A free face lift for everyone who enters the kingdom of Heaven. Come all ye faithful through the Pearly Gates. Let the Lord nip and tuck you, let Him face-lift and breast enhance you and lead you to eternal life. Eh? How about that people. How about that.’

So I went on, no-one suspecting that I was just an undercover secret agent. Still the terrorists hadn’t turned up. I kept an eye open and kept up the rant.

‘Well boys there you go. Been out shopping have you? Wey hey! It’s the lads. Wey hey! Aren’t we cool eh! Pull your pants up boys, pull your pants up. I’m sick of staring at your underwear. I don’t want to see your fancy underpants thank you very much.

‘And what wonderful lives you lot lead. You’re moral garbage. Go to work in your fancy cars. Earn lots of money. Go to the pub. Have a laugh. Take a girl back to your seedy little shag-pad. Have a one night stand. Go to a lap-dancing club, have sex with a prostitute. Any moral doubts or dilemmas boys? No? Oh well. Any time for God in your routine? I didn’t think so.

‘No, you soulless, mindless creatures really revolt me. And reading your lads’ mags. Well excuse me! But am I the only one who knows that looking at glossy magazines crammed full of naked women is immoral. Oh! What a horrible culture is the lad-mag culture. What a sleazy, fake, soul-destroying culture. Oh how soulless you are to gorge yourselves on pictures of naked women with over-inflated cosmetic breasts and then reading dead-end stories about footballers and cars and about drinking and being a lad. What total bilge.

‘And look at the front cover of the magazine. Next to the naked women are the amazing words: ‘inside this month’s magazine: win a boob job for your girlfriend!’ Oh joy, oh spiritual God-filled moment. How about that lads? ‘Win a boob job for your girlfriend’. Oh you disgusting dogs. You soulless, depraved, farm-yard animals. Do you not have mothers and sisters? Do you not rage at the insult to your beloved sweetheart? Do you not revile at the revolting pressure this puts on normal women to risk all and go under the knife? Whoever wrote those words should burn in Hades for eternity.

‘Hey I know. ‘Come to church and win a boob job for your girlfriend.’ Oh life, life, life it’s a wonderful, wonderful thing. What beautiful and Heaven sent words, how humanity has advanced: ‘Win a boob job for your girlfriend’.

So winding things up, I stopped at lunchtime to grab a quick bite to eat.

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I ate a speedy lunch knowing the terrorists could turn up at any minute. Accordingly I was back out on the street ten minutes later.

‘And in opposition to all this self-centred, egocentric, breast-enlarging philosophy to life, in contrast to the vain, indulgent, luxurious lives of arrogant unbelievers, we have the third worlds. Hundreds upon thousands upon millions of desperate people; starving, aching, uneducated human beings; struggling to make

a living, doing the most God-awful, back-breaking, soul destroying jobs for peanuts, whilst you lot wallow away in opulence and indolence.

‘Good Lord, to the suffering, disease-ridden, malnourished, ignorant third worlder, trapped forever and anon in the most inhumane of conditions, what anger, what incomprehensibility must he or she feel towards the west, toward you lot out shopping without a care in the world.

‘What ultimate, ultimate human iniquity. To slave and suffer for a crust of bread while a bunch of shameless westerners, with all of their animal needs long since taken care of, live a life of luxury, and find pointless and stupid ways to waste their time, behaving like revolting and silly little children, totally oblivious of their wealth, education and good health; spending money willy-nilly on all the must have accessories of the petit bourgeois; obsessing over celebrities and cosmetic surgery; out on the town getting shit-faced; bumping themselves up with boob jobs; wasting their money on wine, women and song; pissing their lives away with drink, drugs and rock and roll and not giving a shit while their third world brothers and sisters die of famine and disease. And all the while knowing full well that they themselves are Godless and spiritually dead, indifferent to the fate and welfare of others, contemptuously mocking their third world relations, sticking two fingers in their face as they idle away in riches and debauchery.

‘Huh! What an act of mercy it would be if the poor third-worlder could see in the behaviour of the westerner some small semblance of God. Some such characteristic as would explain to them the reason for their difference in wealth. Yet no such mercy is at the ready. For the third-worlder sees only that the godless and shameless westerner is rewarded without respect to any moral value; that the people up above his or herself in the food chain are no decent, God-fearing people; but arrogant, indifferent, selfish, Godless imbeciles. Oh what an awful world we live in.

‘Hey Momma, why we Africans have to live in such poverty while the white man live in luxury?’

‘Don’t ask such questions little Mullegeta.’

‘But Momma please, why I have to dig all day in dirt, with empty stomach, looking for these little stones, these die-mans?’

‘Because za white woman need to look good. What a stupid question little Mullegeta.’

‘But Momma it’s not fair. There’s no sense in it. We live in hut. We get paid peanuts. We eat nothing. And what we work for? To make za white woman beautiful? Where is zie justice in dat?’

‘Don’t pester me with al dese questions little Mullegeta. My body ache, my legs are sore. I feel ill. Go and ask your Pappa.’

‘But Pappa is dead Momma. He died of dysentery. Why was zhere no doctor to treat him Momma? Why do we have no hospitals here? Why do they have hospitals in the west where women can get larger breasts Momma? Surely that’s not as important as treating dysentery.’

‘Don’t keep asking me about za large breasts, little Mullegeta. If zie white woman wants za large breasts zhen die white woman must have za large breasts. Now go. Run off and find me a diamond. If you can, you trade it in for some magic beans.’

And later:

'Was I the only one who knew the invasion of Iraq was an illegal war? Huh! Was I the only one who cared? You indifferent bastards! Swanning around, shop, shop, shop. You couldn't care less could you. So indifferent. What were you lot doing when the war was announced? You were shopping, you were watching TV, you were out partying. Couldn't care less. You should have been trying to stop it.

'Read my lips people, read my lips. It was an illegal war. It is an unjust war. How dare you all be so callous and indifferent as men, women and children, innocent Iraqi civilians are slaughtered on a daily basis. What a mess, what turmoil has that nation fallen into since our invasion.

'People killed without relent. Suicide bombers everywhere. Bomb after bomb after bomb after bomb, death after death after death after death. I am sick to my back teeth of hearing about casualties. Every fucking day, in every fucking news bulletin, '70 people killed in Iraq' 'today 120 people killed in Iraq' 'up to 150 people were killed today in Iraq'.

'Good Lord what a disgraceful war. Children blown to bits, families destroyed, the maimed and injured cluttering up the hospitals, look me in the eye people, look me in the eye and tell me that this doesn't bother you. That you don't care. And what was the war about? For what important reason did we invade a nation? Oil! Hah! Oil! What ultimate human iniquity: all of that inhumane barbarity in the name of oil. Huh! That treasured piece of black liquid, oil! Is there anything worth living for in this life? Next time you're filling up your car with petrol you just remember what it cost:

'Well sir, that'll be £12 exactly. Oh and a dead Iraqi child as well.'

'Barbarous, inhuman man. War is never justified, never ever. To see papers full of pictures of war victims, a man desperately carrying his injured wife from a bomb hit building, their little children running around crazy – what horrific images. And what is this they've been printed next to? Oh how lovely. It's a naked woman. Oh joy! When the Iraqi civilian looks at what we have done to him or her – bombed them with the right hand and photographed them with the left – will they believe us to be creatures of God? I don't think so people, I don't think so.

'Hey mammy, why has the west invaded our country and left us in this awful mess, where bombs go off on a daily basis?'

'Don't ask such stupid questions little Nura.'

'But mammy please, why has our house been bombed and my father's arms been blown off?'

'Because the westerners need oil stupid.'

'But mammy surely oil isn't that important.'

'Look little Nura, if the westerners don't have oil, they can't drive their cars. And without cars how are they going to go shopping?'

'But shopping isn't that important mammy. And in any case if they all went on public transport, that would use a lot less oil and moreover reduce global warming.'

'Don't be smart with me little Nura! Now go and collect some stones. We're burying your brother this afternoon.'

'For God's sake will I ever be able to tune in for the sports news without having to hear of the day's casualties in Iraq? Every freaking day, to hear a meaningless,

meaningless statistic of the numbers of dead and wounded. News reporters mentioning with indifference, that which has become an everyday occurrence. The deaths of innocent civilians falling down the pecking order as time goes by.

“A great day for England’s footballers, they beat San Marino 2-0 in a friendly; elsewhere ninety people were killed in Iraq.’

‘...the Big brother star had denied sleeping with miss cosmetic breasts; in other news one hundred and fifty people were killed in Iraq.’

‘...if the plan is implemented it could mean that hundreds of consumers will be left without fresh marmite for a week; and finally bla bla bla bla killed in Iraq. That’s all from the News team, have a good weekend!’

‘And what is it with all these wars people? Does no one remember history classes when we were taught that war is wrong, when we chastised our forebears for all their bloodshed? War is wrong and yet time and again this stupid country enters into a new one. Is it just to spice up the history curriculum or something? We need to revise our philosophy on wars:

“Exam question: explain the causes of World War one (thirty marks).’

‘Answer: man always has wars: it’s his destiny to. Some fuck heads at the top decide to have a fight and innocent people get blown to bits in the middle. Next question.’

‘Imagine you are a soldier in the trenches in World War one. What are your thoughts?’

‘How the fuck did I end up in the middle of a fucking war with people being blown to bits all around me? We used to say that war was wrong in history class and criticise older generations for their propensity to shed blood and now somehow we’ve ended up in one ourselves.

‘Bastard! I’ve just thought. In eighty years’ time, smug, snot faced little school children will be sitting around writing essays saying that we loved war, that we were totally stupid, that we went off to battle crying ‘hooray we’re going to kill people’. Oh I’ve been whored by history! Well I’ll tell you something, those same snot faced school children – they should stop being so judgemental, and start concentrating on avoiding their own fucking wars.”

And so I went on in a similar vein. The people seemed genuinely scared of me. They were walking past me very hurriedly. I was playing the part to perfection. It was an Oscar winning performance. Truthfully reader I was just talking completely out of my backside, laying it all on, just as these people tend to do.

By four o’clock the IC3 male still had not shown. In all likelihood if the terrorists were to have struck today, it would surely have been earlier. The crowds were beginning to dwindle now. Nevertheless I held my position and continued to undercover.

‘Friends, Romans, countrymen lend me your ears. What chaotic, senseless world we live in. Where in the comfort of our own homes we watch the most horrific and disastrous scenes play out, where we watch innocent civilians die the most awful deaths.

‘A world where we see aeroplanes carrying ordinary people, men, women and children into skyscrapers populated with unwitting bystanders. To know of civilians desperately messaging their loved ones, telling them they are going to die. Or of a seven year old girl sitting next to her mother, flying into the jaws of death.

Of men and women blown away in a heartbeat whilst sitting at their desks working. Of petrified souls not knowing what's hit them, surrounded on all sides by fire and pandemonium; not sure as to whether to jump out of a skyscraper and plunge to their deaths or submit to the flames and chaos.

Terrified, terrified people, screaming for their lives – and all the while being watched in their final tragic and horrific moments by the eyes of the entire world. The twin towers collapsing, in devastation for the poor people inside; a mere cinematic moment for the rest of civilisation. Planes packed with people dying; a ratings-winner movie clip, clicked on so many times.

Or the Tsunami. The entire subcontinent overwhelmed by a nightmarish, all-encompassing wave. Hundreds of coastal villages simply swept away. Fisherman drowned. Natives and tourists alike racing from the beaches, desperate not to be swept away by this awful natural calamity; children the largest victim of all, because they have shorter legs and can't outrun the tidal wave.

And to all of this nightmare apocalypse unleashed once more upon the third world, be sure, you can bet your life on it, the westerner's cameras are there, ready to beam back the whole dramatic spectacle to the comfort of your own living room. 'Don't go away folks. Coming up after the break a mother and her children, clinging for dear life to a pier, are swept away.'

'Oh soulless, soulless man. To record on camera the final and terrifying moments of a defenceless, voiceless, third world woman and her children. To just stand there like a heartless robot and record her and her children's agonising final moments, when she's screaming for help and her children are being swept out one by one – ugh! You fucking bastards! Shame on you westerners! Shame on you. Shame on you, shame on you, shame on you. Bastards! Fucking bastards! Fucking bastards!

The Bali bombings, the Madrid bombings, the London bombings.

People of London, will there ever be any sense to this chaos? Will there ever be an explanation? Ordinary citizens on their way to work as usual, blown to smithereens in a heartbeat. In the flicker of an eye their lives taken from them, never to be returned. And all of this on what should just have been another usual morning, another uneventful day.

Men and women killed and blown to pieces, countless others crippled, scarred and maimed for life. People, on their way to work, never to return to the loving arms of their families again; poor souls on trips to London, forever lost to their dear relatives back home; men and women from various parts of the world, a million miles away from their native land, dying in utter, utter horror. Girlfriends and boyfriends going about their business, never to return to the arms of their beloved.

A brother, a sister, a husband, a wife, an aunty, an uncle, a child, a parent, a friend and a lover, all gone. Obliterated instantly or burned most excruciatingly. Oh sad, sad scenes and tragic days. Innocent lives, civilian lives, ordinary people of London wiped out in a heartbeat. Destroyed whilst deep underground in the dark. The awful carnage of the tunnels of death. Oh what tragic, tragic scenes.

And then the accidental shooting of a Brazilian man thought to be a suicide bomber. To be *accidentally* shot dead. Oh! He's gone in an instant as well. Goodbye to you all, you poor, unfortunate souls. May the Lord be with you, may

He bless you. May peace and serenity be yours in the next life, my poor, poor souls.

‘Is there any explanation people? Any sense at all in any of this? Any crumb of meaning to which the relatives of the dead may grasp on to; is there any sense to life?’

‘What chaotic, senseless and awful world we live in people. Imagine how our great grandchildren will look back on us. Imagine the judgement of history bestowed upon you:

‘Well today children we’re going to study world history 2000-2010. Can anyone tell me what this period of history is often referred to as?’

‘Please miss, please miss, I know.’

‘Yes little Johny.’

‘Please miss was it the period of gross hypocrisy.’

‘No, no, although I can see where you’re coming from. What was it called class? Yes little Sarah.’

‘Please miss was it the period of barbarity, cruelty and callous evil?’

‘That’s a good guess little Sarah, but not quite what I was looking for. In fact this period of history is often referred to as the *period of man’s inhumanity to man*. Now shortly we’ll take a look at the oil wars and the conquest of Iraq. But let’s begin by looking at what everyday life was like for the typical ancient westerner. Who can tell me what the Holy trinity was? Yes Katie.’

‘Please miss was it er, em was it TV, mobile phones and plastic surgery?’

‘That’s two out of three little Katie. Let me say mobile phones *weren’t* part of the Holy trinity.’

‘Please miss, miss, please miss, miss, please I know.’

‘Yes little Toby.’

‘Please miss was it celebrities.’

‘That’s right Toby, that’s right. Now what I’m handing out now to you is a sheet with some key words on that relate to this period of history: selfishness, brutality, murder, inhumanity, poverty, plastic surgery, suicide bombers.....the list goes on.....

‘Okay class. Now, who can tell me what did the ancient westerners do when say a plane flew into a skyscraper and men and women stood at the windows of the flame-infested building screaming for their lives; what did the ancient westerners do? Or when a woman and her children were being swept to their deaths by a Tsunami, what did the ancient westerners do?’

‘Please miss!’

‘Yes little Suzy.’

‘Please miss did they switch on their video cameras and start recording the whole event?’

‘That’s right Suzy. They recorded these events on video cameras, thereby allowing all the people of the world to sit back and enjoy the spectacle in the comfort of their own home.

‘You see children the ancient westerners loved death, they loved watching people die. They went crazy for video tapes of people being beheaded for example. Now if you look on the sheet I’ve given you, there’s a homework question children.

Were the ancient westerners any more civilized than the ancient Romans? Discuss.'

'Oh people. I hope you feel ashamed. Watching videos of people being decapitated. Are you any better than the fucking bastards who commit such evil, if you watch the spectacle itself? After a hard day's shopping, to go home and find yourself bored, depressed. There's nothing on the TV you see. You need a high. You need a lift. Something to entertain you. I know, why not download a video of some poor soul having their head chopped off. Go on, go and get the popcorn out. It's a disgrace people, a shameful disgrace.'

Thus did I go on. I have to say I'd really managed to frighten the people with my words. You know they truly weren't at all indifferent, as these sandwich board characters always believe them to be. I was making them all feel very guilty and depressed, and for things they weren't to blame for. I felt like a right bastard.

You know I wanted to say to them, I'm just an undercover agent, don't take any notice of anything I'm saying. There's no sense in it. I'm just talking a load of crap. Pure nonsense. It's all just a load of bull. I'm really here to catch terrorists.

Honestly people, don't take it to heart. If there's any truth in what these religious nutters say I'll be going straight to hell that's for sure. I saw the twin towers fall, watched the tsunami on the TV – it's just human nature. And how these people go on! I mean as if it were a crime to be happy, to have fun, to spend money or be wealthy. And going on about homeless people and what have you as if rich people are to blame. Or talking about wars as if all was black and white. And constantly obsessing about airheaded money-girls and breasts. How one-sided these sandwich-board characters are. How little they know about reality or human nature. What a load of blinded cod-philosophy they spout.

At six o'clock I decided I could take a half an hours break. In truth the terrorists were very unlikely to strike at this time of day. Nevertheless, after I'd eaten, I decided to get back out there. As evening came on, the shoppers were gradually replaced by young people dressed up for a night out. Hordes of women, scantily clad in little tops and skirts, showing lots of bare legs and cleavage, and trotting along in their high heels, walked past me. I really felt like throwing down my megaphone and chasing after them, the lovely darlings. Honestly it was a wonderful sight. Beautiful creatures, beautiful. Lovely legs, lovely hair, lovely faces, lovely nails, lovely breasts. I do like it when a woman dresses up, and make herself look sexy. You know when they really get themselves all dolled-up. And, my God, there was so many of them as well. A constant stream of them. I was in Heaven.

However I really had to snap out of it and keep up my undercover persona. Accordingly, I knew where my discourse was headed.

'There you go ladies, out for a night on the town is it? Have you girls not got any sense of shame or immorality? Do you not have any fear of God? Huh? Do you not have any ounce of decency? Of course you don't. You're nothing but vile harlots.

'Godless sex-mongers. Whores of Babylon! You might as well be wearing nothing. Going to have a one night stand are you? The cheap thrill of a lousy one night stand. It's all very easy isn't it, you bunch of slags. Ah! You girls are an absolute disgrace. You make me absolutely livid. Drive me absolutely fucking crazy!

‘Showing off all your bits. Dressing yourselves up like sex-dolls. Drinking to excess. Dancing around like a group of slags, consumed by lust and vainglorious in your shallow and empty little lives. What moral filth you are. What complete trash. You’re animals. Drunken, slutty, harlot queens. Filthy, lust-filled, debauched come-sacks. Oh you make me sick. You will rot in hell you bunch of slags. Do you hear me! Rot in hell. Burn in the fires of Hades! Bah! Argh! How you infuriate me!

‘That’s it girls, you mock me and walk on by, go on you mock me. Tell me I’m a loser. An angry little man. I know what you harlots get up to. One night stands, three way sex, swinging, orgies and all the rest of it. You’re nothing but prostitutes who do it for free.

‘Sluts! Sluts! Sluts!’ I shouted through the megaphone. ‘Go on, there you go you bunch of slags. You people so disgust me, you make me so angry as you dance your lives away in amoral seediness without a care for anyone but yourselves. Slags!’ I screamed at the top of my lungs as they walked past.

And so I continued into the evening.

One thing that had crossed my mind, as I essayed to get into character, was to what extent men like this are aware of the hypocrisy of their actions. Indeed when I was later able to access several files, developed by the secret service which gave detailed information and analysis on playing such characters, I found a report by the noted German psychologist Dr Friedrich Köhler pertaining to sandwich board men that very much backed up my hunches. He echoed my question regards the hypocritical words of these men.

‘In ancient times’ so he wrote ‘it was prostitution, in the 20th century pornography and page 3, and nowadays cosmetic surgery – and with all these issues, that so arouse people’s sense of anger, and plunge their soul into an abyss of depression, it is usual to put the blame at the door of the opposite sex. Thus though a man will tend to blame women we see that women will implicate *men*, and their obsession with large breasts and sex for the horrors of boob-jobs, pornography and scantily-clad women. It is clear moreover, from what research I have done, that the irony of these points are lost on this type of person be they male (as in 90% of cases) or female.’

Thus I had been bang on the money when I had decided against introducing any sense of remorse or irony into the act.

Dr Köhler continues:

‘There are several other little details related to this protagonist [sic] which are of interest but one in particular stands out. Although an in depth, psychological profile cannot be here given, at this juncture, let me expand, ever so briefly, on an interesting point that my studies suggest is commonplace amongst such sandwich board men.

‘Speaking to them you will find that they always paint women as the devil incarnate, and that they make generalisations about the opposite sex based on what might be termed alpha females who they’re obsessed with; and at the same time, they completely wash over their own sins as men. But the most interesting fact about such people, which is very much related to the first point, is that they actually *want to be women*. And not just any women. Rather the most feminine and feline of alpha females. This is backed up by extensive research done over

several decades into transsexuals and transvestites; and brings to mind the old adages *if you can't beat them join them and it takes one to know one.*'

I made it my business to read this secret service report afterwards; and found that, much to my credit, I had played the role very well and that my intuition as regards this character had, as usual, been spot on; and that years of research by an eminent scholar pretty much chimed in with my own deductive analysis concluded in but a day.

Anyway, at eleven o'clock, satisfied that the terrorists were not going to come today, I packed up and headed back to the hotel. With my uncanny knack for tapping into the minds of the diverse people of our society, I'd once more played the part to perfection.

26

Time's arrow flies forever onward. The forces of history, in eternal antagonism, vie with one another to shape her flight. The wheel of fortune rotates, the soldiers of empire march on, the seasons come and go, and the earth, moon and sun grind onwards and around-wards in the eternal waltz-dance of the heavens.

The will of the masses or the rule of the king – which will force the hand of history I cannot say. The birds fly south, the wildebeest migrates, and the tides are brought in and back out again to the unrelenting rhythm of life's lute. The DJ's of destiny are at their decks, watching on as the whores of history enter the dance floor and high five the Lords of the dance. We are ready, we are braced, it is now or never. It is time for the players of history to step forth and come of age.

Reader the end is nigh. The four horsemen of the apocalypse are galloping towards us. I can see them now on the horizon, as they thunder with ever growing rapidity towards us, their hooves engulfed in a cloud of dust. The threads of this tale are rapidly reaching their rollercoaster conclusion. The bridge has been burnt: there is no way back. To the end, to the end, let us head bravely for the eye of the storm, let us drive doggedly to the vortex of the maelstrom. Let us achieve a climax. So to narrate the shocking and angst-ridden final installment of this true narrative; the dramatic conclusion of 'License to Stalk: the true story of a war on terror secret agent.'

To cut an old lady's tongue in half: the day after setting myself up as a religious nutcase, I got wind that a strike on the tube was imminent. Accordingly I threw caution to the wind, and, leaving my post at Oxford Circus, ventured straight to the Lion's den and started patrolling the underground.

Buying an all-day ticket I rode random tubes in the central London area, taking the Circle line, Victoria line etcetera and keeping my eyes open to any suspicious activities. Of course you might say reader, what good can one agent do if a suicide bomber wishes to blow himself up; and the truth is that I would be able to do very little. Nevertheless, this is what we're taught at the academy.

Despite the fact that, if I did spy the suicide bomber before he committed his atrocity, there was a 99 percent chance I would be blown to pieces as well; despite

the fact that by setting myself up on random tubes I was unlikely to come into contact with him anyway – despite the slim chances of success and high probability of death, I had to be here. It was the least the nation could expect of me.

If the underground was to be bombed once more it was my duty to be one of the victims. With certain death looming round the corner I should have felt nervous; yet I felt only excited. I was ready, ready, ready for the terrorists. And if I spotted one I would have to grapple with him in a desperate death struggle; fighting for my country, fighting for democracy, fighting for humanity. I had my gun. With one accurate shot to the head I might even thwart his evil operations.

The nation had no idea that I was on the underground, with a gun in my pocket, ready to shoot terrorists. If they had they would have felt much safer. In fact more reassuringly, there were many such individuals as myself now patrolling the tube in said fashion. Indeed – as HQ dictated – a raft of other agents had arrived here as well, and I frequently saw them on the trains, undercover as they were, looking like everyday citizens.

However, as I sat there on my seat and kept an eye out, I began, towards the close of the first day, to feel myself a bit obvious. You see, I'd been sitting on train after train after train, and constantly looking about me, and looking into the eyes of all and sundry who got aboard. This was no way to proceed. Another day of this and people would start to suspect me of secret agency.

What I needed was to blend in somehow with underground life. I needed a disguise, I needed to be able to stare at people without them knowing it. It didn't take me long to come up with the most perfect of undercover aliases.

In the evening I travelled out east and bought my costume. I returned to my hotel, and putting it on, stood before the mirror. Dressed as I was, I was an everyday London citizen. My eyes could look where they liked without people believing I was spying on them. In fact in my new outfit I might even elicit the sympathy of a suicide bomber. For I was, dear reader, *a burka wearing Muslim woman*.

In fact the reasons for this undercover mission were twofold.

I didn't want my face to be recognised. Partly by the terrorists who I would be fighting with, and who would know me, for that would give me an advantage; but more so by the general public.

Reader, I think I made it clear at the beginning of this memoir, that the links between myself and the secret service are tenuous at best, for reasons of the better facility of our operations; and that if an agent is caught in flagrante in any way, shape or form, the chiefs back at headquarters will often disown us, and pretend to have no knowledge of us, dismissing us as deranged madmen acting on their own accord.

This is what had happened now. For reasons which I am still unable to fathom, the chiefs of staff had seemingly given up on me, to the point where they had released my photo, into the general public, as the suspected rape assaulter. True that didn't blow my cover as an agent – in fact I wondered whether the big cheeses weren't trying to give me an alternative alias to help facilitate my operations – but still it meant I would be hounded by police, press and public.

The papers bore my face, people were on the look-out for me, and already I'd heard reports that I'd been recognised yesterday as the religious nutter at Oxford Circus. And 'the Sun' really went to town on it, with the headline 'Where's Wally?', a reference to the fact that I wear glasses and bear a resemblance to that famous cartoon character (who looks a bit like a pervert if truth be told, as indeed I do, reinforcing the moral of this story that appearances can be deceptive), who people have to try and spot in various locales. People were now being encouraged to try and spot me.

In any case, whyfore they had done it I could not say, but it made me doubly determined to sport the burka. Wanted by the authorities I might be, sold out for whatever reason I had been, but, there was no way on earth I was going to shirk my duties: my nation needed me.

I lost no time in studying the role and getting into character. Given my poor preparation on my previous undercover operation I was desperate to study hard this time.

The part to be played came in two flavours: in the first place I'd have to learn to be a woman, adopting all their manners and customs and hanky-waving the effeminate flag of the ladies; in the second I'd have to honk the tonk and learn to be a Muslim. Jumping to the beat as regards their manner and customs as well, walking like an Egyptian and spouting the Arab vernacular to boot.

However this last didn't worry me. For I've got a knack of picking up languages in a very short space of time reader. I'd bought 'Learn Arabic in three months' earlier in the day, and, bearing in mind that I learn much quicker than the average Joe, I intended to consume that small volume, in one go, later on tonight. But in the first place I was concerned with becoming a woman; and to that end I'd come up with a series of drills designed to get me thinking and acting like one.

I began with some physical tests. Firstly I stood at one end of the room, holding in my hand three pieces of scrunched up paper. A bin lay at the opposite end of the room. The aim of the game was to throw the balls of paper into the bin.

I got off to the most miserable of starts, as with a flowing movement of the shoulder I released the balls, which, describing perfect parabolas through the air, landed, all three of them, straight in the bin. Yet I soon improved on this lacklustre beginning, as on my next set of throes, swinging from the elbow I scored only two out of three. By my tenth go I was prefacing my throw with a little run up, and, totally failing to transfer the momentum I'd gained by the run to my arm, swung from the elbow and scored nil out of three. But the drills ahead were a lot harder.

I next entered the toilet and did some *seat-lowers*. Standing in front of the toilet I lowered the seat. Then raising it to the starting position again, once more lowered it. It was a difficult task that required a lot of mental concentration, going against the ingrained programming of the male brain as it did and requiring the need to lay down new neural pathways in the process. In all I did six sets of ten repetitions with a minutes rest in between. By the time I was done the sight of a raised seat filled me with deepest anger and bred within me a deep-rooted hatred of men.

Next was target practice. Drinking large amounts of coke I now attempted to urinate into the toilet bowl without shooting wide. But it was madness to even attempt such a feat. I returned and tried several times throughout the day, yet it

was impossible to control the flow and each time I ended up hosing down the carpet. The subtleties involved in getting into character were becoming ever more complex and for sure this was a very demanding role. However in the end I assumed a ladies urinating position and found, by projecting my manhood downwards, that the task was easily accomplished in this manner, something which bore testimony to the method acting approach of Stanislavski.

Next I borrowed a hoover from reception and began hoovering the room. The noise was awful. I felt like jumping out of the window head first. And it made no difference whatsoever! *The hoovered and un-hoovered carpet looked exactly the same.* It is one the most profound discoveries of this book, *that hoovers have no effect and carpets are never dirty.* These are the honest facts. Please women listen to me! There is a conspiracy by hoover manufacturers to propagate the myth that hoovering is essential. It is not. It need not be. We could all happily live in a world without these wretched, marriage-destroying, life-wrecking machines!

Of course I might mention, though the powers that be will adamantly deny it, that *hoovering* is one of the preferred methods of torture employed by the secret services. A suspect will be made to relax and given some food and drink and left to watch the TV. Then, without any warning, a female operative, disguised as a cleaner, will enter the (completely clean!) holding cell and begin hoovering.

The effects of this type of torture can be extreme. Though the powers that be will allude to the fact that they bare results, this is not always the case. True, in some instances suspects will be found, only ten minutes after hoovering has begun, banging on the cell door like a madman screaming 'let me out! Let me out! Heeeeelp!' and a full confession will follow. But these cases are rare. On the other hand the long term effects of these cruel methods, revealed in a study carried out at the California institute for physical and mental illness, found that '75% of men, subjected to these vile practices, suffered long term effects, including headaches, severe depression, recurring nightmares, and massively increased risk of heart failure.'

Of course the role of women in torture has been well documented by the press and the idea of using ladies to simultaneously arouse and yet tease the suspects is well known. However, I wish to use the confines of this book to hint at a much more insidious form of torture, carried out by the female sex.

It is an elaboration of the cleaner scenario above. Suspects will be brainwashed into believing they are married and a female operative will then be permanently placed in the cell with them, purportedly as their wife. It is her mission to nag him constantly about the most trivial things imaginable whilst all the while expressing disdain for the authorities and the secret services.

The suspect will be treated to a cynical routine in which he is criticised for such misdemeanours as not washing a fork properly, dressing in the wrong clothes, and making a smell when he goes to the toilet. At the same time he will be forced to watch endless, soul-destroying soap operas which the female operative pretends to be incredibly interested in.

Moreover he is verbally assaulted for not noticing that the female has a new haircut (in fact she hasn't, it's *exactly* the same as it's always been) and forced into a confession of negligence on his part, and a slobbering, insincere suck up apropos how incredible the haircut looks. She then proceeds to unhurl a

monologue of complaining – a cleverly rehearsed and well written routine (it's all very calculated) – culminating in a brutally ironic killer line in which the suspect is told that he never listens to her.

It is a cunning, premeditated, cynical tactic designed to bring a suspect to the brink. There is a fundamental perniciousness in the strategies and schemes employed by these female agents. It is excessively depraved.

In theory, the fact that she openly despises the secret services, induces the suspect, who is now full of loathing for the woman he's locked in a cell with day and night, to view the secret services as the good guys and to cooperate with them. However in reality, in eight out of ten cases, the suspect is found hanging in their cell, having decided suicide was the only option.

Anyway in my role as a woman I would have to pretend hoovers were of importance.

Thus determinedly I hoovered on. Yet I felt myself ailing at the helm. I had a headache, my mouth was dry, I felt faint, I was so bored. Yet I fought on. The noise was unbearable. And then in an awful, earth shattering moment I blacked out and fell backwards on the floor.

In my efforts to become a woman, I had pushed myself to the utmost limit of physical endurance. I lay prostrate upon the ground.

There was a time when I thought I would *never* recover. That I had taken my diligence in duty simply too far. Yet some two and a half minutes later I was on my feet again and getting on with the next drill, this time a test of *skill*.

I was attempting to plump a pillow. Yet the art was a complete mystery to me. No matter how I struck the pillow, instead of plumping up, it only seemed to get flatter and flatter and flatter. I know it might seem silly to draw such inferences, but I could only conclude that this was some magic art form passed on secretly from one woman to the next, thus lending credence to the idea of a secret society amongst the female sex, with the plumping of a pillow being the equivalent of the masonic secret handshake.

I moved onto a final skill drill. Wetting my hair in the shower I now made every conceivable effort to wrap a towel over my head in that way women do when they sit down to watch a soap opera in mid-preparations for a night out; but this task – seemingly an innate female skill – completely eluded me as well and I had to give it up for hopeless.

I was starting to think and act like a woman. Of course you might naively think reader that this entailed taking an interest in the male body and ogling men as I saw them on the streets of London. But nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, experts of the female psyche will tell you that women are much more interested in the *female* body than the male. And not just to the same extent that men are, but in fact more so. Accordingly, I made it my business to become obsessed with women's bodies, openly looking at them on the street (as women do) and relentlessly studying hundreds of images of them in the privacy of my hotel room.

In fact, in light of the drills I'd been doing, I was developing such a deep hatred of men, based on how they treated toilets – urinating everywhere and leaving seats up – that I was beginning to think that my character was a lesbian. To this end I

bought several magazines and watched several adult movies all centred on the theme of women making love to women. It seemed so apposite for my character.

My womanly persona starting to take shape, I now opened up 'Learn Arabic in three months' and began the first lesson.

There were fifteen lessons in all and I'd have to get moving if I was going to get through them all tonight. It was nine o'clock already. Nevertheless I was determined to do the job properly, and as such began by reading the preface and introduction, the notes on grammar and pronunciation. I read each bit thoroughly and carefully. Yet I couldn't understand. What was a diphthong? What the heck was a glottal stop? I tried to do a glottal stop. Ach! Ach! Ach! I sounded like a witch cackling. What on earth? Al? Ach? Argh? Argh? What? It made no sense whatsoever.

At 9.45 p.m. I was on to lesson one: 'Aperitifs'.

Mr Smith, Miss Boukili and Mr Hussein were meeting for an aperitif and to exchange business cards. What the bloody hell was an aperitif? I didn't even know what that meant in English. And was any of this really relevant? I felt bored to tears. And my concentration levels were down after all that glottal stop business. I fast forwarded ahead and took a peak at chapter two: 'On the train to Tunis – tickets please!' Oh good God! It looked just as bad.

I turned back to aperitifs. In this chapter I would learn how to order an aperitif, greet someone in Arabic, say one's name in Arabic and exchange business cards. I put on my earphones and listened to the conversation on the CD. What? What on earth was that? It just went past in a blur, a surge of nonsense. What complete incomprehensible gobbledygook. I was never going to be able to learn Arabic. Never in a million years.

As I listened to the conversation rush past, my concentration levels down, I started drawing moustaches on the stupid little cartoon pictures of Mr Smith and Miss Boukili. God I hated them! The stupid morons! I flicked through every page of this stupid book and found more and more pictures of false people, falsely laughing for false photographs. Allah help me! This was going nowhere. I stopped the CD and switched on the wireless.

Tonight, on the radio show I was listening to, they were discussing the rights of women to take maternity leave, also the role of men as nannies and child-minders, the rights of *men* to take maternity leave, and the prejudice experienced by women in the workplace when coming back after childbirth.

Perfect. If I could get myself on to the live phone in discussion that would be an excellent way to hone my impressionist skills and test out my female character. I'd already acquired a female voice – it was a lovely, flute-like, chirpy little bird noise, and I'd named myself Layla. True I might not get through. Nevertheless it was worth a try.

I dialled up and waited. As I sat on my chair, the phone to my ear, I was really quite impatient and annoyed. That stupid Arabic course was rubbish – I'd expected to be fluent by now – and I couldn't be bothered to look at one more page of it. I was so annoyed and worked up and I waited testily on the phone, huffing and puffing as I went.

I listened to the discussion: the guests included a professor of child-rearing who was propounding the view that women shouldn't be in the workplace when

pregnant, and also a young man Tim who worked full time as a child nanny. Incredibly, much to my surprise I got through to a researcher; and when I gave them my opinions and viewpoint they told me I would be on in a short while. I waited nervously.

'Well, we're going to take some of your calls now on this subject,' said Anita, the presenter, 'so let's first of all go to Layla in south London. Hello Layla.'

'Hello Anita. My point is that that stupid professor person you've got on, who's *meant* to be an expert in childbirth – what would he know about being a woman?'

'Well you can speak to him directly Layla.'

'Right I'll speak to him directly. Hello professor no brains. I want to know who the hell you think you are to be telling us women we shouldn't be in the workplace prior to childbirth. Excuse me! We've got rights you know. If we want to work we bloody well will. This is the 20th century for Heaven's sake! Men like you are stuck in the middle ages. You want women to be chained up as slavish little housewives. I've met men like you before. I know you like the back of my hand. 'A women's place is in the kitchen' and all the rest of it.'

'This is completely absurd. I won't have this' replied the professor angrily. 'Young lady, you haven't been listening to a word I've said. I'm on the *side* of women. I was advocating the point that it's the right of women to have time off from work when pregnant. Now listen, you said just now that I'm stuck in the middle ages, is that right? Well, let me just explain to you that...'

'Look' I responded 'I'm not going to get into an argument with you, you silly man. I don't have the time for such petit squabbles, I'm incredibly busy.'

'You're the one who started the argument!' said the professor in real anger. 'Listen young lady, you need....'

'Listen young lady! Listen young lady!' I mimicked in his pompous tone. 'Is that all I am to you, *a young lady?*'

'How dare you be so rude to me' said he angrily. 'I'm all for women's rights. Do you hear me?'

'Why are you getting yourself all worked up for professor' I responded calmly and superiorly. 'You've got yourself into a right tizzy.'

At this point Anita interjected. 'Okay I think we'll leave it there for a minute. I don't think you quite understood the professor's point there Layla but never mind. Can you feel the love people? Can you feel the love?' she said sarcastically.

'Anita I've got one final point to make' I said.

'Go on, but make it quick love.'

'I just wanted to say I think that professor – he's obviously got problems with women. I never trust men like him who try to tell women what they should or shouldn't do. I'm very suspicious of them. And as for that child-minder Tim: he's obviously a ponce. But I'll tell you Anita as one woman to another, I wouldn't trust him with my children, that's all I'm saying. There are paedophiles out there, strange men.'

Tim broke out in angry defence and there was a right brouhaha in the studio. But I'd already put the phone down. I couldn't be bothered to listen to any of those whingers. I'd had my two pennies worth and, I felt, played the part well.

That same evening I set up a blog under my new alias and made my first post:

Double Standards

This entry concerns some general points that need to be made about the abuse women take from men. I'm talking about derogatory remarks about how we look, and vile, abusive comments about our most intimate body parts. Do you get the picture?

For example some of the things men say to me and have said to me are beyond the pale and deliberately insulting. I am often subjected to derogatory comments such as 'you look beautiful', or 'your hair is very girlish', 'your eyes are pretty', 'that's one sexy butt!' and so on, remarks designed to reduce me down into body parts, and to inform me that I'm no more than a composition of sexually stimulating organs.

These are mixed up with other blatantly abusive, denigrating, patronising comments such as 'you would make a good wife', dirty aspersions, including 'let's have children together', and the use of misogynist language such as princess, darling and dear in addressing me. Do men not know how grossly offensive all of this is? Or how angry it makes me? Is that all I am to these jerks?

I've tried telling these morons, these pigs who belong in another century that you can't call me beautiful, you can't see me as just another 'attractive young lady'. No! Enough is enough! You have to respect me for what I am. A thinking human being. But will they let me be that? Of course not! They have to debase me and demean me with this foul misogynist language. Yet when I push my point and try and educate them into perceiving me as more than just a sexual object, they get alarmingly angry, and immediately reveal their utterly sexist misconceptions, telling me (as if I, the victim, am to blame!) that it's my fault for dressing up like a lady.

This goes right to the heart of male misogyny. Excuse me! Do I not have any rights! It is my choice if I want to wear my hair long or paint my nails, or if I want to wear a short skirt. Who are these men who think that just because a woman is wearing a short skirt it's alright to give her compliments?! And yet that's the mentality of these pigs. 'She was wearing a short skirt, so she deserved it'. I hear it all the time.

Then when I'm out in town I've got men staring at my breasts! Excuse me! Just because I'm wearing a t-shirt with the words 'can you see my breasts!' on it, doesn't mean people are entitled to look at my breasts! For God's sake! It's outrageous.

And then there's the fact that female victims are always blamed for crimes committed against them. I mean that woman who killed her husband. And yet some people dared to pour blame on her or insist that the word victim was inappropriate. I mean please! What kind of an age do we live in? It's the typical blame the victim mentality, just because she's a woman.

The attitude of men, to women who wear revealing clothing, is disgraceful. They think we're nothing but sluts and demean us as such. And then they have the cheek to criticise us when we make legitimate protests against this. I was part of the slut march. I dressed up as a slut and paraded through the streets to try and educate men that we're not a bunch of sluts. I even went so far as exposing my breasts for the camera, in order to remind men that we are more than just a pair

of breasts. But look how they reacted. Calling us all sluts! When will they ever learn?

And then there's driving. When will there ever be social equality? Why is it that people hate me just because I'm a woman driving an expensive sports car? Can they not handle that? Are they all so intimidated? Good grief, the silly little boys. What disgusting prejudice there is out there. Why do men have to be so aggressive? God it makes me angry!

There is a male conspiracy to keep images of women in the media down to pretty young girls smiling submissively at the camera. It makes me sick! When are we ever going to be given the dignity we deserve? Constantly we are taught to hate ourselves. There is an obsession with these images. I'm sick of looking at them.

In all of this the words double and standards immediately spring to mind. Why no one has sympathy with us I do not know. It's time to stop being walked over ladies. And to win some respect. Go and kick some ass!

I posted this entry alongside a profile picture I'd put up of myself looking very cute and sexy, if I may say. It had taken me all night to settle on a photo I liked, after I got carried away taking hundreds of them, trying to make myself look as beautiful as possible. I really enjoyed it and felt like a model doing a fashion shoot.

I was half-way to being a woman and felt in a much happier mood now, after having had my say on various issues both on radio and in my blog. Moreover I felt more confident about the Arabic: in time it would surely come.

I now set about making some final preparations concerning my clothes.

I had my burka and my ordinary shoes would suffice – they were somewhat unisex. So too my socks. In terms of underwear I had of course the jaguar patterned bra. However for knickers was I somewhat at a loss. Only Mrs Blackmore's dirty pair were on hand.

Of course you might say reader that it really didn't matter – I could get away with wearing underpants. But attention to detail is everything. I once remembered, back in my student days, during an exercise in which we trainee spies had to write a love letter to an imaginary French mistress, a young undergraduate had addressed her in the familiar 'tu' form as opposed to the more polite 'vous' form. Though he had an otherwise perfect record, he was kicked out of the academy immediately. I wasn't going to forget that little lesson now.

Could I get away with wearing Mrs Blackmore's dirty knickers? Possibly. I could wash them, but then I didn't want to lose her evidence. The irony of the situation was, was that whilst I had only one pair of dirty knickers, I had a total of ten clean bras – taken in raids similar to the one I described at the outset of this memoir. Perhaps I could buy some knickers by order. I went on the internet and going to a shop's online catalogue, spent a good hour or so perusing the women's underwear section. Yet I was wasting my (very precious) time; they wouldn't be able to be delivered until two days at the earliest. I would have to wear the soiled pair.

All ready for my first outing as a woman on the morrow, I bedded down in order to get some beauty sleep.

I awoke the next morning at seven a.m. I was nervous but excited. The first thing I noticed when I looked in the mirror was that I had a big red spot on my nose and a horrible cold sore on my mouth. Normally I wouldn't venture out on such a day. Yet by wearing the burka it wouldn't matter. I couldn't help cynically thinking to myself that perhaps this was the real reason so many women were desperate to have the right to wear the veil.

In my bra, knickers and burka, I stepped out into the bright, fresh London morning. For the first ten minutes I kept thinking that people could see through my outfit. I had to keep telling myself to relax, that nobody suspected a thing, but that if I did act tense and peculiar people would be suspicious. I affected a mincing, girly walk and swung my hips as I went. After about twenty minutes or so I calmed down. I had got used to the fact that people took me only for a Muslim woman – there was nothing extraordinary in my spectacle.

And no sooner had I calmed down than I began to enjoy playing my new role. Honestly reader as I crossed the streets of London that morning in my close hugging bra and panties I never felt more comfortable or at ease. And undercover as I was I felt really excited, and, my true self disguised from the world, I felt thrilled and able to do anything. As a woman I felt liberated, felt free to do what I liked. It was all a very pleasant experience. I had tricked the world into a fresh identity, and had been born anew as a woman.

On my way to getting into position on the underground, I decided I just had to go to the lavatory. Heading into a department store I walked toward the toilets, hoping to have a quick pee, when unbelievably, what on earth was this? There was a ten women tail-back coming out of the ladies. As I stood in line, I watched the men come and go from their toilet, as free as they liked.

I'll tell you reader, I was dying to get inside to see what the hell was in there that would create such a queue. And as I stood there in the barely moving line, next to all the other women, I couldn't help thinking of one of my former teachers back at the academy, old Huckleberry, who, during the Second World War, whilst stationed out in North Africa, had dressed up as a Berber, and in a bid to steal their camels, entered their camp. I couldn't help think that if he could see me now, decked out in Arab regalia, all ready to go behind enemy lines, he would have been very proud indeed.

Yet in an incredibly shocking anticlimax, I found when I did finally enter the ladies' toilets, that they were essentially the same as the gents. Although the burden of explanation should necessarily fall upon the shoulders of those few brave men who've entered these un-chartered waters, I can find no reasonable explanation to explain away the anomaly of the queue for the ladies lavatories.

It is my sad conclusion, that to this very day I can make no serious hypothesis as to justify the mysterious manifestation of the ladies' queue. In comparison to the gents next door, the three urinals have been removed and replaced by one extra toilet cubicle. Each cubicle contains a sanitary towel bin – or 'tampon box' as

I call it – and there are no puddles of urine on the floor. Otherwise are the two toilets identical.

My observations that follow relate to my toilet experiences on that first day and throughout the time I was undercover. As a rule women would appear always to use a piece of toilet roll, even if just urinating. Shit stains on the toilet are less frequent than in men's toilets though still common. The same applies to toilet paper shreds and bits of Bolognese on the bog brush.

Breaking wind is a widespread practice during urination and carried out with utter freedom. After toileting of the second kind it is common (though not always the case) that a woman applies some deodorant or perfume. And lots of time is spent at the wash basins, looking in the mirror, so that a second queue forms here as well. Yet the most incredible and unbelievable of my discoveries deserves a paragraph to itself.

In an absolutely shocking and gob-smacking piece of research, I found that a whopping 84% of all toilets that I entered were left with the seat up. This is an incredible yet true and authentic statistic and smacks of the gross hypocrisy of women. It is an astonishing revelation. Yet the reason behind it again seems unfathomable. Like the Loch Ness monster or the Marie Celeste, there will always be some things in this world that are shrouded in mystery.

One final note. I found it impossible to go to the toilet in my burka, the strategy employed being simply to take it off all together and to defecate in the nude. However this is a serious point and raises the question of just how a woman wearing a habit, be she nun or Muslim lady, manages to relieve herself. Unfortunately, I was able to ascertain little on this score, secluded as I was whilst toileting, and in truth the whys, ways, and wherefores of how religiously-clothed ladies toilet, and the more wider ranging question of how the ordinary woman in a dress defecates, is beyond the scope of this book.

When I finally left the toilets, I looked at my watch. It was ten o'clock already – I'd spent a good twenty minutes waiting for a pee. I'd better get a move on to the underground. The terror threat was very real. Yet hang about, whilst I was here, couldn't I just spend ten minutes shopping? Of course!

With new found liberation I headed to the women's department. Oh how lovely just to be able to browse lady's clothes at leisure! And I could try them all on as well. Oh happy days! I made a start by looking at women's dresses.

What variety, what utter variety! Blue satins, pink laces, scarlets, greens, purples – all the colours of the rainbow. Such lovely patterns, such lovely silks and flashy fabrics. I made a point of touching all of them, slowly caressing my hands across their surface, the cool, seductive, silky ones being a real treat. I picked out the ten that I loved the most and headed off to the changing rooms to try them on. But I was told I could try on only three at a time. Crestfallen I went and replaced seven and came back to try on the remainder.

My absolute favourite was a silky pink dress with a very, very short skirt so that you could almost see my knickers. I stood in front of the dressing room mirror. I looked absolutely stunning. I felt incredibly sexy. I was so ecstatic about my appearance that I involuntarily started moaning as if I was going to have an orgasm. And I stared into the mirror, pursed my lips, made foxy eyes and with a

slutty expression, lifted up my skirt and flashed my knickers mischievously. Truly I'd never been happier.

Though I would have loved to have bought all the dresses I couldn't afford them. Yet hang on a minute? This shop had a policy where I could just buy the dresses now and bring them back in a week's time and get my money back. Oh thank God for such easily exploitable store policies!

I now continued my shopping. I was like a kid in a candy store. I was having a ball. I looked at all the lovely nighties and pyjamas, all the shoes and high heels, all the jumpers, scarves, jackets and jeans. And all of these things I tried on. My especial favourite were the dressing gowns, and I took a horde over to dress myself up in. They were so luxurious, bouncy and padded and I felt so happy, so cosseted when wearing them. My favourite was white with red hearts on it.

I was so at home in my women's clothes and felt myself so safe, sexy and at ease as if I'd finally found true happiness. And I tried on slips; delicate, lacy little things that became me so well; and skirts, shirts, and hats and all sorts besides. Yet I'd saved the best till last. After all these dresses and nightgowns, all these pyjamas and shoes, all these slips, skirts and what have you, I was about to enter the holy sanctum of women's lingerie.

Heaven on earth! Heaven on earth! What a big, big section. Oh! What a delight to roam freely within, to be able to browse at large. Truly if I had not found Shangri-La in the women's department as a whole I had found it right here and now. I felt like dropping on all fours and thanking God for here delivering me. Oh I cannot explain the electric thrill that seemed to run through my fingers as I went along touching every single piece of women's lingerie; bras, knickers, panties, thongs you name it, they were all here stretching away to infinity.

As far as the eye could see: bras, knickers, panties, thongs, bras, knickers, panties, thongs, bras, knickers, panties, thongs, bras, knickers.....Oh what joy! What happiness! Every colour of the freaking rainbow and more besides. Silks, satins, cottons and laces. What a pleasure to touch it all. I picked out my three most favourite bras and my three most favourite panties, (it was a tough, tough selection process) one of which was a thong, and went to try them on. And even though you're meant to try them on over your underwear, I cheated reader and put them directly on, exposing my naked groin to the thrill of those fancy, silky-electric, tight fitting knickers.

I stood in front of the mirror posing in my new lingerie; looking at myself, making foxy eyes, twirling and blowing a kiss. Later, I went to the counter and bought these items, and once I had, I went to the toilets to put on my new panties in place of Mrs Blackmore's dirty knickers. And I bought a tampon and a sanitary towel and went back into the toilets to see what the difference between them was.

I bought some lipstick, mascara, blusher and false tan and I had false nails and false eyelashes attached and I also acquired a handbag, a necklace and some perfume. And what with all these knick-knacks and accessories I thought myself now finally a *real* women. I had it all. What else could I possibly need?

Yet holy cow! What time was it? It was ten to three! I'd wasted nearly five hours shopping. Good Lord I was meant to be on the underground. With a horde of shopping bags in tow – I had three in each hand – I now ran, ladylike to the nearest underground station and got on the tube. Honestly it was a real challenge

to run past several other shops without going in and trying on more women's clothes. However with firm resolve I walked on by, and got into position on the underground. Admittedly reader, if I do have one fault, it's that in my efforts to play my roles to perfection I sometimes get so carried away and engrossed in my character that I forget the real purpose of my mission.

I toured the Circle line. From the other passengers my presence elicited a mixed response. Many citizens were indifferent to my presence and took no notice of me at all. Others however, shot me not so very nice looks. Nothing overt or anything I could lay my finger on. Simply subtle little glances that made me feel somewhat unwelcome. And these came in equal number from men and women alike. I rather got the impression that they were eyeing my bags of shopping and wondering to themselves 'what has that Muslim *woman* (!) got in there?'

A small minority were audibly perturbed by my presence, and though not directly aiming their petty grievances specifically at me, nevertheless took the chance as I stood vulnerably and isolated in the carriage, to give vent to their petit grumbles.

'Tut. I can't stand these people, I really can't. They give me the willies. Fucking terrorists.'

'Hey there's too many fucking Islamists in this country now, they're coming in in droves.'

'These Muslims think they've got rights to do whatever the hell they like. You know I've got no problem with Hindus and Sikhs. But Muslims hey they really get me.'

'Why do they have to wear their stupid veils? As if we were going to perve on them. Honestly it's a total insult. And how are they ever going to assimilate?'

And so on. All of these comments I knew were intended for my ears personally. And though I knew they were essentially harmless, that if I had have gone and sat down next to these people and chatted to them, they would have soon been friendly and befriended me, and have been overcome with shame; still I felt intimidated by their talk and somewhat threatened.

Yet there was a handful of abuse that went beyond this – from teenage boys mainly. I heard the words 'Packie! Packie!' shouted a few times and very loudly for all to hear. Also the well-known Indian expression 'Goodness gracious me' said in an Indian voice. Plus a mob of teenage boys standing with me in the gangway started staring at me intently and I didn't know where to look and felt intimidated. One of them came over to me and asked threateningly 'what time is it?' and I was glad when they got off.

Another bunch of boys, this time more cheeky and less harmful, kept calling me Darth Vader and when they got off to leave they all said 'may the force be with you'. Showing them I was no mean comedian myself I returned their quips with some heavy breathing alla the dark Lord himself; something which, to be honest, I'm rather expert at.

Riding various tubes did I thus patrol the underground discovering as yet no suspicious activity. At seven o'clock I called a halt to things. It was unlikely an attack would take place in the evening, and I wanted to get some rest and so be ready and fresh for tomorrow morning.

After my hard day's work I felt like taking it easy. Yet at the same time I was determined to stay in character and so perfect the role. How would a woman relax on an evening? I guess I could go and unwind by having some beauty treatment. But then I wanted to do something Arabic as well. Then I had the perfect idea. Yes, that was it: I'd go for a Turkish sauna.

Reader, I won't bore you with the details. Suffice it to say that after paying my money, I entered the women's changing rooms and had a nose around, though I didn't undress and have a sauna but simply pottered about. In this little 'mission' of mine (I use the word ironically) I did do a lot of what you might call 'spying'. Come on reader, you would have done the same in my position. Don't get me wrong, I'm no pervert, but which man wouldn't have used the opportunity to see the opposite sex dressed down and naked? And this being London, rest assured, there was every colour of the rainbow on show.

I returned to my hotel bedroom late at night and stripping down to just my bra and panties, lay down on the bed. I felt really, really sexy in my underwear, and I tried on my other new garments – my little panties, the thong, plus my new dresses, nighties and dressing gowns – and had a fashion parade in front of the mirror.

Afterwards I lay on the bed in my underwear and spent a good twenty minutes just contemplating how sexy and beautiful I was; and I ate a chocolate bar, although ate isn't really the right word exactly, more so I just slid it in and out of my mouth, toying it around my lips; and as I did all this I became quite aroused and started to fake an orgasm.

Later on I took out a women's magazine I'd bought, and filling out a questionnaire, found out what sort of woman I was. Apparently I was the sort who couldn't hold down a relationship, slept with men on a first date, was insecure and in need of understanding and would seriously consider having cosmetic surgery. Well what would they know?

The next day I paid a quick visit to Harrods before getting into position on the tube, as I was determined to make a trip to their well-groomed ladies and get my new nails varnished for free. And a nice job my girl made of them as well. For sitting next to a middle-aged English man on the tube, and spreading my hand out in front of me as though it were a starfish, in order to better admire my beautiful little fingers, with their false nails painted a damask red, the stranger next to me dared to comment that they were very pretty.

'Oh thank you!' I said, starting to giggle coyly to myself. He grew confident from this reaction of mine, and started asking me where I was from. I told him I'd always lived in England, had been born here and regarded myself as English, though my mother was Syrian and my father from the Yemen; and that I wore traditional dress out of respect for my cultural background – it had been the way I was brought up.

As we got into conversation the chap grew evermore loquacious and started telling me that he didn't have such a high opinion of English women, thought them too arrogant and presumptuous and that he much preferred a modest Muslim woman; preferred their humble and respectful ways and moreover considered our garb more elegant and our features more beautiful. And he even made so bold as to say that if he was somewhat younger he would dare to propose

to me and make me his wife, and that he wouldn't swap me, no way on earth, for a hundred English girls no matter who they were.

As I listened to all of this I just coyly laughed from time to time and encouraged him in his discourse. However at the end he took the liberty of bending down and kissing my hand, something which I thought strayed over the line of reasonableness. Frankly I was very relieved when this stranger got off, fearing what he might have tried to do to me otherwise.

He was evidently a complete weirdo, the sort who's got problems with women. Accordingly, I gave a description of him to local transport police, stating that he had sexually assaulted me.

Of course you might be thinking reader that he hadn't sexually assaulted me and indeed you're right (though it did feel that way); rather he had been guilty of the lesser crime of stalking me. But we know how the latter is regarded by police and in order to kick them into action I had used the (totally justified) tactic of *upgrading the crime*. Of course I didn't do this out of any personal motive for I did not fear for my own welfare; rather I did it out of a feeling of sisterhood to other women, some of whom, more vulnerable than I, could be his next victim. Women should stand shoulder to shoulder like this (many of you don't! and I'm here furnishing you with a good example) and moreover it tallied with my feminist ideals and my views on women, who, as this book is witness to, I hold in the highest regard.

Yet difficult though this sort of harassment was, it was in the afternoon that things were going to take a turn for the worse. Thus far had my time as a Muslim woman progressed without incident. The biggest concern that I'd so far faced not coming from any terror related incident, but rather from the diverse and varied tasks I'd had to undertake in order to maintain my round the clock undercover persona. So far it had been knickers and bras, thongs and veils, perfumes and nails. It had been tresses and curls, roses and pearls, peppermints, hop-scotch and curtsies. It had not been terror and chaos. As such I'd had an easy ride of it. But events were soon to take a most dramatic twist and leave me faced with a desperate predicament.

Reader I should point out that by this time I was fairly fluent in Arabic. Yet to better improve my skills I thought it a good idea to try and make contact with various Islamic peoples as they got onto the tube. And such an instance presented itself, when one burka wearing Muslim lady, looking very beautiful it has to be said, boarded at Piccadilly station. Bracing myself I walked up to her and presenting myself said pleasantly 'aslam-u-alikum' (peace be unto you - I'll do the translations for you (ignorant) reader, so don't worry about getting lost).

Yet, in a shock horror moment for myself, the lady so addressed merely turned her face and body away from me and rudely offered up no response. Clearly she didn't want to have anything to do with me. I was most taken aback and felt really upset. You know it was as if, by not acknowledging me, I felt myself outcast and friendless; as if I wasn't a real woman like her, but just some loser. As if I was a nobody.

Her haughty, better than thou attitude towards me, her way of behaving as if I was the lowest form of scum, really upset me and got me down. And for all of this I felt really depressed. Yet the worst thing of all, the most heart-crushing issue

about the whole case; the true, deep reason as to why that woman thought herself better than I, thought herself more a woman than I, was because she had huge, beautiful breasts.

Call me paranoid if you will reader, but I felt myself so inferior to that buxom, haughty queen. I could in no way match her in that regard, I was completely flat chested and I felt small, unwomanly and unlooked at, as I sheepishly went back to my seat in a little walk of shame. And all of a sudden the truth seemed to dawn on me. I saw all the men look eagerly toward that large-breasted bitch, saw how she cared not for their glances, came to realise how *none* of the men were eying me up. When I thought back now to that Englishman who'd kissed my hand earlier, I wondered whether I hadn't been a bit of a fool in thinking that he'd been interested in me. I couldn't help think that he'd only been giving me a sympathy vote. You know maybe *he hadn't been stalking me*. God how deluded I had been.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to others, I left my underground post and went home early. True that was a bit naughty, but I was just too downcast and gloomy to care. I made for Hyde Park, my favourite of the London parks, and there, isolated in solitude, I strolled slowly around the lake in my burka. Other, similarly dressed Muslim women were there too; but I desisted from any further interaction and sought only to be alone.

I strolled around the lake and tried to collect my feelings. I knelt down on my honkers at a corner of the lake and stared at the little ducks as they went about their daily business. And then finally after a few hours of this, I found a secluded little spot in the parkland, and sitting down, gave myself up to a few hours of melancholy indulgence.

That woman had thought herself better than me only because she had larger breasts. Of that I was sure. Yet I couldn't help chide myself, and say that it was in fact *me* who was at fault, that I was being paranoid, that I had an inferiority complex. But all of that was no good. I simply felt angered and enraged by that haughty woman's antics and how all the men looked at her breasts as if she was a goddess and how they didn't look at me.

When I thought back to the previous nights on which I'd spent my time trying on different bras in front of the mirror; where I'd wasted hours in contemplation of myself, feeling really, really sexy, I simply felt embarrassed. I'd been kidding myself to think I looked good. *I didn't have any breasts*. I had no cleavage whatsoever. I didn't need to wear a bra at all.

I continued contemplating like this, relaxing in the fresh spring evening and watching a little squirrel in front of me who ran around hunting for nuts. You know I felt as if I just wanted to give up being a woman, give up playing at being a woman. I felt somewhat resigned to who and what I was. That woman had larger breasts than me, she was the queen of the crop, and there was nothing I could do about it. And because of that I just felt like I didn't really want to play this game anymore. I would never be a real woman, and just wanted to give up my bra and knickers and have away with all this dressing up and styling and what have you. Truly I was sick of it.

There are always going to be some people who are more glamorous than ourselves, better equipped so to say in the assets of embodiment, and it is a

measure of our capacity as human beings, that we should simply accept this and realise that there is a lot more to life than good looks or big breasts. In all things of this nature, it is very much inherent in our human make-up that we should crave the endowments of sexual voluptuousness, even though we may not have them, and even though this may arouse in us feelings of jealousy towards those lucky few who have. But it is a testament to our status as sentient beings that we are able to look beyond such imperfections in our organism and to perceive the limelight of the higher things in life, in short to realise that God made us how we are and that in accepting this and living humbly and with modest dignity do we serve his will and heart. I was depressed by my physical inadequacies it is true; but at the end of the day, *we must accept our bodies for what they are.*

With a heavy heart, yet beginning to feel better, I slowly trudged my way back home. You know why not just have a cosy night in by myself, away from the world, watching the telly and having something nice to eat. Accordingly I entered a supermarket. They had a take away range. Now what did I fancy? How about a Thai-style pork curry? Or perhaps lemon chicken. Yet just as I was passing through the fruit and vegetable section, my eye alighted on a cartload of produce and I had the most brainstorming idea.

Why not stick two oranges in my bra and thereby give myself a lovely, big, firm-feeling bosom? Oh what an idea!

Suddenly I felt so uplifted, so happy, so delighted to think of my new breasts. And it would be so easy: buy two oranges, stick them down my bra, and gallivant about the place like the haughty, arrogant bitch I always imagined I was. Nobody would ever know. Oh yes! What a brilliant idea.

Yet just as I had gone over to the oranges and was feeling them, with relish, in my fingers – letting my hands slowly run across their surface – my eye fell on something further up the aisle. It was the cart of Savoy cabbages.

Holy cow, with two of those babies in my bra, then flipping heck I'd be the bee's knees. Oh what a stunner I'd be then! All the men would be dropping down on the floor for me, begging at my feet like little dogs. Yet come on, I was getting a bit carried away wasn't I? No, the oranges, they would be more than sufficient. They would do me absolutely fine.

I was desperate to put my plan into motion now. Accordingly, forgetting to buy myself any dinner, but purchasing only four nice firm oranges (two for reserve) I headed home almost running, consumed by one single happy thought of my new breasts, my spirits buoyant now and feeling very, very happy.

Though I had some difficulty in settling the oranges in the bra, I eventually got them into place. And I now took the decision to ditch my burka and instead opted to wear western clothes, and in particular a nice tight fitting top to better show off my new breasts; whilst at the same time retaining the veil and so my disguise and Islamic identity.

With the jumper off it looked as though I wore two oranges in my bra; but with the jumper on it looked as if I had a pair of perfect, big, firm bosoms, if a little too perfect and unnatural, but nevertheless a lovely pair of knockers. With my top I chose to wear a new pair of jeans I'd bought and with these in place I thought it would be a good opportunity to showcase the new thong I'd bought the other day. I mean what is the point of spending good money on fancy lingerie, of wearing

beautiful, highly-coloured, silky-textured thongs, if no-one is ever going to see them? Accordingly I wore my pants somewhat lowered, so that a good portion of my thong and my tight little ass were on display.

I went to bed extremely excited. On the morrow I would set out for the tube with my new assets, a proud, sexy woman and all the men would be dazzled by me. You know truly, I was deeply, deeply happy, so, so happy with my new equipment; I felt finally fulfilled and as though a real woman; and I felt just deep seated happiness in lieu of all the angst, tension, worrying and bitterness that were my usual wont.

Further, I didn't think of getting any sort of revenge on the lady – she of the big breasts – who'd disrespected me earlier. Not at all. I thought of no such thing. I simply wanted to swan around town, a happy, contented girl, viewed by my admirers on all sides.

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I awoke at six, and watched the dawn ascend. Oh beautiful dawn. Oh how happy and contented I felt. How I seemed finally at ease with the world, as though I were queen of it. Beautiful, beautiful, springtime dawn, blessedly fresh and wholesome. Oh deep seated joy. I dressed hurriedly and was soon ready to go. But I stopped once more to admire myself in front of the mirror: what a stunner I was. I was absolutely perfect.

I set out into the sun shining day. I had so arranged my oranges that, super-gluing them to my bra, I need have no fear of them falling out. Thus I went forth happily into the bright new day, and, wearing thong and veil as I was, oxymoronic incarnation of the yin and yang of human contradiction.

As I thus made my way through town the results were predictable. The men were mesmerized by me. How easy it was to fool them, to fool everybody! I simply had two oranges in my bra. Such a trivial little thing, yet what profound changes it wrought, to myself and those around me. And it was so easy to pull off – exactly as it had been to dress up as a Muslim woman. As I stood on the tube, I felt that I was very much the centre of attention. All the men were casting looks at my oranges. Some openly and honestly; others more furtively; and yet others, unsure as to what they'd caught a glimpse of first time around, returned to gaze at me with gaping jaws. That lovely feeling. Of being worth a second look. Of having men absent-mindedly snatch a dull-witted glance at you; only to have them review you a moment later, this time with excited intent, to see if they had really seen what they had thought they had.

And that lovely, lovely, well-rounded sensation of knowing that they won't be disappointed and that you're in charge of them, that you're worth it. Oh how lovely was that first morning, with all those men clamouring to know me, to make eye contact with me. Yet I desisted from returning their looks. Rather I kept up – through my veil – an amiable, smiling and respectful look, all the while glancing

aside and looking at no-one; though it was probably clear to them by my happy eyes and body language that I knew they were watching me.

Thus was life throughout the morning. So pleased was I with myself that once, when the tube was fairly empty, I stood right in the centre of the carriage and holding onto the central pole, exhibited myself somewhat, by engaging in a semi-lap-dance around the pole; which little titillating scene I had seen yesterday performed by two attention-seeking school girls.

Another thing I couldn't help doing was this: I became obsessed by looking at other women's breasts and got a lovely, though rather cheap, thrill and satisfaction from seeing how measly they were in comparison to mine. And I know it was a rather bitchy thing to do, but I just had to go over to these women, stand in their vicinity and pout my chest proudly. And time and again throughout the morning I got off the tube and went to the toilets, though not with the intention of there relieving myself; rather I wanted to look at my person in the mirror. And always there stood before me in the glass the image of a beautiful buxom lady; and my favourite game was to view myself from the side and to pout my chest to maximum voluptuousness.

Yet amidst all this happiness there lurked a small dark cloud upon the horizon. As the afternoon began and the day, which had begun so long ago, wore on, I found myself becoming tired, bored and listless at having to sit on the hot, stuffy tube all day and more especially I was sick to death of perverts staring at my breasts. Added to the fact that I was tired from having so little sleep last night; to the fact that I was exhausted by all the excitement of the morning and the attention that I'd received; and also to the fact that I was now left with a headache and that my oranges were rather heavy to carry around and so burdensome as to really drain me – added to all of this was the fact that men whom I didn't want to attract thought it their God given right to eyeball my titties ad nausea.

I was really irritated by all this unwanted attention and began to get stroppy and started pouting and blowing a huff. Stupid bloody animals! Men so unkempt and dishevelled – to think that they had rights to look at my bosoms! Huh! What an insult. Truly I felt myself devalued, as though I was mere cattle to these men, as though I had no face or other bodily parts; as if I had neither brain, nor personality nor spiritual side; as though I was simply a piece of meat; simply a pair of breasts. No I was thoroughly outraged by these leering perverts and sickos who looked at my breasts as if I wasn't there. I was really quite enraged.

And worse was to follow. As I kept retreating to the ladies toilets for my usual hit of looking at myself in the mirror, the magic of the oranges seemed to be wearing off. The sight of myself with full bosom no longer excited me so much, and I seemed to have gotten used to the effect. No matter how hard I looked, no matter how many times I returned to the mirror to view myself, always my memory anticipated me, and expecting too much, I was left to ponder an image of myself that fell somewhat short of expectations.

Truly the effect seemed to have lessened, and to keep lessening every time I took a look. Each time as I returned to the toilets in the afternoon, addicted as I was to these viewings of myself, my breasts appeared to be getting smaller and smaller, and I was growing evermore dissatisfied by the minute. I was so angry and annoyed with those leering perverts, and so dissatisfied with my bosom and

everything else, that as I stood on the tube I felt I could not hide my anger and dissatisfaction anymore, clad in veil though I was.

Yet perhaps there was a remedy to all this woe, a real cure. For I could always bump up to become a Savoy cabbage girl. I thought it through.

That evening, troubled at heart and sick of leering perverts as I was, things took a turn for the worse as I attracted some unwanted attention.

I happened to be in a shop looking at some dresses when all of a sudden I felt a presence behind me. I looked around. Walking behind me, some few paces off, was a rather dishevelled looking man. Had he snuck up on me or something? I hadn't heard him approach.

As I turned around to look at him I saw his beady little eyes looking at my backside and thong, and, as I turned, my oranges. I blew a huff and marching forward, turned into an aisle selling lingerie. I was just walking about looking at the items in the soiled ladies underwear section, when again!, I turned around and saw that man behind me, looking at me. What was he doing in the ladies lingerie section?

I was convinced he was stalking me and that he was going to rape me. Marching straight up to the security guard I told him so.

'Are you *sure* madam' said he thoughtfully in response.

'Look I'm absolutely convinced of it' I said 'I'd be happy to repeat all of this to the police. Please help me kind sir, I feel really scared of that rat-face' and just as I finished saying this, I eliminated any doubts from his mind, concerning the veracity of my tale, by just moving my body that bit closer to his and pressing my oranges into his chest.

'Okay madam' he said, and with this the security guard walked over to the stalker and accosted him. That leering pervert had the insolent cheek to protest his innocence, and looked sheepishly as if he hadn't done a thing. And the more the security guard questioned him the more he got all worked up and almost violently protested his innocence. Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth!

Yet suddenly I was struck by the fact that I may have made a mistake and black-mouthed an innocent man.

You see reader, I think I was having flashbacks to that despicable incident, earlier in this book, when I was raped, something which I (very bravely) decided to write about (most people would have covered it up). I think my oversensitivity to current events was based on a (very understandable but admittedly misplaced) fear of being raped again. I had made a mistake.

Yet could I go and contradict myself in front of the guard? Of course not. If I did that how badly would that reflect upon the fairer sex? I had to remember that at all times I was being accorded the privilege of being female and so it was my responsibility and duty to portray them in a good light.

In this case, it would only be giving more credence to men's misogynist views against rape/stalking victims. Out of respect to feminist ideals it behoved me to keep lying.

If truth be told however, the man in question was probably a pervert – he looked like one – and indeed in my experience most men are. You might be surprised to learn but even I am (albeit to a lesser, perfectly-respectable extent). Yes, most men are perverts, it's true. Don't sit there and deny it gentlemen!

I watched the little scene that I'd set in motion, unfold before my eyes. And the stalker was getting really worked up now and denying the allegations and shouting and swearing. And then the security guard had simply said in that neutral English tone 'I'm going to have to ask you to please leave the store now sir,' to which the rat man had responded angrily, getting evermore worked up.

The security guard called for back-up and two other guards arrived, and, behaving like a little team of Rambos, physically removed the man from the shop. Meanwhile a crowd of passers-by, ladies especially, stopped to watch all the fuss and commotion.

And it wasn't long before a group of English ladies had surrounded me and started asking me what had happened. I immediately broke into tears and through my sobs said 'he was stalking me – it happens to me all the time. I didn't know what he might do' and as I said all this the other women gave me much sympathy, shook their heads, and looked shockingly in the direction of the stalker who was being carried away.

And as I continued to sob I said 'I don't know why men do this to me, I really don't, but they're always stalking me, I'm so terrified....' and with that I burst into tears and putting my arms around the woman next to me, nestled my head in her bosom and had a good cry.

'There, there' she said in sympathy, a bit taken aback, but nevertheless assuming the role of mother that I'd put upon her. Yet as I was thus recharging myself with head in her bosom, a small group of other women, who'd also seen some of the incident and who seemed quite angry and worked up by it all, dared to suggest that I had fabricated the story, had bad-mouthed an innocent man in an attempt to seek attention, and that my antics were really disgraceful.

'Racists! Racists!' I barked back at them. Even if there was some truth in their allegations – after all the (very likely perverted) man that I had got into trouble had done nothing wrong – I knew this country's problems with racial issues were at the heart of their vile abuse against me. Moreover I was now a victim of the awful procedure of women selling other women out.

How vile you ladies are! To sell out your very own gender. And yet in all of this it also struck me how easy it would be for a woman, by so using her oranges, to wreak untold havoc. Honestly, I was coming to see how bad the female sex is from both ends of the spectrum.

Feeling guilty toward the pervert I'd had ejected from the store, I decided to get some justice for him, by leaving a complaint with customer services that evening, telling them that the security guard who had removed that poor man, had been titillating himself on my oranges and that that had been his *rationale* for ejecting the other man from the store. I felt mightily relieved after that and had that lovely sensation of having a clear conscience once more.

And yet, on second thoughts, had that pervert been going to rape me? Maybe I was being too generous to him?

I made immediate inquiries into equipping myself with a rape alarm. Luckily – thanks to a spate of rape attacks that had taken place since my arrival in the London area – I was able to obtain one for free by standing in line and collecting it from a nearby police station. As I stood in the queue I chatted to the women next to me and said it was disgusting that there were all these perverts and sickos out

there, and we had a lengthy chat on all the dangerous men on the loose who were simply lusting after our bodies.

I knew given the widespread interest men were showing in my new boobs that I was very much a likely target, and I chatted to the lady and said that I long ago got used to the fact that men only think with their penises, and she quite agreed. Said they were a mere dick-orientated creature, controlled by the whim and will of their willies and that she feared she'd be the conquest of their lust. Though I agreed with her in the main, and though I seconded her sentiments in general, I couldn't help think she flattered herself a little in thinking she would be a rape victim.

I thought her well past it in fact, and she probably hadn't been up to much in her heyday either. She had neither my skinny little booty nor my well-proportioned bosoms. Nor either my veil, which contraption would have well improved her.....but then I shouldn't get too bitchy.

Anyway, I couldn't help think that in standing in line like this, queuing up to get a free rape alarm, she was merely seeking attention: it was just a stunt on her part, an activity to while away the otherwise banality of her life, a statement to society that she was a woman. It was stunners such as myself that these masked rapists were targeting and as such my place in line was very much justified. And as it turned out, the rape alarm came in handy that very same evening.

Reader this book is a straight forward spy narrative with no delusions of grandeur or pretensions to be anything but that. However I think it is not out of line, in this chapter, to take some time to explore several issues concerning women, and thereby shed light on important social inequalities present in our everyday lives. This is not, incidentally, a calculated move on my part to try and rope this book in to being some kind of outside favourite for the Nobel prize for literature (he says, with one eye on the trophy and his acceptance speech in his back pocket). (Really it's not. I'm just having a joke. (I mean we all know spy narratives, and the crime genre in general, is snootily looked down upon, by the judges, as not being 'literature'. (Just a suggestion, but maybe the judges could reverse that trend this very year, by considering this book for the award?)))

I decided to test how the police responded to rape victims.

Accordingly I headed out alone into the night and soon found myself in a God-forsaken back alley. I know reader, it was brave of me, but let's remember here that the cause, to enlighten the locker-room, testosterone-fuelled, male demographic, and help innocent female victims (some of whom have faced hardships much more difficult than I was now facing), was a good one. I set off my alarm.

Woo-a-woo-a-woo-a-woo-a-woo-a-woo-a-woo! What a powerful shocking noise! It was deafening beyond belief. A-woo-a-woo-a-woo! I simply collapsed in a heap on the floor and started crying.

The rape alarm continued at its most dramatic and it took only a few minutes before a single police officer arrived. As I heard him turn down the alley and saw him run towards me, I stood up and immediately ran toward him; and when I got to him I simply embraced him, and putting my arms around his neck and nestling my head over his shoulder began sobbing.

'Oh my hero!' I cried 'oh how you saved me!'

He tried to put me down and to free himself but I just wouldn't let go and held onto him as for dear life; and I made sure I pressed my oranges right into him. In return I could feel his throbbing manhood in my loins.

I tried to explain myself but my voice failed and I trailed off into a flood of tears and snuggled into the officer's arms; who – though it's completely against protocol, and not a very clever thing to do – decided to put two arms around me and hush me and tell me it was alright.

I couldn't fault him for his response time and yet I found his willingness to get titillated over a rape victim – a vulnerable, Muslim lady – he wouldn't let me go at one point – very alarming indeed. Nevertheless I decided to give him the benefit of the doubt, only lodging a minor (and anonymous) complaint with his superiors later on.

So much for the first test. I now repeated this procedure in several parts of the city, trying to elucidate an important insight into the machinations of the police force in its response to female rape victims.

And, I'm afraid to say, I found an attitude of male misogyny prevalent, widespread and at work in the way they handled this most heinous of crimes. I was absolutely revolted.

On the fourth incident I was *ridiculed*, (ridiculed me, a rape victim!) for having gone outdoors again after the previous three rapes. But I mean please. What kind of mentality is that to have? Just because I had previously been assaulted three times that night does that somehow make me responsible for the fourth rape? Excuse me, but why should somebody who's suffered the injustice of being raped three times (three times!) not be allowed – as other people are! – to go to one of the most notorious red light districts in the city, at three o'clock in the morning, wearing a very tight little mini-skirt? It seemed like there was one rule for normal people and another for rape victims.

And I mean come on! Was this somehow my fault? I'd deserved to have been assaulted had I? Huh! Can a woman, who's suffered multiple rapes in one single evening (this is the very definition of a victim!) not be allowed to have a little bit of me time, a little bit of fun later on? She has to immediately become a nun does she and enter a convent forthwith? Does a woman who has been sexually assaulted (repeatedly in one single night!) have to immediately renounce the use of the mini skirt? Please!

Moreover they started to doubt my stories, calling me an unreliable witness and so forth, smearing the victim as they always do. Plus I was accused of 'hindering access to help for real rape victims' something which almost made me cry by the sheer depravity of it, implying in the first place that my assaults had never taken place and that I'd just made it all up – some things never change aye; and secondly because they were trying to implicate a rape victim – who they labelled as being 'selfish' – as having had a hand in the downfall of other women. Their hurtful remarks almost made me feel as if I was a rapist myself.

So much for the attitude of the police vis-à-vis female rape victims. Seriously, all joking aside (about the Nobel Prize), even if I don't win that award (and there's a good chance I won't), I will be happy to have both researched and published these findings on a very important topic and the disappointment of not winning a silly award, presided over by a bunch of idiots in Sweden (who probably, given their

history, think rape is okay; and who will no doubt look over my work with the usual male-chauvinistic attitude, designating the issue of female rape as 'trivial' and 'unimportant') will be way out-measured by the fact that one, I'll have made an important contribution to social justice and two, many feminists will no doubt pat me on the back and say 'it seems not all men are bad then'. In fact, I'll go one further and suggest that I may even, through both my work on social inequalities and my dashing persona, convert many of these people (if not all) back to the realms of heterosexuality. (Can any of the winners of the Nobel Prize claim the same?) (Of course not.) (You know probably they'll give me the damned award now just to make me feel small and pathetic.)

The following day was routine. I changed now permanently back into my burka, sick and tired as I was of men looking at my thong; something which they (mistakenly) thought was their God-given right.

Late that evening I returned to the comfort of my hotel room; and after soaking in a bath for a little bit and putting on my lovely knickers, nighty and slippers; and also wrapping a towel around my head in the time worn fashion of women (which skill I was now master of) I turned on the radio to discover that tonight on the show, they were going to have a big discussion on the issue of Muslims in this country, and more specifically of Muslims in the media.

I immediately dialled up the number. Not only as I felt like getting some things off my chest, but also because I've always thought – anti-terror agent though I may be – that Muslims come in for a lot of flak, that there's an anti-Muslim sentiment out there and that this would be a good chance to set the record straight.

Furthermore, since I was now a Muslim, and had had some first-hand experience of some of the things they have to suffer, I could now speak with some authority on the subject. Yet would I get through? I'd already been on just a few days earlier. Surely they would choose someone else this time. Nevertheless I dialled. And in the end they were happy to have me on the show again. I couldn't think why they should let someone like me on twice in succession like this?

'Well, we're going to take some of your calls on this subject now, so let's begin by going to Stuart in Leeds. Hello Stuart?'

'Oh hello there Anita, how you doing. My basic point is this. I live in Leeds. There's what, I don't know, a very large proportion of Muslims in the community. Now living amongst them as I do, I can tell you they're totally normal people like you or I. Not at all like the media meks them out to be. They're just as relaxed and chilled as anybody. They go to the footy, they're out shopping and what have you, hell they even go to the pub. But it's the media, it's you lot who are always mekin them out to be a bunch of repressed whiners, whinging about their rights and getting worked up about everything. Really it's a media conspiracy just to sell newspapers.'

'Well, let's welcome now Hussein from Dewsbury. Hello Hussein. Am I right in thinking you *are* a Muslim?'

'Yeah, Hello Anita, that's right I am. In fact the previous caller Stuart's just stolen my thunder somewhat. Actually I'm surprised I got through at all. You see what it is, is that it's precisely as Stuart put it, there's a media conspiracy. I'm a normal British citizen like anybody else okay. I consider myself British. And even though I might have been against the war in Iraq and what have you, still, by and

large I'm a regular kind of guy, I've got a regular job, I go to the footy, I've got a wife and family, the children are completely integrated, I share the same concerns as any other parent.

'Yet time and again the media, and the tabloids especially, make us out to be a bunch of disgruntled, beard-wearing, holier-than-thou religious nutcases who want to do down western civilisation. You see that's why I was surprised that I got onto the show. Because usually the only Muslims you allow on the radio are whinging, small-minded, holier-than-thou egotists, people who are self-opinionated and think they've got rights on everything. In a word deranged madmen who are not in any way representative of the Muslim population.'

'Well, let's see what Layla in south London has to say about that. Hello Layla.'

'Yes hello Anita. Well frankly I'm absolutely shocked to hear a fellow Muslim talk like that. Listen, as far as I'm concerned this is the anti-Muslim show. I've never heard such racism on a grand scale. Time and again I have to suffer abuse as a Muslim. We've got no rights whatsoever. It's a total disgrace. I'm not allowed to wear my veil. Excuse me! I've got rights you know! If I want to wear my veil I'll damned well wear it.'

'I suffer racism on a regular basis with English people abusing and taunting me; I'm at a disadvantage at a job interview; I'm discluded from mainstream society; and I've got perverts staring left, right and centre at what I'll euphemistically refer to as my oranges. What a God-awful country this is! It's not liberal at all. You English, you British, you westerners – you've got no respect for the Muslim community. We are the most disenfranchised, disrespected Diaspora of this country; in a word we're nothing but slaves of the English, and frankly I'm absolutely fed up with it.'

'See this is exactly what I'm talking about' said Hussein getting all worked up. 'Listen you stupid bloody cow, what on earth are you going on about, saying we're slaves.'

'How dare you call me a silly cow, how dare you' I retorted in anger. 'What my own people, my brother of Islam turning against me like this? You're a traitor you, you're not a real Muslim.'

'Not a real Muslim? Well hang on, what do you mean by a real Muslim?'

'Well, have you read the Koran?' said I.

'Not from cover to cover I haven't but that....'

'Well you're not a Muslim then' said I 'so don't go misrepresenting us please, if you can't even be bothered to read our Holy book. I've read every word of it and therefore I've got rights to come on here and give my opinion.'

'You should shut your flippin trap, you silly cow, you're doin nout for the Muslim cause are you' said Stuart.

'Excuse me!' I said angrily. 'How dare you suggest that. There's freedom of speech in this country you know and if I want to have my say, even though I might just be a Muslim woman in your opinion, not entitled to her say, not entitled to any rights whatsoever, even so I'm going to say it.'

'Oh shut up you silly cow!' said Stuart

'Oh here we go' I said. 'Typical chauvinistic, racist remarks of a Leed's man. I wondered how long it would be before you started going on like that. Hey, I'll tell you, I know you Englishmen like the back of my hand. You're all racists.....'

‘How dare you accuse me of racism you silly.....’

‘Look, I’m not going to get into an argument with a racist’ I said superiorly.

‘Look Layla love, listen, listen, listen’ interjected Anita, ‘I don’t think you’re being very fair here on Stuart and Hussein, you haven’t really been listening to what they’ve been saying. Look Layla, I think you’re obviously a very passionate girl – I think you were the girl we had on a few nights ago? – but look love you’ve got to....’

‘Don’t call me love Anita! How dare you! I’m highly educated you know, I know my rights. I’m not love or pet or sweetheart. I’m Layla.’

‘Okay Layla, but I don’t think you’ve been very fair on the boys there now have you?’

‘Listen’ I said ‘the other day I was in a cafe and I sat down for a nice meal – just a one off treat because I only get £167 benefit allowance every week – how is anyone supposed to live on that? (The benefit system in this country is despicable especially for someone like me who’s disabled.) But anyway I just went out for a nice meal, a chicken curry, when all of a sudden as I’m half way through, I suddenly think ‘is this halal chicken we’re eating?’ Anyway I put my fork down and march up to the counter and ask the woman ‘is this halal meat?’ Anyway she doesn’t know what I’m talking about, the ignorant fool, so I demand to see the manager. Anyway he comes out and says ‘no it’s *not* halal meat.’ And I said ‘how dare you serve us infidel chicken, can’t you see we’re Muslims! This establishment is racist, it discriminates against the Muslim population. Now give me a refund, you’re lucky I’m not going to sue.’

‘And then at Christmas, oh don’t get me started. The neighbours sent us a Christmas card! Excuse me but we’ve got rights you know! I was round there in a flash.

‘How dare you send us a Christmas card, this is racist against Muslims! How dare you!’ I said. ‘And take down those decorations as well, they’re an insult to Allah. As far as I’m concerned you’re all racists and Christmas should be cancelled!’

There was commotion amongst the callers and in the studio.

‘Shut up’ cried Hussein infuriated, but I was determined to have my say.

I’m absolutely sick and tired of Muslims being represented as nothing but self-opinionated, whining do-gooders, I’ve absolutely had my fill of it. I ring up this show to try and put the record straight and all you lot can do is bicker amongst yourselves. Really you should be ashamed to hear how you go on. There are *real* problems out there people, real issues. And to hear you lot whining really makes me sick.

‘I myself suffer from *real* problems, I’ve got *real* issues to deal with. Like I said, I’m disabled. But I don’t let it get me down. Not at all, I get on with things. Despite my depression, despite suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Attention Deficit Syndrome, gluten and dairy intolerance, autism and acute Asperger’s Syndrome, I get on with my life. And all you people can do is squabble amongst yourselves and make Muslims out to be self-important, neurotic, precious little whingers. Well I’ve had enough of it!’ I shouted finally and put the phone down.

It was the last straw of what – after all the horror of being multiply raped in the wee hours of the morning – had been a very long day, and I felt thoroughly

exhausted. I immediately lay down on the bed and fell into a deep repose, totally oblivious of everything.

So much for getting into character. Reader we have reached the end. I shall shortly describe to you the most dramatic conclusion – and I'm not lying this time either. Only one further interlude is required.

Anyone who's ever attempted to balance a manhood in a thong will well know that it's better to station the phallus crossways rather than attempt to place it downwards like an arrow in a bow. But the situation is further compounded when one also has ideas of garrisoning, in one's knickers, a revolver. In this case the best strategy to adopt is simply to remove the gun altogether from the groinal region and slip it in between one's oranges.

Finally I should mention that I also wore in my loins a sanitary towel, having earlier on figured out the difference between it and a tampon (which tool I once a day tomato-ketchuped and placed in the ladies toilet bin, in order to avoid arousing suspicion). The sanitary towel was slightly difficult to fit since the presence of the male genitalia means that one can't wear it straight on, but must position it so that it circumvents one's privates. However once fitted, the contraption is rather snug and comforting, and having worn it in place for something like a week, I feel myself well-qualified to digress a little and speak knowingly of a sanitary towel; the use of which I will now venture to hypothesise on.

I think I mentioned earlier on that oftentimes throughout the day, in attempting to break wind, I am worried into thinking that, unable to carry out said operation, I've accidentally gone to the toilet in my pants. Although 99 times out of 100 this is not the case, still the constant worry of it and the one time out of a hundred when things go wrong, means that a device to capture any escaping excrement is a must for the worried minded.

It is therefore my firm belief that the sanitary towel is exactly such a device, and though women may argue this point and pretend that it is a contraption so in place to counteract mysterious problems known only to the female sex, the very fact of it being composed of the same material as a nappy, nay in short being nothing but a down-sized nappy, speaks to me of it being precisely for the purpose I've suggested it, and smacks, moreover, of a conspiracy amongst women to hide this fact and to propagate the myth of it being a womanly-related device.

Indeed twice during this operation I unwittingly 'fumbled the pass' whilst flatulating and activated a *live round of ammunition* which would otherwise have fallen into my pants; but the sanitary towel came to the rescue, I carried on as if nothing were amiss and the device proved itself of incredible practical worth.

Moreover this hunch of mine is to a large extent supported by one of the key statistics I obtained during my time amongst women (in the toilets). For I found, counter-intuitive though it clearly is, that at the five percent level of significance, women on average break wind twice as often as men. I hereby end my toilet findings.

The people of London were tense. An attack on the underground thought imminent. Though at present we had dropped down to the second highest terror threat, everybody was on tender hooks. You could have cut the tension with a knife.

Secret agents were crawling, like the rats that infested the sewers beneath, all over the city of London. Yes, armed police were visible everywhere. But undercover operatives were ten to the dozen, especially on the underground where I kept on seeing them, friends and colleagues from the academy, who I would often give nodding smiles to, as though we all knew what was coming. They, in credit to their professionalism, pretended to ignore me and have no idea of what my nod portended. But believe me they knew.

There could have been as many as ten operatives on every train. Which is part of the reason that I am so proud and indeed – dare I say it fortunate – that the responsibility for dealing with what eventually came to pass fell upon my shoulders. Elsewhere I had now spotted as many as 100 snipers patrolling the London roof tops. The entire place was swarming with operatives of various sorts. Meanwhile, the very chiefs of the academy, the real big cheeses reader, had also gone undercover to spy on us spies and make sure we were doing our job properly. I saw several of what might be termed the highest powers in the land riding the subway, dressed up variously as city-boys and white collar workers, maintenance men, students and homeboys. Of course, I would have been court martialled had I surreptitiously acknowledged them and so didn't. But in light of the fact that these people are some of the most pompous, overbearing officials you could ever meet, I made hand gestures and faces behind their backs when they weren't looking. That's the kind of rebel I am and as I've alluded to before, fun and games like this help a spy get through the horrors of his day.

I patrolled the underground. And in this climate of tense, tense fear, extreme diligence was required. As I mentioned at the beginning, there is a fine line between thwarting a terror plot and killing an innocent civilian.

So to the denouement.

It all began one morning as the tube entered Piccadilly Circus. I was standing in the aisle next to the door, when in a shock horror moment, a burka wearing Muslim woman stepped on board and stood next to me with the biggest bags you've ever seen.

My first gut reaction was 'Argh! Argh! We're all going to die! Argh! Argh!' You might be surprised at this, to see that a secret agent would react just as you, the idle reader would, but these are the facts. However my suspicions were not based on cheap-profiling; rather my hunch was informed by a well cultivated, time-worn sixth sense.

There is a history reader, a shameful history, concerning the bumbling treatment given out to 'suspects', handed out by those representing the crown, who have foolishly profiled innocent bystanders in the past; something that has only served to antagonise them into joining the enemy's ranks and thereby played

into al-Qaeda's hands. I was however convinced we had a terrorist here. And yet it is a credit to my forward thinking and notions of fair play that I did stop to consider these issues.

In fact, in an interesting aside, I know that there are some secret agents who wouldn't have touched this case at all, given its political sensitivities. Not so yours truly. I never duck a call.

The tube headed out the station. Desperately I looked around at the citizens on the seats, who all looked comatose and unconcerned. Was I the only one who sensed the Muslim woman was a terrorist? God my powers were good. Evidence, if you still needed it reader, that secret agents like me are indeed a special breed.

All my six senses told me this was a terrorist. I was convinced of it. Though I stated previously that all terrorists are men, I did not contradict myself now. For I was also convinced that this was a man dressed up as a woman.

Yet just as I was pondering what to do, the most soul-shaking, nerve-shocking noise exploded loudly in my ear, I got the shock of my life and my hunch was proved completely correct.

So it had finally come to this.

In the most alarming, stomach-churning, terrifying noise, my mobile phone started beeping.

I immediately jumped up on the spot and screamed. Everyone looked around at me to see what the matter was. In the meantime I looked at my phone. My worst fears were confirmed: it was a message update telling me that the nation had gone to highest alert. An attack was imminent.

Without arousing the attention of the terrorist, who seemed to stand there lost in his own little world – he leaned against the glass and had his back facing the majority of the carriage – I now moved into the centre of the aisle and started gesticulating wildly to the passengers to get off at the next possible opportunity.

You'd have thought that if a citizen goes all crazy like this, starts acting up like the devil possessed, imploring the people on the tube to get off at the next opportunity, and points his finger crazily in the direction of a burka wearing Muslim – you'd have thought they might just get the idea that a suicide bomber was in their midst and that they should evacuate immediately.

Yet they thought none of this. Rather they simply believed me to be an over-excitable nobody trying to seek attention.

Ultimate iniquity! How dare they think such thoughts, when I was trying to save them. Well people, you left me with no other option. I'd have to force them off.

Pulling my pistol from my bosom as we approached the next station platform, I raised and fired it, smashing the lights, some of which went out, and to the screams of women in the carriage, boldly announced myself in high-spoken English.

'Secret Agent X. Everybody get off the tube. I don't wish to be alarmist, but there's a suicide bomber on board.'

'Aaaargh! Aaaaargh!' the whole carriage erupted into pandemonium as the shots were fired and my words were heard in the semi-darkness. As we came into the platform all hell broke loose as screaming citizens attempted to alight; and running like a herd of cattle, they bumped and tripped, and stampeded each

other, sprinting away in panic and terror to the backdrop of loud screaming and utter chaos.

As the people in my carriage got out and ran away yelling excitedly, the passengers on the other carriages seemed to get the idea and they too made a quick exit and sprinted away up the escalators. The train would have appeared to have stopped as well. And as I saw all the citizens run away, fleeing in absolute terror, stampeding one another, I just shook my head in disbelief at the sheer shock and hysteria that one lone deranged individual could cause.

And amidst all these running civilians who did I see? None other than several secret agents!

Now I'm going to be generous to them and say that it was not cowardice at the events, but rather cowardice towards handling the (Muslim-in-a-burka) political sensitivities of this case, that saw them run off like a herd of cattle. And yet I think I'm being very kind here to even suggest that.

Ha! I had to laugh in irony then, and I do so now. To see several of her majesty's finest, dressed as normal civilians behaving like custard-belly cowards. Ha! And don't you just know it, these are the very same people who all got A's at the academy. You know the sort reader, sucking up to the teachers, talking till midnight about how heroic they were, and using the answer sheets of last year's students to bump up their marks, which are of course so important to them.

And what would happen to them now? After this debacle? I'll tell you reader. In ten years' time these people will all have ascended to the highest roles in the service, will be sitting behind desks, earning obscene sums for making the most petty, overbearing, bureaucratic decisions, while good men like myself will still be out in the real world catching terrorists. And you bet your life they'll be telling the entire world and his wife of all their heroic deeds. *The level of their delusionality is mind-blowing.* Anyway I'm philosophical about these things and their crime – of being who they are – is also their punishment say I.

Meanwhile the terrorist was still to my rear, slow to react to what had taken place, and unable to flee as I had deliberately impeded his path. Why had he not detonated when I'd made my attempts to evacuate? Why had he tried to run off? Why had he not attempted to suicide himself when I blocked his path? It made no sense whatsoever reader. I told you they were difficult people to fathom.

He simply stood there pretending to be unsure of what was going on and taking in the scene. He realised that I was impeding his path, saw me standing there alone with the gun, saw that everybody else seemed to have fled, looked at me with mistrusting, nervous eyes, and then made a final desperate attempt to get off the tube.

'Oh no you don't terrorist!' I shouted and running bravely up to him, hit him, shouting 'take that terrorist!' I then wrestled him to the ground and pinning him, held a gun at his head.

It is what, in the circumstances anyone would have done.

Now I promised you at the outset reader to debunk some of the myths pertaining to spies and let me take one to task here. It seems, as one of a select bunch of genuine heroes, that I am contractually obliged to peddle out this sort of *it's what anyone would have done* dribble, in an effort to appear modest. Let me here throw away with the carefully cultivated etiquette of centuries and tell you,

my friend, that had you been in exactly this same position you would have run away screaming along with the others. When will people ever learn: heroes are a special breed. Do not disrobe me of my well-earned honours in order to make yourselves feel better.

Anyway to return to the plot. Reader I'm sure you know the routine. If you've got a suicide bomber in your midst and you are 110% certain it is a suicide bomber – which I now was – you fire first and ask questions later.

Yet in fact just as I was about to fire, I suddenly had second thoughts. Seeing that the platform had essentially cleared of people now, I bravely decided I could take the chance of allowing the bomber to suicide given that it would only be myself who would be a victim.

This was an extremely bold and noble deed on my part and though I was convinced of the ill-intentions of the bomber, and was not at all concerned that I might shoot an innocent person, I wished to keep the suspect alive with a view to questioning him a little further. He could be useful. It was a gamble that was for sure, but hey, I'm no stranger to danger reader, not at all. I'm always up for a risk or two and if it's in the name of national security, I'll be damned if I don't put my life on the line. (Okay I'll level with you, secretly I was trying to make this into a 'Queen's honours list' commendation-incident.)

'You're lucky' I shouted heroically. 'You'll find us Brits a tough nut to crack. We're not like the Americans you know, we don't just shoot first and ask questions later. We're pretty damned reasonable people in fact. But if you terrorists think you can steal a march on us, well, you'd better think on.'

'Now listen terrorist, you'll also find us Brits the very embodiment of fair play. And for that reason I'm not going to shoot you, deranged, psychopathic individual that you may be. Tell me terrorist what were your plans?'

'Please let me go' he murmured. It was a very good impression of a woman. He even screamed and sighed like one, and his body, pinned underneath mine almost felt as if it were a woman's. He'd gone to uncanny lengths, but then these people always do.

'I want to know about this bomb equipment you're carrying,' I said.

'Please, I don't know of any bomb equipment, please let me...'

'Liar!' I screamed and pistol whipped him across the head. I was sick to my stomach with all this denial. Reader I knew fine well he was carrying explosives across his chest – I could feel the strap through the back of his dress. I started tugging wildly at this strap.

'What the hell's this then?' I shouted angrily.

'Please let me go, please.....' and he broke into tears.

'Crocodile tears!' I shouted angrily.

Just then a little gang of men, including the driver and some officials, approached the platform entrance and from around a corner looked in. Behind them were some people who were recording, on their mobile phones, the scene of myself on top of the terrorist.

'Just put the gun down and let the woman go' said one of the men.

'Get out of here now' I screamed. 'This is no place for civilians. I've got complete control of the situation' I added in anger.

Attention seekers! Argh! You know what it is reader, but this is typical of men. In an emergency, in a chaotic scene like this, there will always be some men who want in on the action, some men who want to show off what heroes they are, some men who want to impress the ladies; in a word wannabe secret agents and James Bond types who try to pull off heroic stunts to gain attention.

I now got rid of this little posse of men and the camera crew behind them by firing my gun. The shot took down the tube window which smashed into smithereens and the camera crew scattered abruptly, as too did the 'heroes', though a little more reluctantly.

Now that I was left alone with the terrorist I decided to get down to business. Lying on top of him as I was – it was the wrestling match all over again – I was beginning to come around to the idea that the terrorist was in fact a woman. That was certainly a shock. For heretofore it's always been my experience that they're men. Anyway it's the day and age we're living in I guess.

I now decided to commence a hands-on search of the suspect. Reader, there are two main areas of the body where a terrorist will hide their weapons of destruction. This is what we're taught at the academy.

The first is that they'll strap something across their chest. Whilst the second is of course that they'll stick something down amidst their genitalia. I now dropped my revolver and freeing up my hands, decided to make a direct test of what weapons were on hand.

Accordingly.....yet just as I was about to get my hands on her equipment, all of a sudden out of nowhere, an elbow or a heel – to this day I'm not quite sure – struck me right on the Cameroon's.

Oh! Argh! I wheeled backwards in utter paralysis. Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

That had hit the bloody spot, I can tell you that. These terrorists – they certainly hit their targets that's for sure. I was learning that the hard way now. And as I reeled backwards on the floor in that utter, utter agony known only to boys, I saw the terrorist stand up and run away, heard a rape alarm going off ten to the dozen, and slowly I tried to recover myself and get to my feet.

I picked up my gun and exiting the tube, went in pursuit. As I ran I thought of the commendation I would receive from the Queen for my heroic devotion to duty; and pumped up by the excitement of it all, I sang the James Bond theme tune, as I ran, revolver in hand, veil upon face, oranges upon bosom, thong upon ass. And then in an incredible, totally unforeseen and dramatic twist of events, the most shocking, utterly ironic and completely farcical scene was played out.

As I entered the vestibule area and began to run up the escalators, a team of armed police officers came running down the other way.

'Armed Police! Armed Police! Drop the weapon! Drop the weapon! Drop the weapon! Now! Now! Now! Drop the weapon!'

'Oh you bloody fools!' I shouted 'I'm not the terrorist you bumbling pillocks!'

I was absolutely amazed at this turn of events. Reader they were arresting me! They thought that I was the terrorist! Oh final irony! Honestly! (Though in fairness to them, as I later had time to reflect, I was, just as the terrorist, burka clad, and they had very obviously confused us. It was a simple mistake which anyone (with limited intelligence) might make.)

But at the time I didn't consider all of this. 'I don't believe it!' I shouted. I was having one of those awful Victor Meldrew moments when events simply conspire against you and, notwithstanding your best intentions, you find yourself in the most ridiculous of sit-com situations. Ugh! I felt like Basil Fawlty, I really did. The one seine person surrounded on all sides by utter idiots. Ha! On another day this could have all been very, very funny.

'Drop the weapon!'

'I'm dropping the weapon officer' I said adamantly, now resigned to this farce.

'Now get down on your hands and knees and take your clothes off!'

'What!' I screamed. 'Take my clothes off! Huh! You damned officers. Can you just take a deep breath and a step back, and look at what you're doing. You're forcing a burka-wearing Muslim woman to strip naked at gun point. You stupid fools!' I shouted passionately. This absolutely reinforces the point I made earlier about the atrocious treatment handed out to profiled suspects. 'Al-Qaeda's recruitment agents are here in London' I said sarcastically to the police, although it was, surprise, surprise, lost on them.

'A burka-wearing Muslim woman is the ultimate symbol of Islamic sanctity. The Muslim woman is sacred. And you bastards think you can just hot-headedly mishandle her, and strip her naked at gun point. Perverts!' I screamed.

'Take your clothes off!' shouted an officer.

'Is this the only way you can get a woman to undress for you officers' I said cheekily.

Reader you know fine well what us secret agents think of the police. When my colleagues back at HQ found out about all this I wanted them to have a good laugh at all the cheek I'd put the officers' way, and have them say 'bravo X, bravo'.

Accordingly: 'Okay officers I'm going to strip down for you!' And I began a striptease, with their guns surrounding me in a circle and I the centre of attention.

'Na, na, na, na, na, na' I said teasingly as strippers do, pulling off my top to reveal my oranges.

'Well boys this is kinky isn't it? Is that your rifle sir, or are you just pleased to see me?'

And so on. It wasn't long before I'd shaken my little booty out of my pants. Finally I removed the veil. And as I stood there, oranges in my jaguar bra, manhood crossways in the thong and sanitary towel beneath it, one of the officers said, slowly, in disbelief 'what the fuck is going on here?'

'Officer' I said 'there's a perfectly rational explanation for all of this.'

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I was taken into custody and eventually interviewed by two Scotland Yard detectives.

'Well Mr X – so you like to call yourself – you were arrested by armed officers at Leicester Square station today in the possession of a revolver, and dressed up as a

Muslim lady wearing bra and panties, and also, I'm informed, a pair of oranges in your bra. You fired the revolver several times, caused panic and hysteria on the underground, and it appears, held a gun to a woman's head. I've just got one question for you X: do you like dressing up as a woman?'

'I was undercover' I said in reply.

'So you've told us. Well, there's no laws against dressing up as a woman, is there now detective inspector Price.'

'No, not at all governor' said Price.

'You know I've even known some police officers, worked with them my very self, who liked to dress up as women. Isn't that right Price?'

'It is indeed Gov. In fact cards on the table time, I'll even admit that I've dressed up as a woman once or twice in my time and really quite enjoyed it.'

'I don't know where this bullshit's going detectives, but it's not very clever.'

'X, X, X, secret agent X' resumed the governor. 'We can't do you for dressing up as a woman; we can't do you for *that*; but possessing a fire arm; firing a fire arm; causing panic and hysteria.....and what else now? Oh yeah, molesting a Muslim woman at gun point – we can certainly get you for those. Heavens above X, do you know how much trouble you're in son?'

'Officers' I said cockily, 'you're beginning to get on my nerves. I've told you already that I'm a secret agent. I had good reason to believe that the Muslim in question was a suicide bomber; to that end I was simply doing my duty. I don't know why you people can't just get with it – all of my actions were justified.'

'X are you a terrorist?' said Price.

'What?' I said flabbergasted. 'Of course I'm not. I'm the exact polar opposite of one. I'm a secret agent. Why would anyone think that?'

'Oh no particular reason' continued Price, 'it's just your actions on the tube this morning were, how shall we say it, somewhat erratic; you certainly put the fear of God into all those passengers, firing your gun and what have you. And then we've also got eye-witness accounts telling us that a few days ago you were stood at Oxford Circus denouncing western culture?'

'Uh! How totally mistaken some people can be? In both instances I was undercover, carrying out missions. This is sheer stupidity detective. Me a terrorist? One of those attention seekers on the fringes of society. I don't think so. In fact nothing could be further from the truth.'

'That's fine' said Price calmly, 'I believe you.'

'X, have you got problems with women? Do you have problems relating to them?' said the governor.

'No' I said 'of course not. And anyway what would that have to do with anything? In fact I've had hundreds of women in my time if you must know. I'm getting as much sex as I can get through.'

'But you've admitted to my detective here that it was you who raped and assaulted Miss Heather Stanton in the toilet cubicle of the 13.03 Edinburgh to London train service.'

'No! I didn't rape her at all. That's total bull-shit! I simply told the detective, when he asked me about that incident, that I was the man in the mask. The rape story was a deliberate fabrication on the part of the secret service.'

'Mr X, are you sure you don't want a lawyer? You're making this very, very easy for us. You're confessing to the rape of Heather Stanton.'

'I'm doing no such thing' I said. 'I'm merely trying to help you people get with it. If we all team together we'll save ourselves a lot of time. Now listen boys, technically I'm your superior, so if you'd shut up and let me speak, we can all save ourselves a lot of hassle. That whole frigging incident is a fabrication. It's a *government conspiracy*. This is what happened. One way or another the terrorists managed to poison Sasha, then...'

'Hang on, who's this Sasha?' said the Gov.

'Sasha – the girl who was poisoned' I said getting irritated by his slowness.

'Hang on now, I'm getting confused. This Sasha – this is Miss Stanton?'

'Yeah, if that's what you want to call her. Miss Stanton is clearly an alias assumed by Sasha in the whole made up story. Now look, she and I were making love together in the toilet cubicle – I know you think it's seedy officers, but live and let live that's what I've always said – anyway she was just screaming my name and saying how much she loves me, when all of a sudden she says the terrorists have poisoned her and she falls down almost dead on the floor. I fled in panic of the terrorists and then later made the phone call to you lot so that you could rescue her. Then the powers that be – my lot upstairs – get word of what's gone on and quickly spin out the rape story. Have you ever heard of deflecting bad news boys? Really I can see why you two never got promoted into the secret service. You're absolutely clueless. You wouldn't last five minutes as a secret agent.'

'X, we know that only too well. Isn't that right Price?'

'It is governor. We're not secret agents. Never have been, never will be. We don't have the brains and we don't have the looks boss. We're no film stars.'

'It's true Price, it's true. We don't look like James Bond. We're not mega studs like secret agent X here. You know when I first saw you X, do you know what my first thoughts were? I thought, that man's a secret agent, I'm just convinced of it. I mean look how dashing he is.'

'Thanks' I said smiling.

'I can see why you're getting all those women. They like your sort, secret agents and spies and all that. But tell me special agent X – is it special agent X or secret agent X? – yes tell me secret agent X, saviour of our nation, if all of what you say is true, why is Miss Stanton – or Sasha as she's really called – why is she saying that she was assaulted? Why is she saying she doesn't know you and has never met you before?'

'What?' I said shocked. 'Is that what that bitch is telling you? Of course she bloody well knows me, the fucking lying cow' I said heatedly.

'Uh-uh' said the governor. 'She's never met you at all.'

'Well I see what she's doing detective. She's clearly playing you. For whatever reason – I don't know what I've done this time – but that cow is pissed with me and is making this shit up just to get back at me. You fools gentlemen. You've gotten yourselves caught up in the middle of a domestic and you've swallowed her rubbish hook, line and sinker.

'Listen to me boys, go ahead and press charges, say that I'm a rapist, a pervert, a sicko what have you, let's have a day in court and go through the whole proceedings; and I'll tell you officers, I'll bet my bat and balls on it, that just as the

judge is about to pass sentence on me, just as he's summing me up as a thoroughly indecent young man and about to condemn me to life imprisonment; just at that very moment Sasha's countenance will dramatically change, and instead of being the pitiful victim of a rape, she'll suddenly start screaming and shouting, and run across to where I'm standing; and embracing and kissing me, she'll say 'No! No! Please don't send him down your honour! I love him so. I love him so, so much. He's my secret agent.' And turning to me she'll start kissing me passionately and she'll say 'I love you X. I always have done. I just wanted to punish you for being a cheat.' There officers, that's the explanation.'

The officers started to laugh good humouredly at this. Then with a smile on his face the Gov. spoke up.

'X, I really am ready to believe you – I mean this tale of love between you and Miss Stanton or Sasha as you say she's called. But can you prove it? I mean you may have convinced me and Price here, but what about a jury? How will you convince them?'

'I'll warn you X' interjected Price 'she's going to stick to her story in court. You'd better have something up your sleeve to catch her out in her lies.'

'It won't be hard gentlemen' I said assuredly 'the truth always outs in the end. And liars need good memories which she, God bless her, doesn't have.'

'Tell me X' said the governor changing tack, 'if you two were just making out in a train toilet, why were you doing it with a mask on?'

'Because Sasha likes me to do it with a mask on' said I. 'All day long she's been nagging me 'arrh! Wear the mask X, wear the mask, it's such a turn on for a girl.' And I'm like 'oh give over girl, I'm not wearing any silly mask' and she's saying 'oh go on!' And I'm like 'no, it's not happening and there's an end of it.'

'Well anyway Sasha's really disappointed, but actually this is all just a little ploy by me and later I slip the mask on and Sasha's like 'argh! Argh! A masked man is trying to rape me!' and I'm making growling noises and molesting her and she's screaming her head off though she's really thrilled and then suddenly she realises it's just me and in a moment of deep, deep emotion for her she says in this really grateful voice 'oh X thank you so much, oh that's so lovely. I love you X, you're the best.' There officers what more do you want me to say.'

'Ha! Ha! Ha!' the officers chuckled. 'Secret agent X, I don't think we need to know anything further in this case, do we now Price.'

'No Gov., not at all.'

'Then let's move on. Secret agent X, I wanted to personally thank you for telling us precisely where you lived.'

'I've got nothing to hide gentleman' said I.

'I know, I know X, and for this reason I wanted to thank you for making my life very, very easy. Now a couple of officers had a look around your house this afternoon, and Price and I have seen the video evidence, and well, there's just one question that we've got to ask you about X.'

'What?' said I

'Tell him Price.'

'Yes Gov. Secret agent X, the officers found a stash of what I'll call soiled ladies garments under the bed of your house. In full a total of 43 ladies bras, 30 pairs of ladies underwear (of which twelve were identifiable as thongs); also what appeared

to be used sanitary towels and tampons. As well as, I have to say, a total of seventy-eight porn magazines stuffed full of photos of women with naked breasts.'

'It's not against the law to look at pictures of women with naked breasts' I said guiltily.

'Okay X it's not. But the dirty knickers and bras, the soiled tampons and sanitary towels? X, what is this all about?'

'Sorry detective but I don't understand the relevance of the question' I said.

'X, let me explain' said the governor. 'As soon as I saw the piles of ladies underwear, my first thought was evidence. Isn't that right Price?'

'Absolutely Gov. You said to me 'Price, secret agent X has collected so much evidence here – that's what all these bras and knickers amounts to – it's evidence.'

'Precisely' said I. 'What's your problem?'

'Well it's just some people might not see it that way, X' he said suggestively. (Reader he was suggesting something.)

'I'm sorry but I don't understand' I said questioningly.

'X' said Price 'some people might think you're a pervert – a knicker thief.'

I was slowly coming to realise what they were suggesting. I just sat there in silence a few moments, abstractedly thinking and trying to come to terms with what they were saying.

Reader, they were suggesting I was some sort of bra thief, that I went around stealing women's underwear. A little tear began to form in my eye. When I thought about how I was out 24/7 saving the lives of asses like these two buttheads I felt really quite angry that I should be thus accused. I mean after all the hard work I put in, after all the dangerous missions I undertook to gather these *vital* pieces of evidence in order to safeguard the nation, Joe Public and stupid sods like these – and now these dirty slurs against my name?

Yet the truth was that, when I thought about it, I could genuinely see it from their point of view. I could genuinely see how it might look like I was some sort of women's dirty underwear thief; how it might appear that I was some deranged weirdo who loved sneaking into women's bedrooms, and groping around in their underwear drawers and fondling all the frills and laces; and then running off with all their dirty panties, which I loved to put my head into and kiss – and all to give myself a cheap and dirty sexual thrill. I could really see it.

'Look gentleman' I said reasonably, 'I'm going to be honest with you because I don't want to waste your time. I can genuinely see that it would be easy to get the impression that I'm a knicker stealing pervert; but nothing could be further from the truth.'

'Secret agent X, I hope you don't mind me asking' said the Gov., 'but when was the last time you had a girlfriend? In fact let me scrap that question and ask you a simpler one. X have you ever had a girlfriend?'

'Lots' I replied. 'I've had hundreds of women in my time.'

'X, you stud' said the governor. 'Putting my hand upon my heart, I've got to admit I'm quite envious. I've never made it past double figures as far as women are concerned. So tell me something about your amorous adventures X.'

'I don't kiss and tell officers' I said smugly.

'You're a man of honour are you X?'

'Sure, I don't take part in men's room gossip. Not me. Look' I said finally 'I love women and I've had loads of them – all the colours of the rainbow.'

'Well that's certainly true' said the governor. 'You've had an 'amorous encounter' with both an English girl and a Muslim woman. You certainly like to sample all the dishes on the table. But X you know there's something that doesn't quite fit in all of this. You're not exactly handsome. I mean you're no looker now are you? So why are all these women so attracted to you?'

'You said I was a dashing secret agent and mega-stud before' I said angrily.

'I know kid but I was lying. Now I don't think women would be very interested in you X, real-life secret agent though you may be.'

'You obviously don't understand women then detective. If a man has a certain magnetism about him – well bob's your uncle, you can seduce women at will.'

'Shall I tell you something secret agent X' said Price. 'Do you know what my first thoughts were when I saw your face? Do you want to know X? I thought, oh here we go, we've got an honest to goodness pervert on our hands here. Look at him would you – he's a class A pervert.'

'How dare you call me a pervert' I said, standing up and shouting 'how dare you make such allegations.' I was really incensed.

'Pervert!' cried Price 'wearing those glasses, you're a sicko son.'

'How dare you judge people based on looks' I said. 'This is an outrage. This is profiling and it's wrong. Next you'll be saying that a Muslim in a burka is a terrorist. You disgust me detective, you disgust me.'

'Pervert!' taunted Price.

'Alright, alright Price' said the governor. 'Lay of the poor lad would you. Sorry X, sorry that was out of order. Now come on sit down X; and you Price button it – is that any way to treat one of our secret agents?'

'Detective can I get a smoke' I said downheartedly.

'Against the regulations I'm afraid son. Do you want some gum? Price give the secret agent some gum. There you go son you get stuck into that.'

I took the gum and chewed awhile; they did likewise. After a few moments I spoke up.

'Officers I've had enough of this. I want you to call my boss.'

The detectives looked at me slowly and then at each other a moment, and then the governor took out his mobile phone. I typed in the number saying 'I think that's the number chaps – it'll get you straight through to head of operations – I'll be out of here in a heartbeat.'

'Who should I ask for?' said the governor genuinely curious.

'Ask for 713' I said smugly 'he'll get me out of this.'

They rang the number.

We all three of us listened.

But nobody answered. Was 713 not carrying his mobile? It didn't make any sense whatsoever.

'Well' said the governor finally. 'There's no one at home. Perhaps in the meantime you can tell me what happened on the tube. Now I've got reports that you opened fire and were in hysterics; and I've got a tearful Muslim lady, who speaks broken English, telling me that you held a gun to her head and attempted to rape her.'

I shook my head at all this.

'You disagree X?' said the Gov. 'Well then perhaps you'd like to explain.'

'Officers' I said 'you know me, I don't lie. I've got nothing to hide. I always tell it how it is and I'll do the very same now, even if in *your* view and in the view of *others* it appears that I was at fault and that I was the dangerous one.'

'Listen' I said 'I was in position patrolling the underground – I've got word that a strike is imminent. Anyway a Muslim woman wearing a burka gets on with big bags containing I don't know what. Anyway I think to myself that's just a Muslim woman. Some people would immediately jump to the conclusion that it's a terrorist, but I don't go in for any of that profiling lark, and I'm just standing there minding my own business.'

'Anyway we're pulling into Leicester Square station and all of a sudden that Muslim lady runs to the centre of the aisle, takes out a gun and fires it.'

'I'm an al-Qaeda agent!' she announces. 'Everybody off the tube! I don't wish to be alarmist but I'm a suicide bomber.'

This last was said really cynically and she started cackling 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' really evilly. And I'm like 'shit, this is crazy man' and all of a sudden I'm running up to the terrorist and I've flawed her and we're wrestling around on the floor. And as we're fighting she's saying 'Jihad! Jihad! I hate the west, you're all vermin.' And I'm saying 'no-ooo terrorist, you'll never destroy us.'

'Anyway we're wrestling around on the floor and I'm starting to think to myself is this terrorist – who incidentally I genuinely believed to be a man by this point – not just getting his cheap kicks out of fondling me like this, when all of a sudden he drops the gun. The next thing I know his hands are on my privates – he's feeling them and then all of a sudden he's punched them or something and I'm out for the count. Anyway I recover and pick up the gun with the intention of bringing it to evidence control.'

'Yet just as I'm running I suddenly think 'shit! I've been done by the terrorist. He's fitted me up. Because he's wearing a burka like me, he'll say that *I* fired the gun and harassed *him*. My finger prints are on the gun and I'm thinking to myself oh-no!.....'

'X, X, X, X, X' said the governor getting impatient. 'Dear me that's a load of bull. X for Heaven's sake it was a woman whom you 'wrestled' with, we know that. Why are you saying it was a man?'

'I thought it was a man dressed up as a woman' said I. 'Anyway the point is that she molested me – she touched my privates. I was sexually assaulted.'

'Oh X this is really pitiful' said the governor. 'Do you know how serious this is? We've got a Muslim woman downstairs crying her eyes out, traumatised and in shock, an Iranian woman, with a poor grasp of English, been here for two weeks visiting her son, on her way back to Iran tomorrow, and she claims that you held a gun at her head and started groping at her.'

'Now please try and understand the serious nature of the incident X. That woman is not a terrorist, nor either is she a man, though we haven't checked that out as thoroughly as you did. But either way X this is serious. We've been inundated with all sorts of phone calls from the press, my officers are being accused of stripping down a Muslim woman at gun point, I've got the Muslim council of Britain on the phone wanting to know what the hell's going on, I've got

Iranian translators and diplomats here. But most of all I've got a terrified woman. Now she says that you molested her at gun point. Why the disparity in your stories?'

'It's simple officers' said I 'there's always two sides to every story. Haven't you ever heard of that? Look' I continued 'as far as I'm aware the whole thing was caught on camera. Study the tape chaps. It'll show her, on top of me, pointing a gun at my head.'

'X, you're a liar.'

'Not at all' said I calmly. 'In fact I'll be happy to take a lie detector test. I mean don't get me wrong detective, no doubt my description of events is not perfectly the truth of what happened, I'll have subconsciously glossed over some things in my favour it's true; but still, by and large my account is accurate – and if she's saying otherwise, well, she's either a good liar or a deluded psychopath.'

'I'm getting sick and tired of all this. You son have molested a Muslim woman at gun point and that's done nothing for relations with the Muslim community.'

'Can I ask you' said Price accusingly 'have you got something against Muslims?'

'Absolutely not' I said, 'I've got hundreds of Muslim friends, they're just average Joes like you or I – I don't see why you have to keep regarding them as one homogenous group.'

'Name one of your Muslim friends' persisted Price.

'I've got hundreds of them' I said. 'Lots. There's the family that runs the newsagents round the corner – I don't know their names, but they like me.....actually perhaps they're Hindus? I don't know.....look, I've got hundreds of Muslim friends. Loads.'

They looked at me accusingly.

'Look' I said 'I'm not prejudiced against Muslims.' And then thinking awhile I added 'would I like the French footballer Zinedine Zidane if I was a Muslim hater as you're suggesting?'

'I think we'll leave that one there' said the governor. 'X, do you mind if I start calling you by your real name now?'

'You don't know my real name. It's top secret.'

'Your real name is Anthony Hughes' said Price 'and from what we can tell you're a piece of benefit scum.'

'How dare you call me a piece of benefit scum!' I said angered.

'The officers had a good nosey around your flat Anthony' said the Gov. 'They talked to some of your neighbours as well. 'That boy's got such a sweet little face' said one woman. In fact many of your neighbours said you were the nicest man in the world. It was then that we knew you were a deranged, psychopathic pervert. Oh as well as the fact that you have restraining orders against you and a string of minor offences, involving the theft of ladies underwear, to your name.'

'But Anthony tell me' he continued 'why do you hate the police so much, what have you got against us?'

'I don't hate the police.'

'It seems to us you do.'

'I've got a theory' said Price.

'Oh yeah?' said the governor.

'Yeah' and he pulled out a little document.

'What's that?' said the governor.

'It's an application form to join the police force from one Anthony Hughes a.k.a. secret agent X.'

'What does it say Price? Read the personal statement.'

He cleared his throat in mockery.

'I have always wanted to be in the police force since I was young because I love chasing people and arresting them and wearing a uniform and firing a gun, and I want to join MI5 and be a secret agent and fight terrorists and I always watch police dramas on the TV like 'The Bill' or 'Law and Order' or 'CSI' and I'm always way ahead of the people and can solve the mysteries really faster than them. I still haven't had the tap on the shoulder from the security services yet, but I believe that by proving my skill as a police officer I will soon rise up the ranks to become a top secret agent just like James Bond.'

'And once I was in a shop and a woman says 'that man over there's stole a chocolate bar' and I said 'which one' and she said 'the one with the naughty face and the earring' and I said 'I'm gonna go and arrest him' and she said 'ehh don't son he's a real nasty pasty' and I said 'a crime's a crime' and ran up to him and said 'did you steal a chocolate bar?' and he said 'no of course not, I don't need to steal' and then I said 'so what's that then?' and picked the chocolate bar out of his pocket and he started running off and then I rang the police and they came and the officers said I'd been really clever and was like another Sherlock Holmes.'

'And another time a dog was swimming in a lake and a man shouted a duck's drowning over here and I jumped in and started to try and save the duck and anyway I picked it out and it was just a carrier bag and then I ran after the man and I caught him and he said 'I thought it was a duck drowning honestly' and I said 'I've got wet pants now!' and he said 'I was just testing you son, in case there's an emergency – honestly kid you're gonna go far, you're a real hero.'

The detectives burst out into laughter.

'Price, I cannot understand how secret agent X here, slipped through the net. Reading that I'd say you're officer material son.'

I had also been laughing alongside the detectives.

'Please gentleman, I'm a lot more sophisticated than that. If you want to think I'm some sort of failed wannabe police officer that's fine. You people are so easy to fool.'

'X are you suggesting' said the governor in mock archery 'that this was only a rouse on your part; that it was another one of your undercover aliases?'

'Precisely' said I. 'If I remember correctly it was all in aid of a mission I was trying to mount. If you want to think I'm simple so be it. It'll be your funeral.'

'Well, all things considered' said Price, 'it's a little hard to believe that someone like you would have made it into the secret service.'

'Because you believe me to be a simple-minded fantasist-wannabe with a penchant for stealing women's underwear? Someone who's deluded and clearly on the edge?' I said calmly.

'Exactly' said Price.

'But you see' I said 'it shows how little understanding you actually have of the secret service if you think that a) people like that don't form the bulk of the applicants, and indeed the successful applicants, to the academy; and that b) the

secret service has no use for such evidently deranged fantasists. Believe me it does.

'I mean' I continued, rounding up my argument 'I am not in any way, shape or form of that ilk; but even if I were it would by no means preclude my entry into the service or mean I couldn't carry out necessary work of one kind or another.'

'Secret Agent X has just put you in your place Price!' said the governor smiling. 'I really quite like you X.'

'Anthony can I ask you' said the wounded Price 'were you abused as a boy?'

'No' I said guiltily.

'Are you sure about that?' said the governor. 'It'll work well in your defence X, you're looking a bit fragile at the moment I'm afraid to say. You could do with a sympathy vote. And according to this, you spent several years in foster care and children's homes – your parents having died when you were two – before you were eventually adopted by Ted and Jessica Hughes.'

I burst into tears.

'X, were you abused as a boy?' said the governor gently.

'I'm no pervert' I said through my tears.

'No of course not, but did nasty people do nasty things to you? Talk to me X. Tell me about it.'

'I wasn't abused' I said, suddenly shaking off the tears and recovering myself.

'Look, I'm getting sick and tired of this detectives. Any minute now my boys up at special branch will call in here, explain the situation fully and I'll be going home. I'm sick and tired of your questions.'

'Okay' said Price 'we'll leave you alone. But just let me ask you one final thing X. Just one thing. Do you *genuinely* believe you're a secret agent, hand upon your heart?'

I took a long hard look at Price before finally blowing air out of my mouth in impatience. Finally I shook my head, giving up on him and said to the governor 'I've had enough of this now.'

'X, I genuinely believe you when you say that. You honestly do believe you're a secret agent. Hmm? I don't know whether you're a fool or a clever one; you appear quite harmless and yet your actions would suggest you're very dangerous; all I can say with certainty is that you're quite simply mad.'

'We're all guilty of being a bit mad from time to time' said I wisely and philosophically (the detective, despite his years, had not my wisdom in this particular).

'What one person considers as mad another may consider as seine' said I pursuing the subject. 'If you want to say I'm mad detective so be it, you're entitled to your opinion. But in my walk of life, in my profession, when you get to spy on people on a daily basis; when you study people and watch how they live from day to day, you get to see that in lots of ways they're all mad. In short, that the entire human race is.'

'But you know detective' I said continuing 'what do we really know? I mean when I see blue you could be seeing red and vice versa; but how will we ever be able to tell? There's a Chinese story – I don't remember what it's called – about a police inspector who has to work out the truth of events, by listening to their

accounts, of an incident between a man and a woman in which the woman claims to have been raped and the man says otherwise.

In the end the policeman comes to the conclusion that he'll never know the truth. That in fact truth is something, almost ethereal, that is difficult to capture and which escapes one. Like a vapour, which once given off, quickly diffuses throughout the air. That truth is no more than an abstract concept and that two people, neither of whom may be deliberately lying, will give totally conflicting accounts of the same events.

'All of us interpret things in ways different from others, like two journalists who report on the same live event but who give totally conflicting accounts. We're all subconsciously biased. Yet when we hear things we never question their validity but take them to be the God-honest truth. A deluded madman wilfully misinterprets the facts; but if enough people listen to him, without questioning what he says, it becomes almost set in stone. This is propaganda, and every man and his dog, his own propaganda machine.

'Life isn't composed of solid truths. It is a soup of conflicting propagandas – each with a message, each with a weight of credibility – vying against one another to form the whole. And only by looking at their sum total, or average, do we get some kind of idea of the truth. You can't put your hand through the table, not because it's solid; but because on average, there is a tendency for whatever particles that constitute it, to generate a force-field against your hand, in that direction. It might be a subtle difference, but it's the difference between absolute truth and its general shape.'

'Interesting' said Price thoughtfully. 'I don't know what to make of you X, I really don't.'

'Come on, let's get out of here' said the governor, and saying the words to the tape recorder, he terminated the interview. Standing up, he spoke finally to me.

'You know X on another day I could have really liked you. I mean honestly I could listen to you all day, you're intelligent, interesting and amusing. But as things stand you've molested an Iranian woman and caused a right brouhaha with the Muslim community. Plus you've sexually assaulted Miss Heather Stanton, who is, by the way, still in hospital, shocked and traumatised by what you did to her. More than that, you're wanted for questioning by your local police for a case involving the beating, and tying up, of a homosexual man in his own home.

'You have a think about that Anthony. For now it's goodbye. And one final piece of advice. Sex offenders aren't that popular in prison; but sex offenders who attack Muslim women – well they're gonna love you in there X. My advice son – get yourself a nice big chastity belt; you're gonna need it. Alright Price shake hands once more with the secret agent.'

'Gentlemen' I said, standing and shaking their hands 'we're on the same side here you know. In the fullness of time you'll come to see that.'

'Cheers X' they said and went out.

I was taken back to my cell where I waited an hour or so before I suddenly heard a knock.

It was the governor with a man in a beard.

'X' said the governor completely shocked and taken aback. He looked utterly confounded reader.

'I...I...I...I don't know what to say' he stammered, struggling for words.

'I owe you an apology.....you truly are a secret agent' he said in shock.

'I'm sincerely sorry' he continued apologetically, '713 is here to see you.'

'Secret agent X what on earth have you been up to old chap? Fondling females again? Aye boy? Tut! Tut! Tut!

'Only kidding son. You've done a great job. With a diplomatic incident with the Iranians now taken care of, it won't be long before they retaliate in some measure, even if it's just burning an embassy. Before you know it they'll have done something we can nail them for, and, once the talk shifts to nuclear weapons, we'll have the excuse to go to war and nobody will remember this little 'madman' incident.

'The troops are already amassing on the borders with Afghanistan and Iraq. It'll be a two fronted war. Easy pickings.

'No, this little incident will soon be long forgotten about. In any case, what with all your antics – implicating yourself as a deluded madman and fantasist, as well as a pervert and knicker thief, and with your official police application form proving you to be a nutjob – the blame will lie solely at your door and not ours. The American's are very happy. Uncle Sam sends his regards. It's the *Black Hand* incident they've been looking for for a while.

'Well done X, bravo man!'

I simply looked at the governor – totally crestfallen and embarrassed – and laughed heartily. Reader, reader, reader! What's that I hear you saying to yourself? 'I don't fucking believe it!'

'Anyway when we got word of what had happened I flew here directly to get you out of the situation. I've spoken with the chief inspector here; I've cleared it X, we're ready to go – the choppers on the roof.'

'I'm terribly, terribly sorry sir' said the chief inspector in the most humble and apologetic voice. He was absolutely mortified and seemed to want the ground to swallow him up.

I looked at him with a huge, huge grin on my face, and then burst out into laughter once more.

I walked, very calmly, over to where '713' stood.

'713' I said 'why are you just detective Price with a beard on?'

'Gentlemen this is really feeble' I said dryly, addressing the two detectives. 'Go on, get out of here and leave me in peace to do my meditations. You people think it's all a game don't you.'

They departed.

Honestly reader, I know. I couldn't fucking believe it either. What were they like? It was enough as I could manage just to laugh at them. They *genuinely* believed that this was just some fantasist's world I was living in!

Epilogue

From what I later learnt, at the time of the tube incident the media and general public were very much in the dark as to what had happened, though believe me everyone was going crazy for the story. The most central thing that people knew was that a Muslim woman had been forced to strip naked at gun point.

To that end Muslims were (reported to be!) up in arms. Other people spoke of a terrorist dressed as a Muslim woman firing a gun on the tube and several people said that there were two shots fired whereas others swore that there were three or even five. No one really appeared to know, eye witness accounts varied, people were saying two Muslims took control of the tube and were going to blow themselves up. Others claimed it was a man dressed up as a Muslim woman who for some reason was targeting another Muslim woman. Yet others insisted that a secret agent had been there; that in fact he was dressed up as a Muslim woman and that a terror attack had been thwarted.

Amateur and rather sketchy and inconclusive videos of the events appeared on the internet soon after and it seemed to show two Muslim women grappling with a gun and shots being fired. No one seemed to know who was doing what and to whom, whether these people were a secret agent and a terrorist or terrorist and innocent bystander. And MI5 and the secret service had been asked 'was this a special operation with a secret agent in place?' and they denied it all, and this made people only the more suspicious, and everyone was speculating on conspiracy theories and the secret service.

Yet events seemed to take a spin for the worse and to start focusing in one direction, when a man – presumably a police puppet – claiming to be the son of the terrorist I'd tackled, came out saying that his mother had been molested at gun point by a madman. This was the day after the incident. And eventually that same evening, the police issued a statement giving more details of what they believed to have had occurred, desperate to kill out the stink of bad publicity they'd received for stripping naked a Muslim woman at gun point and wishing, moreover, to end all the speculation as regards the internet videos.

Reader to this very day, I have been unable to fathom why the powers that be decided to go the way they went, why they sold me out so completely even to the extent of releasing further photos of me. For whatever reason it was however, I accept it; for it is my duty. There are greater things in this world, such as the well-being of a nation, than my very own life, and saddened though I was to see the shocking lies printed about me, I saw the bigger picture and accepted my fate.

Reader, though I didn't much like it at the time, I can now relate it to you with somewhat comic indifference. The general story went that I was a deranged psychopath, who liked dressing up as a woman – please don't laugh – and in a bid to seek attention fired a gun on a tube train, and then proceeded to assault, molest and hold at gun point an innocent Muslim lady who I claimed was a terrorist.

Needless to say, with a story like that, the media had a field day. A photo of me appeared on the front of all the newspapers and on all the news stations, looking, I have to admit, more like a total pervert than a secret agent, and when it was aired, on the TV, as headline news, it was accompanied by the most dramatic and shocking music. I'll give you some of the headlines from the time.

The Daily Telegraph: 'Burka wearing lunatic sparks diplomatic row with Iran.' The Independent: 'PM to fly to Iran to make public apology.' The Guardian: 'Madman causes hysteria in crowded tube train.' The Daily mirror: 'Psycho transvestite to get life for molesting Iranian woman.' The Sun: 'Muslim molester kicks off World War three with Arab nations.' The Daily Mail: 'Muslim molester was illegal immigrant who played violent video games.' The Corriere della Sera: 'l'attacco del stalker inglese.' Der Spiegel: 'Blitzkrieg! Stalker fährt auf der Underground und macht Sex.' The New York Times: 'Even President Bush outraged by antics of the London Muslim molester.' The Daily Star: 'Big Brother star in three way sex romp with Chuckle brothers.'

And the Sun really seemed to have it in for me. There was a campaign by them to hand me over to Iranian custody. Their columnists were saying I should be deported, and there were headlines such as 'send the sicko to Iran to be hanged'. And as well as the pictures of me on the front page looking like a pervert, if you turned to pages two and three there were images of me all over it looking very dodgy and plonk next to a woman with naked plastic breasts smiling for the camera. And her little contribution was 'I think sickos like that should be locked up for life.'

In the ensuing days, once the photos had done the rounds, lots of women came forward and sold their stories to the papers in such headline hitting news as 'I was stalked by the Muslim molester' or 'I got perverted poison pen-letters from the Muslim molester' or 'he groped my breast the evil pervert' and 'he masturbated into my pyjamas'. And with all these articles there was a picture of the girl in question. Some of these I recognised as people I'd followed in anti-terror raids; others I'd never seen before and were simply attention seekers; and of all these women a small few were good enough, in the interests of the better understanding of the story, to take off their clothes and bare their breasts for the camera.

And in addition to all this I've been receiving poison-pen letters myself and also some death threats from people purporting to represent Muslim groups. White people seem to hate me just as much if not more for my antics, and reader, if there is one piece of good news to come out of all this, it's that everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, seems to have united against me.

The Muslim council of Britain denounced me as an 'outrageous pervert', politicians came out calling me deranged and sick, women's rights groups were quick to bad mouth me and a procession of some three hundred or so women marched through the streets of London in protest.

As they marched hand in hand, they bore signs reading 'we hate the Muslim molester!' 'The Muslim molester is evil: women be warned!' and my personal favourite, the rather simple but effective 'kill the Muslim molester!' Next to these placards there was my picture, and they also carried little effigies of me which they burnt. By and large everybody seemed to have it in for me, and as I left police custody and was taken to a cell, a large crowd had gathered to jeer and spit at me and denounce me as a pervert; a few of whom were Muslims, but by and large these people were white English.

Yet not quite everybody was against me. There is an ever growing movement of people, in this country and around the world, who believe that this whole thing

was a government conspiracy and that I was sold out by the powers that be and the secret service.

It is gaining support every day and charts the many confusing threads of the story and logically connects them with other known facts that relate to the secret service. Indeed at a conference on conspiracy theories that took place this year, it was given its own three hour seminar, with participants, who, including those on the web totalled nearly 5,000, asking some of the key questions in this case.

It is a growing movement and I am somewhat thankful for it; nevertheless, I have to concede that it's mainly made up of deluded sad cases who've got nothing better to do with their time; fantasists and secret service fanatics who see a conspiracy on every corner. They are ridiculous, simple-minded idiots who nobody in this world takes seriously. I wish they would give it up! It does nothing to add credence to my tale.

When I got to prison they wanted to shove me in with the sex offenders. I was having none of that and told the officers there was no way in this world I was going to spend a night with those sickos, and I moved into the general prison population. From the start I was treated like a sex toy, with every prisoner having a feel of me and beating me besides; and though the Imam there said I was a harmless fool and should be forgiven for my actions, later on, out of his sight, two naughty Muslims held me over the railings of the second floor.

They held me by the ankles and shook me and I really thought I was going to fall head first onto the floor. As they thus suspended me they told me that if I ever messed with a Muslim woman again I'd be history; and since, when I told the guards about this they refused to listen to me, I decided enough was enough and moved back in with the sex offenders.

So I moved there and am there till this day. And in order to fit in with my surroundings, it's been necessary to dress up as a woman and live in a cell with a man I met, who was very kind to me from day one. We started living together and we get along so well.

And I mean...well.....look, he's not exactly what you'd call handsome but.....I don't know.....it's just...well...how can I say it.....reader, I married him!

In a small civil service with just a few guests did we thus tie the knot. And you know it seems like the perfect union. And he's always telling me how much he loves me, how I'm better than his wife and that he'd never go back to her. And I love to hear this, I really do.

Yet people have been whispering in my ear telling me he says that to everyone and that he's still seeing his wife behind my back. I determined to have it out with that bitch, to tell her to back off my man, that she's hopeless in bed and that he doesn't love her and never has. Yet each time I've picked up the phone to say this to her, I simply haven't been able to get the words out; and I merely remained on the phone line saying nothing and breathing heavily.

But of course all of this, as you well know it reader, is a mere act of mine in order to fit in with the surroundings and as each day goes by I'm working on ways, legal and otherwise, by which to get out of this place and return to active duty. For the world at present is in great peril, we live in terrible times, and my sort are very much required out there.

Indeed it is my duty to get back out there and to evade my captors, and it is of especial relevance given that some of my academy mentors had escaped from Colditz during World War two. There hasn't been a prison built that could hold a good man like myself down. Fear not reader. The tunnel is getting longer with each passing day. Watch this space!

Yet in the meantime do not be afraid my friend. Trust me there are many of us out there, men like myself, out there at this very moment, doing the exact same secret surveillance as I have described to you here in this brief memoir.

For my female fans (and indeed male ones, who, on the sole basis of myself and this good book have now converted to homosexuality) I should say this: don't be too disappointed that I am imprisoned; for the reality was that it was very unlikely that we were ever going to get it on. *Sorry, I'm out of your league.* I know I will have broken a multitude of hearts with those words but come on people, give up your delusions and start being more realistic.

It has been said that many (if not most) of my female admirers are to be found on the opposite side of the pond, something which no doubt will come as a setback to those ladies in England who thought they had me all to themselves. But, American girls, before you become too smug, let me just wipe that grin off your face a little and remind you that the entire world is reading this book, and indeed love letters, dedicated to yours truly, are no doubt already being penned in diverse regions of our global village and sent upon their way by the bag load. All I'm saying is that competition is fierce.

Incidentally I should mention that it was never my intention with this monograph of mine to try and paint a one sided account of events in my favour, as some people would have done; rather I simply intended to give you the bare facts and let you make up your own mind. And the Queen, if you are reading ma'am, you've been a bit lazy with the secret telegram. But anyway.

Believe me reader no matter what it takes I intend to get back out on patrol; and there, with my hard work and diligence to duty I intend to make a better, safer world for all; a world where people need have no fear of madmen and lunatics; a world where citizens can sit in the comfort of their own homes without worry; a world where women can walk the streets alone at night without fear. Adieu for now reader. X.
