

End Game

Cloistered

It is the first day of April 2021, around three am.

Cloistered for over a year within the confines of Carrick Grange, Malcolm's garden and wildlife family have become crucially important to him, allowing him to suspend himself, self-absorbed, in a benign world far from the current distortions which exist beyond his perimeter fence. Many of the restrictions which apply to those living beyond the Carrick Grange perimeter do not apply to Malcolm and his wife Alice. The couple are estranged, a situation which has pertained for decades but they soldier on, in an uneasy compromise, hiding their secrets from one another as best they can.

From the first day of Spring, Malcolm's bedroom window is ajar. On the tree nearby, a blackbird is singing; his mate is asleep, settled on her brood. With the clock now an hour forward, it is still too dark for his small platoon of birds to hunt worms on his extensive lawn. The lone foragers will be his robins who enjoy the semi-darkness of suburbia and seem to hunt food both night and day.

Malcolm thinks of his dawn chorister as Archie, after his father. Archie is the name he would have chosen if they had been blessed with a son. If a daughter, he would have chosen Marie, after his paternal grandmother, the one with the shipping wealth inherited first by Archie Fraser-Scott, conserved, invested and enhanced before being passed on to Malcolm, his son and heir. With Alice terminally ill, now on her last few weeks or even days, Malcolm has no one to share his fears and anxieties with, except Sally who is also in lockdown, alone, about a mile away.

The 2020/21 winter has been exceptionally mild and his garden is two weeks ahead, according to his snapshot photo-diary on his garden iPad. This is a man who lives his digital life carefully, in compartments.

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For ex-Chief Superintendent Malcolm Fraser-Scott, money has never been the issue. Indeed, in his current situation, his wealth has become a burden. To ride out the financial storm while minimising taxes, legally, he has been assured, the residual bulk of his wealth, amounting to a diminished £16 million, is offshored to a holding account on the Isle of Man. This was done at the start of the crisis, when Malcolm's wide-ranging portfolio investments valued at £63 million BTV were salvaged to cash on the advice of Ronnie Goldie, his former PFA (Personal Financial Advisor). Ronnie was the son of Malcolm's best friend ACC Jimmy Goldie. Father and son are now dead of the virus which has raged

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around the globe unabated for nearly sixteen months, perhaps longer since it now common knowledge Covid-19 was at first ignored then concealed for months by the Chinese Government.

In Britain, this current iteration of lockdown is the fourth, openly called The Final Lockdown or TFL. It is being applied rigidly, worldwide and it is intended it will stay in place until the virus is defeated.

Malcolm's current home in the Carrick Grange enclave of Bearsden was previously owned by a friend, Enrico Ferranti, a successful restaurateur who retired to Venice. Brokered by his Ronnie Goldie, his PFA (Personal Financial Adviser), they had helped the weary Enrico to make this move, buying out his entire portfolio of six restaurants and the Carrick Grange house. When Enrico had become a distant memory, his Ronnie, who had taken a share in the buy-out, had advised a sell-off, using management buy-outs to rejuvenate the restaurants, making Malcolm around forty percent in net profit after costs and taxes.

Sadly, in early February 2020, Enrico, his wife and disabled daughter were among the first Italians to die of Covid-19. Enrico, Ronnie Goldie and his father Jimmy had been Malcolm's golfing buddies at Pollok Golf Course, all members of The Masonic Order, formerly office bearers of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Glasgow.

Although Malcolm knows Alice derides his sentimental attitude to wildlife as another weakness, he thinks of his garden creatures as his 'family', his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and so on. He provides many safe nesting boxes, hedgehog bowers, insect havens and nooks and crannies for frogs and toads, bees and wasps aiming at a suburban have, a paradise. Over the years he has counted thirty-two species of birds nesting in his garden including the rooks and crows in the trees nearby and for one year only, a heron pair who had devastated his pond life after which he had netted it to protect his pond friends.

In fact, the pond and its garden were the main reason he had chosen this house when they felt forced to abscond from Pollokshields, downsizing from his parents' rambling and crumbling ten-bedroom 'castle' in favour of a modern six-bedroom luxury villa. There is also a full-sized attic space where he keeps his most important secrets.

His pond has a thriving colony of palmate newts and a few great-crested. It is a large, deep pond teeming with aquatic flora and fauna. It is the jewel in his crown, he feels, with two underwater cameras which he can view on his garden iPad from the seclusion of his treehouse or observation shed set up as a hide with high-powered cameras and an array of expensive binoculars and monoculars. Set back in the trees, this hide, his attic windows and the treehouse all give commanding views over his neighbours' properties, another bonus which Enrico had also enjoyed.

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The other reason Malcolm stuck to his resolve and eventually persuaded Alice to move from Pollokshields was to be nearer to Sally McAnespie. Sally, who never married, is five years his junior and lives a brisk five-minute e-bike ride away in a conveniently anonymous apartment block towering above Westerton Station. This tower block is part of the redevelopment of former hospital campus which is entered by road from the switchback near Canniesburn Toll. This means Sally's flat is technically in the slightly more prestigious suburb of Bearsden, not Westerton. Sally picked this location because of its excellent rail links and for its stunning views over Glasgow and beyond to Glenniffer Braes where she lived as a girl.

Although Sally had also attended Hutchie, being Eurasian, she had been excluded from the Pollokshields' Hutchie set. Daisy Ng, Sally's mother, had been among the early influx of Hong Kong Chinese who came to Britain in the early 1950s. As a sixteen-year-old, Daisy had been married off to an older man called Richard (Ricky) McAnespie who ran a small string of betting shops and an exclusive members' only casino in Glasgow where William Ng had built up a huge debt. Shortly after the wedding, William and Rose Ng had moved to Manchester and beyond, each time fleeing gambling debts. As a result, Sally had lost contact with her roots until later in her life, reconnecting through the HKGFG (Hong Kong-Glasgow Fraternity Group). Because of the pandemic and despite her close proximity, Malcolm has not been in physical contact with Sally for nearly eight months.

The installation of the three-metre high fence enclosing Carrick Grange includes a roll-top razor wire topping, an automated security gate and array of twenty CCTV cameras linked by Wi-Fi to his Malcolm's Home Security Laptop. Malcolm's fence was authorised by ACC Jimmy Goldie at the outbreak of *Morph A* strain of *Covid-19* when break-ins and looting were a serious issue. Jimmy did not see the completed fence as he was hit by *Morph A* a few weeks before it was completed. Jimmy had arranged everything for a lump sum price of £1.8 million which Alice had claimed was double what it should have cost.

Malcolm likes to believe the fence was allowed because of his long-standing friendship with Jimmy but suspects the permission came from higher, because his wife Emeritus professor emeritus Alice Nimmo Harkness QC is a member of the Scottish Government Agency's ICE (Inner Circle Elite). Malcolm has always held the suspicion Jimmy and Alice were too close over the years but he has no proof.

Everyone inside Carrick Grange, even Alice, agrees the fence is a vital contribution to their physical protection and biosecurity. At Alice's instigation, Malcolm assumes the role of watchkeeper of the fence becoming the de facto chairman of their unofficial neighbourhood watch group.

Withdrawn to his redoubt with summer approaching, Malcolm already lives outdoors for most of his time, mowing, weeding, pruning, tending his large orchid collection in his

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glasshouse, potting-up cuttings or crouched in his treehouse or hide with his binoculars glued to his eyes, taking note of everything which happens in Carrick Grange, occasionally and surreptitiously checking neighbours' bedroom windows. He has read in TDW that home nudism is the current rage but has been disappointed, so far.

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The Dark Web

Throughout officialdom there has been an explosion in the use of acronyms for both internal and external communications, defended on the grounds of 'efficiency'. In the new official, public-relations-based world of TFL (The Final Lockdown), these acronyms pervade every broadcast, every media statement of comment, every instruction setting out the rules by which society must abide. What were once guidelines and now firm rules. These acronyms also pervade TDW (The Dark Web) where it is widely recognised the BGA (British Government Authority), and the SGA (Scottish Government Authority) are struggling to maintain control. The BGA have retreated from Westminster to a heavily fortified Windsor Castle while the SGA are bunkered at Stirling Castle, Scotland's ancient capital, under the vigilant William Wallace. King of Scots on his 220 foot podium overlooking the Field of Bannockburn where Robert the Bruce conjured up his surprising victory over the feckless Edward the Second, the last major Scottish victory 1314 when the Auld Enemy were sent homewards to think again.

At one stage, during the frustrating months of the original and subsequent lockdowns, the populace took to the Internet in droves, living their lives over the web, sharing vociferously, revealing intimate details of their lives, complaining, arguing and threatening for hours at a time every day and through the night, becoming part of GODS (Global Online Digital Society). By December 2020 this activity had faded away and the dissenters and naysayers had retreated to TDW which has become, in its immediate sub-surface layer, more accessible, more user friendly, a place occupied by educated people of all political persuasions and wannabee intellectuals can wander about dipping and sampling, masquerading with apparent anonymity and usually with ersatz authority.

According to TDW, Joe Public resents but accepts these acronyms which, through incessant repetition, are now common parlance in daily speech, social media and Internet chat rooms. According to pundits in TDW, this repetition has the effect of making them 'accepted', making them 'true'. In TDW, the consensus view is the increasingly draconian measures promulgated by the BGA and SGA under TFL (The Final Lockdown) are a last-ditch attempt to avoid anarchy, not just in the Britain but globally. According to this rhetorical mantra:

The Authorities' world-wide have re-aligned by combining politicians and civil servants into IEUs (Interim Executive Units).

Like other IEUs, both the BGA and the SGA now use IEOs (Internet Efficiency Orders) to restrict public access and, after a two-week hiatus, from November 2020 there have

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been new restricted versions of Google UK and other search engines. These authorities allege the Internet is under great pressure due to 'excessive' use. A second reason is the need to prevent antisocial 'fake news' from ill-informed protesters.

In Malcolm's mind this raises the question, *is what the BGA and SGA broadcasting not the real fake news?* This notion plays on his mind and from the start of the *Morph B* death surge and for a while he stops listening to these earnest public pronouncements.

Malcolm is also doubtful if recent results from his public Internet searches are believable. With recording frequency requested pages on Google UK are often *down for maintenance* or the search returns *this site is currently not available, please try later*. In public social media it is claimed these Internet outages are the result of cyber-attacks by Chinese and Russian hackers.

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Alice and Sally

Malcolm is awake early. He did not sleep well and is worried about Sally. He checks his special phone which he uses only for her, his Sally phone. There is no WhatsApp message. His sense of foreboding increases and his mind swings back three days.

He was in his treehouse watching the blackbirds and thrushes feeding. From nowhere a female sparrowhawk swooped and took a pigeon fledgling from his lawn, leaving only a few white feathers. He is inundated with wood pigeons and although he regrets his loss, he accepts it as nature's way. All predators kill to survive.

His niggling worry is it might have been a collared dove. In recent years they have been scarce in his garden and he does not know why. He likes collared doves; unlike bold, brash, aggressive wood pigeons, collared doves are gentle, secretive, shy and their pleasant cooing reminds him of Sally. He only caught a glance. Without binoculars his eyes are poor, from his diabetes. He cannot be sure. The kill was over in seconds and within minutes the feathers had been taken by a flock of smaller birds to line their nests. Nature in the raw. Life and death are all around him in his garden but he shuts his mind to this, preferring his myth of harmonious cooperation. He will not allow it to be a collared dove. Ergo, it was a woodpigeon youngster which would have become an adult bold, brash and a fearless bully; gone, as if it had never existed.

This morbid incident has been lurking at the back of his mind, unsettling him as he waits for Alice to die.

Sally sends Malcolm WhatsApps at least twice a day. She is a woman of fixed habits and he receives a long chatty one around nine o'clock each evening as she heads to bed and a short *good morning have a nice day* message whenever she wakes, which can be anytime from four a.m. onwards. Sally is a workaholic. After a short career as a hospital consultant she was head-hunted to the executive of Universities Scotland, formerly CoSHEP (Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals). During the pandemic Dr Sally McAnespie has been parachuted into many failing universities and colleges to help them re-organise their finances. In lockdown, she spends her days from early to late online, in video meetings. This she finds exhausting and frustrating and for this reason prefers to engage with Malcolm in voice only calls or by an exchange of WhatsApps.

This is a rouse. Sally has bowel cancer and has been told she has to wait her turn for surgery as she does not have high enough status to be a priority. As a palliative she takes a mixture of Chinese medicines. Suffering weight loss, her appearance is affected and her once shining jet-black hair is now falling out in handfuls. No longer able to cope with

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the pressures endless Zoom meetings, she has written to her superiors asking for a six months sabbatical, claiming family issues. She has not yet shared her plight with Malcolm as he has enough on his plate with Alice. Every time she looks at his handsome smiling face on her screensaver she smiles and remembers meeting him by chance while walking the West Highland Way. Over that wonderful May week, they had talked and talked, fallen in love, true love of the kind Sally had been waiting for all her life.

Malcolm checks his Sally phone again. In their twelve years as an occasionally adulterous couple, Sally has never once missed these twice daily contacts to his Sally phone. He sends another WhatsApp asking her to let him know if she needs help, adding he will come to her aid, if necessary. After pressing the SEND icon, he wishes he had not been so bold. He is afraid to leave the compound, not just because he does not have a permit and could be arrested. His fear is ingrained from months of isolation, a form of agoraphobia.

He decides to try not to think about the problem of Sally until later and swings his mind back to the past when everything seemed brighter, more hopeful. This is a frequent habit when he is lying awake for his day to begin, a technique which he was taught in therapy.

As Malcolm Fraser-Scott treads the familiar pathways of his life, he nods off, smiling.

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In the Beginning

In his half dream, half trance, Malcolm dwells on the highlights of his life, trying give himself a boost, trying to slalom around the rocky, bumpy moguls, trying to avoid the psychic hurts. At key intervals in his life he has submitted to private counselling and knows how this works, knows the tricks.

He begins the review of his life BTV (Before the Virus), starting decades earlier with his privileged upbringing in Pollokshields, his early home schooling under the strict and demanding Agnes, his 'new Mummy', brought in by his father when Malcolm's mother died of a self-administered 'overdose hoard' of anti-depressants in a locked ward at of a private clinic.

It was only much later, on her death, Malcolm learned Mummy Agnes was not married to his father but a distant cousin of the same surname, a confirmed spinster diagnosed with untreatable Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) which had prevented her from ovulating, building up frustration and tension which she had secretly vented on him, her innocent victim, administering painful beatings with her switch for failure (bed-wetting) and sweets and fizzy drinks for success (flushing the WC and cleaning after himself with a loo brush, washing his hands, being polite and quiet when she suffered her headaches).

Following a period of stern home schooling under Mummy Agnes, at age nine Malcolm was sent as a day boy to Hutchesons' Grammar School (Hutchie), a pricey fee-paying school. Bright enough when driven and supported by Mummy Agnes, he made good progress at Hutchie rising to Dux and Captain, promotions enabled by judicious charitable donations from his father, under the shrewd direction of Mummy Agnes. By this stage, the handsome Malcolm Fraser-Scott was an 'item' with a gawky, studious Alice Nimmo Harkness, an arrangement approved and promoted by her ambitious parents who were very aware of the Fraser-Scott wealth but unaware Archie and Agnes were unmarried.

Both youngsters enrolled at St Andrews,. For accommodation, they were set up by her parents who had a holiday cottage in the hamlet of Dunino, five miles from the University campus. Provided with a Mini Cooper and a generous allowance by Archie, they were a pre-marital nesting couple, taking precautions to remain free of pregnancy which would sully Alice's purity. During this period of intensive study-oriented lifestyle, Malcolm had already begun to rely on Alice. When Mummy Agnes died of lung cancer during their second year, this transfer of dependence and obedience increased. It was also during these years at St Andrews the gawky Alice Nimmo Harkness blossomed, becoming a

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beautiful young woman, a perfect match for the already handsome and debonair Malcolm, sole heir to the Fraser-Scott inheritance then reckoned around £45 million.

The couple graduated and married two days later back in Pollokshields, everything arranged by Alice and her mother, paid for by Archie Fraser-Scott who had a new partner, Melany, a beautiful and strangely disturbing Filipino girl who claimed she was eighteen but looked like a boyish twelve-year old or younger.

On their return from their month-long honeymoon in Nice, Alice and Malcolm were beginning to drift, to argue. While they searched for a house of their own, they stayed at *Belvedere* with Archie and Melany. This was not a happy arrangement. Melany resented Alice's high-handedness and complained bitterly to Archie who assured her it was only for a few months.

Without the routine and discipline of university study, and with time to be free at last, the perfect couple found they were not entirely compatible. They began to disagree, at first mostly over small things. When Alice insisted her way was best, Malcolm adopted truculent silence. The situation escalated. Every house Alice chose to view, Malcolm found fault with it. She wanted Pollokshields; nowhere else was 'suitable' because *this is where people of our kind live and always have done*. Malcolm declared he 'preferred' Glasgow's West End or maybe Bearsden or Milngavie, *nearer to the hills and open wildness to the north of Glasgow, away from the suffocating crush of the familiar*.

The plan, according to Alice and Mummy Agnes had always been they should pursue careers as lawyers, aim to become QC's like the Harknesses who were from a dynasty of lawyers with many contacts. *Perhaps one day we shall become Judges, like Great Grampa Harkness*, she opined. Malcolm remained silent, ignoring the application forms she placed before him for signing. Without the backing of Mummy Agnes, Alice was losing her grip on her new husband.

Unknown to anyone, on Saturday afternoons when Archie was at golf and Alice was lunching and house-hunting with her mother, Melany was visiting Malcolm's rooms on the top floor, whispering insurrection. Eventually, Malcolm rebelled against Alice's dominance and made his surprise announcement, stating his intention to apply to the police, to follow in his father's footsteps and dedicate himself to a life of public service.

Chief Superintendent Archie Fraser-Scott of Strathclyde Police pulled strings and called in favours; Malcolm was recruited for direct entry to Tulliallan Police College on its exclusive graduate acceleration programme reserved for the *crème-de-la crème* of the autumn intake, all much brighter than Malcolm. Jimmy Goldie, also a Hutchie boy from Malcolm's year who had studied Psychology with Maths at Glasgow University, was in this cohort and Jimmy and Malcolm became closer again, becoming study buddies with Jimmy receiving a secret grant-in-aid from Archie. This had set the stamp on Malcolm Fraser-

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Scott's steady rise into the upper echelons of Strathclyde Police with Jimmy Goldie minding his back and keeping him in the limelight, for a generous monthly fee, an amount sufficient to pay his mortgage on a very comfortable four bed Art Deco villa on Rouken Glen Road, overlooking the park of the same name. Alice got her way and bought a well-appointed quarter-villa on prestigious Nithsdale Road, only a short car hop from the Harkness home in Sutherland Avenue. This starter home, bought in his son's name, was mortgage free, paid for by Archie to get rid of his daughter-in-law and stop Melany's constant whining.

In Malcolm's fifth year post-Tulliallan, Archie Fraser-Scott died of a massive heart attack while playing golf in Spain. Alice who had previously resisted this Malcolm's career choice, now stepped up to the wicket again, resuming her previous St Andrew's role as Malcolm's mentor and confidante, now encouraging him in his career, seeing the potential for him to become a future Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police, topping his father who had only reached ACC, briefly, before being edged into early retirement on health grounds.

Alice, now free of Archie's restraining presence, came to an arrangement with Jimmy Goldie. She also paid off Melany who quickly found a new sugar daddy and moved to Troon as a house helper to one of Archie's golfing friends, Tom Mitchell QC, a retired Sheriff.

At this point their lives change. Malcolm and Alice move to *Belvedere*, the grandest mansion on Sutherland Avenue, one of most sought after addresses in Pollokshields and a few doors along from the Harkness family home. Here they settle to a comfortable lifestyle of dinner parties, golf, tennis, social bridge. Spring skiing in France was a focal point of the social calendar and where they buy a four bedrooled second home in Morzine. Later, they buy a sprawling farmhouse with a swimming pool in Provence. This property comes with an older live-in husband and wife team who tend the grounds, cook wonderful French country cuisine and make Alice and Malcolm's lives an idyll, when they can find time to escape fly south by private jet to escape from their busy lives.

For added variety, they enjoy cruising and city break adventures. These jaunts and other country house hotel weekends are always as part of a large, jolly group organised by Mamie Goldie at the behest of Alice who gives her friend a free hand and a generous budget. Aged thirty-seven, Allice Nimmo Harkness QC assumes the position of Queen Bee in their social set, following the example set by her mother two decades earlier.

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Malcolm dwells on these years and smiles as fond memories of fun in the sun roll across his mind's eye. He often wallows in these golden years for hours at a time, especially when inebriated.

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In this reverie and unbidden, Malcolm swings back to dwell his choice of Law at St Andrews. For the millionth time he scolds himself for his weakness: he should have stuck to his first choice of Biology and fulfilled his idealistic teenage ambition to emigrate to New Zealand. As part of his portfolio of investments gifted to mark his tenth birthday, he had once owned 30,000 acres of productive farmland near a township called Otaki, north of Wellington. Grandma Marie had gifted Malcolm this parcel of land in her will and it had been held in trust for him until he was twenty-five. During his period of ownership, this land had benefited from steady inward migration, accumulating in value and returning a worthwhile income in rents. Malcolm blames Alice who had opposed this plan to move with a dismissive:

No sweetheart, no! Please, will you give up on this frivolous and boyish notion. I find it so very tiring to have to continually remind you that place Otaki is at the opposite end of the globe from our world here in Glasgow! Won't you make him stop his silliness, Mummy Agnes?

At that early stage, Alice and Mummy Agnes had become good friends, both set on moulding their 'handsome and perfect Malcolm' for greatness.

Years later, as part of their reconciliation after the long rift, Alice had insisted Malcolm sell the Otaki land, part of her plan to buy the farm in Provence, killing the escape plan he had always harboured.

Malcolm had known since a child Mummy Agnes had despised Archie's career as a policeman with the oft repeated aside, whispered behind his back:

Archie has such a horrible time, you know, forced to deal with such dreadful unpleasantness, day in, day out. It why he drinks so much, you know. Why he chose policing I will simply never fathom. He should have been a lawyer, like his father, like the Harknesses. If only he had not squandered his chance at university with all that silliness, none of which was true, of course.

Unable to oppose the two women, Malcolm had finally agreed to apply to St Andrews to read Law. Studying alongside the ambitious Alice, he benefited from her sharp mind and harsh coaching. At graduation she was awarded a *First* to his *Lower Second* suffering the ignominy of being the lowest in their cohort and last to kneel for his scroll. Perhaps it was this hurt which had caused him to rebel by joining the police, following in his father's footsteps.

With Alice embroiled in building her career and Archie caught up in shifts, endless CPD (Continuing Professional Development) courses, promotion boards and serving on liaison committees to further his own career, the 'perfect couple' had drifted apart for a spell during a wasted decade when they had grumbled, descending into corrosive low-level

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sniping with the first distant rumbles of a possible divorce, a messy and expensive catastrophe with the potential to fatally scupper both careers.

Jimmy and Mamie Goldie had stepped in, suggesting a golf foursome weekend at Turnberry Hotel during which Malcolm and Alice had aired their differences and had been persuaded to try again. Privately, a deal had been struck between Alice and the Goldies and gradually, with the trio working in concert, Malcolm began to rise through the ranks more quickly. If Malcolm was aware of this situation, he did not bring it up, happy to enjoy the limelight and deference shown by those around him.

In parallel, Alice had become a leading Procurator Fiscal, confiding to Malcolm that only now could she understand his frustration at how easily criminals could escape justice.

During this period and beyond, as she began to circulate in the social scene in Edinburgh, the new mantra from Ms Alice Nimmo Harkness QC was:

Without good policing to gather the necessary sound, joined-up evidence, my "ammunition" in the war against organised crime will fail to penetrate the smokescreen of the Defence, fail to hit the mark. Our police must be properly respected and well-funded for us to succeed. We are all in this fight together.

For her own part, Alice had set her sights on becoming Judge and was cultivating the influencers on JABS (Judicial Appointments Board of Scotland) and the politicians agitating for a devolution and a Scottish Parliament in Scotland, spending more time in Edinburgh at committee meetings and informal dinners, taking up a position as a visiting professor in the Faculty of Law at Edinburgh University.

With both careers on track, Malcolm and Alice gradually edged towards a truer reconciliation, a second phase of romance which had fluttered in their time in the cottage at Dunino. Malcolm renewed his requests to start a family. In response they had cleared their social diaries, spending several weekends closeted at home, dedicated to sex and sex games. Their favourite, Alice riding high above him, dressed in her riding gear from early teenage years when she had been obsessed by gymkhanas, thudding down on him screaming at her climax:

Giddy-up Blaze, come on boy, get up and over for me - GO NOW!

The move ended in the disaster of Alice's miscarriage after which they had returned to their own lives and separate bedrooms once again, subdued, wary of each other, and sleeping apart once again.

In private Malcolm, to satisfy his fantasies, Malcolm took to late night hand relief viewing raunchy DVDs from Amsterdam. In public, he took to the thrill of the far more dangerous habit - *voyeurism*.

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At this point in his dwam, Malcolm is now in a familiar mental cul-de-sac. His bile rises, bringing a sour taste of regret at being ousted, denied his goal by a moment of weakness - 'upskirting'.

Unfortunately, as the CCTV cameras had proved, he was guilty. His defence *that it had been part of the 'culture' at the Govan campus* was rejected and threats issued. In the end, counselled privately by Jimmy Goldie, Malcolm has accepted the package, voluntary resignation of health grounds, stalled not even reaching the level of his father before he too was ousted. By this stage, Malcolm was party to the first whispers about his father's peculiar tastes, information which Malcolm had long know about but had never discussed with anyone.

In the lonely darkness of his bedroom, the suspicion rears its head again - had he been set up by his colleagues? If so, whom? Jimmy Goldie was rumoured to have orchestrated it but Alice had scotched this suggestion with her acid reply:

No Malcolm, Jimmy and Mamie are our oldest friends. He may be a bit devious but he is not a backstabber. Look elsewhere for your Judas, if there is one. Better still, buckle down, accept your punishment as you father did when he was caught and be thankful for small mercies. And please, henceforth, aetate dignitate (a life of dignity). If you scupper my career with any further off piste excursions, I promise you I shall beat you to within a hair's breadth of your miserable existence. Pornography and whatever it is you are playing at are not innocent crimes, there are always victims.

Moving quickly away from this throbbing mental ache, Malcolm quickly circumnavigates back to his descent into alcohol in the period immediately after the miscarriage and looks again for ways to re-write his history.

Around four a.m. and tiring, he drifts off into restless sleep.

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Bio-Bracelets

When Malcolm surfaces, his bedside *Alexa Show* displays 5:13.

On his left wrist Malcolm wears a watch which keeps perfect time, exactly in step with Alexa. It is a *Garmin Quatix*, a gift from Sally on his sixtieth birthday. He told Alice he bought it for himself. Rugged, waterproof, radio time signal enabled tuned to the national time signal, it is designed for fishermen and sailors, incorporating many features, such as logging of barometric pressure, ambient temperature and one-touch *GPS* datapoint entry tracking used to identify precise locations where fish might be caught in a loch or river or a skylark's nest rediscovered.

On his right wrist he wears his faulty "silver" bio-bracelet, a device which he despises. Its error varies occasionally but is often fixed for days on end at ten minutes ahead of real time. Although he tries to ignore it, he systematically compares bracelet time with *Garmin* time, like a tongue seeking out the edge of a ragged tooth.

This bio-bracelet, like the one worn by Alice, is a modified *Fitbit Inspire*, issued to all members of the *IEC* (Inner Circle Elite) and members of their lockdown families during the September 2020 *Morph A* surge as part of the *TTI* (Track, Trace, Isolate) strategy. To remove it at any time is strictly forbidden.

Alice has a "gold" bracelet, heavy, fashioned in white gold which is hallmarked. In the new gender-free world, as her designated *CHP* (Co-Habiting Partner), Malcolm was assigned his silver bio-bracelet, lighter weight, metal-coated plastic. Had he still been part of the upper echelons of what is now *Police Scotland*, he too would have a gold bracelet, he believes.

When his bracelet began to display faulty time readings, Malcolm had complained directly the *SDF* (Scottish Digital Forum) an organisation which reports directly to the *SGA* (Scottish Government Agency). His complaint was fobbed off with a scolding email stating he must pursue his complaint through *Ms Alice Nimmo Harkness QC* as the account holder. This Malcolm refuses to do. The email response also emphasised both bio-bracelets must be worn continuously to maintain the biosecurity of both the account holder and the *CHP*.

The logic was patent: if you behaved well, obeyed the rules, you had nothing to lose and, in theory, everything to gain. In a real emergency, he could enter his personal voice code to the microphone port of the bracelet and summon emergency prioritised help for Alice and for himself, leap-frogging *Joe Public*.

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Over the last few months from TDW Malcolm has learned should the SDF database surveillance algorithm judge his health or lockdown behaviour constitutes a risk to Alice, he would be 'removed'. In a later treatise in TDW came a stark warning:

Every class of bio-bracelet has been remotely re-programmed and is now able to detect attempts at faked deaths. Any such attempt re-re-labels the Account Holder or CHP (Co-Habiting Partner) as a subversive, as a possible terrorist with all personal and biometric details transferred to a 'dangerous and wanted' list.

Given everything else he has learned on TDW, Malcolm accepts this is *omnino est verum* (completely true). He veers away from the thought his every move is being monitored, like Winston Smith in Orwell's *1984*, a book which he did not finish reading.

Malcolm checks his Sally phone in case he missed the signal of an incoming signal. No signal. Out of habit, he puts it back under his pillow, this unnecessary as Alice is comatose under morphine.

Now back in familiar and comforting territory of his lockdown routine, he mentally ticks of each waypoint of his day ahead: he will get up, check on Alice and, if she is still alive, change her drip. He will note her vital stats and enter them online encrypted to his e-log located in the cloud at G-Drive, a log which he knows no one will ever read.

In recent months, he has used encryption to protect everything, diligently keeping all his passwords and codewords on duplicated pen-drives, one on a soft cord around his neck and a backup taped under the desk in his attic hidey-hole.

During the last ten weeks, since January 2021, he has learned to manage Alice alone. When her prognosis confirmed she is terminal, her NHS status was re-prioritised and she was assigned to an 'end of life pathway', now an established protocol in accordance with a blanket IEO (Internet Efficiency Order). There is a hidden irony here as Alice had drafted this and many other IEOs before becoming too unwell to function.

The morphine is running low but the re-order website is bouncing his requests. He has a 'disposal' number to call when she expires but until then, he is on his own, not that he would welcome any visitors had they been permitted. The house is a ramshackle mess; dirty and grimy, food stains on carpets and furnishings, dirty dishes and clothes strewn everywhere. Gradually, week on week without Mrs Isa Graham their daily cleaning lady, and with Alice at first living in her flat in Edinburgh, Malcolm has let the house go.

This is a situation which would have appalled him back in mid-March 2020 BTV when he had been looking forward to his first full summer of retirement, having resigned from all his committees. Back when Alice had been in good health, they had, he believed, mastered the art of living parallel lives without too much friction. Back then, with Alice often away, Malcolm had Sally, a few minutes away, always happy to see him, BTV.

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Thinking of Sally and Alice, Malcolm is snagged back into uncomfortable territory, his mind loops back at and runs his familiar mind-tape through the highlights, checking for flaws, loopholes, escape routes he has previously missed.

This history tape slows as it approaches March 2020: his hands begin to shake and beads of cold sweat break out on his forehead.

End Game

Secure

BTV, before the world became skewed by the pandemic, the Carrick Grange enclave comprised thirty-two residents living in nine luxury homes, each constructed to the highest standards over a three-year period, the last dwelling being completed in 2004.

Now four of the homes are empty, boarded to prevent looting, secured by the local council on behalf of the inheritors. At Alice's insistence, Malcolm is the unofficial guardian of these homes. He security checks each premises carefully everyday using Home Security iPad, taking mini-videos date-stamped clips, reporting back to Alice with his images and observations. There has been no looting, so far, thanks to the perimeter fence.

As a service to the remaining residents and to keep their lawns productive for his blackbirds and thrushes, Malcolm keeps these abandoned gardens in order, after a fashion, using solar powered auto-mowers running continuously during growth months.

Since the original *Covid-19* outbreak, the number of official residents in Carrick Grange has reduced to twenty-three. Of these, seven are still actively working, all medics of one sort or another.

Three are surgeons in their mid-fifties, at the peak of their careers; Ansar Khan was widowed in the summer BTV; the O'Riordan sisters, Verity and Gabriel were once very friendly with Alice, playing golf together but since the lockdown they have become withdrawn, reclusive, secretive.

BTV these three medics were once competing colleagues, specialists in heart and lung problems at the Golden Jubilee Hospital (now re-organised as a major CVT (Covid-Treatment Centre)). BTV they had made a healthy return from their skills, splitting their time between NHS and private medicine. Currently, private medicine is suspended and their workflow is mainly for elite gold bio-bracelet wearers like Alice who treated in privileged nursing care facility at the former NHF (Nuffield Health Facility), now part of the GNCC (Gartnavel (Non-Covid) Campus). Since the outbreak, these three surgeons have been re-trained as tele-medicine specialists working from home as robot-surgeon 'pilots' using powerful PCs and delicate controls to operate robot arms. It is for this reason the Carrick Grange broadband service is maintained to a high standard, stable, no outages, no unexpected glitches.

All though he has yet to get a positive sighting from his night-time drone flights, Malcolm is convinced all three surgeons have imported illegal Thai Brides to share their lives. In

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the dead of night, he occasionally roots through their refuse bins for evidence of female personal items, so far without success and he fears the drains may block. He imagines these live-in lovers are like the beautiful girls dressed provocatively in TDW websites.

For Malcolm, importing a Thai Bride when Alice expires is a tantalising prospect he carries around to give himself a boost when he wilts.

The two other medics are Senior Consultants, not surgeons; they are dull, stolid old-school men who forage out to various exclusive CCF (Certified Covid Free) establishments and private homes to perform their functions hands-on, diagnosing and re-assuring gold bio-bracelet wearers. Because these elderly out-goers are at highest risk, they operate in parallel self-isolation, conversing with their wives through hermetically sealed doorway screens by radio mics and speakers. Malcolm despises and envies them in equal measure; at least they have someone of their own kind to share with.

The final two medics, Sean Malone and Kevin Feeney, dubbed Carrick Grange's 'boys', are in their late forties. BTV they were owners of an up-market orthodontic and cosmetic dentistry business, now moribund, heading for bankruptcy. After *Morph B* took hold, and very much against their wishes, the boys were 'conscripted' and retrained as frontline CTRs (Covid Triage Receptionists) at the new Louisa Jordan CTC (Covid Treatment Centre) located at the SEC (Scottish Events Campus). Sean and Kevin work the 10.00 to 22.00 shift, five days on, one day off, a rolling rota. When they return to Carrick Grange they are like zombies, exhausted, uncommunicative, no longer the bright, happy party animals they had been, BTV.

Malcolm believes it is the presence of these seven medics which provides added protection against intrusive inspections by CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate), a new role assigned to Strathclyde Fire and Rescue. Any such inspection might uncover his secret attic room computer and his visits to TDW which would surely lead to his arrest. So far, by working online using his Home Security iPad and responding timeously, diligently and courteously to complete reams of queries from the SDF (Scottish Digital Forum), he has managed to keep Carrick Grange clear of inspections by the CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate).

According to TDW, the real purpose of these CBSI teams is to check for 'illegals' and 'contraband' including weapons, drugs, and the powerful 'heavy lift' drones the dealers used to traffic them. In TDW, secret videos of CBSI raids show the outrageous behaviour by these brusque, bullying operatives who wear top-rated biohazard suits incorporating SCUBA type breathing apparatus and rampage through premises leaving the residents as traumatised, tearful wrecks.

Of his remaining ten neighbours, all in their seventies and eighties, Malcolm has assumed a socially distanced watching brief responsibility for the six most needy, four widows

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and two elderly men, one on the edge of dementia. This role was taken on reluctantly at first at the behest of Alice but Malcolm has come to enjoy the power it gives him over them and an excuse to pry into their waste bins and check their deliveries.

Before the pandemic Carrick Grange had been a smug, self-assured community but now its residents are fearful, depressed and lonely. However, unlike Malcolm, the others still have families beyond the perimeter fence with whom they chat and meet online for Zoom Together meals, quizzes and drinks parties, friends and family with whom to share their anxieties, pass on Internet jokes and spoofs, creating opportunities to reminisce, laugh, relax and forget their predicament, if only for an hour or so.

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Omnino Est Verum

Malcolm shakes off the fear of a future trapped forever in TFL (The Final Lockdown). Although he cannot see a safe way out, Malcolm understands that although he is stranded, he is lucky and indeed, very, very lucky.

He is aware it is the elevated status of this group of medics combined with Alice's membership of the ICE (Inner Circle Elite) which has helped him maintain the status of Carrick Grange's as a SPMC (Strategically Protected Micro-Community). Nonetheless, stirred by what he has learned by delving into TDW, he wants to discuss his anxieties to help himself to understand them, get them into perspective. He is missing Alice who is always so adept at separating wheat from chaff, Sadly, Alice is now beyond conversation. In any case, to have the discussion he wants would mean revealing his visits to TDW, the same reason he cannot raise it with Sally. In any case, Sally would not want to debate such issue; she has a narrower, more practical, narrower perspective, he feels immersed in her financial spreadsheets and with her Honk Kong group.

Seeking clarity, certainty, he visits and revisits his favoured TDW sites, comforted by the notion only here he can find curious and cautious minds like his own. Although the culture in TDW is one of strict anonymity, insofar as he can tell these contributors are all men. Paranoia is tangible, hence the voice changers and masks.

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In early June, the world explodes with the BLM (Black Lives Matter). Malcolm finds this hard to follow. The man who died was a known criminal, resisting arrest. The scene was being played out against a backdrop of chaos, with the Covid-19 virus taking a heavy toll in the Minneapolis area. The police were being harassed and abused by onlookers throwing missiles from a safe distance. Mystified and inebriated, the ex-Chief Superintendent attempts to make sense of what he is watching night after night, watching hundreds of thousands milling closely to each other, spreading the virus, mobbing and vandalising the streets of Britain in support protest marches with the Police in attendance as facilitators, some even bending their knees in support. Malcolm switches off in disgust and staggers off to bed.

From mid-August 2020 Malcolm is dipping into TDW more regularly, filled with apprehension, increasing from once a week to twice a week, sometimes more, quickly learning to avoid those were poor grammar and foul language revealed the wrong sort of person. Back in August as now, there are many other 'open' forums to choose from when

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you take the plunge and call up your chosen entry port, pay a small amount in cryptocurrency and enter under a pseudonym.

Because of the stilted nature of text-messages based chat rooms or those using clunky video, audio-mode is gradually taking over again although everyone is fearful their voiceprints might reveal them and swing through their voice changer options randomly, making the conversations difficult to follow. Despite these frustrations, through September to December Malcolm dips under into TDW time after time, sensing it is 'thinking people' like him who use these forums as outlet for their frustrations.

During the second week of October 2020, Malcolm strikes a rich seam, a group called *Nature Nurtures*, men who seem more knowledgeable about the BMZ (Bearsden and Milngavie Zone). Passively, listening only, he fully believes what he hears, *omnino est verum* (*absolute truth*). What he listens too chimes with his own experience. On occasions he fancies he is hearing former police colleagues or friends from main hobby immediately post-retirement as a member then on the committee of the SWT (Scottish Wildlife Trust).

What he learns appals but does not surprise him. In fact, although it seems fantastical, it reassures him, confirms his suspicions and reinforces his prejudices. The business of disposing of the dead has been de-humanised, made into an industrial process, a return to the dark ages.

During the pandemic, Malcolm has observed the death and disposal of many of his near neighbours. From the middle of the *Morph A* resurgence, the collection teams arrived wearing distinctive fluorescent green biohazard suits loading hermetically sealed khaki-coloured body-bags into dull grey-coloured morgue trucks with Red Cross emblems on each of the doors and the roof. Over the months which followed, the design of these trucks and their attendants' uniform colours have evolved, becoming more discreet. Red Cross symbols have been removed following protests from other faith movements.

From the time of the first outbreak, traditional funerals became a thing of the past. For a spell, the funerals of notables and celebrities were broadcast online, on a dedicated public TV channel. This petered out, seen as elitist.

The commanding voice at *Nature Nurtures* in TDW has revealed: for the area west of Shotts, roughly midway to Edinburgh, extending south Fort William to the north down to the border with England, all body bags are sent for processing to the DMRTF (Douglas Muir Reception and Treatment Facility) located on the northern outskirts of the BMZ (Bearsden and Milngavie Zone). At this WSRRF (West of Scotland Regional Reception Facility), the bodies are reduced to a chemical slurry prior to being transported for internment, deep inside a disused mine shaft in Ayrshire.

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This explains the convoys Malcolm has observed from his drone, groups of up to five tankers speeding along Drymen Road, usually travelling under cover of darkness with police escorts bowling along at high-speed. This strategy, according to the voice from *Nature Nurtures*, is to avoid or intimidate Intermittent Protesters, who oppose this process. By implication, the voice implies these Intermittent Protestors are organised by *Nature Nurtures*, recruiting from a more strident site called *Action for Nature* advertised by a trailer flyer each time he logs out of *Nature Nurtures*. Malcolm avoids any site he fears might involve violence: if the omnipotent SDF (Scottish Digital Forum) are doing their job properly, they will have infiltrated *Action for Nature*.

When this disposal regime was introduced with *Morph B* surge, it conveyed as a necessary response, using soft-focussed, photo-shopped versions of the rolling Ayrshire countryside, with comforting music and gentle voice overs. For several weeks these public information broadcasts were repeated any times a day, offering a cynical re-assurance to the bereaved their loved ones had received a fitting internment. This fake news 'truth' failed to wash, withdrawn following strident demands from the bereaved to be allowed to visit the interment location to pay their respects.

From *Nature Nurtures*, Malcolm also learns the NHS, the Military and Police Scotland had been diminished by the virus. The long-established Scottish ethos of conventional approach of policing by consent has gone. Although part of him is repulsed by the new aggressive confrontational approach, he admits to himself if he was in post as Chief Constable of Police Scotland, he would have easily gone along with the BGA and SGA measures to conserve and manage precious resources.

In this imagined scenario, he assures himself, with Alice to help him, he would have insisted on a cast-iron written guarantee of a complete return to democratic freedom and consensus policing ATV. Malcolm has watched Michael Palin's Special Report on North Korea *How we beat Covid-19* and fears this might be the fate of the world, ATV. Indeed, he feels that living under the strictures of TFL (the Final Lockdown) this process is creeping ahead in Britain and Scotland.

This is a fear shared by many in who point out the North Korea has reported itself to be a CVFC (Covid Virus Free Country), an assertion challenged by many other chat rooms in TDW. Other suggest it might well be true, point to the likelihood North Korea bio-warrior scientists are the designers of Covid-19 and its *Morph*, working as ciphers for their socialist allies in China. This is a recurrent rumour, rising and falling in popularity as the months run on without an effective antidote while number of victims in China remain suspiciously low.

From *Nature Nurtures*, Malcolm learns to his chagrin many of the new police recruits to Police Scotland are raw youngsters, the sort who would have been taken by the military and used for cannon fodder in the Iraq and Syria. It seems British police forces can no

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longer attract the sort of better educated people demanded by the old guard at Tulliallan College.

When the third wave of deaths and lockdowns caused by *Morph B* raced around the world, this time from India and Pakistan, the global death toll to surge above two million. This had caused a resurgence of faith and mysticism. Many in the West who had previously blamed China and Russia, redirected their criticism at Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims citing their poor hygiene standards. As a result, You Tube worldwide was inundated with clips from *Slum Dog Millionaire* and other archive sources showing disgusting scenes of men and boys clearing blockages in open sewers.

As a result of these and other overtly racist clips, from late September 2020 to early November, Google, the owners, under pressure from governments and advertisers, withdrew You Tube entirely as subversive. When reinstated, the offering was in much diminished form, offered as a subscription only service with a draconian screening regime for those wishing to upload material, another step towards a North Korean style totalitarian regime, in Malcolm's judgment.

In the wake of public protests and to deflect criticism and suppress mass insurrection, both BGA and SGA now promote online multi-faith worship as a panacea for those who need this support. In consequence, the descriptor "multi-faith" is widely promulgated in the official media to calm inter-religious conflict.

Without a vehicle to promote their views, extreme groups from right and left are stranded, often re-appearing in TDW to get their views aired. The NIRA (New IRA) has become active, vying for attention with the NUFF (New Ulster Freedom Fighters) which display only poster-board information to visitors beyond which these are 'closed/members only' sites. In parallel, a series of TDW news sites cum forums are 'open' acting as 'verified' outlets for alternative news and views, available to those willing to risk visiting them who are invited to add anonymous comments.

This flood of information which he has been denied from official channels fuels Malcolm's growing addiction to TDW. Once over this threshold with apparent impunity and growing confidence in his firewall, his masks and voice changer, he becomes bolder with his drone flights, extending them beyond the Carrick Grange perimeter, gathering confirmation of what he is seeing, reading and hearing in TDW is indeed, *omnino est verum*.

End Game

Drones

Malcolm's obsession with drones had taken a firm grip of him by the late spring of 2018, BTV. Initially his drone flying was a genuine desire to study wildlife but soon became a vehicle for his voyeurism. Skylarks have always held his imagination for their soaring carefree singing and secretiveness while nesting.

By the summer of 2019 he has flown and wrecked five drones, gradually becoming proficient in the process. At each renewal he upgrades to a more sophisticated version, adding on-board stabilised control, GPS auto-hover and expensive cameras streaming and directional microphones providing professional HD quality videos of skylarks in flight and dropping, scurrying their nests, all control from his ruggedized Drone iPad reserved solely for this purpose.

Volunteered for the vacancy as the Field Studies Coordinator of his local SWT (Scottish Wildlife Trust) group, he uploads his findings to the group's informal sharing website. However, he discovers certain traditionalists in his group are against his use of drones. At first he shrugs this off as jealousy. However, the protest is taken up by Mrs Veronique Heatley MBE is his most vociferous critic, a vigorous and feisty matron who reacted violently against such 'intrusive' methods of observing wildlife. After a flurry of harsh emails, the dispute escalates and is referred to the SWT hierarchy.

In Mrs Heatley, Malcolm had picked a fierce adversary. Aged twenty, the tall and statuesque Veronique Mosweu from Botswana was on a scholarship to study Veterinary Medicine at Glasgow University and had failed her second-year exams and was studying diligently for September resists. As a summer job, she had been working on a research project at the Strathclyde Police Horse and Dog Branch under the supervision of Dr Eric Heatley and shortish, skelf of a man with poor eyesight, a thin beard and a shoulder-length ponytail. A few weeks into this secondment, Veronique received news her grant funding would not be renewed. In desperation, she turned to her mentor for help. At this stage Eric was thirty-eight, a quietly spoken, introverted bachelor, who lived alone in a smallholding which had belonged to his parents.

Despite the eighteen-year difference in their ages, the soft-hearted Eric accepted her proposal and married his twenty-year-old student. The agreement was for Veronique to graduate before they would try for a family but midway through her third year, she was pregnant with Janice on the way. After a difficult birth the slightly built, underweight child was colicky and poorly for her first few years and Veronique was forced to give up

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her studies to care for her. It took a further period of years before Louisa eventually arrived, this time a swift near pain-free birth, a healthy, lusty child.

It was then disaster struck the couple. Eric's research funding dried up and he was out of a job. To make sure there would be no further children to burden them financially, Eric agreed to have a vasectomy. They struggled for a few years until Veronique hit on the idea of opening The Heatley Cattery. As she got traction on her new life, Veronique embarked enthusiastically on a successful career breeding Scottish Folds, a class which was rising in popularity. Her kittens sold well she became the main breadwinner, travelling to competitions with her prize specimens to spread her name. The gentle Eric lived in her shadow as her house husband. To raise her profile, she became chair of many local societies including the National Trust for Scotland, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and as a fund-raiser for the SNP and a busy committee member of the local Baptist church.

With Eric's death and the departure of both daughters, The Heatley Cattery, like her cottage, is in steady decline. It was Eric who had been the mainstay, doing the maintenance, feeding, cleaning, grooming and medicating the cats. When her drones war with Malcolm starts, the dilapidated premises is struggling but she battles on with her accustomed vigour. She has a good view of his activities as the cottage and cattery overlooks the moor at Queen's View where he has been experimenting, learning his skills.

She has shouted at him, on one occasion firing a shotgun at his drone, missing wildly. She acts as if as if she on these fields, which she does not, he has checked. Malcolm reports the incident to the local police and writes to the Milngavie and Bearsden herald but his letter is rejected. Inspector Robbie Fernley from Milngavie police station telephones to tell him Mrs Heatley was shooting at a rogue injured fox which has been actively raiding her cattery. Fernley lies and assures Malcolm she holds a valid licence. The man seems unaware of Malcolm's police background and hangs up rudely when Malcolm raises it.

Malcolm loses his argument and feels obliged to resign from the SWT, on principle.

This setback spurs him to increase his prowess as a drone pilot. He reports his skylark findings independently on a newly created rival website which he pays for and which he names *Nature-Drone-Watch*. To his mind his video clips prove decreasing skylark breeding numbers in 'his' patch of farmland around the Heatley Cattery is due predation by domestic cats, escapees breeding wild. As might be expected, his findings denied by Veronique. Using her influence as chair of the *Strathblane Cat Lover's Society*, Veronique raise storm of negative publicity in the local Milngavie and Bearsden Herald where she is a long-standing block advertiser. When the issue reaches the local radio, at Alice's insistence, Malcolm terminates his website and sends a grudging apology to the newspaper, citing a GPS error.

For Malcolm, the loss of these friends and his status is another hurt, still raw.

End Game

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During the autumn and early winter of 2019 BTV, Malcolm spends weeks out on the moors near Queen's View and the Whangie honing his skills, wrecking another batch of drones in the process. He has checked land ownership records and this this land is not owned by Heatley, as she had implied in her letters to the press. In any case, if challenged, he will assert freedom to roam under Scotland's Land Reform Act, 2003.

Determined, he gradually improves which leads him to make a bulk purchase of a squadron of six up-spec drones, bought bulk at a ten percent discount, carriage free, from an eBay seller called Ernst von Heinkel GmbH, paying 35,500 Euros by international money to a bank which has a Liechtenstein sort code. Malcolm's new drones are 300 mm (12") diameter, with eight tiny propellers. Although small, they are powerful. Prior to purchase in an exchange of emails, he was told they were authentic Israeli military aircraft with high-endurance batteries capable of flights of up to an hour or more in calm conditions. On arrival he discovers they are Taiwanese clones. Despite this disappointment, his new drones work exactly as per specification and he has little choice but to accept them as the eBay seller has shut down his website.

Each drone has two high-definition video cameras, one in full colour, the other with an infra-red lens, both connecting to an onboard image-processing microcomputer which transmits an encrypted radio signal to his Drone iPad with a flight control range of two miles. Embedded in the microcomputer is an onboard chip which stores the encrypted images as back-up to be downloaded after the flight. (Later, after the drone ban regulations under lockdown, Malcolm worries about this when he loses his first drone and hopes this chip cannot be decoded to lead the authorities back to him at Carrick Grange.)

When flown at or above an altitude of a hundred metres, his drones are invisible and soundless to humans, according to their specification. He tests this and agrees. According to the odd English in the user manual, he is assured his drones are *vistaually impossible to detecting of radar in overt means*.

With practice, Malcolm now considers himself to be a highly proficient drone pilot.

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In July 2020, four months into the first *Covid-19* wave, Malcolm learns from Alice she is working on new regulations to ban all unlicensed drones because of their use to fly drugs between dealers and users. On the 1 August 2020, these rules mean it is illegal to fly an unlicensed drone. An amnesty is set for 31 August. To satisfy Alice, Malcolm pretends to comply, offering older drones from his collection while concealing his squadron of special drones. With this act, a new fear starts building. Perhaps someone will discover his international money order. According to TDW this could initiate a snap inspection by a snatch squad from the CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate). Week by week, this

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obsession grows; the CBSI are his 'enemy', at times displacing his nagging dread of catching the new *Morph A* virus circulating alongside the original *Covid-19* 'mother' version. With each new month in lockdown, his fear of a CBSI increases. As *Morph A* runs its course, deaths in the Carrick Grange community tail off his fear of Coronavirus infection reduces but the threat of a CBSI visit increases to fill the void.

From around September, provided Alice is in Edinburgh, Malcolm is flying his drones at low level within the Carrick Grange perimeter, occasionally soaring vertically to hover at 150 metres where he remains invisible to the naked eye but can observe the surrounding streets in detail. On clear days, he can see Sally's tower block in the distance in perfect detail but sadly not her windows which are on the far side overlooking Glasgow to the south and west.

During the months to follow, when sober, he learns to fly at night, a first moving slowly around his neighbour's properties, peeking, curious about the three Thai Brides. His favourite time is when it is just fully dark and their bedroom windows are brightly lit. Home nudism is the new fad circulating widely on social media and he is hopeful. For a spell he tries nudism himself, taking Viagra and standing in profile, well-lit at his floor to ceiling lounge windows in the hope of a responder from the windows below.

Gaining experience and confidence in night flying, he regularly soars a drone to 200 metres and studies the surrounding BMZ in lockdown; it looks almost normal with well-lit streets, lights twinkling in windows although there is a noticeable absence of traffic. In the distance, beyond the BMZ, there is darkness towards the DRA (Drumchapel Residential Area), the KRA (Knightswood Residential Area) and the MRA (Maryhill Residential Area) where the less privileged live. The main thoroughfares of Anniesland Cross, Great Western Road, the approach to the Clyde Tunnel and the M8 motorway beyond are also bright ribbons of light, but again traffic is desultory, mainly official vehicles.

End Game

In Flagrante

During the lonely periods of lockdowns and short trial releases, Malcolm thinks he is coping with his alcohol habit well. He hides his gin, wine and beer bottles in nooks and crannies. From mid-March she has been in an apart hotel in Edinburgh near to the seat of government making only occasional, fully authorised visits back to Carrick Grange. She tells him she and her team are tested and assures him she is virus free. She takes samples from him when she goes back to Holyrood and sends him a WhatsApp confirming he too is clean.

When Alice is around, he holds himself in check, pretending to abide by her rules. Through the summer and autumn, the frequency of her home visits to Carrick Grange reduce. They are fleeting, two, three days at most. She gives only snippets, highlights of her pandemic emergency work for Ms Sturgeon but he learns she is now in Stirling, not Edinburgh under group lockdown and may not be able to visit until the pandemic recedes. Malcolm must self-isolate, she warns him, keep himself safe. He must not worry about her. In group lockdown with her team, each person is tested daily for the virus, monitored rigorously for symptoms of illness.

It is these wide-spectrum screening blood tests which had in due course detected the return of Alice's cancer in late November 2020.

The lowest point in Malcolm's marital life, since his forced retirement occurs in early October. Alice returns, unannounced, to find him in a drunken stupor wearing only a sports top, masturbating to an old Enrico Ferranti porn video surrounded by the debris of many weeks of microwaves meals containers, empty crisp and peanut bags and dozens of empty gin, wine and beer bottles. Their altercation escalates. In her frustration Alice attacks him her childhood riding crop, inflicting vicious weals on his backside and legs. One blow, inflicted while he was scrabbling away on his hands and knees, slashes through the flesh just below his right calf muscle causing tendon damage.

When he surfaces hours later, he is in bed, still semi-naked. There is a makeshift bandage on his leg and ointment on the other whip marks. During the remainder of her visit, they avoid each in stony silence.

Two days after his beating by Alice, Malcolm is alone, his wife back in Stirling, he assumes. He was guilty as charged, again caught red-handed and does not hold a grudge against her knowing he was a *very naughty boy*. He thinks of seeking medical help but cannot devise a plausible excuse for his injuries.

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The pain recedes and his wounds heal but he is suffering from pains in the toes of his right foot. Searching online, he learns rose hip syrup is a cure for gout and related muscle spasm conditions. He orders it with Alice's code and this treatment works, after a fashion, in conjunction with gym work, foot rotating, stretching and toe wiggling exercises found online.

A week after the beating in the immediate moments after Sally's evening WhatsApp message, he is filled with an overpowering desire to see her. She no longer accepts video calls and so, only slightly tipsy, he enters the GPS coordinates for her tower block, soars a drone to 300 metres into the darkness and flies out on autopilot to visit her. On flashing his code to her bedroom, she peers out from behind partially closed curtains, waves and sends a further WhatsApp wishing him a restful night's sleep and three kissing lips emojis. Seconds after he presses the Home key to initiate the automated return flight, communication fails. He revisits the Drone iPad keyboard to work out what he did wrong. After a ten-minute wait, he concludes his drone is lost and is filled with the terror of an impending visit from a CBSI team. He suspends all drone flights for two weeks.

End Game

Parallel lives

In TDW Malcolm learns there is a network of several thousand PPCs (Protected Perimeter Communities) dotted around the UK, areas akin to the BMZ (Bearsden and Milngavie Zone). He also learns these PPCs are where those in control of the levers of government and business live with their families, a number estimated to be around 4% of the population.

For these residents, most goods including fresh fruit and vegetables, raw meat, alcohol, scarce medications, luxury toiletries and such like are available. For Malcolm inside the BMZ these are delivered from the Glasgow CFH (Consolidated Food Hub). Online, any BMZ resident with the right online access codes can order most items online, almost as if living in the era BTV (Before the Virus).

In TDW, Malcolm has viewed poor quality amateur videos from high-level drones which have tracked delivery vans the Glasgow CFH and knows it is located at the St Rollox Business Park, in Springburn, just under five miles away, beyond the range of his drones. From TDW sources, he knows ordering and delivery requests are cross-checked with postcode and NHS registration number in addition these special codes. This accords with his experience; Malcolm always uses Alice's code; if he uses his code, some items requested, particularly the more expensive French wines become 'unavailable'.

Following this thread in TDW, he learns CFH websites guarantee every item is packed by robots under GVFC (Guaranteed Virus Free Conditions), each item individually wrapped in disinfectant-coated virus-resistant cling-film, then sprayed with a disinfectant. For privacy, each combined order is packed in anonymous cardboard boxes which are also shrink-wrapped with the same film then sprayed. Thankfully, like the cardboard boxes this special film is organic, from potato extract, biodegradable, confirmed by TDW as true, *omnino est verum*.

Deliveries to Carrick Grange residents are on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 11.00, from a special truck with a roll-back roof. From inside his bio-sealed and security reinforced cabin the driver operates a grab and drop claw. The items are lowered expertly just inside entry gate where Malcolm supervises in full PPE, watching as the items are lowered into weatherproof container. He checks each item from an electronic list emailed by the driver then issues sign off voucher in return, all from his Home security iPad. Using his golf buggy, he delivers these packages to each individual home decanting them into smaller weatherproof storage boxes outside each residence. Thursdays are his days for using the buggy to collect his community's rubbish bins and move the bins out into

End Game

approach roadway, his only weekly excursions outside the perimeter. This private service which he arranged, includes a 'full sanitisation' of the bins after emptying. These acts of neighbourly service are highlights of his week, boosting his frail self-image.

Amazon and eBay dominate the non-food and drink online delivery providers. For Carrick Grange residents, these online orders are delivered first to the St Rollox CFH for incorporation into the food and drinks deliveries. These rivals share the same fleet of licenced delivery vehicles operated by Google Driverless Deliveries (GDD) as Google's share of the logistics carve up agreed with BGA and SGA mandarins In TDW he learns the logistics process chain is entirely managed by robots with minimal human intervention, further echoes of George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave new World*.

On his high-level drone flights, Malcolm has seen these GDD vans which are a dull orange-brown colour and have special fluorescent pale green licence plates. For those in apartments like Sally and others living outside PPCs (Protected Perimeter Communities), the final stage of CFH and GDD deliveries are by heavy lift drones supplying to windows and balconies or use stairclimbing robots complete the final stage of the automated delivery. Larger items are placed in electronically secured drop-boxes cabinets located near apartment block entrances although not all areas are permitted larger items.

Deliveries to Carrick Grange from other freelance online retailers, those operating at the darker margins, are usually problematic. They almost always arrive unannounced, at random times, signalled by a call from the security gate. This requires Malcolm to race to tog up in his PPE and the trundle down on the buggy to negotiate with the drivers, if they have not already given up and dumped the items outside in the roadway or tossed them over the fence. Malcolm treats all such packages, even his own, with great circumspection, spraying and isolating them repeatedly for at least three days before transferring to the addressees, operating under a regime devised by Alice which she terms *nempe adsiduaque vigilantia* (constant vigilance).

According to TDW, the remaining 96% of the population living outside PPCs receive ready meals from central kitchens. This approach, it is claimed, has become necessary on grounds of Food Resource Efficiency (FRE). Online menus provided a wide choice and it is claimed these meals are designed and prepared under the supervision of celebrity chefs.

In Malcolm's TDW forums it is claimed such meals are doctored with TUSTs (Tasteless Euphoric Suppressants), added to keep these communities calm, malleable, obedient and to reduce appetites. SGA propaganda asserts its SMA (Scottish Meals for All) initiative is reducing obesity and improving the underlying health of the population.

End Game

Panaceas

Occasionally, dependent of local CBSs (Community Behaviour Statistics), special seasons of TLTs (Time-Limited Treats) widely known as TiLTs. These special items are placed on limited offer for those who can afford them and may include malt whiskies and Cognacs, hard to source liquors, upmarket chocolates and other food delicacies.

By far the most popular TiLTs are specially commissioned blockbuster Netflix cartoon movies incorporating VRAs (Virtual Reality Actors). These digital clones are concocted by CGI (Computer Generated Imagery). Several of the most popular actors on this new genre of films are now dead, many to the virus. Others, believed to be alive, have been persuaded to silence or have spoken in support of this new approach for a fee, endorsing the films with promotional trailers. Some say these the 'real actors' in these promos are also CGI clones, a Catch-22 conundrum.

Competition between rival CGI film makers is generating a tsunami of digital films of every kind, enterprises enabled and encouraged by an IGE (International Governmental Edict) removing copyright by asserting "*the dead must serve the living*".

As a development of IGE rules, the principal has been extended to many areas of society, particularly online where clones of every hue abound, sparking dire warnings in TDW of ineffective fake medications invading the NHS supply chain.

For Malcolm, this welter of information about the world beyond the perimeter of Carrick Grange is overwhelming. As a man who craves certainty, he finds it hard to judge the truth of the swirling information and disinformation to be found in TDW and day on day, the tension builds, relieved only by alcohol, his escape.

In parallel, the authorities have 'permissioned' Royal Mail to support a thriving grey market which supplies designer tobacco and vaping products from which government taxes are levied as part of the Royal Mail delivery charge. According to TDW, although it is known cannabis is also traded by this delivery channel the authorities have, so far, decided to ignore this provided these bespoke traders stay clear of other illicit drugs such as heroin and cocaine products and Chinese medications (hallucinogens and the like). To enforce this, Royal mail are subjected to regular snap inspections by CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate) teams who impose finds and confiscate contraband items. Despite the risks, Royal Mail persist with on-foot-by-van deliveries, their operatives clad in top-rated PPE and highly incentivised by improved bonuses, enhanced pensions the issue of silver bio-bracelets. In the rougher communities they serve, their Posties enjoy 'hero status' which protects them from muggings.

End Game

Only vehicles with approved registrations are permitted on any road. Un-Registered Vehicles (URVs) are subject to STOP (Stop and Search Procedures). Punishment for unauthorised travel is by steeply escalating fine and public naming and shaming. Persistent offenders are sent to ADARC (Arran Detention and Rehabilitation Centre) for 'healing and re-orientation', all part of a wide-ranging batch of inter-related legislation drafted by Alice and her team.

Alice's Nissan Leaf is still registered but only when driving alone and for journeys within the GGC (Greater Glasgow Conurbation), roughly a twenty-mile radius centred on George Square. The Nissan has not left Carrick Grange since late October 2020 when Alice's cancer flared again and her new regime of chemo began, reducing her immune system and making her extra vulnerable to the virus. Malcolm has a Range Rover and a vintage Maserati but no longer possesses a licence to drive because his eyes have been affected by diabetes.

Conventional vehicles must apply for a LTPF (Licence to Purchase Fuel) voucher. Petrol and Diesel fuel is, allegedly, in short supply. In the UK sector, only gas and offshore windfarms are being maintained. The entire network of UK North Sea oil rigs was shut down in September 2020 as part of an agreement with the USA and OPEC. Norway has become the main supplier of oil and gas to Britain, a deal negotiated by Nicola Sturgeon.

Fuel including recycled biofuel from cooking oil is severely rationed. Since the *Morph B* surge, the LTPF control system has been gradually extended to other goods and services. Everyone is being encouraged to cut down on electricity and gas usage and there are rumours these essentials are soon to be added to LTPF system. Traffic movements are monitored by roadside cameras and drones. Noisy high-speed motorcycles and near silent, souped-up e-bikes like Malcolm's are still around in decreasing number, both methods of two-wheeled transport used mainly for drugs deliveries, according to TDW.

End Game

Defection

Globally, the world of business and commerce has adjusted, operating mainly online in a reduced, patchy fashion. The current buzz-phrase/acronym is #IOO, pronounced Hashtag-Aye-Ooooo, and delivered in a cheery sing-song manner by officialdom. After a minor spat, Facebook and #IOO resolve to work, with co-investment seen as the win-win solution. Some analysts see this as a sell-out, others as stroke of genius, boosting the profile of the emerging Scottish online brand.

The #IOO (Innovative Online Opportunity) methodology was originated by the Scottish entrepreneur Sir Tom Hunter in October 2020. It is welcomed effusively by First Minister Ms Nicola Sturgeon who is visibly weary from the continuous limelight of making public broadcasts. Desperate to boost her flagging popularity with *the longsuffering people of Scotland*, Ms Sturgeon seizes her opportunity and, as the Hashtag-Aye-Ooooo campaign takes hold, she surges to global fame as *Scotland's #IOO's global ambassador*.

To the shock of her party, in early December 2020, Ms Sturgeon steps back from her duties as First Minister and relocates to Oslo as the SGA's BRA (Business Regeneration Facilitator). It is extensively rumoured she has the ear of the NGA (Norway Government Authority) with privileged access to Norway's vast NGEF (Norway Green Energy Fund). Sturgeon and others claim the NGEF has garnered the sort of wealth Scotland should have retained under the *It's Scotland's Oil* campaign of decades earlier.

Her departure plunges the SNP in turmoil. Some, those still loyal to Sturgeon, claim she has earned this respite from the public eye, asserting she will return ATV to reclaim her authority. Others see her as a traitor. In the vacuum, the youthful and wholesome Kate Forbes is shooed in as Scotland's IFM (Interim First Minister), heading off rumbles of a bid from the previous incumbent Alex Salmon.

End Game

TWIRL®

In Scotland, under #IOO, seeded by Norwegian money, many home-businesses focus on the production of luxury items of all kinds; organic hand-made soaps and shampoos, organic food supplements modelled on *Arran Aromatics* and a resurgent version of the *Hawick Cashmere* and *Harris Tweed* industries. "Bespoke" has become a new buzzword worldwide.

From Oslo, Sturgeon strikes a #IOO deal with Hewlett Packard and Microsoft and a new website called TWIRL® is launched by Facebook. Under this collaboration, new high-end artisanal clothing goods are handcrafted with exact precision using personal data captured from a short TWIRL® video of the customer wearing a special pale blue skin-hugging body suit ordered online for a registration fee of £500. As an alternative, naked TWIRL® videos may be submitted for lesser fee of £200.

TWIRL® video clips must be submitted via an ultra-secure web portal to prevent abuse by hackers. TWIRL® video images are converted to precision 3-D computer models of each customer whose data points are used to instruct a new breed of affordable weaving and sewing machines supplied by Agilent Technologies (co-owned by Hewlett-Packard) This revolutionary equipment uses DDCT® (Direct Digital Control Technology), an product of RTA (Robot Technology Acceleration) which provides the simultaneous control thousands of micro-weaving and micro-sewing heads to 'hand-craft' unique personalised versions of any item in minutes in the artisan's garage or workshop directly from the boles of yarn and spools of thread. For suitable candidates who must be domiciled in Scotland, lifetime loans are made available through the NGEF (Norway Green Energy Fund).

This is accepted as a further bonus of the acceleration of technology which has been sparked by the pandemic and widely trumpeted by Ms Sturgeon from her Oslo HQ. Every item of this new equipment is leased, licensed, location tagged, monitored and supported continuously from a web-centre in Austin, Texas, USA. If abused or interfered with, these domestic robots are shut down, rendered useless, to prevent cloning.

Scottish design creativity is released and CGI version of Ms Sturgeon makes a documentary lauding the Scottish Enlightenment in which she appears alongside CGI versions of the main characters of the period talking about the need for freedom and innovation to go hand in hand worldwide. This becomes a global hit and an ongoing series is created as a marketing tool to showcase #IOO producers and their products.

End Game

Subversive online comedians led by a CGI version Janey Godley launch a parallel series which is promoted by You Tube. All publicity is good publicity.

Week after week, new bespoke designs come to market created under the #IOO initiative. The most popular are lingerie, shoes, furniture and furnishings, pet clothing and toys of all kinds, all created by enhanced DDCT[©] software and new robot machines. For overseas customers who can afford luxury goods which receive priority shipping from a rejuvenated #RBSPFHPIA (Hashtag Rabbie Burns of Scotland Freight Hub at Prestwick International Airport). This re-branding proves to be a tongue-twister too far and soon becomes #RabbieBurns.

Unauthorised online retailers offer counterfeit, lower-cost copies of the originals to Jo Public with illicit #IOO and TWIRL[©] labels for 'private delivery', usually by unauthorised couriers. The final link in the delivery chain usually one or more children wearing a balaclavas over a face masks, even though children are no longer a low risk group under the *Morph A and B* strains circulating alongside the original Covid-19 virus now known to be reOinfecting at a higher R number.

The irony is that these goods are truly hand-crafted, sadly in the main by children working in sweatshops based in India and the Far East. Those claiming to be British made are mostly from Burnley and Bolton, made by second and third generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, garments which are inferior, sold at a heavy discount.

For Christmas 2020, Facebook and TWIRL[©] launch a new 'must have' item called a RVM (Room View Mural). This product is licensed under a GCP[©] (Global Concept Patent) held by jointly by Google and Microsoft. Microsoft have increased their Facebook holdings following the retreat of Mark Zuckerberg into isolation in New Zealand following the recovery of his wife from *Morph B* still circulating alongside the emerging *Morph C* virus.

Within days of the RMV concept launch, droves of new #IOO traders enter this market. RVMs are high tech fabric coverings with embedded LCDs, made-to-measure for windows and walls and displaying fixed 3-D images or ever-changing views of local beauty spots in Scotland and Britain. Copyright of all views are held jointly by Google and Microsoft. The RMV craze causes prices to surge and in an expansion deal selected non-Scottish #IOO traders can join the TWIRL[©] 'family', provided they satisfy the manufactured-at-home-artisan criteria and pay the hefty registration fee.

During the second week from launch, these MRVs include international versions depicting favourite locations in France, Italy, Spain and further afield. The Swiss Governmental Authority refuse permission on privacy grounds. This is quickly followed by personalised versions created from the buyers' holiday videos. These must be verified, edited if required and licensed by Google and Microsoft. Perhaps surprisingly, for the British customer base the best sellers are the busy street views of Buchanan Street, Princes

End Game

Street and Rose Street, T-in-the-Park and other concerts, the Shambles in York and the Ramblas in Barcelona, seaside beaches, anything with crowds of people milling around the world as it was, BTV.

Malcolm is tempted to buy himself a bespoke RVM (Room View Mural). Using his drone at 300 metres above his garden, he creates a slow-moving panorama of the West of Scotland, starting from due North, gyrating clockwise to take in the snow-capped Arrochar Alps, Loch Lomond and its Islands against a backdrop of Ben Lomond and onwards to complete a 360 degree gyration. At the point of submission, he changes his mind, realising this clip would, subject to analysis, be sure to reveal his location and that the image must have been captured using an unlicensed drone.

End Game

Beware!

Malcolm is aware the SDF (Scottish Digital Forum) cooperates with MI5 and GCHQ to run a warning site called BEWARE! It is on the periphery of TDW, to warn potential visitors the perils of entering. BEWARE! Is easy to discover, easy to enter, Malcom knows it is a phising site. Intrigued, he has circled it for months and now takes a risk, trusting his encrypted firewall will protect him.

As expected, BEWARE! explains the SDF is actively monitoring Internet traffic in TDW and will severely punish anyone caught using it. Visitors are invited to read the information provided then desist from visiting the site again. Only one visit to BEWARE! Per person is allowed. The central thrust of this protective action is to detect and correct those who are:

Fomenting community unrest by disseminating fake news

Encouraging sedition

Promoting child pornography and abuse of any kind

The SDF site warns miscreants found on the in TDW will be labelled CTTs (Community Traitors and Terrorists) stressing TDW users are persons subject to Judge-only video trials, events which are widely publicised on the SDF on TV and You Tube channels. Penalties are severe, including confiscation of bank accounts, property, assets and, for persistent offenders, imprisonment at ADARC (Arran Detention and Rehabilitation Centre).

BEWARE! encourages whistle-blowers who are rewarded and lauded as CLHs (Community Local Heroes) rewarded with TiLT vouchers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these informers are often family members, mostly disgruntles teenage girls seeking a brief limelight of glory by informing on parents and siblings.

In a downloadable PDF from BEWARE! emphasises visitors risk exposure to criminals, contraband traders and crazies who inhabit TDW in droves. The SDF (Scottish Digital Forum and GCHQ are jointly monitoring Bitcoin and other crypto currency exchange sites to block purchases and suffocate these traders.

The blatant criminals include those trading in banned drugs, cloned medications and weapons, pistols, rifles, sub-machine guns and other weapons up to hand-held rocket launchers. Heavy lifting and weaponised drones are a niche market.

End Game

The crazies, modern-day snake oil salesmen, offer miracle prophylactic potions and super-vitamins to protect against the virus, usually based on animal hormones of urine extracts - modern day snake oil salesmen. Extracts claimed to be derived from bat kidneys, hump-backed whale livers and exotic plant extracts abound. crushed snails including shell grit is the latest wonder prophylactic cum cure from France.

End Game

Revealed

Within a few weeks of sobriety, TDW has become Malcolm Fraser-Scott's new reality. His only contact with the real world is his WhatsApp messages from Sally. As the weeks go by, his erections are firmer, and, supported by Viagra, longer lasting.

In recovery from his self-pleasuring sessions, Malcolm is bold, free ranging, dipping into TDW dipping into forums he previously avoided. What he learns seems unlikely. He is tempted to fly out a drone to check on what is being reported, what is happening so near to him. The night image of the hellish industrial plant will not be dispelled. He decides he must know, must be certain, if what is being claimed can exist. Can this be true, *omnino est verum?*

It is the 18th of January 2021, a Monday.

In the main part of his attic, a games room floored and fitted out with a billiard and darts room by Enrico Ferrari, Malcolm checks over his two remaining Israeli designed drones. He keeps his best drone in reserve and flies off his second-best aircraft. With the rear dormer windows locked in the open position, he uses the billiard table as a take-off and landing pad. For the first time in full daylight, Malcolm flies a drone beyond the Carrick Grange perimeter. Immediately outside his window, the trees where the rookery which bounds the perimeter fence, he flies it vertically to 400 metres, out of sight and heads to Douglas Muir Quarry, an area he knows well, having raced passed it on his e-bike, heading to Veronique Heatley's cottage, place and where he has spent many hours in SWT planning meetings, bored, staring out from her window at The Whangie and the moor where his skylarks nest.

Above the DMRTF (Douglas Muir Reception and Treatment Facility) he hovers ages, making video clips and snapshots of the morgue wagons arriving, the sealed body bags being thrown onto the conveyor belt before slipping down into the macerators and then onward to the series of brightly coloured lagoons which comprise the chemical treatment process to reduce the bodies to a bio-safe slurry.

As he watches on his Drone iPad screen, his mind reels. It is true! The heartless, soulless disposal of corpses is now an industrialised process. It is happening on his doorstep. In his mind this confirms everything he has read in TDW. Alice must have known about this, perhaps she had drafted the emergency legislation, the enabling orders. Had he been Scotland's Chief Constable, he would have been implicated, obliged to accede to this demand.

End Game

Further drone clandestine drone flights confirm other TDW reports; direct street policing on foot or by driverless Google camera vehicles is history. Drone surveillance is the new approach with drone hubs covering each community. The Area Drone Hub (ADH) for the Bearsden and Milngavie Zone (BMZ) is located nearby at Canniesburn Park, run by a team of service technicians and drone pilots working 24/7. This is within easy reach of his drones but he only watches from on high, well above the surveillance drones he must avoid. From his observations, he concludes their primary task is to monitor and protect the perimeter of the BMZ, his own PPC (Protected Perimeter Community). There are very few overflights within the BMZ as it is clearly considered safe, at least during daylight hours. His mind dwells on this. In TDW it is reported that empty properties vacated by the dead without families are usually rented out to those from outwith the BMZ, key workers with sufficient status to be part of the elite. The BMZ is where those controlling the Glasgow nexus are now located, moving into empty properties vacated by the dead. Will the four empty properties in Carrick Grange be requisitioned, he wonders. What will these new people be like? Will they be home nudists?

Although shocked, Malcolm is excited this time he has clear images to prove the DMRTC exists. At last he has something important to contribute, to back up his views, to ensure that he will be heeded. He believes his images will become viral in TDW. He is working himself up to making his revelation but is held in check fearing if he reveals them, by some clever detective work, the SDF (Scottish Digital Forum) will use them to find him and send him to trace him as the source and send a CBSI team to arrest him. If this happens, Malcolm is certain he will surely receive the ultimate punishment and be sent to ADARC (Arran Detention and Rehabilitation Centre) where the death rate is virus is culling at a rate approaching a thousand per month, according to sources on TDW. Not even Alice, were she at the height of her powers would be able to rescue him.

While he waits for the exactly right moment, to protect himself, he stores his encrypted evidence to his Google Drive cloud storage site then wipes them from Drone iPad and destroys the drone, burning it in a garden rubbish fire to corrupt the dreaded on-board recording chip.

End Game

The T* Eagles

During the last week of January, he stumbles across a members-only chat room called "T*Eagles". Staring at this tag, he realises an asterisk on his keyboard is an upper case '8' and retypes the tag as "T8Eagles". Intrigued this might relate to his cohort from Tulliallan, he set himself the challenge of teasing out a password, thinking back to those long-ago days.

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In September 1977, Malcolm's exclusive graduate entry cohort give themselves the nickname of "The Eagles", partly after the eponymous rock group but mainly because of Dr Adriana (Riana) Eagleton from Pennsylvania. During their first six-week module Malcolm's elite group is tutored by the American professor on the topic: *Profiling the modern criminal mind*.

A married woman in her early thirties, Riana Eagleton is a vamp who dresses in skimpy, clinging, plunging dresses or mini-skirts and tight tee shirts, no bras, no visible panty line hence no knickers. A decade older than her students, she laces her lectures and workshops with ripe come-hither innuendo. For her students, all male, the main guessing game at each lecture is the colour of her thong to be glimpsed as she folds and unfolds her legs while sitting pertly on a desk, regaling them.

Her ploy works. One by one, each of the young men make a play for her. All are gently let down gently except Jonathon (Jonno) Moston who claims to have bedded her on three occasions over the final week of the short course. Compared to other Eagles, he is less attractive, more slightly built with an awkward face and a prominent aquiline nose 'Persistence' is the key, he claims. No woman can resist repeated offers. As proof of his conquest he reveals Dr Eagleton had a tiny Bald Eagle tattoo on her inner left thigh and a Grey Wolf head on her right.

By the time Moston make his claims, their American professor had left, flying back to her main job at the top-rated Penn State University. He is buffeted by questions and derided at first but he holds to his story, his sharp tongue aggressively seeing off criticism. Eventually his story is accepted, *omnino est verum*.

Through the remainder of their course, Jonno Moston becomes their natural leader, befitting a Fettes boy with a Double First from Cambridge University. What Moston keeps secret was his humble roots. His father had been miner who got lucky on the football pools. Keeping his winnings anonymous, Alec Moston uses the record pay-out to

End Game

relocate his family to the anonymity of a smallholding in rural Perth, away from his humble Ayrshire roots and grasping relatives. As Jonno grows up and makes his way in the world, his father slowly descends into alcoholism, ending his days in debt to the local bookies and solving the problem with a shotgun, one barrel for dog, Hoondie one for his wife, Patricia and two for himself.

During these months at Tulliallan other salacious details of Jonno's conquests are whispered, mostly invented by his Jimmy Goldie who claims he knows Jonno's other secret conquests, revealing Moston always target's married women and warns everyone on the course should take care not to let him near their wives. Malcolm, who is travelling back to Mel in Glasgow at every opportunity, does not pick up on this hint. Jonno's continuing conquests some true, some invented by Jimmy, become the stuff of legend, to be retold with embellishments at subsequent bi-annual reunions still to come in the years ahead, by which time they had huddled under the banner of the T8Eagles.

It seems Jonno's claims of conquest may have been true. On graduating from Tulliallan, he resigns from Strathclyde Police and emigrates to the USA to join the FBI, later becoming a criminal profiler based in Philadelphia.

The T8Eagles reunions continued with decreasing numbers until 1988 when they plan a special ten-year celebration to be held at the Gleneagles Hotel. This is the final failure with a raft of last-minute cancellations due to *diary and domestic pressures*. Malcolm and Jimmy Goldie had been left to foot the bill for the unused rooms and meals. Although he had agreed to attend, Jonno Moston also cancels, perhaps with the best excuse, revealing he has booked a romantic weekend in the Bahamas with his new wife, Riana, recently divorced from her previous husband. After this last-minute telex, Jonno drops below their radar.

On discovering the T*Eagles group in TDW, it takes Malcolm over a week of puzzling and pitching alternatives before he finds the twenty-five-character passcode comprising the initial letters of the surnames of the nineteen Eagles who had graduated in the summer of 1978 preceded by 'BEGW' after Riana's tattoos. Malcolm is inordinately pleased they have incorporated both characters of his double-barrelled name complete with hyphen.

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On his first visit through the portal, wearing a mask and using a voice-changer like the others in the shadowy video chat room, he is welcomed but senses they are wary, holding back. He is grilled vigorously until they are satisfied he is indeed a 1978 graduate from the Tulliallan Eagles cohort. In accordance with their established protocol, he is not asked his name and does not volunteer it. The remnant group comprises fourteen, all with strange nicknames. When asked, randomly, Malcolm choses Rubus, Latin for Bramble, Sally's favourite soft fruit.

End Game

On Google and in TDW he searches for traces of the original cohort of T8Eagles. Information is sparse, much redacted. Searching for Jonno, Malcolm discovers Moston's records had been wiped. According to the web, Moston had never existed. To Malcolm this indicates Jonathon Moston has fallen foul of the FBI just as he has fallen foul of Strathclyde Police. Although Malcolm still has Google profile, its much diminished after his forced resignation, carefully adjusted by Alice on LinkedIn, a website withdrawn by the SDF under lockdown rules because of its propensity to raid its clients' Contacts profiles and sell the information to online retailers. now defunct.

At last, after years of being alone in a desert of sorts, in the T*Eagles chat room, Malcolm feels 'at home', safe with his own kind, familiars and equals, of a sort. Upfront, he explains he explains he is 'constrained by domestic and personal circumstances' and must remain a 'listening only' member, unable to contribute directly to their 'projects'. This is accepted without demur. He wonders constantly if they have guessed who he is and if they share gossip about 'Rubus' when he is not with him. Perhaps even the very little he has revealed will allow them to identify Alice leading them to him.

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Each time he is admitted to an ongoing meeting, he senses a reserve but after a while the atmosphere relaxes and he is accepted as Rubus, the quiet man and allowed to listen without contributing. The images of the death plant at Douglas Muir he has stored in the cloud on G-Drive tug at his mind and he wants to astound them with what he has discovered, share the images as proof. He holds back, waiting for the right moment. When the chat room is empty, Malcolm is free to read their posts and information bulletins, most of which he initially classifies 'speculation'. However, by cross-checking with other his sources in TDW and re-visiting public service podcasts to read between the lines, he gradually realises the T*Eagles are very well informed and concludes some might be disgruntled members of ICE (the Inner Circle Elite).

In his early weeks in the T*Eagles meetings, Malcolm wants to raise the issue the CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate) but fears someone in the room might command of these teams. To clear his conscience, he logs his fears to a blog diary which he encrypts and sends to G-Drive, immediately wiping it from his encrypted laptop reserved only for TDW. This act has a purging has a cathartic effect and although he has never been religious, he imagines this is the power of the Confessional.

Through February he rehearses his various speeches in the same way, tapping them out, editing, polishing and then sending them to G-Drive before cleansing his laptop. His time will come and he will be ready. He must be free of Alice first, he tells himself. Examining his motives, he realises he has only complaints and has no grand master plan for salvation to offer. All he really has are his drone flight video clips and his deductions from them.

End Game

In early March, while in the T*Eagles chat room he is certain he recognises Jonno Moston but then loses him. It is common for speakers to change a voice selection mid-sentence. On another occasion he senses Jimmy Goldie is present; fearful he is losing his mind, he checks out at once, vowing never to re-visit but is back in the room the next day having convinced himself it was a simple mistake caused by overtiredness. Malcolm needs these sessions in TDW, clinging to the easy camaraderie like a drowning man to the handhold of a lifeboat in a storm. Inside the T*Eagles chat room he is safe.

Through March, his foreboding grows; he believes the T*Eagles are in the brink of action. He has no details and believes he has been excluded from these discussions. He thinks they may be ready to try to reset the agenda on TFL rules. Perhaps the issue is funding, or rather lack of it to holding them back. He is now picking up nuances, suggesting they have decided to support the RTV (Release the Virus) movement, which would set *Morph C* loose and accept the consequences as a trade-off for a return to freedom and the restoration of civil liberties. The basis of this argument, in crude terms, is that the *Covid* pandemic has run its course and has culled the weak and aged in society leaving the remainder better able to build herd immunity if exposed. *Lives versus Livelihoods* emerging again as a potent desire for the lucky ones who have survived, so far.

Malcolm knows RTV is a view Alice would never support and is unsure what he will do if they decide on a full-blown vote. If he votes against them, he believes he they will change the entry passcode to exclude him and he will be adrift again, left to drown. He is also unsure about Sally's views on RTV. In Britain, Eurasians are in highly vulnerable category with a huge death rate approaching 90%. In many TDW forums people of mixed race are despised and feared. Other groups see it as a cleansing, a return to a pre-WW2 Britain a concept Malcolm thinks would be a good thing but is impossible to achieve. The clock can never be turned back.

His quandary churns endlessly. Perhaps when Alice is gone he might be willing to join the T*Eagles wholeheartedly and help them financially. Or, instead, if Sally agrees to relocated to Carrick Grange, he will cut his ties to the T*Eagles, wait out TFL with her, then, ATV (After the Virus), fully inoculated and bio-safe, they will move to New Zealand which has remained almost virus free throughout. Perhaps he might be allowed to settle as an incoming investor, maybe in far north of North Island where the weather is milder. There he would live quietly with Sally, build up his birding list, enjoy their last few decades together in safety and harmony.

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A Brave New Normal

With his drone flight evidence and extensive reading in TDW, Malcolm sees the role of the SDF in suppressing debate as a fatal flaw, shutting out keen minds and wise council from people like him and the other T*Eagles. At times, sometimes for days on end, he has burned with a desire to make his views known but knows the SGA will not listen, having made him a pariah because of his trivial offence of upskirting.

Once again he veers away from this hurt and refocuses, and slaloms across to focus on the response of the military establishment.

At one stage he had thought of approaching the CMA (Combined Military Authority) but soon realised they were no longer a true force for reason. In the new normal, the CMA are mainly in the background, providing training and weaponised snatch squads for suspected criminals and terror groups. During the *Morph A* surge in the early autumn of 2020, the military rose to the ascendancy and deploying their reserves gung-ho using inadequate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), items purchased directly by the MOD, manufactured in Turkey, despite the earlier failures of the same supplier a few months earlier with items delivered to the NHS. This bureaucratic cock-up resulted in widespread deaths which raged through all ranks. Malcolm concludes the CMA is no longer a vital strategic force, diminished in the same manner as Police Scotland and its hierarchy with strong men like Jimmy Goldie and his like all gone.

Whenever he considers the CMA, Malcolm's thoughts swing again to Isa Graham's son Kenny. He wonders if he is now part of the CMA's slurry tanker convoys bullying other vehicles off the roads. Malcolm's knowledge of Kenny comes from a few summers when the boy was in his late teens, unemployed. A willing though not very bright lad, Kenny had provided grunt labour in the garden. For Malcolm, Kenny's redeeming feature was his clean-living approach, playing as an energetic mid-fielder for Drumchapel Amateurs, the teenager is a non-smoker, keeping himself super-fit. Kenny always smells clean, fresh with a hint of floral talcum powder, reminding Malcolm of Melany.

Malcolm makes a special effort with the boy, takes time to teach him about birds, taking time to explain repeatedly the differences between the finches and tits, the jackdaws and the rooks, and the raptors, as his father Archie had done with him when he was a child.

In the late autumn, as tasks in the garden wind down, they build a nest box for the elusive tawny owl and choose a secure site, following all the recommendations in Malcolm's RSPB magazine. All through the winter the youth comes once a week to check and Malcolm gives

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him £5 as pocket money. They sit huddled together in the treehouse under a travel rug, shoulder to shoulder, thigh to thigh, sharing wine gums, hardly talking. Malcom rests his hand on Kenny's knee and squeezes softly relishing the contact. He is tempted to touch Kenny intimately but resists.

They do not get tawny owls; instead, they get the bonus of a barn owl pair. Now Kenny comes every day and they sit for hours in the treehouse. Kenny is fascinated, Malcolm is aroused but disciplined. Even though Kenny is sixteen and legal, he is fresh faced, unshaven which makes him seem even more like Melany.

Malcolm gives Kenny a pair of expensive Carl Zeiss binoculars for his seventeenth birthday and shows him how to adjust them, standing behind him, the tall, slim youth holding the glasses while Malcolm adjusts the precision focus. They stand like this for much longer than necessary. Fully aroused for the first time in years, Malcolm presses himself into the boy's rear and murmurs very quietly, *Happy Birthday, Kenny Graham. You are a very, very nice young man.* Kenny does not object to this close attention.

When it becomes dark, the boy leaves on his BMX and Malcolm is fearful he might tell his mother Isa and that trouble might ensue. When Kenny comes back the following day, Malcolm is ecstatic. Helping Kenny adjust the complicated focus on the binoculars becomes part of their daily routine. Malcolm gives the boy £25 pocket money twice a week, on one occasion an extra £80 to buy new football boot on another occasion £200 towards a new mountain bike Kenny is saving for.

The barn owls hatch their eggs, feed their chicks diligently. Kenny borrows an air rifle and brings dead rabbits. The chicks thrive and fledge and are driven off by the parents to fend for themselves. The adults mate again and raise a second brood, producing nine owlets in total.

Kenny and Malcolm have been a birdwatching partnership every day for weeks during which Malcom has gently held him close from behind, part of their established routine. Kenny seems oblivious.

From this point in their daily routine, their encounters are normal. They eat wine gums and chat about their barn owls and Malcolm teaches Kenny to listen for bird song as a means of identification. Kenny is awkward, naive, attentive and deferential. He smiles readily and giggles at Malcolm's puns though he might not fully understand them. He wants to please. Malcom finds this reaction intriguing and frustrating in equal measure and when holding the boy from behind is constantly tempted to check if Kenny is aroused by his actions but continues to wait and hope Kenny will respond when he is ready.

When the last owlet flies off, the parents desert the nesting box. They shake hands to a job well done. Kenny does not return and Malcolm is alone, devastated and at first

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resentful but this fades as Melany and Kenny merge into the same person and his night dream encounters with Kenny are recalled in a different and most enjoyable light.

A few years on Isa reveals Kenny's second application to Police Scotland had failed. Malcolm, who endorsed both forms suspects his signature may have caused the young man to be rejected but soon convinces himself it is Kenny's lack of grey matter is the real reason. This information is gleaned from listening to Isa and Alice talking, Malcolm on the fringes, behind a door. Alice and Isa whisper secrets which Malcolm is eager to share.

Over time he learns Kenny shrugs off these disappointments. Unexpectedly, Kenny, who had never mentioned girls in his life, is married, with a child on the way, and has a job as a barrow boy delivering Irn Bru for AG Barr. At Alice's suggestion, Malcolm sponsors Kenny through an HGV course. He must first pass his driving test, which takes five attempts and he needs three rounds of HGV tuition but eventually passes. This elevates the young father to driver cum salesman status driving for AG Barr.

In the summer of 2018 BTV, Malcolm learns from Alice Kenny is enrolled part-time as an in The Terries, now TAR (The Army Reserve) where his HGV licence allows him to drive monster vehicles including tank-transporters and enormous recovery vehicles. Later updates inform of his rise to Lance-Corporal and Isa produces a photograph of a very smart and smiling young man in uniform.

During the first lock-down, contact with Isa stops. Alice produces a schedule of tasks which she and Malcolm will share; she will cook/freeze in batches and he will clean, do the laundry and iron for himself.

Unrevealed to Malcolm, Alice is in weekly contact with Isa who borrows Kenny's mobile to exchange text messages Kenny's mobile. Alice is thus able to keep track of Kenny and Monica who now have three girls, Aliston, Aimee, and Alicia. Unknown to Malcolm, Alice has bequeathed £500,000 from her estate, to be used for the children's education, the remainder of her personal wealth to be divided equally between *The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust* and *Glasgow City Mission*.

As his day is about to begin Malcolm feels his familiar anxiety building. His heart is racing, he is sweaty and his throat is dry. Out there, beyond his perimeter fence, the new normal under TFL is disturbingly skewed from how policing and law enforcement should be implemented.

Like a grasshopper in a strong breeze, Malcolm's mind lands on another topic then, after a short pause, launches itself to land on another unsettling issue.

During *Morph C* repositioning, under the euphemism of NRE (National Reporting Efficiency), the BBC incorporates all other licenced British news agencies and is re-

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branded as the CBC (Combined Broadcasting Corporation). Alternative views are only available in TDW. The word 'efficiency' crops up in many official broadcasts as the various authorities juggle dwindling resources against growing needs constrained by a bankrupt Treasury.

CBC nightly television updates are short, ten-minute slots broadcast at 6.00 pm. From their lockdown bunkers by a weary, cynical but spruced up Dominic Cummings (49) as the EPM (Emergency Prime Minister) represents Westminster alongside a fresh-faced, artless Kate Forbes (31) as IFM (Interim First Minister) representing Holyrood. In these broadcasts the mismatched pair are dual screened side by side in a tag-team performance promulgating incessant variations of the same message:

Stay at Home; be of good cheer, TFL is working.

The British people are leading the way in harmonious living, a great example to all nations.

We are not alone in this fight; the entire World is affected.

An antidote vaccine is under final testing and is coming soon.

Regulations on easing TFL will be reviewed when more data is available.

Written questions must be submitted in advance. These are usually 'plants' for which slick answers are given. Others, impromptu questions from viewers, are answered excruciatingly fine detail, often self-contradictory, as if intended to confuse but with the object of running down the clock on the ten-minute time slot allotted for questions. Polling reveals the jaded public are no longer tuning in, preferring to watch a new comedy game show broadcast in parallel on You Tube from the Republic of Ireland, a show called *Limericks* which offers viewers the chance to win 1,000 Euros for the best final line emailed to the show.

Welsh and Northern Ireland voices are no longer heard. Shortly after the *Morph B* outbreak in October 2020, TAIA (Temporary All-Ireland Travel Arrangement), commonly mocked as the Ta-Ta Arrangement, was negotiated by Westminster and Dublin then imposed on Stormont. News of widespread strife in the Ulster's Seven Counties is suppressed, according to TDW. After the devastating effect of the ORP (Open Roads Policy) introduced by the Welsh Assembly after *Morph A* lockdown, the Westminster authorities re-imposed direct rule.

Hard facts on numbers of virus deaths are no longer reported by any governments. Estimates generally accepted for mainland Britain state there have been no more than 750,000 DVDs (Direct Virus Deaths) to December 2020. Estimates for CVDs (Collateral Virus Deaths) range from plus 550,000 if counting estimates of suicides, strokes, heart attacks, untreated cancers and rampant diabetes. On TDW, estimates suggest the true CVD figure is around 1.2 million taking account of suicides and lockdown abuse deaths.

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Global death figures are into the tens of millions. The WHO and other international support organisations have retreated from the devastation in Africa, leaving the Chinese and Russians to mop up and take control of the continent's fractured infrastructure and vast mineral and agricultural land banks. This new imperialism has occurred without protest from Western interests who have adopted a NIF (National Interests First) stance such as *Germany for Germans*, *The American Torch of Freedom* and *Where Britain Leads, Others Follow*.

From news forums in TDW it is clear crime of every kind is ramping up as people become more desperate and bolder, sensing the forces of law and order are breaking down, losing control. Deaths arising from criminal acts are being held in 'abeyance' until ATV (After the Virus) when normal policing and judicial processes will, it is stated, be restored.

Not reported by the CBC news is the huge effort being expended by HMG and the SGA to fight cyber-crime. From TDW, Malcolm has learned in Scotland this initiative is being spearheaded by the SDF (Scottish Digital Forum) supported by MI5 and GCHQ. Because of dwindling resources, Police Scotland has been side-lined, marginalised with their best people now working on secondment for the SDF, the new superpower at Holyrood.

An area of major concern is 'grave-robbing', removing wealth from the bank accounts of the deceased. This is a major issue for the SDF, under pressure from the 4% of the population most at risk, those living in PPCs (Protected Perimeter Communities) like the BMZ. To counter this, intent on reclaiming lost ground in the status war with the SDF, Police Scotland have introduced CNPs (Covert Night Patrols).

UK Offshored and International cyber-crime is being pursued by the BFO (British Foreign Office) supported by MI6 and GCHQ who have responsibility for protecting the entirety of mainland Britain and their home islands with strong focus on the Isle of Man and the Chanel Island banking centre where the richest are now hoarding their wealth.

As in other UK regions, in Scotland only "External Offences" are of interest to the SGA (Scottish Government Authority). These crimes include, sabotage, arson, theft of physical property and the catch-all category of "street offences". Police Scotland have mounted a huge effort to detect and arrest UCOs (Unidentified Curfew Offenders). UCOs are known to operate mainly under the cover of darkness and are countered by CNPs (Covert Night Patrols) who use dogs, night vision goggles and baton round guns to detect and down their quarry at a distance to ensure hygiene security for the police involved. This information is widely publicised by the CBC.

Anyone breaking the curfew is liable to be shot on sight. As a prophylactic measure those arrested are outed on television to name and shame them and their families. This is a measure which Malcolm now strongly supports. Since October 2020, he has personally emailed Inspector Robert Fernley at the PCP (Police Control Point) in Milngavie, logging

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seven attempts to breach the defences of the Carrick Grange enclave, As expected, Fernley has yet to respond. Malcolm is considering planting a swath of brambles around the external perimeter of their protective fence. He has also considered using batteries to electrify it but discarded the idea because of its likely effect on his wildlife garden family, particularly his visiting polecats.

"Internal Offences" such as domestic abuse, rape, incest and child abuse and consequential deaths may be reported to the DMT (Deferred Matters Tribunal). Alleged victims are directed to upload historic and contemporaneous evidence with the promise that all cases will be reviewed for future investigation, post-pandemic. In TDW it has been widely reported women are at least equal in number to men in initiating domestic violence, a fact which chimes with Malcolm's professional and personal experience.

According to the T*Eagles, the collection and disposal of the remains of victims of Internal Offences are logged and cross-referenced to the DMT (Deferred Matters Tribunal) database using the NID-PRS (National Insurance Database-Postcode Reference System) which seeks to track all official UK residents location and continuing existence. Anyone detected who is outside the NID-PRS system is arrested and imprisoned until repatriation can be arranged.

Other sources in TDW suggests there are over three hundred thousand such detainees living crowded conditions in SHUs (Secured Hotel Units) in run-down coastal resorts around Scotland under military supervision. A massive Portacabin accommodation complex has built inside the security fence at Faslane Naval Base. Most of the these internees are known to be innocent migrant workers, cheap labour for the agricultural and service industries whose home countries have denied them the right of repatriation under the CNBA (Closed National Boundaries Agreement) put in place in the October 2020 global repositioning.

The attrition rate in SHUs is reported to be in Auschwitz proportions. Reports of viral wipe-outs in SHUs make the headlines in free-sheets left on doorsteps overnight by well-meaning and benign UCOs (Unidentified Curfew Offenders) UCOs These unauthorised free-sheets compare the SHUs outrage with the CHSs (Care Home Scandals) which dominated the early summer of 2020, culling over ninety percent of residents and nearly fifty percent of carers due to the inadequate provision of appropriate PPE.

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However, even in this unremitting gloom, there is a glimmer of hope.

From January 2021, the previously abandoned acronym ATV (After the Virus) is re-used with increasing frequency by IFM Kate Forbes on CBC-Scotland noon updates channel. These bouncy fifteen-minute slots are a new initiative to encourage public belief that a bright, hopeful, healthy future is ANH (At Near Hand). Delivered in a happy-clappy

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evangelical style, Forbes' broadcasts point to a future when everyone will discover new and satisfying harmonious living by working together to rebuild society in a fairer, more caring society. Malcolm recognises she is aping the mantras of Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his lead slot as part of the two-hour National Multi-Faith Assembly broadcast on CBC at eight o'clock on Saturday mornings when the majority of viewers is either sleeping off the night before while their children are watching *Netflix for Kids*.

The old euphemism "at near hand" has struck an ironic, jovial chord with Joe Public and everything is now ANH. It is the widely used tongue in cheek catchphrase used in chat rooms hosted by Zoom, the only such channel which remains free. Skype, FaceTime and other similar sites now levy high registration and usage charges, passing on Government levies on Internet activity under the guise of measures to improve Internet Operational Efficiencies (IOEs).

Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and other messaging services have been shut down by GCHQ on grounds of IOE, citing capacity overload concerns.

Malcolm's TDW sources assure him the new WhatsApp with end-to-end encryption is still safe. Like Malcolm, many have reverted to WhatsApps as their principal means of communicating, causing WATs (WhatsApp Tsunamis), overloading the system and causing messages to 'disappear', undelivered. Consequently, the video element of WhatsApp has been withdrawn, leaving Zoom as the only free alternative.

However, due to security concerns, overseas Zoom calls are blocked by GCHQ. This is part of the DFB (Digital Fortress Britain) initiative against Internet scammers. Most TDW regulars would not touch Zoom with a barge pole. One group asserts it is being operated by GCHQ while another is adamant it is funded by the Chinese Government, still believed by many to be at the root of the entire *Covid-19* pandemic in their continuing quest to achieve global domination. Malcolm who has always been wary of Zoom believes it is heavily monitored by the SDF although Alice has repeatedly denied this. Sally thinks Malcolm is being paranoid, and says she uses it for her keeping in touch Hong Kong Bubble, many of whom cannot afford Skype and the others.

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In early December Alice returns from Edinburgh unwell and his day flights are suspended. On several occasions she is taken away in a special ambulance for tests and treatment. Regarding her illness, she is closed mouthed, stoic, frail, pecking at food, mainly cheese on crackers and lemon curd yogurt. To Malcolm's enquiries she is snappy, irritable until finally she takes to bed under the ministrations of a care team who visit twice a day. Now she is fed by a drip. During her care team visits Malcolm must self-isolate which he does in the attic, in his special room. These three-person nurse led teams come in all shapes and sizes, mostly large local women who work quickly and leave, twenty-

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three minutes is their shortest visit. Locked in their own world inside their special PPE, have no interest in Malcolm who decides they are moronic automations.

During this late December period with Alice bedridden, he resumes his daytime flights, peeking, hoping for a glimpse of a Thai Bride. Late one evening, fully inebriated, he crashes a drone into a tree close to a neighbour's property and must creep out in the darkness to retrieve its shattered remains.

His drinking is accelerating, sometimes a full bottle of gin, two bottles of wine and several large beers. He no longer waits until it is dark before starting. His head is a constant fuzz and his tinnitus becomes louder, an incessant high-pitched buzz.

Once again inebriated, he flies a drone towards Sally's apartment but loses it in high winds, watching fearfully as the infra-red lens send images of the terrain below as it soars north over a brightly lit industrial complex after which the images judder and fail, leaving a grey dappled screen. He hits the button to review what he has just seen and accidentally wipes these images from his Drone iPad.

However, the memory is imprinted; a scene from hell; dozens of lagoons filled with boiling yellow-green slurry releasing iridescent vapours, pumping stations and pipework, giant storage silos and a line of tankers being loaded.

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Melany

From 1st January 2021 Malcolm Fraser-Scott returns once again to abstinence, part of a cycle of behaviour with sober periods gradually becoming less. In his solitude, with Alice now sedated 24/7, Malcolm spends increasing periods in TDW, engrossed, confident he is secure, poking through from behind his encrypted firewall.

From 5th January 2021 the BGA and SGA jointly announce more restrictions to the TFL measures while promising yet again there is light at the end of the tunnel. This nudges him deeper into the murky depths of TDW, nosing around the edges of closed chatrooms, fearful he might be snagged into deliberate wrong-doing or expose himself to bribery.

The next day, on 6th January, Alice is emailed her final diagnosis. Using a hand pump to self-dose against her physical and mental pain, she retreats into a morphine induced repose. Reclassified as IT (Irretrievably Terminal), her care team is withdrawn and Malcolm is sent a fifteen-minute training video advising he is now her DMCA (Designated Medical Care Assistant) for which he will receive an allowance of £55 per week, to be paid to Alice's account.

Without the intrusion of her care team visits, without Alice monitoring his every move, Malcolm is last free to spend even more time in TDW and to indulge his fantasies without challenge.

A shadow of ex-Chief Superintendent Malcolm Fraser-Scott slowly emerges. This version is bolder, risking sites he previously avoided but continuing to be passive or spinning tales to make himself fit in. With his mind clearer, he listens more carefully and grows in certainty that what he hears is true *omnino est verum*.

Although angrier, he is still reticent, reluctant to share his increasingly strongly held views and so resist these opportunities to develop his ideas by sharing them.

As he burns off the residues of alcohol in his body under his exercise regime, his testosterone levels rise, his erectile dysfunction lessens and a weak if satisfactory pleasuring returns. He opens a new Bitcoin account and visits pornography sites in TDW and discovers ETBs (Encrypted Thai Babes). They remind him of Melany who led him astray with her afternoon visits and encouraged him to revolt.

Malcolm conjures Melany up again, hears her lisping cooing in his ear, her soft hands under his tee-shirt, wandering, sneaking into the pocket of his shorts for the waiting £20, her fee for services rendered, a cash only transaction. In recovery, she tugs off his tee, shorts and underpants, which she sniffs with smiling approval in her charcoal

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dark eyes. As always, he wants more, "Likes Eyee doos to yoos Daddee"? On the first offer, he resists annoyed he did not have the full amount in cash to pay and she will not accept a cheque. On her second visit, with £200 cash in his bedside drawer, he is ready and curious, imaging she will sit down on him from above, in the jockey he fantasies about but has never experienced.

To his astonishment, he discovers Melany is in fact Mel, a boy. Mel is the stallion, Malcolm his mare. It is what he wants, more that anything. Mel allows him credit and they spend the afternoon coupling and cavorting like schoolboys, lip kissing, touching, giggling.

Malcolm, sobs. Although he thinks Alice suspects his affair with Melany, she does not challenge him. These sins are still unpunished, suppressed, waiting for salvation, holding them close, never once revealing, not even in therapy.

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Birthday Boy

Malcolm is now fully awake, almost ready to face Thursday 1st April 2021.

At 6.00 am his Garmin alarm will ping softly and vibrate and as these final minutes dissolve, Malcolm tries to balance Alice's views with Sally's, trying to settle to a firm opinion of his own. This is a debate which has been ongoing in his mind since the first lockdown failed and he realised the situation was far more serious than he had assumed and his life may never get back to where it had been, BTV. Soon Alice will be gone and he will make a new life with Sally, a fresh start. He will be strong, he will behave, *he will be a good boy.*

He blocks out the nagging thoughts last night's failure, thoughts which drag him back to December 2020 when, released from Alice's eagle-eyed surveillance, he teeters from the brink of heavy drinking to the edge of another bout of full-blown alcoholism. During the Christmas season he defecates spontaneously on three occasions. BTV, a fit and healthy Alice would have put him in recovery again. During therapy he has been told repeatedly his alcoholism is hereditary, citing his mother as the likely source of his addictive genes and told he must resist by strength of character and adherence to complete sobriety.

By Christmas, the old, vigorous, dominant Alice is gone. Her 2018 breast cancer from the summer of 2018 has returned, accelerating, taking hold throughout her body. There is a major tumour in her brain, inoperable. On Hogmanay, her final prognosis is revealed in a short email sent to him as her designated EOLC (Endo of Life Carer).

Left to cope alone and spurred by the new hope of release from his old life, he pulls back complete sobriety to wait out the last weeks and dream ahead to a period when might reveal his new freedom and invite Sally to join him at Carrick Grange. He knows this process of detoxification because he has been here before at least six of seven times, he thinks. In his mind he is fixed, determined and aware his spells of self-imposed abstinence are becoming shorter, less frequent. This might be his last chance at sobriety as a way of life. *His last chance to be a good boy.*

From the second day of January 2021, suppressing the worm of desire, he fills his days with a schedule of exercise and the reward of longer sessions on TDW. This effort is supported by thought of Sally's warm, softness pushing against him, the delicious taste of raspberries and strawberries from her lips; her *Halfeti* floral perfume haunts him hour by hour causing pleasant waves of arousal.

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Three months on, as his mind wallows, the effects of his birthday blowout alcohol are countered by the fitness level he has built up. His liver is working overtime and he is overheating, sweating. His enlarged prostate is pressing on his distended bladder causing increasing discomfort. His mouth is parched and his eyes are itchy; this is dry eye syndrome, undiagnosed. Due to his episodes of mental illness Malcolm strenuously avoids medical doctors fearing he might be sectioned again, doubly afraid und Covid because he knows these institutional care home situations have a diabolical record for deaths from the virus.

He guesses he has at least half an hour before he must get up. At six o'clock his new day will begin, on schedule. He drifts up to the meniscus of full awareness and reviews the failures of the old day which he has left in his wake. He shudders at the memory of the day before, Wednesday 31st March 2021, his sixty-sixth birthday. He tries to escape from this but cannot and decides to face it, then try to dispel in. He let his guard down badly and fears he might slip back again into his old ways. If he wants to hold onto Sally, he must not slip ever again. She does not drink alcohol; he pretends to her he drinks only on special occasions.

Yesterday, when he rose to face the day, he decided to allow himself an impromptu day off. In truth, this notion had been lurking in the back of his mind almost since his first day of sobriety. For months he had been teasing himself and resisting, telling himself he would stick to abstinence while knowing he would allow himself to slip, just for one day only, on his birthday, in strict moderation.

After he attending to Alice's early morning needs, he showered and dressed in a smart-casual outfit; long-sleeved shirt, slacks and loafers with a cravat to hide his chicken neck. Rather old-fashioned, which he knows Sally likes

At this stage, everything is normal except he skipped his gym session and as a result the cramp-ache-stab in his right leg causes him to limp; his right calf muscles and tendons are not fully recovered from the injury although the wounds have healed without infection.

His birthday off-piste excursion starts with a large fry-up for breakfast eaten from a tray in the home cinema followed by a wallow in his lounge with a flask of coffee. As he eats and sips he is on Netflix, skipping through all the best bits of all five seasons of *Breaking Bad*.

For a late lunch, he zaps a two-person bag of spicy prawn stir-fry in his microwave and allows himself a glass of ice-cold Chardonnay. This was a recent unexpected find, a 250 ml bottle which had had found stashed among the pile of ready meals in his fridge, hidden and forgotten before he signed the pledge, a tiny bottle which had escaped when he had poured away most of the rest of his stock.

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While eating, he spends time online with his House iPad tablet and completes an easier online crossword. This iPad is used only for public emails but, just in case, he checks for one from Sally, puzzled why she has not sent him a birthday WhatsApp on his Sally phone earlier. He sends her an invitation Zoom Together Meal (ZTM) starting at 17.00 hours Garmin time, knowing she prefers to dine early. As a precaution, he wipes the SENT email to the BIN and then immediately empties to wipe all trace of this illicit contact. Disappointed, he tells himself Sally has been OTT again with universities' work or leading online Zoom Funeral Services for her Hong Kong Bubble crowd. He shuts down the iPad; a result he does not see the RECIPIENT INBOX FULL response message from Sally's system message. He might have missed it anyway as his contacts filter has sent it to JUNK.

At two o'clock he opens a bottle of expensive Chateau Margaux, his second last bottle. Nosing the cork, he decants it, nosing again, judging the dark red wine to be 'excellent'. In the first year of unplanned retirement he had enrolled for a year-long course, planning to become a Master of Wine but Alice had kyboshed that immediately, seeing it as another excuse him to overindulge.

After this pleasant duty, Malcolm steels himself, enters Alice's dimly lit bedroom, changes into a disposable medical boilersuit and pre-scented mortuary mask and prepares to face his daily ordeal of attending to Alice. He restarts her background music, a fixed playlist of her favourite gentle orchestral pieces starting with Beethoven's Sixth, *The Pastoral*. A rag of nostalgic regret flits across his mind as he wonders what his life would have been like if their foetus, a boy, had not aborted. For the millionth time he wonders why she has stuck with him when she might have escaped with half his money and done better for herself. In her thirties, in her prime, she could have been a film star, a Scottish Sophia Loren.

His routine comprises: washing and bathing her by hand, replacing the incontinence pad and elasticated Velcro knickers, changing her disposable Velcro nightie and bedclothes, dispensing the measured dose of morphine mixed with other medications and saline into her drip bags. Using a head torch, concentrating, he injects her double mastectomy scars with a strong painkiller before gently rubbing the frail, weeping skin with fragrant, antibacterial moisturiser to prevent infection and sepsis.

Finally, as part of his tracking process, he notes her medical parameters which he will upload later to a spreadsheet at his encrypted website at G-Drive, part of an end-of-life software package he found on TDW. Alice has so far defied this software's projections which predicted she would be dead by the end of February. If required, this dataset will be his defence should her masters at the SGA decided to carry out an autopsy which he thinks unlikely yet possible.

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At three o'clock when he would normally have been back in the gym for a longer session, he is showered again. With his recent goatee beard neatly trimmed, he dowses in a spicy lemon, lime and lavender body lotion and aftershave combination to help him get in the mood. He heads upstairs for a little afternoon delight. He is dressed in a tee-shirt, baggy shorts and flip-flops with a damp cloth rolled inside a hand towel. This is a transposition of his schedule; this session is normally conducted in the late evening but he knows his hostesses are on call 24/7. Pornography never sleeps.

The access to his secret study is concealed by a fake wardrobe in his lesser guest bedroom where he locks himself inside. This wardrobe conceals a steep narrow stairway to his dimly lit attic study cubby hole. This innovation was inherited from Enrico Ferranti who had created as a place of escape to enjoy his late-night specials DVDs imported from Amsterdam, porn shared freely with Malcolm and Jimmy Goldie.

In preparation, with a headphone/microphone headset connected to a voice changer and a realistic mask and the webcam set to head and shoulders only, Malcolm Fraser-Scott is transformed into a husky version of Brad Pitt. Hooked up through his dedicated and protected laptop used only for TDW, the laptop screen display is now mirrored on a 60" HD-LED monitor which dominates the gable wall, rendering his porn girls almost life sized.

With a generous top-up of Bitcoins transferred to his porn account, he stretches out on his bed-lounger, splay-legged, his shorts on the floor beside his facecloth and towel. He pops two Viagra tablets, drains a large can of Red Bull, switches off the desk lamp and settles to enjoy explicit two-way video chats with a succession of ETBs (Encrypted Thai Babes) in their equally dimly lit 'bedrooms' lurking somewhere out there in the dubious safety in TDW.

In these fantasy sessions he travels a familiar pathway while wondering if any of these girls might be nearby, somewhere in Glasgow, maybe even in the same tower block as Sally or a squalid bedroom in Knightswood or Maryhill. He is on a journey and will eventually visit his favourite Thai Babe, a girl who he imagines who looks like Melany. He takes his time, and chats to many familiars, who perform their routines and collect their bonuses from Brad.

On entry to her boudoir, 'Melany' recognises him and responds as she has been coached, speaking in a simpering Melany lisp, going through her familiar routines before oiling and then stroking a small, slim very life-like dark pink dildo. Malcom pops another two Viagra and rubs himself as Melany continues, her act, waiting for his signal. When it comes, she screeches with realistic ecstasy as Malcolm he vigorously conjures up a weak climax. Behind his mask he is imagining his Thai babe is one of the three mysterious Thai Bride's moonlighting, knowingly cheating for him in her bedroom in Carrick Grange.

End Game

In the afterglow, as he cleans and dries himself, Malcolm is once again toying with his alternative plan. When Alice dies, as a trial, he will procure a Thai Bride, someone young, trainable, someone who would not dare criticise him. He will call her Melany. He believes he learn inside a few weeks if this was feasible, workable and, if it failed, he would revert to his Sally plan.

Although this option is alluring, he fears the downsides. Apart from the sex and other fun and games, his Thai Bride would not have any common life threads to share, no proper ordinary dialogue as he enjoys with Sally. His Thai Bride might arrive infected with other illnesses, not just the virus. His Melany might turn out to be a druggie, difficult to shake off, leaving him exposed to blackmail, a topic discussed many times in the T*Eagles chat room in relation to 'buying in' sex partners. Sally is best and safest option, he concludes; she has told him repeatedly she loves him deeply, for all of him and that sex is not important to her, that gentleness and sharing is enough. They have discussed this on several occasions and Sally, who knows nothing of Melany (Mel) or Kenny, has explained Alice has caused his erectile dysfunction. With her help, Malcolm will be fully restored, she has promised. In New Zealand, free of his past, he will live up to her ideal of him, a second chance at happiness not to be given up easily, *his reward for being a good boy*.

By late afternoon, Malcolm is showered again, dressed in a linen suit, a pale lemon colour, with a pastel pink open-necked shirt and dark blue cravat. These are clothes he used when cruising, years ago. Seated in his dining room opposite his dedicated large screen laptop reserved only for Zoom meetings, he is enjoying the buzz of a strong G&T while waiting for Sally to respond to his dinner invitation.

Sally fails to respond timeously and at 17.08 he calls her on his Sally phone. Her phone immediately defaults to her message service which in turn defaults to a standardised electronic voice intoning: *Sorry, this message box is full. Please call again later*.

Malcolm is disappointed but not surprised by these setbacks. According to the T*Eagles, the entire personal communications network is slowly crumbling due to lack of maintenance. Only secured BGA and SGA networks are kept fully functioning.

After a short wait, he pours another stiff G&T and fills a large balloon with Chateau Margaux, swirling it gently, allowing it to stand and breathe. From the window, binoculars to hand, he watches the blackies and thrushes on his lawn and sees a toad swimming across his pond. The sun will not set until about eight o'clock but the gloaming will be short and it will be fully dark by half-past eight when he would normally be in the gym again for a short, sharp spin session with the lights off, wearing his night-vision goggles, staring across the nearest mansion with the suspected Thai Bride he thinks of as Melany, hoping for a glimpse of bare flesh.

End Game

As six o'clock approaches, he gives up and dines alone, on a tray in the home cinema and seeks out *As Good as it Gets*, another favourite, skipping through the highlights. Reverting, he spends the evening on his recliner among the debris of past ready meals watching clips cast onto his home theatre screen cast from his dedicated YouTube iPad. This is a new iPad, bought after Alice destroyed his previous one in her fit of rage. As a strict rule in his reformed lifestyle, he never uses this iPad to visit dubious or porn sites in the public domain, sites which he finds insipid compared with competing images on TDW.

There is another side to Malcolm Fraser-Scott. As he sips from both a gin and tonic and the wine, he spins through a mental list of his You Tube favourites, all innocents, including opera and classical concerts, rock and pop groups of the late seventies and eighties such as The Eagles, Fleetwood Mac and Dr Hook. He adores Abba and dances awkwardly while singing along wildly out of tune. His current favourites are George Ezra, Ed Sheeran, Luis Capaldi and Gregory Porter's *The Consequence of Love*; he knows all the words for this song tries for a low baritone and sings along in perfect time unaware his every note is off pitch, too low for his high tenor range.

Over the next hour, he snacks from his Chinese Meal for Two, zapping and re-zapping it in the microwave/grill oven he keeps in the home cinema, sipping slowly but steadily from the bottle of heady wine until it is empty. His 'clean' body, unaccustomed to the rapid onslaught of so much alcohol, capitulates and he slips into the arms of Morpheus. Around midnight he staggers off to bed without checking on Alice.

End Game

On Schedule

The Garmin pings and vibrates his 6.00 am alarm. He levers himself up out of bed and sits on the edge, moving slowly. His head aches and he feels phantom twinges of cramp in his right leg, seeing these as just punishment for his slippage. Last night's binge was a weakness but Malcolm excuses himself, blaming Sally for standing him up. In the hope of escaping from the dull hand of depression which has come to dominate his life, he starts a deep breathing routine and turns his mind to the day ahead.

As his mind clears, he runs through what he must do. His routine will be fixed, essential if he is to fight back against the lure to regain control. First off, he will force himself through a series of stretching, bending, deep breathing exercises. He will make a quick check on Alice, then on schedule at 6.10 Garmin time, he will creep softly downstairs, urinate, defecate then medicate for high blood pressure and type two diabetes. Today he will allow himself a small measure of rose hip syrup. His supply is running low and he is conserving, waiting for a delivery. In the basement gym he will complete the first of his three daily workouts lasting thirty-five minutes: a slow gentle warm-up of stretching and twisting, slow jogging on the treadmill before building to more vigorous spinning on his bicycle rollers followed by a final session of pull-ups and weights.

With three months in drying-out behind him, he is again lean and fit, proud of his six-foot-two-inch frame. Over these last weeks he has been studying himself in his gym mirrors admiring a rejuvenated, fresh-faced, handsome, vigorous man hovering around twelve stone four pounds, the same weight he had been at Tulliallan. His goatee suits him, he feels, adds panache, transforms him into an old-fashioned grandee, the style Sally likes, the style Alice would nowadays despise.

By 7:05 am he will be showered, dressed in a loose-fitting track suit and trainers, eating a healthy breakfast of muesli, fruit and yogurt and a large glass of fresh orange to be followed by a small cafetiere of strong coffee. Eating slowly, he will check his Home Security iPad used only indoors, distracting himself with infra-red downloads from his twelve heat sensor cameras, hoping to see his elusive pine martens, night raiders marauding his hedgehog and bird feeding stations.

The second reminder alarm from his Garmin ping-ping-pings at 6.05 am. Rolling his shoulders, yawning widely, sticking out and wiggling his tongue, Malcolm projects himself through the rest of the day ahead and hopes when evening comes he will resist the temptation of the remaining gin and his last bottle of Margaux. Tempted, he knows he

End Game

can order an express delivery of whatever alcohol he wishes, using Alice's codes. He shies away and seeks comfort by thinking of Sally.

Sighing, he reaches under his pillow, feeling for his Sally phone which is missing. Is it in the home cinema?

He checks his Garmin again to be sure of the date and sobs with frustration. Today, Thursday 1st April 2021 with just over a year on lockdown, will be like exactly like those of the previous three months; alcohol-free.

Ex-Chief Malcolm Fraser-Scott, breathes deeply and stiffens his resolve puts his hands on his knees and prepares to stand up and face the day. He will wait out Alice's last few weeks then invite Sally to come and isolate with him. He recycles, re-parses the notion: he will cling to his schedule, his rampart against his boring loneliness as he waits for Alice Nimmo Harkness QC to die and the prospect of a fresh start with Dr Sally McAnespie.

No Thai Bride. No more delving into TDW. His last chance at sobriety. His last chance to be a good boy.

It is a resolution he has promised himself many times over but this time he means it.

End Game

Breakout

Rising from his bed, his Sally phone falls to the floor. Dead, out of battery. He knows immediately this is an omen. Why has Sally not responded to his WhatsApps and email? There is something terribly wrong. The image of the sparrowhawk and the fledgling fills his mind; Malcolm finally admits it was a collared dove and not a wood pigeon.

His mind is in overdrive. From his Garmin, sunrise is still fifty minutes away. He hauls on his track suit, goes directly to the attic and mounts the special high-endurance battery, always a tricky task. He is working quickly now, concentrating hard and trying to shake off the throbbing fuzziness from the alcohol of the previous night. Wearing a full-face mask, a disposable gown, latex gloves and spraying disinfectant liberally, he wipes all trace of his prints and DNA from the drone, pairs it to his Done iPad, runs through the software pre-flight checks. Satisfied, he switches off the room lights, pulls back the curtains, buzzes up the black-out blinds and opens the dormer windows. Thick cloud. A light breeze. Good flying weather using his GPS system. He clicks the stays into place against a sudden gust.

This is his last drone, the best of them, he hopes. For the previous drones lost outside his perimeter, he has no firm explanation but suspects a construction or software fault. A more sinister explanation lurks in the back of his mind - the CMA (Combined Military Authorities) are tracking him. After each loss he feared these downed aircraft would lead the SDF to send a squad from the CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate) to Carrick Grange to arrest him. This notion makes him jittery; he is hyperventilating and stops to take deep breathes. His mind settles and his hands stop shaking. He places his fingers above the control icons and visualises the flight track. At Sally's, his drone will be perilously close to the ADH (Area Drone Hub) at Colquhoun Park. He is worried about their weaponised drones.

In the distance there is a rumble, probably thunder. It must be risked. Committed, he takes a further deep breath and flies the drone off on its short flight, rising vertically into the darkness to 300 metres before heading directly to pre-set GPS coordinates which place it directly above Sally's apartment block.

The building sits high above the Forth and Clyde canal which separates the adjacent KRA (Knightswood Residential Area) from the BMZ (Bearsden and Milngavie Zone). Although he has flown his drones here many times in the hope of catching a glimpse of Sally or her neighbours, he is nervous, ready to abort if required. He manoeuvres his drone, making a slow three-sixty-degree sweep, checking. So far, so good. He lowers his drone to hover

End Game

close to Sally's windows and peers in using the infrared camera. Curiosity takes hold, his fear subsides and his fingers are steady above the controls, manipulating the drone a mere two metres from the façade. Although it is still dark, her bedroom curtain is wide open and her bedside light is on. The bed is made up, the room is neat and tidy. Apart from the lamp, there is no heat signature. The room is empty. He moves to the adjacent window. The kitchen blinds are up and the lights are on but again the room is empty. On the worktop above the dishwasher there is a plate with orange peel, an empty yogurt tub and spoon, an empty tumbler and a half-full bottle of strawberry pressé.

He moves the drone again. The lounge is in darkness but the infrared camera picks out the outline of Sally sprawled on the floor beside a pair of ladders. He takes the drone closer, zooms to her head and sees the dark stain of blood on the rug beside her. From the glowing image he knows the body is warm. She is alive. He presses the laptop key and the drone issues a series of flashes, his signature code to reassure her it is him and not a random drug deliver or spy drone from the KRA on the far side of the canal.

At this point his laptop screen flares brightly and turns grey. His drone has stopped transmitting. A flit of lightning illuminates his attic followed by a sharp crack of thunder. He glances anxiously at the window and realises he has forgotten to close it and lower the black-out blinds. The rains starts to fall, large heavy drops within seconds, a downpour. He believes his drone has been struck by lightning.

Malcolm will never learn his drone was destroyed by a sniper shooting from a house on the border of the KRA. Ten-year-old Hermione Stockley is part of her father's ring which flies drugs to punters in the apartment block. Malcolm's drone was downed as a suspected rival delivery in progress. The girl's favourite targets are seagulls and wood pigeons on the wing, much more satisfying hovering drones silhouetted against a bright background. Following his time in Iraq during the first Gulf War in 2004, Colour Sergeant Jared Stockley was a champion small-bore rifle shooter until turning to drug-dealing after he lost his left arm in a motorcycle accident. Hermione is his prodigy and has been shooting unofficially since she was four years old. She hopes to get to the Olympics, ATV.

The storm is directly overhead. Malcolm sees this as a good omen. Somethings never change; the UCOs (Unidentified Curfew Offenders) will head for home and the police night patrols will find their nooks and crannies to wait out the storm, talking shop.

He packs a rucksack with a first aid kit, a syringe, a phial of Alice's subcutaneous painkiller and adds a measured dose of morphine, to be used only if required. He then adds a change of underwear, toilet bag and fresh clothes to spruce up in case he needs to take Sally to hospital. He will risk taking her car, claiming the right to act in an emergency. Over his track suit he wears his dark green DRP (Disruptive Pattern) hill-walking over trousers a full winter balaclava with just eye holes then slips into his Vibram-soled walking shoes. He puts on his distance glasses then changes his mind because of

End Game

the rain and pops the case into his rucksack. He puts on his matching DRP three-quarter-length anorak and tightens the hood around his face. These outdoor clothing items are top-of the range, Gore-Tex lined and guaranteed 100% waterproof and breathable, including his shoes.

Halfway down the stairs he turns back to attend to Alice. Her drips are empty because she missed the change on the previous evening. She is moaning; a small, desperate mew, like a kitten. He is filled with shame and remorse. Adrenaline pumping, he sets her up with two bags of medication/morphing/saline mix arranged in tandem. He feels inside her knickers and finds her incontinence pad is dry. This action causes her to surface, her eyes open and she stares at him with a puzzled look. In a querulous, hoarse whisper she demands:

Who are you? Go away!

These are the first words Alice Nimmo Harkness QC has spoken in over three months. Her eyes close and the tension leaves her body as the new morphine takes effect. He checks her pulse, weak but steady then bends forward, kisses her forehead and turns away.

Closing the door on his wife, Malcolm races down to the back door, already thinking ahead to Sally and her injury. She is his new priority.

He exits through the back door to the garden and runs to his tree house, slips, skids, falls and feels a sharp stab in his right calf muscle. He remembers he has not medicated and has forgotten his pill box. Sally will write a prescription and he can order online using Alice's codes and get a special delivery to Sally's place. Limping, he makes it to his sycamore, climbs the hardwood spikes to the treehouse then out onto the branch which overhangs the fence where he unwinds the spool and drops the rope ladder outside the perimeter. On the ground, crouching, he hauls on the thin grey cord of the retrieve pulley and rewinds the ladder back into the tree, out of sight. He reaches up and ties off the cord near the top of the fence.

For ex-Chief Superintendent Malcolm Fraser-Scott this is his fifth time outside the perimeter since the UK Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in March 2020, his first since TFL and the new regime of night patrols. Moving slowly, nursing his right leg, he sets off along the perimeter through the undergrowth then strikes out below the rookery following the route he used when he plucked up enough courage to visit Sally last July for an delicious cuddle session. On the other four occasions he bottled it at Drymen Road and turned back.

His hands are shaking. He knows his imperative is to move quietly, maintain stealth but with adrenaline pumping and de-hydrated from his night of boozing he is skittish, caught

End Game

between his desire to run but afraid of aggravating his wound. The rain intensifies and he decides to speed up.

Entering the grove of rhododendrons, he is approaching his Rubicon; to get to Sally's place, he must cross Drymen Road, risking a night patrol. He sees the roadway ahead, glistening like a river in the streetlights.

A voice calls out:

'You there, STOP! Down! Now! On your knees. Hands behind. . . .'

They are behind him, near the rookery, he thinks. Malcolm is already running, dodging around and under the high branches of the rhododendron bushes.

He trips, falls, gets up and keeps going. A dog barks repeatedly, a high, excited chase bark. Malcolm believes it is an Alsatian. Malcolm hates dogs. As a toddler he was bitten by a neighbour's Alsatian and had to be taken to hospital. The fear of dogs has never left him. At one stage in his career he was responsible for the Strathclyde Police Horse and Dog Branch but always sent his deputy to carry out quarterly inspections.

His calf muscle twinges. He slows, sees Drymen Road twenty metres ahead. On the far side he sees his next waypoint, the gate into the grounds of Norwood Park, the complex of nineteen-sixties high-rise apartment blocks which dominate Canniesburn Toll roundabout.

His brain is racing. The gate on the far side of Drymen Road is half-open, inviting. He plans to transit the grounds of the Norwood Park development, cross Canniesburn Road on the far side and escape into the woods and on to Sally's place, a five-minute jog away alongside a quiet terrace of modern, compact town houses, the sort Sally would have preferred but could not afford. Malcolm had offered to buy her one but she had refused, indignantly. She does not want his money, only his love, she has said, over and over.

End Game

Consignments

Sergeant Kenny Graham has been up since half-past three. He is showered, shaved, toileted and is now in uniform. In an hour's time his slurry tanker convoy is due to leave the KIC (Killoch Interment Centre) heading for another pick-up at the DMRTF (Douglas Muir Reception and Treatment Facility) on the outskirts on the BMZ (Bearsden and Milngavie Zone). He stabs at his watch, a Casio Multi-Function, a birthday gift from Monica:

Thursday

April 1 2021

He lets out a sob. Tomorrow would have been their tenth wedding anniversary.

Kenny knows he will be breathalysed when he signs the roster sheet and has abstained for the last thirty-hours, making him grumpy. To help him face the day ahead he pops an 'upper' and washes it down with V8 vegetable juice, to which he is semi-addicted.

His mother Isa is moving about in the kitchen-dining room below. *Alexa* is playing Sounds of the Sixties at low volume and Isa is singing along quietly. During her entire life as an unmarried mother she has lived in the day and does not think much about TFL. She only knew Kenny's father for a few weeks. It was when she was working as a cleaner on the Central Station Hotel. Bunny Bonham was a tall, laughing, African American, a drummer with a touring band. He offered her a \$50 note. She had fancied him like mad and after the first time, she did it for free, twice a day for two weeks. He moved on and she was left with the gift of Kenny, named after her long dead father, a man who had also played the drums in the Pride of Clydebank Flute Band.

She was glad to escape from her small two-bed council top-floor flat in Drumchapel to the spacious four-bedroomed semi-villa in the CMA (Combined Military Authority) compound at New Cumnock in East Ayrshire.

Kenny's wife Monica has been dead for seven months, taken by the *Morph B* virus contracted in Crosshouse Hospital during her treatment for high-blood pressure and bleeding in the final month of her fourth pregnancy. Extracted from the corpse, Baby Axal held on by a thread for a week before he too expired. Isa's other grandchildren are still pining for their mother but with every passing day the girls are learning to forget her. Aliston is six, Aimee four and Alicia is three.

End Game

Several years BTV (Before The Virus), Monica Mbaye arrived in Drumchapel as a sixteen-year-old refugee. As a 'displaced person' from Senegal, she was allocated a bed in social housing place in a three-bedroom flat across the landing from Isa Graham and Kenny. Six girls, all from different countries. As the newcomer and an Evangelical Christian, Monica was the outsider. The authorities gave each girl a debit card for shopping, promised support and education then left them to fend for themselves. When Monica joined them, the other girls were already established in prostitution. Isa gave in to Monica's pleading, took her in, let her sleep on a fold-down bed in her living room.

Monica had passable English, wide hips, a shining ebony complexion and a beautiful smile. Within four months of arriving, Kenny made her pregnant. Isa paid for their marriage party with a £200 hand-out from Mrs Harkness, always a soft touch though prickly, a stern mistress, demanding perfection in everything. Isa liked Monica. She was a good girl, polite and affectionate, much cleverer than Kenny. Her grandkids are also bright and Isa has high hopes for them, ATV.

Isa knows the work Kenny does as part of the Killoch-FIT (Final Internment Team) is despised by many people but in New Cumnock, FIT members are highly regarded. This is because they have raised the status of the failing township to a TSPC (Temporary Strategically Protected Community), a smaller version of the BMZ but with lesser privileges than the SPMC (Strategically Protected Micro-Community) at Carrick Grange.

Despite the virus and her confined situation with three boisterous children to manage, Isa truly happy for the first time in her life. She is free of personal debt, wiped out by a FRW (Financial Relief Warrant) obtained by Kenny as part of her relocation package deal as his family carer, to enable him to carry out his duties. This gives Isa a renewed purpose. When Covid-19 had first struck, Alice Harkness had sent special delivery letters each month enclosing cheques for £300, her normal wages, usually paid cash. Because she had no means of cashing these cheques, Isa had traded them through the wife of her drug-dealing neighbour for £100 in used notes, a scheme which protected her lockdown benefits.

In her new life in the FIT compound, and as an authorised user of Kenny's PWC (Personal Warrant Card), she phones the hotline number to order what she needs up to her limit. To her amazement, this includes ciggies and Vodka. Kenny is smoking and drinking again so they get along without friction. At first, without Monica he had been dry, nicotine free and touchy.

At last Isa has *Escaped to the Country*, a programme which she used to watch avidly but is no longer available on tele. She has a small garden laid with artificial grass for the kids to play, a large safety enclosed trampoline and a shed full of toys. Unlike her tenement living situation in Drumchapel, she now has polite, well-behaved neighbours she can talk

End Game

to over the fence or from her front door. Best of all, she has *Netflix* and the 'specials' she had heard about back in Drumchapel but could not access.

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Sergeant Kenny Graham climbs into the lead tanker. The mechanic already has the engines running for his convoy of five. Kenny knows these engines are unreliable and must be run continuously even when loading slurry at the DMRTF. The rooftop arrays of blue and white roof lights are shuddering, shattering the darkness. On schedule at 4.30 am precisely, the compound gates open and the twice weekly high-speed run to Milngavie begins, Mondays and Thursdays with the occasional extra shift on a Saturday.

Until late January, these slurry convoys were accompanied by an officer driving ahead in an ancient Saracen armoured vehicle beside a driver with an armed patrol of four in the rear and two motorbike outriders front and back a total protective escort of ten personnel to protect the convoy against protestors. Cutbacks mean recently promoted Sergeant Graham is now in sole charge.

To avoid protestors, his route varies. Today his dash mounted Satnav has been pre-programmed to direct his journey along B roads via Sanquar to the M74 motorway then towards Glasgow past Hamilton and Motherwell to join the M8 which he will leave at Charing Cross and head north west along Great Western Road to Anniesland Cross. Kenny knows this longer, roundabout route is necessary to avoid a transit of the Clyde Tunnel, a frequent ambush site favoured by protestors and crazies who often race out across the dual carriageway to try to disrupt progress and allow their mates fire home-made bazookas loaded with human excrement at the slurry convoy windscreens.

He has been told his convoy must stay on Red Alert but has not been given detail. Since Kenny has been in sole charge, every run has been designated as Red Alert. He knows the threat is real. His in-charge convoys have been attacked four times, once by a group driving a small herd of bullocks onto the road in an attempt to get him to stop but he had blared his horn and driven over through them, causing carnage. Later, at the DMRTF, he had been quizzed closely by Major Dave Sommerville the OIC, After the grilling, he had been reluctantly complemented for doing the right thing.

Kenny likes being out on the roads in the low light levels before dawn and hopes to spot a Barn Owl, his favourite bird. Kenny has been an avid bird-spotter since Chief Superintendent Fraser-Scott gave him his first pair of binoculars. He thinks back to those summers and wonders if the rich couple are still alive. His mother has asked him to look them up but he has refused, knowing everything he does online is monitored closely. He is not keen on computers; they confuse him.

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End Game

As they approach Anniesland Cross, Sergeant Kenny Graham hits the orange button on the dashboard and the Hi-Lo sounder blasts ahead to alert the waiting police escort car. This is the part of the journey he enjoys best. He feels the surge of adrenaline and his fingers begin to shake, losing grip on the wheel. He pops a downer, chewing it, putting up with the bitter taste to get it working quicker. He forgot to bring his carton of V8 and juice bottle and he is thirsty. He has been using uppers and downers since Monica died. His mother gets them for him but he does not ask how or from whom.

The four tankers trailing him join in the cacophony, clearing a path for his convoy to swing right through the complex junction and head due north onto Bearsden Road and onward to swing north west again onto Switchback Road, the undulating dual carriageway where he will enter the BMZ on the last lap to the DMRTC. A fluorescent lemon-coloured police car turns out from a side-street and races ahead with its blue light rotating. Its mee-maw sounder blips an acknowledgement and Kenny turns off his Hi-Lo and the police car and convoy proceed in relative silence. Sounders must only be used inside the BMZ under circumstances of duress.

Kenny's convoy is running thirteen minutes behind schedule. The unexpected downpour and the incident blocking the M8 motorway at Easterhouse beside *The Fort* shopping centre has spoiled the run, slowing progress. This shopping centre was once part of his Irn Bru delivery run is now a charred ruin because of repeated arson attacks. Kenny knows when he arrives at the DMRTC he will be reprimanded and humiliated if he exceeds the ten-minute leeway window for the run. Kenny has a history with Major Dave. Kenny is not alone; 'The Major' has a down on everyone. When Kenny first came across him, Sommerville was a mere Lieutenant, a university drop-out and former member of the GSUOTC (Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Officer's Training Corp). Right from the outset, the teenager had set out to prove himself by threat and bluster.

As Kenny comes over the final rise before the dip down to Canniesburn Toll, he already slowing to be able to negotiate the tight left-hand bend onto Drymen Road. Even when unladen these old top-heavy tankers are a nightmare to drive. The police car veers and skids to a halt to block traffic on the roundabout to give the convoy a free transit.

End Game

Mentor

As Kenny leaves the roundabout he floors the pedal and checks his wing mirrors to be sure the other tankers are tight up behind him. The downer is slowing his reactions.

In the undergrowth, Malcolm Fraser-Scott is invisible to the naked eye. He sees the convoy swooping out of the roundabout, accelerating towards him. This is his opportunity to shake off the men chasing him. He can hear the dog growl and yip, bark and whine and hopes it is still on its lead.

The downpour increases in intensity and Kenny's wipers are not coping.

Malcolm sees the convoy of trucks approaching at speed and realises this is his chance. He will cross Drymen Road ahead of it, skip through the gate then close it behind him, leaving the night patrol stranded, blocked from crossing by the convoy.

Malcolm charges out onto Drymen Road.

As Kenny re-focusses, a tall dark figure wearing a balaclava runs out from the pavement. The figure is glistening in the tanker's full headlights. Inexplicably, the man stalls in his stride and stumbles to his knees clutching his leg, on one knee as if in a Black Lives Matter pose. From his footballing days Kenny is familiar with cramp. Kenny's foot floors the accelerator pedal. The engine roar covers the pop of a baton road gun fired at the fleeing man.

The protester rises to his feet and his pleading eyes stare straight into Kenny's then disappear from view with a soft thud.

Malcolm's is already dead when the following tankers crush his remains to pulp.

Kenny's convoy intercom crackles: 'Sarg, Ah think we hut somethin.'

'Aye, itwizzadeer, so it wiz. Nae worries, okay? Noo, keep up tight, guys, okay? An keep yer lips zipped infrontae The Major, okay? Wur near back on schedule, okay?'

On his return trip to the New Cumnock Interment Centre, Kenny's Sat Nav routes his convoy via Torrance and Lenzie and onto the M80 at Stepps before joining late evening traffic heading back into Glasgow where he cross the Kingston bridge to join the M77 then onwards to Ayrshire.

Later Kenny Graham will ask himself why stood on the accelerator and not the brake but salves his conscience with the knowledge he could not have stopped his tanker quickly enough to save the protester.

End Game

In the months to come the pleading eyes will haunt Kenny but the connection to his bird-watching mentor Malcolm Fraser-Scott will never be made.

End Game

Aftermath

The police escort car races passed Kenny's convoy to block the manage the junction at Bearsden Cross. The convoy races after it and the flashing lights fade. Crushed by dozens of heavy-duty tyres, all that remains of former Chief Superintendent Malcolm Fraser-Scott is a smear of blood and guts. His phone and Garmin watch are in tiny pieces enmeshed with the fabric of his expensive, shredded, wet-weather clothing. Because of the downpour the pre-dawn bird chorus is muted.

The rain is washing his blood away, carrying Malcolm's smashed bio-bracelet with the flow into the gutter running full where it snags twenty metres from the corpse trapped by a bunch of twigs at the ribs of the drain outlet. Miraculously the device is still functioning and, because it is paired to a gold bracelet user, it reports his demise to SDT Control Centre, part of the Hampden Stadium Drone Hub which has responsibility for protecting the BMZ and Glasgow's other two SPMCs (Strategically Protected Micro-Community) at Pollokshields and Newton Mearns. The information from Malcolm's silver bio-bracelet is logged automatically to the database. Because of its inherent malfunction, data which puts Malcolm Fraser-Scott's TODAL (Time of Death and Location) ten minutes ahead of Garmin time, a time when Malcolm was still inside the perimeter fence of his garden. As it is only a silver bio-bracelet no alerts sound to the system for Malcolm, only for Alice who is, according to her monitoring records, classified as 'satisfactory'.

However, the databases are linked and a message is forwarded to the DMRTC at Milngavie where is captured and held back from CIC (Collection and Interment Control) system by an old friend from Malcolm's past, a man who has been waiting for this opportunity.

From the shadows near the rhododendrons, nineteen-year-old police cadet Darren McKillop silences the dog barking device and stows his weapon on its harness secured to his rear webbing. Six months earlier the youth had been digging ditches and building deer fences on the Attadale Estate in Wester Ross.

The Attadale Estate was bought out administration by a Swiss-based consortium who are a front for the CGIG (Chinese Government Investment Group (Europe)), a secretive organisation who are steadily buying up similar landed estates throughout Europe. In the re-organisation which followed, Darren was made redundant. His father's best friend Inspector Robbie Fernley put Darren's name forward to Police Scotland for a position as a Cadet Officer. Robbie Fernley is high in the Masonic Order and Darren is due to join as soon as he becomes a regular policeman.

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On the estate, the youngster has fired rifles at deer and shotguns at vermin but this is the first time he has fired at a person and his adrenaline is still pumping. His lead officer, Sergeant John Daley called in sick with a tummy bug two nights earlier and is self-isolating as a precaution.

This is Darren's first solo human fatality and he is unsure what to do. It is also his first patrol wearing the new issue of combined face mask incorporating night-vision goggles. As a cadet, Darren did not get a combo-mask and is wearing John Daley's. This is strictly forbidden but Darren has sprayed it with Dettol to sanitise it. Colleagues who were issued with them a month earlier have told the cadet the goggles are cheapo quality and the masks leak, warning him not to get too close to UCOs (Unidentified Curfew Offenders), emphasising these crazies and looters are usually infected with something or other which can kill you, even if it is not The Virus. To Darren, this was unnecessary information who well knows corpses can kill. Since he was ten years old his job was to use poisoned rabbits to kill eagles and other raptors praying on the estate's grouse and pheasants.

Firing from fifty metres, desperate not to lose the UCO, the youth had not expected to hit the fleeing man. As per his two-hour training session, Darren had aimed at the torso but believes he caught the man on the leg. He does not know his baton round flew harmlessly high into the trees of the Norwood Park complex.

The teenager moves closer to examine the debris. His stomach heaves but he gasps and swallows the bile. His sphincter muscles are not firm enough to prevent further leakage into his underpants.

He switches on the night-vision goggles hoping they will help him see through the downpour. Feeling like a character in a futuristic video game, he checks slowly in a three-sixty-degree arc to be sure he is alone. All he sees is a wall of luminous grey. He switches off the goggles and wipes the PPE visor with the back of his latex gloved hand. He knows nothing of bio-bracelets worn by the elite. In Darren's assessment, the miscreant is unlikely to be important and is seriously thinking of *not* calling in this shout then realises he will have to account for the baton round. Without his full complement of ten rounds at check-in, his weapon will be examined and he will be grilled.

After a short debate with himself, he decides not to take a chance and calls on his personal radio to PPC (Police Patrol Command) at Milngavie police station and describes his version of the chase which led to the death of the UCO in RTA (Road Traffic Accident). Prompted, he describes in graphic detail the condition of the remains. PPC ask him to confirm his location as per his radio tracker beeper. Darren is unsure where he is and stumbles over his response. PPC know he is a cadet new to the BMZ and cut him short and use his beeper location, stating they will advise CIC (Collection and Interment Control) at DMRCT to arrange a pick-up of the body parts of the UCO (Unidentified Curfew Offender).

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Grateful his version of events seems to have been accepted, Darren continues with his patrol, leaving Carrick Grange behind and moving on to check the grounds of the Norwood Park complex where he knows from old John Daley that Inspector Robbie Fernley is shacking up with his latest conquest, a rich widow in her early thirties. Siobhan Osmond is Robbie's landlady and he has 'met' her in a short Zoom call. She is very sexy, Robbie thinks. He leaves the scene and moves inside the Norwood Park development, finds the third-floor apartment which Daley has identified on past patrols. Disappointingly, although the bedroom lights are on, the blinds are down. Ronnie Osmond, the widow's deceased was an oil worker who was killed in Nigeria in September 2020, during street fighting near the Lagos Port Complex during a Covid protest uprising, an innocent victim in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Inspector Robbie Fernley has been married twice but is separated from his current wife. Like Robbie, Louisa Fernley nee Heatley, was a second timer. According to old John Daley, Fernley is sex obsessed and 'goes like a bunny'. She is co-habiting in a luxury flat at Roman Court near Bearsden Cross with her young boss at DMRTC, Major Dave Sommerville. John Daley, a life-long bachelor, lives alone in a smaller flat nearby which has line of sight to this The Major's bedroom. Daley claims to have watched the couple with his binoculars, seeing Louisa perform with her shiny PVC dominatrix outfit, pink fluffy handcuffs and fake whips.

These Roman Court apartments are also part of their patrol route and most nights John and Darren stare up in hope at the darkened second-floor bedroom window with old John making lewd remarks about The Bunny and The Major and their goings on. Darren suspects John Daley's stories are the wishful thinking fantasies of an old, lonely man.

Darren has never had any success with girls and fantasies about having a girlfriend like Siobhan where you could do it properly, in a bed, and not one you have to pay to get satisfaction, standing in a back court standing behind the refuse bin shelter wearing full PPE with a girl grinding into your back as her disposable-gloved hand reaches from behind, enveloped in the stench of her cloying patchouli vaping fumes. She calls herself Angel and the spot behind the bin shelter is her stance. Darren watches for her from his top-floor tenement flat.

This flat, which Siobhan owns, is on the traditional, cheaper fringe of the Merchant City, where she used to live before she got lucky and pulled her golden ticket with Ronnie Osmond. Darren leaves his bedside light on to cast him in silhouette and stands at his window from 9.30 pm waiting for three red blips from her laser pointer flash in his direction, his signal to go down and pay for his fifteen minutes of fun.

Later, when he comes off shift, Darren is fined £35 for the loss of his radio tracker beeper, which is still in the undergrowth near the Garrick Grange perimeter fence at the spot where he stopped, suddenly caught short. To satisfy the urgent need to defecate,

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he was crouched under a bushy tree when he saw the man climbing down from a tree nearby with a rucksack bulging with loot.

Due to a glitch, this false information about the location of the possible remains of a RTA remains a mystery by which time the Malcolm Fraser-Scott has become history and the colocation of Kenny's convoy and the timing of the RTA are lost in the databanks.

An hour after Darren leaves the scene on Drymen Road adjacent the gate into the Norwood Park development, the rain stops and a clamour of rooks arrives to pick over the remains. One bird sees the dull mud-covered silver bio-bracelet as a useful twig and takes it to weave into her nest.

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Darren McKillop is now off shift, riding his trail bike at full throttle along Maryhill Road, heading for Parnie Street. He is now outside the BMZ zone and in the MRA (Maryhill Residential Area) and the road is unlit.

Wearing his heavy waterproof parka from his days on the Attadale Estate, he feels overheated and welcomes the cooling effect of the lashing rain. On the estate he did not use a safety helmet; he slows, unbuckles, slips the helmet over the handlebars. He feels slightly cooler but his head is woozy.

In medical terms, Darren is termed a 'rapid reactor' and the virus is ramping up, taking control. He does not see the deep puddle ahead and when he hits it, he is thrown head over heels and sideways into the rusty green iron palings near the entrance to Maryhill Allotments. Darren is dead on impact.

The dual carriageway fills with blue flashing lights as John Daley passes in an ambulance, wearing a hermetically sealed pressurised oxygen helmet, similar to a diving helmet, designed to prevent the spread of the virus to NHS staff, an improvement on the older open-type of pressurised face mask. The latest victim of the new virus is heading for the where he will be triaged by Kevin Feeney at the CTC (Covid Treatment Centre) located at the SEC (Scottish Events Campus). Daley will be in ITU for several months. Heavily medicated until he is transferred to a research unit at the West of Scotland Science Park to be studied and experimented on by Professor Susie Ling and her team. Over the months to come, his survival will turn John Daley into a medical prize specimen as his DNA and antibodies may offer a clue to the manufacture of a *Morph C-hybrid* vaccine.

Darren McKillop's death is witnessed by Therese (Tres) Morran who is widdle-walking her aged staffie called Vera. Tres knows she should not be outdoors after curfew but is hoping to meet the boy Dessie who supplies her with wee pink and green tabs to help her get to sleep when her husband Phil is away on his night runs and the local jobs are partying in the flat above her, breaking TFL rules.

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Tres has seen the accident and guesses the man is dead. She crosses the road, checks left and right then stoops, riffles his corpse, finds his Velcro wallet suspended on a cord around his neck, empties it of cash, stuffs it back inside his shirt and re-fastens his big jacket.

Scuttling away, Tres is now infected but her body proves highly resistant and her symptoms are mild. Dessie and his drug ring are not so lucky. Her husband Phil is a long-haul delivery driver for the St Rollox's CFH (Combined Food Hub) who will soon leave Tres as a widow when his vehicle crashes off the high-level motorway section at Birmingham's Spaghetti Junction, spreading Darren's *Morph C-hybrid* infection to a new outbreak hotspot.

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On the afternoon of 1st April 2021 at Carrick Grange, around two pm, Alice's double-bagged medication and morphine mix drip runs out. She cries out in pain for an hour before her heart spasms and stills. Her bio-bracelet records her death. Because she is a gold bracelet wearer, a collection and disposal team is scheduled as a priority.

Late in the afternoon, the collection team arrive a long high-sided van towing a trailer which looks like a small caravan. Wendy McClure is in charge; Peter Lyness is her driver and technical assistant. They have been a team for almost nine months and do not like each other. Peter is a heavy smoker and Wendy hates the stench from his hand-made cigarettes, detectable even at three metres separation, the new social distancing norm under TFL restrictions. To counter this, she wears a simple face mask, sprinkled with oil of lavender and thyme.

The front section of their dark purple morgue vehicle has two side by side front compartments, hermetically sealed, allowing them to travel together, safe from each other and external influences. In an emergency they can lock the external doors and remain sealed in the reinforced vehicle and call for assistance. As they mainly work inside the BMZ, this has not happened to them but other collection teams have been attacked by protestors.

In the van, Wendy and Peter speak to each other via an intercom although conversation is intermittent, stilted. Peter easily defeats the security barrier and rolls the vehicle to a stop outside the Fraser-Scott home. Before they approach the premises, Wendy and Peter use their personal changing rooms in the two-compartment trailer and emerge in biohazard suits. Inside these suits they are again constrained to communicate by built-in radio mics, headphones and hand-signals. Dressed like this they resemble slimmer versions of space-walking astronauts of the past. Their suits were developed by Porton Down and are believed to be 100% secure against all viruses.

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The collection team are fully authorised and do not need a B&E permit. The front door is triple locked and will be difficult to force. They head for the back door which, it turns out, is open. From this location they cannot be seen from adjacent properties, a bonus. Peter finds the alarm unset, this due to Malcolm's rapid exit. They enter and are unsure whether the disarray they observe is natural or caused by intruders. Their interest is personal. They have no remit to call in such suspicions to the police. Indeed, they suspect it could have been caused by a police patrol as they are rivals in the business of relieving the dead of their easily disposable goodies.

The corpse of Ms Alice Nimmo Harkness QC is fresh and collection is straightforward. They already know her death was expected and Wendy makes the assessment she is a DNC (Death from Natural Causes), reintroduced by the ONS (Office of National Statistics) for simplicity and convenience in the early weeks of the pandemic. Because of her medical training, Wendy is a MAP (Medically Authorised Person) and this convenience avoids the need for an autopsy.

While on site Wendy receives a second WhatsApp from the STUB (Stuck Up Bitch) Louisa Fernley at CIC instructing them to search the garden for Harkness's husband, registered as Malcolm Scott-Fraser, a silver bio-bracelet holder who has also been recorded as deceased and requires collection. It is late afternoon and the light is failing. The rain is teeming down again. Wendy and Peter have had had a long day and their search is half-hearted. Peter refuses to climb into the tree house to check, point out the near impossibility of this manoeuvre while wearing his protective suit.

They have already had a hassle with the corpse of the police cadet on Maryhill Road. Wendy had argued with the STUB, pointing out the LOD (Location of Death) was outside their BMZ collection area and requesting police or CMA backup as protection against protesters. After a rapid exchange of WhatsApps, Wendy was overruled as the youth's corpse was a suspected Covid risk requiring urgent collection to prevent spread.

After ten minutes, of slipping and skidding, Peter and Wendy return to the house and from there report their lack of success to CIC (Collection and Internment Control), co-located at the DMRTC (Douglas Muir Reception and Treatment Centre). Thankfully, the STUB Fernley is has gone off duty early and after a delay. Wendy points out by WhatsApp they have only one last storage compartment free in their morgue van. After a short delay, Wendy is told call off the search the husband. Wendy has guessed but has not been told the husband was a token silver bio-bracelet in the role of carer for his wife, Harkness, the gold-bio-bracelet wearer. CIC do not reveal Fraser-Scott is listed as a PSI (Person of Secondary Importance) whose signal has expired. It is common knowledge that silver bio-bracelets are designed to shut down and then self-destruct withing a few hours of wearer's death.

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Wendy removes Alice Nimmo Harkness's gold bracelet and places it in an evidence bag for forensic checking. Unknown to Malcolm, this bracelet has logged Alice's key medical data hour by hour, an automated bureaucratic process superior to the data which Malcolm sent to his Google Drive. This evidence bag also contains Harkness's remaining medications. Wendy takes a risk and palms two small bottles containing doses of morphine for which there is a ready market among her street contacts who provide her with marijuana. Peter does not see this as he is raking through the deceased's handbag, from which he removes a thick wad of cash which he will use to feed his gin and nicotine habits.

CIC do not advise the lowly Wendy that Malcolm's death has now also been listed as a DNC (Death from Natural Causes), to boost statistics.

With Alice tagged and stowed in the chilled morgue compartment of their van beside their haul of seventeen other corpses, they are ready to leave for the DMRTC. Before locking up and still in their protective suits, armed with smaller IKEA blue shopping bags, the pair wander side by side through the house, checking for booze, tobacco, illicit drugs and other easily disposable booty. At each discovered item, they adhere to their choose in turn arrangement. They are both expert at this type of search but watch each other warily to be sure they do not miss out on a find while trying to outguess each other over where to look next when it is their own turn to choose. Although they check the attic games room and see the accumulation of broken drones, they do not find the secret access to Malcolm's attic room.

In Malcolm's special wine cellar, built into an underground vault below an expensive Persian rug to the side of the long dining table, a lock which Peter easily defeats, they are surprised to find only a single bottle of red wine and two-thirds of a bottle of Tanqueray Gin. It is Peter's turn to choose first and he takes the gin. Wendy asks for a swap but Peter refuses. Neither is aware of the value of the Chateau Margaux. As they leave the deceased's home for the final time, in order to cover their tracks, Peter locks the back door and takes a time stamped picture with his mobile phone as evidence the premises were left secure as they leave. He then uses his jemmy to force open door and smash the alarm panel to make it look like an unauthorised B&E.

This is their last pick-up for the day. It is the end of their shift.

Peering through the downpour, the remaining Carrick Grange residents have watched the pick-up from behind curtains and venetian blinds. Using their latest WhatsApp group from which Malcolm and Alice are excluded, they agree the secretive Fraser-Scott couple have succumbed to *Morph C. Unsaid*, the general feeling is 'good riddance'. Alice, although snooty, she could also be kind but they feel well rid of the creepy Malcolm and his 'security' drones peering in through their windows under cover of darkness.

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Wendy and Peter go through their rigmarole inside the changing room, first disinfecting their suits before disrobing. At the DMRTC/CIC campus, they will shower and change into civvies. To curry favour, Wendy decides to donate her bottle of wine to the monthly CIC Booty Raffle run by her boss. Major Dave Sommerville realises the value of the wine and later substitutes a bottle of Romanian red from his stash. Peter drives off for Kelvindale in his ancient Fiat Panda and Wendy togs up and sets off for home wearing her special viz jacket, riding her e-bike. She is tired and irritable but a hot bath, a spliff and an aromatherapy massage from her partner will help her throw off the horrors she has to deal with day by day by day.

At the DMRTC/CIC campus, they shower and change into civvies. To curry favour, Wendy decides to donate her bottle of wine to the monthly CIC Booty Raffle run by her boss. Major Dave Sommerville realises the value of the wine and later substitutes a bottle of Romanian red from his stash.

Peter drives off for Kelvindale in his ancient Fiat Panda and Wendy togs up and sets off for home wearing her special viz jacket, riding her new e-bike, her final booty pick from Malcolm's garage.

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When the morgue van and trailer exit Carrick Grange they are being observed from Malcolm's tree house. As the barrier gate closes, a man shins down and crosses to the back door. He is wearing a black jogging gear and full balaclava but no PPE. He knows almost everything there is to know about the previous occupants and knows from their bio-bracelet data they were free from the virus.

In any case, Jonno Moston is protected by the pre-cursor *Morph C* wonder vaccine named *Resolve-C-Beta5*. This experimental vaccine was produced in a secret micro-lab at the Griffiths Observatory in the hills above Los Angeles. This project was being protected by Jonno's FBI team, at a time when Adrianna Eagleton was fading rapidly. Two days after her death, Special Agent Nat Moston, who was in overall charge of the security detail for the lab, was the first trials volunteer to receive the course of three injections, precisely timed at twenty-three minutes apart to match his age, health records and genetic profile.

This lab is one of hundreds around the globe funded by the BMGF (Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation). After a wrangle and several off-the-book payments, The GOL (Griffiths Observatory Lab) which authorised under a special licence issued by President Trump, almost his last flourish before 'resting' from public life. The design of the *Resolve C* vaccine was led jointly by the British duo, Professor Hugh Pennington and Sir Paul Nurse who shrugged off the constraints of the underfunded British research effort to base themselves in Los Angeles to personally design and oversee the roll-out trials. By hacking

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the research team's computer system during these early months before *Resolve C* was cleared for us, Moston believes himself to be bio-safe, immune.

Until five months earlier, Johnathon Moston worked for the FBI. Now he is freelance, out for himself. His decision to abscond arose from two causes, one personal, one professional. The first knock to his settled life was when his life partner Dr Adrianna Eagleton died of *Morph B*, still circulating unresolved alongside the newer *Morph C*.

The second trigger arose from the Washington Post's expose of Donald J Trump's illegal investments in the Hong Kong and Beijing Property Fund, following a secret deal with the Chinese Government, flaunting the very rules Trump had imposed in retribution on trade with China who he blamed for the original *Covid-19* outbreak. Trump's widely praised rules under his winning 2020 re-election campaign slogan "*Fight the Economic Virus War*" had embargoed USA registered companies from investing in China and Chinese companies.

After a period of denial, with the President Elect calling the Washington Post's measured attack as *just more fake news*, Trump eventually tried to shrug off the clear evidence of his \$3.2 billion China portfolio routed through the Cayman Islands as a *simple clerical oversight caused by a spreadsheet glitch*. It proved the final straw. After a two week media blitz, ahead of his inauguration the newly re-elected President Elect was forced to retreat from the front line of US public life in favour of his son-in-law Jared Kushner who was installed as his *Covid-EVP* (Executive Vice-President).

Before relocating from New York back home to Los Angeles to care for Adrianna, Special Agent Moston had been on secondment to The Big Apple, the FBI outsider chosen as lead investigator working undercover to ferret out evidence on the continuing irregularities of the Kushner family's New York and New Jersey property empire.

Before Nat took on the assignment, many other FBI Special Agents had been 'volunteered' but had declined. With Jared's rise to ultimate power, the word on the FBI grapevine was that EVP Kushner had put a Mafia 'hit' on Moston. With Adrianna gone, Nat Moston faked his own demise in a spectacular car explosion then used his international contacts in TDW to slip back into the UK to operate under the radar.

In his new undercover persona, former Special Agent Nat Moston is now James Jonathan (Jonno) Sanderson, using his great-grandfather's Christian names and his maternal grandmother's maiden name. He is expert at living under cover and has a full set of first-class forged documents to prove who he is and excellent references, all provided by a contact in MI6, for a price. While hiding out in Los Angeles during his research and preparation stage before his move back to Scotland, he easily infiltrated the T* Eagles group and has been lining up Alice and Malcolm and other wealthy residents in the BMZ for a hit.

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Using his passport and references, Jonno Sanderson works at the DMRTC/CIC campus. From mid-January, the cheerful, likeable, hard-working and always obliging Jonno rises to become third in the chain of command, deputy to Mrs Louisa Fernley who runs the CIC office team of twenty or so under Major Dave Sommerville who is in overall command of the campus. By volunteering, he is the CIC night supervisor. Nights are normally quieter which gives Jonno more scope to probe and hack DMRTC/CIC computer system and tweak it to serve his personal requirements. During this careful process, he uncovers secrets about Major Dave parallel skulduggery.

Inside the Fraser-Scott/Harkness mansion Jonno wears an infra-red headtorch with paired goggles and makes an immediate start, moving quickly, using his training. Within minutes he finds Alice's black book with her personal details, bank account codenames, login details, passwords. He knows not to use her devices which are monitored 24/7 by the SDF (Scottish Digital Forum). Using his own secured tablet computer, Jonno raids her three banks and pension savings, converting them to cash on TDW then transferring these liquid assets first to an account in Guernsey, where he splits the money into five tranches of different currencies before moving them to the Cayman Islands and onwards to an accounts in Zug, Switzerland, netting the equivalent of £839,082 after intermediate cut-out and special fees imposed by the chain of processing banks.

He checks the details of Alice's Living Will and decides to forward it to her solicitor. Unknown to Malcolm, during his time at Tulliallan, Jonno Moston and the gorgeous but borderline frigid Alice Harkness had enjoyed several weekends at the Gleneagles Hotel masquerading as a married couple. Alice had been Jonno's first ever married virgin but when released and stimulated, she had been very willing sex buddy although determined to be in charge and control every move. This had put him off and, in any case, since he had no wealth at that stage and could not the lifestyle she expected, he did not object when she scuttled back to her husband.

Jonno reckons the money from her share of the house should cover setting up and administering the educational trust in the name of Alicia Graham, a resident of New Cumnock, a place he knows well. Until the age of nine, Jonno Moston was brought up in the nearby village of Auchinleck. Jonno wrongly assumes Alicia is Harkness's secret love child.

Moving upstairs, Jonno soon finds Malcolm's attic man den. After a few minutes checking, he finds the back-up memory stick. It is password protected but he has a software on his tablet which unlocks it. It takes a further fifteen minutes to take Malcolm's sixteen million pounds in one million tranches through various cleansing and converting sites before finding a new home in a raft of numbered accounts in a different bank a few hundred paces from the previous Zug bank holding Alice's wealth.

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As a final act of revenge on the pompous, self-satisfied and barely competent Fraser-Scott, Jonno Moston uses Malcolm's laptop reserved for TDW to post his portfolio of secrets to the newsroom poster wall of video chat room run by the pathetic T*Eagles group. This salacious material includes his drone flight videos of sneak peaks into the bedrooms at Alice's tower block. The most damning are a series of nine stills taken in different rooms at *Belvedere* with a naked Malcolm Fraser-Scott on all fours being jockeyed by an enthusiastic Melany dressed in a variety of bikini tops and jockey caps, wearing stirrured riding boots, wielding a child's riding crop. Jonno could not know these staged shots had taken by Malcolm, for which he had paid Melany £1,500.

In his final act of digital housekeeping, he bares two wires, plugs in and switches on then zaps each of Malcolm's many devices in turn by applying a 240 V AC supply to the 12 V DC charging ports. Nothing of Malcolm's life online can exist without them.

Forty-seven minutes after entering the Fraser-Scott/Harkness residence, Jonno Moston leaves the shattered back door ajar, climbs into the treehouse, drops the ladder, rewinds it and makes his way around the perimeter to Drymen Road. In the rhododendron grove he dons his striped orange and yellow key worker viz vest and starts off a steady jogging pace, on schedule, in good time for his nightshift.

As he jogs, he picks up his pace, Jonno is due on shift at the at the DMRTC/CIC campus in thirty-eight minutes but if he is late, he will concoct an excuse. Louisa Fernley and her lover Major Dave usually leave up to an hour early and no one will think to challenge him of dare to log his late arrival. Moston is heading first to a small apartment at Bearsden Cross across the landing from the garrulous Sergeant John Daley. He needs to drop off his special tablet computer and will shower quickly and change into fresh clothes and drive out to the CIC office in John Daley's old Ford Focus which Jonno rents informally at mate's rates on nights when it is raining.

Breaking TFL rules, the two men have shared a few beers, watching archive football and talking of the good old days when The Bhoys won their first nine in a row and the European Cup. Like his neighbour, Jonno has observed The Bunny and The Major performing on the rare occasions when he calls in sick with phantom gout in his fingers. On these nights he dogs Daley's night patrol, noting their times and routes to be sure to avoid them during his graverobbing break-ins. As with most police patrols, they stick to a well-bedded routine hoping to avoid trouble.

Jonno is already moving on from his latest victims, thinking of the others on his list. Unknown to Major Dave and his odious girlfriend Fernley, Jonno has created a buffer system which holds the data logged by the other CIC operators until he has checked against his list and double-checked in case he missed something earlier. He has held back the information on Malcolm's demise from the central database. If the disappearance of Alice's funds is ever detected, this will be attributed to Malcolm, he hopes. In around six

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weeks' time, if there are no rumblings, Jonno plans to erase Malcolm Fraser-Scott entirely from the system when it will be as if the stuck-up schmuck had never existed.

James Jonathan Sanderson 'nee' Moston is now close to his minimum target of fifty million Sterling equivalent and plans to retire after TFL and live out his remaining years quietly in anonymous luxury. He is confident the *Resolve C* vaccine will soon release the world from the tyranny of *Morph C* and at sixty-five he reckons he has at least twenty-five years left to enjoy his wealth.

He has not yet decided precisely where he will settle, probably Switzerland. He has visited many times on holidays and for conferences and finds it a highly civilised place where efficiency and anonymity go hand in hand. With top-rate cosmetic surgery and his contacts in TDW, he will be able purchase residency and obtain a new, 'genuine' Swiss passport, the platinum standard for international travel which will allow him to visit anywhere he wishes, without hindrance.

During his time at the CIC, Jonno has discovered Major Dave Sommerville, using a process akin to his own, has acquired a £10 million nest egg, lodged in a Guernsey bank account. This has put Dave on Jonno's list, not just because of the amount of his illicit wealth but mainly because he is running a crooked staff lottery. However, Sommerville is slippery, ultra-careful. In his mind's eye, Jonno sees the TFL lockdown beginning to unfreeze by late summer 2021 which might be a good time to sneak up on Major Dave, when his guard is down. Meanwhile there will many other opportunities in the BMZ for Jonno to tease out further donations to his retirement fund.

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When Jonno found Alice's black book of codes, he knew not to tamper with her devices, aware her Internet and telephone traffic would be under constant surveillance. As a result, he missed the opportunity to read information of crucial interest to him, had he taken the time to study her emails, time he did not have.

IFM Kate Forbes has never met Alice Nimmo Harkness and knows only of her sterling work under Nicola Sturgeon. When Forbes was thrust into power, Alice had already departed for her Glasgow home due to ill-health. Forbes immediately replaced Harkness with her friend Dr Kieran Strang, a fellow Christian whom she first met at Cambridge University where he was an administrator. Strang is helping her draft the post-lockdown strategy which is aiming to re-shape a new ISE (Independent Scotland in Europe), guided by Nicola Sturgeon from Oslo. Forbes has suggested several times that Harkness be dropped from the Scottish Government Agency's ICE (Inner Circle Elite) but Sturgeon has point-blank refused and Strang has advised she drop the issue as Harkness is terminal.

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During the four months of her final decline and while Alice was unable to check and respond, the inboxes of her devices were daily recipients of classified and increasingly hopeful emails confirming the joint Scottish/British/US *Morph C* antidote vaccine under development by Pennington/Nurse in Los Angeles are proving successful. There is an expectation this new *Resolve C* vaccine will be rolled out by December 2021, perhaps earlier. The three-stage injection process timings are proving problematic but new techniques using robots are being developed to eliminate human error.

Three days before her death, Alice as a continuing member of ICE (Inner Circle Elite), she receives a group email from IFM Kate Forbes advising, in strictest confidence, both bad news and good news.

Problems with the Pennington/Nurse field trials in Los Angeles the *Resolve C* vaccine have arisen. The vaccine is withdrawn and production suspended pending further research into crucial timings of the injection process.

The good news is another Scottish study led by Professor Susie Ling from the GSUPG (Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Pharma Group) has generated a superior serum called *Anticovid® (Gamma 7)*. This is a combined PTV (Prophylactic and Treatment Vaccine), a one-shot remedy which has been and verified by the WHO (World Health Organisation) in secret trials carried out in 96 countries. These PTV trials have proved successful for all age groups, ethnicities and all major underlying health conditions eliminating not just *Morph C* but its forerunners still circulating the globe. The long sought after 'cure-all' for *Covid-19* and its morphs has been discovered by a Scottish research group.

Under licence, mass production of the serum is planned in a new built-for-purpose facility under construction at the SIPBB (Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne). This facility is being funded by the BMGF (Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation) and is to be named the BLIB (Buffet Life-Invest Building) in honour of the great man who left the bulk of his wealth to the BMGF on his passing to *Morph B* in the autumn of 2020. Production trials are scheduled to begin in early July with full scale production in August 2021. A priority batch of 10,000 phials of the serum is promised for early September and full global rollout completed by December 2021.

A gradual easing of TFL will commence in October 2021 with full release planned for Christmas 2021. Plans are being drawn up for a Weekend of National Celebration at Holyrood over the Easter weekend in 2022 as a launchpad for the delayed Scottish Government Elections to be rescheduled for July.

It is expected Ms Sturgeon will return to lead the country out of TFL (The Final Lockdown) and announce plans for the NNSGEI (New North Sea Green Energy Initiative) to be launched on the banner called, *Greening the North*. This will be a thrust against

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Westminster, supported by Oslo and the resources of the NGIF (Norway Global Investment Fund).

In an appendix, Ms Alice Nimmo Harkness QC and her registered carer Malcolm Fraser-Scott are listed in Cohort Alpha (3) and should expect to receive their self-injection kits and instructions by courier during the second week of September 2021.

In a further propaganda appendix, the Forbes document also praises the role of Ms Nicola Sturgeon who authorised repeated backing from the #IOO fund for Professor Ling and her team. This section provides a detailed briefing of her personal involvement in the process. Snappy extracts from archive speeches BTV are quoted in which Sturgeon voiced strong support for the innovation and expertise of the embryonic SPRI (Scottish Pharmaceutical Research Initiative) while pointing out, repeatedly, the historical contributions of hundreds Scottish Medical Scientists and Engineers, contributions dating back Scottish Renaissance continuing to the present day in the work of Susie Ling and her team. A folksy footnote adds that Nicola and Susie pupils together at Greenwood Academy in Dreghorn, Ayrshire and went up to Glasgow University, remaining firm personal friends, sharing a common interest in Christopher Brookmyre novels, enjoying the same tastes in New World wines, Mexican food and television wildlife series.

Buried in yet another appendix is a low-key synoptic news piece describing the international cooperative effort in progress to remedy the problems caused by the trials of the Pennington/Nurse *Resolve C Beta 5* version of the antidote vaccine. As part of this research effort Professor Susie Ling has taken a lead role. An outline the Ling research group provided, a team which works in a small tightly knit group from a world-leading facility located the West of Scotland Science campus on the Garscube Estate, (just off the Switchback Road, less than a mile from Carrick Grange).

Because the latest intelligence filtering back from Pennington in Los Angeles is somewhat alarming, Kieran Strang has insisted this snippet be include as a CYB (Cover Your Backside) back-up ploy. He has argued its inclusion will provide future wriggle room, should a disaster occur or, in the alternative, should the Susie Ling team achieve another breakthrough, Forbes will be able to point out the SGA had been instrumental in funding and supporting this endeavour from its outset.

There is no mention in this appendix or elsewhere of the intensive research focussed on the still comatose John Daley nor is it revealed the research team are working in total isolation, living on-site in emergency accommodation with physical and bio-security set at its highest level, protected by a DDSU (Dedicated Drone Surveillance Unit), a SPTF (Special Protective Task Force) drawn from the best of the CMA and Police Scotland with a standby team from the CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate) on site, should they be needed.

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At Carrick Grange, the rain has stopped and the night is humid, cool and misty. The thunderstorm is rumbling eastwards towards Edinburgh. The blackbirds, thrushes and wood pigeons are silent, too busy feeding on the worms raised by the heavy rain, while the light fades during the last hour before true sunset. Only the robins are proclaiming their territories, wheepling mournfully and intermittently into the gloom.

It is 7.03 pm when a dark grey Transit van arrives at Carrick Grange. The Fraser-Scott/Harkness household is dark, foreboding. The database assures her this dwelling is virus free but she is naturally cautious. After a short delay, a neat, medium height woman emerges from a sliding door dressed in highest quality disposable PPE. From a distance and because of her long-stride gait, Mrs Janice Bonnington nee Heatley might easily be mistaken for a man.

As a long-ago teenager, Janice Heatley had been trapped at home with her boy-mad sister Louisa, forced to listen to her tales of this new boy then another. Straight boys had never aroused Janice. The worm of desire for the right person had been suppressed until she escaped to university at Heriot-Watt to study chemical engineering, where, at last, she had been set free, able to explore her sexuality.

When she receives the emergency WhatsApp request to visit Carrick Grange from Edinburgh, a request made directly by Roddie McQueen, CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of the SDF, Janice is obliged to act immediately without prevarication, sensing an unstated urgency.

Why otherwise would he directly ask her instead of routing his request through an intermediary?

Currently, she is working as a Field Investigator for the SDF (Scottish Digital Forum), a task well below her previous status when she worked for the Sturgeon team. In this role, she is here to remove all computers and devices belong to Ms Alice Nimmo Harkness for off-site checking and subsequent destruction.

At one time, as Ms Janice Heatley, she had been a high-flyer in the Scottish Executive until she moved sideways to work as a fixer for the then First Minister's support team. This move, a political appointment, meant she was no longer a civil servant. Her move had been sponsored by her former husband who was a golfing buddy, drinking pal and confidante of Wee Eck.

Janice knows the rumours about Harkness, her on-off affair with the devious wimp Dr Kieran Strang and about her odd husband, the failed policeman with conflicted gay and bisexual tendencies. This is a position Janice Bonnington fully understands but she has no sympathy for the mega-rich Malcom Scott-Fraser. In her view, gay people must be

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resolute and pursue their pleasures wherever they can discretely and safely find them. Despite the rhetoric spouted publicly in support of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning), Janice believes at the secret heart of the Scottish government and its electorate, there is an overriding prejudice in favour of those with a normal white-with-white marriage, a view still dominant alongside a nervousness about socialising with neighbours and politicians who are of mixed race origin like herself.

To Janice, this explains why Alice Harkness and her dysfunctional husband remained together like limpets in their failed marriage, unable to face the muttered ridicule and scorn had they admitted the failure of divorce, the very unvoiced prejudice which has blocked her own progress at Holyrood since separating from her now dead husband.

Janice's marriage to the Rt Honourable Thomas Hamilton Bonnington CBE had proved to be a bad misstep. He was fifteen years her senior and owned half of East Lothian. Bonnington was the influential avuncular uncle figure of the SNP had been widely admired. In public, her mother Veronique had warmly approved, saying to all and sundry: "Thank God! With this marriage, my shy Janice has at last made her mark". To more intimate friends she had whispered, "What on earth does he see in her? My poor dear Eric, may he Rest in Peace, always thought she would choose a nice girl and get on with it".

To outsiders, Big Hammy was bluff, gregarious, generous and garrulous and, or so it had seemed, a soft, agreeable man and undemanding man. However, in his cups Bonnington was a callous brute, a sodomite and borderline sadist who was clever enough to leave Janice's face and other visible parts of her body unmarked. On the day after his first assault, he had apologised profusely, claiming what had happened was totally out of character and would never happen again.

Janice left him after the fourth assault but this time she had secret video evidence of her vicious beating. To buy her silence, she put her signature to a NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) in exchange for a one-off payment of £400,000 and the right to continue to use her married name. Even now, ten years after his death from an overdose of sleeping tablets, said to be accidental, 'Bonnington' still carries considerable sway in the hotbed of the Edinburgh political cognoscenti.

Officially, Janice and Hammy were amicably separated. To emphasize this, she moved her official residence back to Glasgow while retaining her one bed flat on Brandon Street near the Water of Leith at Cannonmills, on the artisanal fringe of the upmarket New Town.

This pied-à-terre had been purchased with a mortgage when she had first moved to Edinburgh from Glasgow. At that time, her simple room and kitchen with inside WC had been cheap, especially as it was three flights up a steep, spiral stairway in a dull, scruffy property occupied by noisy students. Gradually, as she crept tentatively onto the gay

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scene, she had remodelled it to incorporate a shower room, transforming it into her boudoir in an ideal, anonymous location, a place used to lure her special ones found in Edinburgh's pink and purple clubs and pubs. Over subsequent years, with the advent of Airbnb in the surrounding area, its value had risen sharply, a process stalled by the pandemic, creating a worry in her mind about the security of her flat and possessions, particularly her extensive personal video archive of her most enjoyable snares.

In the years since her separation from Hammy Bonnington, Janice worked hard to ingratiate herself as a political fixer for the new First Minister, making slow but steady headway as her new boss became gradually more isolated as her ministers and other advisors began to fail her one by one. When Ms Sturgeon absconded to Oslo, Janice realised at once she would have to get out, away from Ms Forbes, the wholesome evangelical Christian with her strict rules of right and wrong, a young woman who walked under the eyes of the Lord. Although she is now on the periphery of the SGA (Scottish Government Authority), Mrs Janice Bonnington believes her chance will come again and biding her time, but still unaware of the Forbes plans for the release of TFL and Sturgeon's triumphant return, information locked in the devices she has been sent to collect.

Under her holding plan, Janice called in a few favours to get an undemanding job with the SDT and moved from Brandon Street to three-bedroomed luxury apartment located within the NMGCZ (Newton Mearns/Giffnock/Clarkston Zone) also classified as a PPC (Protected Perimeter Community). In this move, which she expects to be temporary, she is now a lowly cog in the highly politicised SDF (Scottish Digital Forum), based at their Glasgow South HQ, at the Hampden Park Security Hub, the campus which controls the entire West Scotland Area with oversight of Major Dave Sommerville and his team DMRTC/CIC team in Milngavie, where her slut of a sister is the supervisor of the CIC team. By visiting Carrick Grange, Janice is operating in outwith her familiar area and is keen to get this task over and done with before Louisa gets wind of it and intervenes to try to cause trouble.

As she approaches the darkened Harkness home, Janice is annoyed and impatient. The WhatsApp call to her mobile arrived as she was about to enter a foam bath for a relaxing soak, part of her planned long, slow preparation for an online date scheduled for 9.00 pm.

In her dating profile, Janice is Ms Loretta Bradley, a divorcee of seven years, a professional lady with property who is earnestly seeking a loving and lasting relationship with a lusty, virile companion. She has withheld her age using a "??!!" icon and has insisted - *no time wasters, please!* Although Janice is forty-five, as Lorretta she plans to deduct ten years, perhaps more, if asked.

Her latest online lover is Alexios Alexopoulos who lives in the west coast harbour town of Oban. He is a recent widower to the virus with twin boys aged four. Loretta has told

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him she has always wanted a large family which sadly did not happen because her former husband had suffered 'problems'. Several times she has made a point of telling her latest target she is a primary head teacher who adores children, especially boys. She has dropped the baited hook twice, telling him she plans to sell up her grand penthouse flat at Kelvin Court in Glasgow's West End and move 'home' to Islay, away from the stress of frantic city living, a plan she will initiate immediately ATV (After the Virus).

Alexios is currently trapped in social housing, on breadline benefits, having lost everything when his 'fabulous' seafood restaurant overlooking the harbour was shut down in March 2020. Janice has looked up *Zorba's* on Google; it was a tiny fifteen-seater affair located in a backstreet.

Alexopoulos is from near Athens which she has visited once on a long weekend conference, part of the entourage on one of Wee Eck's conference junkets. Several times over she has listened with growing impatience to her new man's tales of woe arising from his 'big decision' to move his wife and family to Scotland. Perhaps he should have stayed on 'his' island of Psyttalia, he grumbles, a place he describes as a small fishing community off the coast of Athens, a close-knit community where they had been happy. Janice has looked up Google to discover this idyllic spot is dominated by the Psyttalia WWTP, the main wastewater treatment plant in the greater Athens area, receiving an average flow of approximately 730,000 m³/d making it one of the biggest sewage processing installations in Europe and worldwide.

Janice's Greek God is two metres tall, aged thirty-two, lightly bearded, athletic, has a soft hairy chest, a prettily handsome face, a winning smile and a long ponytail. After her assignment at the Harkness home, she will race home to Newton Mearns and prepare for their fourth online Zoom dinner date. So far she has not revealed her age and he has not asked and on each occasion she has steered the conversation away from her 'dull life', keeping Alexios front and centre stage to build his ego clearly damaged by his business failure and the loss of his wife. In her flat she has kept the lighting level low, using candles, scented to keep her in the mood during his long, complaining tirades. His only solace is keeping super fit, he tells her, demonstrating his push ups and sit ups for her.

On each ensuing date Loretta has dressed more provocatively, on the last date using dramatic tart-on-the-pull make-up with red lipstick, purple eyeshadow, big green lashes, a tight, plunging tees highlighting her small, unfettered boobs, flashing her smiles then pouting, licking her yogurt slowly from her spoon, letting it dribble onto her chin and then rescuing it with a pinkie back onto her lips, a pinkie which she sucks, suggestively. It is a variation of an overt seduction routine she has perfected during her many years in the Edinburgh gay scene.

Janice has coached him in how to behave, how to set up his phone at the right height, making suggestions about what he should choose from his limited wardrobe and,

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wonderfully, Alexios has responded, wearing a pink, sleeveless shirt, unbuttoned to display his rippling muscles to best effect, his strong legs sheathed in tight, tan-coloured chinos, lying back in his lounger, spreading his legs in display mode, proudly rubbing his hand over the trapped bulge, then standing boldly before his lens, releasing his ponytail, flicking his blond hair clear of his face to reveal his hungry blue eyes and blown kisses when their date comes to an end.

Janice has hammed up her story. She is longing to be back on Islay, to live on remote croft by a golden sand beach. This fine property had been her grandfather's, left to her as the only remaining Bradley. The croft has a pier, a seaworthy fishing boat and hundreds of creeling pots. The seas are filled with crabs, prawns and good-sized lobsters. There is a sizeable outbuilding which could be converted to a small restaurant. The potential is enormous, ATV.

Tonight, Janice is hoping at last to persuade Alexios to play strip pontoon, leading to greater online intimacy which she will secretly video for her archive. She has a good track record of success. So far, eleven men have agreed to perform to ejaculation in response to her cooing endearments. It is this voyeuristic witnessing of this act of self-pleasuring and abandonment which excites her, a legacy from her father when she was in control until she was displaced by her bitch sister. Janice has also had success with seven Thai and Filipino boy-girls, some as far away as Vladivostok, desperate to escape their brothels and make a new life in the West. As they always have done, these trans boy-girls intrigue Janice.

In lockdown, she has moved to the safety of searching online, once again toying with the notion there may be a future partner out there on the Internet who is also looking for her. Her ideal is a tall, willowy Scottish boy or girl with a pretty face and good teeth who would be gentle with her, provide she can find a clean one, free of addictions and other diseases.

One way or the other, after tonight she plans to dump the whining Alexios and move onto one of several others she has been carefully grooming. Next in line is a teenage girl from Dumfries called Lumina Bizimani whose parents were refugees from Rwanda. Lumina has a deep husky voice, plays soccer, pumps weights and is shy and alluring with gorgeous pink lips and excellent teeth revealed when she laughs at Loretta's jokes. As they have progressed to greater intimacy, Lumina has revealed her secret hoard of strap-on dildos and has talked openly of changing her gender. Her parents are strongly against and the teenager is desperate to escape and strike out on her own but cannot afford to make the move.

Leaving her van, Janice is anxious to complete her task at Carrick Grange and go home to shower, do her hair and make-up. She checks the front door and then moves to back door, finds it is ajar so does not need to use her jemmy. She is in and out in under fifteen

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minutes. Alice's husband's devices are not on her list. To her, he does not exist except as a rumour.

Had fate dealt her a different hand, perhaps a younger Janice Heatley might have made a suitable partner for ex-Chief Superintendent Malcolm Scott-Fraser, a man quite like her father Dr Eric Heatley.

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It is mid-August 2021.

The weather has been hot and dry since May, claimed to be the result of the shift in the Jetstream caused by the lack of atmospheric pollution due to the worldwide TFL still in force. All over Britain the ground is parched and brush fires have dominated the official news. Some fires are said to be some naturally occurring, others started by disgruntled teenagers sneaking out of lockup during the hours of darkness to start them in order to set ambushes during which they launch excrement and missiles from home-made potato gun bazookas using hairspray as their propellant. These attacks are aimed primarily at the hated CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate) but also at farmers, landowners or others who dare to attempt to douse the licking flames.

The moors around the Queen's View and The Whangie to the north of the DMRTC have been recently targeted, culling a population of unclaimed cats set free by Janice when Mrs Veronique Heatley MBE caught *Morph B* in the autumn of 2020 and died within two days due to her genetic disposition and poor lungs. In recent days, a pall of acrid blue smoke has drifted slowly over the BMZ, causing residents to remain indoors to protect their eyes and lungs.

Without Malcolm Scott-Fraser to tend them his gardens at Carrick Grange have become a miniature wildlife jungle dominated by rosebay willow herb. The tree house is now a home to a squirrel family, a swallow's nest and two ball-like hives of wasps.

Since April, the business of death and disposal has ramped up again over recent months. In response to the rising death toll from the virus, Kenny's convoys are making four runs a week from Kinloch-FIT to DMRTC where the CIC team has been enhanced from twenty to twenty-five, everyone dressed in high-quality PPE. Two of the three air conditioning units have failed and everyone is worn out, hot, sticky and irritable.

Jonno Sanderson has been off work for three days, gout in his hands again, he claims but is now back at his post. From the outset, he has preferred to sit at the back of the room, near the door. Louisa is on the small raised platform behind a screened, wrap around desk with her head and shoulders only visible to all the operators. Behind and above her is the rolling digital display of the automated call monitoring system showing calls in progress, numbers on hold and calls waiting. This display mirrored on large desktop screen which shows various links including the feed of similar data from the Hampden Hub, The Mothership, as Dave calls it, where her sister Janice works.

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It is late afternoon and Louisa is looking forward to going off shift. This is perhaps the best part of her working day, the time when she always gets a lift by thinking to the evening ahead. She raises her laptop screen to vertical to shield her face and closes her eyes behind her thick tinted glasses, spreads her legs and eases up her mini skirt. She has excellent legs, her best feature and likes to display them. Hidden behind her desk, she slips her hand down to rub gently, projecting to the evening ahead.

Twenty minutes after logging out, she plans to enjoy a long hot shower, shaving her underarms, legs and lower, irrigating gently to heighten her mood. Stepping from the shower she will pamper dry with soft towels then puff spicy talc before attaching her pleasure rings and studs, one ring and one teardrop stud for each boob. Using a mirror, she will check her Nefertiti studs and apply a soothing antiseptic gel if required. Finally, she will check her anal ring, a recent toy which has a four-carat pink diamond stud.

This was a lockdown Christmas present from Dave who did the piercing and nursed her swollen flesh back to normality with antibiotic injections. She thinks of this as their 'engagement ring'. It has proved to be a magnificent success, leading them to a new world of pleasure which, before Dave, Louisa had always resisted but now enjoys wholeheartedly with Dave's revelation it is he had been dreaming of since they met.

Louisa is feeling the pull of India and plans joss sticks with haunting music from Ravi Shankar. Fully naked she will shimmy and glide around an equally naked Dave, touching his piercings as if by accident, cooing and begging until he relents and pours her a large goblet of rich red wine, chosen to match his authentic ragù alla Bolognese served on tortellini; always tortellini, never spaghetti, she has learned. Dave is good in the kitchen and considers himself to be a cordon bleu chef and an expert sommelier. For Louisa, this is another windfall, as she hates cooking.

She is now reaping the rewards of her patience. It took her several months of OTT praise about his bedroom performances to make him willing to adopt home nudism. After this breakthrough, he was released, enthusiastically. It was from that point her satisfaction rating rose from good to excellent as they progressed as sex partners, with Dave at last becoming fully engaged as a willing 'victim' in her dominatrix *Fifty Shades of Grey* lovemaking fantasies. To be fair to Dave, his manhood is commendably impressive and in vigorous working order. At twenty-seven, released by her wiles, he is in his sexual prime.

At forty-four with three previous failed marriages and many other try-out partners, Mrs Louisa Fernley is in no doubt; in Major Dave Sommerville, she has at last found her perfect man, a man who is good in bed, malleable to her requests and clever too. She knows the basics but not the details of his pension scheme and is looking forward to living a life of luxury, ATV. With the recent horrible news of new strain of *Morph C-hybrid* virus on the loose, her clever Dave has revealed his intention to proceed with an escape

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plan and move them to New Zealand, one of very few places worldwide which has remains virus free.

They have nothing to keep them in Scotland. Dave is an orphan, raised in a series of abusive residential homes where he was sodomised by priests. For Louisa, there is only her Janice. The sisters have hardly spoken since the bust-up over the sale of their mother's cottage from which Louisa received a mere £8,532 and a long and complicated explanation from Janice about a codicil her father Eric had signed over to the bank of America to release 74% of the capital a year before his death, disappointing information kept from them both by Veronique.

In TDW (The Dark Web), working at home on his on his unregistered laptop, Dave has found a Swiss vendor with impeccable credentials who offers a relocation package comprising a complete medical screening and certification process followed by sealed sterile air cabin flight in a private jet. This jet will fly them directly from Scotland and, with short fuelling stops it will land them in New Zealand at another secret airport where they will be disembarked with 'genuine' a NZ passports and cover documents. Dave has told her these flights cost £4 million per couple which he has boasted he can afford with plenty to spare.

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In the luxury apartment block towering above Westerton Station, Wendy and Peter wait in the corridor outside the sixth-floor apartment of Dr Sally McAnespie's flat where she is registered as a sole occupant. Wearing their biohazard suits they cannot sense the last traces of the rank odour which has given rise to months of complaints from other occupants. This smell and the swarms of flies around the window of her bedroom, have caused Sally's neighbours to complain repeatedly to CIC (Collection and Interment Control) at Milngavie.

The occupant does not respond to her doorbell. Although Wendy is almost certain the woman is dead, she is following protocol. Over their months together, Wendy and Peter have experienced a great many bizarre situations, including people who have the kept decaying remains of pets with them, unwilling to give up their soul mates, frequently sharing their beds with them despite the stench and maggots until they too have passed away.

Wendy is waiting for a WhatsApp from Milngavie authorising them to B&E.

Peter is back on his nicotine chewing gum again. They are both under stress from overwork. There has been another local spike in the death rate in the MRA (Maryhill Residential Area) and they had been assigned to assist even though the BMZ deaths are up to around fifty per day. On the grapevine, they hear the NMG CZ (Newton Mearns/Giffnock/Clarkston Zone) is also suffering an uplift in collection numbers.

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Since May, Wendy and Peter have been working back to back shifts, twelve hours on, twelve off, four days on, one day off. The CIC office team are not coping and sometimes they are forced to wait for up to an hour for responses, making the corpse collection system even slower. To defend herself from the irritating smacking noise from his toothless gums, Wendy turns away, switches off her internal mic and headphones and wanders along the corridor to stare down to the car park, where she homes in on the soft-top.

Wendy, who completed her nurse training at Caledonian University School of Nursing and has recognised Sally McAnespie's name from the WhatsApp voucher. She remembers a younger Sally in her prime, as their Visiting Examiner, parking in her yellow Porsche Boxster in a VIP bay at the main entrance. From a crowd of other admirers, Wendy watched the woman slinking cat like out of her car wearing a lavender coloured, figure-hugging cashmere trouser suit, perhaps the sexiest older woman Wendy has ever seen. Enraptured, Wendy had followed the slender figure as McAnespie bounded up the run of steps to the entrance on pale green pumps. Sighing, Wendy reruns a youthful fantasy of slipping under the sheets with the gorgeous Eurasian woman.

On each visit to GCU this open top Porsche was the object of adoration for many students, always attracting a gaggle who stood around it, dreaming of one day being rich enough to own one. Wendy still hopes to pass her driving test but has failed four times. She wonders if she might take the Porsche's keys from the flat and, ATV (After The Virus), collect the car if it is still there.

For Wendy, ATV is a newly recycled acronym which has become more prevalent again over recent months, despite the rise in deaths. The rumour at CIC is a vaccine has been discovered but The Major has been adamant this must not be discussed as rumours might spoil everything by encouraging people to break TFL (The Final Lockdown) curfew before enough stocks of the vaccine can be built up. The good news on the scuttlebutt is CIC staff will be among the first to receive it, starting with volunteers from the office team, Major Dave's 'nearest and dearest' as he calls them.

However, from the Hampden Hub there is a frightening counter rumour. A new upsurge plague has reached Britain known as *Morph 3-hybrid*, a man-made virus set free in an accident from a laboratory in Los Angeles where they were trying to make an antidote for *Morph 3*. According to the Hampden CIC teams, only 2% who catch this *Morph 3-hybrid* virus have a chance of survival. In the early stages until the virus takes full control of its host the virus can play dormant for days or weeks with the hosts are asymptomatic until it flares and the victims die very quickly, within minutes.

The occasional bizarre characteristic marker, occurring with about 8% of victims of the *Morph 3-hybrid*, is a purple-pink rash which blooms on neck and head within minutes of death before fading gradually over the next few hours. The effect has been gruesomely

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dubbed *the plague death mask*. Informally, the Hampden Hub teams say this new hybrid virus is circulating alongside the pre-existing *Covid-19* and its true, natural morphs but they are only allowed to classify it as *Morph C-hybrid* if they spot the plague death mask on the victim the deaths, otherwise the deaths are classified simply as "Covid".

Hoping to be long gone when the new virus reaches the BMZ, Dave has only shared the snippet of information with Louisa about the plague death mask. To date, Wendy and Peter have not seen this rarity and although the Hampden Hub CIC teams have been warned to look out for this at pick-ups, the DMRTC/CIC teams under the control of Major Dave have not been officially briefed to look out for it and there is an informal sweep running for the first collection team to spot it.

From the corridor window, Wendy thinks she can see her flat in the distance but it will hours yet until she is home to enjoy a pint of gin topped up fifty-fifty with fresh orange, the kind with the juicy bits. Wendy, who is thirty-seven, lives in a rented flat in Knightswood (she hates the term KRA). To get this flat, she paid a £3,000 purchase-option deposit to the bank which repossessed the property from the estate of an elderly lady who died of dementia in December 2019 when *Covid-19* was circulating in the UK undetected. Wendy paid her deposit on Friday 31 January 2020, the day The Brexit Leavers got their way and Westminster finally signed off the UK Withdrawal Agreement flaunting the democratic will of the Scottish people. Wendy is a fervent SNP Remainer and now Britain is out, she hopes Scotland will re-join the EU through Sturgeon's proposed coalition with Norway, ATV.

Inconveniently, her deposit is non-refundable which clashes with their latest plan. Wendy lives with Alesha Kapoor. Alesha, twenty-two, is a hair stylist and beautician who is drop-dead gorgeous and amazing in bed. Wendy feels lucky to have her. Alesha is also a superb cook who eats like a horse and never puts on an ounce. Wendy has always struggled with her weight and she is up by thirteen kilos since the first lockdown in March 2020 when Alesha finally moved in full-time when her older sister and her Scottish husband left for Tenerife.

Wendy met Alesha in November 2019 BTV when the girl joined the *Rainbow Room* in Bearsden as a trainee straight from the *City of Glasgow College*. Wendy had been at the Rainbow Rooms for several months moonlighting from the NHS as a Botox technician, using her nurse's qualification to obtain a licence to inject, saving hard for a place of her own. The *Rainbow Room* franchise is now defunct and Alesha is totally dependent on Wendy. When things get back to normal ATV (After the Virus), they plan to marry and set up a beauty and massage salon in Tenerife, where the extended Kapoor family live.

Alesha is keen to adopt a child to bond them but Wendy thinks a donor-sperm child would be better. Neither of them are willing to risk being the mother. They bicker about this constantly. Alesha wants to get a dog but Wendy has forbidden it. Wendy has never liked

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dogs and has fibbed to Alesha saying contacts between dog walkers are known to be a major vector for virus transmission.

Instead, they have a cat, a Scottish Fold which they call Natasha. The cat is quite young, a rescue orphan from a house in Milngavie. To keep Peter quiet when the family complained about the missing cat, Wendy had to bribe him, granting him ten first choices from their booty hunts. BTV, Scottish Fold kittens were selling £800. In lockdown, on eBay, they can fetch upwards of £4,000. Wendy, who is slightly allergic to Natasha's hairs, wants to sell the cat before TFL is ended to compensate for her loss of deposit; she is holding back on revealing her idea because it would set Alesha off on one of her weepy sulks.

As Wendy and Peter wait on the B&E voucher via WhatsApp, back at CIC, Jonno Sanderson checks the data, visits Sally McAnespie's bank accounts. This action is more out of habit than intention, given his pending departure. After a further check on her contacts, he finds nothing of interest and finally issues the B&E coupon to the bossy, and butch Wendy McClure.

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Over the previous week, Jonno has been suffering from a combination of high pollen count and thick smoke from the brush fires on the moors nearby. This makes him wheezy and sneezy but he called earlier to Fernley to volunteer himself for an extra half-shift. He needs to monitor the whereabouts of Major Dave and Louisa Fernley during these last crucial countdown hours before he makes his escape.

During his first break-in to Dave's flat three days earlier, after an extended sneezing from their spent joss stick fumes, Jonno finds and copies Dave's secret list of Guernsey and Isle of Man account numbers and passcodes, these printed on a folded A4 sheet slipped inside a well-thumbed copy of the Kama Sutra which he photographs. Dave hold cash in US Dollars, Euros and Sterling. Later, back at his flat, curious at slippery Dave's lax security and working with his special tablet, Jonno visits Dave's three linked Guernsey accounts and notes the transfer of amount greater than £10,000 equivalent are blocked. He suspects Dave has enabled touch id from his Apple Notebook. Confident he will defeat this trap by revisiting the Roman Court flat to claim Dave's Notebook and use it for the transfers, Jonno initiates his escape plan.

The first step is to make an anonymous of \$1 million non-refundable charitable donation to an Isle of Man account. By return he is given his unique code (sHaNkLy@127) and a mobile number. On WhatsApp he uses this code and receives his sealed instructions which also require his unique coded to open them. As directed, he submits a sputum test by special registered delivery to a Liverpool area Royal Mail PO Box.

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From noon on the following day he checks the Schweizer Reise-Franchise site on the TDW every few hours and starts to fear he has been scammed.

Today, at six am he learns his sputum test has been accepted. He has been cleared of viral contamination and is free to travel. The next payment is due within three hours.

When Major Dave and Louisa depart from Roman Court for the DMRTF/CIC campus, Jonno slips into their pungent love nest and to remove Dave's Apple Notebook and Kama Sutra list. Using his infra-red headtorch and matched goggles he collects HD (High Definition) fingerprint and handprint images using a special FBI photo-gun, a camera cum projector.

Back in his own flat he notes tricky Dave has changed his passcodes. Using his FBI photo-gun, by trial and error, he overrides Dave's sophisticated trips and uses Dave's Apple Notebook to pay his second \$2 million charitable donation from sHaNkLy@127@, this time from one of Dave's Guernsey pension fund accounts. After transfer of the remainder of Dave's savings to Zug, Jonno's pension funds balance is £57 million equivalent.

The final \$5 million travel agent donation will be paid to a contact when he arrives in Switzerland. He has been warned this money must be paid by bank transfer within thirty minutes of arrival in order to receive his new temporary papers and safe passage to the clinic where he will be kept anonymously until he has healed from his surgery after which his permanent papers will be prepared and he will be free to operate under his new identity.

Within an hour of paying his second \$2 million instalment, by WhatsApp his travel agent confirms his departure code is "Miriam@127@@". A second WhatsApp gives his sealed instructions which he opens with this new code. As James Jonathan Sanderson is cleared to fly tonight from Cumbernauld Airport departing at 10.00pm, when it will be fully dark. Jonno studies the route and estimates the jet will make a low altitude, high-speed transit eastwards across North Sea where he should arrive in around two hours to be met by "Stefan@127@@@". Jonno has all his details transfer details set up on his tablet computer which means all he requires to do is apply his right and left handprints and his right thumb and left index finger stored in his FBI photo-gun. This must be done in the correct sequence after which the \$5 million final payment will be authorised.

He spends the next few hours cleansing the Bearsden Cross flat professionally, washing bedclothes and clothing items he will no longer need while wiping down with disinfectant and bleach. After lunch he gathers all his gear into a larger rucksack which he stashes in John Daley's tired old Honda CRV and heads out to the CIC office. To square the circle on Major Dave and his booty lottery scam, Jonno has prepared an **exposé** with attached spreadsheets which he plans to email to the every member of the CIC team when the

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lovebirds leave for the evening after which he will leave for his pick-up. Sneaky Dave's name will be mud forevermore.

John Daley's car which is still in registered in the system. Details are scarce but Moston has gleaned his old friend is still holding out against the virus and has been moved to a special isolation ward for research purposes.

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In the corridor of the Canniesburn apartment block, Wendy feels her mobile phone vibrate and checks. The B&E voucher is authorised. Peter is expert at B & E and neutralising alarm systems. He claims he was a technical advisor for the SAS but Wendy doubts it. He is as old as her father who was a bus driver on the Oban/Glasgow run. Harry McClure thought he was invincible until the *Morph A* took him.

She turns and signals to Peter to uses his slim, flexible jemmy and the door lock is easily defeated without damage. It swings inwards and a swarm of tiny black flies swirl around him like a mist and move off in a cloud away, towards the far end of the corridor. Wendy switches on her comms headset and follows him into the flat. Despite being hardened by the work she does, Wendy shudders at what she might find of the beautiful woman who lived behind the canary yellow door.

On entry, Peter quickly disables the alarm which has been pulsing quietly, a pre-alarm. In the silence of the lounge, Sally's decayed and shrivelled corpse awaits. Another cloud of black flies rise and swarm. Peter sprays with a powerful insecticide and over a short period the dead flies tumble to the floor. During the short wait, they wait, they survey the scene. Not for the first time, Peter takes record photographs on his phone and attempts to send them to CIC. This is childish behaviour and Wendy wags finger at him for encroaching on her territory. His mobile number is not on the list of ASIs (Authorised Site Investigators), the CIC firewall bounces his WhatsApp message as a possible cyber incursion.

Between them. Wendy and Peter conclude there has been no foul play. It is not the first accidental death tableaux they have seen although they cannot read the victim's trauma and suffering from its runes.

On the evening of 30th March 2021, paralysed by her fall from wobbly ladders while changing a light bulb, Sally hovered on the edge of consciousness, blood oozing from a head wound. Within hours, flies and the occasional wasp arrived to torment her. Many hours later she had seen the drone and the brief series of dots and dashes spelling out M-A-L-C-O-L-M. Thankful she was pain-free, she had pinned her hopes on him, certain he would risk breaking the curfew and come to help her. During periods of wakefulness, she had wept with frustration, unable to stretch her hand by the necessary distance to

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reach her mobile phone and medications which had tumbled from the upturned coffee table to fall under her longer, out of reach.

It had taken three further three days from the Malcolm's drone visit for Sally's body to give up the fight. Without her bowel cancer pills, recurring bouts of diarrhoea had induced dehydration causing irreparable damage to her liver and kidneys, freezing her brain into a final, peaceful coma.

Wendy and Peter examine the desiccated remains. Based on their findings, Wendy, sends her authorised photos to CIC by WhatsApp, adding her opinion that Sally McAnespie's COD (Cause of Death) was from an ADF (Accidental Death from Fall), wrongly estimating this event occurred in June 2021.

At the CIC office, Louisa Fernley, as duty ROD, (Registrar Of Deaths), accepts this verdict gladly but changes the DOD (Date Of Death) to 3 August 2021 to help counter a new surge of deaths, hoping to quell recent suggestions from her team who have heard whispers there might now be a *Morph C-hybrid* version of the virus in circulation. Soon she and Dave will be out of this mess and it will be someone else's problem.

She frowns then smiles behind her hand, remembering her try-out boyfriend before Dave, the brutish man who had taken her *Fifty Shades of Grey* fantasies to extreme, slapping and punching her into submitting to oral sex which she hates. Under her breath she whispers: *Let's hope Morph C-hybrid gets you Robbie Fernley, you bastard.*

She turns to have a word with Jonno who has his face mask off, blowing his nose. She is about to call out to tear him off a strip and send him home when the door bangs open and Dave staggers past Jonno into the room, sinks to his knees and sprawls face down, motionless. Before she can reach him, his face and neck bloom, turning a bright pink red colour. Colour drains from her face, her throat is dry, her head is pounding, her legs are heavy.

In the distance she hears the screams of panic but she is no longer in charge of herself. Believing she too is doomed, her mind freezes then rewinds to a holiday with her parents, camping by a beach at Arisaig and the events which led her astray. Her mother's hissed words sound in her ears when she is hauled from her parent's tent and slapped and pushed into the tent she shares is forced to share with the spiteful Janice who puts earwigs and other beasties inside her sleeping bag.

Caught in the act, coorried down inside her father's sleeping bag, she had been roughly hauled away with the imprecation:

"You, Louisa Heatley, must mend your ways or you will burn in Hell's fire. How could you do that to your poor, dear father?"

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Her mind rewinds further, to the origin, the year before at the same isolated camping spot, where her father has been coming since he was a boy.

It is the just after dawn, not fully light on the morning after a huge storm. The sky is heavy but the wind has dropped and it is warm. She is eleven years old, wearing her new frilly nylon one-piece swimming costume, walking along the steep white sand beach alone. She has been warned repeatedly of the danger from the fierce undertow. Waves as high as the walls of their cottage at home are rearing above her then crashing onto the beach in a relentless, mesmeric cacophony which blots out everything else. She imagines she is a sea princess, a mythical Selkie. As the waves recede to build again water rushes away from her, dragging with it a wash of sand mixed with tiny white pearl-like crystalline stones which she stops to peer at through her thick glasses. She will claim these stones to make her tiara and feels herself being drawn forwards to scoop these stones before they escape.

She is poised, ready to race after the next receding wave, when Janice garbs her arm and drags her back from the edge and slaps her face, causing her glasses to fall into the sand at her feet.

Over the previous year, the gawky Louisa has sprouted, filled out with boobs to match Janice's. The sisters are well-matched physically. They fight for supremacy, gouging, biting and kicking. The fight goes on for ages and their screaming and cursing rises above the din of the surf and wakens their parents. Louisa's expensive spectacles are smashed beyond repair.

Both girls defend themselves and, as usual, it is the more articulate Janice who wins. Louisa who is singled out for punishment by Veronique who skelps her harshly on the back of their legs and buttocks with a thin belt. Veronique and Janice go off to the shop five miles away to buy rolls and milk for breakfast, Janice riding in triumph on her father's racing bike, as a treat.

As soon as they are out of sight, Louisa slips out of her scuffed and torn costume and enters her parent's tent where Eric is kneeling beside his sleeping bag, wearing only his pyjama top. It is a familiar routine which she has come to enjoy more in recent months. She lies down and he kneels over her and applies Germolene to her weals. He has soft and gentle hands which feather over her. She rolls over into his sleeping bag and they zip themselves inside to kiss and cuddle and play their secret game of tease the snake.

Louisa is called back to the present reality in the CIC office, the screams and blasting of horns outside penetrate her mind. Moving like an automaton, she moves back to her desk and presses the luminous yellow emergency evacuation alarm button.

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The room is clearing fast. Jonno, first out, runs to Daley's car. In the melee, he seizes his opportunity, and passes without challenge through the security gate by tagging onto the rear of Sergeant Kenny Graham's convoy. When the convoy turns right for Glasgow, Jonno hauls his wheel round, puts his foot down and heads north for Drymen, away from the debacle. Excited, he drives fast. On the edge of Cumbernauld, he waits hidden in a copse of trees with a good view of the deserted airport. He has just short of three hours to wait. There is a light breeze. The air here is clear. He opens the window, rakes his seat back, sets his watch alarm for 9.20 pm, lies back and tries to shut out the scenes of chaos he has just witnessed. He too has heard the rumours of a possible new virus but is still confident he virus free, as his recent sputum test has proved.

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As Jonno passes through Drymen, Louisa is alone in the CIC office, slumped in her chair on the podium. She stares down at Dave's corpse. Her head reels and her stomach heaves at the thought of their early morning sex romp.

Amid the euphoria of his fantastic news, whispered the details of his plan for their escape to New Zealand and his revelation of the stunning amount in his Guernsey accounts, she had defied her mother's imprecation and treated the clever Dave to a blow job, the full works. Unlike Robbie, Dave had not forced her and she had conceded to his tender but insistent request, behaviour which had reminded her so much of her gentle and loving father, the only man who had ever truly loved her, and his softly whispered endearments as he cradled her afterwards: *Thank you, Louisa, my wonderful, beautiful, secret princess, my special gift from God.*

Outside, the only sound she can hear is from the incessant pumps and the rattling wheels of the elevator belts. She glances outside and the DMRCT plant is deserted, even the CMA detachment has fled.

Gradually, her rational mind starts to function. Using her touchless thermometer, she checks her temperature and is surprised it is normal. She puts on the wrist cuff and presses the button. The screen shows her heart and blood pressure traces are normal. The spark of hope ignites: can it be she has natural resistance to this latest virus as she appears to have had to its forerunners, having always passed every test as CLEAR?

Calmly, deliberately, she selects every important personal item which she packs into her rucksack. Whatever is ahead for her, she has no intention of coming back to the DMRTC, not ever. She knows where Dave's laptop is and his code book back at Roman Court. Can she access the money? Can she find the site on TDW and arrange her relocation to New Zealand by herself, start again? Unlike the clever Janice, Louisa has never been good with computers. Maybe, if she gets stuck, she will ask her to help.

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Louisa gives his corpse a wide berth and makes her way to the open-air toilet block where she unlocks her personal Portaloo, a perk authorised by Dave. She hovers to pee and then washes her hands with biocide, three times over. In the car she sprays and wipes down thoroughly. The Jaguar F-Pace is Dave's, supposedly from money received when his father died, a cover story to quash the jealousy which it caused among the other ranks. Louisa has not been allowed to drive it before. She is not a good driver. Because of her poor eyesight and thick glasses, she had never been proficient. Her last car was an old left-hand drive Smart car which 'expire' five years earlier.

At the Roman Court flat, she searches for hours, taking the place apart. There is no laptop, no code list. The only explanation she can think of is Janice the lesbian has beaten her to it, stolen Dave's money. It is like the money from the cottage all over again.

Disregarding the curfew limit, Louisa sets in the murky gloom caused by the brush fires and heads for Newton Mearns. The car is too powerful for her. As she approaches the Clyde Tunnel a youth with a home-made potato gun bazooka fires a solid wad of human faeces at the speeding car and scores a lucky hit.

Automatically, the windscreen wipers start on high speed. Louisa, unable to see through the smeared glass does not know how to enable the powerful screen washers. Panicking, she hauls on the steering wheel which has power-assist. With her foot hard down, the speeding car careers across the inside lane and races up the grass verge towards the Clydeside Expressway, smashing through bushes and small ornamental trees until it smashes to a standstill when it hits a high-voltage electrical control box near the base of a floodlighting column.

The seatbelts and air bags deploy. Louisa is stunned but uninjured. Her glasses are lost somewhere in the footwell, she thinks. Afraid and disoriented, in flight or fight mode with adrenalin coursing through her bloodstream, her foot is still pressing hard down on the accelerator. The engine whines at high revs pulsing huge amounts of power to the auto gearbox which is 'hunting', struggling to satisfy the accelerator's demand to drive the car ahead. The pressure of the bonnet against the electrical cabinet's is being resisted by holding down bolts which tear out of the concrete base.

The car rides up over the cabinet, climbing to a crazy angle. Louisa removes her foot. The car rolls backwards. To counter this frightening situation, she reapplies throttle and the Jaguar crunches upwards over the cabinet once again. The vehicle is at a precarious angle but the seatbelt holds her firmly. She fumbles but cannot get her door to open. The doors are auto locked, a feature designed to enhance the shell of the safety box which protects her. The engine stalls, the vehicle hovers for a few moments then slides backwards before toppling sideways and rolling onto its roof. The diesel fuel lines have ruptured and the exterior coated with slick of fuel. Within a minute the car is a blazing inferno.

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From high in a tree on the perimeter of nearby Victoria Park which flanks the entry to the Clyde Tunnel, fourteen-year-old Tommy Ingram captures it all on his phone then races back to his Whiteinch pals to boast of his first 'kill'.

In due course the ashes of Mrs Janice Fernley will be logged by the Hampden Hub as an RTA death, victim unknown.

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It is 8.30 pm and Jonno Moston is ready to move to the edge of the runway. He is wearing his balaclava, dark clothing and trainers. All personal his personal items, his tablet and FBI gun are in a small rucksack which he wears on his across his chest. He has dumped his other unwanted gear down a surface drain manhole, near the car. He has a weapon, a plastic-bodied Glock 33 which holds 9 rounds of 0.357" modified armour piecing shells. Despite his forebodings, he has left this weapon in the boot of Daley's car, stowed beside the spare wheel. The instructions from Schweizer Reise-Franchise were specific: *persons carrying weapons will be rejected without refund.*

Jonno crouches behind a hut at the perimeter of the field, looking east. He is surprised when he hears the aircraft approach from the west. It is showing no lights. The small, boxy twin-prop aircraft lands expertly and turns at the eastern end of the runway and waits, pointing west, not east towards Switzerland. Jonno does not like what he is seeing but assumes there must be a reason. As he runs towards the plane, the side hatch opens. There are no steps. A man jumps down onto the tarmac. He is wearing PPE and urges Jonno forward.

As Jonno reaches the plane, the PPE man pulls Jonno's balaclava off, shines a torch, peers at him closely and bundles him towards the hatch. The hold is open, empty, no seats, utilitarian, not luxurious. Jonno hauls himself up onto the metal floor and as he pushes up onto his knees, the blow comes from behind. The PPE man climbs in, the plane is already moving and takes off into the gloom, heading south west, not east.

Jonno's world is black.

When he comes round, the jet is wave hopping at 200 metres altitude. Jonno is naked, wrapped in cling film with a slit at his mouth to allow him to breath, through a mask. His hands and legs are firmly bound with cable ties which are cutting into his skin, cutting off his blood flow. He sees a 50 kg bag of concrete contained in a fine plastic fishing net mesh attached with blue cord to his neck. His hands are covered in ink, used to double check his identity. Jonno understands what has happened and hopes his end will be quick.

The PPE man is a woman, who speaks with a slow, confident, soprano Liverpool accent:

Right, sunny boy, yeess have one chance to make it painless. How do we access this wee tablet?

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She is thirty-two-year-old woman called Orla Walsh Feeney. She is the Deputy Leader of the New IRA, Derry Contingent, responsible for Intelligence and Finance.

Jonno shakes his head and the huge bear of a man called Conner Dooley reaches from behind and garrottes ex-Special Agent Nat Moston while Orla films the deed on her phone as additional proof which she will use to claim payment for the Mafia hit. In the immediate aftermath of his death, his head and neck flare a bright crimson colour but this remains a mystery to Orla and her team.

She continues to film as the twin-prop slows and Jonno's corpse is heaved out to drop into the sea near Ailsa Craig.

Orla has a PhD in computer science from ICL (Imperial College London). Her recruitment to the cause began when she got six straight A-Levels at her first sitting aged only sixteen. From that stage, her further studies were paid for by her a man she met only once, her adoptive 'uncle' who called himself Lionel Walsh. She remembered his face and after months of searching Google images, she discovered he was Leo Malachy, a prominent Boston businessman whose Italian wife Franca Vignola's brother Sergio is head of the New York Mafia and a close friend of the Kushner family.

Although she does not yet understand Moston's odd camera cum projector, she is confident she will figure out how to defeat the man's peculiar no-name tablet computer and discover the rest of his wealth which she will claim for herself. Like Jonno and many others she has been stashing away her own secret funds which she plans to use, she plans to use, ATV, to start a new life with Connor. She has been researching Stewart Island (Rakiurain) off the tip of South Island New Zealand where they plan to raise rare breed sheep and live simply, anonymously, free of constant and fear and intrigue.

The money is eventually winkled from Jonno's accounts in Zug to a bank on the Isle of man, under Orla's control. While she plans her escape with Connor, the Morph 3-hybrid virus strikes New IRA cell and the entire group are wiped out while the virus makes inroad to wider population in the new integrated Ireland.

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Back at the DMRTC near Milngavie, six teams from the CBSI (Community Bio-Safety Inspectorate) arrive to commence a deep cleaning operation. For the foreseeable future, the facility will be managed from the Hampden Hub.

Sergeant Kenny Graham and his drivers are deemed safe. By sticking rigidly to protocol, during their loading period at DMRTC they did leave their vehicles, kept their doors locked and cabin ventilation off. While on route back to Killoch-FIT, they have been ordered not to return to their homes after discharging their slurry. Together with their

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support team of mechanics, they will be accommodated at the Hampden Hub until further notice, where they will be subjected to daily tests while continuing to fulfil their duties.

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It is September 2021.

In a CBC Combined broadcasting Corporation) special split-screen broadcast given by a weary Kate Forbes, IFM (Interim First Minister alongside a haggard and bedraggled Dominick Cummings, EPM (Emergency Prime Minister), the population at large first learns of the new strain known as *Covid-19 Morph C-hybrid* has arrived in Britain from the USA with its origin suspected to be from a laboratory in Los Angeles.

In a follow up written statement from Cummings alleges the bio-security breach has been traced to the Glasgow area and advises he has ordered the English CMA to mount road blocks on the England-Scotland border and to fly non-stop armed surveillance drones to stop all north to south traffic, effectively partitioning the two countries and shattering the logistics of food distribution.

In response, in a statesman-like and measure statement from Oslo, Ms Sturgeon she advises she is returning to resume charge of the Scottish Government Agency and to set a date for a referendum to establish an Independent Scotland in Europe.

In a WhatsApp, Mrs Janice Bonnington nee Heatley is recalled to Edinburgh to resume her duties. On route, she rendezvous with Lumina Bizimani, who has agreed to a trial period of living with her at Brandon Street.

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As of December 2021, the situation has stabilised. Amid mud-sling accusations from both camps, the Scotland-England border has re-opened. Meanwhile the *Morph C-hybrid* cull continues to hover relentlessly at around 500 per day on a gradual upward trend.

Within Nicola Sturgeon's ICE (Inner Circle Elite), there is renewed hope from Professor Susie Ling and her team at GSUPG (Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Pharma Group) of a new PTV (Prophylactic and Treatment Vaccine) called *Anticovid®-hybrid (Gamma 9)* which is expected to pass all WHO tests and become available for global roll-out in the Spring of 2022. John Daley is sitting up, talking and his memory is clearing. He has revealed his contact with Jonno Sanderson, the ex-MI6 man with an American lit to his voice. The death of his partner, police cadet Darren McKillop uncovered. Inspector Robbie Fernley has linked his death to a Phillip Morran and, during questioning, his wife Theresa has admitted she checked Darren's body, just to be sure he was dead.

Therese Moran is now in isolation under investigation by Professor Susie Ling and her team. There are hopeful signs.

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Meanwhile, TFL (The Final Lockdown) continues.