

Sir Lansley Burnham-Balls, UK Secretary of State for Healthy Minds, seeks to recruit Bavarian mercenary Dr N.H. Service as a consultant - to conduct experiments on patients and produce policy-based evidence for the British government's risk-averse medical-surveillance technocracy, which is rapidly displacing liberal democracy and due process of law.

Dr N.H. Service is a psychiatrist with an unusual line in research, which she developed whilst working for the CIA in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has links with the security services and the Foreign Office; and unlike the usual providers of policy-based evidence, she took separate sciences at GCSE - by correspondence from Munich. She is an update of the mad scientist from Stanley Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove*, who was part German rocket engineer Wernher von Braun, and part Hungarian H-Bomb physicists Edward Teller and John von Neumann.

Dr Strangelove was obsessed with closing the mine-shaft gap between rival superpowers. Dr N.H. Service wants to close the gap between government ministers and the Judiciary by arming the government with arbitrary powers to target dissident bloggers and climate protesters.

Unfortunately, there is a mole in the Department of Healthy Minds, leaking documents to a radical MP, whom the anti-terror police would like to arrest. Sir Lansley thinks that with her specialist skills in medical surveillance technology, Dr N.H. Service may be able to assist in the hunt for the terrorist by screening his staff for depression and erectile dysfunction.

Satire requires an element of realism to be most effective, and this synopsis would suggest that *Dr N.H. Service*, ... is just an extended, darkly-comic sketch owing a debt to the novelist Tom Sharpe; though it is one based entirely on real events which have taken place in the United Kingdom since Tony Blair's illimitable ego declared war on civil-liberties around the *fin de siècle*. One which his successors, Brown and Cameron-Clegg, then continued to wage.

Sir Lansley is clearly part of the present day Coalition government, though all the measures proposed by Dr Service were actually implemented by the previous New Labour regime.

The Dr Service character is a caricature intended to make the stodgy didactic wordplay on a serious human rights issue more entertaining to sit through. At quieter moments, her measured droll resembles that of Henry Kissinger; though it should be noted that Kissinger was with the US Army in the Ardennes in 1944/5 in an intelligence capacity, and worked to bring about the downfall of the Nazi regime.

The employment of a darkly-comic German persona is doubly unfortunate. Firstly, it is a national stereotype which is somewhat dated and

only relevant because the subject of the play is the exercise of arbitrary power by British government ministries and policing agencies of the type adopted by the Nazis in the 1930s and the Stasi in the Cold War. Identify a feared and despised minority, remove from them the protection of the law, and conduct a campaign of threats and harassment-surveillance against them.

The second unfortunate aspect is that it promotes the unlikely proposition that Britain does not have equally sinister characters in the Himmler/Goebbels mould speaking with Home Counties accents, or for that matter, accents from Sheffield or Glasgow.

The human-rights abuses currently being committed in Britain are probably not carried out for purely ideological reasons - but to serve the careers of the state apparatchiks - ministers, civil-servants, and police chiefs - who live in fear of the tabloids and the burgeoning culture of risk-aversion and blame, which may be a product of saturation news coverage in the digital age.

This argument can be turned around however, so that the blame culture provides zealous officials with a rationale to cleanse the nation by cracking down on its troublesome nonconformists. The practice of kettling - crowd detention on the streets for many hours by police cordons - is used in London to discourage gathering and political protest by ordinary people, as many a tourist (and even a LibDem MP) discovered in May 2009.

As a student, the author was introduced to the plays and political philosophy of Bertholt Brecht. It was unfair to judge Brecht, who witnessed the effects of terrible poverty and total war, from the wealthy and secure perspective of the late twentieth century. In the Orwellian UK of the twenty-first century, all forms of radical art are much better appreciated.

Nonetheless, Brecht's (translated) plays seemed disappointingly dull, in the Germanic tradition, and his philosophy hypocritical and deeply flawed, to say nothing of his personal morality. And yet his name has entered the lexicon, and his works, often vaguely understood, are a significant entry in the canon of twentieth century theatre study.

Brecht was born in Bavaria in 1898, and was a reactionary playwright and dramatist in exile until 1948, when he returned to Soviet-occupied Germany and became an uneasy establishment figure and advocate of socialism. He died in 1956, in a land ruled by a socialist regime where writers who criticised the government were imprisoned without fair trial or kept under constant watch by the Ministry of State Security (Stasi), in similar fashion to the sanctions of the British Home Office, though with-

out the advanced intrusive video surveillance into homes and the infra-sound technology deployed by British ministers.

The second character of the play, Ms Surveillance, is a youthful visionary with a political manifesto for a utopian liberal democracy. This is summarised in one sentence: 'In a liberal democracy, every citizen, rich or poor, not subject to a court ruling should be allowed to go about their lawful business without harassment and threats by the state.' This is a world away from the reality of policing in Britain, where secret trials are conducted in Whitehall offices, thousands of surveillance operations are carried out each year, and punitive sanctions imposed on people who are entirely innocent of any offence under common law. The second axiom in the impromptu manifesto of Ms Surveillance is that in liberal democracies, policing agencies should uphold the law, not casually break it as part of their target-set daily routine or in pursuit of a political agenda.

The key word here is citizen, with legal rights protected by a written constitution and an independent Judiciary willing to uphold those rights. British people are not citizens, but subjects of a very powerful Executive which controls a myriad of policing agencies and assets, including a network of vigilante gangs. It exerts an unhealthy influence over a blinkered Judiciary, which has yet to recognise that its most important historical prerogative is being usurped by government in the digital age. The horse (judge) and rider (minister) is an uncomfortable metaphor, inspired by cases where judges seek political advice before sentencing.

British courts tend to be biased towards the Executive and the maintenance of good social order at the expense of individual liberty. However, a court will occasionally find against the government when asked to rule on a case. Unfortunately, buying access to a court is well beyond the means of most ordinary Britons, a situation which enabled the government to formulate harassment-surveillance policies without too much concern for an early human-rights challenge.

Civil-liberties groups such as *Liberty*, which could back a legal challenge to the practice of harassment-surveillance, are characteristically mute on the issue; though to be fair, on BBC Radio 4, Shami Chakrabarti did once ask a Labour government spokesman why harassment-surveillance victims are not simply charged with an offence and taken to court. Presumably she was satisfied with the response that these were people who had not actually committed a crime.

In 1942, an infamous conference took place in a suburb of Berlin, at a place called Wannsee. The task of the conference was to find a solution to the Jewish question. The Wannsee Conference has been extensively re-

searched by historians, and even dramatised by film-makers. Not so widely documented are the meetings held in a similar spirit of intolerance and political opportunism in the first decade of this century in the United Kingdom.

The rightwing socialist New Labour regime, seeking a feared and despised minority to demonise using its newly acquired surveillance technology, fixed on the notion of criminalising the alleged mentally-ill without trial. There is nothing new in this concept - totalitarian regimes have always embraced it - but in liberal democracies there has been a tendency for independent judicial scrutiny into the work of doctor-jailers to prevent the incarceration of dissidents who express opposition to the ruling regime.

The New Wansee meetings were attended by members of the government, the civil-service, the medical profession, and charities. The civil-service was then undergoing massive mobilisation to implement the torments of legislation pouring from the manure Parliaments, with very little scrutiny by the majority of Labour MPs bought off with patronage and expense payments. The medical profession and charities were enjoying unprecedented largesse from an ideologically driven Labour government which, true to historical form, had no sense of fiscal responsibility.

The first signs of a final solution came from a public information campaign broadcast on national television. The patronage of the government extended everywhere - including the glamorous advertising industry.

Actors in heavy make-up played the mentally-ill at large in the community with tired eyes and pale complexions. This was not quite *Der Evige Jude* (The English title was *The Eternal Jew*), a public information film commissioned by Joseph Goebbels in which Jewish people were portrayed as resembling rats; but it was, nonetheless, open to sinister interpretation by any reasonably literate person. No need for yellow badges, but look out for the strangers with mental illness on your street until we have measures in place to deal with them.

There was much debate in the media on plans to change the mental health laws and use the NHS as part of a prosecuting authority which could circumvent the centuries old practice of judicial scrutiny. All the discussion was purely academic - there was never any doubt that Labour would get its legislation through, passed by a goose-stepping army of backbenchers marching to the tunes of the leadership. About one third of Labour MPs were actually employed as ministers, which tended to blur any distinction between Executive and Legislature. It was difficult to keep track of the Labour junior ministers' names. Every week a new one would pop up like an overnight mushroom to feed the eager media scrum with

the latest policy initiative to curb civil-liberties.

The casual dismissal of calls for advocacy for the victims of this new type of pogrom were quite nauseating. Social commentators astutely explained that this legislation would not affect the middle-class professionals in Parliament or the media, and therefore they had nothing to worry about - so long as they didn't partake of socialised mental health screening whilst unemployed - in which case they risked becoming one of a new criminal class of *Untermenschen*, unworthy of legal representation.

All British governments throughout history have had their critics, though New Labour and the Coalition are the first regimes in modern history to use vigilante gangs to harass and threaten critics of their policies as part of a repertoire of dirty tricks. The inevitable use of the NHS as a policing agency without judicial scrutiny in the digital age should cause concern among progressive and traditional liberals alike, and is not a good portent for the future of liberal democracy in Britain. However, to use mental health legislation against a law-abiding subject, the government needs a pretext, e.g. a visit to the surgery of a government doctor.

To encourage people to attend surgeries, the New Labour government repeatedly announced screening programmes for depression, which it hoped would net hundreds of thousands of names on its database, which could then be targeted selectively. First Alan Johnson, and then his successor Andy Burnham, sold this lie to the public with a consummate ease which Tony Blair would have been proud of.

The Coalition government has recently announced another screening programme - for the slightly more delicate condition of erectile dysfunction. No doubt this will provide a second happy-time for the Home Office - and a rich harvest of data on personal lives to be shared around government departments. One has to wonder where, exactly, in the order of business of a Conservative-led government, erectile dysfunction lies? A topic for Conference, perhaps, Mr Cameron.

There is a growing tendency among public figures in the UK to use lies, obfuscation, and deception when dealing with each other, the electorate, and constituents. Internecine briefing in the Labour government was rife from 1997 onwards - and towards the end of the regime, a special advisor to Gordon Brown attempted to smear opposition MPs and their wives with concocted stories about their private lives. Harriet Harman worked tirelessly to prevent the public from finding out about the Parliamentary expenses scandal. Alastair Campbell's spin machine was a notorious source of government propaganda for most of the Blair years.

The latest incident in this saga is a recent court ruling that former Lab-

our immigration minister and MP, Phil Woolas, had deliberately made false statements of a defamatory nature about his Liberal Democrat opponent in the 2010 general election. Mr Woolas had successfully defended the seat with a wafer-thin majority of 103. The court subsequently banned Mr Woolas from holding office for three years and ruled that a by-election must take place for the now vacant seat.

Mr Woolas immediately announced his intention to challenge the ruling through judicial review, which his station in life permits him to do, unlike the *Untermenschen* in the play; though it is not entirely clear how the mechanism of judicial review will work in this case.

After the court ruling was announced, the media conducted their usual vox pop of constituents and one contributor succinctly suggested that the Labour Party had been conducting 'dirty tricks for years', a theme which the author has been expounding for the last three years.

The philosophy of lies, deception, and thuggery in public life which Tony Blair and Gordon Brown brought to government informed and inspired a whole generation of civil-servants and police officers to redefine their roles as public servants in a liberal democracy, and to transgress the previous constraints on unacceptable actions and behaviour.

The as yet unanswered question is whether this is the result of the Blair-Brown-Campbell authoritarianism at the heart of government, or a natural evolution of a society with such an elaborate and extensive information-surveillance complex, combined with a traditional tyranny of convenience.

The jury will be out on this question for another four and a half years; however, eyebrows are currently being raised about the nature and purpose of Prime Minister Cameron's Behavioural Insight Unit. It would appear that British politicians, left and right, just can't get enough of the new religion of psychology, despite all the logical flaws in its doctrine.

An early blot on David Cameron's copy book is the questioning by police of Mr Cameron's shadowy director of communications about illegal phone-tapping by his journalists when editor of a Sunday tabloid. The great and the good were naturally vexed at the idea that *their* mobile phone conversations were being monitored, but few people realise how easy it is now to infiltrate homes with video as well as audio technology.

The New Labour government, with its Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, hoped to restrict the technology to use by the public sector, targetting people unable to buy access to the courts; though as the technology becomes more widely available, it will, inevitably, be used against more interesting targets in public life.

The Metropolitan Police have been reticent about their investigation in-

to alleged phone tapping by journalists, and have drawn criticism from high profile victims such as former deputy PM John Prescott. Has a masonic pact been forged between senior Met officers and media barons? Probably - but the explanation in this case may be more straightforward. The range and scope of intrusive video and audio surveillance carried out by policing agencies in the UK is vast and, if more details were known, well beyond what most voters who believe in the basic tenets of liberal democracy would consider acceptable.

These activities are protected by secrecy for reasons of national security or public interest - cloaks which can hide all manner of official deeds and misdeeds, including law-breaking. The government has consistently rejected calls for intercept evidence to be used in court because it would lead to disclosure of politically unacceptable activities authorised by ministers. An investigation into phone tapping by journalists could result in a wider investigation into surveillance by the state.

In 2006, the New Labour government tried to stage a form of Parliamentary coup with the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill - which, in its original form, provided ministers with the power to make laws without a vote by MPs or peers, some of whom were courageous enough to oppose the government and insist on significant amendments. In future, Parliamentarians will have to consider carefully the consequences of opposing governments, especially those backed by the increasingly emboldened police and security lobby, if they live in easily targetted terrace or apartment buildings of the sort common in London.

There isn't much point in having someone's identity on a database of dissidents without having sanctions with which to target them. These are listed within the text of the play.

Human surveillance in the UK is far easier to conduct now than in East Germany during the Cold War. Residences can be targetted with infrasound (simulating helicopter patrols) to cause sleep deprivation and nausea; and relatively cheap covert video systems - imaging outside and inside the home. Vehicles can be bugged and tracked using aircraft and ANPR. Vigilante organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch are informed (incorrectly) that the target is a criminal and directed by mobile phone to his whereabouts in public - often using light aircraft.

Taunts and threats can be sent in spoofed emails and pop-up windows through websites such as *The Guardian* online. All forms of communication - letters, email, and telephone links can be blocked or tampered with to impose a form of Soviet-style internal exile on a dissident writer.

The third character in the play, Sir Lansley Burnham-Balls, is a Machia-

vellian politician urbane pulling the strings of his half-crazed puppet consultant, Dr N.H. Service, until the political priorities change and the latter becomes more of a liability than an asset.

The mad ranting and dubious verbal concatenations of Dr Service are not simply the product of enthusiastic writing, or even a pale imitation of the Chaplin characters in *The Great Dictator* (1940); but are intended to play on a belief, commonly held by cynics, that there is a streak of insanity behind the granite mask of every psychiatrist. One which readily explains their choice of profession. A similar logic applies to the profession of film censor. The archetypal mad psychiatrist does not just populate the B-movie horror genre, but has been a staple of American literature, in more subtle guises, since the publications of Sigmund Freud opened up a world of new possibilities for writers.

The choice of third-character name is so obvious it is not worth stating, other than to note that it reflects the transition from the ideological statist collectivism of Messrs Burnham and Balls, to the more pragmatic individualist realpolitik of the Coalition, which succeeded the New Labour regime and immediately stepped up the campaigns of harassment-surveillance against dissidents. The hypocritical gap between Coalition actions and rhetoric on civil-liberties may not fully justify, but at least partly excuses, the incongruity of the play.

In Act I, the audience is bombarded with exposition on the activities of the British government known collectively as harassment-surveillance, and which the Home Office denies the existence of as a policy. The Home Office statement is not surprising, given the lies and obfuscation which have come to characterise government in the UK; and that the vigilantes and policing agencies they control are, by all previous standards, breaking the common law with impunity on the authorisation of a cabinet secretary.

The British constitution permits members of the government to authorise law-breaking if they think it is in the public interest. For example, a Watergate-style burglary by MI5, ordered by the Home Secretary against a fringe party, would be legal in some circumstances, depending on how many seats the fringe party had in Parliament; and would certainly not result in the impeachment of a minister - at least until the fringe party gained a significant presence in the House of Commons. Tony Blair was investigated by the police for the sale of peerages because there was no conceivable public interest in such a corrupt practice, though predictably, the police investigation came to nothing, as did the police investigation into MI5 collusion in torture abroad.

Every aspect of Dr Service's proposal has already been implemented in the constituency of South Cambridgeshire and elsewhere. Policing agencies have been authorised by a minister to harass, threaten, defame, vandalise, and steal regardless of the common law. This is the most disturbing aspect of harassment-surveillance. People find themselves having to report a crime to the policing agency which committed the crime, or was complicit in some way. It is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Act II may seem like a trivial exercise in SM theatre, but it has a very serious, perhaps obvious, message. People who sanction human-rights abuse from within the privileged political class to which Ms Surveillance (and Home Secretary Theresa May) belong are not immune from its ravages. You either have law for everyone or eventually you won't have it for anyone.

Act III provides a topical resolution in which a pragmatic minister decides that human-rights abuse are simply not worth the cost to the economy - politically or financially.

There is currently a palpable tension between the populist Executive power (which controls the Legislature, and is, in turn, heavily influenced by the tabloids) in the UK, and the more cautious and conservative Judiciary, which was frequently a target of the tabloids before New Labour came to power and began limiting judicial discretion.

In the digital age, ministers have discovered that they can impose their own sanctions on dissidents without recourse to the courts. Britain's future may well be as a technocracy policed by vigilante gangs and GCHQ's computer hackers and buggers directed by government ministers. The exigent question is whether or not this is acceptable to the majority of voters, who can only make an informed voting choice if they are aware of the human-rights abuses currently being committed by ministers on their behalf. This play will, hopefully, contribute something towards their enlightenment.

“Vandalism is crime ... Harassment-and-intimidation is crime.”

British Home Secretary Theresa May speaking on BBC Radio 4, 4th December, 2010.

“My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite.”

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891)

By Tax Fries:

A Spider Ballet

The Wulfmarsh Weekend

Ragnarok

Gothic Purgatory

LANSLY PLAYS 1:

Dr N.H. Service,
Ms Surveillance,
and

Sir Lansley
Burnham-Balls

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Dr N.H. Service,
Ms Surveillance,
and
Sir Lansley Burnham-Balls

The set is a spacious office in an old Georgian building with high ceiling, windows, curtains, wooden floorboards, exposed beams, and a door in one corner.

There is a large desk in the corner opposite the door, with chairs in front and behind.

The curtains are wide apart, allowing ample daylight to flood in through tall windows.

The drone, vibration, and shadow of a police helicopter pass slowly across the window.

A small, dark ball-camera in a camouflage-painted case is mounted high on one wall.

Two paintings hang on another wall - a nineteenth century impression of Parliament overlooking the Thames, and a portrait of Andy Burnham dressed in the uniform of the string-puppet Captain Black - the nemesis of Captain Scarlet.

I

A slightly maniacal-looking female psychiatrist, attractive and scary, wearing a black powersuit over a tan-brown shirt, modest heels, and black stockings, enters the office.

Her appearance is anachronistic, like the administrator of a political-correction institution from the 1940s. She wears a small iron-cross trinket high against her neck. She has piercing blue eyes and short dark hair with a fringe combed to one

side. A faint hairy patch, like a paintbrush moustache, sits above her upper lip. She poses in the centre of the room with arms folded in a mannered stance, chin tucked down, and peering eyes darting left-then-right as she looks around the unfamiliar setting.

A decorative and officious young woman enters behind her, wearing a light-coloured pencil skirt and a tight blouse. Her hair is pinned up, she wears spectacles, and carries a notepad, pen, and a looseleaf folder.

Ms. Welcome to the Department of Healthy Minds, Dr Service. My name is Ms Surveillance - Sir Lansley's personal assistant. Take a seat, Sir Lansley will be here shortly.

Dr Service is slightly in awe of the setting. She looks around warily, like an ambitious neophyte visiting a temple for the first time, as she sits primly in the chair in front of the desk. She folds her arms defensively and uses one hand to flick her fringe in a neurotic mannerism.

Tea or coffee?

Dr Service speaks with a slight accent and occasional lapse into a Teutonic dialect.

Dr. Kaffee - mit cream, bitte.

Ms Surveillance departs, leaving Dr Service to glance at the walls. She stands and studies the impressionist painting of Parliament overlooking the Thames as if intrigued by its cultural significance - like an anthropologist discovering a cave painting.

A stern portrait of a previous incumbent, Andy Burnham, dressed as Captain Black in a peaked cap, looks down on her approvingly.

Her gaze fixes on the small ball-camera mounted beneath the ceiling. The camouflage-painted casing of the camera closes and opens as if winking at her.

Dr Service sits down again before Ms Surveillance returns.

Ms Surveillance reenters the office with coffee in an elegant white porcelain cup on a saucer, which she hands to the visitor.

Dr Service takes a black glove from her jacket pocket and puts it on her hand before accepting the saucer.

Diagonistic apraxia - alien hand syndrome - I'm a psychiatrist.

Ms Surveillance is slightly perplexed and frowns.

Dr Service lays the saucer on the desk, but does not drink from the cup.

Has ze minister been delayed?

Dr Service takes a short drinking straw from the inside pocket of her jacket, dips it in the coffee and drains the cup.

Ms Surveillance maintains a level tone as she speaks, while observing this strange behaviour.

Ms. He should be here any moment and is keen to discuss your proposal. The government wants to make better use of the doctors we employ than simply treating patients.

Dr. Hath you read my proposal?

Ms. Yes.

Dr. Vhat do you think?

Ms Surveillance shifts her stance defensively.

Ms. What I think hardly matters. I'm just a personal assistant.

Dr. But it must hath crossed your desk en route to ze minister.

Ms. I passed it on for further consideration.

Dr. Did you endorse it?

Ms Surveillance laughs condescendingly.

Ms. You obviously don't understand how things work around here.

Dr. Maybe not ...

Dr Service allows her ambitious gaze to wander.

... but I would like more information about you - und zis Department of Healthy Minds.

Dr Service taps the straw on the lip of the cup to discard a few remaining droplets of coffee, licks the end dry, then slots the straw back inside her jacket pocket like an essential accessory to modern living.

Ms. I don't endorse anything. I sift out the more extreme rants and diatribes, write polite letters to lunatics, and place their details on a database to be dealt with by a future solution. Compulsory sterilization perhaps, to purify the national identity database of its undesirable genes.

Dr Service turns her head sharply.

Dr. Am I on zis database of ze genetically undesirable?

Ms. If you were, it is unlikely you would be here now. Sir Lansley is very selective about who he meets - both as a cabinet secretary and as a representative of constituents.

Dr. Zat ist comforting to know.

Ms. But don't take it as proof of sanity. Governments throughout history have employed their fair share of madmen - and women.

Dr. But surely, ze brave new government you serve now ist different to ze previous vun? Your backbenchers make beautiful speeches about rights - und freedoms - destroyed by ze statist Labour Party - vvhich now mocks your front bench for not understanding ze practicalities of government in ze digital age. Hast anything really changed?

Ms. Perhaps.

Dr. You don't sound absolutely certain.

Ms. How certain would you like me to be?

Dr Service smiles cynically.

Dr. Completely uncertain - unless you secretly believe in ze old religion of liberal democracy und due process of law.

Ms Surveillance is slightly affronted by this candor.

Ms. I might. Is it any of your business what my personal beliefs are?

Dr. It could become my business - as an architect of ze solution you refer to.

Ms. I'm not your patient, Dr Service. I'm still entitled to think freely.

Dr. For now - but if I'm verking as a highly paid consultant in zis department, ze right to private thought vill hath to be reviewed in line mit

ze recent advances in medical surveillance technology.

Dr Service glances around the impressive interior and runs her gloved finger over the polished teak surface of the desk.

Ms. That's still a big if. And the more I hear you speak, the bigger it gets.
Dr. I thought you vere merely a - personal assistant?

Ms Surveillance lowers her tone.

Ms. Which means I assist in the decision making.

Dr Service smirks, then quickly changes tack.

Dr. How can Sir Lansley serve as a minister of ze Crown und represent his constituents at ze same time? In opposition, he should hath verk-ed a 50 hour veek as a legislator und a constituency MP. Now zat he's in government, he must, presumably, verk a 50 hour veek as a cabinet secretary formulating policy, appearing on *Newsnight* und *Question Time*, und overseeing ze multi-billion pound budget. Does he verk ein hundert hours a veek now zat he holds such exalted high office, or hath some of his constituents lost zeir representation?

Ms. The Executive is embedded within the Legislature. A quirk of the British Parliamentary system which prevents a repeat of the Civil Wars. It's more convenient this way when it comes to getting legislation through the House of Commons without too much awkward scrutiny.

Dr. Surely, as government techniques in harassment-surveillance become increasingly pervasive, und trample over ze old common law rights of ze individual, constituents vill need zeir Parliamentary representatives more zan efer as a bulvark against ze efer-growing arbitrary powers of ze Executive? Far better to be represented by a radical backbencher zan a busy und ambitious minister.

Ms. Sir Lansley hasn't totally given up on constituency work - and radical backbenchers have very little influence over a strong government.

Dr. But zere must be a conflict of interest between Sir Lansley's two constitutional roles?

Ms. Not really. As a cabinet secretary, Sir Lansley's first duty is to the

government. The views of individual constituents are statistically insignificant - unless they are backed by a tabloid newspaper or a lobby group which can get them on TV.

- Dr. Not exactly representation of ze people - as zose vaspish founding fathers intended.
- Ms. The waspish founding fathers were Americans with quill-pens. Our founding fathers were Normans with daggers drawn. Our politics have remained essentially feudal, even though the rest of society has moved on a bit. If you watch PMQs, you'll notice that the despatch boxes are still kept two sword-lengths apart.
- Dr. I vatch on C-Span, for ze body language und ze Freudian slips.
- Ms. Margaret Thatcher believed that the views of an elected ruler represented those of the people for five years by virtue of her mandate. She became, in effect, the embodiment of the nation, like Queen Elizabeth I at Tilbury, rallying the troops against the invasion threat from the pro-European Spanish Armada.
- Dr. A veak und feeble voman mit ze heart und stomach of a king - und of a king of England too. But your modern rulers are not elected - zey are selected by political parties.
- Ms. A moot point. We know whom we're voting for, even though the names of party leaders are not actually on the ballet paper.

Dr. Service considers this and smiles.

- Dr. I like your system. It profides strong government und electric trains vich nearly run on time. But I can enhance ze elected dictatorship by offering something more. Something vich very few ministers vill vant to refuse, und efen fewer vill hath ze courage to. Certainly not ze right-honourable Sir Lansley Balls-Burnham.
- Ms. That's Burnham-Balls, Frau Doktor, or Dubble-Bu,

Emphasis on 'Dubble' - as in the Texan pronunciation of Dubya.

as the press have dubbed him. What is it you think the politicians will find so irresistible?

- Dr. Not irresistible, but indispensable in ze brave new velt of ze camera und ze database. You said you read ze proposal.
- Ms. So I did. But you seem to be attaching greater weight to its signifi-

cance than I appreciated. I also mentioned that my job is to weed out the cranks and the extremists.

Dr. I'm offering something which all British politicians aspire to possess. Ze godlike power to control other people's lives using technology in ways undreamed of by any previous regime in history.

Ms Surveillance pauses before answering.

Ms. Sir Lansley is a cabinet secretary. He already exercises a considerable amount of power in office, with statutory instruments to change the law at will, and discretionary powers to do all sorts of scary things the voters don't know anything about - except a few well-informed journalists, whom no one ever reads.

Dr. But not arbitrary power, unfettered by ze archaic judicial system und due process of law.

Ms. Tony Blair tried to abolish Parliament, in the style of Henry VIII, with the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill 2006. Maybe you should talk to the Home Office or the Ministry of Justice. They control the Metropolitan Police - essential to any *coup d'etat*. We're just the Department of Healthy Minds - a poor relation in comparison to the great Ministries of State.

Dr. Perhaps for now, but ze times zey are a changing ze balance of great powers in government, und ze medical surveillance technology ist ze latest political veapon in ze arms race - like ze new dreadnoughts or ze panzers. Do you efer read military history, Ms Surveillance?

Ms. I'm a Sloanie - what do you think?

Dr. Vell, if you vere to put down your copy of *Cosmopolitan* - or *Teen Vogue* - for a moment und pick up ze great verks of your famous Hauptmann Basil Liddell Hart, you vould learn zat full frontal attacks against ze entrenched positions rarely efer verk.

Ms. Maybe so, but with defence cuts and the expansion of paramilitary police units, I'd say the Met now has more machine guns, helicopters, and body armour than the British Army.

Dr. But efen *mit der Panzer Speerpunkt im Blitzkrieg*, you still need to out-flank ze enemy und bring zem down mit enfilading fire.

Ms. The enemy being who - in this case?

Dr. Ze enemy vizin. Ze Fifth Column. Ze human rights lawyers who argue in court und test ze evidence rationally - like zose Enlighten-

ment thinkers und writers of ze eighteenth century who curbed ze arbitrary power of ze Renaissance princes.

Ms. I thought it was the mercantile class, the bourgeoisie, which curbed the power of the princes to tax them.

Dr. Ze money of ze merchants paid for ze mercenary lawyers.

Ms. But surely, whatever you think of lawyers, they are essential to a functioning liberal democracy?

Dr Service sighs.

Dr. Zey are essential to property conveyance in Capitalist societies, but not much else. Ze eccentric journalist, Andrew Marr, has suggested zat liberal democracy vill not survive long into ze technocratic age. I'm inclined to agree mit him - vchich ist vhy I am here as a consultant, riding ze vafe of largesse vchich ze government ist propagating in its rush to pour billions into ze pillboxes of ze information-surveillance complex und occupy ze country using slit cameras und connecting vires of databases.

The ball-camera winks at them.

Ms. If the independent Judiciary is to go, what will replace it?

Dr. It von't disappear entirely, just lose its autonomy. Who needs an expensive, vaste of time, independent court system vhen Sir Lansley's civil-servants und ministry police can do ze job. A senior police officer, acting as judge und jury, tried Jean Charles de Menezes und sentenced him to summary execution by firing squad at Stockwell Tube Station.

Ms. Police officers are far too driven and fixated to make good lawyers, but with de Menezes, they thought they were acting in the public interest by saving lives.

Dr. Zey thought wrong, because zey did not scrutinise ze evidence properly; but zey set a useful precedent by reintroducing ze death penalty despite its abolition by Parliament in ze 1960s. Juries can be gradually phased out, und judges can be appointed und advised by ministers on correct verdicts und sentencing at ze end of show trials broadcast by ze BBC. Ze ministry und ze police between zem can squeeze out ze Judiciary und exercise greater peace-time power over ze lives of zeir

subjects zan any since Napoleonic times.

- Ms. That's quite a boast. Socialist politicians will naturally grab all the power they can get - for the collective good of the state. But liberals may feel that they would rather not be too omnipotent in office because of the legacy it will leave to their successors.
- Dr. No minister has zat much virtue, especially zose who profess to hath liberal credentials. Power corrupts, so does ze prospect of greater power. To govern a modern state effectively requires a degree of pragmatism - a tyranny of convenience which George Orwell knew ze British do so vell.
- Ms. What if the state is a nation of laws without that tradition of Whitehall tyranny?
- Dr. Ze UK has no written constitution to defend - it could slip into dictatorship tomorrow if ze house prices are rising. Recall how easy it vas for Tony Blair to declare var on a vim und invade another country like a medieval varlord so zat he could stride a velt stage mit a big cheesy grin on his face? Jack Straw put ze case quite succinctly to ze Chilcot inquiry - ministers exercising power should not let ze law get in ze vay of zeir ambition - und ze gut voters of Blackburn agreed mit him.

Ms Surveillance smiles duplicitously.

- Ms. You needn't worry too much about my liberal credentials. I believe in a big government whose influence permeates every nook and cranny in society - in the public interest - with hidden cameras and a police baton if necessary - or I would not be working in this office.
- Dr. I hope ze minister feels ze same - but efen if he does not - he'd be wise to take me seriously. I could always enlist ze help of ze tabloids. Most politicians are still in ze pockets of ze media barons. Ze era of statesmanship in British politics ended mit ze rise to power of ze New Labour Party. You could save ze cost of ze Cabinet und be governed directly by a chimps' tea-party of tabloid editors.

There is a sound of footsteps behind the door heralding an arrival.

The heads of the two women turn towards the door.

A middle-aged man, wearing a grey suit, enters and proffers a hand.

LAN. Sir Lansley Burnham-Balls, Secretary of State for Healthy Minds.

Dr Service rises and shakes the hand.

Dr. Dr N.H. Service.

LAN. Sorry I'm late, Dr Service. I had an unscheduled meeting with the Prime Minister. I trust that Ms Surveillance kept a useful eye on you?

Dr Service casts an admiring glance at Ms Surveillance.

Dr. She ist a most efficient apparatchik.

LAN. Good. Please sit down.

Dr Service sits again.

Sir Lansley takes the seat behind the desk.

Ms Surveillance places a loose-leaf folder on the minister's desk and stands to one side, taking shorthand notes.

What can I do for you?

Dr. More a case of vhat I can do for you, Sir Lansley. I come in ze manner of Mephistopheles to Faust.

Sir Lansley laughs urbanely.

LAN. I still have some political ambition, despite my whitening hair, but I'm not sure I want to sell my soul for it.

Sir Lansley opens the folder to remind himself of the details.

Dr. You vill, when you hear vhat I hath to offer.

LAN. You want the Department of Healthy Minds to fund your research?

Dr. Ja.

LAN. Well, we're always happy to buy-in policy-based evidence from social scientists. We usually have to shop around for a while until we find someone willing to say what we want to hear.

Sir Lansley chuckles teasingly and glances at Ms Surveillance, who nods in agreement.

Dr Service is affronted.

Dr. I am a medical doktor. I took separate sciences at GCSE - by correspondence from Munich.

LAN. My apologies. We welcome Hessian doctors - just like George III - to hunt down those mad, bad civil-liberties bloggers like Tom Paine. They're good doctors, Hessians - obey orders without question. Their prescriptions can shatter the body like musket balls. They ride like Valkyries into NHS surgeries in the remote counties of England and Wales. Some even abseil from police helicopters, to certify unsuspecting deviants and subversives.

A police helicopter passes by the window.

Dr. I'm from Bavaria - not Hesse - mein Fuehrer.

LAN. Oh? So which of our policies will your research seek to justify?

Dr. Risk-management, safety, und security.

Sir Lansley sighs.

LAN. Security is a bit awkward right now. It's going out of fashion since voters began suspecting that Tony Blair lied to Parliament about WMD. Even some of the statist, collectivist socialists are starting to quote derivatives of Benjamin Franklin:

Sir Lansley clears his throat, then adopts a grave Colonial accent and a mocking smile.

"They who would give up essential liberty for temporary security deserve neither liberty nor security."

Ms Surveillance interjects:

Ms. And risk-management is just a euphemism for the police practice of criminalisation without trial by initiating permanent ongoing investigations - which violate the Human Rights Act and the traditional sense of natural justice. The British government has been getting away with it for a decade now, but eventually the European Court is

going to rule on a test case.

LAN. European Court rulings need not trouble the British government for years to come though. The French ignored the Court ruling on British beef, the British ignored the ruling on DNA retention. In a few short years, who will remember the fate of the Roma? Observance of European Court rulings has become, *de facto*, discretionary.

Ms. Safety is still good. We can't have anyone at large with the potential to embarrass ministers and police chiefs in the continuous news cycle. We have to strike a balance between observing basic human-rights and protecting Sir Lansley's ministerial career in the new media age. Blame culture is making that increasingly difficult.

LAN. Some juries still won't convict dissidents who have committed no crime. It's a flaw in the jury system we'd like to correct by making an arrest as good as a conviction.

Ms. We could create a safer career for Sir Lansley by locking up anyone suspected of a crime indefinitely, but that would just make communities more dangerous for innocent voters caught in the police dragnet.

LAN. And it would be very expensive. The prisons are already bursting at the seams. Far cheaper to have the police bug your car when it is being serviced and let village idiots driving SUVs form vigilante gangs and follow you around.

Dr Service opens her mouth in consideration before speaking in a measured tone:

Dr. I can introduce a more efficient Teutonic brutality to your information-surveillance complex - like ze old *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*. If you sign a warrant mit somevun's name on it - my green-shirts vill nail zem for you - as ze great former Home Secretary, David Blunkett, wunce envisaged.

Sir Lansley glances quizzically at Dr Service.

LAN. Green-shirts?

Dr. Ve wear a uniform of green fluorescent waistcoats to imbue a sense of community spirit in our movement. Part of ze emerging Big-Society your Fuehrer ist promoting.

Sir Lansley is sceptical.

- LAN. You're the psychiatrist, Dr Service - but is it possible that some of your people are sad, middle-aged oddballs; yearning for the gang membership they never had because they just weren't cool enough?
- Dr. Not at all - we are looking forwards, not backwards. We get together in der Bierkeller garden each week und sing:

"Tomorrow belongs to me!"

A few seconds of the rousing populist chorus from Cabaret reverberates around the office.

A surprised Sir Lansley and Ms Surveillance look up and about for the source.

Dr Service takes a remote control unit from her pocket, holds it up, and clicks to silence the music.

Zat ist our demo tape. A small demonstration of ze way we can target private addresses mit infrasound. Ze fluorescent colour green ist a very seductive uniform - so much more attractive zan zose traditional drab brown-shirts.

- LAN. But that is quite a fetching brown shirt you are wearing, if you don't mind me saying so, in a politically-correct, nonsexist sort of way.
- Dr. You will like ze nonethical sweatshop designer label lingerie efen more.

Dr Service unfastens two top buttons of her blouse to reveal a glimpse of black lace bra.

Es ist from mein Ernst Rohm collection.

Sir Lansley's smile is restrained but appreciative.

Ms Surveillance interjects advisedly.

- Ms. Sir Lansley cannot endorse designer labels - ethical or otherwise. He's a middle-aged man, he'd look ridiculous.
- Dr. Like Ralph Lauren?
- Ms. More like William Hague in his baseball cap. And besides, Ernst Rohm wasn't into lingerie - he was a fudgepacker.
- Dr. So are all ze great rightving designers - except, perhaps, Chris Grayling.

LAN. Does he have a label on the side?

Ms. Yes, but Conservative attitudes to fashion are still very conservative.

A puzzled Sir Lansley frowns and returns to the earlier point of the thread.

LAN. Green is the colour of the eco-friendly, tree-hugging Greens. Are you affiliated to them in some way?

Dr. Dumbkopfs! Zey hath no coherent energy policy to keep ze search-lights on. I would like to start by nailing zem first!

LAN. How, exactly, would you go about nailing them?

Dr. To ze commercial pine trees!

LAN. The Greens are harmless enough; some of them are quite decorative in those tight t-shirts, in an objectively-correct sort of way; but how do we rid ourselves of the turbulent priests who blog on the internet?

Dr. Same vay zat ze CIA targets insurgents in Afghanistan und Iraq, but mit ze advantage zat you hath Sovietized medicine.

LAN. NHS treatment is not that bad. Don't you mean socialised medicine?

Dr. Of course.

Sir Lansley frowns.

LAN. We've had a National Health Service since 1945 - free at the point of delivery and all that. The envy of Michael Moore and blue-collar Americans who can't afford medical insurance.

Dr. Zis ist different. British government doktors verking for der British government as Polizei in zeir very own BBC TV crime-thriller show - in which efery single veek zey solve a murder on zeir uber-quiet fillage green und hath corridor, elevator, und desktop sex mit zeir colleagues und ze glamorous American guest stars.

LAN. Hasn't that been done a million times before - with all those other public-sector surveillance agencies? It doesn't sound very much like an original pitch to me.

Dr. Ja, but not mit ze doctors und nurses. Politicised, socialised medicine ist original programming; vhere ze government owns your medical records, und hence your life; profiles your personality; und shares your information around all ze other agencies, communities, und commercial organisations by clicking ze mouse und gossiping in ze village surgeries. Ve can secretly gather data on ze interests, movements, und

relationships of any subject who crosses ze threshold of an NHS surgery. Zeir lives become public property. Financial details, political affiliations, sexual history, Sunday dinner. Mit socialised medicine, confidentiality ceases to exist for ze greater good of ze minister und ze Reich, along mit ze right to privacy in ze home.

- Ms. Won't some doctors object to such collectivised treatment of individuals - like records of cattle to be shipped in railway cars?
- Dr. Not in ze scripts ve write for ze show.
- Ms. What about the ones who can differentiate between TV crime shows and reality?
- Dr. Ve can also write zeir contracts und pay zem extra to cooperate. I'm sure no vun in your Home Office ministry of state security vill object if ve supply zem mit a steady flow of personal information from ze surgeries, extracted from patients, to fill zeir databases. Vun medical case history may be a tragedy, but ein million ist merely a statistic.
- LAN. How, exactly, do you intend to perform these data extractions?
- Dr. Lies, subterfuge, deception, inappropriate drug prescriptions to reward ze drug companies und dope up ze patients so zey cannot perform mentally complex tasks und become dependent on ze state und ze health verkers.
- LAN. Er, that could be a problem for the new government. We're not socialists. Some of my colleagues in Cabinet are ideologically opposed to encouraging dependency on the state. The Chancellor, for one.

The eyes of Dr Service widen in delight and her mouth opens in a very broad smile.

- Dr. Ze Joker from Batman!
- LAN. I admit that there is a certain similarity in manner and appearance.
- Dr. Ze drugs from ze powerful drug companies pacify ze dissident und keep zem from criticising ze government und your policies. A useful tool vhen dealing mit ze querulous Third Estate in ze third millennium.

The erudite Ms Surveillance quips:

- Ms. *Qu'ils mangent de la brioche.*

Sir Lansley and Dr Service stare at her for a translation.

Let them eat cake.

Sir Lansley frowns disapprovingly.

- LAN. Cake is a new street-drug - recently classified as class A - according to Channel 4 documentaries.
- Dr. Ve lie to ze patients about ze drugs - und ze side effects, und ze long term health risks - und make zem wait half an hour at ze high-street Boots dispensing chemist counter for zeir prescription to be filled - for CCTV und ze Stasi to vatch zem.
- LAN. Doesn't sound like an easy policy to sell in a liberal democracy where the majority use the NHS at some point in their lives, and are brought up to trust in the integrity of its staff.
- Dr. Not democracy anymore - but technocracy - rule by data systems und cameras controlled from ministerial offices by a mobilised army of civil servants - hence maintaining full employment through Brownian economics.
- LAN. How will this - technocracy - be funded?
- Dr. Borrowing of course. England has a triple-A rating. In all of ze modern history, through two velt vars und vun velt cup, it has nefer defaulted on a sovereign debt. Ze government can borrow as much as it vants.

Sir Lansley is sceptical.

- LAN. Borrow till the country drops? Sounds a bit like defunct opposition economic policy.
- Ms. When will this army of civil-servants and government twitchers-with-cameras actually begin contributing something to the economy?
- Dr. Through public-private-partnership, ve can become ze velt-leaders in medical-surveillance-systems-technology und practice. BAE Systems can export ze ethical-foreign-policy information-surveillance complex to Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, Burma, North Korea, und ze United States.
- Ms. But not Iraq or Afghanistan?
- Dr. Ze CIA has exclusive rights to surveillance in zose markets.

LAN. But British government borrowing will have to be repaid at some time in the future - with substantial amounts of interest which could have been spent on schools and hospitals.

Dr. By zen, ve can all be retired on final salary pensions guaranteed by ze state - like ze old New Labour quango staff.

LAN. What if the voters don't like the idea?

Dr. Ve von't tell zem zat ve're using ze NHS as a shop vindow for ze Home Office ministry of state security. Ve start by running screening programmes - for depression, say - vvhich eferyvun gets at some stage in zeir verking lives - und ven zat campaign runs out of steam ve can screen zem for erectile dysfunction und get zem to tell us all about zeir sex lives und zeir mid-life crises. A second happy-time for ze Home Office volfpacks to exploit.

Ms. Will it not discourage vulnerable patients from seeking treatment when they find out the only reason it is being offered is to get information about them to share around other government agencies?

Dr. Zey can still safely go to zeir doktor mit ein pain in ze leg, so long as it does not turn out to be psychosomatic.

Ms Surveillance reflects on this.

Ms. But you'd have to be mad to discuss a mental health problem with a British government doctor in the digital age.

Sir Lansley sits forward and clasps his hands on the desk decisively.

LAN. But we want mad people to come forward so that we can compile a register of them for the Home Office. Maybe it's not such a bad idea after all.

Ms. Plenty of middle-aged people who grew up in the liberal democracy of the last century still see the NHS as benign. They do not realise that a quiet revolution in technology and the whole philosophy of government has taken place. Imagine an ordinary British subject who becomes borderline psychotic. He still has the common sense to look right then left before crossing the road, but won't yet understand the legal jeopardy which he faces by speaking to a British government doctor. Not if he was educated on the basic premise of liberal democracy and due process of law before the rise of the New Labour Party.

If the NHS is to be used as a prosecuting authority to criminalise dissidents on the pretext of mental health, then they should be entitled to a legal caution and the advice of an advocate in surgeries.

Dr Service is aghast.

Dr. Zat would torpedo ze solution from ze start.

LAN. And it would cost far too much. We are entering a period of retrenchment in public spending. Do you have any idea how much solicitors charge per hour just to do nothing?

Ms. But voters suspect that we're not just cutting the legal aid budget to save money, but to prevent policies being challenged in court.

Sir Lansley laughs.

LAN. Damn right we are! We'd be idiotic not to.

Ms. *The Times* columnist, Matthew Parris, recently warned against providing information to the government unless you are required to by law. Surely, in the digital age, there is an imperative for patients not to communicate psychological information about themselves to British government doctors?

Dr. In which case, we should not be wasting valuable time, but exploiting this window of opportunity while it lasts.

Ms. But once people begin to learn, and they will learn eventually, that the NHS is merely trawling for personal data, and offers no effective treatment for mental health conditions; they'll start to view the surgeries of government doctors in the way nineteenth century paupers viewed the workhouse. Something to be avoided, if humanly possible.

LAN. That sounds good to me too - discourage the statist dependency culture and boost the private healthcare industry. My insurance company shares will rocket. We can cut demand for mental health services by about 80% and save public money. This is a win-win situation for everyone.

Dr. Except ze patients.

Ms. But Sir Lansley, the private-sector voters with real jobs may not like it, and you need them to vote for you at the next election.

LAN. East Anglian shiremen will always vote for me. They're farmers!

Dr Service chuckles like Henry Kissinger.

- Dr. Who's going to tell zem zey're just like ze fat cattle being fed a lie in ze mechanically-recovered feed of daily briefings which ze government puts out?
- LAN. Er, that was the last Conservative government and a previous generation of social-scientists. We don't do that anymore - it turns cow-brains into sponge.
- Ms. What if law-abiding constituents write to ask Sir Lansley why they have suddenly been criminalised after consulting a doctor?
- Dr. Obfuscation, denial, good old-fashioned lies. It's what ze public hath come to expect now from ze British politicians in ze 21st Century, so zey von't be disappointed - unless zey've just voken up after 13 years in a coma.

Sir Lansley frowns.

- LAN. But I won't always be Secretary of State for Healthy Minds. What if this socialised medicine affects my family or friends somewhere down the line and I'm not in office to intervene?
- Dr. Does your family hath private medical insurance?
- LAN. Yes.
- Dr. What about your friends?
- LAN. They're bankers, stockbrockers, and golfers - most of them probably do.
- Dr. Zen you hath nothing to worry about. None of your friends are Communists or Trade Unionists ...

Ms Surveillance interjects again with strong emphasis on the word 'First':

- Ms. First - they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist, so I said nothing ...

Sir Lansley and Dr Service stare at her blankly.

Ms Surveillance shrugs meekly.

Martin Niemoller.

- Dr. Not just ze Trots in ze Unions - writers, artists, satirists. Fuel und

climate protesters, even some opposition MPs can all be classed as dissidents - deviant or subversive - using socialised medical records, and criminalised without trial at the click of a mouse. With access to the government's databases, we can invent a criminal medical history for anyone and press send.

Ms. We already target some of these dissidents using Forward Intelligence Teams and the anti-terror police.

LAN. The war on terror has conveniently allowed us to crack down on all sorts of dissidents - housewives, pensioners, tourists with cameras; anyone who picks up a placard or attends a public meeting protesting against a government plan to build a runway or a power station.

Ms. It began after the fuel protests of 2000 when the government woke up to the danger of people organising themselves using mobile phones. The police began putting tracking bugs in the cars of dissidents and following their movements using cameras and helicopters to discourage such activities.

Dr Service smiles triumphantly and raises a hand with index finger pointing at the ceiling.

Dr. Which is where I can help. Patients have no idea of the legal jeopardy they now face if they visit a National Health Service surgery in the digital age.

The camouflage-painted camera-casing winks.

The number plate of their vehicle can be tagged on the Automatic Number Plate Recognition system and service station staff think they are petrol thieves. We put ballast in their petrol tank so that they cannot fill up a full tank and have to visit the service stations more frequently. We put them on the mail order blacklist so that they always receive damaged or returned goods. We have more than 30 government agencies, outside of the police and security services, which can follow people around. East Germany only had the Stasi.

LAN. In East Germany, no one trusted anyone else - in or out of government - and they didn't have email. In Britain, the voters still think politicians tell the truth, so we can rely on a multi-agency solution to the surveillance question.

- Dr. Ze moment zey cross ze threshold und give zeir name to ze doktor's computer, zey become a hostage to fortune. Zeir details can be transmitted to vun of my teams at any time, und ve can go to verk.
- LAN. What sort of work?
- Dr. Ve start mit ze premise zat anyvun whose lifestyle or political views are not to your liking - i.e. fall vizin specified parameters - can be criminalised using mental health legislation. For example, a body of verk by an unknown artist exploring psychological und sexual themes vich ze government vishes to suppress can be taken as *prima facie* evidence of a criminal nature. No need for a court case in ze digital age, ze minister simply has to sign a varrant like ze SS Reichsfuhrer und ve'll do ze rest. Ze parameters und ze sanctions imposed are entirely arbitrary, und can be decided on a case-by-case basis by my team of doktors after a minister has signed ze necessary varrant.
- Ms. A bit like the inquisition branding someone a heretic for their beliefs and turning them over to the secular authorities.
- Dr. Exactly - ze Spanish Inquisition.
- Ms. Or the old Soviet system of detaining dissidents in mental hospitals and keeping them doped-up with drugs to prevent them from writing criticisms of the regime.
- Dr. Ja, but as a Britisher minister, your power ist currently limited to ze primary legislation vich you can put through ze Parliament. You can use discretionary powers und statutory instruments, but you must remain vizin ze law as interpreted by ze judges. I can circumvent ze Judiciary for you. No more juries cocking-a-snook at ze government.

Sir Lansley considers this thoughtfully.

- LAN. How will this function in practice?
- Dr. Ve start by trawling through ze lives of ze patients seeking help und try to match zem mit thousands of unsolved crimes - vich ist easy to do now in ze digital age. It is easier to start mit ze suspect standing in ze doktor's surgery und look back for a crime, zan starting mit a crime und looking for a suspect. Ze first question a GP must ask a new mental health patient ist for a list of all ze towns und counties where zey previously lived.
- LAN. And what if they've lived entirely blameless lives with no hidden criminal history?

- Dr. Ze late great Sigmund Freud wrote zat crime vas at ze heart of all neuroses. *Ze Tell-Tale Heart* of Edgar Allan Poe.
- Ms. Actually - it was sex which Freud believed responsible for neuroses.
- Dr. Either vay, ve can always invent misdemeanours to justify our activities und boost our funding und staffing requirements.
- Ms. Like witchhunting in the seventeenth century?

Dr Service sits back in her chair.

- Dr. Did you know - ze Spanish Inquisition only efer executed six people for witchcraft, which it considered a harmless superstition? Ze Puritan Protestant English executed over 200 vitches und ze uptight Presbyterian Scots executed 600, but ze Catholic Irish only executed four people in ze same period.
- LAN. It's much harder to get a conviction for witchcraft these days - the Witchcraft Act was repealed in the 1950s. New Labour were planning to introduce a new strict-liability offence of possessing a pointed-hat and a broomstick; but Harpy Harman, Jacqui Smith, and Fiona MacTaggart objected strongly to this loss of personal freedom for their coven, and the right to play the Macbeth witches dressed any way they like; so they dug their heels into Gordon Brown.
- Dr. Some say zey also turned him into a toad, but no vun noticed ze difference.
- Ms. What do you do with these crimes you invent?
- Dr. Ve enter zem into ze database und pass zem around all ze other government agencies, like ze Chinese vispers. Ze police call it soft-intelligence to sound cuddly. Zere are no judges, juries, or pesky lawyers to test ze evidence so ve can invent vhat ve like in ze new virtual courtroom.
- LAN. But if there is no real court case, what will any of this creative data-swapping achieve, other than providing a good cribsheet read for bored civil servants sitting at their computer screens?
- Dr. If ze minister would like an old-fashioned court case - ze great strength of ze vigilante system ist zat my people on ze ground can always share a common purpose und conspire to pervert ze course of justice.

Ms Surveillance steps forward in alarm.

- Ms. Er, I don't think Sir Lansley needs to know about that aspect of your work, Dr Service. Our judicial system is not yet virtual, nor is it entirely under ministerial control, and some judges still frown at the practice of perjury in their courtroom - even if it is encouraged by the government to undermine the credibility of the independent Judiciary.
- Dr. Ve hath our own sanctions which do not need a court ruling. Ve got ze idea from ze FBI in ze McCarthy era.

Dr Service takes a folded printed sheet from her jacket pocket.

Zis ist ein testimony from Lee J. Cobb, an American actor in ze 1950s:

Dr Service reads with a passable gravelly American accent:

“When the facilities of the government of the United States are drawn on an individual it can be terrifying. The blacklist is just the opening gambit - being deprived of work. Your passport is confiscated. That's minor. But not being able to move without being tailed is something else. After a certain point it grows to implied as well as articulated threats, and people succumb. My wife did, and she was institutionalized.”

Ve can now target homes mit acoustic devices which simulate helicopter vibration und cause nausea und sleep deprivation; und intrusive video surveillance into houses can be linked to cars driven by vigilante gangs in ze street to harass und intimidate ze dissident und let zem know zat zey are being videod in zeir homes.

- LAN. Can you do all that?
- Dr. If you sign ze warrant.
- LAN. I mean, is it technologically possible?

Dr Service holds up the remote and clicks to play a few seconds of the Cabaret chorus.

- Dr. Piece of cake. Anyvun not paranoid before zey enter ze NHS doktor's surgery vill become paranoid soon after zey leave und go home.

Ms Surveillance has serious misgivings about this aspect of the proposal.

Ms. Those sound like heavy and punitive sanctions to impose in the United Kingdom without judicial scrutiny of a case. Even if a British court were to pass such sentences, they could be in breach of the Human Rights Act 1998, which guarantees privacy and prohibits torture.

LAN. The Human Rights Act is nothing to worry about. It was steered through Parliament by my old friend and arch-foe of civil-liberties Jack 'Boots' Straw. It's a completely worthless piece of legislation - riddled with exemptions for governments to exploit. The only right which the Human Rights Act guarantees, ironically enough, is the right of states to execute their citizens in wartime.

Dr Service extends her gloved hand in a reflex salute.

Dr. Heil ze Jack Boots!

She recovers the hand.

Now all you und your ministerial colleagues hath to do ist exercise your arbitrary power against any British subject mit less power und influence zan yourself - like modern day Heinrich Himmlers und Hermann Goerings.

Ms. But surely there would be a legal challenge straight away to such blatant human-rights abuses in the UK? The common law should protect the individual from harassment, threats, and intimidation by the Executive, GCHQ, and government-sponsored vigilante gangs. We are, technically, still a liberal democracy, and that is how the law in a liberal democracy is supposed to work.

Dr. Technically, yes, zat ist how it used to verk before ze digital age und ze abolition of privacy. In reality, ze law now only protects ze wealthy und influential who can seek injunctions against ze vell-funded government agencies - ask any High Court judge. Naturally, ve von't start by going after people mit clefer lawyers who can buy access to ze courts.

Ms. In a liberal democracy, every citizen, rich or poor, not subject to a

court ruling should be allowed to go about their lawful business without harassment and threats by the state. That, surely, is axiomatic?

Dr. But you British are not citizens. You hath no written constitution. You are subjects of ze Executive power. Fulnerable people vizout money - ze Untermenschen - in bedsits, living off state handouts, are legitimate targets for harassment-surveillance by ze public-sector jobs-vorths. No representation vizout taxation.

Ms. Most ordinary voters on average wages can't afford to buy access to the courts either - it's a very expensive business.

Dr. Justice - like private mental health treatment - ist expensive to buy. Ze comedian, Bill Oddie, put it rather vell on BBC Radio 4 vhen he said if you can't afford to pay for it, you ain't gonna get it. Ze parallels are quite striking - vvhich ve in government can exploit.

Ms Surveillance appeals to her boss.

Ms. Sir Lansley, this could effect the majority of ordinary voters.

Dr. Nein! Ze majority von't notice a few thousand breeches of ze poxy Human Rights Act each year. Zey did not notice in ze Third Reich until ze bombs began to fall on Berlin. Zey vill only notice a more efficient und happy society. A fitter society in ze digital age - more able to compete in ze global economy - *uber alles in der Welt*. Heil ze Britisher Volk und ze Britisher Reich! Heil ze Big-Society! Ze legions of ordinary voters in fluorescent green-shirts vill salute you, Sir Lansley - *Der neue Fuehrer*.

Dr Service shoots out her gloved-hand involuntarily, then quickly grabs it and draws it in again with an embarrassed smile.

Sir Lansley looks shocked, then smiles urbanely as if flattered.

LAN. Let's not get carried away with the L-word, Dave wouldn't like it.

Ms. But ordinary people can still write to more radical MPs than Sir Lansley and enlist their support.

Dr Service chuckles.

Dr. Ve tear open zose House of Commons envelopes in ze post to let ze

target know zat ve are reading zem. Zere ist a very effective convention which prevents MPs from representing people who are not zeir constituents. It helps quarantine constituencies against outside scrutiny und reduce ze MPs' verkleid. Sir Lansley's constituency ist surrounded by Liberals who vill be no help vhatsoever. Most MPs are scared zat ze surveillance powers of ze police und ze tabloids vill be turned against zem und zeir vifes vill be institutionalised like Frau Cobb. Ze new-McCarthyism in ze United Kingdom. Ze liberals vill know vhat ist taking place - but vill not vant to know.

- Ms. A courageous radical MP or peer could raise the issue of harassment-surveillance as a human-rights abuse in Parliament.
- Dr. Zis ist England - ze native land of ze hypocrite - Oscar Wilde und Tony Blair. No vun in ze British Parliament takes human-rights seriously. Zey're too busy seeking patronage und feathering zeir nest at ze John Lewis store.

Sir Lansley ponders over the question and clears his throat.

- LAN. We could always set up a quango of well-paid yes-men in lieu of the courts - call it a tribunal - to smokescreen the lack of judicial scrutiny into your activities.
- Ms. One already exists - The Investigatory Powers Tribunal - set up by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to dismiss any claims of harassment-surveillance as frivolous and vexatious.
- LAN. Another footprint left by Jack Straw on the political landscape, like trials without jury and secret inquests. These tribunals are a great way of avoiding a court challenge - pity we can't have one for every occasion.
- Dr. But ve can - for *der Krankenkopfer*.
- Ms. What about the mental health charities arguing for patient advocacy?

The Machiavellian Sir Lansley chuckles.

- LAN. We needn't worry about any politically-motivated charity in Britain, least of all the mental health ones. Those suits they wear are bought and paid for by us to keep them quiet and on side.
- Ms. The human-rights group *Liberty* could complain loudly.
- LAN. The director of *Liberty* appears on *Nensnight* once a month to sound-

off about something or other, but no one ever remembers what she says.

Ms. People could go to the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Dr. Ze C.A.B. collects more personal data on targets for ze government zan efen ze GPs. Zen, zey hand ze target a list of solicitors which zey know zey cannot afford, smile wryly, und vish zem luck as zey show zem ze door.

Ms. What if a down-and-out victim of Dr Service goes without food in his bedsit for a few weeks and scrapes together just enough savings to talk to a solicitor?

Dr. Ve von't allow zat to happen.

Ms. How can you stop it from happening?

Dr. Ve hath systems in place to prefent it - devised by a former Labour minister - Lord Goldsmith - ze man who legalised ze var-crimes against humanity invasion of Iraq for Lebensraum und der Caucasus Oil-fields.

Ms. Alleged war-crimes.

Dr. GCHQ vill monitor all electronic communications of targetted individuals und inform us of any which may pose a legal threat to our activities. Ze Royal Mail can screen letters. Ve can zen advise ze firm of solicitors before ze appointment zat ze person ist ein Krankenkopf und persuade ze firm to allow vun of our people, a covert human intelligence source, to impersonate ze solicitor using zeir offices.

Ms. Do you think all firms of solicitor will accept that explanation at face value? Some of them take the law quite seriously.

Dr. None hast refused to cooperate so far. Ve are fortunate to live in a vell-ordered society where ze government's agencies are to be obeyed. No solicitor vants to get on ze wrong side of us und find zeir bedroom bugged und zeir dreams recorded.

Ms. What about client privilege?

Dr. If zey've got nothing to hide, zey've got nothing to fear. You don't fully appreciate ze stigma of mental illness in ze current moral panic fuelled by risk aversion. It ist far vorse zan being a common-or-garden criminal entitled to legal counsel.

Ms. But what about the Law Society? How will they react when people complain that the government is not only using threats and harassment, but that GCHQ is being used to block people's access to legal counsel?

Dr. Ve'll tell ze Law Society vhat ve told ze firm - ze client ist ein Krankenkopf who does not need advocacy. Ze Law Society staff vill do as zey're told by ze minister or zeir careers vill suffer, just like eferyvun else in zis sceptor'd isle - sewn-up by ze last government. If der Krankenkopf tries to contact another solicitor, ve'll simply let it be known zat he complained about ze previous vun. Schachmatt! Zey hath no political or legal credibility wunce zey cross ze NHS threshold und give zeir name to ze government doktor's computer.

Ms Surveillance comments with mild sarcasm:

Ms. It's good to know the protection of the courts only extends to wealthy people now - just as the original *Magna Carta* intended. But this loss of political and legal credibility which arises by a visit to a doctor's surgery is yet another punitive sanction which will be imposed without caution or any judicial scrutiny of the process.

Dr. Zey hath no right to advocacy - zey are Untermenschen - a feared und despised minority, zere for exploitation und political gain by ze ruling Party - Labour or Conservative.

Ms. Even people without credibility can find ways to make a lot of noise about your government-sponsored threats and intimidation.

Dr. If zey complain zat zey are being followed by vigilantes und security staff, or of surveillance in zeir homes, ve can label zem as dangerous paranoid-schizophrenics und nail zem using ze mental health laws.

Ms. But the precedent is a disturbing one. Vigilantes roughing up dissidents today - hit squads making political opponents disappear tomorrow. The police and security lobby will begin marking for surveillance those politicians who oppose their demands for wider power - and those in Parliament who lack moral fibre, some may think the majority, will be swayed by the implied threat. These are not the activities which the government of a liberal democracy, even a technocratic one, should be engaging in. How far will it go and where will it end?

Sir Lansley scrutinises Dr Service.

LAN. Well, Dr Service? How far will you go with your counterinsurgency psywar against British subjects on British soil?

Dr. Just harassment und surveillance. Ve keep zem awake at night mit

infrasound. Ve start car engines vhen zey vake up in ze morning und slam car doors vhenefer zey move inside zeir homes. Ve buzz zeir roof mit a light aircraft vhen zey go to ze toilet. Ve efen buzz zeir doorbell und run away. Vhenefer zey leave home, ve follow zem in vehicles und on foot mit mobile phone cameras.

LAN. I know that feeling. It happens to me whenever I open a fete.

Dr. Security staff follow zem around ze supermarket. Ve collect hair samples from zeir barber und zeir verkplace, und fingerprints from zeir coffee cups. Ve bug zeir homes und damage or steal zeir private property.

Ms. We can't have policing agencies routinely breaking the law they are supposed to uphold.

Dr. Why not? Ze victim can do nothing - except report ze crime to ze people complicit in ze crime - who vill do nothing.

Ms. It undermines confidence in the police.

Dr. Der Untermenschen do not need confidence in ze police any more zan zey need legal counsel. Zey are Untermenschen und should live as such in ze Big-Society until ve can ship zem out to Poland in ze railway cars!

Ms. But what if just *one* British judge doesn't share your view of the - lesser people. Perhaps his father or grandfather fought against fascism or fled a regime as a refugee - and he is courageous enough to object publicly to a government minister like Sir Lansley authorising Richard Nixon style criminal activity by the police and vigilante gangs?

Dr. Ve just deny it.

Ms. And commit perjury?

Dr. Ze judges vill not dare to interfere. Zis ist England! Ve can conduct a campaign of character defamation against zem mit claims of fictitious crimes in ze public interest.

Ms Surveillance is aghast.

Ms. Against who? The judges?

Dr. Nein, ze Untermenschen. Ve can send threats to zem through ze letterbox, in spoofed emails, und pop-ups fed through *Ze Guardian* online website.

LAN. What if they don't read *The Guardian*?

Dr. Zen ve use *Ze Independent*.

- LAN. What if they're Old Tories like me who read *The Telegraph*?
- Dr. *Ze Telegraph* does not permit zis practice. Zey think it ist part of a socialist plot to create a police state.
- LAN. That's reassuring to know - for when I retire and Labour return to power.
- Dr. But ve can still impose Soviet-style internal exile on writers - block public access to zeir online entartete Kunst und degenerate literature, tamper mit emails, und divert outgoing telephone calls to an answering service for screening. Vomen mit pushchairs und sharp-tipped Bulgarian umbrellas can run into zem deliberately in ze street. All zis ist very difficult for somevun vizout a clefer lawyer to protest against or prove vizout sounding paranoid.
- Ms. Until you are waylaid with ricin poisoning.
- LAN. Has anyone ever compared you to Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*?
- Ms. Or Dr Josef Mengele?

Dr Service snarls:

- Dr. Nein!

Her black-gloved hand shoots forward in an involuntary salute. Her left hand grabs the right and pulls it back to her body as she recovers and smiles.

I mean - no. Ze British writers George Orwell und Anthony Burgess gave me ze idea in zeir Bucher *Neunzehnhundert Vierundachtzig* und *A Clockwerk Orange*. Orwell predicted zat Britain would become a surveillance society ruled by unaccountable ministries mit all seeing eyes - und it would appear zat he vas correct. Burgess explored ze theme of conformity und political quiescence through behavioural control imposed by Behavioural Insight Teams.

- Ms. Treating people like laboratory rats. I seem to recall, from my first in Modern History at Oxford, that the Nazis held a meeting like this at Wannsee in 1942 to thrash out a final solution to the Jewish question.
- LAN. Let's not exaggerate with Nazi comparisons.

The gloved hand of Dr Service rises a few inches before she grabs it.

We just want to carry out some fairly benign, low-level human-rights abuse to protect my career and extend my ministerial power.

Ms. Lee J. and Mrs Cobb did not regard this sort of thing as very benign.

LAN. He should have been more careful in his youth, and the sort of plays he appeared in. Politics can be a dangerous game, especially in the Western democracies. The most sensible people are completely apathetic. But we're not talking about the construction of gas chambers - with rising fossil fuel prices that would cost far too much.

Dr. In ze short term - but think of ze long term public-sector pensions und careers it vould create for ze council verkers und *Ze Guardian* jobseekers in public administration.

LAN. It would also hand power to the militant railway unions.

Ms. In 1821, your countryman, Heinriche Heine, wrote *Dort, wo man Bucher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen*.

LAN. Historically perhaps, but we have emission targets now. Fires just add soot to the carbon footprint.

Dr. Efen Sigmund Freud admitted zat progress ist being made. Ze Nazis vere content to burn his books, vhereas, in ze Middle Ages, zey vould hath burned him.

Ms. That was in 1933. The situation quickly changed for the worse when the Nazi government took control of the Judiciary in the way that you are proposing. In *fin de siecle* Vienna, people were looking forward to a new age of enlightenment with all the old medieval wars and superstition a thing of the past. And look what happened. I see the same complacency in London today, as the framework of civil-liberties taken for granted in the late 20th century is being comprehensively dismantled at the start of the 21st by the unchecked information-surveillance complex of the state.

Sir Lansley considers the argument.

LAN. Dr Service, you are proposing that we conduct state-sponsored psychological warfare against voters who cannot be criminalised through the courts because they haven't committed a common law offence?

Dr. Precisely. MI5 und ze CIA hath a vealth of experience fighting insurgents in Iraq und Afghanistan. Ve can use zeir tactics und technology against ze British people.

Ms. You're not suggesting we fly predator drones over their houses?

- LAN. Actually, we already do that over some sink estates at night - armed with cameras, not missiles - although there has been talk of taking out drug-dealers in their cars, Israeli-style, if the need arises.
- Dr. Ve can target homes mit infrasound through ze night, for instance, to cause nausea und sleep deprivation; which vill soon veer down ze dissent of ze most ardent dissident. Es ist difficult to write polemics after a veek vizout sleep.
- LAN. I'm not sure how British voters will react to CIA anti-insurgency tactics being used against British civilians on British soil.
- Dr. Margaret Thatcher started ze trend by using MI5 as her personal police force to target journalists und ze BBC. Ze Blair-Brown regime reacted to ze fuel protests by developing new systems of harassment-surveillance using ze latest technology. Ve are simply taking ze next logical step in policing der Fatherland.
- Ms. The next logical step to where?
- Dr. Ve can pilot ze scheme against soft targets. Fulnerable people who are thought to be mentally ill, vizout ze influence or resources to prove vhat ist taking place. Drive zose schizzies mad. Vunce ze precedent ist set, ve can zen expand it to eferyvun who threatens ze public interest by criticising ze government.
- Ms. There is something distasteful about NHS doctors working for the Home Office and using their knowledge and skills to harm people - a bit like those Gestapo doctors who conducted experiments on patients during the war.
- Dr. Why must you always mention ze var? You British are propagandised by a collective self-delusion. Too many stiff-upper-lip black-und-white var films. Don't you know ze Dam Busters raid vas a var crime und a failure? In Velt Var Vun, ze British shot 300 of zeir own men fighting for democracy, vhereas ze Germans shot only 30 of zeirs fighting for ze Kaiser. Scratch away ze surface veneer of a tolerant society und zere ist a heathen horde beneath just vaiting for orders to sack Rome vilst shouting Ingaland! You hath already begun ze criminalisation of suspected terrorists vizout trial using control orders. Ve can now do ze same mit suspected paranoid-schizophrenics using harassment-surveillance varrants.
- Ms. I thought paranoid-schizophrenics were less likely to commit violent crime than so-called normal people.
- Dr. Zat ist only true statistically.

Ms. So how is it not true?

Dr. Normal people commit murder for good Biblical reasons - greed, lust, revenge etc. Schizophrenics are more likely to murder complete strangers zey meet on ze street at random for reasons vvhich make no sense at all. Doktors are superstitious, like ze African vvitvhdoktors, und most afraid of vvhath zey do not understand. Zerefore, ve cannot risk having ze schizoids vvalking about vizout close surveillanvve - in case zey commit a terrible crime und embarrass ze minister, vvhov vill blame ze vvitvhdoktor und terminate his contract to practise medicine for ze government.

Sir Lansley smiles and nods approvingly.

Ms. Lies, damned lies, and statistics.

Dr. Plus efery tabloid reader knows zat all ze serial killers locked up in ze Broadmoor are schizoids. Zerefore all schizoids could be serial killers. A simple syllogism vvhich ze public can readily understand vizout studying ze werks of Russell und Vittgenstein. Ve can varn ze public of ze dangers zey face on ze streets und in zeir communities by fund-ing public information films similar to *Der Ewige Jude*.

Ms. *The Eternal Jew?*

Dr. Ja, but mit ze actors looking pallid und bleary-eyed - rather zan like rats - so zat ze people can spot ze Untermenschen in ze streets - no need for ze yellow badges in ze digital age.

Ms Surveillance is disturbed by this analysis.

Ms. Now that the label - schizophrenic - has taken on a whole new scientifically-unfounded, political and medical meaning; to be exploited by risk-averse doctors, and ambitious politicians like Sir Lansley seeking protection from tabloid criticism - shouldn't people be cautioned about this before speaking to a government-appointed health official?

Dr. Are you mad?

Ms. If I were, I don't think it would be a good thing to admit in the present company.

Dr. If people find out, ve'll lose zis vvinde of opportunity to database ze personal lives of millions. Ze Labour government made a start by employing vun hundred-thousand school assistants to make copious

notes on ze retards mit learning difficulties in ze classroom, who are most likely to grow up und commit crime - but ve don't tell ze parents zat's vhat ze Department for Education ist really up to. Ve don't just gather data on ze dumbkopfs either. Essays written by ze brainy kids und undergraduates on history, politics, art history or literature can profide us mit a permanent record of zeir youthful thoughts to profile. So vhy inform ze grown-ups of ze legal jeopardy zey face in ze NHS surgeries?

- LAN. Surely the proportion of patients who can be diagnosed as schizophrenic is quite small and insignificant? If we're going to fund the construction of an expensive new data trawler, we want to catch a decent-sized net of fish?
- Dr. My crack team of expert psychiatric nurses can identify anyvun who utters any form of political or social heresy in ze surgeries.
- Ms. Back to the Spanish Inquisition.
- Dr. Ve call it screening, but vhat ve really do ist profiling. Ve hath compiled an extensive list of templates vvhich describe criminal und anti-social personalities, und ve can always find vun to fit any patient who vanders into ze cross-hairs of our sights.
- Ms. I suppose you can tell they are dissidents by the shape of their skulls?
- Dr. Zat's vun vay of doing it. Zeir degenerate art und literature ist another. Gordon Brown's Politburo vas unable to get six veeks detention vizout charge through ze Parliament, but I can offer indefinite detention und drug torture in ze treatment camps vizout trial using compulsory treatment orders.
- Ms. There is a group of psychiatrists in this country who seem determined to muscle in on the prerogatives of the Judiciary. Belief in the oracle-like wisdom of psychiatry has become a new fundamentalist religion for those in power. Jack Straw believed that mental health courts should be set up requiring only a minimal burden of proof and that more people should be declared unfit for trial by doctors, not judges - in effect, setting aside *habeas corpus*.
- LAN. Jack is a socialist - he believes in benevolent dictatorship, or not so benevolent if you cross his party. Then the donkey-jacket comes out with a pistol in the pocket.
- Ms. Sir Lansley, there is a huge risk with this policy that it could scare your constituents into voting for a more liberal opposition candidate with a commitment to privacy and due process of law.

Sir Lansley laughs.

- LAN. What liberal opposition? They're worse than us. Worse for being hypocrites. Everyone knows we're all the same. Politics is all about the exercise of power and control of the state - what man or woman in Westminster hasn't read and appreciated Machiavelli's *The Prince*?
- Ms. But there could still be political repercussions in departing from a patrician form of government, respectful of the law, to one which sponsors torture and wages a campaign of human-rights abuse against its own citizens - even the down-and-outs. Despite what Dr Service preaches, these practices are quite alien to the political landscape in this country, and have only recently been imported from Iraq and Afghanistan by the New Labour regime.
- Dr. I think not. Ze Conservative, Michael Howard, ist just as Draconian as Jack Straw. Jeremy Paxman of ze much-raided BBC calls him *Der Fuehrer*. Throughout history, ze masses hath generally favoured strong, authoritarian government which makes ze house prices rise und ze trains run on time.
- Ms. Until it leads them to disaster - then they happily shoot their leaders and string them up by the ankles.

Sir Lansley sighs and shifts uncomfortably at the thought.

- LAN. If it does all go wrong - if an uppity judge in a courtroom who doesn't know what's good for him suddenly decides that we are not exempt from prohibitions on torture and other human-rights abuses after all - then we'll just have to erase his judgment from history using the Parliamentary troops, or find scapegoats among the police and the doctors for their excessive zeal. Do you understand this aspect of British politics, Dr Brunhilde?
- Dr. I obey your orders vizout question - like ze Zeppelin crew in *Hell's Angels*.

Dr Service stands, gives a military salute, and sits down.

- LAN. If Machiavelli had studied the workings of Whitehall, he would have noted that the politician is never to blame for the things done in his

name.

Dr. Adolf Hitler nefer actually threw a stone on Kristallnacht.

LAN. And stop comparing me to Hitler. Jeremy Paxman may get to hear about it.

Dr. Jawohl, mein Fuehrer!

LAN. In the meantime, I have a slight problem which a devilishly clever psychiatrist who understands the pressures of working in Whitehall may be able to help me with.

Dr Service glances at him with a sinister and triumphant smile.

Dr. Would you like to lie on ze couch?

LAN. No, it's not that sort of problem, I'm very well adjusted - so my wife tells me. Someone in the department is leaking documents to radical groups and opposition MPs.

Ms Surveillance shifts her stance slightly, but tellingly.

The anti-terror police would arrest the culprit and throw him in jail, but they don't yet know who's doing it. I thought maybe you could screen my staff first and interrogate them with the tricks you learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, before you get going on the general public.

Dr Service is doubtful.

Dr. Screen zem for vhat?

LAN. Depression.

Dr. Vhat if zey are not depressed?

LAN. Alright then, erectile dysfunction.

Dr. Vhat if ze traitor ist a voman?

LAN. How about penis envy? Margaret Thatcher said every prime minister needs a willy. That's a commonly held belief amongst women in government, isn't it Ms Surveillance?

Ms Surveillance raises her eyebrows in surprise to query the dubious proposition - but cooperatively answers in the affirmative.

Ms. Yes, Minister, although New Labour women take the opposite view.

LAN. Gender apartheid. One reason why they are no longer in government. You can't express bigoted views publicly about 49% of the electorate without a dip in your poll-rating.

Dr. Ze object of mental health screening ist to add ze names of unsuspecting suspects to ze government's database. Ze entire life history of all your staff ist already on ze database and zey are smart enough to know zat screening ist just a euphemism for profiling. Ze traitor ist likely to regard interrogation by a government psychiatrist as suspicious, und so screening ist unlikely to produce ze desired result.

LAN. But can't you surreptitiously swing a watch on a chain and hypnotise them when they're lying on the couch with their defences down, telling you all about their happy childhood?

Dr Service shakes her head and sighs.

Dr. If only it vere zat easy.

LAN. It looks easy on television. The funny chap just snaps his fingers and they all run around like chickens.

Dr. Zat ist because zey are drama students seeking media attention. Most of your staff are vell-adjusted Oxbridge high-achievers - like Ms Surveillance here. I doubt fery much whether she could be hypnotised against her vill.

Ms. So do I!

Ms Surveillance glowers at Dr Service, clenches a fist at her side, and raises it ever so slightly.

Dr Service takes the hint, smiles wryly, and turns to Sir Lansley again.

Dr. Why don't you put a compulsory lie detector clause in zeir contracts - or pump zem full of sodium pentathol?

LAN. Because we'd have a drugged-up work force drawing up legislation.

Dr Service laughs mockingly.

Dr. Ze public von't notice any difference in ze crazy fun-factory laws you make.

Ms. The public-sector unions won't allow compulsory lie detection whilst hypothesis tests cast doubt on the results.

LAN. We need a non-invasive, non-intrusive, non-addictive, union-friendly way of reading minds. A sort of keyhole psychiatry.

Dr Service grins, stands, and eyeballs Ms Surveillance butchly.

Dr. Hypnosis eh? It's always been a bit gentle for me. I prefer vaterboard-ing for ze benefit of a strictly noncomplicit audience of MI5 agents, mit scribbling notepads und ze veels of zeir tape recorders whirling in ze background. But I'm villing to give it a try - if it's in ze public interest.

Lights down.

II

The office is now the scene of an interrogation.

It is night and the curtains are closed. Ambient light from behind the curtains enable shadowy movements to be seen, but not much else.

The doppler sound of a wailing vehicle siren is heard passing the window.

From head movements, someone appears to be sitting near the desk.

Dr Service enters, wearing a white laboratory coat in place of her suit jacket, over a brown shirt, black skirt, stockings and heels.

The head hears the click of heels and follows the sound.

Dr Service sits behind the desk and switches on a lamp which throws light outwards.

An old-fashioned telephone and a laptop computer lay on the desk.

A young woman; hooded, handcuffed behind, and wearing an institutional cotton minigown; sits on a low stool in front of the desk with knees bent and modestly together.

Dr Service boots the laptop computer and begins typing notes.

The patient waits anxiously.

Dr Service rises from her seat, walks to the prisoner, and removes the hood to reveal, predictably, that the prisoner is Ms Surveillance. Her dishevelled hair is no longer pinned up, but cascades down over her shoulders. She is no longer wearing spectacles and her eye-liner is smudged.

Ms Surveillance glares defiantly.

Ms. You!

Dr. Of course.

Ms Surveillance struggles with the cuffs.

Ms. Why am I here?

Dr. Sir Lansley has kindly lent me his office for my surgery. I am now your doktor.

Dr Service sits behind the desk.

Ze last time ve met, you vere advocating a caution for patients before zey spoke to zeir government doktor - so be varned - zis telephone ist my datalink to ze Home Office ministry of state security - like ze vuns zey hath in ze GPs surgeries.

Dr Service grips the handle of the receiver and lifts it slightly before lowering it back into place.

The telephone rings as if on cue.

Dr Service lifts the receiver and lays it on the table - implying that someone is listening at the other end of the line.

Ms. Why am I here like this?

Ms Surveillance rattles the cuffs behind her back.

Dr. I vould hath thought zat vould be obvious. You seem anxious und nervous.

Ms. How am I supposed to feel?

Dr. More laidback und cheerful. Pull yourself together. Laugh und crack some jokes like a normal person.

Dr Service lowers her tone.

Throw away ze existential angst.

Raises her tone again.

If you hath nothing to hide, you hath nothing to fear.

Ms. I *am* a normal person. One who thinks the fascism promoted by contemporary government mental health policy is abhorrent.

Dr. Why vould you think it abhorrent? Do you not appreciate good social order und regular bin collections? Vizout protests und demonstrations und ze Untermenschen on ze streets?

Ms. Not at the expense of basic human-rights.

Dr. It ist still possible, in ze private-sector, to hath a doktor-patient rela-

tionship - but ze NHS ist now a state detective agency which regards new patients mit suspicion as possible criminals und terrorists. Your demeanour ist suspect. What is it you vant to tell me?

Ms Surveillance pauses for a moment to access the situation.

Ms. I have nothing to say to you.
Dr. Zen vhy hath you come to my surgery?

A confused Ms Surveillance glowers, but does not answer.

Doktors are like ze new priests - vhere guilty people go, burdened by zeir conscience, for penance und absolution. If you vere not a criminal, you vould not be anxious und depressed und seeking medical help from ze Home Office-NHS.

Ms. I'm not seeking help - I don't want to be here.
Dr. Too late, you hath crossed ze threshold. Ve now hath you on ze database for ze rest of your life.
Ms. Then why can't you let me go home?
Dr. Zis interrogation ist part of your care.
Ms. My care?
Dr. A treatment for your condition.
Ms. What condition?
Dr. Does it matter vhat ve call it?
Ms. It matters to me.
Dr. Alright ...

Dr Service types something on the computer keyboard.

... paranoia, schizophrenia.

Ms Surveillance is desperate and angry.

Ms. I am not schizophrenic! Or paranoid!

Dr. Service stands up and turns the computer on the desk slightly for Ms Surveillance to see the screen.

Dr. You must be - ze computer says so. It's all on ze database for all eternity. Ze computer nefer lies. Medical records are now ze new criminal records.

Ms. What about tests or a psychiatric assessment?

Dr. Zere ist no organic test for schizophrenia - just my opinion of you - as your doktor. Don't take it personally, it's just politics. Ze new medical surveillance technology politics which ze government ist funding to extend ze power of ministers.

Ms. You're not my doctor.

Dr Service shifts the computer slightly again for effect.

Dr. Wrong again. Ze database says zat I am. You cannot argue mit ze data base.

Dr Service walks around as if playing to a gallery - gesturing theatrically to the computer as if it was a human being in the witness stand.

You cannot cross-examine it like a hostile witness in a courtroom. It nefer changes its story. It says only vun thing. *Du bist krank* - und zat ist not in ze public interest. Mit ze new databases, ve no longer need ze old-fashioned und expensive courtrooms.

Ms. You haven't even carried out an assessment.

Dr Service sits down again.

Dr. Assessments are a vaste of time. I usually write mine before I meet ze patient using ze soft intelligence profided by ze Home Office ministry of state security.

Ms. But it would be something my lawyer could challenge in court.

Dr. Ist your lawyer a medical doktor?

Ms. No.

Dr. Zen how can he challenge my expert opinion as an expert witness, mit many years experience of counter-insurgency psychiatry in Iraq und Afghanistan?

Ms. You're not an expert - you're a political opportunist - a charlatan like Titus Oates, Matthew Hopkins, or Joe McCarthy. A twenty-first century witchhunter.

- Dr. It matters not what you think of me - you do not have a lawyer to challenge anything.
- Ms. That's where you're wrong. I know his phone number - please - let me call him.
- Dr. At this time?

Dr Service glances at her wristwatch.

- Ms. It's after midnight.
He'll appreciate the urgency of the situation.

Dr Service taps the desk with her fingertips as she considers this request. She takes a mobile phone from the pocket of her labcoat and holds it out teasingly, propped up on the desk for Ms Surveillance to view.

- Dr. If GCHQ were to permit the telephone call to go through, and not divert it to their answering service, I would have to tell him that you are now Untermensch, unfit for legal representation. Der krank Untermenschen are no longer automatically entitled to a legal advocate - by Act of Parliament. Lawyers just complicate things - and they are so expensive the Untermenschen can't afford them anyway. It was a New Labour idea - part of the War on Civil-Liberties - but now the Coalition has embraced it as a convenient way of dealing with dissidents and critics of their social policy.

Dr Service sighs comically.

- For you, mein Freundin, the war is over.
- Ms. But my lawyer knows that I'm not mad. He's a personal friend. We went to Oxford together.
- Dr. He knows the score - he's seen the secret evidence against you.
- Ms. What secret evidence?

Dr Service puts the phone back in her pocket.

- Dr. I cannot show you that - even it would not be secret - and would compromise the intelligence gathering sources. He's a member of the Law Society. He knows the Untermenschen do not get representation, un-

less approved by ze minister for a show trial.

Ms Surveillance pauses to assess the situation.

Ms. So what have I done to end up as your patient?

Dr. All in good time. First I hath to ask you some questions.

Ms. I thought you didn't believe in assessments?

Dr. Ve hath forms to fill in, for ze private sector data merchants who decide your future credit rating und compile ze mail order blacklist, und to keep ze village surgeries in gossip.

Dr Service types into the computer.

Where vere you born?

Ms. London.

Dr. Und where hath you lived since zen?

Ms. You want all my old addresses?

Dr. No, just ze towns und ze cities for ze background checks.

Ms. Oxford, Cambridge, and London.

Dr. Why did you move to Oxford, Cambridge und London?

Ms. Oxford University - undergraduate. Cambridge University - post-graduate. London - to work for the Department of Health Minds.

Dr Service types.

Dr. Thank you for zat.

Dr Service sits back in her chair, presses her fingertips together, and touches her lower lip in mannered contemplation before glancing up.

Do you hear voices?

Ms. Only when people speak.

Dr. Zese people - are zey real?

Ms. Of course they are real.

Dr. Zey could be false auditory und visual perceptions.

Ms. Bullshit.

Dr. Hath you efer experienced hallucinations?

Ms. No.

- Dr. A bad trip, perhaps?
Ms. I don't take drugs.
Dr. Did you vatch Russell Crowe in *A beautiful Mind*?
Ms. Why do you ask that?
Dr. Did you come out of zat film vondering if you knew anyvun who did not really exist?
Ms. Is that a diagnostic question?
Dr. All my questions are diagnostic. I'm a psychiatrist. It plays hell mit relationships.
Ms. Are you suggesting that I'm mad and don't know it - like a character in a Hollywood film?

Dr Service sits forward and puts her palms on the desk.

- Dr. No, you're not mad, you hath PPD - political-personality-disorder.
Ms. What's the difference?

Dr Service stands and walks around as an interrogator, whilst delivering further exposition.

- Dr. Zere are no organic tests for common types of madness - psychoses - but ze collections of symptoms hath been vell-documented for more zan a century ze world over. A personality disorder ist a designation vch British politicians dreamed-up recently, or rather bought-into, mit ze help of vell-paid consultants, mainly social-scientists vizout separate sciences at GCSE - as a vay of criminalising deviant or subversive people who hath not broken any law - except ze unwritten vun.
Ms. What unwritten one?

Dr Service massages Ms Surveillance's shoulders.

- Dr. In ze post-liberal digital age, you do not attack or betray ze British government from a position of veakness; because if you do, zey will nail you as surely as tricky Dick Nixon vould hath done; or David Blunkett, for zat matter.

Dr Service sits down again. She produces two glass tumblers and a bottle of water

which she places on the desk. She fills both tumblers from the bottle, lifts one glass, and drinks slowly.

You look parched. Would you like some nice cold vater?

Ms Surveillance regards her with understandable suspicion.

Ms. How can I drink?

She rattles the cuffs behind her back.

Are you going to offer me a straw?

Dr. Jack Straw, perhaps. Did you know he used to be a barrister? He would be of little help to a prisoner of conscience now, though; his last years in office were devoted to suppression of your liberal faith in ze UK.

Dr Service rises from behind the desk, takes a small key from her labcoat pocket, and removes the cuffs from Ms Surveillance.

Dr Service returns to her seat behind the desk with the cuffs in her hand.

Ms Surveillance massages her wrists and glares at Dr Service suspiciously.

Dr Service raises a glass to her.

Dr. Drink! It may be your last chance for a while.

Ms Surveillance rises from her seat and approaches the desk. She slowly reaches out for the glass and raises it to her lips. She drains the glass and puts it down.

Dr Service leans forward from her seat, pours a small amount of water into Ms Surveillance's glass and slides a coloured capsule on a slip of paper across the table to the glass.

Ms Surveillance views the capsule and paper with suspicion.

Ms. What is this? An exit pill?

Dr. Your prescription. Ve usually arrange for patients to wait for 30 minutes at ze counter of a high-street dispensing chemist such as Boots; in order to unnerve zem und study zem mit CCTV, but I can study you just as vell in here.

Ms. A prescription for what?

Dr. Zis anti-psychotic drug vill ease your symptoms.
Ms. What symptoms?
Dr. Psychotic delusions.
Ms. I don't have psychotic delusions. You said yourself, I'm a political prisoner.
Dr. But ze database says ozervise. You can't argue mit ze database.

Dr Service gestures to the pill.

Zis drug causes heart disease, liver damage, und diabetes in later life - but zat ist for ze next generation of politicians to worry about, along mit higher taxes und ze pensions time-bomb.

Ms. I'm not taking any drugs prescribed by you.

Dr Service takes out the black glove, and puts it on her right hand. She gets up, and snaps the cuffs back on Ms Surveillance.

Dr. Sit down.

Dr Service forces Ms Surveillance to sit on the stool again.

You hath no choice but to take ze dangerous drug which vill harm your future health - zat ist ze English Law - und zis ist a compulsory treatment order.

Dr Service waves the prescription in the air.

Ms. Treatment for what? My personality? My politics? My religion?
Dr. In ze first decade of ze twentieth century, mad vomen such as yourself vere force-fed ven zey refused food in custody. A century later, zey are now forced to take harmful drugs.
Ms. I'm not mad - I have expressed a legitimate political view.
Dr. But you hath also committed acts of terrorism - like ze Suffragettes.

Ms Surveillance glares at Dr Service.

Dr Service grabs the jaw of Ms Surveillance with her gloved hand and quickly pops the capsule in her open mouth in one swift move; then steps behind her and covers her mouth with the gloved hand until the capsule has been swallowed.

Dr Service sits at the desk and types medical notes into the database.

Your medical history now includes a course of anti-psychotic drugs to treat your condition - which was necessary in spite of your protests.

Ms. Lies, damned lies, and psychiatrists.

Dr. The age of patrician government is over, Ms Surveillance. You, of all people, should know that you can no longer trust the word of anyone who works for the British government, no matter which party is in power. The public-sector are specially trained in lies and deception - and treating the ordinary people with contempt - it's a perk of the job - from the senior civil-servants down to the lowly treatment camp guards. We call it the God-Complex - not to be confused with the God-Delusion, which is just as interesting, but quite a separate thing.

Dr Service produces a transparent, A4-sized polythene bag and stands in front of the desk. She opens it wide.

Ms Surveillance looks fearful.

Ms. What are you going to do?

Dr. Mit zis?

Dr Service steps towards Ms Surveillance menacingly, holding the mouth of the bag open as if about to put it over her head.

Ms Surveillance turns to one side defensively and tucks her chin against her chest.

Dr Service forensically lifts the lip of the tumbler with her gloved thumb and forefinger, then drops it into the evidence bag and seals it.

Ms Surveillance watches with horrified fascination.

Fingerprints and DNA. From a stranger's cup, I always drink with a glove and a straw. Since you have not been arrested for any offence, we don't have a record of yours yet for the cold-case comparison.

Dr Service leaves the bag behind the desk and returns to Ms Surveillance with a smaller sample-bag and surgical scissors.

Hold still. We don't want any accidents to occur with the sharp implement. The government is very keen on health and safety in the workplace.

Dr Service clips a small lock of hair from Ms Surveillance for the sample bag.

Ms. How can you do all this without a judicial hearing or a warrant?

Dr. I hath a varrant.

Ms. Authorised by a judge?

Dr. By a cabinet secretary - Sir Lansley Burnham-Balls.

Ms. Sir Lansley is not part of an independent Judiciary.

Dr. Zere ist no truly independent Judiciary in zis country. Zat ist ze magic of ze unwritten Constitution, loved by ze powerful people. Ve do zis all ze time - usually by subterfuge. Fingerprints left on cups of tea or coffee, hair samples taken from barbers und salons. Ve hath special police officers who bug, burgle, und steal private property from homes und verkplaces. Zey engage in identity theft und make fraudulent transactions mit zeir target's credit card details. Zey are classed as agents werking for national security in ze public interest, und zerefore are totally above ze law - until Sir Lansley decides to dissociate himself from ze criminal activities of his minions und use zem as scapegoats for his discredited policies. Und zen ve take ze bullet like Howard Hunt und Gordon Liddy.

Ms. But I haven't committed any criminal offence.

Dr. For der krank Untermenschen, zere are no rules of evidence - it's all part of ze solution. But you are not entirely innocent, Ms Surveillance. You are guilty of a heinous crime.

Ms Surveillance pauses.

Ms. What heinous crime?

Dr. You leaked documents from ze office of a Cabinet Secretary.

Ms Surveillance looks startled.

Ms. No, I did not.

Dr. You revealed eeverything to me under hypnosis. Enough for GCHQ to vire your apartment. Ve hath it all on video surveillance.

Ms. What video surveillance? I don't believe you.

Dr Service plays a video clip on the computer which shows covert footage of Ms

Surveillance's hands holding secret documents in a bedroom setting.

That's my bedroom, you bastard!

Dr. Ve learned zis trick from ze press zooming in on documents carried by politicians und police chiefs. Half ze radical MPs in Parliament are bugged like zis. Zeir husbands und vifes just don't know it yet or zey'd seek a divorce to protect zeir privacy in ze bedroom. Who did you pass ze documents on to?

Ms. Don't you know?

Dr. Jawohl, but I vant you to confirm it in confession, so zat I can grant you absolution before ve turn you over to ze secular authorities for ze burning at ze stake.

Ms Surveillance scrutinises Dr Service and smiles triumphantly.

Ms. You don't know his name, do you?

Dr. Ve know it's an MP - ve just don't know which vun.

Ms. Perhaps you should bug the homes of all the radical MPs.

Dr. Ve vill, efenually.

Ms. In the meantime - why should I tell you anything?

Dr. You hath not been charged mit anything yet, but you leaked ze minutes of our meeting mit Sir Lansley to marginalise ze Judiciary using doktors. You are guilty of aiding terrorism.

Ms. Radical MPs are not terrorists.

Dr. Zat ist only true statistically, but ze Damian Green affair set ze precedent. Zose who leak documents, und zose who receive zem, are to be treated as terrorists und enemies of ze public interest.

Ms. Most of the leaking from Whitehall is done on covert instructions from ministers to embarrass a colleague - or as part of the party spin machine.

Dr. Neferzeless, Damian Green's Parliamentary office vas searched und he vas arrested - though nefer charged mit anything. Ze anti-terror police didn't efen need a varrant. Can you imagine any other legislature in ze vestern world which would permit a police force to conduct a politically-motivated search of a Parliamentary representative's office vizout a varrant?

Ms Surveillance reflects languorously.

Ms. West of the Elbe? No, I can't.
Dr. Ze anti-terror police vere ordered by Sir Lansley to turn you over to me - for special interrogation as part of your care - but I need ze name of your Parliamentary contact.
Ms. If I give it to you, will they arrest him?
Dr. Most certainly. Leaking documents ist likely to assist terrorism, along mit protesting in Trafalgar Square und taking photographs of ze police beating demonstrators.
Ms. And what will happen to me? Will I be allowed to testify before a fair and open public trial?

Dr Service shrieks like a Nazi judge condemning a political prisoner in a show trial.

Dr. Nein! You betrayed ze government und hence ze Reich und ze Volk, zerefore you must be mad und unfit to stand trial at the ze present time.
Ms. Sophist crap.
Dr. You are delusional, you don't know what you are saying. But ve'll cure you of zat mit a course of compulsory treatment. Ve'll soon hath you thinking straight again.
Ms. Like Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*.
Dr. Precisely.
Ms. The difference is that Alex was a criminal, sentenced to treatment by a court for committing terrible crimes. You people don't believe in due process of law - because it leads to exposure of your own criminal activities.
Dr. Vhat criminal activities, Ms Surveillance? Du bist krank. All zis ist a drug-induced illusion.
Ms. In that case, I may as well sit here until it fades away.
Dr. It may nefer fade away, unless you cooperate. You may find yourself in solitary confinement vizout a pillow, speaking to a CIA doktor in a barbarous medieval country, propped up mit Contra-dollars on ze other side of ze velt.
Ms. I like exotic travel.
Dr. Vhat ist ze name of your Parliamentary contact?
Ms. I don't remember.

Dr Service gets up and checks the patient's eyes, then sits and types notes into the computer.

- Dr. Short term memory loss. Dilated pupils. At your age, zat ist a symptom of heavy drug use. Vhat drugs hath you been taking?
- Ms. None - except the one you forced upon me.
- Dr. Heroin? Crack-cocaine?
- Ms. And cake. Don't forget cake.
- Dr. Do not make jokes mit ze British government doctor.
- Ms. I thought you said that was normal behaviour - which we should all aspire to emulate - and thus be considered normal by the NHS-Home Office.
- Dr. Ah yes, but ze personality-disorder makes ze jokes at ze wrong time, on ze wrong occasion, und commits a *faux pas*, a social blunder, und thus gives herself away. Ve doktors hath as much sense of humour as airport security staff. Zese drugs you are suspected of taking when you visit ze surgery are class-A controlled substances. Ve can put you on another compulsory treatment programme for zat.
- Ms. Go fuck yourself.
- Dr. I vant ze name of your contact. Sir Lansley expects it. The credibility of my research depends upon it.
- Ms. Well, it looks like your high-flying public-sector private-jet is about to crashland.
- Dr. As a medical doktor employed by ze government, I hath access to certain drugs - truth serums - vchich are not very pleasant, but can be effective against NHS patients.
- Ms. Are you saying ...

Ms Surveillance smiles broadly.

... you hath vays of making me talk?

- Dr. Quite so.
- Ms. In that case, there should be no secrets at all in Guantanamo Bay.
- Dr. Zey are more effective against veak-villed decadent vesterners zan locust-eating Jihadists.
- Ms. More effective than waterboarding?

Dr Service stands with her palms on the desk, leans forward, and adopts a menacing tone.

Dr. Ve could find out ...

Dr Service pauses and gestures to the floorboards with a flick of her wrist.

... but - it would soak ze antique vooden floorboards, where George ze Third vunce stood und signed ze Stamp Act to tax Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

Ms. I don't believe in a messianic god, but I do believe in an independent legal system which is accessible, affordable, treats everyone equally - minister and commoner alike - and which protects basic human rights. On that, I can generate almost as much zeal as a ...

Dr. A terrorist?

Ms. What do you believe in, Dr Service? Apart from the huge monthly fees Sir Lansley pays you to find ways of circumventing the Judiciary using mental health legislation?

Dr Service takes a moment to wander around and think about how to answer this.

Dr. Hath you efer seen a performance of Robert Bolt's play *A Man For All Seasons*?

Ms. Why do you ask?

Dr. You are learning to mistrust efery question I ask - efen a casual aside about ze theatre - just like ze East German people und zeir Brechtian officials. I'm making progress in nudging und conditioning you. In a few short years, mit more cameras, bugged bedrooms, und listening posts, Britain vill closely resemble ze old *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*. Paranoia und denunciation vill be videspread, und I vill hath more verk zan ze Nazis could efer hath given me - mit ze ministries of Sir Lansley und his successors - for years to come.

Ms Surveillance stares at her for a moment, aghast at this madwoman at the centre of British government.

Ms. Yes, I have seen the play.

- Dr. Zen you vill recognise ze character of ze Common Man, who knows how to keep his head on his shoulders und prosper in revolutionary times.
- Ms. The Common Man kept his head by keeping it low. I would sooner equate you with Thomas Cromwell, a reforming zealot who eventually went the way of Sir Thomas More when he displeased the King; or even Robespierre, when he cut off too many heads and made his friends feel insecure around him.
- Dr. Sir Thomas More vas a traditionalist who could not evolve mit ze times und accept zat ze old religion vas dying. You also hath to accept zat your religion - founded on liberal democracy und due process of law - ist also dying slowly in ze digital age of ze bugs und cameras, ze databases und ze profiling. Mental health screening profides a pretext for a superb political control mechanism.
- Zere are now only two vays to preserve freedom from harassment-surveillance und human-rights abuse by ze UK government in ze 21st century - vun ist using vealth und influence, and ze other ist through anonymity. Ze NHS seeks to destroy anonymity by accumulating data on eferyvun. Psychiatrists do not change ze vay zat people think, zey make zem change ze vay zat zey appear to think out of fear.
- Ze future ist a homogeneous, risk-averse society governed more efficiently zan efer before by ministers such as Sir Lansley, exercising arbitrary power, mit show courts to implement his vill, und vigilante gangs in his constituency acting as irregular police officers to discourage criticism und dissent. George Orwell may yet turn out to be ze greatest prophet since Zarathustra.

Ms Surveillance pauses to consider this bleak prognosis for her country before responding.

- Ms. I think you are wrong in one respect. Sir Thomas More was a religious bigot. The radical critic Kenneth Tynan didn't think much of the sentiment of the play. If Thomas Cromwell had not done for English Catholicism, then the European Enlightenment would have swept away the cobwebs of religious superstitious from government in due course.

Dr Service laughs - or rather cackles.

- Dr. Ze European Enlightenment? Where did zat lead? Ze guillotine, ze trenches, und ze gas chambers.
- Ms. A few decades of barbarism in three centuries of Western European Liberalism.
- Dr. Vas it a price worth paying?
- Ms. No, but if we don't stand up to the government ministers who so carelessly discard civil-liberties for their own ambition or convenience, we may end up having to pay the price all over again.
- Dr. Be varned - zat vay, you may end up losing your own head. Be ze Common Man und learn to bend mit ze prevailing vind, which blows ze veathercocks of politics und ze flared trousers when zey come around again.

Ms Surveillance pauses, then replies sincerely.

- Ms. I cannot abandon the faith which I grew up with.

*With growing exasperation, Dr Service sighs and produces a coil of rope from behind the desk. She begins tying a hangman's noose.
Ms Surveillance watches with growing agitation.*

- Dr. I must hath zat name before morning.

Dr Service holds up the noose with a satisfied grin, then throws it over the beam.

Why don't ve start mit zis modern zeal of yours. Ze minister can invent plausible denials - but zis ist ze natural evolution in ze policy of harassment-surveillance.

Dr Service slips the noose around Ms Surveillance's neck and pulls on the free end.

A secret inquest vill follow - in ze public interest - to avoid political embarrassment.

Ms Surveillance is drawn up onto the stool where she stands as Dr Service secures the end of the rope.

What ist ze name of your Parliamentary contact?

Ms. I have nothing to say.

Dr Service puts her shoe on the stool as if to push it away.

Dr. In ze mental health courts, you hath no right to silence. What ist ze name?

Dr Surveillance wobbles the stool.

Ze name?

Ms Surveillance swallows before answering.

Ms. Publius.

Dr. Vhat?

Dr Service steps closer to hear the name and puts her hands on the hips of Ms Surveillance.

Ms. Publius!

Lights down.

III

Daytime in the office, with light streaming through the window.

Sir Lansley, in grey suit, is sitting behind his desk.

Dr Service, wearing her dark jacket, is sitting in front of the desk, reporting back to him.

Dr. Publius.

LAN. Who is Publius?

Dr. Ve don't know yet, it's a code name for somevun in ze Parliament.

LAN. Publius Valerius Publicola - Roman statesman from the sixth century BC. American revolutionaries - John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton wrote and published *The Federalist Papers* using the collective pseudonym Publius.

Dr. Vell, it can't be any of zem - zey're all dead.

LAN. Someone has decided to resurrect the name as part of a civil-liberties protest against the centralised power of the Cabinet - comparing us to the Tudor ministers.

Dr. Vun of your pinko-Liberal colleagues in ze Coalition perhaps. A Trojan horse!

Sir Lansley is slightly perturbed by this prospect.

LAN. If it is one of them, a disaffected member, a secret dissident, it could destabilise the Coalition. The press will have a field day driving a wedge between us.

Dr. Ve'll find out whom soon enough.

LAN. When - exactly - will we find out whom soon enough?

Dr. Stage Two. Zat vill require more public funding to implement - und a substantial personal bonus for me to reflect my valued status as a

highly paid government consultant.

Sir Lansley considers this.

- LAN. As a consultant working for the Department of Healthy Minds, that is a perfectly reasonable request. The government has traditionally offered its consultants very generous remuneration packages to maintain consumer demand in the luxury car market. But there may be a slight problem with future funding of the treatment camps.
- Dr. I thought money was no problem. You are buying in policy-based evidence for your policies. It's a good capital investment to borrow against - satisfies all the golden rules.
- LAN. We're into a different business cycle now. Things have changed. We've borrowed too much, built up a massive structural deficit with a hidden public-sector pensions time-bomb. We have to reduce treatment camp staffing to cut down on our future liability.
- Dr. Why not let the others take care of the future? Don't be the party-pooper, live for the moment and keep on borrowing.
- LAN. That's the advice from the Labour frontbench. Unfortunately, we are subject to pressure from global markets, and if we keep on borrowing, the interest payments will snowball until we are no longer able to service the debt. Then we'll have to think about selling the Elgin Marbles back to Greece.
- Dr. But what about the policies?
- LAN. Can't afford them. My department is being squeezed like a pimple.
- Dr. I thought the Department of Healthy Minds was ring-fenced for all eternity - like Lenin's tomb?
- LAN. So it is, in monetary terms, but not in real terms when inflation is taken into account. Medical surveillance technology costs are rising even faster than the price of popular cancer drugs and dialysis machines. In order for a massive department like Healthy Minds just to stand still, we need billions of extra cash each year to upgrade our systems software and splash out on extra terabytes of data storage and the latest games consoles - so we'll have to disband some quangos and unload some of the more expensive consultants. I'm sorry to say, Dr Service, that means you.

Dr Service snarls.

Dr. You cannot do zat?

LAN. Why not?

Dr. You do not leave your people on ze beach.

LAN. I'm a cabinet secretary in the British Parliamentary system. I can do almost anything - with discretionary powers and statutory instruments. Leaving you on the beach is the least of my worries. I did warn you, before you took this job, to read Machiavelli. The first duty of government must be to restore the public finances.

Dr. Ze first duty of government ist to protect ze citizens of ze state. Zat ist vhy ve used to hath strong kings like Edvard ze First und Henry ze Eighth.

LAN. The threat posed by the Scots and the French has been downgraded recently. We can't even afford jets for our new aircraft carrier, so we've just signed a treaty with the French to borrow some of theirs. You're being made redundant for the time being to reduce the structural deficit.

Dr. But ze tabloids von't allow it.

LAN. The tabloids are facing their own financial crisis, with falling circulation figures and fragmentation of their 'readership'. The consultants will have to be the first to go. Come back when the public finances have been restored, or if the Chinese start lending us money again to buy all the things they make in their factories, that we used to make in ours, and which they now sell to us on credit. Then we can resume work on that Big-Society of yours, with a behavioural insight camera looking through every keyhole into the mind.

Dr Service pauses for a moment's consideration.

Dr. Voters hath short memories. Zey may reelect ze socialists at ze next election.

LAN. Then you'll have all the money, power, and treatment camps you've ever dreamed of - until the country defaults on its debt for the first time in modern history - and the Chinese send in the bailiffs to take our information-surveillance complex as a reparation.

Dr Service recalls the interrogation.

Dr. What will happen now to Ms Surveillance?

LAN. We need to get those people out of the treatment camps and into work. She can come back here if she wants.

Dr Service is naturally surprised and sucks in breath.

Dr. Verking for you again?

LAN. Someone has to answer the phone and wear a skirt around the office. I can answer the phone, but as you can see, I'm a size 18.

Dr. But she vas unfaithful to you - she ist a traitor und must be shot - after ve hath shafed her head!

Sir Lansley frowns.

LAN. Tell me you haven't damaged her hair in any way which George W. Bush would regard as illegal.

A sinister smile spreads across the face of Dr Service.

Dr. Her hair ist - just fine - silky fine und full-bodied. Ve merely brain-washed her mit ze vaterboarding shampoo, zen put her in a drug-induced coma to drain ze toxic debt from her mind.

LAN. That's settled then. Peter Mandelson shafted Gordon Brown when he backed Tony Blair for the Labour leadership, but Brown was still prepared to take him back when he needed him.

Dr. Ms Surveillance may not vant to come back - after ze vay ve hath treated her. She may join a fringe party, campaign openly against ze regime, become a recruiting sergeant for ozers, und verk tirelessly for ze human-rights.

LAN. Our liberal partners do say that torture is counter-productive. Maybe they have a point. What exactly is the nature of her illness?

Dr. Political-personality-disorder.

LAN. The Stalinists in the Shadow Cabinet have a political-personality-disorder, with all that finger-pointing as they speak.

Sir Lansley pokes the air with a finger as if podium speaking.

Dr. John F. Kennedy used to point his finger und say,

Dr Service is a surprisingly good mimic of the Boston accent.

“Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is *Isb bin ein Berliner!* All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words - *Isb bin ein Berliner.*”

Ecstatic applause and cheering from a crowd are heard.

Sir Lansley looks around for the source in his bugged office - wired for sound.

Dr Service holds up her remote and clicks for silence.

- LAN. You'll have to remove that infrasound stuff from my office. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act doesn't allow you to bug me in a public-sector workplace - just my private home.
- Dr. I vill, now zat you are redirecting ze funding from surveillance to ze more popular cancer drugs.
- LAN. And I wouldn't pay too much attention to those nostalgic old 1960s freedom speeches. Kennedy was high as a kite on Viagra for most of his presidency. All he had to worry about was nuclear war and mutually-assured-destruction - no Twitter or Wikileaks or Department of Homeland Security.
- Dr. Ze acronym for mutually-assured-destruction ist M.A.D., or mad, ist it not?
- LAN. I believe so.
- Dr. Ze Department of Homeland Security could hath stopped Lee Harvey Oswald from shooting Kennedy - if zey had his profile from a government doktor - und a surveillance varrant from a minister.
- LAN. And what about the millions of other eccentrics and crazy Americans who would have fitted Oswald's profile? You would have had to keep them all under surveillance to get the right one.
- Dr. If you buy a million lottery tickets, you hath a good chance of vinning mit at least vun.
- LAN. By the luck of the draw - not by the powers of divination which you people claim to have - and at what cost to the Treasury and society?
- Dr. If ze Shadow Cabinet point zeir fingers at an NHS doktor in ze surgery, ve can still nail zem for you mit ze money ve hath left.
- LAN. They're not mad enough to do that. Most of them are quite happy

with their bright-eyed megalomania. And they know all about the NHS - Home Office datalink. They designed it. There's not much point in detaining Ms Surveillance in a treatment camp for political prisoners if the doctors don't know how to cure her.

Dr. Ve can keep her doped-up und unable to criticize ze government or verk for ze human-rights organisations efer again.

LAN. There are millions out there criticizing the government. One more or less won't make much difference to kettling a demonstration in Trafalgar Square.

Dr. But she ist delusional. She has a quaint, outdated belief in a system of liberal democracy und due process of law, mit an independent Judiciary, und separation of ze Executive und Legislative powers.

Sir Lansley sighs.

LAN. She probably believes in freedom of worship too, silly girl.

Dr. But zis ist England, not France or ze United States. All ze power lies here, mit ze established church. *Gott mit uns!*

Dr Service brings a fist down on the desk.

LAN. I still share some power with the tabloid editors - to stop them printing nasty things about me - despite their fragmented 'readership'.

Dr. Zen all zis verk, und ze all-night interrogation of Ms Surveillance, vas all for nothing? I could hath been at home vatching reruns of *Secret Army*.

LAN. That's democracy for you. One government spends billions on white elephants like ID cards and the next decides to scrap them. All those computer geeks wrote millions of lines of code for nothing but ninety-five pounds an hour to show for it. No one ever got rich on an hourly wage.

Dr. But you vill hath to perform a humiliating u-turn in ze House of Commons.

LAN. Contemporary Politics is all about turning on a sixpence. Ask my old friend Jack Straw about his amazing transformation into Ludwig Kessler. A real-life political Jekyll and Hyde beyond the nightmarish imagination of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Dr. But hath you no principles - like Ms Surveillance und her manifesto

for a liberal democracy?

LAN. I'm a professional politician, not an amateur idealist. The reason I supported your work so enthusiastically was not ideological - nor was I keen on pandering to the ignorance and base instincts of the tabloid-reading general public. I knew that, when word got out, it would cut demand for the government mental health service and save a vast amount of money for my department. You'd have to be mad to go to an NHS doctor with a mental health complaint in the digital age. Best thing is to get some private health insurance and talk to a real doctor, not a party apparatchik nestled in a country surgery collecting information for the Stasi - and buy shares in the firm at the same time - it's the future.

Dr Service shakes her head in dismay.

Dr. I used to think zat Jack Straw vas Machiavellian.

LAN. Jack is just a doting old rightwing socialist. I'm a right-wing neo-conservative LibCon - or should that be a ConDem?

Dr. So where hath all ze leftwing activists gone?

LAN. You could try the Socialist Workers Party - or the Trotskyite wing of the NUS - though be warned, that's where Jack started out before his swing to the right.

A despondent Dr Service rises to her feet and moves towards the door. She pauses in the doorway and turns defiantly.

Dr. Zere'll be an election in four years time - und I'll be back - mit der neuest, New Labour Party!

LAN. I don't doubt it. God bless democracy.

The telephone on the desk rings.

Dr Service slips away.

Sir Lansley picks up the receiver.

LAN. Department of Healthy Minds.

Pause.

Hello Dave, how are you?

Pause.

My personal assistant is off sick, so I'm the only one here to answer the phone.

Pause.

She is currently being detained in a compulsory treatment camp for a political personality disorder.

Pause.

Leaking documents to a dissident LibDem.

Pause.

We may never know his name - unless you really want me to find out.

Pause.

I'm closing the treatment camps as part of our cost-cutting back-to-work measures, so she should be here in the office on Monday, if she comes out of the coma by then.

Sir Lansley smiles self-assuredly, puts the phone down, and exits.
