

WESTMINSTER

Security Novels Series - Episode V



John M Upton

The Episodes of the Security Novels Series:

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Westminster

If there had been anyone else in the office, they would have seen an extremely concerned look on the face of Sir James Peters, the National Administrator General of the Department of National Security & Civil Defence, the UK police force responsible for all levels of crime fighting and investigation across the country.

It was a very well appointed office, befitting the position of its occupant, the most senior Security Officer in the land. The antique oak desk with traditional style silver gilt pen holders, the photographs on the wall of various officers, buildings and other things connected with the service all added to an atmosphere of power and control.

Unusually for the Administrator General, he was dressed in his full dress uniform, probably the most elaborate of the outfits issued to officers, with a multitude of gold braiding and medal ribbons decorating the finely tailored dark blue almost black tunic.

He looked out of the window on the top floor of New Scotland Yard in central London across the nearby rooftops in the direction of the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben and just visible, the top of the London Eye Ferris wheel.

It was late morning and he was making the most of the rare quietness between the appointments and meetings that usually dominated his schedule. Taking in a last view of the city sky line before him, he took a deep breath and returned to the desk, sitting down slowly as if savouring this moment.

On the desk facing him was an antique gold edged photograph frame, within it a black and white photograph of his late wife. He had been a widow for almost a year now although he was still very much married to the service in many ways.

He thought of her for a while, silently recalling fond memories of their many years together but soon he had to return to business in hand. Reaching in the lower desk drawer, he retrieved a notepad and began to write what appeared to be an important note which he then signed and sealed in an envelope before carefully placing it in the post out tray behind him.

Then on the computer situated to one end of his desk, he called up the internal e-mail system where he proceeded for the next couple of minutes to compose a further message, the message quickly disappearing from view as he clicked the send button to send it on its way through the sub-ether on to its intended destination.

Suddenly his concentration was broken when there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" in called in a wonderfully authoritative tone that echoed around the spacious office.

After a brief pause, the door opened and a well dressed man stepped inside, firmly closing the door behind him.

"I was wondering when you where going to appear" the Administrator General enquired.

"Well now you know" the stranger responded where upon he produced a silenced gun, aimed directly at the Administrator General, fired two direct and clean shots and instantly killed him.

The unidentified killer paused for a few moments, ensuring that his shots had been successful before returning his weapon to the hidden depths of his jacket and moving forward.

The stranger spent the next few minutes very carefully manipulating the scene, including the position of the body. Also he spent a few moments on the computer before making sure that a couple of documents that were on the desk, were removed to the nearby document shredder.

Seeing that his work was complete, the mysterious killer turned and discreetly left the room.

"Platform 17 for the 11:02 Southern service to Portsmouth Harbour and Bognor Regis" the automatic recorded announcer boomed across the concourse of Victoria Station.

In amongst the busy crowds, the gold braiding of the uniform of one person stood out clearly. That person being Deputy Divisional Commander Tracy Caverner, the second in command of the city's Transport Division of the Security Service.

Although she was scanning around the busy South Central side concourse of the station seeing that all was well, Tracy was in fact technically off duty although this was not really a term that applied to her much as a rule.

In fact the reason for her patient waiting was to greet her husband, the Commander whom she had been expecting to arrive within the last half an hour. By now however she was coming to realise that he was now unusually late to the point where she began to suspect he was not coming at all.

Momentarily contemplating a cup of coffee, Tracy's thoughts were interrupted by her radio suddenly calling her.

"Lima Tango Zero Two from control" the radio blurted out loudly for most of the concourse to hear.

Tracy quickly grabbed the radio and turned the speaker volume down before responding.

"Go ahead" she responded.

"We have just this minute received a report of a body on the line just north of Longhenge Junction" the dispatch officer back in the Divisional Head Office Control Room over in Holborn announced.

"Oh joy..." Tracy responded with a distinct lack of enthusiasm.

"Southern have stopped all trains between Victoria and Clapham Junction and the power will be off in a few moments" the dispatcher informed her.

"Who are our nearest officers available?" Tracy enquired as she walked across the concourse in the direction of the South Eastern side of the station. All around her waiting passengers were beginning to stop in their tracks as the large electronic destination boards all suddenly began to show a series of suspensions and cancellations of services.

"You are the nearest senior officer Maam" the not entirely unexpected response came.

Walking briskly over to the south eastern half of Victoria's concourse, Tracy looked around for a solution to her next problem which was a distinct lack of transport. It was probably two or so miles to Longhenge Junction and with the power off, options were now understandably somewhat limited.

"Excuse me!" Tracy called to one of the Network Rail officials who had bravely ventured out of his office to see what all the chaos that was beginning to build, was all in aid of.

"Yes?" he responded.

"Do you have anything around here that does not require electrical propulsion?" Tracy enquired.

"Well there is that" the official pointed in the direction of platform 2.

"That will do nicely!" Tracy looked over to where the official was pointing and responded with a happy grin.

"What the hell is going on?" the Commander murmured to himself as he alighted from the South West Trains service on platform 10 of Clapham Junction Station.

The reason for his enquiry was obvious to see, as although the South Western side of the massive station was operating normally, there did however appear to be a major problem building over on the South Central side with the northbound services to London Victoria as throngs of passengers crowded the platforms while an awful lot of trains were apparently not moving.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Control" the Commander called over his radio as he ascended the steps up to the bridge that connected all of the platforms together "I am at Clapham Junction and so it would appear is everyone else. What's occurring?"

"A train has just struck a body at Longhenge Junction" the Control room despatch officer informed the Commander who was now on the stairs down to platforms 13 and 14 and attempting to fight his way through the thronged chaos.

"Driver is reporting that the body has a uniform on it" the dispatcher added as he relayed the latest piece of incident information he had just received.

"Show me on the way" the Commander called before continuing the difficult journey through the confused flock of passengers crowded onto platform 14, making his way to the north end.

Once he managed to reach the end, the Commander retrieved a bright orange high visibility safety vest from his uniform tunic pocket and put it on across his shoulders before carefully stepping off the platform, down the end ramp and onto the ballasted track bed, taking care to avoid the live third rail which, although it had been switched off because of the incident, may still have contained some residual power.

Walking along the track bed towards the junction where the reported incident had taken place, the Commander observed ahead a small crowd of bright orange jacketed railway staff gathered around the front of a stationary four car train of Class 455 suburban stock.

"Morning gents!" the Commander called cheerily as he arrived at the scene. The location was rather desolate being in the middle of a complex of track work out in the open and exposed to the wind and other elements.

"I think this fella is one of yours mate" reported one of the railway engineers who was standing next to the body lying between the tracks.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Zero Two" the Commander called Tracy, his wife over the radio "I don't suppose you are anywhere near here yet by any chance?"

"I am just approaching now" Tracy responded "I had a little trouble finding some transport" she explained.

"Well I'll be blowed!" one of the engineers commented as on the adjacent down slow line a large dark green steam locomotive approached, it having left its Orient Express luxury train behind at Victoria to transport Tracy to the scene.

"Morning love!" Tracy called cheerily from the footplate of locomotive 34067 'Tangmere' as with the hissing of steam and clanking of its heavy wheels on the rails, it came to a stand alongside the scene.

The Commander went over to greet her at the bottom of the cab steps as she clambered down, being careful not to slip on the high access steps.

"We seem to meet up in the strangest of places" the Commander commented to his wife with a wry expression which he followed up with a mutual loving kiss.

"That we do love" she responded in kind.

"Back to business I am afraid" the Commander added regretfully. All things being considered the Commander would rather have spent the day with the wife he had not seen for two days whilst he was away at a dull conference than inspecting dead bodies on railway lines in the middle of nowhere.

"Alright then lad" the Commander reluctantly called over to one of the railway engineers "Let's see the body then."

With a respectfully slow movement, the nearest of the railway workers lifted the coat that was covering the body to reveal the blood soaked corpse.

"It's one of ours I think" Tracy commented with some controlled shock in her voice as she knelt down to take a closer look.

The Commander reached inside his tunic pocket and retrieved a handkerchief which he used to protect his hands as he reached into the inside jacket pocket of the deceased. After a few moments of feeling around the blood saturated pockets, he removed a wallet like object and opened it.

"Not only one of ours" the Commander commented "but one of mine." He passed the open warrant card to Tracy.

"Lieutenant David Carstairs" she read from the blood stained warrant card "Transport Division, Hammersmith and Fulham Section."

"I know his father" the Commander added as he slowly stood up, a look of genuine sadness upon him.

"What the hell is he doing here?" Tracy enquired.

"Dying by the look of it" the Commander responded with a resigned sigh as he reached for his radio.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Control" he called.

"Control receiving."

"Better get the forensics and the body team down here ASAP" the Commander requested "and while you are at it, get Fuller to dig up the personnel record of Lieutenant David Carstairs".

"Is he the investigating officer?" the Control Room Dispatcher asked.

"Afraid not" the Commander confirmed grimly, "he's our victim".

Being promoted to third in Command of the London Transport Division had done nothing to improve Simon Fuller's house keeping skills as his office, which doubled as the computer maintenance department office of which he was in charge, looked like the result of an explosion in a branch of a computer hardware store.

Fuller was seated at the desk that was cluttered with bits of computer and other paraphernalia, working at the computer terminal that was festooned with post-it notes. Indeed the only tidy bit of the desk was the part devoted to his photograph of Jennifer Caverner, his girlfriend and also Tracy Caverner's identical twin sister.

On the computer were displayed the operational and personnel records Lieutenant David Carstairs which Fuller had called up from the central archives. As he casually studied the details whilst drinking his fourth cup of tea of the morning, there appeared to be little of any unusual note until he scrolled down to the last entry in the operational allocation section where something that he suddenly noticed, made Fuller lean forward and re-read a section of the screen more closely.

"What have you got laddie?" the Commander asked suddenly as he entered the office nearly making Fuller jump out of his skin.

"Six years service" Fuller summarised the files on the screen in front of him "Joined the service at the age of eighteen, son of a retired Commander from Berkshire Division, highly educated, decorated twice for bravery, no reprimands, all the 't's' crossed and the 'i's' dotted."

"So what's the catch?" the Commander enquired sensing probably correctly that everything seemed just that little bit too good to be true.

"He was seconded to a special operation about three weeks ago" Fuller passed a paper copy of the files to the Commander "by none other than and reporting directly only to the National Administrator General, Sir James Peters."

"What the hell would old Jimmy Peters be wanting one of my junior patrol officers for?" the Commander asked somewhat surprised by this latest revelation.

"I don't know" Fuller responded leaning back in his chair and swivelling around "But I do smell a rat around here somewhere."

"Looks like I am off to the Yard then."

"Oh hello love!" Tracy responded when she came out of the briefing room, bumping straight into the Commander who was strolling down the corridor with a worried look on his face.

"Four pence for them?" she asked seeing his worried expression.

"Blimey, inflation has struck" the Commander commented "It's nothing probably."

"I have known you for over two years and you can't tell me fish stories love, something is on your mind" Tracy's tone was insistent.

"Just got one of those feelings again" the Commander added with some foreboding.

"Well before it develops into a full blown major insurance claim" Tracy suggested "Perhaps you would like to give your welcome speech to our new recruit cadet officers in there?" She indicated the briefing room behind her.

"Oh all right then, you twisted my arm" the Commander looked over Tracy's shoulder into the room behind her "Do they look any good?"

"Seem a pretty bright bunch."

"Right then" the Commander braced himself "The quick hello speech then I am off to the Yard."

With a purposeful stride, the Commander stepped into the briefing room and made his way to the speakers podium at the front of the room, immediately causing the four young and understandably nervous officers to stand up to attention.

"Oh sit down for goodness sakes" the Commander remarked with a wave of his arm upon which the youngsters sat down again but still rigidly to a kind of military attention.

"You know you can relax" the Commander advised "I'm not that bad you know." Finally the young officers began to relax a little but still not fully. The Commander looked on, reckoned probably correctly that that was the best he was going to get and decided to get started.

"The Transport Division of the Security Service is responsible for the lives and well being of millions of people, passengers, drivers, staff and general public, in, on and around the public transport network of Greater London" the Commander began with an impressive authoritative tone.

"You young ladies and gents" he gestured towards them "Are going to be a part of it." The Commander stood down from the podium and went over to the desk behind which the four officers were seated.

"It will be hard work and require dedication the likes of which you have never experienced" the Commander continued as he slowly paced up and down in front of them.

"You have been selected for this Division because you were the best of your class" he paused his pacing and looked towards them "And I only want the top notch on this team."

"Yes Sir." they all nervously responded in unison, the Commander's reputation was making them tremble inside.

"One last thing, qualification for this Division is more than having watched 'The Taking of Pelham 123', also there are no cannibals at Russell Square."

At that point Fuller appeared at the door, he was there to give the new arrivals the conducted tour and full induction.

"They are all yours" the Commander announced to Fuller as he made for the exit, he was in a hurry to get to New Scotland Yard and this had delayed him.

"See" Fuller told the youngsters "I told you he wouldn't bite!"

"The next station is St James Park" the tinny automated announcement system spread throughout the fairly quiet interior of the carriage of sub-surface London Underground 'C' stock as it made its way anti-clockwise around the Circle Line.

At this notification, the Commander, dressed in his full dress uniform complete with ceremonial sword, arose from his seat and placed the early edition of that days Evening Standard newspaper under his arm.

Quickly the train began to pull into the somewhat murky green and white tiled platform of St James Park station. No sooner had the train come to a halt than the red painted double doors all down one side opened and a few passengers stepped out onto the cold hard black platform surface.

The Commander alighted from the rear most door of the rear most car and had barely begun walking purposefully towards the Broadway exit than the train had closed its doors and plunged back into the tunnel at the opposite end of the platform.

A short flight of steps led up to the ornate marble and brass decorated art deco style ticket hall that was situated in the ground floor of 55 Broadway, the 1930's built headquarters building of London Transport.

Outside, the sky was overcast, grey clouds passing quickly overhead in strong winds, casting their reflective shadows down the glass sides of the tall 1960's office building that is known to many across the world simply as New Scotland Yard.

The Commander crossed the road and approached this most famous building, acknowledging the formal greetings from the various officers that were both around the building and also on duty outside the main entrance.

Passing with a little caution through the sliding glass doors, the Commander found himself confronted with that most immovable object to communication in the Service, a front desk receptionist.

In his experience, they only seemed to have one purpose in life, and that was to tell everyone, be they the public or a Prime Minister, that they could not see anyone without an appointment and therefore could they please go away.

This one, to no great surprise on the Commander's part, quickly proved to be no exception.

"Hello" the Commander cheerily greeted, he was trying the friendly approach this time.

The receptionist looked up from her desk at the Commander over the top of her small square lensed steel rimmed glasses and gave him a hard authoritative stare.

"Yes Sir?" she responded in an authoritative tone that perfectly matched the stare.

"I need to see Sir James Peter's please" the Commander announced knowing full well what the next question was.

"Do you have an appointment?" came the inevitable response which proved the Commander's theory absolutely right.

"No!"

"Then I am afraid you cannot see him then" and with that as far as she was concerned, the conversation was over.

"Okay then" the Commander looked up as if in search of inspiration. It was then he noticed the receptionist was not looking at him, so he took the opportunity to sidle away in the direction of the elevators.

"Thank you for your help!" the Commander called sarcastically with a little wave from the elevator doors as they closed, leaving a very annoyed looking receptionist seemingly fuming behind her desk that she had let one get away.

It took over a minute for the elevator to reach the top floor of the building, a trip the Commander had made on a number of occasions over the years and this one seemed no different. With a ping, the lift doors opened and the Commander hastily exited, he still did not like the things but where necessary, he used them if he had to.

This being the floor dedicated to the National Command and Administration of the Service, it was probably the most luxuriously appointed corridor in the country. The Commander admired the lush carpets, expensively furnished corridor walls and polished veneer doorways, a contrast from the usual cheap and cheerful Government issue rubbish that most buildings were furnished with these days.

At the end of the corridor were the double doors to the Administrator General's Outer Office where the Personal Assistant sat guard behind a smart computer whilst fending off endless telephone calls.

She looked up momentarily as the Commander knocked and entered. Seeing his uniform and the person wearing it, she quickly finished the call she was on and hung up before greeting the Commander as he stood in front of the desk.

"Good afternoon Sir" she greeted cheerily, a huge contrast from the receptionist downstairs.

"Is he in my dear?" the Commander nodded his head towards the inner office door.

"Yes" the PA confirmed "Although he has been a bit quiet this morning, he hasn't even had any lunch yet."

"Can I?" the Commander enquired.

"Go right in" the PA advised.

With that go ahead, the Commander stepped up to the double doors, knocked firmly and waited for a response. When there was no reply for nearly half a minute, the Commander looked on quizzically and knocked again.

Again no response which led to the Commander putting his ear up to the door and listening for any activity in the office beyond, before he knelt down and peered through the keyhole.

Trying the door handle, he discovered that it appeared to be locked whereupon he turned back to the PA who was looking up from her desk once again seeing the Commander was having problems.

"You have a key for this door?" he asked.

"Yes, right here" she confirmed as she opened the desk drawer and was about to reach for a set of keys, only to stop suddenly when she realised something was wrong.

"There not here" she announced with some surprise.

"Right then" the Commander turned back to the offending door "I'll use mine" he announced.

"Excuse me?" but before she could react any further, the Commander had aimed an undiplomatic boot at the door and kicked it in, sending splinters of wood in all directions and the door crashing to the floor with a loud crash.

"Jim?" the Commander called as he stepped inside the spacious office, the PA right behind him probably trying to ensure the Commander did not do any more damage to the fixtures and fittings.

As the Commander approached the desk, he noticed an arm on the floor just visible from behind the desk. With some trepidation he walked around and found the Administrator General's body lying on the floor, blood staining his uniform as well as the carpet beneath and around him.

"Calm down dear" the Commander advised the PA who had come around the other end of the desk and screamed suddenly as she too saw the body.

"Whatever you do, don't touch anything" he instructed as she backed away carefully back to the door while the Commander knelt down and confirmed that the Administrator General was dead before ensuring his eyes were closed.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Alpha Control" the Commander called into his radio as he stood up and went back to the office door, closing the remains of the it behind him.

"Lima Tango One, this is Alpha Control receiving over".

"Code ten on the top floor of the Yard" the Commander announced "I need a coroner, forensics and the Scenes of Crime guys in the Administrator General's office right now."

"On way"

"Then I want every senior officer and Divisional Commander you can find rounded up for a meeting in the main conference room inside of fifteen minutes on an Alpha Priority status" he added.

"What's happening?" the shocked PA asked.

"A very good question" the Commander responded "And one I fully intend to get to the bottom of."

At that moment a senior officer arrived in the office with a rushed look on his face as he had just run all the way from the third floor.

"Commander Eustace Telford" the officer introduced himself "Acting Chief of the Metropolitan Division Special Investigations Branch" he explained with a friendly shake of the Commanders hand "What's all the excitement? Its not very often I get called up to this altitude"

"The Administrator General is dead" the Commander grimly explained "And as far as I am concerned it is not suicide."

"Holy...." the understandably shocked Telford began. "May I?" he indicated the office door.

"Just be careful" the Commander opened the door for him.

A few moments later he returned to the outer office, near pale white with shock.

"Well what do you think?" he asked.

"I would agree with you Sir" Telford confirmed.

"What is your best investigation team?" the Commander enquired.

"Sierra Alpha Team one."

"Wake them up, cancel leave if you have to, but get them set up and ready to go right now" the Commander requested.

"I'm on it" by which time Telford was already out of the office and heading at speed down the corridor. With the outer door now closed again, the Commander turned back to the PA's desk and picked up the telephone and dialled a number. After a short pause, he was connected.

"Home Office?" the Commander enquired "Home Secretary please".

"What the hell is going on?" Tracy enquired of her husband as she walked into the main briefing room at Scotland Yard.

"Hello Love" the Commander leant across and kissed her "I think all hell has just been let loose" he added with a concerned tone.

"Oh, normal day then!" Tracy remarked "And to what do I owe the honour of being called to the Yard?"

"I needed the moral support" the Commander explained.

"Consider it done" Tracy responded hugging her husband despite the fact that by now pretty much every senior Security Service officer in the Greater London area had stopped their various conversations amongst themselves and were watching them with great interest.

"Oh my" the Commander commented to Tracy with a slightly embarrassed smile "Let's get on with it shall we?"

With that he made his way to the front of the briefing room and largely thanks to the respect he commanded within the Service, had their undivided attention almost immediately.

"What is said within this room in the next few minutes stays within this room" the Commander began "Is that fully understood?"

Everyone nodded or murmured in agreement even though there was probably little else they could do about it anyway.

"Thirty minutes ago, the National Administrator General James Peters was found dead in his office" the Commander announced, a shock announcement that pretty much stunned his audience as he continued.

"I have already been in contact with the Home Office and they have agreed with me that until notified otherwise, outside of this room his death was a result of a heart attack."

You could see the audience had already gathered that this was not the case and were bracing themselves for the next revelation.

"What does not leave this room is the fact that he died as the result of a gunshot wound" the Commander revealed "and that on initial inspection of the scene, I feel we can rule out suicide. Therefore you can see the reasoning why this is to go no further than those in this room."

There was a smattering of murmurings from the audience as they digested these uncomfortable facts amongst themselves, however they soon fell silent once again as the Commander resumed the briefing.

"The investigation will be under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Division Special Investigations Branch under the command of Eustace Telford over there and his team" the Commander indicated the understandably somewhat bewildered acting Section Commander seated nearby "Any and all intelligence is to be fed directly to him on a priority status."

"I remind you of the highly sensitive nature of this incident" the Commander reaffirmed "Under no circumstances is any embargoed information to be leaked, I do not want to see anonymous sources being quoted in the tabloids and nobody turns up on Newsnight or Panorama all right?"

There were nods of agreement from around the room before the Commander stepped down from the front whereupon he was greeted by the PA with an urgent message for him.

"Thank you" the Commander replied as he took the very formal looking yellow coloured slip of paper from her, unfolded and read the message written thereupon.

"Ruddy heck" the Commander murmured as he read the message for a second time to make sure he had not been imagining things.

"What's up?" Tracy asked as she joined him.

"You are not going to believe this" the Commander passed the message to her.

"You're right, I don't believe it!" she responded as she read the message.

"Come on, I think I need some more of that moral support."

Commander Telford looked around the Administrator General's office as various white overall dressed scientific examiners proceeded to go over every surface with the proverbial fine tooth comb.

"What do you reckon?" the Commander asked as he entered the room.

"The Administrator General was left handed wasn't he?" Telford asked.

"Yes" the Commander confirmed "Could not use his right hand to save his life."

"So therefore how come he 'apparently' committed suicide with his right hand then?" Telford asked as the body, covered with a sheet was wheeled out on a trolley past them.

"Well done lad" the Commander patted him on the back "I knew you would fathom it out."

"Thank you Sir" Telford responded "I am interviewing the PA later and then it's around to the Administrator General's relatives to deliver the bad news."

"He doesn't have any" the Commander informed him.

"What none at all?"

"He had a wife but she died a year or two back, no children either. There may be a sister somewhere but nobody close."

"Oh" Telford was one of those people that assumed that everyone had relatives and loved ones and here was an exception that proved the rule, "By the way, can I borrow your computer guy?"

"What Fuller?" Tracy enquired as she joined the gathering.

"That's the chap" Telford turned back to the desk and tapped on the computer monitor "I need someone good to hack into this thing" he explained.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Lima Tango Zero Three" the Commander called into his radio.

"Go ahead Sir" Fuller was quick to respond.

"Get your good self and your bag of tricks to the top floor of Scotland Yard" the Commander ordered "Ask for a Commander Telford, he will fill you in."

"Right" Fuller confirmed "And where will you be Sir?"

"We have an urgent appointment elsewhere. Keep me advised of developments."

"This is Westminster, change here for the Jubilee Line" the driver of the District Line train announced over the tannoy system as the single leaf doors of the 'D' type stock slid open and numerous passengers alighted onto the platform.

Amongst them was the Commander, still dressed in his full best ceremonial dress uniform and arm in arm with him, Tracy. They made quite a contrast to the myriad of passengers in and around the station, ranging from lost tourists to business types and civil servants.

"Do I look all right?" Tracy asked as they made their way up the steps to the ticket hall.

"You look fine" the Commander responded "Mind you I am biased!"

They made their way quickly through the station complex, via the ticket hall to the Whitehall exit, before climbing up the steps and out onto the street level, also busy with buses as far as the eye could see, weaving in amongst and around various cars, lorries and taxis that were all battling for the same pieces of tarmac road.

"Perhaps I should give Traffic Division a call" the Commander mused as he surveyed the normal chaotic traffic which he was about to attempt to cross to reach the other side of the road.

"Last time I called Traffic Division for assistance, they said they could not get to me for half an hour" Tracy responded.

"Oh, why?"

"They were stuck in traffic!" Tracy giggled with the amusement at a typical example of Security Service irony which pervaded throughout the service.

"Oh come on, I'll sort this!" Tracy announced and decided to use her rank and position to make an impact on the problem as she stepped out into the traffic with her gun brandished in one hand and her opposite arm held high up to stop the traffic, indicating as if she was on an emergency call.

"Hold it please!" she raised her voice to make herself heard above the drumming roar of the traffic and faced with the possibility of running her over, the traffic duly did as requested and came to a stop.

"Nicely done" the Commander commented as she took Tracy's arm in his and they proceeded across the carriageway, a similar method this time from the Commander being required to pause the traffic in the opposite direction as well before they reached the safe sanctuary of the far pavement.

The couple continued to walk east along the length of Whitehall, a street lined on either side with imposing stone built buildings containing various departments of Government and numerous civil servants before they arrived at the huge ornate cast iron security gates that guarded the entrance to one of the most famous streets in London, Downing Street.

"You ever been down here before?" Tracy asked as she looked on through the gates down the street.

"No actually" the Commander mused "Have you?"

"Oddly enough no" Tracy smiled albeit slightly nervously.

"All right then" the Commander took a deep breath, reaffirmed his hold of Tracy and stepped forward to the gate.

There, two Security Service patrol officers stood on guard duty, both pretty much the same as other patrol officers, only these carried sub-machine guns very visibly rather than the discrete standard issue sidearm.

They acknowledged Tracy and the Commander as they let them through the gates whereupon the two officers found themselves standing within probably one of the most important and powerfully symbolic locations in the world.

"Please tell me we are not going to all this trouble just to see some anonymous Sir Humphrey?" Tracy enquired.

"Not by a long shot" the Commander confirmed as they strode down the length of the street towards the most famous front door in the country, that of number 10, the residence of the Prime Minister and the seat of parliamentary power in the UK.

Outside of the big heavy black door stood a formidable looking Security Service officer in full uniform on patrol. He acknowledged the two officers as they stepped up to the door, whereupon he spoke quietly into his radio and after a brief pause, the door was slowly opened.

"Are you ready for this?" the Commander asked Tracy as they stood on the threshold, hand in hand as if reassuring each other.

"Are you?" Tracy responded in kind.

"We will soon find out" the Commander confirmed and with that they stepped forward through the door into the main hall way, the door being closed firmly behind them.

"Good afternoon Sir, Madam" the smartly attired man who had let them in and closed the door behind them addressed them with a serious sincere smile "This way please, you are expected."

The man led the two officers down a smartly decorated corridor and across a further hall way to a double door guarded by an internal security guard who stood back and opened the door as they approached, allowing Tracy and the Commander to enter.

Inside, the doors where closed behind them and the two officers where alone in a large ornate room with a huge semi-oval table surrounded by sumptuous leather upholstered chairs. On the table were carefully arranged stationery stands and blotters waiting to serve in the writing of important documents by people not there.

"Is this what I think it is?" Tracy asked.

"The cabinet room" the Commander confirmed "Rooms do not get any more powerful than this one so savour the moment."

It was then that a door at the far end of the room opened and a man walked into the room and approached the two officers, of which Tracy was looking somewhat dumbfounded as she recognised no lesser a mortal than the Prime Minister himself.

"Jesus Christ!" Tracy murmured.

"Not quite" the Prime Minister responded with a chuckle before shaking both their hands "Commander, it's an honour to finally meet you, please take a seat."

Whilst Tracy and the Commander took a seat each, the Prime Minister continued to pace up and down the room, clearly extremely worried.

"Commander" he began with some reluctance in his voice "In two hours time, the Home Secretary will be making a statement to the press regarding the death of the Administrator General."

"No surprises so far" the Commander commented.

"No I will grant you" the Prime Minister continued "However in that statement, I believe that he will announce two things that will surprise a lot of people, including myself."

"I thought you ran the country?" Tracy asked out of curiosity.

"You think so?" the Prime Minister managed a weak smile with a hint of sarcasm "I used to think that until recently, then I was briefed on a project known as the Omega Committee."

"Oh bugger....." the Commander commented under his breath.

"Oh yes" the Prime Minister stopped pacing up and down and looked straight at the Commander "An unseen Government within a Government. They are the ones who permit us mere mortals to run the country providing we run it to their advantage".

"Hang on a minute" Tracy interrupted "That bunch of loons blew themselves up on Westminster Bridge nearly a year ago."

"There is always more loons to go around I tend to find" the Commander commented.

"Exactly" the Prime Minister confirmed "Two weeks ago Jim Peters briefed me on what he had on them, their activities, past history, the lot" he tossed across a thick dossier of papers "Quite eye opening I must say."

"Speaking of which, how do you know this place isn't bugged?" Tracy looked around the cabinet office "As it occurs to me they would be extremely interested in this little meeting."

"Trust me, it isn't" the Prime Minister confirmed as he opened a desk drawer in the table and from it, chucked a handful of electronic devices onto the desk.

"Oh I see" Tracy looked at the disabled bits of what appeared to be listening devices.

"You said two things were going to be announced?" the Commander enquired as he began to discreetly sift through the dossier in front of him.

"Yes" the Prime Minister responded with some reluctance "The Home Secretary will announce that the coroner has declared the death of the Administrator General as suicide and that a new Administrator General has been appointed with immediate effect."

"Do what?" the Commander was understandably taken aback "There is no way on God's earth that his death was suicide!"

"Which is exactly why I am charging you with a most serious task" the Prime Minister replied, taking the seat next to the Commander.

"I want you to conduct an investigation into his death, find out who is behind it, what they intend to do and stop them before they damage the constitution, the Government and the Security Service" the Prime Minister was adamant.

"Could be tricky" the Commander responded "If the Omega Committee are worth one tenth of their dubious reputation, I am willing to bet they have picked someone for the Administrator General's job who works with them and that could make life extremely awkward."

"That is why I want you to pick your team carefully and ensure that you only use people you know and can trust implicitly" the Prime Minister instructed.

"I take it this will be on an unofficial official basis then?" Tracy asked.

"Indeed" the Prime Minister confirmed.

"And if I find enough evidence to nail the buggers?" the Commander was clearly starting to relish the potential challenge.

"You will have carte blanche from my office to annihilate the buggers" the Prime Minister confirmed with a wry grin.

"You know I knew there was a reason why I voted for you last time out" the Commander sat back with a smile.

It could only be described as a massed media scrum outside the front entrance of New Scotland Yard as the Home Secretary prepared to make a statement to the gathered members of the TV and printed press media.

"He really does look like he does not want to be there doesn't he?" Tracy remarked as she, the Commander, Fuller and a number of others watched the statement being broadcast live on BBC News 24 by way of the large screen at the front of the main Holborn Control Room.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I have a brief statement" the Home Secretary, a young looking fellow for a cabinet minister, in his early thirties, announced.

"Brief?" the Commander pondered "That will be a change!"

"At some time between nine thirty and eleven thirty this morning, the National Administrator General of the Department of National Security and Civil Defence, Sir James Peters OBE, was found dead in his office here on the top floor of New Scotland Yard." The Home Secretary paused for a few moments as the press digested this shocking news.

"The Coroner has conducted a formal investigation and concluded that the death was by suicide, a gun shot from the Administrator General's own Service Issue revolver. We are therefore not seeking anyone else in this case."

The press remained unusually calm as the Home Secretary prepared to continue, meanwhile this breaking news flashed across the bottom of the BBC News 24 screen.

"This is a tragic end to a life long career of one of the nation's most dedicated servants" he continued immersing himself in fake sympathy and hyperbole which the Commander saw straight through "and our sympathies are extended to his family at this sad time."

"Cobblers" the Commander commented.

"However the job of the Security Service must continue and the show must go on" the Home Secretary continued.

"Gentlemen, start your sound bites" Tracy additionally commented.

"As such I am pleased to announce that we have been successful in appointing a new Administrator General who will take up this onerous position with effect from the day after tomorrow."

"Do what?" the Commander was astounded. It usually took the best part of six months to appoint senior officers at National Head Quarters level, a fact that made this development rather too obviously a carefully planned plant.

"Assistant Administrator General Mark Lane will be the new Administrator General and I believe will bring about a sea change in the way the Service operates to face the new challenges of global terrorism and anarchy that we face today."

"Who?!?" all three senior officers and some of the Control Room Operators asked in unison.

"Simon" the Commander called "Make me proud and find everything you can about this Lane character and fast"

"You got it!" Fuller quickly left for the comfort of his office to start the process of digging the requisite dirt.

"Who are you going to put on your investigation team?" Tracy asked as they left the Control Room and headed for their office, arm in arm.

"Well I would like to have you on board, trouble is if we both start snooping around together where we are not supposed to, it may look a little iffy" the Commander explained.

Tracy followed the Commander into their office, before sitting down with a thoughtful look behind her desk which was notable as being significantly tidier and more organised than the disaster area that was her husband's desk.

"I have an idea that may sort out the problem" she responded as she leant forward and reached for the telephone on the desk.

"Who are you calling?" the Commander asked as Tracy speed dialled a number.

"You'll see."

The intercom on the desk buzzed momentarily and the sound of the Personal Assistant sat outside came across in a slightly crackly voice.

"Home Secretary" the voice called.

"Yes?" he responded after a brief pause when he had a problem finding which of the buttons on the ancient Government issue intercom system he was supposed to press.

"Mark Lane is here" she confirmed.

"Send him in."

There was a brief pause which the Home Secretary used to tidy up the papers on his desk and brush down his tie before he stood up ready to receive his guest.

"Home Secretary?" Lane inquired as he entered the office.

"Good afternoon" the Home Secretary stepped forward and shook the hand of the uniformed Security Service officer, a tall slim built man in his early forties, a goatee beard and small round framed glasses finishing off a slightly unexpected, indeed even slightly eccentric appearance.

"I'll come straight to the point" the Home Secretary continued as they each took a seat either side of the tired looking wooden desk.

"Two issues have raised themselves" he continued "The first is the implementation of the new Security Patrol Force plan which is what you will, at least in the public eye, be overseeing and implementing at the earliest opportunity."

"And the second?" Lane inquired as he leaned forward and took a sweet from the open glass bowl on the desk, unwrapped it and proceeded to eat it.

"I have it on an unofficial word that the death of your illustrious predecessor is being investigated at the instigation of the Prime Minister" the Home Secretary reluctantly informed him.

"Well it's been officially announced as suicide hasn't it?" Lane responded "Case closed I would have thought."

"If it were some itinerant flat foot stumbling around in the dark in search of facts that have been sufficiently well hidden then I would have said yes."

"But?"

"He has assigned the Divisional Commander of the Transport Division to the case" the Home Secretary's annoyance at this development was obvious.

"Bugger...."

"My thoughts exactly" the Home Secretary responded slinging a pen onto the desk with anger.

"Well surely he could be removed from the equation?" Lane suggested.

"Now hang on a minute Sonny Jim, I did not say that" the Home Secretary relaxed a bit in his chair.

"But surely it would be implied in my mandate, official or otherwise?" Lane commented

"What you considered to be implied is totally outside of my knowledge" the Home Secretary slipped into the role of scheming slippery politician easier than putting on a pair of woolly slippers.

"Mmm."

In the briefing room at the Holborn offices, the Commander sat forward in the chair at the top of the long board room style table.

Around the table where sat the four young officers he had met earlier, one of the Scientific Division's experts, Fuller and a couple of experienced officers selected from around the Transport Division.

"Good evening" the Commander began stifling a yawn that was firm evidence of what had been a very long and tiring day which was beginning to take its toll.

"I have here a letter of authorisation to investigate the death of the Administrator General Sir James Peters to the full extent of the law using and I quote 'any and all available means necessary'" the Commander announced brandishing the official looking letter in his hand.

"Who signed the authorisation?" Fuller enquired.

"The Prime Minister" the Commander coolly replied.

"Blimey...." Fuller's reaction echoed that of the rest of those in the room to this news.

"Now you have all been selected for three key reasons" the Commander continued "One, you are all trustworthy, I know each and every one of you and know that I can trust you. Two, you are key experts in specific fields of investigation and three, I want to keep this small and discrete."

The Commander sat back and looked down at the letter on the desk before him before continuing.

"You will divide into three teams" he continued "Team one under Commander Ibbertson of the Forensics chaps will be analysing every single piece of evidence we have on both the Administrator General and also Lieutenant David Carstairs, an officer of the Transport Division who was on secondment to the Administrator General and by weird coincidence turned up dead on a railway line at Clapham Junction first thing this morning."

The Commander paused a few moments as his audience scribbled notes before continuing.

"Team two under Commander Fuller here will be looking at this case from an electronic point of view, if a file or an e-mail exists somewhere I want to know about it" he urged.

"Team three will be under my direct control from here and will be looking at whatever it was Carstairs was investigating" the Commander added "In addition I believe I will be called upon to handle other interested parties who I expect will be cropping up to both aide and hinder this investigation at every opportunity. All clear so far?"

The unanimous nod of heads saw that all had been understood.

“In addition, Commander Telford of the Metropolitan Division will also be feeding us any intelligence he finds so we have sources pretty much everywhere” the Commander confirmed “Make good use of them.”

"Fuller has set us up a special Investigation Control Room down on the second floor with dedicated secure phone lines, computers, the works" the Commander paused and looked at his ancient watch "The time is now five thirty. In exactly twenty four hours from now we will meet here again and report on what we have found out so far. Any questions?"

"Are we allowed to kick in doors and use thumbscrews?" Fuller jokingly enquired.

"As long as you don't get any blood on my carpets you can do what you like within reason" the Commander wryly responded "One thing though" he added with clear warning in his voice "You divulge any information you receive to no-one outside this room with the exception of Deputy Divisional Commander Cavener or the Prime Minister himself, use your common sense and remember, walls have ears!"

It was now approaching six o'clock in the evening as Fuller and the Commander headed back to the main Control Room. It was clear that the Commander was struggling to stay upright with the fatigue he was feeling.

"Where's Tracy then?" Fuller enquired.

"She had some idea or other" the Commander responded "Gawd knows what she is up to!"

"I pulled everything I could on this Lane character" Fuller added passing a folder of hastily printed paper to him "If this guy is a legitimate career Security Service officer then I am the Queen Mother!"

"Let me hazard a guess" the Commander asked as he began to thumb through the papers he had been given "A perfect operational record with all the 't's' crossed and 'i's' dotted?"

"Too perfect" Fuller confirmed "Its all there, apart from his 'official' records, there appears to be very little around concerning him, it's almost as if he was born at the age of twenty eight."

"Mark Lane!" the Commander suddenly said out loud as he stopped dead in the middle of the corridor as if some serious realisation had come over him.

"Yes?" Fuller asked.

"That was the original name of Tower Hill station" the Commander commented as they resumed their journey to the Commander's office.

"A coincidence?" Fuller asked as they reached the office door.

"A message my young apprentice" the Commander concluded as they entered his office only for both of them to suddenly stop in their tracks at the sight of what greeted them inside.

"Evening Love" Tracy called, assuming that is it was Tracy as both her and her identical twin sister Jennifer where in the office and both dressed identically in Tracy's uniform complete with 'LT02' epaulette insignia.

"What on earth?" the Commander asked

"Well it's quite simple" the sister sat behind the desk explained "As Tracy is required to be remaining in charge of the Transport Division."

"Jennifer will be pretending to be Tracy for a while so that she can take part on your investigation team" the other sister finished.

"I can't tell the difference" Fuller commented aside to the Commander who was studying both sisters carefully to identify his wife.

"Piece of cake" the Commander pointed towards the sister seated behind the desk "That one is your girl."

"How did you know that?" Tracy asked confirming the Commander's conclusions.

"Wedding ring" the Commander held up his own hand in indication.

"Ah well never mind" Tracy remarked as she reached inside her tunic pocket and produced a set of keys which he held in front of her sister with a stern insistent look.

"Now these are the keys to my service issue motorbike" Tracy explained "Listen carefully, you are to take great care of it" she insisted "That means none of your legendary double hand brake turns and no funny stuff all right?"

"Yes sis" Jennifer responded as Tracy firmly placed the keys in her hand.

"Not a scratch!" Tracy warned jokingly as she made for the door where she rejoined her husband.

"Trust me!"

In the streets of the City of London late that evening, something unusual was happening. A number of red coloured Ford Transit panel vans where appearing around the streets.

They were distinctive from regular traffic by the discreet small blue flashing light unit mounted on the roof and some form of official looking logo on the sides and ends.

Blacked out windows in the rear doors as well as the front cab area added to their mysterious appearance as they spread out throughout the city and in some cases, further into the environs beyond, offering no indication of the vehicle's contents, occupants or indeed their purpose.

"Is that one of ours?" the Commander asked as Tracy drove them towards home in one of the Service's patrol cars.

"Is what one of ours?" Tracy responded as she pulled away from the traffic lights at Hyde Park Corner heading south.

"That van back there" the Commander nodded backwards as if to indicate the direction that the object of his enquiry had gone.

"Sorry missed it!" she responded.

"Oh it's probably nothing" the Commander relaxed back in the front passenger seat so very tired.

"Yeah..." Tracy added with some astonished reluctance "Probably nothing" she added as she suddenly pulled up at the side of the road.

"Are we home already?" the Commander asked as he reopened his eyes at the stopping of the car.

"Not exactly" Tracy pointed in the distance to the entrance of Victoria Station, outside of which a large gathering was in progress and appeared to be in the middle of a major fracas.

"Oh great!" the Commander responded as he got out of the car and surveyed the scene, a small and extremely outnumbered contingent of Transport Division officers along with a couple of Metropolitan Division ones who had been passing, where trying to sort out the mess to little avail.

"Shall we have a bash?" Tracy asked.

"Why not" the Commander confirmed as he and Tracy proceeded across the road towards the chaotic scene.

"Evening gentlemen" the Commander called to the officers present "Nice evening for it."

"Evening Sir" one of the officers extricated himself from the mess for a moment and joined them.

"Who are this charming lot?" Tracy asked.

"Rowdy party from the pub" the officer explained as he, the Commander and Tracy instinctively ducked when a bottle thrown from the crowd passed in their direction. "They were all fine and happy until two of them decided to have an argument and then it all kicked off."

"Reinforcements?" the Commander enquired almost anticipating the inevitable answer that was to follow.

"No one available" the officer confirmed as he looked around in desperate hope.

"Someone say there was a party?" the voice of the Commander's opposite number, the Divisional Commander of the Metropolitan Division enquired as he strolled up and joined the scene.

"You been working late as well then?" the Commander asked as the two senior officers shook hands in greeting.

"It's been one of those days" he confirmed.

"I know the feeling" the Commander commented as he decided to cut through the whole problem with his usual undiplomatic tact.

The rowdy crowd suddenly stopped when a gun shot pierced the air and everyone turned to see the Commander standing there, his arm with his gun pointed straight up, a few wisps of smoke coming from the barrel visible in the cold night air.

"Now that I have your undivided attention" the Commander announced "You have two choices. One, you can disperse quietly and go home in a calm and orderly manner or two, I can just arrest the lot of you and sling you all in jail for a couple of weeks."

Despite his short and slim 5' 7" stature, the Commander still presented a formidable presence, the presence alongside him of the senior officers that were the marginally taller Tracy and the towering Metropolitan Chief just added to the Commander's insistence.

"Ok mate" one of the larger men involved in the fracas responded, his hands held up in a surrendering apology "We'll go home".

"A very wise move I think you will find" the Commander replied with a wry smile before turning to the patrol officer present "Gentlemen, would kindly see these chaps and chappesses to their train?"

"Pleasure Sir" the officer who they had been talking to earlier responded and proceeded to set about escorting the party on its way across the bus station entrance road to the front of Victoria Station itself.

"Pity" the Metropolitan Chief commented "I was looking forward to a decent punch up".

The Commander barely had time to reply before the officers attention was drawn to another of those unmarked red Transit vans which at some speed pulled past them, turned into the Bus Station area and screeched to a halt alongside the station entrance where the escorted party had now reached.

"What's all this then?" the Commander enquired as they observed events from afar.

"Do you know that is the third of those vans I have seen tonight" the Metropolitan Chief commented "I thought they may have been yours."

"Not mine, I thought they where your boys."

"Metropolitan Division spend money on new motors?" the Metropolitan Chief commented with a chuckle "I wish I had the money in the budget".

"This looks like its about to get lively" Tracy motioned towards a second identical van that pulled in from the opposite end of the bus station and stopped nose to nose with the first one.

"Who are these clowns?" the Commander asked as they observed the doors of both vans quickly open and a large number of seemingly identical gentlemen, uniformed in black bomber jackets and heavily built with close shaven hair, leap out of the vehicles and make like a massive force for the crowd.

"What the hell is going on?" the Commander called loudly as he walked briskly over to the scene where the heavy mob had started grabbing hold of various members of the party and where proceeding to hit them vigorously into submission with truncheons without any warning or notification, even two of the escorting Security Service officers where hit indiscriminately.

"Sod off pal" the leader of the mob responded as he turned around abruptly to face the Commander. It was at this point that the Commander noticed the emblem on the man's jacket, basically a Security Service crest with an Omega symbol surrounding it.

"Who are you and your charming associates?" the Commander enquired as he held Tracy back who was intending to get involved in the punch up.

"Anti Crime Task Force, Enforcement Division" the head thug responded although it was clear that he was not really enthusiastic at disclosing this information.

"Who is your Commanding Officer?"

"The Administrator General" the thug added "Which means you matey can get lost as this does not concern you" he waved his night-stick truncheon in a menacing manner.

Meanwhile behind him, the now somewhat subdued, and in a few cases unconscious members of the party where being unceremoniously bundled into the back of the vans.

"Good night Sir" the thug offered as a means of an almost polite departure before he turned, got into the front seat of the van and with the roar of engines, the vehicles quickly departed into the night as swiftly and mysteriously as they had arrived.

"Control from Lima Tango Zero One" the Commander called into his radio as he observed the nearest van disappearing out through the bus station and onto Victoria Street "I need a check on a red Ford Transit registration number lima kilo five two echo whisky zulu and quickly please."

"I have got a bad feeling about this" the Metropolitan Chief commented wryly.

"Strangely enough, so have I" Tracy added.

"Lima Tango Zero One from Control" Fuller's voice echoed from the Commander's radio across the bus station.

"Are you still there?" the Commander enquired knowing full well that Fuller was supposed to have gone home ages ago, however his dedication to duty meant he was not really that surprised.

"Err yes Sir" he confirmed "Anyway, that van you asked for a trace on, we may have a problem."

"Oh do enlighten me my young apprentice."

"It's got a black flag on it" Fuller reported as he poured over the details on the screen in front of him "The moment I put that registration number into the system, the whole thing lit up with more red lights than your average Christmas tree."

"How many lights does a Christmas tree have?" the Commander asked aside to Tracy, his knowledge of anything to do with Christmas being notably hazy.

"A lot believe me" Tracy confirmed.

"Fuller, find out everything you can about that van and its distinctively uncharming occupants" the Commander requested "I want to know that vehicle's history right down to what the painter had for breakfast in the factory when it was built."

"Consider it done" Fuller confirmed "Oh by the way, this may just be coincidence"

"Go on...." the Commander responded as he, Tracy and the Metropolitan Chief headed back to the patrol car.

"Well Commander Davies up at Euston just rang and said a, and I quote 'job lot of rent a thugs' apparently leapt out of a red van outside Euston Square and lynched a bunch of tourists who were waiting for a bus earlier tonight."

"I don't believe in coincidence" the Commander responded.

"Since I met you Sir, neither do I" Fuller replied ruefully.

"Anything of this nature, I want it notified to me immediately" the Commander requested "and find out anything you can about some dodgy sounding lot called the Anti Crime Task Force Enforcement Division."

"Who?"

"Exactly."

"I best be off" the Metropolitan Chief commented "I have the feeling that whatever is going to happen is already starting and tomorrow is going to be a busy day."

"You may be right" the Commander opened the driver's door of the patrol car to allow Tracy in "Goodnight."

"Charter Amendment 164, Section 16" Fuller read from the screen, pretty much the only illumination in his darkened office. Indeed it was so dark, and his concentration on his task was so intense that he was blissfully unaware of Jennifer, still dressed in her sister's uniform, enter the office and suddenly place her hands on his shoulders.

"Whoa!" he suddenly jumped causing papers and items on the desk to fly everywhere making the desk seem even more chaotic than usual.

"Anything interesting?" Jennifer asked, kneeling down and resting her chin on his left shoulder.

"I found a reference to this Anti Crime Task Force Enforcement Division in an obscure amendment to the Security Service Constitution under a recently sanctioned amendment" Fuller explained.

"Sorry, you've lost me" Jennifer responded clearly completely confused.

"All Divisions of the Security Service including their operational mandates, command structures, etc, etc, ad nauseum are defined by the original United Nations approved Constitutional Document that was drawn up in 1982" Fuller explained "Are you with me so far?"

"So far yes."

"Well anyway, any changes to the overall structure or operational mandate are added in the form of amendments, the last recorded one as far as I was aware being when the London Transport Division was instigated to replace the British Transport Police."

"But?" Jennifer began to feel there was a problem appearing in the horizon.

"It would appear that someone has been adding further bits of their own" Fuller indicated various sections of text on his screen "One of which includes our local friendly loonies in a van."

"Who authorised all this?" Jennifer asked.

"Well, it would appear that is exactly what the late Mr Carstairs was trying to find out for the Administrator General when he met his grisly end if these access logs are anything to go by."

"Well you be careful" Jennifer warned "I do not want to have to one day scrape my future husband off a railway line!"

"I'll be all.... What did you say?" Fuller suddenly turned to Jennifer in mid sentence as it occurred to him he may have heard her say something vital.

"Oh nothing" Jennifer innocently replied as she kissed him "Come on, lets go home."

"There's something floating in my cup of tea" the Commander announced as he looked carefully into his mug whilst standing in front of the window that looked out from his and Tracy's Vauxhall apartment over the River Thames.

"Oooh red alert" Tracy sarcastically remarked from the adjacent kitchen area with a sly grin "Send in the special investigation team."

"Well its staring at me" the Commander remarked.

"That is a tea leaf" Tracy came across and looked into the mug in her husband's hand "It won't do you any harm."

"My eyesight must be going" the Commander gulped down the last mouthful of tea, leaf and all "I could have sworn it was a fly."

"When this latest crisis is over" Tracy suggested "Could I recommend you take yourself down to the Medical Section and get those lovely eyes of yours checked out."

"Long distance is fine" the Commander responded as he grabbed his uniform tunic off the sofa and put it on "I can see you all right, its close up I am having increasing problems with."

"I think I had better drive" Tracy pondered as they went out through the front door.

"It's not that bad!" the Commander joked.

"Lima Tango Zero One from Control" the Commanders radio burst into life the moment he switched it on leaving him to a resigned sigh.

"It must be nice to be so popular" Tracy grinned knowingly.

"Maybe" the Commander responded as they headed down the stairwell and out into Vauxhall Bridge Road "But fame does have its limits."

"Lima Tango Zero One go ahead" the Commander responded as they crossed the road to reach Vauxhall Underground Station "You do know what time it is don't you?"

"Yes Sir" the despatch officer back at Holborn responded "But Commander Fuller wanted a message passed on."

"Where is he?" the Commander enquired.

"Asleep on the sofa in your office cuddling Jennifer Caverner" the despatch officer confirmed with a knowing tone.

"Subtle" the Commander commented "So what was the message?"

"He asks you to meet him under the Strand at eight a.m. sharp and bring friends" was the cryptic reply.

"Confirm under?" the Commander responded.

"Confirmed"

"Well you had better go and wake him up then, Lima Tango Zero One out."

"New Command, new initiative, new horizons, new ideas!" Mark Lane proclaimed from a podium outside the main entrance to New Scotland Yard. This was his first press conference as the new Administrator General and he was milking it for all it was worth with the Home Secretary beaming like a loony alongside him.

"It's little and large!" Tracy commented as she observed with the Commander from the other side of the street outside the Broadway Post Office.

"Today" the Administrator General continued "sees a new dawn and a watershed in the way this capital is policed by us." At this point he outstretched his right arm and signalled to someone off to his right to do something. Soon one of those red transit vans that had been moving through the city the previous night appeared and pulled up in front of the press.

"You are joking!" the Commander thought out loud as the brutish bomber jacket uniformed morons alighted from their vehicle and formed a neat rank and file in front of it.

"This is our new hot spot anti crime task force" the Administrator General continued triumphantly "They are here to stamp down on crime and bring safety and security to our streets like never before."

"Euston we have a problem" Tracy murmured as she too could see the serious, indeed potentially lethal implications of what was happening here.

"I've seen enough" the Commander took Tracy's arm in his "Let's get the hell out of here."

"Amen to that" she responded as they proceeded to walk down the road towards the busy thoroughfare of Victoria Street which was packed with early morning rush hour traffic.

"This seems a very sudden initiative considering that the old Administrator General's body is not even cold yet" Tracy commented as they negotiated the traffic lights to reach the far side of the road.

"Whoever is plotting all this is both in a hurry and has not really quite thought the whole thing through yet" the Commander admitted as they turned right and headed for the bus stop.

"Their first fatal mistake?" Tracy asked as she looked down the road to see a number 507 bus, an articulated single deck vehicle, bend its way out onto Victoria Street and approach, slowing for the stop they were standing at.

"At least their third" the Commander responded as the bus pulled to a halt in front of them and the two officers boarded through the last set of doors into the rear section of the articulated vehicle.

"Third?"

"Well there is the body of one of our officers left very publicly, well as far as you and I are concerned, on a railway line" the Commander explained as they stood in the large standee area of the rear of the bus.

"Then there is the 'suicide' of the Administrator General that patently is not and coupled with that the very quick declaration of the cause of death and the parachuting in of some brainless politically motivated non-entity into the top job with barely a minutes notice."

"Do you ever get the impression someone is trying to draw our attention to something in a subtly hinted kind of way?" Tracy asked as the bus proceeded slowly down Victoria Street in the direction of its intended destination of Victoria Station.

"It seems obvious that someone with a personal political agenda is manipulating events, using the old fear of crime card to bring their rent a thugs onto the streets" the Commander concluded.

"Our old friends from the Omega Committee?" Tracy asked.

"I reckon so" the Commander's overall expression was grim as the bus pulled around the corner into Victoria Bus Station and came to a halt at the bus stand immediately behind an identical vehicle.

The two officers made their way off the bus and across the bus station towards the Terminus Place entrance to Victoria Underground Station. As they approached, a rumble of thunder through the grey skies above momentarily distracted the throngs of commuters that Tracy and the Commander were struggling to negotiate through.

"That's ominous" Tracy remarked as they descended down the short flight of steps into the north ticket hall below.

"That does not look too promising either" the Commander commented as he pointed ahead to the ticket barriers that led to the District and Circle lines.

The reason for his comment was all too clear, three gentlemen engaged in an argument with the Underground Station Staff at the barrier which was rapidly getting more intense and heated.

"All right that's enough!" Tracy called as she waded into the fray, brandishing her warrant card to back up her uniformed presence "Now what's occurring?"

"Stolen travel pass" the Station Officer responded "Belongs to this fella here" he indicated the smaller of the three men who was very red in the face and looked ready to explode. "I was challenging him about it when his two friends here walk up and start hurling abuse."

"You have anything to say in your defence sir?" Tracy demanded to know.

"It's a fit up, he lying!" he protested, still brandishing the questionable travel card.

"And your two charming friends here?" she enquired.

"Who do you think you are?" the more brutish of the two accomplices enquired aggressively "The Commander?"

"Well I'm not but..." Tracy pointed to her husband standing immediately behind the men "he is!"

"Boo...." the Commander responded in a Droopy the Dog style slow drawl voice.

"Ah!" the largest of the three men suddenly realised the seriousness of the situation, which now had been backed up by two Transport Division patrol officers who had joined the group.

"May I recommend you purchase a ticket from the machine provided" the Commander calmly suggested pointing out the bank of wall mounted machines nearby.

"Yes Sir" the original man who had the problem conceded and quietly moved away. He and his two now calmer associates were not to get far however as at that moment a commotion in the crowd suddenly began and a group of six of the bomber jacket uniformed heavies suddenly pushed their way forcibly through the crowd heading in their direction.

"You have no jurisdiction here you do know that?" the Commander informed the lead heavy as he approached, a nightstick truncheon being prominently carried in front of him.

"Up yours pal!" he responded but the Commander was having none of it and waded into the fracas as most of the heavies started to pile into the three men who had the ticket problems, whereupon they freely began to beat them into submission.

"Hold it right there!" the Commander called but they mostly ignored him.

"Lima Tango Zero Two to Control" Tracy called into her radio, "Get me some backup in the north ticket hall at Victoria Underground as fast as you can!"

By now the Commander and the two patrol officers were attempting to pull the heavies off those they were assaulting but before the Commander could make any headway, the lead heavy came up behind him, administered a blow to the midriff and then another to the back of the head, sending the Commander collapsing unconscious to the floor.

Within moments of this happening, the brutish thugs grabbed the three men they had been attacking and as one mass, hauled them out of the ticket hall up the steps to the street outside.

"Get after them!" Tracy motioned to the two patrol officers while she knelt on the floor holding the Commander's head in her hands.

"Lima Tango Zero Two, urgent message" she called into her radio "Ambulance required at that same location."

Outside, the two patrol officers gave chase to the rapidly departing party of thugs who were making a speedy departure down the road in the direction of one of those red vans which was sitting waiting with a driver revving the engine.

Within moments the men had bundled their three subdued prisoners inside the vehicle along with themselves before slamming the doors shut behind them. The doors were barely closed before the van revved off, forcing its way across three lines of traffic which were forced to swerve and narrowly avoid a collision.

As their van disappeared off into the distance observed by the two helpless patrol officers plus two more from the Metropolitan Division who had now joined them, looking as shocked and surprised as their counterparts, an ambulance arrived.

"Down there mate!" one of the patrol officers indicated the Station entrance to the two green clothed paramedics who had got out of their ambulance and quickly made their way down the steps.

"How long has he been unconscious" the lead Paramedic enquired as they reached their important patient and made an immediate analysis of his initial status.

"A few minutes" Tracy confirmed not looking up from him.

"Pulse and blood pressure ok" the other paramedic quickly confirmed.

"Right, let's get him out of here" the first paramedic responded as they prepared to lift him onto the stretcher that they had brought down with them.

"On three" the first paramedic called "One, two, three" whereupon they lifted the Commander's still body onto the stretcher as the two patrol officers held the interested crowd back to give them room to work.

"Lets roll" Tracy called and together the ensemble made for the exit.

"I must say these morons of yours are working out very nicely" Lane commented between sips of the cup of superior quality coffee that he had been handed by the Home Secretary.

"You know how long I have been waiting to unleash these guys?" the Home Secretary asked "Three years from the original proposal, then the selection process and the training."

"All so our little party has some muscle to bring about how we want things run" Lane confirmed.

"The aims of our 'Department' have always been to act in the best interests of the this country" the Home Secretary rested back in the luxury leather armchair, pausing only to look up at the doors of the study as they serenely opened and a senior looking gentleman, entered, walking with the assistance of an ornate antique cane.

"Good morning gentlemen" he announced "I'll have one of those please" he indicated the antique crystal decanter on the desk from which Lane proceeded to pour him a shot of the finest scotch it contained.

"Thank you young man" the senior looking gentleman responded taking the glass and sipping the drink.

"Mr Renquist, good morning" the Home Secretary greeted him.

"Well it would appear our wheels are well and truly set in motion" Renquist commented as he took a seat in one of the luxury button back leather chairs "Only a couple of slight glitches to sort out."

"Such as?" the Home Secretary asked as he poured himself another drink.

"That idiot of a Prime Minister for one" Renquist responded, a hint of irritation in his voice "I just can not believe he put the Commander in charge of the inquiry."

"Could be just a fact finding mission?" Lane commented.

"He is not going to find out any facts" the Home Secretary responded.

"I would not bet your life on that" Renquist informed them "Just remember that thanks to the Commander's efforts, my predecessor, not to mention at least one of your predecessors as Home Secretary both met with rather sudden demises."

"They were careless" Lane commented "And anyway if I recall correctly, Sharman was disposed of on orders from this Department in the end."

"Which brings me to my next point" Renquist continued "One of your hired thugs just smashed his baseball bat or whatever you have equipped them with across the back of the Commander's head."

"Oh dear" the Home Secretary responded with mocking sympathy "What a pity."

"Apparently according to our operative, he tried to arrest one of our special officers and got clobbered for his trouble" Renquist confirmed "He's on his way to Casualty right now."

"I think I had better get back to the Yard" Lane commented "I have this feeling there will be a furious young lady Commander banging on my office door any minute."

"Until this evening then?" the Home Secretary asked as Lane got up and headed for the door.

"Certainly" Lane confirmed "Let the games begin."

"What the hell happened?" the Commander groggily enquired as he came around in the back of the ambulance that was speeding its way through the streets of the City towards St Thomas's hospital.

"A couple of Lane's goon squad mistook the back of your head for a base ball I think" Tracy confirmed as she gingerly hugged her husband.

"I don't suppose anyone managed to arrest those loons did they?"

"They got away" Tracy confirmed "Sorry love."

"Lima Tango Zero Two from Zero Three" Fuller called on the radio which was barely audible over the roar of the ambulance's engines which with the sirens going as well, was making a lot of noise.

"It must be yours" the Commander confirmed as he looked down at his own badly damaged radio, the remains of which were just clinging on to the battered belt clip "I think for this one, the war is over."

"Lima Tango Zero Two go ahead?" Tracy responded.

"I take it Maam that you have been diverted from our meeting?" Fuller enquired.

"We err ran into some old friends" Tracy wryly responded as she braced herself against the g-force of the ambulance rounding a corner at some significant speed.

"Ah, well I am standing here with a few friends and we where wondering where you had got to" Fuller looked around the dusty disused Underground station platform on which he, the Metropolitan Division Chief and a number of significant other senior Security Service officers where waiting.

"Driver!" the Commander called to the Ambulance driver "Turn this crate around!"

There was a faint distant echoing of trains rumbling along, filtering down the little used tunnel of the Aldwych branch, the sound coming from services passing the other end of that short branch back at Holborn.

Fuller looked at the old 'Strand' name on the platform wall tiling as he twiddled his thumbs waiting for the most important guests to arrive for this clandestine meeting.

Suddenly the sounds of hard soled shoes on the cold concrete floor surface began to echo louder and louder as footsteps approached the platform from the old spiral staircase that now provided the only direct access from the surface to the old platform level at the long since closed Aldwych Underground station.

Fuller looked understandably concerned when the Commander, bandaged around the head and with blood staining his uniform, appeared from the access passageway supported on Tracy's shoulders, arriving on the platform where they were soon joined by the various other senior officers already present.

"I think you ought to take a seat Sir" Fuller suggested. The Metropolitan Division Chief bent down and operated the manual door release on the short train of 1972 tube stock, still in its original unpainted aluminium finish and an almost permanent resident of Aldwych.

Once the doors where open, Tracy and the Metropolitan Division chief helped the Commander to a seat where the others joined him.

"Ok Simon" the Commander gestured to Fuller "You are current breathing air way above your pay scale and the floor is all yours."

"Right" Fuller began obviously slightly unnerved by making this clandestine presentation to such a collection of senior Security Service officers but he quickly regained his composure with a cough and a deep breath.

"I think we are all agreed here that the death of the former Administrator General was not an accident, nor was it suicide?" Fuller asked, whereupon a unanimous series of nods of agreement confirmed this.

"Then we can also be agreed on the suspicious nature by which a virtual unknown was suddenly found to be put in his place to replace him as if by magic?" Fuller again looked around to see further nods of agreement before he continued.

"I am sure by now you will have all seen this Mark Lane's brand new Anti Crime Task Force goon squad as announced in a press conference this morning" Fuller extolled "What I need to know is have any of your officers outside of the Transport Division encountered these loonies in the red vans?"

"I had half a dozen reports of these nutters turning up all over north east London" the Area Commander for Stratford & Tottenham confirmed.

"Another three incidents at least that I know of in and around the Hammersmith area late last night as well" the Transport Division Area Commander for Hammersmith and Chelsea added.

"Looks like they are restricted to Greater London at the moment" the Metropolitan Division Chief commented.

"Every incident seems to have a similar structure" Fuller continued "They turn up unannounced, wade in with all batons blazing, kick seven shades of the proverbial solid waste matter out of any miscreant and anyone who gets near them, civilian or otherwise, then scarper before anyone realises what the hell has happened."

"This has our old friends from the Omega Committee written all over it" the Metropolitan Division Chief commented.

"What is the justification they are using for these idiots?" Tracy asked.

"My reckoning based on past performance" the Commander concluded "They will trigger or stage some sort of serious incident and then use it as justification to bring 'hard target' tactics and look popular with the voters."

"Oh yes, there's a General Election coming up isn't there" Tracy mused sarcastically.

"Have they ever done this before?" one of the area Commanders asked.

"Well nothing was ever proved" the Commander unwisely scratched the top of his head in thought only to touch a sensitive area which made him wince "But there were some marvellously timed terrorist and riot incidents in the late 1980's that provided just the right amount of political capital when it was needed most to change policies or influence votes."

"They would start a serious incident which could result in loss of innocent life just to satisfy their own personal political agendas?" the Metropolitan Division Chief asked incredulously.

"It's been done before" the Commander confirmed "And they usually did it in such a way that it gets firmly blamed on whichever anarchist or terrorist group is either in fashion or their target at the time."

"So what do we need to do?" Tracy asked.

"Firstly" Fuller explained "We need to keep this Lane character and any of those we know for certain we cannot trust out of the loop. We only use the back channels for communication, no open phone lines, no uuencoded e-mails. We tell them only what we want them to know when we want them to know it."

"Check your offices for bugging devices" the Commander cut in "The last time I dealt with these characters, there were listening devices coming out of our ears."

"I think that last lot I dealt with are still in the left luggage office at Paddington even now" Fuller chuckled.

"Secondly" the Commander continued "We find out everything about this Lane guy. He is a phoney but he must have existed somewhere some when so we follow the paperwork trail."

"There is a guy I know at Central Records who might be able to help" the Metropolitan Division Chief suggested "He's reliable, if there is dirt he will find it."

"Don't suppose he works for MI5 on the side does he?" Fuller asked.

"Actually, now I come to think of it...."

"Well anyway" the Commander continued "I want to know everything about this guy and who he associates with, friends, relatives, pets, the works. If you find anyone we should be taking a closer look at, I will supply a small team drawn from the Transport Division's undercover squad to get into their lives and squeeze the pips to see what squeaks."

"What about the goon squads?" Tracy asked.

"With their official sanctions, we are rather restricted on what we can do with them for the moment but their time will come" the Commander confirmed "In the meantime any dirt on their operations or personnel can of course be accidentally leaked to our usual investigative friends in the media, preferably with some nice clear pictures to go with it."

"Major incidents?" one of the Area Commander's asked "You said they may try something?"

"What groups are fashionable at the moment?" the Commander asked.

"Islamic fundamentalists, animal rights, anti-capitalists, anti-war, anti anything American, far right, far left, pro cannabis, anti-cannabis, anti speed cameras, anti congestion charge, anti four wheel drives, anti bendibuses on route 73" Fuller reeled off the list that got more sarcastic as he went along "You name it, there is an anarchist group out there grinding an axe for it."

"They will either go for one really big public incident or a whole series of smaller ones" Tracy concluded.

"Well that either means a full scale riot with lots of Daily Mail readers looking on horrified and demanding strong action is taken" the Commander pondered "Oh lots of smaller incidents, petty punch ups, car bombs, that sort of thing."

"So we need reliable intelligence" the Metropolitan Chief commented "And we need to make sure we all keep each other informed."

"We need to ensure we use only people we can trust" the Commander added "And use only reliable secure communication lines as I expect our friends have probably got every single telephone line well and truly bugged by now. If that means using carrier pigeons, smoke messages and heliographs then that is what must be done".

"There is one other thing" Fuller cut in just before the Commander was about to conclude the meeting "Someone has been rewriting the Security Department Constitution on the quiet as well."

"What sort of things have been changed?" the Metropolitan Division Chief cautiously enquired.

"Mainly things about these new goon squads, one or two areas about the chain of command and a few other bits" Fuller confirmed producing a rather battered and mangled piece of paper with a summary of the changes printed on it, from his jacket pocket and passing it to the Commander.

"This kind of thing needs official Security Service staff referendums, authorisation from the Home Office and ratification by the United Nations Security Council Regional Committee" the Commander exclaimed "So what the hell is going on here?"

"I think its time we seriously considered the possibility that we may have to go against our own Commander in Chief and the chain of command" Tracy cautiously advised "And given their past form, they will not hesitate to eliminate anyone who gets in the way of their plans."

"All right then" the Commander concluded "Keep your ears and eyes wide open and watch your backs."

A couple of waiting passengers leaning against the platform wall of the northbound Piccadilly Line platform at Holborn were suddenly surprised when the wall panel turned out to be a hidden door that opened. From it emerged the limping Commander, Tracy and the Metropolitan Division Chief who had just ridden down the line from Aldwych in the old tube train.

"Why is it I suddenly have the urge to go home and lie in bed for a week?" the Commander asked as Tracy closed the door firmly behind them and they proceeded to walk up the platform towards the exit.

"As long as I can be lying alongside you" Tracy commented.

"But of course" the Commander retorted.

"You two really do love each other don't you?" the Metropolitan Chief commented as they reached the bottom of the Piccadilly Line escalators and proceeded upwards, standing correctly on the right hand side.

"Damm right" they both responded in unison as they looked into each others eyes whilst the escalator continued to carry them upwards.

"Considering the nature of our work" the Metropolitan Division Chief commented "What would happen if one of you were to be killed in the line of duty?"

They reached the top of the Piccadilly Line escalator and rounded the corner to the bank of four main escalators that led from the Central Line and intermediate level to the surface.

"Well" the Commander mused as he looked Tracy lovingly in the eyes whilst the escalator carried them to the surface "If anyone did harm her, I would use everything in my power to track them down, drag them blindfolded into a darkened room and then introduce them to new, previously unheard of and extremely grisly definitions of the word pain."

"I'd just shoot them" Tracy admitted as they reached the top of the escalator into the busy cramped ticket hall. Turning right to the side High Holborn exit, the Commander duly placed his warrant card on the round yellow sensor that opened ticket gate 55 and they passed through, out into the street outside.

"Looks likes there a storm coming" the Metropolitan Division Chief commented looking up at the threatening grey clouds that were passing overhead.

"Possibly in more ways than one" Tracy pointed ahead across the crossroads where Southampton Row and Kingsway running north to south crossed High Holborn running east to west.

"What am I supposed to be looking at?" the Commander asked as he pulled a toffee from his pocket, unwrapped it and popped it into his mouth.

"I think your good lady wife is referring to the two goons lurking near your office" the Metropolitan Division Chief motioned towards the lower front entrance of the large glass fronted building that sat on the corner of High Holborn and Kingsway, the home and head office of the Transport Division.

Acting in a manner that could only be described as loitering were two of the heavy goons, seemingly waiting for trouble to occur so they could unleash their heavy handed bully boy tactics on some other poor unsuspecting passer by.

"Are you thinking what I am thinking?" Tracy asked the Commander.

"I believe I am" he confirmed before grabbing Tracy's radio and discreetly lifting it to his mouth.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Control" he called quietly.

"Control, go ahead Sir"

"Listen carefully" the Commander instructed "In exactly two minutes I want you to have every available armed officer in the front reception area in full lynch mode."

"Yes Sir" came the slightly puzzled and reluctant response.

"The targets are the two bomber jacketed gentlemen currently on the corner of High Holborn and Kingsway" the Commander added "When I give the word, I want them grabbed and dragged inside to the custody suite as fast and as smoothly as possible, understood?"

"Understood Sir, Control out."

"Would you like some backup?" the Metropolitan Chief enquired.

"I'd like a stiff drink" the Commander wryly commented as they proceeded with purposeful strides across the road, at one point against the flow of the traffic lights but the Commander's presence usually meant traffic came to a halt without a problem and this was just such an occasion.

"Good morning" the Commander announced as he stepped up to the two goons who turned and faced him, responding with a troglodyte style grunt of acknowledgement.

"Sod off mate" the larger of the two morons uttered.

"How do you fancy being arrested for loitering with intent?" the Commander asked as the Metropolitan Division Chief and Tracy went around behind the two men effectively surrounding them, "We are doing a special offer this week on arrests."

"You can't touch us" the defiant answer came back.

"Oh really?" the Commander responded calmly "And why not?"

"Because we'll beat the crap out of your lot again" the lead goon nodded towards someone standing behind the Commander who looked to one side to see that they had been joined by four more of these unpleasant nutters.

"Do you know what I am?" the lead goon asked.

"Ugly all day?" Tracy quickly responded with a wry smile.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Control" the Commander called into his radio "Send in the surprise package."

Within seconds, a whole squad of officers emerged from three exits of the Transport Division building and proceeded to attempt to arrest the goons who immediately resisted with fists flying.

With Tracy and the Metropolitan Division Chief sitting on top of two of the men, the Commander waded into the mass of uniformed bodies that was sprawling all over the pavement and out into the road. Chaos duly ensued as the two sides battled with each other which after a couple of minutes saw all but two of the goons under arrest and being dragged kicking and screaming inside.

The remaining two, including the leader had managed to evade capture, however they were not to get away as clean as they had hoped as Tracy had seen them running across the road, using a passing bus in an attempt to shield their escape.

On the opposite side of the road they piled into their waiting van and started the engine by which time Tracy had ensured the injured Commander was being taken inside by the Metropolitan Division Chief before running for a patrol car that was parked nearby.

"Someone had better warn Traffic Division" the Commander commented as he saw his wife start the Patrol Car's engine and with a squeal of tyres that Mad Max would have been proud of, shoot off down the road towards New Oxford Street in pursuit with lights and sirens at full wail.

Reckless driving was the order of the day for the two escapees in the van as they forced their way through the traffic sending pedestrians and vehicles swerving in all directions. Just as many thought it was safe to return with their passing, they suddenly found themselves having to move back out of the way again as Tracy in the patrol car came flying through with equal pace.

"Lima Tango Zero Two to Control" Tracy called over the radio as she swerved through the stationary buses around the area of Tottenham Court Road, swerving left into Shaftesbury Avenue against the flow of traffic.

"Control, go ahead" Fuller responded, almost out of breath having just arrived in the Control Room by running up the stairs.

"I need any available units to intercept a red Ford Transit van index number Lima Whisky Five Four Echo Tango Delta currently heading south on Shaftesbury Avenue towards China Town" Tracy called as she continued to manoeuvre through the heavy traffic that was being scattered all over the place by the pursuit.

"Occupants are to be considered armed and dangerous" she added as ahead the van banked right with no regards for the traffic lights or the safety of passers by whatsoever. Moments later Tracy turned to follow, her passage made a little easier with everyone having now got out of the way.

"Lima Tango Zero Two" Fuller called with new information "Be advised that there are two patrol cars ready to intercept them in the Piccadilly area."

"How is that mad husband of mine?" Tracy enquired as she attempted to manoeuvre through the traffic.

"Metropolitan Chief has taken him to the medical room" Fuller informed her "Kicking and screaming I might add."

"Victor Papa X-Ray One Zero Two to Lima Tango Zero Two" the radio suddenly called.

"Morning Sis" Tracy greeted her twin sister Jennifer who was the one calling.

"I've got one of the fastest pursuit cars from my colleagues at the VIP Protection Division ready and waiting at Green Park if you would care to persuade your pursued morons to pass in this direction" Jennifer responded.

"Should be there any moment now" Tracy observed as the van ahead swerved against the flow of traffic across Piccadilly and on its way, clipped the front offside corner panel of a bus that was coming the other way, sending pieces of red painted metal and glass across the road.

"All right that's it!" Tracy exclaimed "No one smashes up a Routemaster in my town and gets away with it!"

As the red van, now devoid of its front offside headlight and with a few additional dents and scrapes along its side, continued to pick up speed along the length of Piccadilly, Jennifer Caverner observed it approaching from her vantage point outside the Ritz Hotel where her unmarked black high speed VIP Division ministerial car was waiting with the engine running.

"Ok" she murmured to herself as the van drew nearer and she quickly climbed back into the driver's seat "Let's dance."

Just as the van pulled past her, Jennifer quickly pulled out right behind it, skilfully performing the classic movement beloved of old cop films of putting the flashing blue light through the side window onto the roof.

"Oh hell there's another one!" the passenger in the van commented looking back to see the front end of Jennifer's powerful pursuit vehicle filling the rear view mirror.

"And unlike that other one" the driver of the van commented as he narrowly missed hitting his second bus of the day "this one seems to know pursuit driving."

"Sorry!" Tracy called ahead when she accidentally misjudged her speed and nudged the rear bumper of her sister's car with her own.

Jennifer managed a wave out of the window despite being busy in the pursuit which was now rapidly approaching the down sloping ramp which led into the Hyde Park Corner underpass. Here on the entrance to the underpass, a Metropolitan Division patrol car was waiting parked across the road.

"Hold on!" the van driver called as he suddenly swerved left and took the surface road towards Hyde Park Corner itself and the Wellington Memorial which dominated the centre of what was in effect a large traffic light controlled roundabout.

"What the hell is going on?" the driver of a number 8 bus called as the van forced its way through the queued stationary traffic, damaging the lower offside side panels of the Stagecoach London double deck Trident bus and sending further parts of vehicles in all directions.

"Oh hell!" Jennifer commented but her specialist driving skills and the fact that her car was marginally narrower than the van she was chasing meant she avoided damage despite the high speed with which she passed through the narrow gap.

Tracy was not quite as fortunate as her slightly haphazard driving style saw her clobber the side kerb stones with quite a hard impact proceeding to reshape the offside panelling and ripping part of the rear bumper off.

"Oh damm!" Tracy blurted out as she looked in the rear view mirror to see the bits of her patrol car she had left behind being struck by the patrol car behind her that had also now joined the pursuit.

"This guy is nuts!" Jennifer remarked as she executed a textbook handbrake turn to pull right and proceed on to the Wellington Memorial island where the van was now crossing, dodging a troop of Royal Horse Guards who were traversing the carriage road at the same time.

Two Security Service motorcycle units that were escorting the horse guards duly saw what was going on and with loud hailer warnings and waving of arms, quickly cleared the way of innocent passers by who were in danger of at least being run down by the reckless van if not being struck by various bits of vehicle that were proceeding to detach themselves from Tracy's car and scattering themselves in all directions.

"Sorry!" Tracy called as she went past.

"All right what's happening?" the Commander enquired as he limped into the Control Room and squinted through his failing eyesight to see what was being shown on the main screen at the front of the room.

"Both Caverner sisters are currently in pursuit of the red Transit" Fuller confirmed "And one of them is wrecking the car and the surrounding fixtures and fittings as she is going along."

"Oh I wonder which one that is" the Commander mused sarcastically as he slumped into a seat "Where are they now?"

"Heading west at a rapid rate through Knightsbridge" Fuller confirmed as the four vehicles involved were shown on the screen as they speeded past one of the city's many traffic monitoring cameras.

It was clear to Jennifer's experienced eye for a pursuit that the van she was following clearly had a more powerful engine than was normal for a vehicle of its type and even with her powerful car, she was starting to fall behind somewhat, not helped in any way by the traffic that was thronging the area even though a few did try and make as best an effort as they could to move out of the way of the pursuit.

Suddenly, as Jennifer approached a box junction against the run of the traffic lights, she was forced to swerve completely sideways as a large articulated lorry appeared right across her path.

"Thank you!" Jennifer sarcastically commented as she looked out of her side window at the van that was now disappearing out of sight into the distance. However her thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the sound of a crunch as Tracy arrived on the scene and was unable to avoid demolishing a traffic bollard alongside.

"Hi Sis!" Tracy commented.

"I thought you took the advanced driving course?" Jennifer enquired looking at the somewhat decrepit condition of her sister's borrowed patrol car.

"Never had the time" Tracy responded as she, with some difficulty opened the door and clambered out "I always seem to be busy with something else."

At that moment, Tracy and Jennifer both looked up to see the underside of the Metropolitan Division's helicopter appear overhead.

"Hang on" Jennifer interrupted "I have got an idea" she added as she reached inside her car and picked up the radio.

"Victor Pappa X-Ray One Zero Two to Eagle One" she called.

"Eagle One receiving, go ahead" the helicopter pilot hovering above responded.

"I don't suppose you can see where our friends in the van have got to can you?"

"Heading west towards Earls Court" he confirmed.

"Ta very much."

"I think we lost them boss" the passenger in the van commented as he looked back in the cracked rear view wing mirror.

"We had better head on in then" the driver responded as he began to slow down to normal traffic speed, in an attempt to blend in with the traffic inconspicuously.

Behind them at a distance of some two to three hundred yards, Jennifer was now trying to do the same, in fact the removal of the blue flashing light from the roof and her passenger, Tracy, removing her uniform tunic was all that was required for them to appear as a normal car in the traffic while they meandered around the various circulatory systems that made up the Earls Court area road network.

"Are you thinking what I am thinking?" Jennifer asked her sister.

"Yep!" Tracy confirmed "If we tail them, we will know where they are based and exactly how much we are dealing with."

The scrunching of gravel beneath the wheels was the only sound audible above the low drumming of the van's engine as it cautiously advanced up the back road of an old industrial estate towards what appeared to be a row of semi-derelict warehouse and factory type buildings.

Approaching a set of wooden double doors, the van driver sounded his horn twice, paused then once more which brought the attentions of a similarly attired guard who stepped out through a small access door and after a brief check to see who it was, signalled inside.

Within moments the double doors were being opened, a large shaft of light from the interior highlighting the fact that it was now early evening and darkness outside was beginning to close in.

Once inside, the driver and passenger got out of their van, signed in their presence on a clipboard on a nearby desk and then proceeded up a set of metal steps to an office above the large warehouse space which was filled with vehicles and personnel in various states of readiness.

"What do you think?" Jennifer asked her sister as they pulled up at the side of the road that overlooked the old industrial estate.

"I think we should go and take a look" Tracy urged as she calmly checked her gun.

"You don't think we should call for some backup or something?" Jennifer enquired.

"What and spoil the surprise?" Tracy was obviously anxious to get stuck into this lot.

"All right then" Jennifer responded as she gently moved off and drove down to the site, extinguishing the headlights as they approached the corner that led to where their quarry had run to.

"I've got a really bad feeling about this" Jennifer quietly commented as she opened the car door and stepped outside, checking her weapon was ready and loaded just in case.

"Trust me!" Tracy urged as she went on ahead, sticking to the left hand side of the alley using the side walls and strewn industrial clutter as cover for her approach.

"When you say things like that, it's usually when people start shooting at you" Jennifer reminded Tracy as she joined her half way between their car and the doors of the target building.

"Well?" Jennifer asked.

"I suppose we could just knock" Tracy suggested.

"We don't know how many of them there are in there unfortunately."

"You're right" Tracy mulled the problem until her eyes alighted on a roof access ladder that led up the side of the building "It would be impolite to call on them unannounced at this late hour" she added sarcastically.

"This is a really bad idea" Jennifer commented to herself as she followed her sister over to the rusty old ladder, years of disuse obvious from its condition. "Anyway I thought you were afraid of heights?"

"That's my husband" Tracy responded as she took her gun and put it in her mouth before beginning her ascent up the ladder.

"I am going to regret this!" Jennifer commented as she too took her gun in her mouth and began to follow her sister up the ladder.

Approximately three quarters of the way up the ladder, a horizontal walk way extended all around the side of the building and was positioned immediately adjacent to a row of dust covered rusty window frames, many of them featuring cracked and broken panes of glass.

As Jennifer joined Tracy who was kneeling on the walkway, her sister opened one of the windows carefully to see inside.

"Holy Toledo!" Jennifer quietly exclaimed as she saw inside.

"Yeah" Tracy agreed "These guys are serious!" she commented as they continue to look down into the warehouse which contained a large number of the heavy goons, vehicles and equipment.

"How many do you reckon are in there?" Jennifer asked.

"I don't know" Tracy scanned around trying to do a mental add up "Hundred and fifty, maybe two hundred" she estimated.

"At least whoever is behind this lot have had the sense not to give these morons guns" Jennifer commented thankfully.

"Quiet!" Tracy urged pushing her sister to the deck of the walkway as she heard the sound of a vehicle approaching the building. Carefully the two sisters made their way along the walkway to the end and peered around the corner to view the new arrival.

"Is that who I think it is?" Jennifer commented.

"I think so" Tracy confirmed as they saw the new Administrator General alight from one side of the dark saloon car "And he's brought a friend."

"That looks like one of my motors" Jennifer commented as she looked at the vehicle, which appeared to be very similar to her own and a number of other such vehicles allocated to her VIP Protection Division.

"The Home Secretary?" Jennifer nearly blurted out too loud when she recognised the second man to exit the car from the opposite side "What is it with you, your mad husband and lunatic Home Secretary's?"

"Don't know" Tracy mused "Just seem to collect them I guess,"

"Ah well I suppose everyone needs a hobby" Jennifer commented as they moved back to the open window to continue their observations now that the Home Secretary and the Administrator General had proceeded inside.

"Captain!" the Home Secretary called to the senior man present "My compliments on a magnificent operation." he shook the man he identified as the Captain by the hand.

"Thank you Sir!" the rather brash bearded man responded "It's always good to get some proper head smashing action!"

"Quite..." the Home Secretary commented however Tracy noted that the Administrator General seemed slightly ill at ease with what was occurring here.

"What do you think Mr Lane?" the Home Secretary called over to the Administrator General who was looking around.

"Mmm?" he looked up from the table he was looking over "Oh yes, very efficient operation, well planned."

"He doesn't look too convinced does he?" Jennifer commented before suddenly realising that the Administrator General, who had been casually looking around, had now seen them up in the top of the building. Strangely though, he did not react as either of the two sisters had been expecting him too.

"Home Secretary" the Administrator General went over to him and guided him away, being careful that his back was facing the two hiding officers above "We were discussing Phase 2 I believe."

"We will need the best snipers you have got" the Home Secretary "and the hit needs to be clean and untraceable back to our little organisation."

"Public or private?" the Administrator General asked as they walked through the warehouse.

"Oh definitely very public" the Home Secretary confirmed with an evil grin, "Then we can move these guys to the main operations site and let them lose with some proper firepower" he indicated a series of locked cages at the far end of the warehouse containing a significant quantity of firearms, ammunition and other weaponry.

"Well there goes the neighbourhood" Tracy commented as she too saw the cages the Home Secretary was indicating, indeed she noted that the Administrator General seemed to step out of the way to facilitate a better view of them for her.

"If these morons get out onto the streets with that lot" Jennifer commented "It will be a war zone!"

Below them, Tracy noted that the Administrator General had left the Home Secretary talking to some of the men and admiring the weaponry. He looked around to ensure no one was watching him before looking up at the window where the two officers were watching from and discreetly signalling with a finger across his face towards the doorway.

"What the...?" Jennifer began but by then Tracy was already half way back down the ladder "Hang on a minute, wait for me!" she called after her sister.

At the bottom of the ladder, Tracy already had her gun drawn as a precaution when Jennifer joined her. "Would you mind if I asked what the hell is going on?" she enquired.

"Yeah, why not?" Tracy responded, her concentration clearly on the area ahead that marked the short distance from the access ladder to the corner of the building. Suddenly a figure appeared silhouetted by the poor lighting from behind causing both sisters to train their weapons on the mysterious visitor.

"Good evening ladies" the Administrator General announced as he stepped forward, one of the few working lights in the area illuminating his face and his formal uniform for the first time.

"Why is it I get the distinct impression this is a Babylon 5 moment?" Tracy enquired.

"Huh?" Jennifer was by now thoroughly confused but her sister had some idea of what was really going on here.

"No one here is exactly what they appear?" the Administrator General casually replied.

"Well you are up on your science fiction knowledge, I'll grant you that much" Tracy responded as she lowered gun although she still chose not to holster it at this time.

"Let's just say we have mutual friends" the Administrator General explained.

"If you were really working with those morons in there" Tracy concluded "You would have raised the alarm the moment you clapped eyes on us and we would probably not be in too great a shape right about now."

"You have a point there" Jennifer agreed and decided to lower her gun now, convinced that maybe this gentleman was indeed not all that he appeared.

"Could you please pass on a message to your husband" the Administrator General asked.

"Sure" Tracy responded.

"Tell him that we should meet alone at my name sake before the first service tomorrow morning" the Administrator General explained as he reached inside his pocket and removed a small business card from his pocket and passed it to her. "Also give him this, I think he will find it very illuminating."

"Consider it done" Tracy responded.

"You might also consider checking his e-mail for him as well" he suggested "I know he never has been totally au-fait with modern technology."

"You can say that again" Jennifer commented aside as she continued to scan around, ensuring that their conversation was remaining private and unobserved.

"Oi! Lane, where the hell are you?" the Home Secretary called from the door way of the warehouse.

"That's my cue" the Administrator General confirmed "Take care my dears" he doffed his forelock in an old gentlemanly way and backed into the darkness from whence he had emerged moments earlier.

"Where did you get to?" the Home Secretary asked as the Administrator General approached the car.

"Needed some fresh air Sir" he confirmed convincingly as he joined the Home Secretary in the back of the car.

Jennifer squinted into the darkness as she attempted to make out the face of the driver of the car as it reversed and pulled away. Unfortunately the standard VIP Protection Division specification of darkened bullet proof windows defeated her efforts and all she managed was the registration number.

"Come on" Tracy urged and together they made their way discreetly back to their own vehicle.

"Victor Pappa X-Ray One Zero Two to Control" Jennifer called over the radio as they drove back into Central London.

"Victor Pappa Control, go ahead."

"Who's driving our ministerial saloon Lima Foxtrot Five Three Echo Oscar Alpha tonight?" she enquired.

"No one" the VIP Protection Division Control Room dispatcher responded after a brief pause as he checked the computer. "It's in the garage at Hendon having its brakes done and a respray." he confirmed.

"Thank you!" Jennifer responded with a clear irritation in her voice as another potential line of enquiry fizzled away into nothing in front of her.

"Lima Tango Zero Two to Control" Tracy called.

"Lima Tango Control go ahead" a tired sounding Fuller responded.

"I need a meeting of our special investigative team in the briefing room in thirty minutes" she called "And get the Chief of the Metropolitan Division there as well."

"What if he has gone home?" Fuller enquired, rather uncertain about having to disturb a senior officer's precious time off as he might not take it too happily.

"Go around, knock on his door and drag him out of bed if you have too" Tracy instructed "Just get him there."

"Will do."

The bleeping of a pager disturbed the otherwise silent atmosphere of the front living room of Security Officer Commander Elizabeth Baker. From the kitchen doorway, Baker looked at the bleeping device sat on the coffee table and momentarily stared at it in case this would make the call go away.

"Well it was worth a try" she commented to herself as she stepped through into the front room and picked up the small bleeper, silencing it and reading the message that was being flashed up on its small digital display.

A more serious business like look came over her as she read the brief message before picking up the telephone on the coffee table and dialling the number that had been displayed on the bleeper.

"Call Echo one six one five" she responded as soon as she was connected before a brief pause.

"X-Ray Romeo" she then stated in a manner that suggested she was speaking to an automated system, maybe even one with some form of voice recognition.

There was another, this time longer pause as she listened carefully to a set of instructions that were being re-laid to her before she responded.

"Confirmed received" she stated before hanging up.

Baker looked down at the telephone for a few moments gathering her thoughts about whatever it was she had just heard. Then with a brush down of herself and a quick look up at the mirror on the wall above the fireplace, she turned away and proceeded to the hallway and the cupboard under the stairs that she then opened with a key.

The high security double dead lock on the door was most unusual for what at first glance seemed an ordinary under stairs cupboards, even more so when Baker switched on the light to reveal the usual things such as ironing boards, vacuum cleaner and other domestic household items, however it was the secure cabinet set into the far end wall of the cupboard that set this apart from the ordinary.

With another key, Baker carefully unlocked this cabinet and from within it pulled out a large metal briefcase, slightly longer and narrower than that which you would expect to see on a train or in the street carried by a regular commuter.

Baker extinguished the light and closed the cupboard door behind her before taking the case into the front room where she set it down on the coffee table and seated herself on the sofa immediately in front of it.

With a professional approach, she carefully set the combination dials on the two locks to the correct number and then released the catches before opening the case to reveal its contents, the components of a high powered long distance sniper's rifle with an accompanying small case of ammunition.

With care, Baker checked the contents before firmly closing the case and standing up. With the case in her hand, she left the room, paused in the hallway to pick up a long overcoat and a handbag before opening the front door, extinguishing the hall light and then closing the door firmly behind her.

She looked around at the quiet dark cul-de-sac in which her modest house was situated before taking a deep breath and setting off into the darkness of the night.

"You've tried everything?" Tracy asked Fuller as the two stood in the doorway of her and the Commander's officer observing the sleeping Commander on the sofa adjacent to the door.

"Noises, loud bangs, biscuits wafted under the nose" Fuller went through the bizarre list of things he had tried in his attempts to wake his sleeping Commanding Officer "I did think of hitting the fire alarm until I remembered it sounds at that frequency of tone he can't hear at."

"Let me try" Tracy duly proceeded into office and stood over her dozing husband surveying him for a few moments before kneeling down and closely whispering something in his ear.

Whatever she said, it must have worked for the Commander suddenly stirred into life and wearily sat up rubbing his eyes.

"What time is it?" he asked.

"Gone eight o'clock Sir" Fuller confirmed.

"Can I go home now?" the Commander asked Tracy as he looked down at his dishevelled, blood stained and ruined uniform.

"I wish" she responded "However we are about to have a briefing, something has come up."

"That's the trouble with crooks these days" the Commander commented as he got to his feet "Absolutely no consideration for other people's social schedules whatsoever."

Tracy smiled and helped her husband out of the office and down the corridor to the briefing room where the Chief of the Metropolitan Division was waiting in the doorway with the rest of the special investigation team already sat down inside.

"Crikey mate" he commented seeing the generally tatty state of his colleague "You look even more dishevelled than usual!"

"You should see the other guy" the Commander quipped "Speaking of which, have we got anything out of those goons we nicked yet?"

"Still refusing to say a dickie bird" Fuller confirmed.

"Figures" Tracy commented as they entered the briefing room.

"All right then" the Commander enquired as he took a seat at the head of the table "What is occurring then?"

"Firstly" Tracy announced "We have identified the operations base for our local friendly goon squad." At this point Fuller activated the large wall screen behind them and displayed a map which Tracy got up to refer to.

"They are operating out of an old industrial warehouse complex right about here" she leaned forward to peer more closely at the map before placing her finger on the screen.

“There are at least a couple of hundred of these charming gentlemen” she continued “And they are about to be issued with guns, I believe as a direct response to something that is going to happen tomorrow.”

“Any idea as to what?” the Commander enquired.

“Not exactly” Tracy was slightly coy about her response “but I might know a man who does.”

“Who?” the Metropolitan Division Chief asked.

“Hang on a minute” Tracy stepped across the room and after looking out into the corridor to ensure no body was about, closed the door firmly.

“The suspense is killing me!” the Commander commented with anticipation.

“More likely to be your cholesterol level!” the Metropolitan Division Chief grinned.

“The new Administrator General is not all that he seems” Tracy announced in a slightly hushed tone.

“Well I knew that” the Commander responded “But I take it not in that way then?”

“He spotted Jenny and I observing from a roof skylight” Tracy explained “Now if he is a bad guy, then he should have immediately raised the alarm and had the pair of us shot on sight, except he didn’t.”

“Come again?” Fuller asked although it was not clear whether his shock was this news or the thought that his beloved Jennifer had been in serious danger.

“He was with the Home Secretary and made a point of turning him away so that he did not see us” Tracy went on to explain further as she sat down again next to her husband.

“He then met us outside and gave me a message for you” she added passing the business card that Lane had handed her earlier over to the Commander. “He asks you to meet him at, and I quote his name sake before first service tomorrow morning.”

“Fuller” the Commander called “District and Circle Line timetable if you please.”

“On the screen in front of you” Fuller responded after he had tapped a few keys on the laptop he had open in front of him.

“The 05.27 clockwise Circle Line service” the Commander confirmed.

“Let me guess” Tracy interjected “Mark Lane is Tower Hill.”

“Well done love” the Commander confirmed “The original name for Tower Hill was Mark Lane.”

“If he is a mole for our side” Fuller suggested “We can look on this as an opportunity to gain some valuable information.”

“That reminds me” Tracy added “Lane asked that you check your e-mail.”

“I’ve got one?” the Commander asked.

“I’m on it” Fuller responded as he set about the task of hacking into his superior officers e-mail account, a task he found all too easy.

“You know Sir” Fuller commented as he made a successful entry “You really ought to change your password, it’s a little obvious.”

“Why what is it?” the Commander asked. His general lack of expertise at anything resembling modern technology was well known and ably demonstrated here.

“I’ll give you a clue” Fuller responded but he could tell from the Commander’s expression that his superior officer was still none the wiser. “Begins with a ‘t’, ends with a ‘y’, has ‘rac’ in the middle?”

“You’re right, it is obvious” the Commander agreed “Silly me, anyway do I have any e-mails?”

“Forty two” Fuller announced.

“Forty two?” Tracy was astonished.

“Five e-mails inviting you to invest in a non-existent timeshare in Benidorm, three asking you to log on to a bank account you don’t have, seven offering you enhancement of body parts you don’t have, three offering you enhancement of body parts you do have, three from me from four years ago, several urgent memos from Central Command dating back at least two years and, interesting...” he tailed off.

“Well?” the Commander asked.

“One huge e-mail from the Administrator General” Fuller announced “The dead one that is, and sent I reckon less than half an hour before he died.”

“What’s in it?” Tracy went around the table and peered over Fuller’s shoulder.

“Files, photographs, surveillance reports, personnel details, all sorts of stuff” he responded.

“And the message itself?” the Commander asked.

“Here you go” Fuller passed a print out of the e-mail message itself over that he had just printed off.

The Commander rose from the table and went over to the window that looked out over the City, to read the message to him self with a little privacy, although he found that he had to squint a little thanks to his failing eyesight.

From Sir James Peters OBE, Administrator General.

My old friend. There comes a time in everyone's life when he or she must make a decision that comes above all others. Today as I sit here, that decision is one of loyalty, honour, trust and duty. I know that by upholding my oath to the Service, the country and the people it serves, I must now make a decision that will almost certainly end my life.

Trust is a very important word and over the many years with the Police and Security Service, I have always known instinctively who I can trust and rely on. Today, I call upon you in the wake of my imminent death at the hands of dark forces, to carry on the struggle against those who would destroy everything for which we have worked and suffered over the years, to satisfy their own dangerous personal and political agendas.

For years, I have been secretly co-ordinating a project with the assistance of another Division, a project to identify and eliminate those of the secret organisation you and I have come to know as the Political Operations Executive or Omega Committee.

A year ago, you scored a major victory against them, however like the Medusa, when you cut off one head, another one quickly grows again in its place and this time they are preparing to move in, in full force and with undeniable speed.

They must be stopped, however for me now the battle is about to come to an end. I pass to you in this e-mail all of my files and data I have on them that I have spent over fifteen years accumulating. There are no other copies in existence and I have never kept these files on a networked system.

I know that you have been encountering our friends of the Omega Committee for many years now, probably since the day you first put on your Service uniform all those years ago. They were behind the Hainault Enquiry massacre as you know, but that is but one of numerous black operations, political manipulations and sanctioned terrorist activities that they have had a hand in organising and executing over the last twenty years.

I know that you have the connections, the intelligence and the strength to carry out this operation to its final ultimate conclusion. Working on the theory that you do not open this e-mail for a day or two until after my death, I am assuming that by now two people will have or are about to identify themselves to you, one of those being the Prime Minister who will give you instructions and authorisation to carry out what needs to be done.

The Omega Committee have operatives in every walk of life and division of Government, the Civil Service and the Security Department except two.

Your section is the only front line Division that is completely free from their influence, a feat achieved though the combined vigilance of both you and myself over the years. The other division untainted by these scum is, if you are who I believe you are, well know to you but certainly not to them and that is the most potent weapon we have against them.

You have to take them all down together in one fell swoop, no one can be allowed to escape otherwise they will wriggle free and begin again like an unchecked mould. Two people outside of the two divisions I have discussed that you can trust beyond all doubt are the Chief of the Metropolitan Division and also Commander Prowse of the Specialist Operations Division who will also be contacting you when you need his services. The indisputable loyalty of your staff, your lovely wife Tracy and of course her sister Jennifer needless to say are without question in this matter.

Probably at some time around when you are reading this message, you will have received a request for a meeting with someone who up until now you have understandably not trusted, however names have many meanings and no one here is exactly what they appear.

The symbol that will appear on the reverse of the card he has given you will dispel any doubts or fears you may have. He is the key to obtaining the information you will need to bring them down so make the best use of this valuable opportunity.

Finally, I wanted to say that it has been an honour serving with you and Tracy. I have come to think of you as good friends as well as excellent colleagues and I know I can rely on you to make things right.

Above all else, take care and watch your back.

Jim Peters.

The Commander turned over Lane's card that he had received from Tracy and looked at the small hand drawn symbol on the reverse. It was cleverly done so as not to arouse any unwanted attention, being to an eye not deliberately looking for it, merely a random doodle.

"What do we need?" the Commander asked as he rejoined the group at the table and sat back down again.

"Well whilst I can identify some of our targets from these files, we would need to identify everyone who is working for or who has sympathies to these guys." Fuller explained.

"There has to be some sort of membership list or something somewhere" Tracy commented "They must have some sort of administrative computer system of some kind."

“That is what I have been thinking about” Fuller agreed “The problem is finding it. It will most likely be some anonymous server, little more than a large grey computer case probably hidden away in some little visited dusty corner of a Government building somewhere or a sub system off a main unit even.”

“If I could find out the location of the main system” the Commander speculatively enquired of Fuller “do you think you could access it?”

“Well in theory yes” Fuller confirmed “Once I had physically attached a transmission system to it, I could run various access hacking programs from here although an isolated system may be more suitable just in case they are monitoring.”

“All right” the Commander ordered “Get what you need. Beg, borrow, steal and kill if necessary as I want you to be ready to go the moment we locate their system.”

“You’ll have to be very careful” the Metropolitan Division Chief cautioned “If they pick up that you are trying to access their system, they will shut down and move on, after which we would be back to square one again.”

“What about our dead officer on the railway line?” the Commander turned to one of the young junior officers.

“Beyond the identification we found on him, the pathologist has not yet been able to formerly identify the body due to the facial damage.”

“Any idea what he was working on for the old Administrator General?” Tracy asked.

“Some communications company fraud apparently” the second junior officer responded as he consulted a file in front of him that was laced with copious amounts of hand written notes “Nothing obviously connected though.”

“Keep checking” the Commander insisted “and give the pathology guys a kick up the jacksi from me.”

“Yes Sir” the two junior officers responded before getting up and leaving the room.

“What are we missing here?” Tracy asked.

“Well sleep for one thing” the Commander wearily commented.

“I’ll have a team of my best surveillance guys on stand by for tomorrow morning” the Metropolitan Division Chief confirmed “I’ll also do a bit of calling in of favours and see if I can find out anything” he added as he turned to leave.

“Be careful” he insisted as he reached the door prior to leaving.

“Simon” the Commander looked across at Fuller “I need your best efforts on this one, anything you need, name it.”

“I don’t suppose Jennifer could help me could she?” Fuller tentatively asked.

“I’ll see what I can do” the Commander commented as he and Tracy left the room, exiting out into the corridor arm in arm.

“Oh my” Tracy commented.

“What?”

“He’s got it bad hasn’t he?”

“Who?”

“Simon” Tracy responded “He’s definitely got that loving feeling for my sister.”

“You can say that again” he confirmed as they reached their office, whereupon after stealing a quick kiss from his beloved, the Commander went over to his desk and sat down behind it.

On the computer screen a small flashing folder icon had appeared in the bottom Windows taskbar which was not there earlier. He clicked on it and a small message appeared on the screen that he quickly read before closing the window.

“Something wrong love?” Tracy asked as she joined him alongside and put her arms around him.

“Oh probably” the Commander responded with a tired smile before reaching for the telephone which he had to excavate from beneath the piles of paper that were lying on top of it. He lifted the receiver and pressed the speed dial button on the keypad for the Transport’s Division’s Kings Cross office and was soon quickly connected.

“Hello Eddie?” the Commander asked “Yeah, it is your boss. Listen, I have got a package coming in on the first train from Doncaster in the morning” he explained “Can you see it is taken care of and safely delivered?”

There was a brief pause as the person who the Commander had called responded before he continued. “Yep, usual deal, cheers mate” where upon the Commander hung up and turned back to his understandably confused looking wife.

“What was that all about?” she asked.

“Oh just a little house keeping” the Commander responded attempting to dismiss the matter out of hand casually. He was about to lean forward and kiss Tracy when all thoughts of togetherness were suddenly and rudely interrupted by the piercing scream of the fire alarm claxon.

"Oh tell me you are joking" Tracy commented, the irritation clear in her voice even though it was barely audible above the noise.

"Simon!" the Commander called into his radio as with Tracy hand in hand he swiftly exited out of the office into the corridor.

"Control" Fuller responded by now already in the front main entrance foyer, helping the receptionist evacuate the ground floor areas to which members of the public had access.

"What's happening?" the Commander had to shout to make himself heard, not only over the din of the alarm but also the sound of bustling people as the staff evacuated the building by way of the fire exit stairwells.

"One moment Sir" he responded as the last of those in the reception area left leaving just him and the sound of the siren. Seeing that the area had now been safely evacuated, he went over to the fire alarm control panel situated on the side wall behind the reception desk.

"Ground floor rear fire exit" Fuller announced over the radio as he examined the electronic status readout giving the location in the building where the alarm had been activated.

"Tracy, make sure everyone is out and get a headcount sorted" the Commander insisted.

"Right love" she responded, parting with a quick kiss. She wanted to go with him but realised that she had a duty to oversee the safety of everyone else so that was what took priority.

The Commander watched briefly as Tracy brought up the rear of the convoy of personnel making their way down the stairs before he left the stairwell, walking through deserted corridors which thanks to the evacuation, had a look of having been suspended in time with items left where they happened to be at the time and still steaming half drunk mugs of coffee sat on desks with documents on the screen still paused in mid sentence.

Outside, Tracy gathered the two hundred or so staff and visitors in the emergency collation area on the opposite side of High Holborn, in front of the site of the former British Museum station on the corner with Bloomsbury way.

"Anyone missing?" she called whereupon various section officers confirmed that all their staff who should be present had reported in whilst in the distance, the sounds of approaching fire appliances with their distinctive sirens echoing around the narrow streets, grew ever closer.

The Commander's hard soled shoes made quite a noise on the checker plate metal steps as he made his way swiftly down the rear emergency staircase to the ground floor level. Opening the large fire resistant door that led from the staircase out into the rear entrance area, the Commander was cautious as he entered.

However the only presence there was a very tired looking plant by the door, although the broken glass on the floor from the fire alarm button unit did signify someone had been there fairly recently.

Suddenly the door to the outside opened, causing the Commander to pull his gun out and point it at the person who was making their entrance.

"Commander!" the Fire Brigade officer exclaimed with a wry smile.

"Sorry Dave" the Commander responded as with a slight embarrassment he re-holstered his gun again as the Fire Officer was joined by two of his colleagues, all fully attired in fire fighters overalls, helmets and all the accompanying equipment.

"I'll let you off this time" the Fire Officer chuckled "Now get the hell out of here until I give you the all clear, you know the rules."

"All right then" the Commander departed through the doorway and out into the street, pausing only briefly to negotiate his way past the parked up fire appliances that lined one side of High Holborn as they attended the call.

"The gang's all here" Tracy announced as the Commander rejoined her, taking her arm in his.

"Even the prisoners?" the Commander enquired.

"They were shifted to Euston an hour ago" Tracy confirmed as together they looked up at the lights shining from their office building out into the dark streets.

"Can't see anything burning, can you?" Fuller commented as he joined them.

"Oh heck" the Commander suddenly called out in realisation "What about the files?"

"Forwarded the whole lot to an alternative off site location" was Fuller's slightly cryptic sounding response.

"Oh yes, well done lad" the Commander patted him on the back.

"All clear!" the Fire Service chief called as he exited the building and approached them "No fires here that we can find."

"Odd" Tracy mused as she led the night shift duty staff back inside the building, swiftly followed by everyone else who snaked across the road back to the office.

Within a few moments, the Commander was back on the command floor and went directly to Fuller's cramped and equipment strewn office.

"Is this office messier than usual or am I just imagining it?" the Commander enquired.

"It's not your imagination" Fuller confirmed from his position kneeling underneath the desk where he was scrabbling around amid the myriad of cabling that was to be found down there.

"Let me guess" the Commander responded with a slightly resigned sigh "We had visitors."

"Yep" Fuller confirmed as he stood up and brushed down his trousers "I believe they were probably looking for this" he passed across a data CD to the Commander.

"I took the liberty of writing all the old Administrator General's files onto this just in case something like this occurred" he explained.

"Good thinking laddie" the Commander congratulated him "Now take this with you and go home" he handed Fuller back the CD who reached over to his desk for a jewel case into which he carefully put it.

"Don't let it out of my sight?" Fuller remarked.

"Exactly!" the Commander confirmed as he turned to leave, Fuller quickly joining him in the corridor.

"I know this is going to sound a little clandestine" the Commander began "but I want you to meet me beneath The Monument with that CD in your hand at one o'clock tomorrow afternoon."

"Right" Fuller responded clearly confused.

"Don't worry" the Commander added "All will become clear. Good night!"

"Can we go home now?" Tracy asked as the Commander entered their office and collapsed back into the chair behind his desk.

"What time is it?" he asked.

"Half ten just gone" Tracy confirmed.

"Come on then" the Commander responded as he rose from the seat again and joined Tracy, putting his arm around her, a move she reciprocated herself.

Tracy stirred monetarily and rolled over but remained asleep. If she had awoken however she would have realised that not only was it four o'clock in the morning, but that also her husband, the Commander was no longer alongside her.

He was in fact already dressed, in his full dress uniform and was at that time standing in the bedroom doorway observing the love of his life as she lay there in total peace. Given the choice, naturally he would rather be still lying alongside her but he had to be elsewhere early that morning.

The Commander let out a bit of a sigh as he took a last final look at Tracy, before turning away and heading through the house to the kitchen where his breakfast, his usual standard two slices of toast, were merrily burning away sending a plume of smoke up into the air.

"Oh bugger!" the Commander retorted as he came across the smoke filled scene and reached through the clouds to activate the release mechanism on the toaster, sending the two blackened charred slices of what was bread high into the air and crashing down on the kitchen table, shattering into a pile of charcoal when they landed.

He quickly resorted to opening the window to let out the smoke but his efforts were too late as the smoke percolated through the kitchen door into the corridor and activated the fire alarm.

"Ah heck!" the Commander responded as he grabbed an old case file that was sitting on the kitchen table and waved it beneath the smoke alarm until it stopped before returning to the kitchen where the smoke had now sufficiently dissipated.

At least the kettle had managed to boil without too much drama and the Commander proceeded to pour the boiling water into the mug next to it and brewed his much needed cup of tea.

"Morning love" Tracy called from the kitchen doorway "I see your cooking skills haven't improved" she commented wryly as she inspected the burnt offerings littering the kitchen table before coming up to her husband where they kissed.

"Sorry about that" the Commander responded somewhat embarrassed. He had hoped to have been able to get away without disturbing her from her sleep.

"So what's all this about then?" Tracy asked seeing the clock displaying the early hour of the day.

"Little meeting I have to attend" the Commander explained as he removed the tea bag, squeezed it and tossed it into the bin successfully.

"Our mutual friend?" Tracy enquired.

"Exactly" he confirmed as he poured the milk in before putting in his customary four spoons of sugar "I am meeting him before the first train which is at 5.27. Hopefully I can get some answers to this mess."

"Tower Hill" Tracy suddenly realised "Originally called Mark Lane."

"Very good my dear" the Commander confirmed as he took a gulp of tea "Have a slice of toast."

"I think I'll pass thanks!" Tracy looked back at the burnt remains of her husband's breakfast.

"Look love" the Commander turned around to come face to face with Tracy "I've erm got to attend this Gatwick Airport thing later, why don't we meet up for lunch when I get back to Victoria."

"You're paying?" Tracy asked.

"I think we've earned it don't you?"

"You're on" she enthusiastically responded.

"I best be off" the Commander enthusiastically gulped down the last drop of his cup of tea before kissing Tracy "Keep an eye on the shop whilst I'm gone, I have a feeling it's going to be a hectic kind of day."

"See you later love."

Outside, it was still pitch dark, only the illumination afforded by the street lighting, a few windows of the surrounding buildings and the one or two passing vehicles lit the mainly dark cold scene.

The Commander pulled his uniform overcoat over himself tightly to keep out the cold, despite it being an early autumn morning, it was still surprisingly chilly outside.

He walked alone across Vauxhall Bridge Road and towards a nearby bus stop as in the distance, the lights of a number N36 night bus approached, the Commander stepping forward to the pavement kerb edge and indicating to its driver his intention to board.

As the double deck bus pulled to a halt, the front double doors opened and the Commander boarded.

"Morning Chief" the cheery bus driver called as the Commander placed his warrant card onto the yellow round card reader pad.

"Morning" he responded as the card reader beeped to acknowledge the Commander's authority to travel.

"Where to today?" the driver casually enquired.

"Victoria" the Commander confirmed with a smile.

"Take a seat" the driver confirmed as he closed the doors and proceeded to manoeuvre back away from the stop as the Commander moved on into the sparsely populated lower saloon of the vehicle and take up a seat at the back next to the offside emergency exit door.

From the front window of their apartment, Tracy observed the bus below pull away and disappear into the distance out of view. Deep down inside her, she had this terrible feeling that something awful was going to happen and there was not a thing she could do about it.

With the light traffic conditions of that early time of the morning, it was not long before the Commander was alighting at London Victoria Station, before making the short walk across the front of the massive main line station building to the bus station and a waiting N8 night bus that was at the front of a queue of identical double deck buses, their only difference being that the ones immediately behind were daytime number 8's all ready to start the day traffic runs.

It was a relatively quiet and uneventful journey of about twenty minutes through the centre of London as far as the stop at Museum Street where normally the Commander would have proceeded to the Holborn office.

This morning however, he was continuing his journey, changing to a number 25 articulated bendibus that was immediately behind the number 8 he had just alighted from.

On board, the Commander took up the front nearside forward facing seat at the very front and observed the traffic ahead which was now just starting to build up as the first hints of the morning rush began to appear.

It was ten minutes past five in the morning and the first rays of sunlight began to turn the sky progressively lighter shades of blue as the bus pulled up outside the Tower of London and the Commander alighted, thanking the driver as he stepped out onto the pavement.

He took a deep breath, inhaling the cold fresh morning air before walking up the steps to the rather non-descript 1960's built concrete entrance to Tower Hill Underground Station, an extremely simple and rather dull structure in contrast to the impressive and famous Tower of London, its next door neighbour that it served.

The duty Station Supervisor was just opening the front gates as the Commander approached, ready for the first train of the day that was due in a little under fifteen minutes.

"Good morning Sir" he acknowledged as the Commander arrived.

"Morning" the Commander responded as he entered the station booking hall, an area as equally uninspiring as the exterior, before passing through the ticket barriers which were still all locked open at that time.

The left hand staircase took the Commander down to the sub-surface platforms 1 and 2 which served westbound District Line and clockwise Circle Line services.

Not surprisingly given the early time of the morning and the fact that the Underground system was only just beginning to wake up, the grey tiled platforms were deserted with only a dark locked out of use train of District Line 'D' series stock stabled in platform 2 being the only signs of any recent activity.

As the Commander stood at the far end of Platform 1, the background noise of the lights, the occasional whirring of the under frame equipment on the stabled train and the scuttle of a mouse down on the track bed was suddenly joined by the noise of approaching footsteps, the distinctive steps of quality hard soled shoes coming down the steps and then onto the hard platform surface.

"Good morning Commander" the Administrator General called as he arrived on the platform and joined him at the far end "Thank you for accepting my invitation."

"Well when I read your calling card" the Commander produced the card that had been passed to him the night before and held it up "Let's just say the penny dropped."

"I am not your enemy Commander" the Administrator General reassured him.

"That much is now clear to me I must say" the Commander responded.

"Sorry about the subterfuge Commander" the Administrator General apologised as he joined him at the end of the platform "but unfortunately it was at the instance of my illustrious predecessor."

"You're Carstairs aren't you?" the Commander concluded.

"Some of the time yes" the Administrator General nodded in agreement, "Shall we?" he directed an arm in the direction of the steps back up to the surface booking hall.

"So who was the unidentified stiff with your warrant card that I had to have scraped off the tracks the other day then?" the Commander enquired as they walked together to the steps and began to ascend.

"The Omega Committee operative who was supposed to become the new Administrator General" he explained as they passed back through the ticket barriers and across the booking hall.

"When Jim Peters found out what they were planning to do, he had me brought in and the originally intended guy, err shall we say, went for a walk" the Administrator General confirmed.

"Straight onto a live electric rail line" the Commander commented "Shocking way to exit."

"Not exactly" the Administrator General continued as they exited outside into the low glow of early dawn and went over to the walkway parapet that looked towards the Tower of London. "We arranged to have his body lobbed out of a passing slam door train the previous night at just the right place."

"Well at least he went out on a decent train" the Commander added ruefully.

"Ever heard of X-Ray Division?" the Administrator General enquired as they leaned against the parapet.

"By reputation certainly" the Commander responded thoughtfully but carefully "The Security Service's Secret Service, a group of approximately thirty specialised officers working in deep under cover positions with a support and command group of high ranking officers."

"Pretty much about right" the Administrator General confirmed "Ordinary service personnel to anyone and everyone, however some of them are placed within the service in key assignments to watch and observe any corruption going on."

"And you are one of these legends" the Commander turned the card over showing the doodle on the back to be the Greek symbols for X and Y "Call sign X-Ray Yankee I presume."

"Pleased to meet you sir" the Administrator General confirmed "The one key thing about the X-Ray Division officers is that not one of them knows who any of the others are, all communication is done through untraceable encoded channels and controlled from a central computer facility somewhere in central London."

"I only ever knew for certain the identity of two of the divisions officers" the Commander confirmed "Jim Peters was X-Ray Alpha, the Commander in Chief and although he suspected, to this day he never knew for certain who his operations deputy was."

"So he was right then?" the Administrator General confirmed.

"X-Ray Bravo at your service" the Commander confirmed. "It's funny, someone once told me that apparently once all the X-Ray Division officers were in the same room at the same time many years ago and not one of them knew that any of the others were on the same team, such is the nature of our little sideline."

"For fifteen years X-Ray Division have been keeping the Omega Committee and one or two others in check with the view to eventually bringing them down" the Administrator General commented as he looked across at the Tower of London.

"We'll wind up being locked up in there if we are not careful" the Commander smiled ruefully.

"Which brings me to the most important matter in hand" the Administrator General continued with some hesitation

"I'm not going to like this am I?" the Commander could feel this was going to be bad news.

"An attempt is going to be made upon your life later today" the Administrator General confirmed "The Omega Committee have sanctioned your life for termination, I even had to counter sign the black order."

"Charming!" the Commander responded indignantly. "When and where?"

"Victoria Station, when you return from Gatwick Airport" the Administrator General grimly confirmed "They are sending four sharp shooters from the goon squad to take up positions in the roof spaces. I have however taken the liberty of providing you with some cover."

"Commander Baker by any chance?" the Commander enquired.

"Best long distance sniper in the service, got an Olympic medal for shooting, but I see you already know about all that."

"Well lets just say she also works for us shall we say" the Commander confirmed.

"I have asked for Commander Al Longton to provide a support team" the Administrator General explained. "When you leave Gatwick Airport, go south one stop to Three Bridges and he will have your body armour and those exploding blood things which Baker will hit at Victoria to add to the realism."

"What about the four goons?" the Commander spotted a potentially fatal flaw in the plan.

"She will take a position overlooking the exit from the South Central concourse platforms, then just before you arrive, she will silently take out the four snipers before shooting you with an audible shot, triggering the blood explosions at the same time."

"You've got this all worked out haven't you?" the Commander clearly did not like this at all but at least it meant he should get out of this alive at any rate.

"Don't thank me" the Administrator General "Jim Peters drew up this plan two weeks ago with Baker in case they tried anything like this."

"Then I guess with the grieving missus cowered over me, I am whisked away into a waiting ambulance in full public view?" the Commander concluded.

"And then you will need to lie low until you are ready to co-ordinate the raids" the Administrator General confirmed "I'll toss the press a few running medical reports and some suspects, although I expect the Home Secretary will not be able to resist the photo opportunities."

"One other thing" the Commander enquired "In order to bring them down, we need to know where all of them are. Where is their central computer core?"

"In an old military storage and research facility near Reading" the Administrator General confirmed "I'll get the details through to Fuller on the usual back channels."

"I best get going then" the Commander was about to turn away when another question occurred to him and he turned back.

"Who is Omega One?" the Commander asked "Their Commander in Chief?"

"Someone well tied in politically" the Administrator General confirmed "But beyond that I don't know, although there is some guy named Renquist who is prominent."

"Be careful" the Commander cautioned him.

"You too."

"The train now arriving on platform one is the 05.35 Great North Eastern Railway service to London Kings Cross" the automated announcement heralded as the lengthy dark blue train glided almost silently into the platform, the major noise being restricted to the powerful class 91 electric locomotive pushing on the rear.

On the platform, Commander Elizabeth Baker stood up and picked up her case before casually strolling across the platform to the edge where the train was now almost at a stop. A few moments later the red painted single leaf doors at the ends of each carriage opened effortlessly and a few passengers alighted before Baker boarded the leading first class carriage.

Once inside the first class saloon, she quickly found her reserved seat and placed her case in the overhead luggage rack and sat down, relaxing into the forward facing single seat.

No sooner had the train recommenced its journey south than a train steward appeared.

"Good morning madam" he greeted her cheerfully "Your complimentary breakfast will be served in a few minutes and here is your paper." he handed her a copy of that morning's Daily Telegraph newspaper before moving on up the carriage.

Checking over her shoulder to see she was alone and unobserved, Commander Baker opened the folder newspaper a little to reveal a manila document folder with a set of instructions inside which she removed and briefly glanced through.

Baker then put the folder away and to one side and picked up the newspaper as the tray containing her breakfast arrived and the train picked up speed on its way along the East Coast Main Line bound for London Kings Cross.

"Oh you are kidding me" Fuller exclaimed as he surveyed the detailed blue prints he had displayed on the large flat screen on the desk in his office. This exclamation was well justified as when coupled with the information contained in the two files he also had with him, meant he had a major problem.

"Morning Simon!" Tracy called as she passed the doorway but Fuller was so engrossed in his work he did not register her presence causing her to double back and peer around the office door post.

"Earth to Simon, is there anyone there?" she enquired whimsically, still to no effect so Tracy decided on a change in tactics to attract his attention.

"Jennifer's just arrived" she announced.

"Where?" Fuller suddenly came to attention finally.

"Sorry, just joking" Tracy apologised as she came into the office "I was having trouble getting your attention."

"I think it is about time I made an honest woman of your sister" Fuller commented.

"I do hope so" Tracy responded wryly, "I've got next April in the office sweepstake."

"Do what?"

"Never mind" Tracy responded "Anyway, you have the appearance of a man with a problem."

"Possibly" Fuller passed over the building plans he had on the desk "I have managed to find out where our mutual friends system core may be located."

"What is this place?" Tracy asked as she looked over the blue prints.

"Its a Government research establishment in an old military compound" Fuller explained "And from what I can work out, the computer system core I need to access is secreted in a storage facility around about here somewhere" he indicated part of the site on a plan of the location on his main computer screen.

"Do we know what the security is like?" Tracy asked.

"That's the major problem" Fuller responded grimly "If its a standard issue Government Research Facility then it will have holes in it you can drive a bus through with no questions asked, however if our mutual friends suspect that I am likely to be heading their way, it's likely to be tighter than a ducks backside in a monsoon."

"Keep working on it" Tracy encouraged as she left the office.

"The train now arriving on platform 3 is the Great North Eastern Service from Edinburgh Waverley" the announcement boomed out across the main passenger concourse of Kings Cross Station.

Watching the train arrive at the platform was Commander Eddie Hopkins, the duty station officer for the Transport Division's Euston & Kings Cross office. He correctly stood at the concourse end of the platform to be immediately opposite the first class coaches when the train came to a halt at the buffer stops.

He stepped forward as the leading driving van trailer that formed the front end of the train, glided past, squealing with its brakes progressively to a stop which brought the leading first class coach to a stand still immediately in front of him.

After a momentary pause, the red painted passenger doors opened automatically and the train began to disgorge its passengers out onto the hard platform surface.

Eddie stepped forward to help an elderly passenger from the train before Commander Baker reached the doorway, observed the officer there to greet her and then stepped onto the platform.

"Commander Baker?" Eddie enquired "Commander Edward Hopkins, I've been asked by the Commander to meet you."

"Thank you" she responded "Do you have a car waiting?"

"Come with me" Eddie showed her the way and together they walked down the platform back to the station concourse, now thronging with early travellers bound for destinations north along the East Coast Main Line.

Outside the station, the area had the impression of a building site and it took some manoeuvring through diverted passageways and hoardings to reach the waiting Security Service car that was parked around the corner.

Eddie being the perfect gentleman as well as a respected officer, opened the car door for her as Baker got in the back, where he joined her and firmly closed the door behind him.

"Ok Terry" Eddie called to the driver "Let's go."

As the car pulled away, Baker turned to Eddie. "Is the job still green lit?" she enquired.

"Afraid so" Eddie confirmed "As far as I am aware, the Commander has been briefed on how we are going to play this and we have all the blueprints of Victoria Station ready for you back at the office."

"How many bad guys should I be expecting?" Baker asked as they braced themselves against a rather sharp turn by the car through the area's complicated traffic system.

"Initial intelligence said four but we think now maybe six" Eddie grimly confirmed.

"They definitely want him dead don't they?" she commented.

"It's not going to happen" Eddie was determined "Well not how they think anyway."

"How many are in on the loop?" she asked.

"You and me, the Commander, the Administrator General and a couple of carefully selected others."

"What about his wife Tracy?"

"She doesn't know" Eddie confirmed "She will be there as well and with no body armour on so make damn sure they don't try and shoot her as well."

"Is that wise having her there?" Baker asked, clearly concerned.

"A grieving widow always makes a far more convincing impression on BBC News 24 and we need our mutual friends to be thoroughly convinced."

"I still don't like this" Baker commented.

"That's why you are here" Eddie added "You won't let it happen."

"I hope you are right."

"The train now approaching platform 3 is the 08.43 Southern service to Portsmouth Harbour and Bognor Regis". The announcement on the platform at Gatwick Airport station caused a senior looking Security Service officer to lower his morning newspaper and look up as the twelve car formation of green and white liveried Southern Class 377 Electrostar stock glided into the platform, its arrival drowned out by the sound of an aircraft taking off from the nearby main runway that ended adjacent to the railway line just ahead.

Walking down to the front most coach, some distance away from the station platform buildings, the officer was just in time to see the front pair of passenger saloon doors open and the Commander appear, framed in the opening.

"Who made you area Commander?" the Commander commented with a laugh as his old colleague Commander Al Longton stood on the platform to greet his arrival.

"Couldn't find anyone else to fit the uniform" Al joked as he looked down at his best dress uniform.

The Commander stepped forward off the train and greeted Longton with a warm hand shake before turning back to the train and closing the doors with the interior button.

"You do know those doors close automatically by themselves don't you?" Longton commented.

"Old habit" the Commander commented as they proceeded to walk down the platform just as the train began to pull away "Anyway, how are you enjoying my old job and my old office."

"Well the job is fine, the office however has been demolished" Longton announced.

"You're kidding me?" The Commander was surprised by this news.

"Nope" Longton confirmed as they reached the lifts to the upper part of the station "They spent half a million quid on refurbishing the old concrete junk pile and then no sooner was the paint dry than they announced we were getting a new head office building."

"Typical" the Commander commented as they waited by the lift doors for them to open "I spent at least eight years there suggesting the place was past it but they wouldn't believe me."

"Well we are still trying to iron out the bugs in the new place at the moment" Longton continued as finally the lift doors opened and they stepped to one side to allow out a family with a large amount of bulky luggage. "The doors are all the wrong size, half the wiring is in the wrong place, we've got extractor fans that blow inwards and the electrics keep tripping out, apart from that everything is fine."

"Let me guess" the Commander mused "Central Architects Office project?"

"Got it in one" Longton confirmed as they stepped into the lift "Building design by committee!"

The Commander looked at the family on the platform with their huge collection of equally huge suitcases and other bags as the lift doors were about to close.

"Doesn't anyone ever travel light anymore?" the Commander commented as the lift doors closed.

"Speaking of baggage" Longton commented as they were now alone in the lift "Of the emotional variety though, are you serious about going through with this?"

"What's the worse that could happen?" the Commander asked as the lift began to ascend.

"You could wind up dead!" Longton exclaimed.

"I've been shot before, after a while you just get kind of used to it!" the Commander remarked with a chuckle that did little to disguise his deep felt apprehension at what was planned for later that day.

"Well when this inspection tour and press conference is over" Longton informed the Commander as the lift slowed to a halt "I have my best specialist team waiting for us at Three Bridges."

"I knew I could rely on you" the Commander commented as the lift doors opened and they stepped out into the upper station concourse area.

"All part of the friendly service."

"Well I reckon there must be about half a dozen different positions a sniper can lurk" Baker commented as she looked over the plans of Victoria Station in the Euston office.

"I reckoned that the one you would need to be in would be here" Eddie pointed out one location on the plans and passed across a couple of surveillance photographs of the area.

"Good views of the platforms 15 to 19 approach, the concourse and all the possible other sniper locations" Baker assessed, "Well I cannot argue with that. How do I get in there?"

"We have arranged for the access to that area to be locked out of use and we will keep a couple of patrol officers around the access to keep away any of the bad guys" Eddie explained "You will need a Network Rail staff pass which you collect with your stuff before you leave".

"Great, all we need now is a cup of tea and a deck of cards" Baker remarked.

"Just don't miss" Eddie cautioned her "If we lose the Commander, God only knows what will happen."

"No chance!"

"Well this is all very impressive" the Commander commented as he looked over the brand new high-tec control room that was the proud centre piece of the new Gatwick Airport Central Security Service Bureau.

"Well I got Fuller to draw up the specs" Longton confirmed.

"I thought the style looked familiar" the Commander responded as he continued to look around.

"Has he asked Jennifer to marry him yet?" Longton asked.

"Why? Don't tell me your office has a sweepstake on him as well?" the Commander enquired as they turned to leave.

"Old habits die hard I guess." They walked down the sumptuously lined corridor to the front reception area, the atmosphere filled with the distinctive odour of new paint and carpet glue.

"So glad you could be here" the voice of the Home Secretary called from the far side of the reception area as the Commander arrived.

"Should have known he would be here" the Commander commented aside to Longton "Always willing to turn out for a photo opportunity but does sod all actually useful!"

"What do you expect?" Longton responded equally sceptically "He's a two bit politician with a pea for a brain and a large number of highly positioned connections to cover his ass when he cocks up, which is frequently!"

"You're starting to sound like me!" the Commander responded ruefully as he slightly hesitantly went over to the Home Secretary and in the name of diplomacy, shook his hand.

“A pleasure to meet you at last!” the Home Secretary announced, grinning like a Cheshire cat. The Commander resisted the temptation to rearrange his teeth there and then however, as the Home Secretary turned to the gathered members of the press and began his speech with the two senior Security Officers plus a number of other members of the Service standing behind him.

“This facility heralds a new era in law enforcement in the face of the threat from global terrorism” the Home Secretary began clearly running a well-rehearsed speech that must have been compiled by someone else as he simply did not possess the imagination or intelligence.

“Aye aye,” Longton commented, “The ego has landed!”

“In the ever on going war against terror” the Home Secretary over enthusiastically continued “we must arm ourselves with the best money can buy to ensure the continuation of our way of life.”

“Who writes this rubbish?” the Commander wondered and he could tell by looking around at his colleagues alongside him that they were thinking along the same lines as he was.

“Today marks the commissioning of one of the most potent weapons in that war, this new Security Command facility dedicated to the safety of the Gatwick Airport community” the Home Secretary started waving his arms around.

“Someone shoot me now” the Commander muttered through gritted teeth before realising what he had said “On second thoughts save that for later!”

“Do you think he enjoys Vagon poetry on the side?” Longton mused causing the Commander to nearly crack up with laughter.

The Home Secretary continued on his rampaging stream of pointless sound bite laden hyperbole for some five more minutes before he turned to the Commander who had by now switched off and was concentrating on thoughts elsewhere.

“Commander?” the Home Secretary prompted.

“What?” the Commander suddenly returned to the matter in hand.

“Time to unveil the plaque” the Home Secretary showed the way to the far wall where a pair of curtains covered the formal opening plaque.

With the Commander on one side, the Home Secretary on the other and the press gathered in front of them to photograph the magic moment, they prepared to unveil the plaque.

“It is with great honour” the Home Secretary restarted his ego trip that was always in full on mode whenever the press was present “that I declare this magnificent facility open.”

With that the Home Secretary pulled his curtain cord and his half of the curtain opened effortlessly, the Commander simultaneously pulled on the cord on his side and promptly pulled the whole assembly off the wall.

"I seem to be having one of those days!" he commented wryly.

"You ever had the feeling its going to be one of those days" Tracy commented as she attempted to make some progress with the numerous items of paperwork with which her in tray was overflowing.

"Only on days with a 'Y' in them I tend to find" Fuller responded as he entered the office.

"Oh stuff this!" Tracy slung the pile of new directive memos into a heap on the floor alongside her desk, an unusual move for someone more known for being organised and tidy.

"So what can I do for you then?" Tracy enquired with a welcoming smile.

"Two things" Fuller responded "Only one of them actually to do with work."

"Get work out of the way first then" Tracy urged.

"I need to break into, undetected I might add, a major Government installation and I need a few bits of equipment" Fuller slightly reluctantly informed her.

"Huh?"

"The location of the Omega Committee's central server system is in some cupboard somewhere in the basement of a semi disused but highly secure Government building in Berkshire" Fuller explained proffering the folder with the blueprints of the site and his intended plans to effect entry.

"I think the less I know about this the better" Tracy suggested.

"Aye, you might be right" Fuller agreed.

"Well what ever you need, get it from Central Stores and invoice it to someone else's Division" Tracy responded. "Now the other matter?"

"I want to marry your sister."

"About bloody time!"

"But how do I ask her?" Fuller enquired meekly, this clearly not being his area of expertise "You see with computers and bits of equipment I am fine, it's just with human beings I tend to screw up."

"General rule of thumb is to purchase ring, go down on one knee in front of the entire Divisional staff and then ask her" Tracy responded "Although the bit about the Divisional staff is actually optional."

"Right..." Fuller's tone was still noticeably reluctant.

"Oh come on" Tracy reassured him "You will be fine, its not as though my sister has not dropped enough hints is it?"

"Right" Fuller sounded a little more positive now.

"Oh one other thing" he remembered as he was about to leave "I am going to need someone to help me on this Government Installation job."

"Try your fiancé" Tracy suggested "She always was good at breaking and entering when she was a wee nipper, probably gets it from our Father."

"Huh?"

"He was a lock smith" Tracy explained seeing Fullers puzzled look.

"Right" Fuller almost stuttered at the embarrassment of the whole matter "Thank you Maam."

"The train now arriving on platform 3 is the 11.46 Southern service to Portsmouth Harbour and Bognor Regis" the announcement automatically echoed across the near deserted platforms of Three Bridges station, one stop and just a couple of miles south of Gatwick Airport.

Longton and the Commander alighted as soon as the train had come to halt and the doors had been opened where they were greeted by a small team of four officer's hand picked by Longton for this assignment.

"Shall we Sir" Longton guided the way along the platform to the waiting room that had been commandeered for the purpose of this visit.

"Ok Mike" Longton called to one of the officers who stepped forward with a box containing a number of items.

"If you would remove your tunic please sir" Mike requested.

"I guess this is going to mean another ruined uniform I suppose!" the Commander remarked with an apprehension contained laugh.

"Just think of the alternative" Longton suggested.

"Right" Mike instructed "This bullet proof vest will stop any of the bullets getting through although as an added precaution, your sniper will change to soft low velocity rounds just for you."

"How considerate!"

"When he or she fires, you will hear the gun shots and probably feel the impacts" Mike informed as he helped the Commander fasten the vest snugly "However the one thing you will definitely notice is these two blood packs here will burst" he pointed to the two small cells fitted to the front of the vest.

"Lovely" the Commander remarked "Is it machine washable?"

"Remember" Mike added as he handed the Commander back his tunic "When you are shot, fall to the ground like you would if it was the real thing."

"I think I've been shot enough times over the years to remember what that feels like" the Commander confirmed as he re-buttoned his tunic with a little difficulty as with the vest, the fit had become very tight.

"When you are shot" Longton continued as they exited back outside and began to make their way to the subway access "there will be a medical team with you in a matter of seconds. At the same time, the officers on patrol duty in the station will declare a code red and clear the area of everyone whilst you and Tracy are whisked away in a waiting ambulance."

"Who will be co-ordinating the evacuation and sweep of the station?" the Commander enquired as they turned left at the bottom of the subway stairs and proceeded up the ramp to platforms one and two.

"Commander Baker has the best experience in identifying snipers and gunmen so she will take charge" Longton confirmed.

"What can possibly go wrong?" the Commander asked out of curiosity.

"We get the number of snipers wrong and one of them manages to kill you for a starter" Longton responded grimly "Then there is the safety of Tracy and everyone else in the station to consider."

"Flying bullets and the public do not mix" the Commander commented.

"Well I have no doubt in Baker's abilities" Longton responded as he looked down the track in a southerly direction to see if there was any sign of the next train back to London Victoria "Its the hired loons who I am confident will be somewhat less than professional. If they start shooting randomly, all hell will break loose!"

"Platform 2 for the 12.02 Southern service to London Victoria. Calling at Gatwick Airport, Redhill, East Croydon, Clapham Junction and London Victoria" the automated announcement boomed.

"That's my cue" the Commander mused as the eight car train rounded the curve from the Horsham line and began to draw into the platform.

"Good luck then Sir" Longton shook the Commander's hand.

"I'll be all right."

"You had better be" Longton grinned "I've got an office sweepstake open on you."

"Put me down for a tenner" the Commander lightened up "I'm good for it."

The train pulled to a stop and the Commander made for his customary seat in the front most carriage, opening the double leaf doors and proceeding inside before taking up the seat nearest the doors at the inner end of the front carriage.

Within a few moments, the sparse numbers of passengers who had been waiting for the train had boarded whilst others had alighted before the Conductor closed all the doors and gave the right away signal to the driver.

As the train pulled away with the whirring of electric motors filling the air, Longton reached for his radio and made a call.

"Whisky X-Ray Pappa One Zero One to Control" he called as the train in the near distance snaked across the complex point work at the north end of the station.

"Control go-ahead" came the response.

"Let Victor Pappa X-Ray One Zero Two know that the package is on its way and will be arriving at 12.46" Longton confirmed "Tell her to let the players assemble."

"Sir?" a young junior officer enquired as he put his head through the door of the office of Commander Eddie Hopkins causing him to look up from his desk.

"Yes lad?" he responded.

"We've just had confirmation that the package is on its way" he confirmed.

"Have my car brought around to the front in five minutes" he urged.

"Yes Sir" upon which the young officer departed, closing the door carefully as he left.

"Well" Commander Baker remarked as she sat up in the chair situated in the corner of the office "It looks like we are on then."

"My car will be out the front in a few minutes" Eddie instructed her "All of the equipment you requested plus the documentation you will need for access is in a case on the back seat."

"Right then" Baker stepped forward "Thanks for everything."

"Good luck" Eddie responded, shaking her hand "And please make sure he stays alive for all our sakes."

"I will" upon which Baker departed leaving Eddie to sit back down in his office chair and apprehensively contemplate the events that had now been set in motion.

Baker was able to make her way through the Euston offices unnoticed as being in her full uniform, she blended into the background with no problem.

Immediately outside, the black unmarked car that Eddie had made available was waiting with the keys in the ignition. She opened the rear passenger door and placed her case inside before removing a brown envelope which she placed inside her tunic pocket.

Within a few moments Baker was in the driving seat, started the engine and pulled out onto the main Euston Road and into the traffic.

The Commander momentarily looked up from his copy of Railway Modeller as the train pulled into East Croydon and noted the usual presence of a couple of Transport Division officers on the platform on routine patrol in amongst the lunchtime crowds of passengers heading for Central London who immediately tried to crowd onto the train almost before it had even fully stopped.

After a couple of minutes of trying to sort out the crowds of both boarding and disembarking passengers, the Conductor was finally able to close the doors and the train set off.

As the train departed one of the patrol officers on the platform radioed ahead a report that the train was now three minutes down on departure time.

"Baker?" Eddie called over the radio to the patrol car as she neared Victoria Station "We just had a report that he is running three minutes down at East Croydon" he confirmed.

"Roger that" Baker responded "I am arriving at Victoria now."

As she parked the car in Wilton Road, Baker noticed a red transit van pull in a short distance ahead and quickly disgorge six darkly dressed men onto the pavement, each carrying black holdalls.

"Let the players assemble" Baker remarked as she got out of the car and from the rear door, retrieved her two cases before locking the vehicle and proceeding towards the main entrance that led onto the South Eastern concourse of the station.

"Gold Control" Baker spoke discreetly into the hidden radio microphone on the inside of her tunic lapel "This is Gold One".

"Gold Control go ahead" a voice responded.

"Be aware that a red Transit van just delivered what looks like six, I repeat six unfriendlies to the station" she announced "I am on my way to the nest right now."

Although she could not see any of the suspicious men anywhere amongst the crowds that were filling both the South Eastern and South Central concourses of the station, she was sure they were still around somewhere.

"Gold Control, this is Angel One" the female driver of a paramedic unit called in. "I am taking up position in Wilton Road now."

The secured door that led to Baker's intended sniper position opened easily with the identification card she had been given whilst two trusted patrol officers circulated in the immediate area to ensure she would have exclusive and uninterrupted use of this location.

It took a couple of minutes to climb the dusty and little used access stairs to the roof space position she had chosen, affording a good view across the whole of the South Central side of the concourse right down to the access through to the platforms 15 through 19 ticket barriers.

"Gold Control, this is Gold One" she called "I am nicely settled in, what's the ETA on Echo One?"

"Gold One" the Controller responded "Echo One is now four minutes down and approaching Clapham Junction."

"Roger that" Baker confirmed as she assembled her rifle, loading the red magazine that contained armour piercing rounds and fitting the silencer to the end of the barrel. With her rifle set up, she took the telescopic sight and trained it around the station.

"Gold One to Control" she called "I have two snipers located above and behind the departure boards overlooking platforms eight through fourteen" Baker confirmed as she affixed the scope to the rifle and got in a position to fire.

"Gold One" Control called "Take the shot."

"Roger" Baker confirmed and with two swift silenced shots, both of the first two snipers were dead.

"Bogey's One and Two are down" Baker confirmed as she continued to sweep around the station "I have two more, one in the upstairs window on the west wall of the concourse above the ticket office, the other lying on top of the ticket office itself."

"Take them out" Gold Control confirmed.

"Already done" Baker confirmed as she fired once at the window sniper then swiftly turned and aimed at the second one, equally as efficiently dispatched before he even knew what had hit him.

"Gold One from Gold Three" one of the patrol officers on the station who was in on the loop called "Echo Two is coming up the west Underground Station exit steps and will be on the South Central Concourse in thirty seconds".

Tracy made her way up the steps that led from the sub-surface ticket hall of Victoria Underground Station and through the short distance onto the South Central Concourse, briefly acknowledging the presence of the two patrol officers as she passed them.

Looking up at the large destination information board that dominated the front of the concourse on that side, Tracy could read from the arrivals information that the service from Bognor Regis and Portsmouth Harbour was due in within a few minutes.

"Gold One from Control" Bakers radio called.

"Go ahead" Baker responded as she kept watching Tracy through her scope.

"Confirm immediate area is clear?"

"Area is clear" Baker confirmed "Echo Two is standing by the self service ticket machines about ten yards from the bottom of the Victoria Place escalators."

"Roger that" Control confirmed.

"Do we know what train and which platform Echo One is arriving on?" Baker enquired.

"Platform 16, unit number 377427" Control confirmed.

"Confirm Platform 16, unit number 377427?" Baker requested.

"That is correct."

"I am switching to the alternative magazine now" Baker confirmed as she reached down and removed the existing magazine and replaced it with one marked with a yellow sticker signifying the low velocity rounds needed for the next phase.

Cautiously Baker removed the silencer from the end of the barrel and prepared herself, aiming along the length of the passageway towards the ticket barriers where just beyond she could just make out a train arriving.

On platform 16, unit number 377427, the lead multiple unit making up the train, arrived slowly as it advanced towards the buffer stops. With a squealing of brakes, the echo of which was accentuated by the tight confines of the station building, it stopped.

After a momentary pause, the door unlocked bleeping sounded and almost simultaneously, all the doors along the length of the train facing the platform, opened, causing a huge number of passengers to simultaneously appear and make their way up towards the ticket barriers.

The Commander wisely held back from alighting straight away, taking his time rising from his seat and placing his copy of Railway Modeller under his arm before proceeding to the door.

There he stood for a minute as the crowds died down before stepping onto the platform himself and following them, maintaining a reasonable distance between the crowd and himself for safety purposes taking into consideration what was about to happen.

The Commander soon reached the ticket barriers and used his warrant card on the circular yellow reader pad to open barrier number 55 and pass through.

"Gold Control to Gold One" Bakers radio called "Echo One just passed through the barriers."

"I can see him" Baker confirmed as she looked through the scope "Taking the shot in thirty seconds as soon as he reaches the Victoria Place escalators."

The Commander walked as normally as he could along the wide access that led between the ticket barriers and the main concourse area. Just as he passed the newsagents, he could make out Tracy waiting for him ahead.

"Echo Two has sighted Echo One and his approaching" Baker called "I am taking the shot now."

"Sorry my love" the Commander mouthed to Tracy just as a gunshot ripped through the air and the first of the blood packs exploded simultaneously with the bullet impacting his vest. It all seemed to happen in slow motion to everyone present as the second shot quickly followed the course of the first and the Commander fell to the ground claspng his chest, the fake blood doing its job well of making the hit look convincing.

"He's down" Baker confirmed as she quickly picked up her rifle, disassembled it and placed its constituent parts back into the case before heading back downstairs to coordinate the next phase.

"No!" Tracy screamed as she ran to the Commander, his apparently lifeless body on the cold hard floor.

"Gold Control to Angel One" the radio in the Paramedic Unit called "You're on."

"For your own safety" the patrol officers who arrived on the scene quickly called "Everyone please evacuate the station immediately."

Within moments the tannoy system was sounding the call to evacuate and a further group of both Metropolitan and Transport Division patrol officers arrived on scene.

As the crowds made speedily for the nearest exits, a number of officers escorted a Paramedic Team across the concourse against the flow of pedestrian traffic.

"I want everyone out of this station immediately" Commander Baker announced brandishing her warrant card to signify her authority "Transport Division officers to sweep the entire building for any further assailants right now!"

"It's all right Sir" the lead Paramedic announced as he reached the Commander "We'll have you fixed up in no time."

Tracy looked on shocked, holding her husband's hand as the Paramedic checked his condition.

"We've got a pulse" he announced "Let's get him out of here now."

Quickly a number of officers joined the Paramedic team as they carefully lifted the Commander onto the waiting stretcher.

"Right" Baker ordered "I want an armed escort across the station concourse" she instructed "There may be more of them."

Baker then went on ahead to the waiting ambulance parked in the now empty and evacuated taxi rank outside. A few moments later, the stretcher, surrounded by armed officers made its way across the concourse with Tracy still firmly gripping the Commander's hand whilst holding back tears.

The stretcher and its accompanying escort managed to reach the taxi rank only suddenly for everyone to be forced to duck for cover as a volley of four shots rang out across the front of the station, narrowly missing them by inches.

"Damm!" Baker swore "There's another one" she exclaimed as she opened her case and retrieved her rifle, fitting the armour piercing rounds magazine and positioning herself behind a luggage trolley before scanning the surrounding roof tops on the opposite side of the bus station overlooking their position.

"Gold One to Control" she called "Anyone have an eyeball on the shooter?"

A second volley of shots rang out, wounding one patrol officer in the leg whilst another shot shattered the side door window of the waiting ambulance.

"Possible shooter on the third roof top from the left in Terminus Place" came the quick response.

Quickly and with a well trained eye, she swung round her rifle to the location indicated and just made out a head bobbing just above a roof top parapet.

"Smile you bastard!" Baker commented as she fired and the distant sniper reared up instantaneously before falling forward down on to the roadway below.

"Nice shot!" Tracy commented by now realising something was not quite what it seemed here.

"Thanks!" Baker responded "Now will you two get the hell out of here?"

"Come on" the Paramedic called as they lifted the stretcher into the back of the ambulance only having to duck down again as a second shooter opened fire.

"These guys are getting serious!" one of the patrol officers commented as he, along with the others looked around carefully for the location of the second shooter.

"Angel One" Baker called over her radio as she stood up and bodily threw Tracy inside the ambulance before slamming shut the doors "You're clear."

"Angel One confirms" Jennifer Caverner, seated in the drivers seat of the ambulance confirmed as she gunned the engine and headed off at speed.

The ambulance's departure caused the illusive second shooter to show his hand as he rose slightly from his position above a restaurant towards the east end of Terminus Place.

"Thank you and good night!" Baker commented as she stood up, lifted her rifle, aimed and fired a single successful shot.

"There must be easier ways to earn a living" the Commander commented as to Tracy's surprise, he sat up and proceeded to unbutton his fake blood soaked uniform tunic.

"Why you rotten sod!" Tracy jokingly reacted.

"Sorry about all that" the Commander responded as he leant forward and hugged Tracy before kissing her passionately.

"It's all right" Tracy responded "I smelt a rat the moment I saw you mouth something to me just before you were shot."

"You could tell from that?" the Commander was astounded.

"Well there was also the dead body on the ticket office roof, the two patrol officers clearly tracking my progress and reporting it discreetly over the radio and the hundred or so hidden Security Service officers secreted around the place that just happened to be there when it all kicked off" Tracy smiled.

"Remind me never to play poker with you love" the Commander responded as Tracy helped him off with the bullet proof vest. "A put up job it may have been" he added as he looked at the two clear indentations in the vest, the rounds still lodged in the holes they had made "but it still ruddy hurt!"

"How did you get mixed up in this circus may I ask?" Tracy asked Jennifer as she continued to defy the traffic regulations as she drove around Hyde Park Corner.

"They needed a decent driver so I volunteered" Jennifer called back "Anyway, where do you want to go?"

"Arthur Street, near the Monument" the Commander called.

"Huh?" Tracy asked.

"I need to be out of sight for a while and I know just the place" the Commander explained "Oh and if we pass a chip shop, pick us up some lunch!"

Fuller was unaware of what was taking place not more than a few miles away, instead he had gathered up his files, a few tools and his trusty laptop computer and was travelling eastbound on the Central Line approaching Bank, the train swerving as the tube tunnel it passed through negotiated its way past other subterranean features including the lower levels of St Paul's Cathedral and the vaults of the Bank of England itself.

"The next station is Bank" the automated on board announcer struggled to inform the passengers as it competed with the squealing of the train's wheel sets on the tight curves. "Change here for the Northern, Circle, District, Waterloo & City and Docklands Light Railway."

With that barely audible announcement, Fuller rose to his feet and made his way to the doorway just as the train pulled into the curved eastbound platform.

"Mind the gap between the train and the platform" the platform announcements warned as Fuller was about to step off the train. He looked down and saw the gap in question, larger for him as he was alighting from an end carriage doorway which was furthest away from the platform edge.

"That's not a gap" he commented wryly "That's a bloody great canyon!"

With due care, Fuller stepped onto the platform and followed the crowds as they made their way up through the station. At the booking hall level, Fuller followed the signs for the Circle and District Line which were situated at the far end of an escalator linked walkway which led to the adjacent Monument Station.

A number of flights of fixed stair cases and escalators had to be negotiated down to the lowest level where a walkway served the Docklands Light Railway either side. At the other end, two more escalators awaited him to take him back up towards the surface.

As he ascended the second up escalator, Fuller's attention was drawn by an announcement that came over the station tannoy.

"Customer Information" it began in a soothing tone that was designed to calm annoyed passengers, usually to little positive effect "Services on the Circle, District and Victoria Lines are currently not stopping at Victoria due to an incident" the announcement went on "There is currently a good service running on all other lines."

Fuller did think about calling in and seeing what the incident was about, however as he was about to reach the top of this escalator and walk on to the next, he decided to leave it be.

As he reached the top of the second up escalator, Fuller was unable to resist the lure of a packet of crisps which he purchased from the small kiosk at back of the concourse that led directly to the District and Circle Line platforms of Monument Station.

A further couple of flights of steps and through the ticket hall soon saw Fuller emerge once more into the daylight, albeit overcast with a threat of rain in the air now. Standing on the corner of the street immediately outside the exit from the station, Fuller reached into his uniform tunic pocket and extracted a battered small sized London A to Z through which he quickly flicked to find his current whereabouts and where it was he was supposed to meet the Commander as arranged.

As he looked in the A to Z, he slowly walked southwards in the direction of the nearby River Thames and London Bridge that crossed it at that point.

"Where the hell in Monument Street?" Fuller wondered to himself before looking westwards towards an office building on the opposite side of the street.

"Arthur Street" Fuller read off the street sign on the opposite side of the road. It was then that he noticed the reflection of something in the predominantly glass building next to Arthur Street which caused him to turn right around.

"Bingo!" he uttered to himself as his eyes were greeted with the tall column like structure that is The Monument itself, marking the spot where in 1666, the Great Fire of London started in what was then Pudding Mill Lane but was now Monument Street.

He looked around for a few moments in search of the Commander but seeing no obvious sign of his presence, Fuller decided to radio in.

"Control from Lima Tango Zero Three" Fuller called.

"Control receiving" came the anxious sounding response accompanied by the background noise of a lot of activity, something which Fuller instantly picked up on.

"What's going on?" he asked as he walked across Monument Street and leaned with his back up against the wall of the adjacent building.

"The Commander has just been shot at Victoria Station" Control responded.

"Oh heck!" Fuller's reaction was one of shock but no real great surprise "What's his condition?" he asked.

"They are listing him as serious but stable" the Control Room officer confirmed however by now, something else had caught Fuller's attention.

"I'll err have to call you back" he hesitantly responded.

The reason for his distraction was an Ambulance that had just pulled up in Arthur Street on the opposite side of the road. This in itself was not unusual until you consider who it was he recognised driving the vehicle.

"What the hell is going on around here?" he asked himself as not only did Jennifer get out of the ambulance and wave at Fuller who rather bemusedly waved back, she was also joined by Tracy and the seemingly very healthy Commander who together proceeded across the road and joined him.

"Aren't you supposed to be dead or something Sir?" Fuller enquired.

"It's a long story" the Commander responded with a smile.

"So why are we standing here admiring The Monument then?" Jennifer enquired as she put her arm around Fuller and kissed him on the cheek which cheered him up no end.

"This wouldn't by any chance have anything to do with this plaque I am leaning on would it by any chance?" Fuller enquired as he stepped forward to reveal the elderly cast plaque which commemorated the fact that where they were standing was once the site of the first Underground Railway deep level terminus station, King William Street between 1890 and 1900.

"Maybe" the Commander remarked casually as he pulled a set of keys from his pocket and proceeded to unlock one of the doors set into the end wall of the large fairly modern office building that now occupied the corner of the site.

"After you my dear" the Commander allowed Tracy in first through the door that to all intents and purposes, appeared to be a service access for the office building's air conditioning system or similar.

Inside with the door firmly closed behind them, the party could see that they were now in a dimly lit room, a bank of dust covered electrical switches on one side of the room and a pair of elderly metal doors set into the far end.

Alongside these doors was a control panel with a key lock which the Commander operated with the keys that had also let them into the building. With a whirr, the doors pulled open to reveal an old wooden lift car, a brass plaque on the inside proclaiming its date of manufacture as 1940.

"Where did you dig up this antique?" Fuller commented as they entered the lift car, with its old time mechanical atmosphere from its wooden panelling almost like a time capsule of an era long since past.

"Well the shaft has been here since 1890, the lift car was installed in the war to replace the original so that the original tenants of the old office building could access the lower level.

"Lower level?" Tracy enquired, she had assumed they would be going up but Fuller by now had worked out their real destination.

"Mind the doors!" the Commander called as he operated the old lever that closed the doors and began the lift on a slow creaking decent into what seemed to be the bowels of the earth.

"Where are we?" Tracy asked as the lift doors opened and they exited out into a spacious tiled tubular shaped passageway, overhead lights illuminating and reflecting brightly off the shiny surfaces.

"Welcome to King William Street Station" the Commander announced as he led the way down one of the two passageways that led from the lift, past the now disused emergency spiral stairwell into what was once the station platform area itself.

"Nice little hobby room you've got here" Jennifer commented as they entered an office area with desks, computers and equipment already in place.

"Actually it was Jim Peter's little place" the Commander explained "When they rebuilt the office building upstairs, he had the access to the old station tunnels retained and the lower sections tarted up for use in special circumstances."

"Where did the trains go then?" Fuller asked.

"During the war, they separated the station platform tunnel into two levels for use as a shelter to the office building upstairs" the Commander showed them around the lower of the two levels, a few of the old style 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' posters preserved on the walls here and there.

"The lower level is just office accommodation" the Commander pointed out "The interesting stuff is on the upper level" he showed the way ahead to a small flight of stairs in front of two running tunnels that curved off into the distance.

"What's that noise?" Tracy asked as she shined a torch into the dark tunnels ahead.

"The Northern Line" the Commander explained, "They used to run all the way to Borough although they have been cut through at London Bridge now."

"How bigger computer system do you need to access the Omega Committee's operation?" the Commander asked Fuller.

"A pretty big one" Fuller admitted as he followed the Commander to the top of the small flight of steps and through a set of double doors.

"That big enough for you?" the Commander asked as he switched on the lights and illuminated the room which contained a large bank of operating computers with a series of integral workstations.

"That should just about do it" Fuller was in awe.

"Wow!" Jennifer exclaimed.

"That is the second most beautiful thing I have ever seen" Fuller was still dumbstruck.

"What's the first?" Jennifer asked in his ear.

"Need you ask?" Fuller turned to her smiling.

"This is X-Ray Division's fully automated and integrated computer control centre" the Commander explained "All nicely hidden away in the last place they would ever think of looking."

"Station sign is a nice touch" Tracy commented as she looked at the modern style Underground roundel sign on the curve of the former station platform tunnel wall.

"Little birthday present from me to Jim Peters a couple of years ago" the Commander explained "Had London Transport make that up especially I did."

"Bet they never guessed it would wind up right here!" Fuller commented as he took a seat at the main console of the computer.

"Can you get into their system?" the Commander asked.

"Once I have physically attached the transmission device and a little discreet software in their system core, I can link into it through this little beauty and they will never know."

"I like it" the Commander patted Fuller on the shoulder "You and Jennifer should get started right away."

"Come on" Tracy urged and taking the Commander's arm in hers they left them to the business in hand.

"The Command office is through here" the Commander guided Tracy into the main office behind the computer centre, a sumptuously appointed room with air conditioning, an impressive oak desk and pictures of the old King William Street station on the wall from its operational days.

"So now what?" Tracy asked as she sat down alongside the Commander on the sofa in the corner of the office.

"Well we can't do anything until Fuller has pulled all the Omega Committee records" the Commander commented as he put his arms around Tracy.

"And the Transport Division?" Tracy asked.

"Commander Baker has instructions to take over as acting operational Commander until I am required to rise from the dead as it were" the Commander responded "She will continue to keep the loonies on their toes and keep up the pretence that I am dying with my faithful grieving widow at my bedside."

"I want identifications on these jokers as soon as possible" Commander Baker instructed as she turned over the body of the sniper who had fallen from the roof onto the road surface of Terminus Place when she had shot him earlier.

"I recognise one of them Maam" one senior looking Patrol Officer from the Metropolitan Division commented as the surrounding air continued to be filled with sirens and alarms.

"Really?" Baker stood up "Which one?"

"The one we just pulled down from the roof of the ticket office looks like a guy Kensington and Chelsea Division prosecuted for a particularly brutal armed robbery about ten years ago."

"Do you know how long he got inside?" Baker asked as she accompanied the officer across the Bus Station area back towards the main station concourse, still sealed off and crawling with investigative officers from the Specialist Firearms Unit and Forensic Science Division.

"Eighteen years if I recall" the officer responded after a few moments thought.

"Out a bit early isn't he?" Baker wondered.

"Depends upon the generosity of the Home Secretary I suppose" the officer remarked "Speaking of which" he pointed in the direction of the front of the station where a ministerial car with two Security Service motorcycle escorts was pulling up.

"Well speak of the two faced lying photo opportunity seeking devil himself" Baker wryly commented as the Home Secretary alighted from the rear of the ministerial car and greeted the seeming glutinous mass of press that mobbed around him.

"Commander!" Fuller called from the Control Room "You are on the telly!"

"Blast" the Commander commented as he disentangled himself from Tracy where they had been cuddling each other on the sofa, and reached across to the desk to pick up a TV remote control.

Within seconds, the dulcet and authoritative tones of BBC News 24 filled the former station tunnels.

"We return to our breaking news item this afternoon" the newsreader announced "The shooting incident at London's Victoria main line railway station. We are going over live to our correspondent there."

"David at London Victoria" the studio based presenter called "Can you shed any further light on what has happened?"

"All we know at this time is that at approximately 12.40 or 12.45 this afternoon on the South Central side of the main station concourse, at least two sniper assassins opened fire and shot a Security Service officer."

"Do we yet know the identity of the officer?"

"Not yet" the reporter on the scene responded "What we do know is that immediately the gunshots were heard and the officer went down, station staff and Security Department patrol officers on site immediately evacuated the station complex. There are also unconfirmed reports that there was some additional shooting a couple of minutes later immediately outside in the bus station area as the ambulance containing the officer shot was pulling away."

"Is there any indication of motives, the identity of the victim and the general mood down there?" the studio presenter enquired.

"Grim determination would best sum up the attitude of the multitude of Transport and Metropolitan Division officers present on the scene, who have now been joined by a number of specialist scene investigation teams from Scotland Yard. As to the identity of the officer shot, one rumour going around is that it may be the Divisional Commander of the Transport Division. He attended a press launch of a new Security Service facility at Gatwick Airport this morning and would have been travelling almost certainly by train back to London Victoria at about the right time. In addition, a major incident has occurred slap bang in the middle of his jurisdiction and yet no one has seen sight nor sound of him, something which is highly unusual."

"Do we expect any statement or press conference of some kind?" the studio presenter asked.

"Sir David Pullman, the Home Secretary has just in the last couple of minutes arrived on the scene and is expected to make a statement to the press in a few moments" the reporter confirmed.

"Thank you very much" the studio presenter then turned from her virtual screen back to the camera "And we will bring you that statement live as soon as it begins."

"Oh this should be funny" the Commander commented with a chuckle as he joined Tracy back on the sofa, at which point Fuller appeared at the office door way, slightly embarrassed.

"We are off out" he stammered slightly.

"Well don't stay out too late" Tracy mocked.

"Err right" he responded, upon which he left.

"You know he is asked me this morning how to propose to Jennifer" Tracy commented.

"Blimey" the Commander responded "That'll be twenty quid you owe me then."

"What?" Tracy asked before realising that something was about to happen on the television "Hang on a minute, here we go, the moron is about to speak."

"Today is one of the blackest days in the history of the National Security and Policing Service" the Home Secretary began with a backdrop of officers and Victoria Station behind him.

"Is it me" the Commander commented "Or is Commander Baker giving him a real nasty case of the evil eye?"

"You could be right" Tracy agreed "Oh and he's got the Department name wrong in the first sentence as well!"

"At 12.42 p.m. this afternoon in London's Victoria Station" the Home Secretary continued to warble on attempting and failing badly to impersonate the stature and authority of Winston Churchill "an unknown number of assassins numbering two or more shot and severely wounded the Divisional Commander of the Security Service's London Transport Division"

"Thanks largely to the valiant efforts of civilian and Security Service staff, the station was safely evacuated and those responsible disabled and eliminated within a matter of a few minutes."

"So far so good" the Commander commented.

"We have strong evidence to believe that the assassins were hired marksmen working for a far right fanatical Islamic terrorist group who have been making threats to target senior public figures for some time now" the Home Secretary continued.

"What is he talking about?" Baker commented quietly.

"They were a bunch of second rate bank robbers from Fulham!" the officer alongside her remarked as equally stunned by the Home Secretary's stream of nonsense as she was.

"Now we are entering Cloud Cuckoo Land" the Commander commented.

"Or the twilight zone!" Tracy cut in.

"At this time" the Home Secretary continued to announce to his somewhat disbelieving audience "The Commander is described as serious but stable in a secure secret location with his wife at his bedside."

"I'm on a sofa and she is lying almost on top of me actually" the Commander commented towards the television, before kissing Tracy just to emphasise the point.

"No stone will be left unturned in the search for the culprits of this callous and unforgivable crime" the Home Secretary continued to ramble on.

"Was that a sound bite or just an old fashioned cliché?" Tracy asked with a giggle.

"And I personally will see that justice is done. Thank you very much." The Home Secretary concluded his speech and after posing for a few photographs in his customary manor, stepped down, ignoring the plethora of questions that were being fired at him.

"What a plonker!" the Commander commented as he turned off the television, returning the deserted tunnels to near silence once again.

"Tell me" Tracy asked as she kissed the Commander "What are we going to do until the others get back."

"I'm sure we will think of something" the Commander responded, as they kissed again.

"Standard! West End Final!" the newspaper seller positioned on the street corner called as the early beginnings of rush hour began to make itself apparent with an increase in traffic both pedestrian and vehicular.

"Assassination attempt on legendary Security Officer" the newspaper seller called.

"Legendary?" the Commander read from the front page headline as he handed the correct change to the seller "I quite like the sound of that" he added before thanking the seller and walking away.

"Thank you Commander" the seller responded "Sta..." he then stopped in mid call and looked up.

"Never believe everything you read" the Commander commented with a smile and a knowing wink before disappearing off into the pedestrian traffic.

"Standard!" the seller resumed his call with a slight adjustment that made the Commander smile as he heard it, "Famous Security Commander victim of assassination attempt. He ain't dead yet says well informed source!"

"Tell me" Tracy asked as the Commander reappeared in the office, the copy of the Evening Standard under his arm "Isn't there some London Transport byelaw somewhere about making love in an Underground Station?"

"Probably" the Commander admitted with a wry smile as he embraced and kissed her "Bit too late now to worry about it though."

"Still, makes you wonder though" Tracy mused as the Commander took the seat behind the desk.

"Wonder what?" the Commander asked looking up from the desk.

"How many couples in the world have done it in a disused deep level Underground station?" Tracy giggled at the thought.

"Oh, the mile under club" the Commander remarked with a laugh.

"Do you regret it that I can't have children?" Tracy asked as she pulled up a chair and sat alongside the Commander before taking his hand in hers.

"Of course not" the Commander reassured her "Where did that come from?"

"Well it's just that here we are" Tracy began to explain "We love each other dearly, have a great steady relationship, secure future..."

"Bar being shot, blown up or otherwise fatally injured" the Commander cut in.

"Granted" Tracy agreed "Well most couples lucky enough to be in our position would be thinking about starting a family and yet here we are knowing it is never going to happen."

"Not necessarily" the Commander mused "There is always adoption and ALF."

"IVF love" Tracy corrected her husband "ALF means Alien Life Form."

"Whoops" the Commander muttered to himself. He never was the most adept at technical terms.

"I'll tell you what" the Commander got up and went over to Tracy before holding her in his hands and looking directly into those eyes "Maybe we should look at the possibilities one day in the future."

"You really mean it?" Tracy was astonished by her husband's positive reaction to the topic.

"Yes" the Commander responded before kissing her.

A polite and discreet knock on the office door interrupted the mood and the two quickly resumed a more professional stance.

"Don't you just hate it when that happens?" Tracy wryly commented.

"Err oh, sorry" Commander Baker responded slightly embarrassed at having interrupted a personal moment for them.

"Wheel yourself in" the Commander urged as he returned to the seat behind the desk. "Now then, how are you finding life in the Transport Division?"

"Hectic!" Baker confirmed as she took a seat on the opposite side of the desk "You're office could do with a tidy up mind."

"I've been saying that for years" Tracy mused "Trust me, it doesn't seem to make an awful lot of difference."

"So how am I doing then?" the Commander enquired.

"You are still serious but stable in Charing Cross Hospital's Secure Unit with a specially selected squad of armed Security Service officers outside the door and your wife at your bedside" Baker confirmed "At least that is the story the BBC have been running every hour, however..."

"There's a problem?" Tracy finished the seemingly inevitable sentence.

"I'm afraid so" Baker continued slightly reluctantly "The Home Secretary wants to see you."

"Oops" Tracy commented.

"Yeah right, oops!" the Commander sat back in the seat and tossed the pen he had been holding onto the desk in front of him.

"Could be an opportunity" Baker considered "If you were lying on your death bed and managed to get him to reveal something, we would have the evidence we would need to bury the lying little bugger."

"It's worth a try" Tracy interjected "The only possible problem would be what if he tried to finish you off there and then?"

"He's behind the shooters then?" the Commander asked even though he was pretty sure of the answer to that question already.

"They were all basically a bunch of second rate armed robbers from Hammersmith who were released way to early on licence a couple of months ago" Baker passed across a set of files.

"Please make me a happy man and confirm that the Home Secretary personally signed their release documents" the Commander asked.

"Consider yourself happy" Baker was delighted to confirm.

"Yes!" Tracy responded and she could tell from her husband's grinning smile that he was equally delighted.

"Knew he was talking cobblers on the BBC earlier" he commented.

"When does he ever talk anything else?" Tracy mused.

"That was just the warm up act" Baker added "You should have heard him in the studio interview later."

"I was err a bit busy" the Commander looked across at Tracy and gave her a knowing wink which she reciprocated.

"Blimey" Baker commented "Anyway let's just say that he well and truly exhausted the lexicon of codswallop and has continued to do so to any member of the media who he can catch up with."

"Any other reactions to my near fatal demise?" the Commander pondered.

"Well most of the Security Service stands with you Sir" Baker was happy to confirm "In addition the Holborn Office has had messages of condolence and support from pretty much everyone who is anyone" she passed across a collection of paper messages.

"Strike a light" the Commander wondered "The Prime Minister, Chief's of pretty much every Division of the service, the Queen, the Prime Minister of Australia?"

"He's in town at the moment" Baker explained.

"Remind me to meet him sometime" the Commander continued to look through the pages of messages. "What nothing from the Pope?" he joked.

"Page six via the Arch Bishop of Westminster's office" Baker replied.

"Oh yes" the Commander read the appropriate message "I ought to frame this lot."

"I will make the arrangements for your magic appearance in the hospital" Baker leant forward and picked up the old style bakelite telephone on the desk "Does this thing actually work?"

"Not everything around this place is as old fashioned as it seems" the Commander confirmed.

"Apart from him" Tracy cheekily put in, pointing to her husband.

Baker found herself having to suppress a light giggle as she dialled a number and was quickly connected. "Secure unit, Commander Ibbertson please." she requested.

"Commander Ibbertson?" she asked as she was connected "Regarding that matter we discussed, we will be there in about thirty minutes, have the back access cleared and two of your best officers on stand by to meet us. Thanks mate."

"You can trust him?" Tracy asked as they all stood up and prepared to leave.

"Should do" Baker confirmed "He's my brother in law."

On the desk outside the office, Baker picked up her faithful high velocity rifle from where she had left it.

"Nice gun" Tracy commented.

"Thanks" Baker responded as the two ladies followed the Commander through the former station complex back to the lift.

"Is that what you shot me with?" the Commander asked as he opened the lift doors and allowed the two ladies to step inside before joining them himself.

"Err yes actually" Baker was slightly embarrassed. Normally the targeted clients with her rifle did not live long enough to make casual enquires about it, however this was of course a special exception.

"I seem to be having a very surreal day" Tracy commented as the lift made its way up to the surface.

"You should try mine" the Commander responded.

Soon they were outside and climbing into an unmarked Security Service vehicle that Baker had parked immediately outside the doorway, Tracy and the Commander snuggled together in the back seat whilst Baker took the drivers seat and started the engine.

"Where to then guvnor?" Baker asked in a brilliantly imitated cockney accent so common of the city's many cab drivers.

"Charing Cross and step on it" the Commander responded. "Where did you learn to speak like that?"

"My dad was a cab driver for thirty years" Baker explained "Still is actually, he rang me up earlier to complain about the traffic chaos around Victoria Station."

"Pass on my apologies" the Commander replied as Baker pulled carefully out into the traffic flow and headed off across the River Thames over London Bridge.

"Are you sure you know where we are going?" Jennifer asked as she drove the borrowed unmarked van down the motorway with Fuller attempting to read the map on his lap, a task made all the more difficult as the daylight was beginning to fade fast.

"Next junction, head left" he responded "I think!"

"I thought someone as technically minded as you would have had one of those sat-nav systems" Jennifer asked.

"Normally yes" Fuller explained "Only I do actually want to get where I am going and not wind up spending the night continually going around the East Croydon circulatory system."

"Ah but you would be spending it going around with me" Jennifer responded "So there is some compensation."

"Nice thought" Fuller mused as Jennifer gradually pulled over to the left hand lane and then up onto the exit ramp.

"Right" Jennifer asked "Now what?"

"Follow this road and then take the second exit at the first roundabout we come to" Fuller responded "I think!"

"Right" Jennifer confirmed as she signalled her way onto the roundabout and negotiated the traffic around to the second exit.

"Can I ask you something?" Fuller asked after a deep breath that clearly signalled something important but which he was reluctant to bring up.

"Sure" Jennifer responded as she continued to drive along the dimly lit 'B' road, just a smattering of occasional traffic passing them in the opposite direction.

"What would you say if after all this is over, I treated you to a proper romantic candle lit dinner for two at the restaurant of your choice?" he asked obviously slightly nervous about the subject.

"You paying?" Jennifer asked somewhat surprised by this latest development.

"Of course" Fuller quickly responded.

"All right then" Jennifer replied, still clearly uncertain where all this had come from "It's a date."

"Right" Fuller seemed a little flustered and surprised she had agreed to his request. What he did not know was that secretly, she had been waiting for him to make a move like this for months.

"Where now?" Jennifer asked as they approached an unlit junction that seemed to be situated in the middle of absolutely nowhere.

"Left, then first right" Fuller responded, glad that the subject had changed back and returning to his now badly crumpled map.

"This is the middle of nowhere!" Jennifer commented as she surveyed the surrounding countryside, barely a light visible in the growing darkness.

"Down that little side lane there" Fuller indicated ahead to what amounted to little more than a farm track leading away from the road.

"You know you had better be right about this" Jennifer responded as she turned into the lane and began the rough journey along it at a reduced speed.

"Good grief!" Fuller commented as they were both forced to brace themselves against the rough ride being caused from running over potholes in the track that seemed to be the size of the Grand Canyon.

"I hope there isn't much more of this!" Jennifer responded as the equipment in the back of the van started crashing about with the jolting.

"About another hundred yards then stop" Fuller announced.

Sure enough, a hundred yards further on, the headlights illuminated a rusty and run down looking chain link fence that joined the track side at that point and then continued along its length off into the dark distance.

"We're here!" Fuller announced.

"Where exactly is here may I ask?" Jennifer asked as she lowered her side window and squinted into the darkness.

"Just a little used long forgotten Government facility that isn't actually on the map" Fuller responded as he got out of the van and then opened the sliding side door and climbed inside.

"I assume you do have a plan?" Jennifer asked as she looked over the back of the driver's seat and observed Fuller gathering together a laptop computer, toolbox and a bag "Only that fence does not look exactly openly accessible."

"Trust me!" Fuller responded with a comforting smile.

"You do realise that anything we record may not be admissible as evidence" Baker warned as Tracy made sure the hidden microphone system was safely secured to the Commander.

"The day that a court of law believes the ramblings of a moronic politician over the word of a senior and well respected member of Her Majesty's Security Service will be the day hell freezes over" the Commander responded with determination.

"I saw snow in Guildford once" Tracy remarked.

"Then we could be in trouble" the Commander jokingly admitted before he laid himself back on the bed whereupon the Doctor overseeing them, applied various pieces of medical equipment.

"How do I look?" the Commander asked.

"Like you've been shot!" Tracy admitted.

"That's what I want to hear."

"Now remember" the Doctor advised, "you need to speak as though you are suffering and low on breath, technically you do have two bullets lodged in you."

"Got that" the Commander confirmed.

"Yes? O.k., I'll come down and escort him" Baker responded over radio before turning back to the Commander. "He's here" she confirmed.

"Showtime love" Tracy announced, kissing the Commander for luck.

"Bring him on" the Commander responded with grim determination.

"Right here" Fuller urged as he trained his torch on a section of the chain link fence whereupon Jennifer started to cut through the rusty links with a pair of wire cutters, the clicks as each link was cut through echoing in the surrounding silent darkness.

"All right" Jennifer announced as she pushed the cut links back to make an entry point "That should just about do it."

"Come on" Fuller urged as he proceeded to climb through the hole in the fence before they headed across the dark open grassy shrub land inside.

Some distance ahead was a series of typical old concrete and brick buildings, some industrial in nature and seemingly varying in ages from the wartime to the 1970's. Many of them gave the appearance of having been neglected for many years with only rudimentary repairs that were essential to their usage, having been carried out.

A few spot lamps barely provided enough illumination to see the outline of many of the buildings, let alone any detail. It was only when Fuller and Jennifer reached the wall of one of the old shed like buildings that they could really make out anything at all.

"Could do with a lick of paint that is for sure" Jennifer commented quietly as she looked at the rusted corrugated iron wall's.

"According to this" Fuller consulted a plan by the light of a small pen torch "The building we need is that one on the other side of the yard."

"How do you know that?" Jennifer enquired as to her pretty much all the buildings looked the same.

"Well for one, its got a large van full of heavily armed men parked immediately outside and secondly, its got a hell of a lot of communication wires and equipment coming out of it for a supposedly abandoned building" Fuller explained.

"Perhaps a back door might be a good idea?" Jennifer suggested as she surveyed the van Fuller had mentioned through a night vision equipped pair of binoculars.

"Good idea!" Fuller responded as they crept off in the opposite direction.

"Commander" the Home Secretary announced as he entered the room, closing the door carefully behind him, leaving the two men alone.

"You'll excuse me if I don't get up" the Commander responded with a slightly rasping voice.

"Between you and me" the Home Secretary casually remarked "I am surprised you are still alive."

"Don't you mean disappointed?" the Commander retorted, throwing in a convincing sounding cough for good measure.

"Commander, Commander, Commander" the Home Secretary responded as he took a seat alongside the bed and sat down "Now that is not a very nice thing to say is it?"

"Oh I'm sorry" the Commander realised "Politicians don't like the truth do they, either hearing it or speaking it!"

"Such negative thinking" the Home Secretary responded "Really you should know better!"

"I caught that male bovine excrement you announced about the snipers" the Commander snapped back as best as he could whilst still giving the impression of being seriously ill "Those guys were a bunch of rent a morons let out early on parole licence by you so shall we dispense with the Mr Nice Guy act?"

"Sometimes it is necessary to make the best use of an opportunity" the Home Secretary responded "And by blaming this incident on some mad terrorist group, we keep up the pretence that we really do need to spend vast amounts of money on the 'war against terror' and all that."

"Money which conveniently gets spent on Private Security Consultants and companies that are owned by yourself and certain other politically connected cronies no doubt" the Commander responded both knowingly and cynically.

"It's a free market economy" the Home Secretary "If the Government is going to spend money then there is no harm in taking it, especially if we can use events to make them spend even more of it."

"You're priceless you know that?" the Commander responded.

"Not if it's the Inland Revenue asking" the Home Secretary commented as an aside.

"You've got friends in the Revenue as well I suppose?" the Commander remarked with a weak voice.

"I prefer to call them acquaintances" the Home Secretary mused "Makes it easier to deny things in the press if anything should ever leak."

"Oh and you would know all about leaks to the press wouldn't you?"

"You would be surprised" the Home Secretary stood up and started to pace around the room.

"Nice ring" the Commander looked at the Home Secretary's hand and the cygnet ring he was wearing, decorated with an Omega symbol "Seen one or two of those in my time."

"The Omega Committee is not your enemy Commander" the Home Secretary's tone changed notably from then on, more ominous and with hidden menace "We merely operate and organise people, events, the press and media so that this country runs at its optimum best."

"Cobblers" the Commander retorted "You are a bunch of crazies, connected personal agenda waving con artists on a power trip who will use and destroy anyone and anything to obtain power and line your own pockets."

"Honestly" the Home Secretary stopped pacing and waved a finger of disagreement at the Commander "Your cynicism will be the death of you!"

"I though your snipers were supposed to be the death of me?" the Commander enquired.

"They were" the Home Secretary admitted "It seems you just can't get the staff these days!"

"So what about these mythical terrorists they were supposed to be then?" the Commander dug deeper.

"Well largely thanks to your officer's efforts, they are dead so we can use them to blame them for anything we care to name from the Great Train Robbery to not paying their Congestion Charge" the Home Secretary explained.

"All it takes is a few authentic looking files, some long lost relatives and some carefully created evidence, mix it all together, bake it on gas mark six for a while then feed it to a news hungry press who will print anything they can sensationalise and blow out of all proportion all in the name of making money by selling more papers."

"Cute" the Commander admitted.

"And then with the public reaction, the press demanding blood and general uproar demanding that something be done, we get carte blanche to sweep through major draconian legislative changes that three weeks earlier would have been thrown out as unnecessary and over the top" the Home Secretary smiled with more than a little pleasure from his triumphs.

"Netting certain private contractors and consultants a nice little earner in the process" the Commander concluded "Nice work if you can get it and I presume damn to hell anyone who gets in the way?"

"That's the free market economy for you!" the Home Secretary admitted with a knowing grin "You see at the end of the day its not about protecting the population or saving the planet as we know it, its simply a case of who can make the most money."

"Why do I get the feeling I am not going to live long enough to tell anyone about this?" the Commander mused.

"One, they would not believe you, two, my associates would discredit anything you say or just make you and it disappear and three, you talk and Tracy dies" the Home Secretary responded with cool calm and fully intended menace.

"You touch her..."

"And what?" the Home Secretary asked "You'll kill me?" he laughed "Take a look at yourself Commander, you are dying my friend and whatever fight you had against us dies with you as it did with Jim Peters."

"You going to kill me now?" the Commander asked out of interest.

"Oh dear me no" the Home Secretary sarcastically responded "one dead senior Security Service officer is enough on my conscious for this week."

The Commander managed to hide a grin of satisfaction knowing that the Home Secretary had just all but admitted to the Administrator General's murder.

"Now if you will excuse me Commander" the Home Secretary turned to leave "I have to go and establish my alibi. Farewell!"

The Commander waited a few moments after the Home Secretary had left before lifting himself from the bed and walking over to the en-suite bathroom where Tracy, Baker and a surveillance technician were crowded inside along with headphones and recording equipment.

"Tell me you got all that?" the Commander asked.

"We got it!" Baker confirmed with a huge smile of delight.

"Now can I kneecap the bastard?" Tracy asked as she kissed her husband.

"All in good time love, all in good time."

"Well it's not a back door in the exact sense of the word" Fuller remarked as he shone his torch upwards towards what appeared to be an old over head loading hatch which would at one time have had a winch system to allow materials to be lifted to and from the upper floor storage area of the building.

"You can go first" Jennifer confirmed.

"What ever happened to ladies first?" Fuller casually remarked as he readied himself to make the climb upwards.

"One, this is your operation" Jennifer responded "and two, I am afraid of heights!"

"Ah..." Fuller reacted as he gained a firm hold with his hands on the outer wall structure and carefully hoisted himself up, making sure he had a firm foothold as he went.

As Fuller continued his precarious climb, Jennifer looked around apprehensively for anyone about, the surrounding darkness however meant she almost missed a large figure round the far corner of the building and start ambling slowly in their direction.

"Ssshh!" Jennifer hissed upwards and when Fuller looked down, pointed discreetly in the direction of the gradually approaching figure.

Fuller had no choice but to stay as still as possible and hope that the passing guard or whoever it was, didn't look up more than one storey high. Jennifer meanwhile ducked behind an old barrel and hid in its shadows.

The large guard casually strolled past and for a moment, Jennifer thought they were in the clear only to see the man stop and turn around. If it had been daylight, he would have seen Jennifer hiding straight away, fortunately the darkness meant he never realised she or her precariously balanced accomplice were there as he took out a cigarette and lit it.

Jennifer breathed a quiet sigh of relief when after a few puffs of his cigarette, the guard moved on, soon passing out of sight around the far corner of the building.

"That was close!" Fuller remarked.

"Get on with it will you!" Jennifer called up, whereupon Fuller resumed his climb, quickly reaching the old hatch way. Once there, he wiped off years of accumulated dirt and dust from the small cracked window set into it and peered inside.

Seeing that the immediate interior appeared to be clear, Fuller proceeded to try and open the hatch, however its advanced age meant he had to resort to using the small crowbar he had brought with him to get it open.

"I think we are in" he called down to a not very impressed looking Jennifer.

"Ah well please yourself" he remarked to himself seeing her reaction before proceeding inside, disappearing from view.

"Simon?" Jennifer called, a few moments later his face reappeared in the hatchway above as he chucked down a rope to her.

"Tie the bags onto the end of this" he called to her "Then climb up."

Jennifer quickly had the two bags they had brought with them, tied off to the end of the rope before she duly climbed her way up to the hatchway and followed Fuller inside.

Once she was inside, Fuller pulled on the rope and carefully hauled the bags up and inside before reaching out and pulling closed the hatch door.

"What is this place?" Jennifer asked as she looked around the seemingly abandoned and dusty room, cobwebs and discarded wooden crates littering the surroundings.

"Old store room" Fuller explained as he switched on his laptop. After a few moments, he had called up a plan of the building they were now in.

"We are here" he indicated on the displayed plan, a space labelled 'Store Room B' on the upper floor of the building they were now in "We need to go outside, along this corridor, down two flights of steps then into the offices that are located in the basement of this place."

Jennifer reached for and retrieved her gun, checking it was loaded and ready in case of any unwanted guests. She had expected Fuller to be doing the same, instead he was just looking down at her gun with a little sense of anticipation.

"Where's yours?" Jennifer asked seeing Fuller's expression.

"In my office somewhere" he admitted "I never did like carrying the thing anyway."

"Regulations state that an officer of the Security Service is supposed to be armed at all times, you do know that?" Jennifer responded "I sleep with mine under the pillow for gawd's sake!"

"I wondered what that was sticking in my back the other night" Fuller mused.

"Lucky I carry a spare isn't it" Jennifer lifted up her left trouser leg and removed a small gun from the inside of her boot and passed it to him.

"You never cease to surprise me" Fuller responded as they stood up and headed towards the large wooden double doors that led to the corridor outside.

With extreme caution and her gun pointed ahead, Jennifer opened the door just enough to see outside both up and down the dimly lit corridor outside.

"Clear!" she whispered back as she opened the door wider and led the way along the corridor to the stair case that was situated at the far end, Fuller following closely behind and watching the rear with his borrowed gun at the ready.

"Back!" Jennifer called quietly as she heard footsteps and voices on the stairs below, however they then appeared to fade away, the closing of a door on a lower floor indicating that the danger had passed for the moment.

"Come on" she called back and slowly, cautiously they made their way down the steps, firstly to the ground floor and then on to the basement level, the way between the staircase and the floor beyond blocked by a pair of fire doors with a keypad combination lock.

"Step aside love" Fuller responded "This is my department."

Before tackling the keypad lock, Fuller looked up as if for inspiration before entering a five digit number and pressing the enter key. To Jennifer's utter amazement, the door opened first time.

"How the hell did you do that?" she asked.

"The number is written in pencil on the side of the door frame" Fuller pointed out the faint pencil markings, "Probably carpenters marks from when they converted this place."

"Typical Government building project then?" Jennifer asked.

"Exactly" Fuller confirmed "Shall we?"

"Ladies first again I think" Jennifer responded as she cautiously opened the door and trained her gun down the corridor beyond.

"Ok Sherlock" Jennifer asked as she looked up and down the grey panelled corridor with its rows of seemingly identical doors down each side "Which room is this system in then?"

"Well logic would say the one with all the cable trunking heading into it" Fuller responded as he looked up, casting an expert eye on the myriad of cables, trunking and other services that cluttered the ceiling like spaghetti.

"Does any of this make any sense to you then?" Jennifer asked as she cast a brief glance upwards at what Fuller was examining before returning to the job of watching out for unwelcome visitors.

"I've always said I get on brilliantly with bits of machinery, it's with human beings I generally tend to screw up" Fuller wryly commented.

"You're doing fine with me" Jennifer reassured him.

"This one!" Fuller declared pointing to one particular doorway.

"You're sure?" Jennifer asked.

"Well this little plaque on the door reading Server Control Access did rather take some fun out of the game I will admit" he responded as he leaned forward and blew a surface layer of dust off the obscured door sign.

"One slight problem though" Fuller added as he tried the door handle without any success, "It's locked."

"Stand aside" Jennifer handed Fuller her gun and moved him to one side "This is more my area of expertise."

Kneeling down, she soon got to work on the lock and as Fuller looked up and down the deserted corridor, Jennifer, using the skills she inherited from her locksmith father, had the door opened in no time at all.

"Clever girl" Fuller commented as they proceeded inside and firmly secured the door closed behind them.

"Good God, its the star ship Enterprise" Jennifer remarked at seeing all the computer cabinets, cables and consoles, winking green lights and whirring noises all around.

"It's a piece of junk" Fuller responded, clearly unimpressed "I should have known they would be using the bargain basement standard Government Contract cheap and cheerful garbage."

"Not that good then I take it?" Jennifer asked.

"I've used better computers than this for target practice" Fuller wryly commented as he took a seat at the main console and looked around the desk and associated equipment.

"Problem?" Jennifer asked.

"Not even a decent USB system interface either!" Fuller continued his scathing criticism of the system "Looks like we will have to do it the old fashioned way."

"What is that?" the Commander asked as he looked through the various cards and messages that the hospital had received for him. The one item that had caught his attention appeared to be a parcel of some kind, neatly wrapped and addressed to him by name care of the hospital.

"Post mark says St James Park W1" Tracy remarked "Isn't that the Post Office right outside New Scotland Yard?"

"Tracy?" the Commander asked as he took the parcel from here.

"Yes love?"

"Run!" he called as he threw the parcel into an adjacent empty room and slammed shut the door before running after Tracy down the corridor.

A few moments later, a large explosion blew the door and most of its surrounding wall into the corridor and sent the Commander to the floor on top of an understandably surprised Tracy.

"What the hell was that?" Tracy asked as the fire alarms began to sound and some of the sprinklers activated, attempting to douse some of the burning surroundings.

"A message from an old friend" the Commander commented with a foreboding tone in his voice.

"Oh this just gets funnier folks" Fuller commented as he accessed the system through a cable connection to his trusty laptop "I cannot believe these jokers are still using Windows 95!"

"Is that good or bad?" Jennifer asked.

"Well apart from the fact the technology is hopelessly out of date, indeed knowing the way Government Computer Contracts usually work, it was probably out of date long before they finished building it, it also means it is a damn sight easier to get into."

"All right then Einstein" Jennifer responded as a red screen appeared "Get past that then."

"Server Alpha, Omega System" Fuller read from the screen "Senior level password required."

"Try Charlton" Jennifer suggested.

"Where did that come from?" Fuller asked clearly showing that he was not thinking of that at all.

"Alpha Omega, the name of the secret doomsday bomb in one of the Planet of the Ape's films" Jennifer summarised "Charlton Heston is in it and Charlton is a place in London as well."

"I don't believe it" Fuller responded with disbelief as the password she had suggested worked "I ought to spend more time with you."

"Promises, promises" Jennifer wryly uttered to herself.

"What was that?" Fuller asked.

"Nothing dear" she grinned.

"Right, now then" Fuller commentated on what he was doing as he went along, "We install this humble little program" he announced as a floppy disk was inserted and an installation procedure was quickly run.

"Then we remove our floppy disk" Fuller continued "delete the program shortcuts and then connect our USB to serial adapter cable to this little beauty" at which point he produced a small black box with a couple of cables and a built in telephone like device.

"That's what transmits the data?" Jennifer asked as Fuller connected his device and checked to ensure it was working correctly.

"Basically yes" he confirmed as he configured the device on the main system console "It has one or two other little party tricks discreetly hidden up its sleeve as well mind."

"Such as?" Jennifer enquired merely out of curiosity.

"Oh come now" Fuller responded with a knowing grin "We don't want to spoil the surprise now do we?"

"Oh I love surprises" Jennifer sarcastically replied.

"Anyway" Fuller continued as he pressed buttons and set various settings on the screen in front of him "All that is left is to specify what I want like that, then tell the little box of tricks where we want it like that and bingo!"

"Done?" Jennifer asked.

"Just have to delete any program icons that may still be hanging around just in case anyone happens to nose around and then hide my little black box where no-one should see it unless they were specifically searching for it" Fuller confirmed as he starting scrabbling around beneath the main desk.

"So that's it?" Jennifer kneeled down and was about to touch the hidden little black box when Fuller guided her arm slowly and discreetly away from it.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you" he calmly cautioned her.

"Oh" she responded "That would be one of its little surprises I assume."

"Correct" Fuller confirmed "Shall we get the hell out of here only I'm starving!"

Jennifer duly retrieved her gun and returned to the door that led out into the corridor, opening it a little to see outside and ensuring that the area was clear for them to make their escape.

"Ok" she called back "Let's go" she urged.

A brisk pace was set by the couple as with their weapons drawn and trained around to the front and behind of them, they returned to the stairwell by which they had originally accessed the floor earlier.

"Is it me or this all just a little too easy?" Jennifer commented as they cautiously progressed up the stairs from the basement level and approached the ground floor.

"It's your imagination dear" Fuller responded calmly although deep down he was having the same nagging thought himself.

As they reached the ground floor stairwell access, they were about to continue further up when the sound of a door opening on an upper level followed by multiple footsteps and generally unfriendly sounding voices begin to approach them, making them stop and make a hasty retreat through the doors that led to the ground floor proper.

"You were saying?" Fuller asked as they ducked into the first side room they came across just as the source of the footsteps and voices arrived immediately outside from the stairwell.

"It may be nothing" what appeared to be the leader of the group, now standing immediately outside the door, commented to the others "But I want this site double checked immediately."

"Yes Sir" the three men that were with him confirmed and at a brisk pace they marched off together down the corridor.

"I think it's time for a discrete exit" Fuller commented wryly.

"I whole heartedly agree" Jennifer responded as they cautiously made their way back out into the corridor outside and then headed along it, using the green fire exit signs as a guide towards the way out.

Through a combination of ducking inside rooms and quickly moving along, they soon managed to reach the door leading outside. Carefully, they each looked out through the cracked dust covered windows set into the doors, at the scene outside.

"The natives do not look too friendly" Jennifer commented as she observed the two armour plated Land Rovers and the approximately three dozen heavily armed private security guards that were roaming about just outside.

"There seems to be an awful lot of protection for a semi-disused old storage facility" Fuller observed the weaponry that the men were carrying "Some of that hardware is too extreme even for the Security Service."

"Maybe they were expecting visitors" Jennifer responded wryly.

"Well normally I would hate to disappoint anyone but I think this is one invitation that will be respectfully refused" Fuller replied as he retrieved his laptop computer and once again called up the layout of the site upon it, seeking an alternative exit.

"Looks like we will have to take the long way around" he pointed to the screen at what appeared to be a side exit from the building they were in.

"Come on then" Jennifer duly led the way back down the corridor as far as a side room about two thirds of the way along.

Inside the room, Fuller was interested to find a number of papers and plans, some stamped with confidential markings.

"Open that bag" he urged Jennifer who briefly put her gun down on the table and did as she was asked.

"What are you doing?" she asked as she picked up her gun again and trained behind them towards the door they had just passed through.

"Field research" Fuller commented "It's amazing what dumb Government employees leave just lying around for someone to make off with."

He shoved the last file unceremoniously into the bag and closed it before looking up at the far wall of the room.

"I don't see any door" Jennifer commented as she too looked ahead at the apparently featureless wall, only a filing cabinet against its utilitarian grey surface.

"Have a little faith" Fuller commented as he wrestled the filing cabinet along the length of the wall, revealing a small hatch way at floor level.

"That's not a door" Jennifer commented "That's a rabbit hutch."

"We could always discuss it with the loonies outside if you like" Fuller offered up the only alternative solution to their plight as he wrestled the old semi-painted over hatch open and peered inside at what was little more than a ventilation duct.

"Well since you put it like that" Jennifer got on her hands and knees "I'll go first as I am the smallest."

"By all means" Fuller stood back and watched as Jennifer clambered into the duct until her feet disappeared through the opening.

At the opposite end, some ten feet away, a grid blocked the exit to the outside. Jennifer looked as best she could at the dark night outside before clambering back out into the room again.

"What are you doing back here?" Fuller asked slightly surprised to see her climb back out and stand up.

"I've got to go in feet first" she explained as she got back down again and proceeded to climb back inside, this time in the reverse direction "I have to kick this grill out otherwise we are stuck here."

In a matter of a few moments, she was back inside the duct and proceeded to hammer away at the grille as quietly as she could with her left foot. After a series of progressively harder and louder strikes, the age's old painted shut grille gave way, collapsing onto the soft muddy ground immediately below it.

Quickly Jennifer clambered out and looked around outside where only a few pieces of rusting abandoned pipe and old drums were to be found.

"Come on" she hissed into the duct whereupon Fuller got down on his hands and knees and pushed the two bags into the duct ahead of himself.

Jennifer took the bags out as Fuller pushed them ahead of him before helping him out.

"Well that was fun" Fuller commented sarcastically as he bent down and reattached as best he could the covering grille onto the duct exit.

"Back this way?" Jennifer asked indicating towards the rear of the building.

"Yep" Fuller confirmed "Then left at the corner, across this yard here" he indicated on a paper plan "and then we are at the perimeter fence."

"Lets go then" Jennifer called as she led the way with Fuller close behind her. It was a short brisk walk to the corner of the building where they peered around the corner and seeing initially that the coast was clear, were about to proceed when the sound of a vehicle approaching suddenly made them duck down.

One of the Land Rover's they had seen earlier passed by slowly and then turned left into an adjacent building, the light from its interior shining out into the darkness for the short period that the doors were open to allow its passage inside.

"I want to take a look inside there" Jennifer urged.

"There's not much point in arguing this with you is there?" Fuller casually inquired.

"No my dear" Jennifer wryly replied "There isn't."

At Jennifer's signal once the area was clear, they quickly crossed the alleyway between the two buildings and approached a roof access ladder.

"Now what?" Fuller enquired.

"We go up" Jennifer announced as she readied herself to climb up the ladder.

"Up there?" Fuller responded, definitely unsure about all of this.

"Relax" Jennifer assured him "I've done this before" whereupon she began to climb up the rusty metal ladder as far as an upper level of cracked and dirty windows through which light was shining from the inside.

"All right then" Fuller responded as he climbed up after her to find Jennifer looking discreetly through the window with a stunned expression.

"Euston, we have a problem" he responded as he saw what had made Jennifer look on stunned. Inside the building were over a hundred armoured Land Rover type vehicles along with specialist water cannon riot control vehicles and a few other pieces of high specification equipment.

"Isn't this stuff against the Security Service Constitution?" Fuller commented.

"Yep and then some" Jennifer confirmed as they clambered back down again "Looks like some power crazed loon is about to rewrite the entire rule book."

"Can I make a suggestion?" Fuller asked "Let's get the hell out of here."

"Roger that" Jennifer agreed.

Quickly and using the cover of the darkness, they scuttled across the adjacent open yard and towards the perimeter fence. Once there, they followed its length until they reached the hole they had made earlier to get in to the site.

"Ladies first" Fuller duly held open the hole to allow Jennifer to clamber through before following himself. Soon they found themselves approaching their van that they had left discreetly parked some distance away, however as they approached, they became aware that someone was waiting for them.

"Oh heck" Jennifer uttered to herself, an expression mirrored on Fuller's face as simultaneously they ducked behind a rough patch of bushes alongside the track.

Up ahead, they could make out through the branches, a red transit van parked a short distance from their own vehicle and two of the heavies, noticeably armed this time, surveying their vehicle with torches.

"What do you reckon Kev?" the larger of the two men asked as he peered inside the front driver's side window.

"Blow it up" the second man responded casually.

"Yeah" the first man agreed "Why not!"

The second man used the butt of his machine gun to break off the fuel filler flap on the vehicle before stuffing an old newspaper into the opening that led directly into the tank.

After allowing a few moments to allow the fuel from the tank to start to soak into the newspaper, he lit the protruding end of the pages with his cigarette before both men laughed manically and retired to a safe distance near their own vehicle.

A few moments later, the van exploded, sending it up into the air and flipping forward onto its roof before continuing to burn fiercely. The two men watched the show for a couple of minutes before returning to their own vehicle and driving off into the night.

Fuller stood up and with Jennifer observed the burning remnants of their vehicle with an annoyed grimace.

"Looks like we are walking!" he wryly commented.

"The Garage Superintendent at Hendon is going to be well pissed off with you" Jennifer casually remarked as she calmly tossed the keys away over her shoulder.

"Me?" Fuller responded.

"I signed it out in your name dear" she explained as they began to walk down the lane, pausing briefly alongside the burning van to give it one last look.

"Never mind" Fuller remarked "Just a quiet evening by the fire."

Tracy exited the lift at the old platform level at King William Street, only to be greeted by a terrible noise echoing through the deserted former station complex.

"What the....?" she began as she walked along the access passageway following the sound which was getting louder as she approached the steps to the upper level.

Soon she found the source of the sound, coming from the Commander's office where she found him asleep in the chair behind the desk, the deserted nature of the surroundings having had the effect of echoing his snoring all around the place.

"Good grief!" she commented as she entered the office, placed the bag she was carrying on the desk and went over to the Commander where she kissed him. It had the desired effect as the Commander spluttered back to life and thankfully he stopped the snoring.

"Good morning" she announced as the Commander came to terms with his surroundings.

"Where the hell am I?" he asked.

"King William Street tube station" Tracy responded "As was that is."

"Oh yes" the Commander responded as his head cleared a little and he sat up in the chair and looked down at the files on the desk.

"What time is it?" he asked.

"About half two in the morning" Tracy confirmed as she sat down alongside him and pushed the bag she had brought in, across the desk towards him.

"Oh you've brought me a pressie" the Commander responded.

"A little care package from Sir Richard Crowthorne and the guys at MI5" Tracy explained "Breakfast to be precise."

"Good old Richard" the Commander commented with a smile as he surveyed the contents although he was a little surprised to find a document folder in the bag as well as a consignment of jam doughnuts.

"A little breakfast time reading" Tracy added "He also passes on his best wishes and says he has two of his most dependable special operations teams at your disposal when you need them."

"Lovely" the Commander commented as he made short work of the first jam doughnut, sending blobs of jam and sugar down his front in equal measure, "We will need them."

"The doughnuts or the guys from MI5?" Tracy enquired.

"Both" the Commander explained as he began on his second doughnut of the morning, however he was not going to be able to finish it uninterrupted as the telephone rang.

"Is there some secret connection between my stomach and this country's communication networks or something?" the Commander wondered as he picked up the telephone.

"Northern Line Travel Information hotline" the Commander jokingly answered.

"It's Fuller Sir" Simon called as he and Jennifer huddled together against a motorway hard shoulder emergency call telephone "We've hit a slight problem."

"Define slight" the Commander responded.

"Loonies massed up everywhere, our van's been totalled, we are stuck in the middle of nowhere and it's just started raining!" Fuller exclaimed.

"Relax lad" the Commander assured him "Where are you?"

"Near junction 8 of the M4" Fuller responded.

"Stay there" the Commander insisted "I'm coming out to get you."

"Thank you Sir" Fuller responded before hanging up.

"Is that entirely wise?" Tracy asked as the Commander got up, preparing to leave.

"It is dark out there" the Commander responded as he put on his uniform tunic "There is no-one about and the less that know what Simon and Jennifer were up to the better."

"Can't argue with that" Tracy commented.

"Great!" the Commander kissed Tracy "Bring the breakfast, I'll drop you off at Holborn on the way."

Outside in the dark night, Tracy looked around at the near silent deserted streets of the centre of the City and mused about how quiet it was.

"I like the night time" she commented as the Commander locked the door and joined her before they walked across the main road towards Arthur Street where Tracy's patrol car was parked up.

"No one about, all the stations closed and only the odd night bus around to worry about" the Commander responded as one of those very same night buses went past them "You may have a good point there."

"You want to drive?" the Commander asked as he casually stuffed another jam doughnut into his mouth.

"You trust me to drive?" Tracy asked slightly surprised as they reached the car.

"Well" the Commander murmured between chews of doughnut "It's the middle of the night, less things around for you to collide with."

"Oh thank you!" Tracy responded with a characteristic giggle, even she realised her driving, on four wheels at any rate was maybe not up to top standard.

"Besides" the Commander added as he sat down in the front passenger seat and looked across at Tracy who was already belting up and starting the engine "I've got breakfast to concentrate on."

"You know you really ought to do something about your diet love" Tracy commented as she pulled out onto the main road "I don't want to find you lying dead at a bus stop somewhere one afternoon after having had a heart attack."

"Don't worry" the Commander "It will never happen."

"And just what makes you so sure?" Tracy asked "Lets face it, you are a total stranger to fruit and veg."

"When do you think I am ever going to find time to have a heart attack with everything else that keeps happening?" the Commander responded "Anyway, no way am I ever leaving you alone."

"Just do me one favour" Tracy asked "If you love me, go and see the doctor for a check as soon as this crisis is over?"

"All right" the Commander reluctantly conceded. Tracy was the only person in the world he would ever listen too when it came to medical advice and she knew it.

"You know you could stick the sirens on" the Commander suggested as they were stood at a set of red traffic lights, yet no other traffic was around for them to wait for.

"Good idea" Tracy responded who switched on the blue flashing lights and siren and floored the accelerator.

Making the best use of the quiet streets and the sirens meant they were soon pulling up outside the Holborn office in double quick time.

"Where do you think you are going?" Tracy asked as the Commander got out of the car "You are supposed to be in hospital" she reminded him.

"Oh yes" the Commander went around to the drivers side of the car "I nearly forgot" he responded as he opened Tracy's door and offered his hand to help her out of the vehicle.

"Be careful" she advised before kissing him.

"I will" the Commander confirmed with a smile before reluctantly letting go of Tracy. It was then he realised he was missing something.

"Tracy? You haven't got a gun I could borrow have you?" he asked.

"Where's your old revolver?" Tracy asked.

"I seem to have lost it in all the chaos somewhere" the Commander sheepishly admitted, a little annoyed about having lost the old six shooter which he had used ever since he first joined the service.

"Here" she handed her semi-automatic Glock pistol to him along with two spare ammunition clips "It maybe not your old relic but this one might at least make you shoot straight" she smiled.

"Are you saying there is something wrong with my shooting?" the Commander asked out of curiosity.

"Well let's put it this way" Tracy mused wryly "The last time you were tested on the shooting range, you did manage to get all your shots in the paper target, the problem was you were aiming for the paper target next to that one."

"Ah" the Commander had to admit defeat as he tucked the gun into his holster and the spare clips into his tunic pockets.

"I'll keep the kettle on until you get back" Tracy confirmed as she headed for the side door into their office building.

"Tracy" the Commander called after her "I love you."

Tracy blew a kiss to her husband before disappearing out of sight inside the building leaving the Commander to pause for a few moments as if in thought.

He looked around the quiet streets of central Holborn and watched as an N8 night bus passed by, before getting back into the patrol car and heading off westbound towards Leicester Square.

Tracy made her way quickly up the back stairs to the fourth floor and walked along the corridor to the Control Room.

"Morning Gladys" Tracy cheerfully called to the duty night shift supervisor as she entered the Control Room and sat down at one of the main consoles. "Anything happening out there?"

"Oh morning Maam" Gladys responded, seemingly slightly surprised not only by Tracy's unexpected presence but also by her considerably positive attitude which considering her husband was theoretically in hospital in a critical condition, did appear to be a little out of place.

"There was a bit of a fracas on a Gatwick Express about an hour ago and the usual round of drunks on the night buses but apart from that, its been a pretty quiet night" Gladys confirmed "How's the Commander by the way?"

"Making a miraculous recovery" Tracy confirmed before realising she was now unarmed and therefore breaking the regulations. "I'll be downstairs" she confirmed as she chucked her uniform tunic over the back of the chair she was sitting on and departed.

"Well that was odd" Gladys remarked as she returned to her seat at the main controller's console.

"Isn't that one of our cars burning up the Piccadilly bus lane?" one of the despatch officers commented as he pointed out the picture feed from one of the traffic cameras that was being displayed on the main screen.

"Looks like it" Gladys remarked "and I have a pretty good idea who it is as well."

Down in the Holborn basement, Tracy walked across the subterranean car park to the armoury, entering by means of the combination lock secured heavy metal door. Inside, she switched on the lights which illuminated the cage protected issuing desk and the racks of weaponry with the firing range situated just beyond.

It was like a giant firearms supermarket with weapons of seemingly every conceivable type and capability available. Tracy sought out a replacement semi-automatic pistol, standard issue to every officer in the Service and after trying three seemingly identical Glock nine millimetre weapons for weight and balance, picked one, loaded a clip of ammunition and proceeded to the firing range.

Standing in one of the firing lanes, Tracy paused, placed a pair of ear protectors over her head and took a deep breath before pulling the gun from her holster, aiming and firing eight times in quick succession.

"Nice shooting" the Metropolitan Division Chief commented as he appeared behind her.

"Thanks" Tracy responded as she re-holstered her gun "Where did you pop from?"

"Couldn't sleep" he explained "So I thought I would go for a drive and return this" he passed across the Commander's missing revolver "I know how much he is attached to it."

"Well's he's got a nice new one at the moment" Tracy mused "With a bit of luck it might keep him alive for a bit longer."

"You may have a point" the Metropolitan Division commented "Only six shots and takes ages to reload as opposed to ten odd shots and instant reloading."

"I just get this feeling he may not make it through this alive" Tracy remarked with a tone of sadness.

"It will take more than a bunch of half arsed power junkies with an agenda to defeat that husband of yours" the Metropolitan Division Chief comforted her. "Do you mind if I have a go?" he indicated the firing range.

"Oh, go ahead" Tracy stepped aside to allow the Metropolitan Division Chief to have a go with his own gun, positioning himself and then firing six shots in quick succession.

"Not as good as me" Tracy commented with a wry smile.

"Jennifer?" Fuller asked as they huddled together in a bus stop shelter trying to keep out of the worst of the incessant cold wind and rain that was beating down outside.

"Yes dear?" Jennifer responded.

"Will you marry me?" Fuller asked out of blind curiosity.

"Yes" Jennifer replied although it was not clear whether she had heard the question clearly or even if Fuller realised what he had asked as they were both shivering with cold.

"I think I can hear sirens" Jennifer commented as she strained to hear a background noise against the deafening sound of the wind and the rain drumming on the metal bus shelter roof.

"I think my right leg just went to sleep" Fuller responded as he shifted slightly uncomfortably on the rather poor quality bench seat.

They were in fact both so near to semi-unconsciousness that they almost failed to notice a Security Service patrol car pass by, stop a few yards away and reverse back again to come to a halt right in front of them.

"Is that a minicab or one of our cars?" Fuller mused as he shivered.

"It's your boss!" the Commander called as he actually managed to find the right button for the passenger side electric window and lower it.

"Oh, hi!" Jennifer weakly responded.

"Will you two love birds just get in the dam car?" the Commander requested and slightly gingerly Fuller got to his feet and propped up Jennifer before they climbed into the back seats and closed the door.

"Are you two all right back there?" the Commander asked as he observed them in the rear view mirror before preparing to drive off.

"Just crank up the heating a bit please sir" Fuller requested, which he swiftly followed up with a huge sneeze.

"I know this is going to sound like a silly question" the Commander asked as he rejoined the motorway and headed back towards London "But what happened to your van."

"It got blown up" Jennifer explained "A couple of those goons found it and decided to have a little fun."

"And to which one of you do I redirect the call from the furious Garage Chief at Hendon when it comes through?" the Commander enquired, in reply to which the two officers in the back instantaneously pointed at each other.

"Tell me you were at least successful in connecting up to the system?" the Commander asked.

"We are all hooked up" Fuller confirmed "Plus I left a little surprise package which may come in useful later."

"Speaking of surprise packages" Jennifer added "It looks like our mutual friends have some lined up themselves."

"Such as?" the Commander asked as he manoeuvred over to the far right hand fast lane and put his foot down.

"About a hundred Northern Ireland style armoured Land Rovers and god only knows what other pieces of serious kick ass hardware" Jennifer confirmed. "I think someone is planning on starting a war."

"I think it started a couple of days ago" the Commander grimly responded "There have been dark forces playing carefully staged moves since before the Administrator General was killed."

"Let me guess" Fuller responded "Create some press fuelled panic on the streets, the odd carefully placed high profile incident and then the Home Secretary launches some brand new initiative that makes him look good?"

"Whilst of course netting a number of well known private contractors a nice little bundle in the process" the Commander added.

"Nice" Jennifer commented "And then he brings in some draconian powers, bingo he is top dog, gets paid a sizeable whack commission from the contractors and probably snaps up a Nobel Peace Prize into the bargain."

"Yep" the Commander agreed "And he and his associates won't give two farthings who gets hurt or killed in the process."

"Sir?" Fuller asked "I think I am going to fall asleep."

"Good idea" the Commander agreed "I'll wake you up when we hit civilisation."

"Yes I am sure there is some perfectly legitimate reason Sir" Tracy confirmed on the telephone in her office. "I'll look into it, good day Sir."

"I think its going to be one of those days" Gladys, the Night Shift Supervisor confirmed as she entered the office to deliver the overnight activity reports.

"You may be more right than you think" Tracy agreed "Anyway, I am needed elsewhere."

"Where will you be Maam?" Gladys enquired.

"You'll see" Tracy smiled knowingly before grabbing her uniform tunic and disappearing out of the office.

Outside, the first few rays of sunlight were just starting to turn the night sky a progressively lighter shade of blue as Tracy exited from the main entrance into the deserted High Holborn road.

Away to her right, she observed the patrol car turn right from Southampton Row into High Holborn and pull to a halt at the kerbside before she opened the front passenger door and climbed in.

"Morning love" she called as she leaned forward and kissed the Commander.

"Sssh!" the Commander held a finger to his lips and pointed towards the rear of the car where she saw Fuller and Jennifer asleep in each others arms.

"Now isn't that sweet" she commented quietly.

"Even with the sirens on they didn't wake up" the Commander confirmed.

"That would be you who tore up the M4 Bus Lane at 140 miles per hour then?" Tracy asked.

"Huh?" the Commander responded.

"The Chief of Thames Valley Traffic Division just rang to say there was one of our Patrol Cars going like the clappers along his motorway" Tracy explained "I think he was a little surprised."

"Whoops" the Commander responded quietly as he pulled away from the kerb and proceeded to drive through Central London back to King William Street.

"Well did they do it?" Tracy asked.

"If you mean access the system" the Commander responded "Then yes" he confirmed.

"So it should be automatically feeding all their data straight to us as we speak then?"

"That is the theory" the Commander responded as he used the sirens to ignore the red traffic lights approaching Monument and turn right into King William Street "Which if it works, means we can analyse the information and then go and knock on a few doors" he added as he pulled into Monument Street and parked up.

"Wakey, wakey!" the Commander called into the back.

"What happened?" Fuller awoke with a start, nearly sending Jennifer who had been lying almost on top of him, flying in the process.

"We are here" Tracy confirmed much to Fuller's confusion as she was not in the car when he had dozed off.

"Define here exactly" Jennifer groggily requested as she came to terms once more with the land of the living.

"I strongly suggest we fill these two with coffee" Tracy suggested.

"Good idea" the Commander agreed as he got out of the car and crossed the street to the side entrance that led to the lift to the lower levels.

"I had this strangest dream" Jennifer began as with Fuller they followed Tracy and the Commander into the lift.

"Oh yes?" Fuller was intrigued.

"I dreamt I was in a cold bus stop somewhere and you asked me to marry you" she responded causing the Commander and Tracy who were standing in front of them in the lift to look at each other wide eyed with surprise.

"What was the answer just out of interest?" Fuller asked.

"Yes" Jennifer recalled" At least I hope it was, I can't really remember all that much."

"Interesting" Fuller remarked as the lift stopped at the bottom and the Commander opened the lattice gates before they stepped out into the tile lined corridor.

"Tracy" the Commander requested "Fill these two with as much coffee as you can find then plug the love birds into the computer."

"Right Love" Tracy confirmed "Come on you two"

"I have to make some phone calls" the Commander confirmed.

The Divisional Commander of the Metropolitan Division had only just made it to the end of his garden path when Commander Baker pulled up in front of his house in a Transport Division patrol car.

"Good morning Sir" she announced from the drivers seat.

"Is it?" the Metropolitan Chief jokingly enquired as he stood leaning on his front gate, his briefcase and cap in one hand, a half eaten slice of burnt toast in the other.

"Your presence is immediately requested" Baker confirmed as she got out of the car and opened the rear door for him.

"I don't suppose my dear you would care to tell me what this is all about by any chance?" the Metropolitan Division Chief enquired as he climbed in.

"That will become clear later" Baker evasively answered.

"Now how did I know you were going to say that?" he responded, not in the least bit surprised at this development following the extraordinary events of the week thus far.

"Are you at least going to tell me where we are going?" he asked as they drove into the suburbs of South London.

"We have two others to collect first" was all Baker would confirm as she was under strict orders not to reveal anything at that stage.

"Oh right" the Metropolitan Chief responded as he attempted to brush toast crumbs off his tunic.

Soon they were moving through Central London and crossing the River Thames by way of Westminster Bridge where Baker pulled up outside the Underground station and got out.

"Back in a minute Sir" she confirmed with a smile.

"Hello, this just got interesting" the Metropolitan Chief commented as he watched Baker cross the road and greet Sir Richard Crowthorne, the Director General of MI5 before escorting him back to the car and opening the door so he could take a seat in the back.

"Morning Dickie" the Metropolitan Chief responded "I see you have been invited on the mystery tour as well then."

"It would appear so" Sir Richard confirmed with a wry smile "I do hope there is some breakfast thrown in on this junket."

"Let me guess" the Metropolitan Chief asked "Mysterious invitation slap bang in the middle of breakfast?"

"Exactly" Sir Richard confirmed as the car moved off around three sides of Parliament Square and into Whitehall "Although I see you have had your breakfast already" he nodded down at the crumbs that despite his best efforts, the Metropolitan Chief still had down the front of his uniform.

"Do you have any idea where we are going?" the Metropolitan Chief asked.

"None at all" Sir Richard responded "Kind of exciting really, you just don't get this kind of interesting thing happen when you are stuck in Intelligence Briefings all day."

"I thought you lot spent all day going around in Aston Martin's, drinking Martini's and playing with gadgets all day?" the Metropolitan Chief commented.

"That's MI6" Sir Richard confirmed sadly "Eight times the budget and far more fun than we ever get to have."

"I wonder if that is our third passenger" the Metropolitan Chief pointed ahead to Horse Guards Parade, outside which, the patrol car was coming to a stop.

"General, Sir Charles Frobisher, Head of the Military Police?" Baker asked after getting out of the car and walking up to a very distinguished looking military gentleman with silver grey handle bar moustache and full dress army uniform complete with sword.

"Yes madam" he confirmed with a welcoming smile and a salute.

"If you would please?" Baker opened the front passenger door for him and he graciously got in.

"Morning Charlie" Sir Richard Crowthorne called "Welcome to the magical mystery tour!"

"Morning gentlemen" the General greeted them "All seems a bit cloak and dagger doesn't it?"

"You can say that again" the Metropolitan Division Chief confirmed "Here Dickie, you are head of MI5, aren't you supposed to know everything about everyone?"

"On my budget?" Sir Richard jokingly laughed.

"Well I've got the dagger" the General confirmed "I don't suppose anyone has a cloak handy do they?" he joked as the patrol car moved off and towards Trafalgar Square.

As the three of the most senior law enforcement agency Commanders in the country exchanged quips and anecdotes, Baker continued to drive on through Central London which by now was starting to snarl up with the early morning rush hour traffic.

As they moved slowly towards the City, the Metropolitan Division Chief looked over his shoulder briefly and observed a small black van in amongst the traffic, about two vehicles behind them.

"I do believe we have company" he announced.

"I noticed" the General confirmed "Been following us since at least Whitehall."

"Don't worry" Baker responded as she turned right past the Bank of England and pulled to the side of the road in the curiously named road Poultry "He is with our little party" she confirmed.

"Is this our destination?" Sir Richard asked even though deep down he had a suspicion it wasn't, a suspicion that was about to be confirmed.

"We are having to take the scenic route" Baker explained as she went around opening the doors to allow the officers to step out of the car and gather on the pavement where they were joined by a younger military like gentleman who was dropped off by the black van nearby before it speeded away.

"Major Forsyth" he introduced himself, saluting the General and shaking hands with the others "I seem to have been invited to a meeting of the Security Services equivalent of who's who!"

"Believe me lad" the General responded "You are as much in the dark as we are."

"If you will follow me gentlemen" Baker led the way into the Cheapside/Poultry entrance to Bank Underground Station and through the labyrinth of passageways to the ticket hall.

Somehow, none of the officers seemed surprised to find another senior Security Service officer waiting for the party in the ticket hall.

"Divisional Commander Prowse" the middle aged experienced looking officer greeted the party "Tactical Firearms Division" he added.

"Good morning Sir" Baker greeted him with a salute.

"How do Lizzy" Prowse responded "I hear you have been a busy little thing lately."

"I have been getting around a fair bit it has to be said" she confirmed with a wry smile.

"Did anyone remember to bring their Oyster card?" the Metropolitan Chief jokingly asked as they approached the ticket barriers, however Baker had this contingency covered as she offered her warrant card to the station supervisor at the gate.

"Transport Division" she called "The brain trust here is with me" she grinned. It was not likely she would ever have charge of such a distinguished and powerful collection of officers every again so she was determined to enjoy the moment.

"Here you go" the station supervisor duly announced as he opened the ticket barrier access gate and with a nod of greeting, allowed the officers through.

"Transport Division?" Prowse enquired as last time he was aware he was her boss.

"I have identification for every occasion" Baker mused "You need a fair few in my job."

"And what exactly is your day job may I ask?" the Metropolitan Division Chief asked out of curiosity as they made their way towards the down escalators, following the signs for the District and Circle Line platforms.

"I assassinate people" she responded with a wry smile.

"I don't think we had better argue with her" the General suggested.

"Oh it's all right" Baker reassured them as they stepped off the first down escalator and proceeded to the second one "I only assassinate bad guys."

"Well that's a relief!" Forsyth jokingly commented as they continued onwards.

It was not long before they found themselves passing through the area where the Docklands Light Railway terminated, having to cope with the throngs of rush hour commuters who were passing through the station seemingly en-masse and oblivious to the presence of six armed, uniformed and powerful Security Service and Military officers in their midst.

It took a bit of struggle to reach the far end of the passage where the escalators lead back up to the Monument Station part of the complex. On their way up the first of the escalators, Sir Richard Crowthorne let out a depressed sigh.

"On no not again" he remarked as he read the free copy of the Metro newspaper he had picked up on their journey through the station.

"What's up?" the Metropolitan Chief asked.

"There's a massive sale on at my wife's favourite shoe shop" he commented.

"Well that's this month's pay check written off then" the Metropolitan Chief remarked.

"And probably a fair chunk of next month's as well" Sir Richard grimly confirmed.
"Ah well at least that is better."

"What's that?" the General asked.

"England are 146 runs ahead with seven wickets remaining" he confirmed from a quick scan of the sport pages.

"I don't know" Baker commented to herself as they made their way from the first to the second up escalator "You just can't take them anywhere."

At the top of the second escalator, they exited onto the back part of Monument Station's District and Circle westbound platform where they were forced to pause for a few moments when they realised that Sir Richard had stopped to buy some chocolate from the adjacent kiosk.

"What?" he asked as he set about the chocolate with relish in a way even the Commander himself might have baulked at, well at this early hour anyway, "I missed breakfast!"

"Come on" Baker encouraged them to follow her up through the station and back to the surface, exiting via the ticket hall out into the street.

"Well that was fun" the Metropolitan Chief commented as they looked around the traffic packed streets immediately outside the station "Now where?"

"This way please gentlemen" Baker led on along the foot path in the direction of London Bridge before turning left and crossing Monument Street to the doorway set into the wall of the building on the south side.

"In here if you please" she held open the door for the men to enter.

"Are you thinking what I am thinking?" Sir Richard Crowthorne whispered to the Metropolitan Chief as they proceeded into the dimly lit passageway, made even the more gloomy when Baker closed the door to the outside world behind them.

"I'll tell you in about one minute" the Metropolitan Chief responded as Baker squeezed past them and operated the lift doors.

"If you would please" she stood to one side and gestured the men into the lift which they did understandably cautiously. Once inside, Baker leaned inside the now somewhat crowded compartment and pointed out the controls.

"Push that lever down once I have closed the doors" she instructed "You will be met at the bottom."

With that she closed the lift doors, turned smartly on her heels and left the building, reaching for her radio as she exited back out into the daylight.

"Lima Tango Zero Five Alpha" she called "They are on their way down to you now, if they can get the lift to work."

"Well come on then" Sir Richard encouraged Major Forsyth who was stood nearest the operating controls "Lets see if this contraption actually works."

"This is usually the point in those old movies when the lift fills with gas or the floor drops out into a shark pool or something" the Metropolitan Chief wryly commented.

"Here goes" Major Forsyth announced and pressed the lever down, whereupon the lift car began to creak its way downwards.

"Is this thing safe?" the General commented as the lift's age coupled with its excessive load of five persons caused it to creak and groan even more than normal as it descended.

"I think we have arrived" Major Forsyth announced "although exactly where I am not entirely sure" he added as the lift slowed to a stop.

"Good morning gentlemen" Tracy announced as she opened the lift gates before stepping aside to allow them out into the tile lined tubular corridor.

"Deputy Divisional Commander Caverner" the Metropolitan Division Chief announced "Now why am I not surprised to find you here?"

"Glad you could come" Tracy responded as she led the way down the corridor to the main part of the former station complex.

"What is this place?" Sir Richard asked as they made their way through the lower level of the former platform area to the steps leading to the upper floor.

"The former King William Street station" Tracy explained as he ascended the steps to the upper level "We seemed to have sort of inherited it."

"We?" the Metropolitan Chief asked as they entered the computer control room.

"It's a long story gentleman" the Commander announced as he entered the room from the other end.

"Jesus Christ!" Major Forsyth commented.

"Not quite" the Commander giggled "I may have arisen from the dead but for completely different reasons."

"I knew it!" Sir Richard smirked "I believe that's twenty quid you owe me" he tapped the Metropolitan Chief on the arm to remind him of a bet they had shared.

"Oh thanks for the doughnuts" the Commander responded "And this" he held up the file that had been included in the bag.

"No worries" Sir Richard replied as they all took their seats around the large board room like desk that dominated the centre of the room "So the assassination was a put up job then?"

"Not quite" the Commander explained as he took up the seat at the head of the table "They did intend to finish me off but thanks to a highly placed source, we were able to engineer a little subterfuge."

"Who knows you are safe and well outside of this room?" the Metropolitan Chief asked as he begrudgingly passed a twenty pound note to Sir Richard who proceeded to hold it up to the light before joyfully stuffing it in his top pocket.

"Jennifer Caverner and Simon Fuller who are in the next room hacking away at a computer" the Commander responded "Commander Baker who actually shot me and the Prime Minister."

"That all?" Commander Prowse enquired as he poured himself a glass of water.

"The Evening Standard seller outside Monument Station" the Commander added before turning to Sir Richard "One of your guys I believe?" to which all he could respond was a reluctant shrug of the shoulders at the thought that the Commander had managed to spot yet another of their deep cover agents.

"Anyway to business" the Commander moved on "Contrary to what you may have read in the press, the death of Jim Peters was part of a carefully worked plan to gain control of the Security Service and associated agencies by representatives of a Governmental committee simply known as the Omega Committee."

"Also known as the Teflon Committee by reputation" Sir Richard added "Mainly because nobody could ever get anything to stick to them let alone beyond doubt prove their existence."

"You must have suspected otherwise you wouldn't have sent me this file" the Commander added.

"Basically yes" Sir Richard confirmed "I had been keeping copies of any internal intelligence reports that crossed my desk regarding unusual goings on in certain political circles and I believe Jim Peters had been doing the same."

"I inherited his files when he sent them to me just before he was murdered" the Commander lifted up a second weightier file.

"Who killed him?" the Metropolitan Chief asked.

"From the start I figured out it had to be someone who could walk into his office and leave again undisturbed and unnoticed" the Commander explained "I had one theory but until last night, no evidence."

"So who then?" the General asked.

"The Home Secretary" the Commander confirmed with a grim expression.

"Well he is capable, motivated and it fits in with things I have been hearing on the back channels" Sir Richard confirmed "Bloody hard to prove though."

"Tracy if you would be so kind?" the Commander asked.

"Here you go" Tracy passed across a portable tape recorder.

"The Home Secretary was very kind to pay me a visit in my err 'death bed' and I manipulated him into spilling the beans" the Commander responded with a wry grin before pressing the play button on the tape recorder, whereupon the Home Secretary's voice echoed around the room admitting to the crime.

"Explains the explosion at the hospital" the Metropolitan Chief added "To finish you off most likely."

"And he thinks I am now dead" the Commander responded "although that is subject to a 'D' notice courtesy of a contact in the system."

"Oh boy is he going to be in for a surprise" the Metropolitan Division Chief commented "I'd love to see the smile wiped off his face when you show up with an arrest warrant."

"It's a little more complicated than that I am afraid" the Commander went on "Which is where the General here, Major Forsyth and Commander Prowse come in."

"Tactical firearms, the Military Police and the entry and seize specialists from the SAS?" the Metropolitan Chief commented as he looked around the room at the impressive array of officers present "We are talking grade 'A' ass kicking here aren't we?"

"Fuller!" the Commander called behind him "Stop snogging Jennifer and get in here."

"Sir?" Fuller responded as he looked around the corner of the doorpost.

"How many targets do we have?" the Commander enquired.

"Eighty four in twenty seven locations" Fuller responded "Plus our major problem at that compound."

"Compound?" the General asked.

"We have a massing of hired loons and some very heavy equipment at an old Ministry of Defence storage compound about five miles from the M4 in Berkshire" the Commander explained.

"I know that old place" the General responded "It's been all but abandoned for ten years or more now."

"Yeah well" Tracy cut in "Someone's appears to have reopened it."

"What do you need?" the General asked.

"As its on MOD property it falls outside our jurisdiction so obviously we can't touch it so that is where your guys at the Royal Military Police come in" the Commander explained "We need the place, its contents and everyone in it seized or stopped and I really don't care how much fun you have doing it."

"Fully understood" the General responded with a wry smile.

"The eighty four targets that Fuller mentioned" Tracy continued with the briefing as she passed out printed details around the room "All need to be arrested at the same time. If one of them escapes and warns the others, we may lose the opportunity to wipe out the Omega Committee and they will crop up again."

"What sort of targets are we looking at?" Major Forsyth asked.

"Fuller?" the Commander called back over his shoulder again.

"Yes Sir?" he responded from the room beyond.

"ID's and locations please" the Commander requested.

"Just coming" Fuller called back before struggling into the room with a pile of paper which he plonked on the desk before it toppled over and slid majestically to the floor.

"Oh, erm sorry Sir" Fuller responded slightly embarrassed.

"Just give me the names and places" the Commander suggested.

"Well" Fuller remarked as he read from a summary "we need arrest warrants for sixteen civil servants, three cabinet ministers, one junior cabinet minister, four members of parliament, sixteen Security Service officers of various ranks from Lieutenant up to the current Administrator General and around a dozen or so others in various agencies across the centre of the City, that's plus the goon squads of course."

"Locations?" Major Forsyth asked even though deep down he had worked out some of the answers already and was bracing himself for the worst.

"New Scotland Yard, the Home Office, Palace of Westminster, Downing Street, several Government and private office buildings, you name any major important building you wish" Fuller concluded "It's on that list."

"Bloody hell" the Metropolitan Chief commented as he scanned down the list of names "The politicians I guessed at but some of these Security Service guys have been in the job for years, mind you he could be trouble" he pointed to one name on the list.

"Who's that?" the Commander enquired.

"My own deputy!" the Metropolitan Chief commented "Shifty little bastard, always been eyeing up my job ever since he got fast tracked a couple of years ago and fond of getting his gun off as well."

"Well I can have sixteen trustworthy tactical entry and search teams here by twelve o'clock" Commander Prowse confirmed "If our friends from the black van squad could provide some backup for the really tricky stuff?" he turned to Major Forsyth.

"Consider it done mate" he confirmed "I'll need to make a few telephone calls and pull a couple of favours to keep the Ministry of Defence out of this but I think we can pull it off."

"I can bring at least three van loads of anti-terrorist guys to the party" the Metropolitan Division Chief confirmed and we can have Scotland Yard swept and all those targets there arrested within minutes."

"Isn't it going to look a bit suspect having all these armed guys running around raiding key parts of central London?" Tracy asked.

"That is where our very own fake fake Administrator General comes in" the Commander confirmed "he is going to be announcing that he has received 'credible intelligence' of an imminent terrorist threat to the City and raise the alert level to red" he explained "This will be of course carefully leaked to the BBC who will then report live that key buildings are having their security enhanced with immediate effect and arrests are being made across the City."

"That's the power of the press for you I suppose" Major Forsyth commented.

"Yeah well the Omega Committee have been manipulating things to their own ends for years" the Commander grimly responded "It's time we showed them that two can play at that particular game."

"Where will the Home Secretary be?" the Metropolitan Chief asked.

"The Administrator General will be calling a press conference at New Scotland Yard for some time between twelve thirty and one o'clock" the Commander responded "and you can bet good money that the Home Secretary will be there for the photo opportunity if not to ramble another of his dreadful speeches at the general populous."

"I'll have my best surveillance teams get to work on surveying our targets" Sir Richard confirmed as he reached for one of the telephones on the desk.

"So what's our clock?" Major Forsyth enquired.

"Target time is exactly 13:00" the Commander announced. "What I need you gentlemen to do is work out a plan, call up whatever resources you require and set up a staging area with everyone and everything we need lined up and ready to roll no later than 12:30."

"Tracy" the Commander turned to his wife seated next to him and took her hand in his "You had better go and get the paperwork signed."

"Ok" Tracy confirmed before they kissed briefly.

"Jennifer!" the Commander called behind him once more.

"Yes Sir?" she responded.

"I want Tracy to have a fully armed escort" the Commander instructed "Bullet proof ministerial car, motorcycle outriders, sharp shooters, the lot."

"You got it."

"Aye lad, open the gate will you" the Security Service officer on duty at the main entrance to Downing Street called to his colleague as a ministerial vehicle with four accompanying Security Service motor cycle out riders approached with sirens at full blast, dodging around traffic in Whitehall before pulling across the carriageway.

As the procession arrived at the gates, they opened and the two officers waved the vehicles through which slowed briefly to allow the pop up barrier in the road to lower to allow them to pass.

The usual gathering of press and television news media outside the famous entrance to 10 Downing Street on the opposite side of the road were surprised as the expected quiet morning schedule of ordinary political comings and goings was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of the ministerial car with its escort.

"Hello" the BBC's political correspondent commented as the car drew to a halt immediately in front of them "Someone's in a hurry."

Expecting a minister to get out of the car, they were all surprised when Tracy appeared from the rear of the vehicle in her full dress uniform, place her hat firmly on her head and then briefly smile at the gathered press before heading off to the door of 10 Downing Street itself.

The officer on duty saluted as Tracy passed through the door, where inside she was greeted by the Prime Minister's personal private secretary.

"Good morning Maam" he greeted her as she arrived in the main hallway, the door being closed quietly but firmly behind her "He is expecting you, this way please."

"Thank you" Tracy acknowledged before following the secretary through the building to the Prime Minister's office. A polite knock was swiftly responded to from within whereupon the secretary opened the door and showed Tracy inside.

"Good morning Sir" Tracy greeted the Prime Minister before pausing until the office door was closed and she had ensured they were alone.

"Good morning" the Prime Minister stood up from behind his desk "I take it this is not a social call?"

"Correct Sir" Tracy confirmed slightly nervously "I need, well the Commander and I need a very large favour."

"All right" the Prime Minister pondered, curious as to what this was all about "What can I do for you?"

"I need you to authorise arrest warrants for eighty four individuals" Tracy responded "And you may not like it."

"Why?" the Prime Minister asked "Who's on the list?"

"Erm see for yourself" Tracy handed a folder with the requisite documentation in it to the Prime Minister who sat back down at his desk, opened it and began to read through the contents.

"Jesus, Mary, Mother of God!" the Prime Minister exclaimed and he had only read the first few warrants thus far.

"You might need to start thinking about a cabinet reshuffle later this afternoon" Tracy suggested, attempting to lighten the mood.

"Well I will be glad to be shot of him for a starter" the Prime Minister responded "Holy crap!" he suddenly blurted out as he turned a page and saw another warrant request.

"You got to the good one then?" Tracy enquired.

"Well I had always suspected there was something not right about that idiot Home Secretary but...." he tailed off.

"Could you possibly sign the sixth one right now?" Tracy asked.

"The sixth one..." the Prime Minister counted through the papers until he found the appropriate one "Oh, I see what you mean, hang on a minute" he responded as he reached for a pen from the desk and quickly signed the warrant before passing it over to Tracy.

"Back in a minute" Tracy responded as she turned and jogged to the door where she drew her gun and after a momentary pause, quickly opened it and pressed the gun directly into the face of the Prime Minister's Personal Private Secretary who had been listening at the door and for whom the arrest warrant was written out.

"You're nicked sunshine" Tracy announced as she slapped his copy of the arrest warrant into his front jacket pocket. The Secretary wisely gave up immediately and put up his hands.

"Move" Tracy firmly guided the secretary into the office and closed the door, "Hands on the desk" she ordered, reinforcing her request with a wave of her gun.

"There must be some mistake" the secretary began to weakly protest even though deep down, he already knew the game was up.

"Don't move a muscle" Tracy responded as she handcuffed the Secretary and the pulled him towards a nearby cupboard.

"Allow me" the Prime Minister grinned as he opened the cupboard door and Tracy shoved the secretary inside.

"You can't do this?" he began to protest.

"Shut up" Tracy responded as the Prime Minister slammed shut the cupboard door and then locked it with the key that was in the old style brass lock.

"You know if this Prime Ministering thing doesn't work out" Tracy responded "I think you could have a career in law enforcement."

"Well one thing I can definitely do is sign these arrest warrants" the Prime Minister confirmed as he returned to the desk and proceeded to go through the papers, rapidly signing each one in turn.

Tracy went over to the window and looked down on Downing Street immediately outside whilst she waited. She observed the press gathered on the far pavement, trying to make sense of her arrival earlier and filing reports about non-descript parliamentary bills and other political titbits of the day.

"You know being Prime Minister is not all its cracked up to be" the Prime Minister called as he reached the last warrant and signed it with a flourish before closing the folder.

"Well" Tracy responded "Just by signing those bits of paper, you may have made a difference today, that's surely got to be worth something?"

"Deliver the Commander my personal good wishes" the Prime Minister requested as he handed the folder back to Tracy "Ask him to give my regards to the Home Secretary, right between the eyes."

"You can bet on it" Tracy confirmed "I also recommend that you remain here at Downing Street until we give the all clear" she suggested.

"What about him?" the Prime Minister indicated the locked cupboard.

"Oh I'll send around a couple of the boys later" Tracy replied "By then I think they, the BBC and indeed the entire country will have realised that the imminent terrorist threat was not all it appeared to be."

"Good luck" the Prime Minister called as Tracy turned to leave.

"To us all Sir" she responded "to us all."

"A reminder of the breaking news story as we approach eleven o'clock" the BBC News 24 announcer broadcast through the television in the King William Street Control Room "Sources within the Security Service are confirming that in the last hour, the terrorist alert status for Central London has been raised to its highest possible level."

"Looks like we are in business" the Commander commented as he picked up the telephone and dialled out to the Control Room at Holborn.

"Hello Gladys?" the Commander called much to her surprise. She knew she had received an unusual request to stay on in the Control Room after her night shift duty had ended, now the reason behind it suddenly became just a little bit clearer.

"Sir?" Gladys responded slightly startled as she instantly recognised the voice of the Commander who up until that point she had assumed was either hospitalised or possibly even dead given some of the false rumours that were being deliberately allowed to filter through the grapevine.

"You've seen the BBC News?" the Commander asked.

"Err yes Sir" Gladys responded "Would you like me to do something about it?"

"Indeed my dear" the Commander confirmed "I need you to do two things, firstly you will be calling in a number of suspicious packages at Tottenham Court Road, Marble Arch and Sloane Square, evacuate the stations, lots of news crew attracting sirens and the whole malarkey."

"Got it" Gladys confirmed as she jotted it all down "Any other chaos you would like me to create."

"If you have any overheating buses going around" the Commander added "Most likely one of route 436's bendy ones, then make a big issue of that as well."

"Consider your chaos to order on its way" Gladys responded "I don't suppose you are going to tell me what this is all about by any chance?" she enquired.

"Just keep watching the BBC News at about lunch time" the Commander suggested.

"Glad to hear from you Sir" Gladys responded before hanging up.

"Who was that?" one of the confused looking despatch officers in the Control Room enquired.

"Err my accountant" Gladys responded. When she first thought of the excuse it sounded fairly reasonable until she actually said it, then it just sounded plain daft.

"We are getting unconfirmed reports coming in of a series of security alerts in at least two central London Underground stations" the BBC News 24 presenter announced.

"Just in the last couple of minutes, it is being reported that significant numbers of Security Service officers have arrived at and evacuated Tottenham Court Road and Marble Arch" the presenter continued.

"With reports of the Bomb Disposal Squad expected to arrive within the next few minutes. For more information we go across now live to our correspondent who is at Tottenham Court Road."

"Well that looks convincing enough" the Commander remarked as he watched the developments being reported live via the television in the office.

"Well that's the Central and Charing Cross branch of the Northern Line pretty much screwed" Fuller commented as he entered the office and joined the Commander watching the developments.

"It is a Saturday" the Commander admitted "so hopefully disruption should be fairly minimal overall."

"Got them!" Tracy called as she arrived in the office brandishing her freshly signed set of arrest warrants, "What's happened to the Central Line by the way?"

"We needed a few high profile incidents to cover our tracks" the Commander explained "So I got Gladys to arrange a few."

"So no one is trying to wreck Tottenham Court Road then?" she asked.

"No" the Commander confirmed as he got up from behind the desk "Mind you, who would notice the difference?"

At that point, there was a polite knock at the door and Major Forsyth entered the room.

"Sir" he announced "I think we have a plan that's good to go."

"Lead on" the Commander urged as they all went back to the briefing room where the large table was now covered with endless notes, drawings, diagrams and plans along with what seemed like an infinite collection of empty coffee cups.

"So what have you got for me gentlemen" the Commander enquired as he joined them and took his seat at the head of the table.

"Well" Major Forsyth began "I think we can be confident that we now have enough resources on hand to pull this off" he announced as he put a large blown up map of London in the middle of the table.

"Commander Prowse will have his teams enter the targets on the east side of London here and here" Major Forsyth pointed out with a pencil, key locations indicated in red on the map.

"Transport Division officers will provide perimeter containment and front line cover whilst the Anti Terrorist boys and the Metropolitan Division teams take the targets in Westminster with Jennifer Caverner guiding the Palace of Westminster crew" he continued "The Met Chief and his team will tackle those targets in his own section at Scotland Yard whilst the Commander and the Transport Division's specialist team take the National Command section."

"I will lead the team into the Home Office in case the Home Secretary is there rather than at the Yard" Tracy added.

"My lads with some units supplied courtesy of the General here" Forsyth continued "will take care of the military compound in Berkshire."

"I will be making sure that all incoming and outgoing communications into our target locations are cut from exactly thirty seconds prior to entry" Fuller confirmed "except the Yard where I will be keeping their Control Room online and connected but I will monitor just in case anyone tries and sneaks any messages through."

"Where are we bringing everyone together?" the Commander asked.

"Battersea Power Station" Forsyth confirmed "To anyone watching it will look like a training exercise or something so should not attract too much attention."

"One slight problem" Tracy pointed out "We are never going to have enough vehicles to transport all our officers in and also prisoners out."

"Fuller" the Commander looked up "Remember that emergency evacuation exercise we did a few months back?"

"Err yes" Fuller responded slightly reluctantly "but where are we going to find that many buses at this short a notice?"

"It's Saturday" the Commander responded "No Red Arrow services running so do the math."

"I have always wanted to drive one of those things" Tracy commented.

"Ok ladies and gentlemen" the Commander announced "Let's roll."

With that command, they all gathered up their briefing documents and plans and proceeded out of the room, back through the complex to the lift where it took two turns to get everyone back to the surface.

Back in the briefing room, Fuller was left alone to oversee communications control for the operation, only the hum of the computers, the occasional distant echo of a Northern Line train filtering down the disused running tunnels and the scuttling of a passing mouse interrupting the stillness.

Outside, passers by were understandably surprised when the innocuous looking door in the side wall in Monument Street opened and a procession of some of the most senior Security Service and military officers in the country appeared from within.

Jennifer had arranged for a set of cars from the VIP Protection Division to ferry them all to their various destinations, most of them to Battersea with Major Forsyth bound for Berkshire to meet up with his men and the General bound for the Ministry of Defence.

"Well there goes the neighbourhood" the newspaper seller on the corner commented as the cars were loaded with their plethora of high profile passengers and quickly departed.

"Home Secretary" the Administrator General warmly greeted although deep within, he welcomed him with all the appreciation of catching typhoid.

"Lane" the Home Secretary "I hear we've got a bit of a crisis on then?" he asked enthusiastically as the two men went into the Administrator General's office on the top floor of New Scotland Yard and closed the door behind them.

"Credible intelligence from the Anti-Terrorist Branch that there may be terrorists active in Central London this very day" Lane confirmed, lying convincingly through his teeth as he sat down behind the desk.

"Should we not unleash our special units?" the Home Secretary asked "They are itching to get stuck in you know."

"Let's not do anything too hasty just yet" Lane cautioned the Home Secretary calmly "We only have a few scattered unconfirmed reports of security alerts which are being dealt with. I personally would prefer to keep our best powder dry until its really needed."

It was a careful balancing act he had to undertake, the last thing that anyone needed was the armed lunatics running free on the streets before the scheduled raids otherwise the potential very public blood shed could be catastrophic.

"If you think so" the Home Secretary seemed disappointed but for the moment agreed with Lane's viewpoint.

"You placed me here to run the National Security Service for you, it's my decision" Lane enforced.

"So where do we go from here?" the Home Secretary asked as he poured himself a drink from the whisky decanter on the side table "The public will be getting nervous and we need to issue something in time for the evening news."

"I've scheduled a press conference for one o'clock" the Administrator General responded, effectively opening the trap.

"Great" the Home Secretary "Count me in" he responded as he unwittingly fell into the trap.

"I thought you might say that" the Administrator General smiled in response as he relaxed back in the seat.

"The man from the bus company said if we scratch it, we are paying for it" Tracy confirmed as she alighted from the large red articulated bendy bus that she had just driven into the inner confines of what once was Battersea Power Station, and parked it alongside nineteen similar vehicles that the Commander had convinced various London Bus companies to loan them for the afternoon.

Alongside the borrowed buses stood pretty much every single Security Service van, patrol car and motorbike that they had managed to discreetly muster. It had not been an easy task either as there were a number of enemy contacts within the service who had to be circumvented and steered around to avoid the whole operation being blown wide open before it had even begun.

"Come on then" the Commander put his arm around Tracy and together they walked through to the gathering area where every single spare trusty worthy officer they could find from several different divisions and other agencies, were all gathered.

Understandably, none of those there present had yet been briefed on what was going on, they had merely been summoned on an Alpha Alert status and given the impression that there was going to be a series of high profile anti-terrorist raids which was not really that far from the truth but sufficiently vague enough so as to avoid detection as to the real targets.

"Here Trevor" one of the more elderly experienced officers asked his Transport Division colleague standing alongside him "You're a knowledgeable fella, you got any idea what this is all about?"

"Haven't a clue Terry" Trevor responded "Not even sure who is heading this operation either."

"Oh hang on a minute" Terry looked up at a raised platform that had been hastily put together at the front, where a number of senior looking officers were now making an appearance.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, colleagues and friends" the Metropolitan Chief announced as he raised his hands asking for silence "Can I have your attention please."

The conversation and general hub-bub that had been prevalent a few moments earlier, quickly died down and the Metropolitan Chief was able to continue.

"You are no doubt wondering what is going on and why we are all here" he continued "For the full briefing, I will now hand you over to the operation Commander" the Administrator General stepped back and the Commander stepped onto the staging.

"Bloody hell!" Trevor exclaimed "Isn't that?"

The Commander was understandably taken aback when the initial split second of stunned silence from the officers in the audience was suddenly broken by cheering and applause as they realised that he was not hospitalised and certainly not dead. Suddenly things for them were starting to make a little more sense.

"Reports of my death have as you can see, been greatly exaggerated" the Commander announced with a chuckle when the overwhelming greeting he had received had died down sufficiently.

"By now no doubt you are probably thinking what the hell is going on?" the Commander continued "Well here is what we know at this time."

The Commander paused, coughed and took a deep breath before continuing.

"As you are all no doubt aware" he continued "A few days ago, the Administrator General, Jim Peters was found dead in his office at New Scotland Yard. Contrary to what you may have read or heard from certain sources, his death was not suicide or accidental."

There were mumblings of shock and surprise at this announcement that the Commander allowed to die down before continuing.

"A significant amount of evidence has now been gathered on those behind the conspiracy and today we are going to execute arrest warrants on over eighty suspects located in a number of key buildings across the City."

"It is vital" the Commander emphasised "that all of those involved in this conspiracy are arrested simultaneously on charges ranging from conspiracy to murder, murder and manslaughter, breaches of the Official Secrets Act, treason, assault and numerous other misdemeanours including offences against the Security Service Act 1985."

"Oh is that all" one of the officers near the front jokingly commented.

"Oh don't worry" the Commander responded "I am sure we can find a few more things to add to the list before the day is out."

"What sort of resistance are we likely to face?" one officer asked.

"You will no doubt have seen the latest 'initiative' from our glorious leader the Home Secretary who by the way we are arresting" the Commander mentioned with a satisfactory grin "with the goons in the red vans."

"Too bloody right" another officer commented, a negative opinion shared by many present judging from the general agreeing murmurs that were to be heard "They need to be stopped."

"Well" the Commander slightly reluctantly began "New intelligence suggests someone has let these little kiddies out with big boy's toys now and I am betting we will run into some of them as we execute the warrants."

"Therefore" the Commander stressed "Everyone involved is to be in full body armour and will be issued with the best weaponry we have, but no one is to fire on any suspect unless fired upon first."

"In addition" the Commander leaned forward to emphasise his point "We will be going up against our own people on this one. We are about to all but declare civil war within the service but I know that the vast majority of decent honest officers we have will support and assist us in removing from their unworthy positions of power those that seek to destroy everything for which we have worked, to satisfy their own political and personal agendas."

"Remember we did not start this fight but today we are dam well going to finish it" the Commander concluded to quite a rapturous cheer before raising his hand for silence once again.

"Your team leaders will give you specific briefings within your assigned groups" the Commander announced "So do your duty, do what you do best and make this country proud of you."

The Commander stepped back as the officers gathered began to disperse to various parts of the site to receive their individual group briefings.

"Well that went well" Tracy commented as she joined him and together they walked over to the Transport Division's mobile operations unit, converted from a single deck bus of the type often seen all around London, that was parked nearby.

"Just said what came to me" the Commander admitted "I thought it sounded rather preposterous actually".

"All right then" the Commander called as he boarded the mobile operations unit "What's the latest."

Sir Richard who was seated at one of the computer console desks looked up but the headphones he was wearing meant he could not hear what the Commander had asked him.

"Eh?" he enquired as he pulled the headphones back and looked up.

"Do we have anything I need to know" the Commander reiterated.

"Oh" Sir Richard responded "My surveillance teams just reported that all of our targets are pretty much where they should be except the Home Secretary who is on his way to New Scotland Yard as we speak."

"Looks like he took the bait then" Tracy commented with a wry smile.

"Sir?" Jennifer Caverner announced as she put her head around the corner of the door frame "We are all ready to roll on your word."

"What time is it?" the Commander enquired.

"12.10" Jennifer confirmed.

"All right then" the Commander announced "Richard, contact our military friends and tell them they may move in on their target."

"Right" Sir Richard responded picking up the radio head set to make the call.

"Everyone else saddle up and proceed with all sirens blaring to their standby position" the Commander confirmed. "It's time to get this show on the road."

Many miles away, in a disused yard not far from the military compound, a significant number of military trucks and other vehicles were waiting for the call to action.

Stood by the lead truck in his best dress battle uniform, the General looked ahead down the road that led past the site to the compound that was their target.

"Sir?" a young communications officer called as he came up to the General and saluted.

"What is it lad?" the General asked.

"The Commander has said we may proceed when ready" the officer confirmed.

"Thank you" the General responded taking the piece of paper from the officer before boarding the lead truck and firmly closing the passenger side door.

"All right then everybody" he announced over the radio "Let's move out."

Like a massive animal, the military convoy as one moved off, snaking out of the yard and down the track towards the compound. In just a few minutes they reached the outer fence and proceeded to deploy all around the perimeter before standing by ready for the final go command.

"Gate team proceed" the General ordered whereupon a team of six soldiers alighted from the rear of the lead truck and quickly proceeded to the main gate, planting a set of explosive charges at its base and then just as swiftly withdrawing to a safe distance.

"Ready to fire Sir" the leader of the Gate Team confirmed.

"All perimeter units secure the exterior" the General ordered "All entry and demolition teams standby to move as soon as we are clear."

"Mr Fuller" the General called on a second radio "Your surprise package if you would be so kind."

"Delivering in ten seconds General" Fuller confirmed from his control room at King William Street as he picked up a mobile telephone and dialled a number.

Deep inside the main building on the compound in the computer room, the device that Fuller had attached to the system the night before began to bleep steadily except there was no-one there to witness its presence or what it was doing.

The attentions of those within the compound were soon attracted however when exactly ten seconds after Fuller had made the phone call, the device exploded with an impressive blast that wiped out most of the building on the basement level and severely damaged the ground floor as well with windows and doors blowing out.

"I do believe that got their attention" the General remarked "Major Forsyth if you would be so kind."

"Yes Sir" Forsyth, standing outside confirmed "All units go, go go!" he called.

Within moments, the explosive charges on the gate were detonated, making short work of them and clearing the way for the entry teams to proceed inside the compound.

A swift deployment saw over a hundred soldiers proceed methodically across the site, meeting some resistance along the way as some of the goons appeared. However many after a brief scuffle, quickly surrendered as they realised they were outgunned and outnumbered.

Just as it looked like the situation was under control of the authorities, gunfire was suddenly heard coming from the main warehouse building, causing everyone to instinctively duck for cover before Forsyth identified its source.

"Second floor window, north end" Forsyth called over the radio whereupon a two man team with a rocket launcher positioned themselves, aimed and fired, destroying the target in an impressive explosion and rendering the gunfire silent.

"Clear!" Forsyth confirmed after the smoke and falling debris had cleared sufficiently to confirm that they had been successful in taking out the target.

"Proceed!" Forsyth called "Sweep the buildings".

At his word, soldiers entered the various buildings on the site, the largest number concentrating on the main warehouse and the central building where some resistance was found within but quickly and efficiently dealt with.

A few minutes of quick frenzied activity punctuated by the occasional small explosion and the odd moment of gunfire resulted in the news that all except the main warehouse building were either already clear or had been cleared.

"All prisoners to be escorted to vehicles" Forsyth confirmed "Those not on prisoner escort and guard to proceed to the main warehouse building immediately."

The loud footsteps of military boots echoed around the site as numerous soldiers moved briskly with the soles of their feet hitting hard the rough neglected weed ravaged concrete surface until they were all gathered at the three main entry points into the building where Forsyth joined them.

"Foster!" Forsyth called up to one of his men situated up near the top of a roof access ladder who was observing through a window the interior of the building "What do you see?"

"Approximately thirty targets Sir" Foster responded "All armed with standard automatic weapons and body armour."

"Damm" Forsyth exclaimed.

"Something wrong lad?" the General enquired as he joined Forsyth.

"Good news, bad news and worse news" Forsyth confirmed "The good news is that there are only thirty of the enemy in the building, the bad news is that they are heavily armed and dug in and the worse news is that because there are only thirty of them, that means at least seventy odd are not here."

"Well lad" the General responded "Read them the riot act and strongly suggest they surrender."

"Yes Sir" Forsyth went over to his nearby vehicle and extracted a megaphone which he then brought up to the main door.

"Attention those inside the building" he called, his voice echoing around the site "The building is surrounded and you are advised to immediately lay down your weapons and make your way outside with your hands on your head!"

After a few tense quiet moments, the door slowly opened and the men inside made their way out slightly despondently with their hands above their heads as instructed, where they were greeted by a team of soldiers who ordered them to the ground before they were thoroughly searched.

"Alpha Commander" Forsyth called over the radio set he had with him "Update on situation Sir."

"Go ahead" the Commander responded from his seat in the control area of the Mobile Operations Unit which was about to leave along with the rest of the fleet from the gathering area at Battersea Power Station.

"Targets neutralised" Forsyth confirmed "However there are approximately seventy, repeat seven zero, guests missing from the party."

"Roger that" the Commander responded "Once you have secured your prisoners, get your boys back to the capital as fast as you can in case we need them."

"Will do Sir" Forsyth responded before signing off.

The Commander took off the headphone set and tossed it onto the desk before getting up and alighting from the vehicle. Outside, he went over to the nearest articulated bendy bus which had Tracy at the wheel and the Transport Division's best Armed Support Unit safely enclosed inside.

"You ready love?" the Commander asked her, a clear note of concern in his voice.

"Go get them" Tracy responded "And if you see that bastard on your travels, give him a smack in the mouth from me."

"You can bet on it" the Commander confirmed before standing on tip toes to kiss her through the driver's side window.

"I love you, you know" he confirmed.

“I love you too” Tracy responded “See you later.”

The Commander turned around to find virtually every officer in the place watching this little loving exchange leaving him feeling ever so slightly embarrassed.

“Err, right then” the Commander responded with a firm cough in the hope of returning to the business at hand when he joined the Metropolitan Division Chief and his specialist armed response team by the Mobile Operations Unit.

“Are you sure she can drive that thing?” the Metropolitan Chief asked, understandably concerned that Tracy’s legendary driving skills on anything with more than two wheels made the prospect of her being let loose on the Queen’s highway in a vehicle that had six wheels, bent in the middle and weighed in at over fifteen metres in length somewhat hazardous.

“As long as she has got a patrol escort to clear anything hittable out of the way, she should be all right” the Commander responded although even he was worried as he waved at Tracy a short distance away, “Well at least in theory anyway.”

“Well at least it looks like I will get to see some decent action before I retire” the Metropolitan Chief commented as he boarded their own bus which was already loaded with the Metropolitan Division’s Armed Response Team.

“You, retire?” the Commander seemed a little surprised as he sat down in the drivers seat and pulled shut the access door.

“Only two months left” the Metropolitan Chief remarked as he sat down in the forward seat at the very front on the nearside.

“Well if the goons put in an appearance fully tooled up and ready for a fight” the Commander commented “You will at least have the chance to go out with a bang.”

“I have a feeling this is going to get messy” the Metropolitan Chief agreed “Still at least it will give the BBC something to provide continuous uninterrupted coverage of.”

“Alpha Commander to all Alpha Units” the Commander announced over his radio “Ready for roll out.”

At his word, the engines of over a hundred different vehicles from various divisions of the Security Service as well as the plethora of borrowed buses started their engines.

“Wagons roll!” the Commander announced as he released the brake and led the way out of the former power station building to the disused yard area outside, where a long rank of Security Service patrol motorcycles were waiting to provide escorts to each of the vehicle groups on their journeys throughout the city.

The Commander paused at the gate that led out onto the main road to let Jennifer Caverner's team in a small convoy of VIP Protection Division unmarked cars go through first, picking up four motor cycle escorts who with sirens and blue lights at full thrash, headed off quickly towards central London.

Two Security Service vans, the Transport Division's Mobile Operations Unit and the articulated bus he was driving made up the Commander's group which were next to weave their way through the gate onto the main road with two motorcycle escorts in front and two behind.

Soon a veritable convoy of vehicles were passing through the gates, picking up motorcycle escorts for each group as they exited onto the main road.

It was clear to anyone in central London that in addition to the various events that had already occurred during the morning, that something new was happening as the centre of the city suddenly became filled with the sounds of multiple sirens and large numbers of Security Service vehicles began to proceed through the streets at some considerable speed bound for what appeared to be a significant number of destinations.

"Lima Tango Zero Three from Zero One" the Commander called over the radio as he made his way a bit slowly through the traffic congested area around Victoria "Cut off all target's communications now."

Fuller looked up from his computer console at a map being displayed on the large wall screen upon which a significant number of locations were highlighted.

"Disconnecting them from the rest of the world now" he confirmed as with a few simple taps of his keyboard, each location acquired a red 'x' over its location marker.

"I've taken the liberty of amending the National Command radio frequencies as well" Fuller confirmed "they will be hearing nothing but Radio 4 for the next twenty minutes."

"Oh rats!" the Commander exclaimed as he looked ahead at the heavily congested traffic in Buckingham Palace Road which despite the sirens of the several Security Service vehicles and motor cycles in the convoy, was refusing to budge as it simply had nowhere realistically to move to.

"Teams one, two and five" the Commander called over the radio "Follow me" whereupon he turned sharply right into the approach to Victoria Bus Station and ploughed on through the empty route 507 bus stop lane with the motor cycle escort in front barely managing to keep ahead of him.

"What the hell is going on?" the Bus Station supervisor called out as the convoy of some fifteen vehicles including four buses piled through with their accompanying blue flashing lights and sirens.

"I'd say that the boys in blue are about to seriously kick somebody's ass!" the Underground Station duty supervisor commented as he joined his Bus Station counterpart outside as he had emerged to see what all the commotion was about.

Outside New Scotland Yard, the time was almost one o'clock and the Administrator General with the Home Secretary and the Deputy Metropolitan Division Chief stepped out of the main entrance and assembled in front of a small stage area with a microphone that had been set up on the pavement of Broadway immediately in front of the famous constantly revolving three sided sign.

Facing them were the cream of the national and international media, with many of the TV news organisations ready to beam live coverage of this fairly hastily scheduled press conference live to the world.

"I think we can begin Sir" the Administrator General confirmed to the Home Secretary as he checked his watch, anxious that the conference should start precisely at one o'clock for reasons that would soon become very clear.

"Lead off and then I'll follow" the Home Secretary amiably agreed whereupon the Administrator General stepped up to the microphone.

"Ladies and gentlemen" he began "There will be a statement by the Home Secretary and then the opportunity for limited questions with ourselves immediately afterwards."

Exactly on cue and with the chimes of Big Ben echoing the turn of the hour in the background, the Home Secretary stepped forward to begin his big speech.

Unseen by them however, the Commander had, along with the rest of his and the Metropolitan Chief's team, arrived on the opposite side of the building in Victoria Street and were deploying onto the street where the Commander duly assembled them for a final few words.

"Our glorious leader has just started his speech so we will go in the back way" the Commander announced "Terry" he indicated to one of the team leaders "You take a couple of your guys and go discreetly down Broadway and in the front door in case anyone is dumb enough to go out that way."

"Yes Sir!" Terry responded before indicating two of his team and making off towards the junction with Broadway.

"You, you and you" the Commander indicated the three Transport Division officers he had seconded to this group "Come with me, we will run through to the front door and creep up behind out targets whilst the rest of you acquire the targets in the rest of the building."

"Lima Tango Zero Three to Zero One" Fuller called over the radio "All units in position awaiting final go command."

"All units go, go, go!" the Commander responded over the radio, causing hundreds of heavily armed officers to suddenly appear on the streets all over the city and proceed briskly and purposely into their various target buildings.

The Commander and his three officers allowed the Metropolitan Chief's team to enter New Scotland Yard first.

With some speed, they proceeded with guns pointed ahead, through the building up the stairs to the Metropolitan Division Command floor.

"What the hell is going on?" one officer understandably asked as the fire exit doors on both sides of the open plan office area burst open and the room began to rapidly fill with armed officers.

"Relax lad" the Metropolitan Division Chief responded before indicating a series of side offices to the armed officers behind him.

"There and there" he pointed. Quickly two small teams had the doors of the offices indicated kicked in and the targets within quickly arrested.

As things looked like they were about to calm down, six of the now armed heavies appeared from the lift and began to open fire across the open plan office, shattering glass and instantly making everyone present duck behind whatever cover they could find.

Two young officers behind one of the desks fairly close to where the heavies had positioned themselves to launch their attack, quickly realised who was the real enemy here and drew their guns.

"Now!" one of them called as he got up, being joined simultaneously by almost every other officer present who all took aim at the six heavies and fired simultaneously, rendering them neutralised in an instant.

"Very nicely done!" the Metropolitan Division Chief commented "Every one of you who is loyal to the service, come with me and sweep the rest of the building!"

On the ground floor, the Commander had made his own way in through the back door and down the corridor to the front main entrance.

"These attempts by shameless and faceless terrorist factions" the Home Secretary continued to ramble on "come at the end of a week that has probably been one of the saddest in the history of the Security Service."

By this point most of the gathered press were beginning to look a little jaded and bored, and the Home Secretary had only been going on for two minutes. It was at that point however that some of them did notice something odd, indeed out of place immediately behind him.

The Commander casually strolled out of the front of the main entrance of New Scotland Yard in his full dress uniform, complete with sword and had a pair of handcuffs waiting in his hands. As he came into view of the gathered press, he put his finger to his lips and silently asked them to remain quiet which they immediately did.

"We have lost two of our most senior and well respected officers" the Home Secretary continued to ramble on, oblivious to the presence of the Commander quietly smiling as he stood right behind him, and also failing to notice two large armed Security Service Officers suddenly stroll by and casually bundle the understandably surprised Deputy Metropolitan Division Chief away from alongside him.

"Not only have we lost the services of Sir Jim Peters" he continued "but also I regret to announce that the Commander of the Transport Division died early this morning from the gunshot injuries he received in an attempt on his life just yesterday."

The Commander casually looked down at his uniform jokingly checking for bullet holes whilst the press observing tried desperately to suppress their laughter.

"We will not let the threat of global terrorism defeat us" the Home Secretary continued as the Commander performed a fake yawn of boredom "and we will not let the tragic deaths of these two fine officers go to waste."

The Commander shook his head in disbelief at the typical tirade of codswallop that the Home Secretary had just uttered.

"Any questions?" the Home Secretary.

"BBC News" one reported called out "How did you feel when you heard of the Commander's death?"

"He was a fine officer, a dedicated professional and his loss is a great sadness to us all" the Home Secretary responded.

"Why thank you" the Commander commented.

"You're welcome" the Home Secretary instinctively replied. "Any other questions?"

"Have you got a very good lawyer?" the reporter from the Evening Standard asked.

"Could you clarify that question please?" he replied.

"Yeah mate" the reporter responded "In two words, behind you!"

The Home Secretary suddenly realised that the very man he had just declared as dead to the world's media was in fact standing very much alive alongside him, a fact confirmed as he turned around after the Commander had casually tapped him on the shoulder.

"Commander...." the Home Secretary responded as his demeanour went from cool calm collectiveness to sheer panic as he saw his freedom and his political career evaporate before his eyes.

"Get out of this one" the Commander challenged him with a knowing smile.

"Oh I intend to" the Home Secretary responded before lashing out behind him at the Administrator General, providing enough of a disturbance to make a run for it back into the New Scotland Yard building.

"Sir!" one of the Transport Division's armed unit officers called as he pointed up the road towards the Post Office where three large red armoured Land Rover's were unloading their cargo of approximately three dozen armed heavies.

"They look like they are here for a punch up" the Commander commented before he stepped forward to confront them.

"You gentlemen have no jurisdiction here" the Commander warned them as they approached aggressively "Disperse and leave immediately!"

"With all due respect pal" the leader responded in a gruff voice "Up yours!" where upon he produced an automatic weapon and proceeded to spray gunfire around in a wide arc sending everyone in the line of fire scattering for cover including the Commander who only just narrowly managed to leap over the adjacent wall into the flower bed in time.

Suddenly the Commander's backup plan was revealed as Commander Baker and three of her specialist sniper team, positioned in overlooking observation points around the area, opened fire and quickly neutralised the leader and six others of the group.

"Now" the Commander resumed as he clambered out of the flower border and brushed down his uniform "I'll think you will have found that was very ill advised, so are you going to come quietly or not?"

The men who were still alive, quickly and wisely made the decision to drop their weapons, by which time a significant number of Security Service officers had also surrounded them from the rear as well with weapons drawn.

"A very wise idea" the Commander commented "Now where did that weasel go?"

"In there" one of the still cowering press pointed towards the main entrance into New Scotland Yard.

"Right" the Commander grimly confirmed and marched purposefully inside.

Inside the main foyer, the Home Secretary had found himself trapped but had quickly produced a gun from beneath his coat and brandished it menacingly.

"If you think you are going to take me down" the Home Secretary grimly and determinedly announced "Then you are sorely mistaken."

"Come on" the Administrator General called "Give it up man, there is nowhere left to run."

"Ah!" the Home Secretary commented "So Mr Lane is not all that he seems?"

"Your stooge was scraped up off the up fast at Clapham Junction three days ago" the Commander confirmed.

"You don't have any evidence that cannot be easily disproved with a good lawyer and some carefully engineered favourable press publicity" the Home Secretary glowered.

"Oh you mean your colleagues on the Omega Committee?" the Commander asked "Hang on a minute" he turned to his radio "Lima Tango Zero One to Zero Three."

"Zero Three, go ahead boss" Fuller responded.

"How are we doing?" the Commander enquired.

"All teams have reported in" Fuller confirmed "We appear to have got everyone."

"How could you possibly know who we all are?" the Home Secretary remained defiant.

"World of computers" the Commander explained "It's amazing what you can find out when you now where to look."

"And your alleged evidence?" the Home Secretary demanded to know, still brandishing his firearm menacingly.

"Try this for a starter" the Commander produced from his inside tunic pocket a couple of documents "Two executive orders signed by you authorising the termination of the lives of Sir James Peters and myself" he waved the documents around.

"Then" the Commander reached inside his tunic again and removed a small portable tape recorder "there is your confession at my death bed."

"Yeah right" the Home Secretary responded aggressively as he aimed and fired, hitting the tape recorder that the Commander instinctively dropped to the floor, its impact shattering its already broken form into many pieces.

"That was a copy by the way" the Commander calmly informed him "I've made sure that there are lots of copies lodged with lots of very interested people. Would you like one? It will give you something to listen to as you rot in prison."

"Well I guess I am all out of options" the Home Secretary casually remarked as he suddenly spun around and shot the Administrator General who fell to the ground instantly.

In the ensuing distraction, the Home Secretary grabbed a nearby civilian receptionist and held his gun to her head.

"Now this is what we are going to do" the Home Secretary calmly instructed "You are all going to lay down your weapons and then this little lady and I are going for a walk, all right?"

"Drop them!" the Commander called whereupon the clunking of weapons hitting the plush carpeted floor echoed about as the various officers both inside and immediately in the vicinity of the foyer did as ordered.

"Come on my dear" the Home Secretary prompted as he proceeded across the foyer past the Commander with his hostage firmly in his grip, pausing only briefly to retrieve the gun and ceremonial sword from the dead body of the Administrator General.

"Let him go" the Commander ordered as the officers present stepped back, allowing the Home Secretary with his hostage to reach the back door that opened onto Victoria Street.

Once outside into the street, near deserted as it had been evacuated earlier due to the ongoing incidents, the Home Secretary secured the door shut from the outside with a pair of handcuffs locked between the two door handles.

"Goodbye my dear" the Home Secretary commented as he released his hostage and walked briskly across the road into Strutton Ground.

"Damm it!" the Commander exclaimed as he reached the doors and found them locked. "Terry!" he called over to one of his officers "Do the honours will you?"

"Stand back!" Terry called as the heavily built officer came up to the door, precisely aimed his automatic weapon at the door handles and opened fire, rendering the door catches and the handcuffs securing them outside, a mere collection of pieces of metal on the ground in an instant.

"Very nicely done" the Commander commented as they went outside into the street where they found the receptionist understandably in a shocked state.

"Terry" the Commander instructed "See to the lady, I have some unfinished business to attend to."

Outside the terrible modern design that is the UK Government's Home Office building, Tracy dumped her body armour and her gun on the drivers seat of the borrowed bus whilst nearby, officers escorted three arrested suspects to a nearby secure van, all under the watchful eye of the BBC news crew that just happened to be broadcasting the whole event live to the world.

"Lima Tango Zero Two to Control" Tracy called in.

"Control, go ahead" Fuller responded.

"What's the latest?" she enquired.

"Pretty much everyone is in the bag" Fuller confirmed "Bit of a fracas at the Yard though, details are sketchy."

"Right thanks" Tracy responded before changing the frequency on the radio and making another call "Lima Tango Zero Two to Zero One" she called.

"Zero One go ahead" the Commander, sounding a little out of breath responded.

"Are you all right?" Tracy asked concerned.

"That bugger's just legged it" the Commander responded as he surveyed along the length of the curiously named street Strutton Ground "I think he may be heading your way."

"Right" Tracy confirmed as she picked up her gun and alighted from the vehicle. Quickly she turned to face the direction of her armed response team and called their attention with a shrill whistle.

"Look lively lads!" she called "The Home Secretary's escaped and is heading this way."

With these words still ringing in their ears, they gathered together their equipment and proceeded briskly to the end of Marsham Street where Tracy looked around the corner of the Home Office building up the length of Horseferry Road.

The Home Secretary was understandably a worried man, however he was also a little naive as he assumed he had managed to shake off his pursuers and would be able to proceed safely to his office and arrange or more likely bribe his way out of his current predicament.

Little did he know as he jogged along the upper part of Horseferry Road past the Channel 4 Television building, that in fact the entire secret clique organisation he had operated for so many years, had in fact been taken apart in the last twenty minutes with nearly all of its associates, sinister agents and members now bundled into the back of vans and making their way under armed escort to Security Service offices all over the city under arrest.

It did not even occur to him that it was a Saturday and therefore the number 507 bus approaching down the road should not have been there being a weekday only service.

He soon realised though he was in trouble as he approached the corner where Horseferry Road met Marsham Street when he suddenly came across the collection of armed Security Service officers with Tracy at the head of them, waiting to intercept him.

“Ah...” he commented to himself before quickly turning back before he was identified.

Instead he walked back up Horseferry Road for a short distance along the side of his own office building and slipped discreetly into the side entrance, pulling up the collar of his overcoat as he went inside to avoid being noticed.

He continued on inwards, oblivious of the fact that the approaching bus he had noticed a few moments earlier was pulling up outside the stop in front of the entrance. No sooner had it stopped than the front pair of doors opened and the Commander, having seen his prey slip into the side entrance, alighted and went in after him.

Once inside, the Commander looked around the busy foyer with a determined look on his face and was suddenly joined by Tracy who had seen the bus pull up and her husband go into the building moments earlier.

“Oh hello love” the Commander responded when he felt the familiar touch of Tracy’s arms around him.

“The last refuge of the scoundrel then?” Tracy enquired.

“Looks like it” the Commander confirmed with a grimace “And some pretty terrible architecture as well.”

Nearby, there seemed to a bit of a commotion at the reception desk and it was clear as the two officers approached that something was causing major problems.

“Good afternoon Sir” the somewhat flustered receptionist responded as the Commander arrived at her desk before something occurred to her “Aren’t you supposed to be dead?”

“I have been getting that a lot lately” the Commander admitted “What’s happening around here?”

“The telephone system seems to have died on us” he receptionist confirmed “Anyway, what can I do for you?”

“Office of the Home Secretary?” the Commander enquired.

“Top floor far end” she confirmed “take the lift from around the corner and then straight down the corridor.”

“Thanks” the Commander responded.

“Shall we?” Tracy led the way.

“Why not?” the Commander let Tracy go first as they made their way to the lifts. Once there, the small group of people who were waiting for the next car decided to let them go ahead when they saw the two senior and heavily armed officers in their presence.

It was a quick journey up to the top floor where the doors opened out into a corridor that was decorated very much as you would expect from a done on the cheap Government office block, attempting to look stylish and modern whilst at the same time saving money and failing miserably on both counts.

Once out of the lift, Tracy and the Commander moved briskly down the corridor and quickly found the office of the Home Secretary, a typical wooden panelled double door with a Personal Assistant on permanent guard behind her desk immediately outside.

"Do you have an appointment" she enquired as the Commander tried the door, only to find it appeared to be secured from within.'

"Funnily enough" the Commander responded as he proceeded without much due care and attention to kick the door in "I haven't."

Tracy looked briefly skywards in disbelief before following her husband into the office, carefully stepping over the remains of the door's handles and lock that were now lying in pieces amongst splintered wood on the floor.

"Hold it, you are under..." the Commander tailed off as he realised he was announcing his presence to an empty room.

"Where the hell did he go?" Tracy asked.

"Good question" the Commander responded as he started looking around the spacious office, in side cupboards and beneath the desk, all to no avail until he noticed the window was open and, pulling aside the blind, looked outside.

"I think he's bolted out of the window" the Commander commented as he quickly ducked his head back inside, heights not really being his favourite thing.

"Fire escape most likely" Tracy remarked as they turned smartly on their heels and proceeded back out past the bemused Personal Assistant and followed the green wall mounted signs that directed them to the Fire Exit.

At the end of the corridor, Tracy led the way through the emergency fire exit, which opened out onto an open external staircase. Quickly she noticed a figure running down the metal steps at a rapid rate with their footsteps echoing all around for all to hear.

"There!" Tracy called pointing out the rapidly moving figure below only to then realise that the Commander was still firmly fixed in the doorway refusing to come out onto the open emergency exit gantry.

"I'm not going down there" the Commander responded, his fear of heights having taken over him and all but frozen him to the spot.

"Go down in the lift" Tracy urged, "I'll meet you at the bottom."

"Right" the Commander responded, almost relieved that he did not have to face one of his worst nightmares.

With her gun drawn, Tracy headed quickly down the steps, her hard soled Security Service issue heavy duty shoes making even more of a noise on the steps than the person she was pursuing.

The Commander meanwhile moved quickly back through the building and commandeered the lift back down to the ground floor. Traversing the well appointed main foyer by basically calling at everyone there to get out of the way, meant that by the time he had exited the building back out into Marsham Street, Tracy had only just reached the ground herself.

"Over here!" she called, seeing her husband standing on the pavement looking around with his obviously failing eyesight for her.

"Did you see which way he went?" the Commander asked as he jogged over to Tracy, a little out of breath.

"He headed that way" Tracy indicated in an easterly direction towards the Westminster area.

"Lima Tango Zero One to Victor Pappa X-Ray One Zero Two" the Commander called over the radio as they began to jog briskly along the street.

"Victor Pappa X-Ray One Zero Two" Jennifer Caverner responded "go ahead."

"Are you still at Westminster?" the Commander enquired.

"I was just about to head on back to the barn" Jennifer confirmed as she waved off her colleagues who were driving away, their mission here now safely and successfully completed.

"The Home Secretary is doing a runner and is heading in your direction" the Commander confirmed "He may be trying to get to the Houses of Parliament or Whitehall."

"I'll have a look around" Jennifer responded "Over and out."

Quickly, Jennifer made her way from her position near the bottom of Big Ben's St Stephens Tower at the north end of Westminster Bridge, along the length of the wrought iron fence that separated the yard of the Houses of Parliament from the outside world and into the large open space and traffic nightmare that is Parliament Square.

Looking around amongst the plethora of tourists and traffic, it was difficult for her to make out anybody, let alone a particular individual.

Two individuals she had no trouble in instantly recognising however were Tracy and the Commander who appeared on the outer western edge of the square looking decidedly out of breath, well the Commander certainly did anyway.

“Sis, I am on your one o’clock on the corner” Jennifer called over the radio but then she noticed a briskly moving figure cross Parliament Square’s grassy centre just ahead.

“Got him!” Jennifer called over the radio “He’s approaching the end of Parliament Street.

“Lima Tango Zero One to control” the Commander called over his own radio as he and Tracy braved the traffic light controlled traffic to reach the middle of the large square.

“Control go ahead” the response swiftly came.

“He’s gone into station” Tracy called to the Commander as they reached the far side of the square only to see their quarry quickly disappear down one of the sunken entrances into Westminster Underground Station.

“Have line control make all services on the District, Circle and Jubilee Lines non-stop through Westminster right now” the Commander called over the radio as they crossed the road, narrowly avoiding getting run down by a passing bus on the 159 “Then evacuate the station and whilst you are at it, I need everyone not doing anything, down here right now.”

Jennifer meanwhile, having realised that the Home Secretary was making his way into the Underground Station, quickly crossed the road to the opposite side immediately in front of Portcullis House. Beneath the modern office block lay the main entrance and structure of the Underground Station itself.

The alarms, announcements and the illuminated ‘DO NOT ENTER’ signs were already activated as she headed into the main entrance, flashing her warrant card at the station supervisor and their staff as she passed the passengers who were in the process of being swiftly evacuated in the opposite direction.

Entering from the far end access, Tracy and the Commander moved as quick as they could through the passageways before reaching the large modern ticket hall, now almost empty having been evacuated.

“Did you see him?” the Commander asked as they joined Jennifer in front of the rank of ticket barriers.

“He didn’t pass me” Jennifer confirmed, now almost as out of breath as the other two officers “So he must still be in here somewhere.”

“If you are looking for a lunatic with a sword” one of the station staff called from near the entrance “He vaulted over the barriers right before you came in.”

“Thanks mate” the Commander responded as he looked around.

“This place is an absolute rabbit warren!” Tracy commented as the sounds of approaching sirens filtered down from the street outside.

“Jennifer” the Commander turned to her “Co-ordinate with the guys and seal every entrance down here” he instructed.

“You got it!” Jennifer responded before making a swift exit to set about the task she had been set.

“Let’s go hunting” the Commander remarked as he pulled his gun from his holster and checked it, a move mirrored by Tracy.

“After you love” Tracy remarked as they passed through the open ticket barriers and approached the top of the first set of escalators.

"I'll take the Jubilee" the Commander suggested as he made for the left hand side bank of escalators "You take the Circle & District."

"All right then" Tracy responded as she drew her gun "Be careful" she warned.

"You too" the Commander responded before heading down the escalator.

Tracy briefly watched her husband begin his descent into the bowels of the station before herself heading down the fixed stairway to the sub-surface District & Circle line platforms.

With its multiple intermediate landings and at least fifteen escalators all moving with their corresponding low rumbling, it was probably an understatement to say that the massive deep cathedral like hole in the ground which housed all this, was a complex rabbit warren.

Pausing at the bottom of the first rake of escalators, the Commander stopped and listened for any sign of movement before gingerly looking over the edge of the parapet down into the depths below.

Seeing no one, the Commander continued down the next flight of escalators that brought him to the immediate level which served the eastbound Jubilee Line platform which was constructed above the westbound one.

With care, he entered the platform, looking up and down its dark grey lined length but found no one, only a discarded page from a newspaper gently tumbling down the platform length, propelled by the draught passing through the passageways.

Returning to the escalator hall, the Commander was about to turn left and head to the lowest level when he heard a clunk behind him. He turned suddenly only to find his quarry appearing suddenly behind him from the lift and clout him soundly around the head.

From the impact, the Commander fell backwards towards the parapet, striking it with his back and causing him to drop his gun which fell down to the lower level, striking various pieces of the metal work structure on its way down.

"Looking for me?" the Home Secretary enquired aggressively as the Commander found himself sat on the floor feeling slightly bewildered.

"Funny you should say that" the Commander responded as he struggled to his feet once again only to be met with a gun being pointed at him.

"At least I get the chance to put you out of my misery personally" the Home Secretary remarked "Then it's home free via a cushy whitewash public enquiry and probably a nice lucrative book deal to see me into retirement" he added with a smirk as he reaffirmed his aim straight at the Commander's head and pulled the trigger.

Nothing happened except a loud click which with frustration, led the Home Secretary to try again with the same result.

"I do believe we have a well worn cliché here" the Commander remarked, using the Home Secretary's state of distraction to discreetly reach down and grab the handle of his ceremonial sword, the only weapon he had left available.

"Safety catch" the Home Secretary announced as he flicked the small switch on the side of the gun and proceeded to re-aim.

Just as he was about to bring his gun to bare, the Commander took his chance and swung his sword across, straight into the Home Secretary's hand, knocking the gun away.

Recoiling from the pain and with his hand now badly cut and bleeding, he backed away and duly produced the sword he had taken earlier from the Administrator General and brandished it menacingly.

"All right then" the Home Secretary called, "Let's do it the old fashioned way."

Tracy was still checking the District & Circle Line platforms when the sound of metal striking metal suddenly began to filter up from the passageways below. Quickly she skipped down the steps to the first intermediate level and looked around for the source of the noise.

Looking over the parapet down to the next intermediate level below, Tracy saw the Commander and the Home Secretary fighting with their swords and making a lot of noise as the striking of metal echoed around the large chamber like structure.

Suddenly, the Home Secretary drew back and then lunged at the Commander who only narrowly stepped out of the way, only to fall backwards over the parapet. It was by a matter of millimetres that he was able to grab the top of the rail, leaving him dangling precariously above a fifty foot drop.

Tracy immediately ran off down the escalator to come to the rescue of her husband as the Home Secretary approached him, ready to slice his fingers off with the sword that he was still brandishing.

"Hold it right there scum bag!" Tracy called, aiming her gun directly at the Home Secretary.

"Young lady" the Home Secretary warned "You are meddling in matters that are well above your pay scale."

"Drop the sword, the act and the sarcasm" Tracy warned "It's been a really bad week and I am just not in the mood."

"I tell you what, I am going to test a theory" the Home Secretary announced whereupon he looked across at the finger tips of the Commander, the only part of him visible to them before suddenly running off, down the last flight of escalators.

The Home Secretary's theory, that Tracy would immediately come to her husband's aid rather than pursue him were indeed correct as she immediately grabbed his arm just as his grip was starting to fail, and hauled him with all her might back up over the parapet.

"What were you doing?" Tracy asked once the Commander had successfully clambered back over to the safe side.

"Oh just hanging around" the Commander wryly commented, relieved to be back on firm ground.

"Come on then" Tracy urged as she began to head for the escalator to resume the pursuit.

"Keep your hair on" the Commander responded as he followed her down to the lowest level where a large open circulating area which fed the entrance to the westbound Jubilee Line platform marked the bottom most part of the station.

"There is nowhere left to run" Tracy announced loudly as they stood on the bottom level and looked around the vast empty space.

"I'll check the platform" the Commander remarked "Stay here."

No sooner had he said that then the Home Secretary appeared from behind a vertical stanchion and stuck Tracy over the head, sending her to the floor unconscious immediately before he made a run at the Commander.

Still surprised and slightly shocked, the Commander was not ready to tackle him and found himself grabbed by the arm and slung unceremoniously into a glass panelled advertising sign on the wall, smashing it with the impact of his body before he slumped to the ground, barely conscious from the strike.

"Gotcha" the Home Secretary triumphantly remarked before heading confidently through the passageway and onto the platform. He looked up and suddenly found himself confronted with the entire Transport Division Specialist Armed Response team, all aiming their weapons straight at him.

"Think carefully" Jennifer wisely suggested.

The Home Secretary begrudgingly raised his hands as the slightly dazed Commander with Tracy came up behind him.

"Now" the Commander began "Are you going to come quietly or am I going to lose my temper?"

"You are watching BBC News 24" the news reader announced "These are the breaking news headlines at two o'clock."

Fuller arrived back in the Holborn Control room as the news broadcast was being relayed over the main screen, seeing this, he took the lead seat, relieving Gladys from duty and relaxing to watch the main headlines.

"The Security Services have in the last hour undertaken a massive operation to arrest multiple suspects across London as part of an unspecified high level investigation" the news presenter announced, backed by images of some of the days event, mostly pictures of heavily armed Security Service officers guarding key locations and vehicles speeding through the streets of the city with their sirens and lights in full cry.

"For the latest we cross over to the BBC's Political Correspondent who is in Downing Street to summarise the events so far." The view changed to a slightly bemused BBC reporter who was standing on the opposite side of the road from the door of number ten Downing Street.

"It has been a remarkable and fast moving day which began early this morning with the unscheduled visit of the Deputy Divisional Commander of the Security Service's London Transport Division to Number Ten with armed escort for a meeting with the Prime Minister" the correspondent's words was backed up with their footage of Tracy arriving at Downing Street earlier.

"At about ten o'clock" the correspondent continued "A number of major security alerts were declared at key locations across the City with high profile station evacuations. It now appears that many of these were specially orchestrated to put the City on a high state of alert for what was to follow."

"We understand" the studio based news presenter enquired "that in the last hour there have been some significant developments?"

"Yes" the correspondent confirmed "At approximately twelve thirty, as many as a thousand armed Security Service officers and military personnel were deployed to key locations throughout the capital in a series of convoys, where upon a number of what have been described as 'anti-terrorist style' raids were conducted on a number of addresses and it is believed as many as a hundred specific individuals were taken into custody."

"Do we have any idea of the nature of the charges being investigated and who were arrested at this time?" the studio presenter enquired.

"Information is extremely sketchy except for an incident that occurred outside New Scotland Yard at just after one o'clock which although subject to a 'D' notice press embargo until a press conference scheduled for later this afternoon, I can reveal did involve the attempted arrest of a senior public figure during which a significant amount of gunfire was exchanged."

"I will have to interrupt you there" the studio presenter cut in "We are going to cross live now to one of our correspondents who is currently outside Westminster Underground Station where we believe a major incident is currently in progress. Can you tell us anything more?"

The slightly confused looking correspondent positioned on the corner of Parliament Square came into view on the screen and after a very brief look at his hastily written notes, proceeded to relay the information he had available.

"If you look behind me at Portcullis House, you can see there is a significant Security Service presence sealing off the building, specifically the station immediately below it" the correspondent confirmed "We have been told that one of the suspects who was about to be arrested somewhere nearby, made a run for it and was chased into the station by and I quote 'two senior Security Service officers'."

It was then that a Security Service patrol car was brought up to the main station entrance behind the Correspondent in full view of the gathered press who, sensing something was about to happen, pressed forward for a better view.

There were gasps of amazement when the Home Secretary was led out of the station in handcuffs, seemingly resigned to his fate. This was followed by even more gasps of amazement when they saw the identity of the senior officer who was hauling him to the car very unceremoniously and as publicly as he could manage.

The studio presenter seeing these pictures live and at the same time as her viewers was as shocked and stunned as everyone else, so much so that there was an uncomfortable silent pause before she resumed with a rather obvious question.

"Is that not the Commander of the Transport Division leading the Home Secretary away in handcuffs or am I seeing things?" the studio presenter asked.

“You are not seeing things” the correspondent confirmed “That is the Commander himself and considering that the Home Secretary who he is leading to the car there in handcuffs had announced he had died after the assassination attempt on his life yesterday, I think we can safely assume that he has some serious explaining to do.”

“I hope you have a good lawyer” the Commander commented as he dragged the reluctant Home Secretary around to the public side of the patrol car and roughly shoved him in the back.

The Home Secretary managed to struggle free momentarily but only got as far as turning around where he came face to face with an understandably angry Tracy who stopped him in his tracks by punching him firmly in the face and then just to make sure, kneeling him in the groin.

“Oh dear” the studio news presenter remarked wryly, unaware that her microphone was on and she had accidentally broadcast her reaction to the sight of the Home Secretary’s misfortune to the world, not that everyone watching was not thinking exactly the same of course.

“That you two faced, no neck, lying, double crossing, gilt aged, grade one asshole” Tracy responded sufficiently loud enough for the world’s press nearby to hear and relay every word “Is for attempting to kill my husband you bastard.”

“Smile for your public” the Commander suggested as he unceremoniously grabbed the Home Secretary and bundled him into the back of the car where he was joined on both sides by the two largest and most heavily armed officers available “It’s not like you to miss a photo opportunity now is it.”

The Home Secretary just sat there grimacing in both physical and mental pain as the Commander slammed the door shut and indicated to the driver of the car to proceed off at a sedate pace with full escort southwards towards Westminster Bridge.

“Well that’s him off to jail then” Tracy remarked.

“I doubt he will make it quite that far” the Commander responded seemingly with some prior knowledge being indicated in his voice.

“Commander, Commander!” the BBC correspondent called from the tape barrier nearby “BBC News, would you mind telling us what the hell is going on?”

“A very good question” the Commander responded as he turned to the press and put his arm around Tracy, mostly for comfort but also to steady himself as he was a little injured from his exploits.

“Needless to say” the Commander announced “as you can see, reports of my demise have been greatly exaggerated.”

“What is all this about?” another member of the press asked.

“Well whilst I can confirm that a significant number of arrests have been made today across the city and elsewhere, also that my err assassination was a set up and that today’s terrorist alerts were indeed a smoke screen for this extensive operation, all other details will have to wait until the press conference that we will be holding in a couple of hours time” the Commander authoritatively announced “Until then, if you will excuse me, I need to freshen up.”

The Prime Minister paced up and down nervously, twiddling his thumbs behind his back as he waited in the Commander's office for his return. Looking out of the window below, he could see the gathered throng of press on the pavement trying to see if they could catch a word or quote from somebody, indeed anybody who could explain what was going on.

Suddenly he was distracted from the view by the opening of the office door, whereupon the Commander arrived with Tracy just behind him. It was a few moments however before he realised that he had distinguished company.

"Oh err, good afternoon Sir" the Commander responded.

"Congratulations are in order" the Prime Minister responded "I wont take up too much of your time so I will come straight to the point."

"Have a seat please" the Commander indicated before sitting down behind the desk whilst Tracy stood alongside him. "Biscuit?" he offered across the packet that was on his desk.

"Oh thanks" the Prime Minister responded enthusiastically as he leant forward and helped himself, the result consumption sending crumbs down the front of his expensive suit which caused Tracy to giggle.

"Anyway" the Prime Minister continued through a mouthful of biscuit "I am proposing a few changes to the primary structure of the Security Service in light of recent events and I wanted to run them past you."

"Go on" the Commander could feel something approaching on the horizon here.

"I have spoken to the Chairman of the United Nations Security Council National Security Service Sub-Committee" the Prime Minister explained "and he agrees with me that command and control on a Governmental level should be removed from the Home Office and placed under the stewardship of a dedicated Secretary of State for National Security and Defence who will be responsible to a central independent public committee."

"All sounds pretty good so far" the Commander cautiously commented "But I suspect there is more to come."

"Just so" the Prime Minister confirmed.

"Oh here we go then" Tracy muttered under her breath.

"One of the first jobs of the new Secretary of State will be to appoint a new national Administrator General" the Prime Minister explained "That however will not happen for probably another two months so in the interim, it has been proposed Commander that you become acting Administrator General."

"Bugger" the Commander responded. He had feared this day would come eventually when the one promotion he really did not want would be thrust into his hands whether he liked it or not.

"I am well aware of your feelings on this matter" the Prime Minister reassured him "I am aware that you don't want to be Administrator General, however at this time we need a familiar trust worthy public face in that chair" he went on "and in everyone's opinion you fit the bill exactly."

"I have a job here" the Commander responded calmly.

"That is the next bit I wished to propose to you" the Prime Minister continued "With immediate effect of you taking over the top seat, your wife will be promoted to Divisional Commander of the Transport Division."

"Well I quite like that bit" Tracy casually remarked.

"In two months time, when a permanent Administrator General has been appointed, you would then take over from the retiring Divisional Chief of the Metropolitan Division" the Prime Minister explained.

"Well..." the Commander reluctantly began although the proposal certainly did sound more than tempting.

"Just think of it" the Prime Minister continued to try for a successful sale to his plan "Both of you in overall charge of the entire Greater London area, no crook would dare set foot near the place!"

"And all this is going to be announced at the press conference?" Tracy asked.

"That is the plan" the Prime Minister confirmed as he sat back in the seat "Providing you say yes to the acting Administrator General's position."

"Well love" the Commander turned to Tracy "What do you think?"

"Not many get a shot at the top chair" Tracy responded frankly "And then the chance to combine both major Security Service divisions within the capital is simply too good to pass up."

"I knew you would say that" the Commander responded with a wry grin.

“Good grief!” Jennifer commented as she got out of her car on the opposite of High Holborn and surveyed the press pack that was growing increasingly larger and laying siege outside the Holborn offices.

“Victor Pappa X-Ray One Zero Two to Lima Tango Control” Jennifer called over the radio as she gingerly crossed the road trying not to get entangled in the mess of traffic that were having to swerve and manoeuvre all over the place as the press spilled out off the pavement onto the street.

“Hello love” Fuller responded, not strictly the correct radio procedure but she was his girl, he had had a very long day and was understandably tired.

“I don’t suppose you could tell me how I can get through this lot and inside could you?” Jennifer asked as she surveyed the crowd to find a way through without any success.

“Come around to the back door” Fuller responded “I’ll let you in.”

As Fuller left the Control Room to head downstairs, he bumped into the Commander in the corridor looking a little anxious.

“Are you all right Sir?” he asked.

“Oh” the Commander came back to his senses, he was tired as well of course “I just hate press conferences.”

“You’ll be fine Sir” Fuller reassured him “Oh by the way, is their any word on the new Administrator General yet?”

“You can tell Jennifer she won the office sweepstake” the Commander confirmed with a wry smile before heading off through the double doors at the end of the corridor.

“Right...” Fuller responded still no clearer now than he was before the Commander’s somewhat cryptic response. Putting it to the back of his mind, Fuller headed down the back stairs and opened the rear fire exit doors to see Jennifer standing there on the other side.

“I missed you!” she responded as she stepped forward and hugged him.

“Me too” Fuller responded, glad to see her again after all the events of that day “Oh and apparently you won the sweepstake on the new Administrator General.”

“I can’t remember whose name I picked out of the hat” Jennifer responded as they stepped back inside and closed the door behind them before heading back up the stairs again.

“Oh my God!” Jennifer suddenly blurted out as she stopped dead in her tracks in realisation “They haven’t have they?”

“The National Security Service aided by a significant number of other agencies and organisations, today executed no less than eighty seven arrest warrants in raids across Greater London and the Home Counties” the Commander announced to the press, now better organised in a wide arc around him as he stood on an old vegetable box in front of the Holborn building main entrance with Tracy standing proudly by his side and the Prime Minister just a little to his right and behind him.

“The charges varied” the Commander continued “from conspiracy, through theft, deception and breaches of the Official Secrets Act, the Firearms Act and National Security and Policing Acts as amended to murder, kidnapping, sabotage and treason against the state.”

“Those arrested have included high ranking politicians, Security Service officers, members of the Civil Service and numerous others in various positions of trust throughout the establishment.”

“The most public of these crimes have been the murder of Sir James Peters, the Administrator General and the attempted murder of my good self, however these are but just two of a significant number of serious charges that will probably occupy the legal system of this country for some years to come.”

“Today, the combined forces of dedicated loyal officers of the law defeated a disease that has ravaged away at the heart of this nation’s institutions. A disease that in the form of this conspiracy, attempted for many years to manipulate people, events and the media in order to line their own pockets irrespective of the cost to the decent honest people of this country they were supposed to be representing and serving.

“That gravy train is now derailed and terminated permanently” the Commander announced triumphantly, clearly on a roll now and enjoying the victory immensely.

“And I promise you now that we will never again let a small personal agenda fuelled clique infiltrate and try and destroy that for which we have for so long fought and suffered.”

"When will you release the names of those arrested?" one reporter asked.

"Some names will be released through our press release later today" the Commander confirmed "Others will not be able to be released at this time as some ongoing investigations are continuing."

"How long has this alleged conspiracy been going on for?" another reporter asked, having to fight his way through a myriad of other questions that were being simultaneous launched every time the Commander paused even for a split second.

"At least fifteen or twenty years" the Commander responded "But then again political corruption of the kind we are talking about here has been a common feature since time began."

"What does this mean for the future of the Security Service in the United Kingdom?" came the next question.

"I think that's your bit" the Commander called back to the Prime Minister who stepped forward.

"After recent events" the Prime Minister began "we feel it is vital that we take measures to reassure the public's faith in the service. As such there is to be a complete change in the command structure of the service at Government level with the establishment of a new dedicated National Security Council under the chairmanship of Sir Richard Hainault, taking responsibility for the Service away from the Home Office.

"What about the Administrator General's position?" came the inevitable question.

"Until the National Security Council has become established and can identify and appoint a permanent replacement, the Commander here will become Acting National Administrator General for the next couple of months" the Prime Minister confirmed although the Commander still did not look too convinced.

"What we need at the top of the Service" the Prime Minister continued "is a familiar well known and trusted figure who commands respect both within and outside the Department and the Commander here fits the bill perfectly."

"Will you take on the job permanently?" one member of the press asked.

"Not ruddy likely" the Commander muttered under his breath but fortunately the Prime Minister was able to provide a more diplomatic answer.

"He has agreed to take on this onerous position on a temporary basis" the Prime Minister responded "After which he will take over as the Divisional Commander of the Metropolitan Division upon the retirement of its current Chief."

The Commander looked on, still not looking overwhelmingly convinced about the plan, however deep down he too agreed that this was by far and away the best move forward for the service following the recent crisis.

"What of the Home Secretary?" came the next question to be quick fired at them.

"He will be getting the appropriate level of justice he deserves" the Prime Minister confirmed which the Commander responded to with a wry but discreet knowing smile.

Two hours after his arrest, the now former Home Secretary was now encased on his own in the back of a windowless Prison Service van heading to an as yet unknown destination.

He sat back in the rather hard and spartan seat waiting for his journey to end, at which he hoped and indeed prayed that he would be rescued by the one remaining member of the Omega Committee's associates he knew for certain was still out there.

The van started to slow down and he could feel it turn into what must have been a roughly surfaced yard or industrial area judging by the bumping about that the vehicle was now experiencing.

Then after a minute, the vehicle came to a halt and the noisy diesel engine stopped. As he looked up, the Home Secretary saw the doors open and he was able to smell fresh air and the outside world for the first time in what seemed like hours.

"Come on" the gruff and formidably large Prison Service guard indicated "Leg stretch."

"Right!" the Home Secretary almost enthusiastically bounded out of the van and onto the rubble and weed covered ground outside. Taking a few moments to let his eyesight adjust to the contrasting light, he looked around and surveyed the desolate industrial waste ground that they had stopped in, an old warehouse type building in the near distance but closer to him, a number of armed guards to ensure he did not try and escape.

He chose to walk around a bit, getting the stiffness out of his legs and as he paced around, he looked up for any sign of an impending rescue, his eyes eventually alighting on what appeared to be a figure slightly obscured from view on the top of the nearby warehouse building.

Commander Baker smiled to herself for a moment when she noticed through the rifle scope, the Home Secretary look up towards her, seemingly delighted that she had got his message and was here to rescue him.

"Poor fool" Baker commented to herself before looking across at the Security Service officer that was stood a little distance behind her.

"Now Sir?" she asked.

"Not yet" the Commander responded as he momentarily peered over the edge at the scene below whilst the Home Secretary was looking the other way, before reaching for the radio on his belt.

"Alpha One to Pappa Echo Six Five" he called.

Below on the waste ground, the lead Prison Service officer responded to the radio call.

"Depart in three minutes" the Commander ordered "and leave the package out in the open."

"Yes Sir" the Prison Officer responded.

It took the Commander a couple of minutes to make his way down through the old warehouse building and out onto the flat waste ground.

On the ground, the lead Prison Service Officer made a shrill whistle and indicated to his officers to get back in their vehicles, yet they made no attempt to reload the Home Secretary back on board the van.

Standing there all alone as the last prison van closed its doors and the engine started, the Home Secretary was not at all surprised that this was happening and believed it to be the point where his freedom would now be granted.

He radiated a smile of confidence and smugness as the prison van pulled away, however he suddenly changed when the dust thrown up from the departing vehicles began to dissipate and the Commander, resplendent in full Administrator General's uniform complete with the 'A1' and crown insignia on the epaulettes, stepped forward with a serious and stern look.

"Commander" the Home Secretary responded, attempting to be calm but with an obvious tremble of fear permeating his voice "What brings a nice guy like you to a nasty place like this on a cold evening?"

"Just sorting out some paper work" the Commander responded as he stepped forward, stopping about ten feet away from the uneasy Home Secretary.

"What paper work?" the Home Secretary asked.

"Th... Oh" the Commander tapped his tunic pocket in mock annoyance "I seem to have mislaid it".

The tap on the pocket was in fact a signal for at that moment a dark coloured ministerial car arrived in the yard, accompanied by four Security Service motor cycle outriders.

"What's going on here?" the Home Secretary demanded to know as the car came to a stop behind the Commander and Jennifer Caverner got out of the drivers seat. She made her way back to the rear passenger door and opened it for her passenger who stepped out, the shiny expensive shoes contrasting markedly with the dry dusty waste ground they were now appearing upon.

"Good evening Prime Minister" the Commander greeted barely looking back behind him.

"Good evening Commander" the Prime Minister responded as he joined him "Sorry I mean Administrator General."

"Acting Administrator General" the Commander muttered under his breath.

"Oh yes" the Prime Minister realised his mistake before reaching inside his pocket "Sorry, here is that warrant I forgot to give you" whereupon he handed over an official looking document.

“You are not taking me in” the Home Secretary warned “I have many powerful and influential friends you know.”

“Oh you mean the last remaining member of the Omega Committee?” the Commander asked before looking across at the Prime Minister “Do you want to tell him or shall I?”

“I’ll let you have the pleasure” the Prime Minister confirmed.

“My predecessor” the Commander explained “That would be the one you murdered, not the one you parachuted in by the way, became aware of your group’s activities as I did some fifteen years ago.”

“I don’t know what you are talking about” the Home Secretary tried to profane innocence but was failing miserably.

“The Omega Committee prided itself on being able to manipulate events, people and the media and install its associates and sympathisers in many influential areas of the Security Service, Government and other agencies” the Commander explained.

“However they say pride goes before a fall” he continued “You and your associates got so arrogant that they failed to consider the possibility that two could play at that game.”

The Home Secretary continued to look both defiant and confused as the Commander continued to explain his predicament and the events leading up to it.

“As head of the Internal Intelligence Section or X-Ray Division” the Commander continued “Jim Peters spent many years gathering data on your associates and worked in carefully placed moles throughout your organisation, of which one was your fake Administrator General and another was Commander Baker.”

“Oh...” the Home Secretary muttered under his breath as he realised his last ally was after not what she appeared before deciding to try his luck and made a lunge forward at the Commander and the Prime Minister.

He was stopped in his tracks by a rifle shot that struck the ground right at the very toe end of his lead foot.

“Good shot isn’t she?” the Commander remarked with a smirk “In case you were wondering, she has orders to stop you from coming any closer to us than right there.”

The Home Secretary wisely stepped slowly back with his hands gently raised.

“Sign here if you would” the Commander asked the Prime Minister as he held the document in front of him.

“With pleasure” he responded as he produced an expensive fountain pen and signed the bottom of both the first and second pages before handing it back to the Commander.

“What is that?” the Home Secretary demanded to know, a distinct element of panic starting to appear in his voice now.

“This is a T114” the Commander confirmed “You should know all about them, you drew up the secret Parliamentary Bill that created them.”

“I am not a terrorist!” the Home Secretary began to protest.

“Oh no?” the Commander responded.

“I don’t know” the Prime Minister remarked with a wry chuckle “The cheek of some people these days.”

“In the last week alone, you have murdered, and conspired to murder senior officers of Her Majesty’s Security Services, endangered the lives of thousands of innocent people and conspired against the Government, people and country of the United Kingdom” the Commander reiterated with clear but controlled anger, all delivered with a firm stare from eye to eye that sent the fear of God into the Home Secretary.

“Worst of all” the Commander pointed an accusing finger in the Home Secretary’s direction “You threatened the three things that mean the most to me, this City, the Security Service and most importantly of all, my wife!”

The Commander turned away for a moment before turning back again “And if that does not make you a terrorist then I will be damned as to what will!”

“I am sure we can come to some arrangement” the Home Secretary decided that negotiation may be the best option open to him, failing that, good old fashioned bribery.

“You just don’t get it do you?” the Commander responded holding up the document “This isn’t a ‘Get Out of Jail Free’ card, there is no ‘If you pass go collect two hundred grand advance on your memoirs’, no exclusive interview deal on Tonight with Trevor MacDonald, this is a Security Service measure you yourself devised as a tool to aid your associates and we are using it.”

“Come on” the Home Secretary was desperate for a way out of this now “Be reasonable!”

“That time is past” the Prime Minister responded “Thanks to your own efforts and your own flagship legislation, you are now more stitched up than a Womble.”

“I like that” the Commander responded aside “Very funny!”

“Thanks” the Prime Minister replied “I always wanted to be a comedian!”

“Ha, ha!” the Home Secretary mocked “Very funny!”

“Well I thought so” the Commander remarked “But then again it has been a very strange week.”

“Look” the Home Secretary “You just can’t make me disappear, people will start asking questions!”

“You think you and your associates are the only ones who can manipulate the media?” the Commander remarked as he put on his uniform cap and adjusted it.

“Where are you going?” the Home Secretary demanded to know “Damm it you can’t do this!”

“Good night” the Commander responded “Have a pleasant evening” where upon with a wry grin of determined satisfaction, he turned away, followed by the Prime Minister who said nothing except mark his departure with a cheeky little finger wave to the Home Secretary before returning to the car.

The Commander joined the Prime Minister in the back of the car and Jennifer returned to the drivers seat and started the engine.

As they moved off leaving the Home Secretary seemingly alone in the middle of the open ground, the Commander looked out of the side window before winding it up electrically.

The Home Secretary looked on into the distance with more than a little panic in his eyes as the tail lights of the car and its motorcycle escorts disappeared off into the descending darkness of early evening dusk.

As Jennifer, revved the engine on reaching the tarmac road, the otherwise dark stillness of the night was broken momentarily as the echoed crack of a number of high powered rifles was heard before a crunch of a body hitting loose hard ground preceded silence once more.

“He’ll be in a bridge support on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link within the hour” the Prime Minister confirmed.

“He always wanted to be a pillar of the community didn’t he?” the Commander remarked with a wry smile as they headed back towards the City.

Despite the late hour, there were still a few members of the press camped out on the opposite side of Broadway in front of the main entrance to New Scotland Yard as Tracy and the Commander arrived, by Underground naturally, emerging from St James Park station and travelling the short distance by foot.

This was the first time he had been seen in public bearing the 'A1' and crown insignia of the Administrator General and he was still not looking entirely comfortable with it, a mood not helped by the events he had participated in earlier that evening.

As the distant chimes of Big Ben sounding in ten o'clock filtered through the dark night air, they arrived and at the requests of the press, posed for a few moments together in front of the famous three sided revolving sign before heading off arm in arm inside.

"Good evening Sir, Maam" the receptionist in the foyer called as they entered.

"Good evening" the Commander responded "Tell me" he asked "In this place, does a person of my rank have to use the lift or can I slum it and sneak up the stairs?"

"As Administrator General Sir" the receptionist responded "You can pretty much do what you like."

"I'll have to bear that in mind" the Commander commented as he and Tracy made for the lifts, a waiting car all ready with its doors open.

As they entered the lift, Tracy and the Commander turned round and faced the foyer as the doors closed.

"You know one thing you could do" Tracy suggested "Get that foyer repainted, that colour scheme is terrible!"

On the top floor, it was with some trepidation that the Commander approached the door of the Administrator General's office, thinking back to what he found in there the last time he entered that room.

"Come on" Tracy reassured him, holding her husband's hands in reassurance and reaching for the door handle, opening the door before they stepped inside together.

The Commander went over to the desk and switched on the desk lamp, bathing the room in a low glow before turning to the window and raising the blind, revealing the dark city skyline outside.

"Well I can't complain about the view" the Commander commented before, with some slight reluctance and hesitation, taking the seat behind the desk and looking around "Wallpaper is a bit dismal though."

"Did I ever tell you I am very proud of you?" Tracy asked.

"Come here" the Commander gestured to Tracy who came around behind the desk and at his insistence, sat on his lap and put her arms around his neck.

"I want you to do one thing for me" the Commander urged her as he looked lovingly into Tracy's eyes "Don't ever change, always be yourself" he asked her.

"Do you think it will always be as quiet as it is now?" Tracy asked.

"I doubt it" the Commander responded. As if to prove his point, the telephone on the desk promptly rang, interrupting the mood completely.

"Don't answer it" Tracy urged.

"I wish I had that luxury" the Commander reluctantly leaned forward and picked up the receiver "One of the disadvantages of being in the top seat I suppose."

"Hello?" he answered before a pause during which the Commander's expression changed from one of resigned fate to one of old-fashioned plain annoyance.

"Tell me you are having a laugh" the Commander responded "Oh all right, I'll be there, goodnight."

"Problem?" Tracy asked not entirely surprised as the Commander put the phone down.

"Tracy" the Commander responded with a wry smile "You are not going to believe this....."

To Be Continued.....

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