

THE LAW STRIKES BACK

*A revised version of 'It's an Unfair Cop, Guv!'
Devised by the performing company with additional material by
Eric Presland*

*The third of the Heath Plays, presented on Hampstead Heath
and Clapham Common, Midsummer 1984*

CAST

All actors played several parts, but these are the main ones:

FI CRAIG	Sarah
ANDY SMART	PC Plod
JOHN ANSTISS	Sergeant Thug
JANE HANNAH	
GRAHAM PYPER	
RODDY	
MANDY	

Host, Debbie, Eve, Darren, Gill, WPC Basher,

SCENE: A bare open stage, with a minimum of props and uniform lighting – suitable for street theatre. A scoreboard to the side.

[A Home Office Spokesperson [H.O.S.] is giving a lecture. PLOD and THUG listen from the back of the audience.]

H.O.S.: ... and in conclusion I would like to emphasise that the Home Secretary thinks you are doing a splendid job. The Police are under strain as never before. Crime is rising in the inner cities; it is your job to stop it. The task is made more difficult by attacks on the police by politically motivated subversive elements and disaffected minorities who will not cease in their efforts to discredit the police. This damaging of public confidence makes it more difficult to obtain co-operation and, ultimately, convictions.

This is what your job is about, getting convictions, The main deterrent for criminals and thieves is the certainty that they will get caught. As long as your work is hampered by do-gooders, so-called liberal organisations and obstructive lawyers, the muggers and arsonists of Brixton and St Pauls will think they can get away with it.

That is why the Home Secretary has heeded the growing demands for more powers for the police. Now we trust you to get on with the job: the maintenance of law and order, and the protection of society.

Good luck.

[H.O.S. joins MANDY and FI at the back for kazoo chorus. Theme music – opening of Stevie Wonder's The Duke. Manager holds up 'Applaud' sign. HOST comes on with funny walk and big cheesy smile. Shakes hands with them, squirts them with trick bow tie. At the end of the first four bars he tries to speak, but the music continues, interrupting him till the end.]

HOST: Hello, good evening and welcome to 'Put the Boot In', the show that puts the laughs into Law and Order. Did you hear the one about the police dog-handler? His sergeant caught him at it. But at least he wore rubber gloves.

Seriously though, folks, we all know our police force is doing a wonderful job, don't we? Hands up everyone who thinks the police are doing a wonderful job. *[No reaction]* Must be the audience for 'Spitting Image'. You're in the wrong studio.

Anyway, tonight as usual we're going to meet a couple of our boys in blue. Tonight's contestants are:

[Fanfare on kazoo. HOST brings PLOD and THUG forward.]

HOST: Give them a big round of applause, ladies and gentlemen. What's your name?

THUG: Sergeant Ron Thug, 437, North Islington, A Division, SIR!

HOST: Relax, Sergeant. You're not on duty now.

PLOD: He is relaxed, You should see 'im when he's being formal. Cor!

HOST: And your name is ...?

PLOD: Er – pass.

HOST: Your name ...

PLOD: Just my little joke, ha ha! Plod's the name. Plod by name and Plod by nature. Here – knock knock!

HOST: What?

PLOD: Knock, knock. It's a riddle. I say 'knock knock' and you say 'who's there?' and I say –

HOST: No you don't. You're not Equity. We don't want anyone coming out on strike.

PLOD: Who?

HOST: Me, for a start. I do the jokes here.

PLOD: Oh go on, be a sport. Knock knock

HOST: Who's there?

PLOD: Annie.

HOST: Annie who?

PLOD: Annie more of your lip and I'll run you in. Ha ha ha.

THUG: Plod!

PLOD: Sorry, Sarge.

HOST: On with the show. Put the Boot In. And just to make sure there's no kicking against the rules, we start by inspecting your equipment. I mean, your boots. Let's see them.

[They each hold out a foot for inspection.]

HOST: That's about size 11, I would say.

PLOD: 12, actually.

HOST: I've never seen one as big as that before. *[Looks at PLOD's foot.]* And that's a fine steel toecap, Constable. Well maintained.

PLOD: I get lots of practice down Brixton on a Saturday night. I like to keep my hand in. Or should that be foot? Haha.

HOST: Well, tonight we're going to Put The Boot in 'The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, Mark Two. Now what does that mean to you, Sergeant?

THUG: It means I can arrest almost anyone on suspicion of almost anything, and lock them up for four days and humiliate them and search them and beat them up and force confessions out of them –

HOST: *[Alarmed]* Sarge –

THUG: and raid their homes, and all their friends' homes, and all the homes of organisations they belong to –

HOST: Sarge –

THUG: and set up road blocks and terrorise the public –

HOST: Sarge –

THUG: and show them who's boss around here –

HOST: SARGE!!

THUG: I mean, it's about giving us the powers we need to do a better job protecting the public.

HOST: Of course it is. Now, just to remind you of the rules. We're going to send you out on your beat, and you are going to exercise your powers under the Police Bill. Every time you use those powers correctly, you score three points. And if you're in any doubt, you can put it to the audience here in the studio. And don't forget, the score you have to beat is 147, which was scored by the Police Cadets from Hendon in our special Wallop-a-Wog edition. And to keep the score, we have on hand as usual the ever-lovely DEBBIE!

[Fanfare. No DEBBIE appears.]

I said, 'Let's hear it for the ever-lovely DEBBIE!

[Another fanfare. No DEBBIE.]

HOST: *[Sidling to the side of the stage:]* Debbie ... Get your arse on here or there won't be any candlelit supper for two at the Trattoria Romantica, darling.

DEBBIE: *[Off]* You talk to me like that and I'll make that *full* and *frank* telephone call to your *wife*, DARLING!

HOST: *[Flustered]* While we're waiting for Debbie – a slight technical hitch – I mean hitch, let's remind you of the star prizes for the top two teams in the series. Second, it's tickets to the Daily Mail Ideal Handcuffs and Restraints Show, together with one hundred pounds spending money. I know that will appeal to some of you. But the premium Star First Prize is a romantic week away from it all in the Belmarsh Top Security Wing. No-one will disturb you there. *[Off]* Debbie...?

DEBBIE: Go fuck yourself

HOST: Now perhaps you can tell our lovely audience and the viewers at home something about yourselves. Constable Plod, I gather this is a very special week for you.

PLOD: Oh yes. Me and my Doreen – that’s my fiancée – we’re getting married Saturday – church wedding of course, at St Nark’s – Doreen all in white – followed by chicken in a basket for two hundred at the Burger King Little Chef Steakhouse à Gogo – and a week’s honeymoon in Benidorm at the Pensione Katie Boyle – they do a lovely paella and chips. We didn’t think we could afford it but Sergeant Thug confiscated this kilo of cannabis and he got a really good price for –

THUG: PLOD!! *[To HOST]* Such a joker.

{Enter DEBBIE pulling on wig.}

DEBBIE: These stilettos are killing me.

HOST: I’ll ram one down your throat.

DEBBIE: Well, that’d make a change from ramming your –

HOST: Let’s hear it for our lovely scorer, Debbie.

[Fanfare again. DEBBIE slips into her role, and goes to the scoreboard.]

PLOD: Cor!

THUG: Careful, Plod. You’re a married man. Well, almost. Though she is a fine figure of a young lady, I must admit. A man’s woman. Sturdy. Strong thighs.

DEBBIE: Push off, creep.

HOST: Yes, indeed, it’s time to start the story, so – off you go!

[HOST and DEBBIE join SARAH and EVE at the back.]

PLOD: Where we going, Sarge?

THUG: *[Consulting notebook]* I thought we might look in on the – er – Right-On Faggot and Dyke Disco at 'The Crown and Prepuce'. Bound to be a rich harvest of subversives there.

[Scene Change. Blackout. HOST and DEBBIE flash two torches on and off for disco lights, kazooing 'All Night Long' at the same time. SARAH and EVE dancing.]

SARAH: These disco lights are really amazing.

EVE: Nightporters must have ploughed – oh, pennies! – into them.

SARAH: It's really great the way they plough all their money back into the gay community.

BOTH: *[singing to the tune of ALL NIGHT LONG]*
So right on
So right on ad. Lib.

DARREN: As right-on faggots we never cruise
We merely swill down pints of booze,
And when we want to pick up tricks
We don't talk sex, but politics.

S & E: So right on
So right on

GILL: *[As a man]* We're fit and friendly as can be
To all men under twenty-three.
We fight the anti-sexist fight
With token dykes, so we're all right.

S & E: So right on
So right on

[A SHRILL BELL. TORCHES APPEAR. IN THE DARK:]

DARREN: All right, drink up please.

GILL: Way past time.

DARREN: Haven't you got homes to go to?

GILL: We've had your money, so fuck off.

EVE: I'll just get my coat.

SARAH: I'll wait for you outside.

[EVE goes to get coat, SARAH goes outside. As DARREN and GILL exit:]

DARREN: I'm anti-racist.

GILL: I'm anti-racist too.

DARREN: I'm more anti-racist than you.

GILL: I'm far more anti-racist than you. I've read critical race theory.

DARREN: I understood critical race theory. I'm the most anti-racist person in the whole of London. Fuck face.

[SARAH freezes outside. PLOD and THUG enter, doing soft shoe shuffle.]

BOTH: *[To the tune of 'Strolling':]*
Strolling, patrolling
In the cool of the evening air.
We're protecting the rich in their automobiles.
If we find a crime, we'll take it;
If we don't we'll have to fake it
When we're strolling, patrolling
Just forget all your cares and fears.
For it's terribly consoling
To know that we're controlling

When we're strolling for the likes of –
[They see SARAH and EVE] QUEERS!

EVE: Sorry I was so long. Thanks for a really super evening.

SARAH: It's been fun.

[They kiss affectionately. PLOD and THUG pounce.]

THUG: All right, you two. Move along there.

SARAH: We were just saying goodbye.

EVE: I was just going ...

PLOD: That's a good girl.

THUG: What's all these badges you're wearing? 'A woman without a man is like a wombat without opera glasses.' What's that supposed to mean?

EVE: It's just a joke ...

SARAH: It means that women don't need men.

THUG: *[Turning on SARAH:]* And what have we here? *[Looks at SARAH's badge]* Superdyke, eh?

SARAH: That's dyke as in lesbian, and super as in 'jolly good thing', 'whoopie!'

THUG: Don't try and cheek me, miss. *[To EVE who's about to slip off:]* You stay there.

EVE: But he said I should –

THUG: I'm in charge around here/ *[To PLOD:]* So, we've got a couple of lezzies here. 'Dykes', hah! Perhaps we should follow the little Dutch boy, eh, Plod?

PLOD: I don't follow.

THUG: You never do. Perhaps we should stick a finger in the Dyke, eh?

PLOD: Ha, ha, ha, ha! *[Hysterical with laughter]*

SARAH: That's really offensive.

THUG: Those bloody badges are offensive to normal folk.

SARAH: Language, Sergeant.

THUG: I've had enough of your attitude, sweetheart. Let's have your names and addresses.

[PLOD drags EVE to one side.]

PLOD: Come on, love. What's the name?

EVE: Eve

PLOD: What's Adam think about this, then? Ha, ha.

EVE: *[Looking over his shoulder]* It's spelt E – V – E. Not Ev.

PLOD: Oh. Surname?

EVE: My second name is Goodchild,

PLOD: A likely story.

EVE: Shall I spell that too?

PLOD: D'you think I'm an idiot? Er – how do you spell that last bit?

EVE: I – L – D.

PLOD: Address.

EVE: 13 Radclyffe Hall, Sackville Street, West 2.

[PLOD and EVE freeze.]

THUG: Name, darling?

SARAH: Don't call me 'darling'.

THUG: Don't backchat me, darling. Now, what's your fucking name?

SARAH: My fucking name is Sarah Brigham, darling.

THUG: All right, you clever bitch. Empty your pockets out.

EVE: *[Unfreezing]* You can't just search her on the street. That's humiliating.

THUG: Too right it is, darling.

PLOD: Can you do that, Sarge?

THUG: *[To HOST]* Can I do that?

HOST: *[To AUDIENCE:]* Can he do that? Can the sergeant search Sarah in the street? *[AUDIENCE response]* Yes, he can! Read it out, Debbie, love. You can read, can't you?

DEBBIE: Part One, Clause One, sections one and two. A constable may search any person or vehicle found in a public place for stolen or prohibited articles, and may detain a person for the purpose of such a search, if he has reasonable grounds for suspecting he will find stolen or prohibited articles.

SARAH: I haven't got 'prohibited articles', whatever they may be.

THUG: We'll see about that, won't we?

HOST: Prohibited articles are offensive weapons, articles made for use in the course of theft, burglary, taking a motor vehicle and – er –

DEBBIE: - obtaining property by deception ... You can read, can't you, love?

HOST: And intended by the person having it with him for such use.

SARAH: Him, you see. Not her.

HOST: Good try. In law, 'him' is assumed to include 'her'.

WOMEN: Bloody typical!

HOST: So, Sergeant, can you do it? Think carefully.

THUG: I have reason to suspect that this person is carrying prohibited articles and/or offensive weapons/

PLOD: Them badges is pretty offensive for a start.

THUG: Not that kind of offensive, Plod.

PLOD: Sorry, serge. But you could do someone a nasty injury with one of them. I mean, if you ripped off the safety pin and opened it, and bent the pin back, like this ...
[He wrestles with the badge; eventually, exhausted:] ... you could have someone's eye out.

THUG: Very good, Plod.

HOST: So you think you've got reasonable grounds?

THUG: She's shown no sign of wishing to co-operate with the police, therefore it is reasonable to assume that she is carrying items which could be used for unlawful purposes.

[Gong sounds]

HOST: Three points. Well done! Carry on.

THUG: All right, you clever bitch. Empty your pockets out ...
[SARAH hesitates] I'm allowed to use 'reasonable force' if necessary ...

[Gong]

HOST: Clause Two, Section Eight.

[SARAH reluctantly takes items out of her pocket: A book – 'Return to Lesbos']

THUG: Return to Lesbos ... If I had a face like yours I'd want to leave the country too. Here, Plod. Look at this.

PLOD: Lesbos ... Travel book, is it? The travel agent offered me and my Doreen Lesbos. But I said no cos you couldn't get a decent pint of Double Diamond¹ –

THUG: Lesbos as in Lesbian, geddit?

PLOD: *[Slow dawning]* Oh! Ooh! Ugh! *[Drops the book]*

[More things from SARAH's pockets]

THUG: Credit card ... Is it yours?

SARAH: I haven't nicked it, if that's what you're suggesting. Look at the name on it, idiot.

[DEBBIE coolly takes it and looks at it.]

DEBBIE: That's her name all right.

¹ A vile keg bitter from Ind Coop dominating the market in the 70s and 80s. Its advertising jingle was 'Double Diamond works wonders...' It didn't.

HOST: You stay out of this, or you'll be back stroking Fiestas on 'Sale of the Century'.

THUG: It might be stolen.

[Gong]

PLOD: Or she could use it to slip back a Yale lock for breaking and entering. *[Gong]* I mean, she looks like a squatter to me, and they're in and out like a greased ferret.

SARAH: You've been watching 'The Sweeney' too much.

THUG: None of your lip.

PLOD: And they're obstructing the highway. *[Gong]*

DEBBIE: Part Three, Clause Twenty-two, subsection Three D four.

PLOD: Here, Sarge. I've thought of a good one. Protection. What about that, eh?

EVE: Protection? What's that?

PLOD: They're lezzies, aren't they? No kid's safe with them around.

THUG: You're right, Plod. I believe that an arrest is necessary to protect children and other young persons. *[Gong.]*

DEBBIE: Part Three, Clause Twenty-two, Subsection Three E.

HOST: They're going great guns tonight, folks.

THUG: What else have we here? Ah, just as I thought. Offensive weapon.

SARAH: They're nail scissors.

THUG: Very dangerous things, nail scissors. *[Gong]*

DEBBIE: Subsection Three-One D.

THUG: And what's this? A felt tip. Hang on to that, Plod.

PLOD: What a pretty colour!

THUG: Going to write some slogans, were we? Deface a few posters, eh, 'Superdyke'? *[Gong]*

DEBBIE: Three-D Two.

THUG: Give us your coat. *[He grabs, SARAH resists]*

SARAH: Take your fucking hands off.

PLOD: Oh goodie! Insulting behaviour. *[He expects the gong. Nothing happens]* Don't I get anything for that?

DEBBIE: It's not in the Police Bill, stupid.

THUG: Give us your coat, or you'll be down the Station before you can say 'dildo'.

EVE: But it's freezing.

PLOD: Did you say something?

EVE: Can you do this?

PLOD: Well, he is, isn't he?

THUG: Coat, outer jacket and gloves. *[Gong]*

DEBBIE: Part One, Clause One, Subsection Ten A.

THUG: Give us it. *[SARAH stares at him defiantly]* Right, you're nicked. *[Puts her in an armlock. To EVE:]* That one can clear off.

PLOD: On your bike, darling. Don't let me see you hanging round here again.

EVE: I'm not leaving her here with you two.

THUG: So you want to be run in too!

EVE: No ... I ... it's not fair.

THUG: Life's not fair, darling. Get used to it.

[THUG gets on his radio]

PLOD: Gosh, got a new radio, Serge? I wish they'd let me play with something like that. What make is it?

THUG: Hitachi.

PLOD: Bless you.

EVE: But what about our rights? Aren't there any safeguards?

HOST: Ah yes! The safeguards. Plod ... Thug ... Give her the safeguards.

THUG: I have to give my name and station. Thug! North Islington!

PLOD: Plod! North Islington! *[Gong]*

THUG: Purpose of search

PLOD: Prohibited articles. *[Gong]*

EVE: We haven't got any prohibited articles.

THUG: We're not to know that until we've searched you. Be reasonable.

HOST: Record of search ... ?

PLOD: 'Unless it is not reasonably practical to do so'. *[Gong]*
Don't see how I can right now. I've got my hands full.
But don't worry, I'll do it later. And you can have a
copy of it. You can't say fairer than that.

EVE: When? When do I get a copy of it?

PLOD: Within twelve months. That's the law. *[Gong]*

[THUG, PLOD and SARAH exit]

EVE: That's no use to anyone.

DEBBIE: Sorry, Eve. It's their game we're playing, not yours.

HOST: And at the end of Round One, Plod and Thug have
scored 45 points. Isn't this exciting? Those police
cadets had better watch out. We'll be back for Round
Two after a short commercial break. See you in a few
minutes.

[Studio manager holds up 'Applaud' sign.]

ADVERT ONE

*[FRANCIS standing as a rent boy, looking very obviously available.
RODDIE enters, crosses, sees him, returns, hesitates/ FRANCIS signals
£25. RODDIE searches pockets, finds he hasn't got enough money. Goes
off dejected. Sudden bright thought. Produces credit card and returns to
FRANCIS who is instantly all attention.]*

FRANCIS: Uranian Express? That'll do nicely.

DARREN: *[as Voiceover V.O.]* Uranian Express. Instant credit for
those – *unforeseen* – expenses.

ADVERT TWO

[GILL as Mum; MANDY as small girl.]

MANDY: Mummy, mummy, why are your hands as soft as your face?

GILL: Because Daddy does the dishes, darling. *[To audience:]* No more dishpan hands, since I discovered Feminism. Feminism: the effortless way with washing up.

DARREN: I've finished the washing-up, dear. I'm just going to Hoover the lounge.

MANDY: *[To Audience:]* Our lives have certainly changed since we discovered – FEMINISM.

ADVERT THREE

DARREN: *[As Speaker of the House of Commons]* The honourable member for Finsbury.²

JANE: Would the Home Secretary explain to this house why it was deemed necessary to send 470 police officers from four different forces on a raid on the 'Crown and Prepuce' to check if their fire extinguishers were working?

MANDY: *[As Home Secretary:]* That is a good question. That is a very good question. In fact, that is a very good question indeed. And, if I may say so, most timely, seeing as it does follow on from just such a raid – er visit. And I must congratulate the Honourable and Learned³ Member for Finsbury for asking such a very, very good question at such a very opportune moment. If I may be permitted a further observation ...

² Chris Smith, now Lord Smith, was MP for Islington South and Finsbury 1983-2005. He was the first British MP to come out as gay, at a 1984 rally in Rugby.

³ A mistake. 'Learned' is applied to MPs who are practising lawyers. Smith was never that.

[The Home Secretary fades to a monotonous drone in the background while GILL does the V.O.]

GILL: Uncle Leon's Home-made Rabbit Waffle. Smooth. Light. Airy. Fluffy. Made to be swallowed by the most delicate stomach. Uncle Leon's Home-made Rabbit Waffle is as comforting and bland as a late-night Horlicks.

MANDY: ... and in conclusion, having regard to all the circumstances of the matter, and taking into consideration all the various factors, I can only repeat what a very, very good question it is.

GILL: Uncle Leon's Home-made Rabbit Waffle. Exceedingly good waffle.

[They break and go into the signature tune again. Enter HOST. 'Applause' sign.]

HOST: Welcome back to Round Two of Put The Boot In. If you remember our contestants had chalked up 45 in the first round. Here – how many policemen does it take to change a light bulb?

DEBBIE: Fourteen. One to smash the door down, one to break the television, two to turn the room over, one to impound the copies of subversive literature like *New Statesman*, two to search the rest of the house, two to beat up the occupant, one to shoot an innocent bystander, one to change the actual bulb, and two to cover it up when the police conduct an independent inquiry.

HOST: Only joking, Sir Kenneth!⁴ *[To DEBBIE:]* Steal my jokes, would you? *[To AUDIENCE:]* Well, I think Plod and Thug are about ready, so it's back to the police station for Round Two of 'Put the Boot In'.

⁴ Sir Kenneth Newman, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police 1982. Previously Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

[Enter PLOD and THUG with SARAH.]

THUG: Sit over there and shut up.

SARAH: I want to phone my solicitor.

[THUG and PLOD pointedly ignore her.]

PLOD: Cup of tea, sarge?

THUG: I'll get it. I want to see if I can have a word with the duty Superintendent.

PLOD: The Super? Gosh, this is living!

THUG: Want to keep everything legal and above board, don't we? You get started on the paperwork.

SARAH: I want to phone my solicitor.

THUG: How can you afford a solicitor? Got a grant from Red Ken⁵, have you? *[Exits]*

PLOD: Empty your pockets.

SARAH: Do you get off on this? Does it give you some kind of sick thrill?

PLOD: I'm only doing my job.

SARAH: I'll bet.

PLOD: What do you mean? I'm a respectable married man – well, almost. Oh, and the belt. And the shoelaces.

SARAH: I knew it.

⁵ Ken Livingstone, leader of the Greater London Council 1981 – 1986 and pioneer instigator of a number of Equal Opportunities and Diversity and Inclusion Policies. The Daily Mail castigated the GLC for funding mats for a lesbian self-defence course.

PLOD: We don't want you hanging yourself in a fit of remorse, do we?

[Kazoo chorus – RODDY, JANE, MANDY – play 'The Stripper'. SARAH produces things out of her pockets and slaps them down very hard indeed. The effect should be disconcerting, indicating both that PLOD does get off on it, and SARAH's fury. No way a straight strip routine.]

SARAH: There. That enough for you?

PLOD: Don't get so uppity. It's just routine.

SARAH: What are you charging me with?

PLOD: All in good time.

[Lights crossfade to THUG on telephone.]

THUG: Hello? Superintendent Woolley. Sergeant Thug, 437 here. I'm sorry to trouble you, sir, I know you're a very busy man, taking bribes on behalf of all of us, but I think we may have found something interesting. Left-wing anarchist, offensive weapons, useful connections if you get my drift. We may have to hang on to her. Yes, her. She's a lesbian too – you know the type – aggressive, hates men. Anyway, like I was saying, we may want to keep her in for a bit. And since you are so busy, I just wanted to check whether you'd mind authorising a few things for me. Purely a formality. I've got a list here.

[DEBBIE and HOST position themselves by the scoreboard. DEBBIE becomes increasingly outraged.]

THUG: Fingerprints ... *[Gong]* Extension of detention ...
[Gong] Body search ... *[Gong]*

DEBBIE: Brute!

THUG: An officer of her own sex, of course. *[Gong]*

DEBBIE: Are they trained for it? Forcible probing of delicate parts of the body could be very dangerous.

THUG: Be reasonable, love. I'd get a doctor to do it if I could, but those bolshie medics have refused to co-operate.

DEBBIE: Ooooh!

[She makes to hit him with the gong, but HOST restrains her.]

THUG: Assaulting a police officer? That'll never get you onto 'Coronation Street'⁶, darling. *[Back to the phone]* Sorry about that, sir, I was distracted. No, that's about it. Sorry to disturb you. I know how much you've got on your plate with all the miners they're bringing in⁷.

[Crossfade back to PLOD and SARAH. PLOD produces an inkpad and grabs her wrist.]

SARAH: You can't fingerprint me. *[To HOST]* Has he got the right to fingerprint me?

HOST: *[To PLOD]* Has he got the right to fingerprint her?

PLOD: It's common police practice.

DEBBIE: That's not good enough.

HOST: I'll put it to the audience.

PLOD: Hang on, I'm thinking.

HOST: Time's up. Can Plod fingerprint the suspect? *[Ad lib to get audience response.]* Yes he can! Part Five, Clause 54, subsection 6. Any person's fingerprints may

⁶ In the 1980s, 'Coronation Street' dominated the TV landscape, with regular audience figures of 18 – 20 million viewers. Pat Phoenix [Elsie Tanner] was something of a gay icon, and began guesting in gay clubs.

⁷ The Miners' Strike against proposed pit closures began in March 1984, with orchestrated responses from the police of great brutality. The Battle of Orgreave, one of the worst police actions, was on June 18th 1984, three days before the Heath performance of this play; this line was added, as were several others, in response to what was going on around.

be taken without his consent if he'd been convicted of a recordable offence.

SARAH: But I haven't been convicted of a recordable offence.

HOST: Really?

SARAH: Well, I was fined £25 once – for possession of dope. But that was a tiny amount. And that was years ago.

HOST: Possession of cannabis is a serious criminal offence. Check it on National Police Records.

PLOD: Shouldn't carry Rizlas with a torn flap, darling. Dead giveaway.

DEBBIE: No points for Plod, though, as he had help from the audience.

PLOD: *[To SARAH]* Shut up and do what you're told. You don't have any rights. *[He grabs her.]* Keep still. The more you struggle, the more it will hurt.

[Enter THUG]

THUG: Gawd, what a commotion in the corridor. The D.I.'s got a crowd of nig-nogs in from that Rasta Club.

SARAH: Racist.

THUG: Just because I believe that our brethren of the coloured persuasion happen to have been endowed by the Good Lord in his infinite wisdom with less brain cells than he saw fit to bestow on the white races; and just because I happen to think they would all be happier living in the warmer climate which they are used to, up in the trees where they belong, and just because I am convinced that there is a certain criminal element inherent in the Afro-Caribbean character, that doesn't make me a racist.

SARAH: What does it make you?

THUG: It makes me a sergeant, darling. *[To PLOD]* I've squared things with the Super. We can do a body search.

DEBBIE: Pig!

SARAH: You can't do that, I'm a woman.

THUG: We can do it. I have reason to believe you may have concealed on your person an article which could be used to cause physical injury to yourself or others. *[Gong.]* Gawd knows what she might have hidden up her fanny.

HOST: Three points!

DEBBIE: *[To THUG]* Think you can do anything, don't you?

THUG: We can do anything the law allows. Which is what we're doing right now. *[to PLOD]* We'll get W.P.C. Basher to search her. *[To SARAH]* You'll like that.

[SARAH, PLOD and THUG exit.]

HOST: So Plod and Thug are bringing on a temporary substitute, as they're entitled to do under the rules of the game. And in these days of sexual equality, the Met is proving that there's nothing that the boys can do, which the girls can't do just as well, if not better. So let's hear it for the gallant little lady –

[Enter W.P.C. BASHER. Fuming at being called 'little lady', she menaces him.]

- Big lady – er, nice lady? – er, tough lady. What a pretty uniform! Did you make it yourself? Speak up, sweetheart. Tell us your name.

BASHER: *[Throwing HOST over her shoulder, then holding him in a half-nelson:]* W.P.C. Basher, number 935, and less of your sweetheart, sonny boy.

DEBBIE: I've been wanting to do that for ages.

HOST: So, you're joining the team now, are you – er – I can't call you W.P.C., it's such a mouthful. Don't you have a first name?

BASHER: Cissy. Cissy Basher.

HOST: And are you married, er, Cissy?

BASHER: *[Menacing]* I do the interrogations round here.

HOST: *[Pleading]* It's only a game. I'm sure the viewers are dying to know.

BASHER: Yes I'm married. To D.I. 'Butcher' Basher. And don't you forget it.

HOST: I promise I won't. Well, good luck with the show. The score now stands at sixty, there's 147 to beat and everything to play for.

[He and DEBBIE exit, SARAH comes back on, putting clothes back on. She is cowed. BASHER pushes her into a chair and shines a torch into her eyes.]

BASHER: Name?

SARAH: We've been through all this.

BASHER: Name?

SARAH: I demand to see a solicitor.

BASHER: Name?

SARAH: I have a right to a solicitor.

BASHER: And we have a right to 'delay'. [*Gong*]

HOST: [*Returning*] That's right. Clause 52, Section 7b. 'In the case of a person who is in police detention for a serious arrestable offence' –

SARAH: This is insane. I haven't committed a serious arrestable offence.

BASHER: But we've got to see what we can pin on you, haven't we? Name?

SARAH: Sarah Bringham.

BASHER: Address?

SARAH: 69 Mattachine⁸ Mansions, Stonewall Estate, Brixton.

BASHER: That's just round the corner from them squatters in Effra Road, isn't it? We had a lot of fun with them, I can tell you. Date of birth?

SARAH: 27th June 1962⁹.

BASHER: Occupation?

SARAH: Playgroup leader.

BASHER: Who d'you work for?

SARAH: ILEA¹⁰

BASHER: Where?

⁸ The script is peppered with historical LGBT references. We had Radclyffe Hall earlier. The Mattachine Society was the early gay rights organisation in the US, founded in 1950. It declined in the 1970s in the face of more radical post-Stonewall movements. The New York branch was the last to fold, in 1987.

⁹ 27th June 1969 is the date of the start of the Stonewall Riots.

¹⁰ The Inner London Education Authority, popularly pronounced Ilya, ran education for the City of London and the 12 Inner London Boroughs 1965 – 1990. It was an informal committee of the Greater London Council until its abolition in 1986. It had a reputation for being progressive and supporting LGBT+ rights which was not always deserved.

SARAH: Highbury.

BASHER: Really? Very interesting/

SARAH: I'm not saying anything else until I've seen my solicitor.

BASHER: That's OK. We can wait.

[She exits to meet THUG]

THUG: We've done it. We've got her. I sent a couple of men round to her house. She lodges with some rich old queer. Antique dealer. Arty farty old nancy, you know the kind. Anyway, he was most co-operative. Didn't want any trouble, I'm glad to say. And he said he knew she'd shoplifted some cat food from Safeways.¹¹ According to him she was moaning cos of some NALGO¹² strike which meant they didn't get paid on time and her bank manager wouldn't let her have an overdraft to tide her over. So she had to make ends meet somehow. So we got her!

BASHER: Doesn't sound like much to me.

THUG: Come, come, girl. It's enough to be going on. Where's your hunting instinct? That's the trouble with women on the force, no spunk.

BASHER: No spunk? I'll have you know I'm full of spunk.

THUG: They're fine for parking offences and chatting up the OAPs, but they'll never get on with the real force.

BASHER: I'll convey your views to my husband, the D.I.

¹¹ A US supermarket chain which expanded into the UK in 1962. It was pretty downmarket. It was taken over by Morrison's in 2005.

¹² National Association of Local Government Officers. The largest white collar union in the UK, with some 700,000 members at this time. It amalgamated with NUPE and COHSE to form Unison in 1993. The Union organised many actions in the 1980s against Thatcher-inspired cuts and deregulation.

THUG: Only a joke, Cissy. Don't take me so seriously. The point is, we've got our serious arrestable offence.
[Gong]

HOST: Part Eleven, Clause 105, Subsection 6F.

THUG: It involves serious financial loss, defined as serious to the person who suffers it. Now, I'm sure a Safeway manager wouldn't need much convincing of the seriousness of the offence. They lose millions a year from shoplifting, don't they? Someone's got to put a stop to it.

[BASHER returns to SARAH, THUG exits]

BASHER: Will you make a statement?

SARAH: Not till I've seen my lawyer. I still want to ring her.

BASHER: Come off it, we can't have you interfering with our investigation.

HOST: *[Gong.]* Part Five, Clause 52, subsection 7A. Tell them, Debbie. *[Debbie hesitates]* I said tell them, Debbie/

DEBBIE: *[Reluctant]* An officer may only authorise delay where he has reasonable grounds for believing that the exercise of the right will lead to interference with evidence in connection with a serious arrestable offence. *[To THUG]* What do you think she's going to do? Get her lawyer to go round and eat the cat food?

BASHER: It'll speed things up if you make a statement now.

[She produces two tennis racquets and a ball. They play back and forth as questions are asked, each line timed to coincide with a bit.]

BASHER: What were you doing when you were apprehended?

SARAH: Saying goodbye to a friend.

BASHER: You were seen kissing.

SARAH: That's not a crime.

BASHER: Insulting behaviour. Liable to occasion a breach of the peace.

SARAH: Only following a complaint from a member of the public.

BASHER: What were you wearing at the time of the incident?

SARAH: You've had a good look at it. I didn't have time to go home and change.

BASHER: Why were you carrying felt tip pens?

SARAH: I'm a playleader.

BASHER: What about the nail scissors?

SARAH: What about them?

BASHER: If someone came at you at night, would you use them?

SARAH: Wouldn't you?

BASHER: I ask the questions. Would you use them?

SARAH: If some creep attacked me, I'd use everything I had.

[BASHER smashes the ball past SARAH. Gong.]

BASHER: *[Triumphant]* Offensive weapon!

[She collects the bat and ball and exits]

DEBBIE: *[To audience]* If you think this is tough, just be glad you're not held under Prevention of Terrorism.

HOST: And at the end of Round Two, the score stands at 69.
We'll be back for Round Three after the break.

ADVERT FOUR

[FRANCIS as police dog handler, JANE as police dog, or vice versa.]

FRANCIS: Here at the Metropolitan Dog Training School, we have to feed our dogs on the best. We feed them Pedigree Dyke. Tests show that police dogs prefer Pedigree Dyke to Black, Asian, Trade Unionist or any other well-known brand of dog food.

[MANDY crosses as a dyke. JANE grabs her ankle and eats it with obvious relish.]

FRANCIS: They love Dyke's delicious chewy texture, the rich gravy, the solid chunks of real meat. That's what keeps them so bouncing with energy. My Sophie wouldn't eat anything else. Here, Sophie. Good girl.

[JANE lollops over, wagging tongue. FRANCIS pats her. She rolls over to have her tummy tickled.]

FRANCIS: Attagirl! There's a good dog. *[To AUDIENCE]* Get Pedigree Dyke for your dog today.

ADVERT FIVE

[RODDY in uniform at the wheel of a car. GILL as voiceover.]

GILL: The new Rover Police. The car for the 80s. Powerful, fast, dangerous. *[Noise of police siren on kazoo.]* Drive the wrong way down one-way streets; jump traffic lights; cut up cyclists; mow down pedestrians. It's the car of your dreams.

[RODDY screeches to a halt with relief.]

RODDY: Phew! Just in time for 'Crossroads'.

GILL: The new Rover Police. It'll bring out the psycho in you.

ADVERT SIX

[MANDY as child, DARREN as Father.]

MANDY: Daddy, daddy, how do you manage to get your sheets so lovely and soiled?

DARREN: I use New Men. *[To AUDIENCE]* My sheets used to be just a dull white, till I discovered New Men. New Men forces white out, forces stains in. Makes sheets an attractive mottle-colour – always a conversation piece.

MANDY: Daddy, can I use New Men?

DARREN: No, dear. You wouldn't like them. *[To men in audience:]* But you would.

ROUND THREE

[Signature tune again on kazoos. 'Applaud' sign. HOST enters, dragging DEBBIE.]

HOST: Welcome back to Round Three, and the moment you've all been waiting for, the answers to last week's competition. And if you remember, the question we asked was: 'When is a crime not a crime?' And the answer of course is: 'When it's a conspiracy.' Because you can actually be arrested for conspiring to do something which, if you actually did it, would be perfectly legal. And the name of this week's winner is –

[Kazoo fanfare. DEBBIE brings forward the hat. HOST picks out winner:]

DI Floggit of Thames Valley. He wins an all-expenses-paid holiday of a lifetime. Three weeks in Alcatraz, with all the coke he can snort; plus free membership

for life to Uniform Nights at the Dog and Fox. And the runner-up is –

[He pulls another number]

W.P.C. Hatchett. She wins the candle-lit dinner for two at the prison canteen of her choice.

And now it's pencils and paper out for this week's question. Are you all ready at home? Here we go. If it takes three thousand police to control a march of two thousand gay activists along a route of two miles, and two thousand to control a black rally of fifteen hundred along a route of three miles, how many will it take to police a C.N.D. demonstration of 200,000 along four miles? Given the average pay of a police officer is £10,000 for a forty hour week, the march lasts for four hours and all police are on double time, how many entry-level MRI scanners could the NHS buy with the money saved if the police didn't show up?

Answers on a postcard to 'Put The Boot In' by next Monday, please. So now on to Round Three of 'Put the Boot In'.

[Lights change. PLOD at phone one end, EVE at the other.]

PLOD: Islington North Police Station, can I help you?

EVE: Hello. I'm phoning about Sarah Brigham. She was arrested last night and she hadn't come home by this morning, so I was wondering what was going on.

PLOD: Brigham, you say ... Brigham ... Brigham ... Oh yes. Ms Brigham is still helping the police with their enquiries.

EVE: Their enquiries into what?

- PLOD: I can't tell you that.
- EVE: Is she all right? Can I see her?
- PLOD: She's being well looked after. We treat people well while they're in custody. We don't like unexplained deaths in the cells. Bad for the image.
- EVE: But this is outrageous. She's been in for twelve hours.
- PLOD: And likely to be in for twelve more if she doesn't mind her manners.
- EVE: Has she seen a solicitor? What's she being charged with?
- PLOD: I'm not at liberty to divulge that information. I've said more than I should as it is.
- EVE: I'm coming down to see her.
- PLOD: I wouldn't bother if I were you. All that hanging around for nothing. You can see her when we're good and ready.
- EVE: If she isn't out of there quick, I'll have a solicitor and Release¹³ and NCCL¹⁴ down on you like a ton of bricks.
- PLOD: Don't you worry about all that nonsense. All it does is make unnecessary paperwork. We know the law, you know.
- EVE: Thanks a bunch.

¹³ Release was set up in 1967 to provide legal advice and services to young people in connection with drug use. They rapidly diversified to more general legal support in areas such as homelessness, benefits advice and sex work advocacy.

¹⁴ National Council for Civil Liberties was founded in 1934 to protect civil liberties and promote human rights. It consistently opposed the gradual extension of state powers and abuse of powers. It changed its name to Liberty in 1989. Since then its leaders have been noted for their cosy relationship with the Labour Party hierarchy, which has blunted its effectiveness when there is a Labour government.

[She slams down the phone and gets out her address book.]

Where's Release ...? Gay's the Word ... Lesbian Line ...
Miriam Margolyes¹⁵ ... PDSA¹⁶ ... Ah! Release!

[Crossfade. THUG enters to PLOD.]

PLOD: Here, Sarge, I was thinking. That Brigham case. Isn't it time she had a review or something? She's been in for fifteen hours. Shouldn't we see the station sergeant?

THUG: What? Fat Freddie? Don't want to bother him with a load of nonsense, do we? *[Calls offstage]* Here, Fred, you wanna review the Brigham case?

FRED: Leave it out, Ron. I'm just off on my tea break.

THUG: You see? The review officer is 'unavailable', so it is 'not practicable'. *[Gong]*

HOST: Part Four, Clause 36, Subsection 4A.

PLOD: And what's more, W.P.C. Basher is questioning her and 'an interruption of the questioning for the purposes of review would prejudice the investigation'. *[Gong]*

THUG: Subsection 4B. Well done, Plod.

PLOD: I have my little flashes.

HOST: But no time to rest on your laurels; still 147 to beat.

PLOD: I may be stupid, Sarge –

¹⁵ Actress and early brave example of 'coming out' – most notably at a Gay Switchboard benefit at the Piccadilly Theatre in 1984.

¹⁶ People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, veterinary charity. We know that Sarah has/had a cat.

DEBBIE: You are –

PLOD: but why don't we just charge her and get it over with?

THUG: Big fish and little fish, Plod.

PLOD: I don't understand.

THUG: Of course you don't, Plod. That is why I am a Sergeant, shortly to be an Inspector, and you are a Constable, and destined to remain a Constable for the rest of your natural. Leads, Plod ...

PLOD: What's happening in Leeds?

THUG: She's going to give us leads. What groups does she belong to? Who are her friends? Who knows what nasty little maggots are going to crawl out from under this particular stone? So this fish is going to take us fishing. See what I've got here? Address book. Very interesting bedtime reading, address books.

PLOD: What are we going to do with it?

THUG: Going for search warrants, of course. *[Gong]*

HOST: Part Two, Clause 8.

DEBBIE: Why don't you just go and kick down the door?

THUG: Would I do anything illegal? The very idea! No, I'll only kick down the door if the buggers won't let me in; or no-one's at home. *[Gong]*

HOST: Clause Sixteen. That wouldn't be special privilege material, would it?

THUG: Oh no sir. I'd go to a circuit judge if I wanted to raid her lawyer or her doctor. *[Gong]*

HOST: Schedule One.

THUG: OK, Plod. See you in court.

[Crossfade to BASHER and SARAH]

SARAH: This is ridiculous. I've been in here twenty-four hours, and I still haven't seen a solicitor or phoned a friend or –

BASHER: Sorry. That's the law. Only another twelve hours to go. *[Gong]*

HOST: Correct. Part Five, Clause 52, Section Four. In any case the suspect must be allowed to consult a solicitor within 36 hours.

BASHER: Like a cigarette¹⁷?

SARAH: Christ, yes.

BASHER: You could look at it like this: it's one way of giving up.

[They both smile. BASHER gives her a cigarette.]

SARAH: Thank you

BASHER: I keep trying to cut down. My Kevin says smoking is unfeminine, but I tell him, who needs femininity in a job like this? Feeling better?

SARAH: Much, thanks.

BASHER: You need a fag now and then.

SARAH: It seems like I've been in here for ever. I don't even know if it's day or night/

BASHER: It's night. One o'clock.

¹⁷ Smoking was banned in police stations in 2007.

SARAH: I wish they'd turn the light out sometimes so you could get some decent sleep.

BASHER: I don't like it either. Don't take it personally. We're only doing our job. You can trust me.

DEBBIE: Oh no you can't.

BASHER: Oh yes she can.

DEBBIE: Oh no you can't.

[Ad lib with audience involvement to a maximum of four each.]

SARAH: If you don't like the job, why do it at all?

BASHER: Gets you out of the house, doesn't it? Kevin wants babies – wants me to have babies, he means. But who wants nappies and Terry Wogan¹⁸ day in, day out? Drive me potty. I did think of being a traffic warden, but it doesn't exactly stretch the mind. And the money's not nearly so good.

[A companionable pause]

SARAH: What I don't understand is, why don't you just charge me with obstruction and get it over with. I don't know what more you want.

BASHER: *[Pouncing]* So you admit obstruction, do you? What about possessing an offensive weapon?

SARAH: *[Realising what is going on]* Oh, no you don't. I don't admit anything.

BASHER: Look, Sarah –

SARAH: Don't you 'look-Sarah' me.

¹⁸ Terry Wogan was far and away the most popular and recognised radio DJ, hosting the BBC Radio 2 breakfast show on and off for 28 years. His relaxed and chatty style established a personal connection with audiences. Unkind critics referred to him as the Housewives' Valium.

BASHER: Don't be like that. We were getting on so nicely too. You could make life ever so much simpler for yourself. Your friend – what was her name? Eve? – she rang up asking after you. She must be getting so worried. And what about your playgroup? They'll be wondering where you've got to, won't they? Now, if you'd just confess to offensive weapons, we could charge you and you'd be out on bail. That's all we want. Oh, and maybe you could tell us a little about your friends and what they do. Do you belong to any organisations? Ever go down to Brixton? Or Kilburn? If you've got any contacts, we'd love to know about them. We're not unreasonable. Or ungrateful.

SARAH: Grass on my friends? You must be joking.

BASHER: It would only be grassing if they'd done something wrong, wouldn't it? We're only checking. Just a formality. And aiding and abetting is a very serious offence.

SARAH: Get out of here. You make me sick.

BASHER: I'll get out of here when I'm good and ready. You make me sick too. I can hardly bear to be in the same room as you. You disgust me. And before you start throwing your weight around, think about this: we can keep you in here for another 72 hours, easy as whistle. The Super can authorise another 36 hours *[Gong]* – in fact he's already given his say-so – and we can go to a magistrate for the other 36 hours. *[Gong]* And OK, you can see your precious solicitor and he may –

SARAH: She –

BASHER: I might have guessed. 'She' may oppose a warrant, but that don't mean 'she'll' win. And how will your playgroup react to you not turning up for four days. And another thing – how they going to react to lezzie

indoctrinating their kids? Do they know you're a pervert?

SARAH: ILEA knows.

BASHER: But it'll be a different matter being a jailbird, won't it?

SARAH: What do you mean?

BASHER: Offensive weapon? Two years, maximum. And Holloway's not a very nice place, as I'm sure your Commie friends from Greenham will tell you. Think about it. *[Exits]*

HOST: Not very high on points, that round, but I'm sure we must all admire W.P.C. Basher's technique. And remember, it's all for a good cause – protecting the likes of you and me.

DEBBIE: You, anyway. *[To AUDIENCE:]* Doesn't it make you all feel so secure?

HOST: So we'll just take one last quick look at the score – and it's 78! Those Hendon cadets had really better look out now! It all hangs on the final round, which comes after the break. I can't wait – can you?

ADVERT SEVEN

[I have no idea how to stage this one! I think possibly using a screen so that only a head appears over it.]

DARREN: *[V.O.]* House of Commons Standing Committee E:

FRANCIS: *[As senile M.P.:]* With reference to the power to conduct intimate body searches, there have been cases where the police arrest people who have secreted knives in their anuses.

[DEBBIE: Whaaa?!]

Such a person may then be put in a cell, where he removes the knife and slashes a police officer. I have asked the police about the amount of drugs a person could carry internally. The street price could be £20,000. And one case came to my notice where the police found a short-wave radio transmitter in a man's anus. And what about explosives and detonators ...

[The drivel fades. Lights up on MANDY attempting to insert something large.]

MANDY: *[To herself] Relax ... relax ... come on ... Go in, you bastard...*

DARREN: *[V.O.]* When you're tired and things get you down, you can become so tense. Muscles that usually do what you tell them simply clam up. You get edgy. Irritable. Active life seems impossible.

MANDY: Relax, you bastard.

DARREN: *[V.O.]* It's times like this that you need Feminax. For muscle cramps, period pains, sore tendons and putting high explosives up your fanny.

[MANDY takes one, begins to feel better.]

DARREN: *[V.O.]* You can feel Feminax's soothing action flowing all through your body; feel your muscles let go, and all that nervous pain just wash away. Once again you'll be ready to detonate as normal.

[MANDY gives one last big push, and whatever it is goes in.]

DARREN: Feminax for those important, intimate moments. You'll find life opening up for you.

[MANDY comes out from behind the screen, waddling. THUG in uniform comes from the other direction. They cross.]

MANDY: Evening, officer.

THUG: Evening, miss.

[As MANDY goes behind him, radio transmitter starts broadcasting beneath her skirt, a RADIO ONE jingle. THUG does gawping double-take.]

DARREN: *[V.O.]* Stay one jump ahead with Feminax.

ADVERT EIGHT

DARREN: *[V.O.]* House of Commons Standing Committee E:

GILL: A publication called 'Capital Gay'¹⁹ has made an allegation about the arrest of twenty-five men last summer in Earl's Court. It is alleged that it was actually a plain clothes policeman who made the advances. It appears that the officers are so well known in the Coleherne²⁰ that they are known to regulars as the Beverley Sisters²¹. The paper says, 'The typical story told by callers is that they leave the Coleherne pub to walk to their car nearby. On the way to the car, an attractive young man' – I don't know which of the Beverley Sisters that is – 'smiles at them and gets them into conversation...'

DARREN: *[V.O.]* They found fame in Earls Court; they shot to Number One in the House of Commons; now you can

¹⁹ 'Capital Gay' was London's free weekly newspaper 1981 – 1995. Despite being a freesheet it managed to provide a remarkable amount of hard news, vigorously promoted the annual Pride Festival, and was a trailblazer in taking the AIDS/HIV epidemic seriously and disseminating information about it and about safer sex.

²⁰ The Coleherne was a well-known gay bar from the 1950s to about 2010, when the brewery Bass Charrington sold it and it became a gastropub. In its heyday in the 1970s and 80s it was a leather bar with blacked out windows. It was always the focus of police harassment, with periodic arrests for soliciting and for obstruction. The pub regulars formed various defence committees to combat this, and on at least one occasion the pub came close to becoming our own Stonewall. 'Capital Gay' campaigned against police entrapment using 'pretty police', a phrase it coined. It published photos of the most notorious agent provocateur, and, thanks to the paper, the issue was raised in the House of Commons.

²¹ The Beverley Sisters were a singing group of sisters whose close harmonies were very popular in the 1950s and 60s. Their most popular songs were 'I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus' and 'Little Drummer Boy'. They looked very similar and always dressed alike, but they were not the triplets many assumed they were. Joy was three years older than Babs and Teddy, who were twins. In the 1970s they had a career revival and appeared on the Cabaret Stage at the 1985 Pride Festival. Their brand of cheerful camp quickly made them gay icons, and regulars on the club and pub circuit. As of May 2025, Teddie, the last surviving sister, will be 98.

relive those magic moments in 'The Beverley Sisters
Greatest Hits: 12 great tracks on one great LP. Songs
you will always remember – I'm Always Chasing
Poofers:

[PLOD, THUG and BASHER in close harmony]

*I'm always chasing poofers
Watching clones drifting by.
My jeans are splitting at the seams
Showing half my thigh.
Some fellers think my face is pretty;
It's something I know I can employ.
When we make contact I feel shitty
Scared I might even quite enjoy
It – fuck me! –
I'm always chasing poofers
Although the courts throw out each case [that] they
try.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LISiSIWbos>

DARREN: *[V.O.]* Memories that you will always treasure: A
Cottage for Sale

BEVERLEYS: *Our little dream heaven with all the men gone
Is lonely and silent; there's no goings on
And my heart is heavy when I gaze upon
A cottage for sale.
The lavatory man don't come round any more
He's polished the brass and he's mopped up the floor
No more will he slip his notes under the door
A cottage for sale
Whene'er I hear a cistern, I see your face
Why choose the cistern for your hiding place?
You pounced on the cruisers and took them away
You never showed mercy when you made them pay
And though it's all over, we're still just as gay
A cottage for sale.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc7exfa8Y5I&list=OLAK5uy_IDRqxjfEbM670qhenparhr9ZdsDzxizUQ&index=3

DARREN: [V.O.] Romantic moments you will always enjoy: The Little Bummer Boy

*Look, he's gorgeous Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
He's opening up his fly Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
He wants a friendly chat Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
Why don't you smell a rat? Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
Rum Pum Pum Pum Rum Pum Pum Pum
Got you bang to rights Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
If you come*

*Hi there, Gorgeous! Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
I think you're pretty hot Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
I think we're both agreed Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
I've got the thing you need Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
Rum Pum Pum Pum Rum Pum Pum Pum
Want to play with me? Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
On my bum*

*In an alley Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
He wasn't faking it Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
I gave my bum to him Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
And all my cum to him Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
Rum Pum Pum Pum Rum Pum Pum Pum
Then he ran me in Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum
Me and my bum
Me and my bum
Me and my bum*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73RLZ4NsfIg&list=PLyozdk9bmq_lfiZK-DernPx1_62E0QGeW&index=2

DARREN: Available from HMV Earls Court

[Crossfade to THUG and PLOD]

THUG: Here, I've just had word there's a demonstration been called. They're marching on the police station from

the Angel. There's – oh – scores of them. 'Free the Brixton One'²².

PLOD: Is she one?

THUG: Of course she's one, why else did we nick her?

PLOD: 'The Brixton One'. Funny, I'd have thought there was more than one in Brixton.

THUG: We're going to need reinforcements. Those queers are vicious when roused. There'll be no holding them. We should get the mounted police out, kettle them in. Set up road blocks. This is a national emergency! I'll see the Super.

PLOD: And I'll see about the barriers.

DEBBIE: Why don't you just lie down in the middle of the Euston Road?

[THUG and PLOD exit. FI as solicitor drives on. She is stopped by PLOD.]

PLOD: I'm sorry, madam, you can't go through there. Didn't you see the diversion signs.

FI: I've got to get to North Islington Police Station. I've just had a call from a client. And may I say I think it's a disgrace the way that you've held her for 36 hours without letting her make a single phone call.

PLOD: Client, you say?

FI: Yes, Sarah Brigham.

²² This part is inspired by the 1980 Gay Pride march, where police arrested Brixton Faerie Frank Egan. Frank was arrested because he was wearing a picture hat decorated with festoons of plastic flowers and fruit – and a miniature meat cleaver of the kind you get in children's kitchen sets. He was arrested for carrying an offensive weapon. When the march learnt about this it went straight to Bow Street Police Station and sat down outside until Frank was released.

- PLOD: Oh, her! Well, it's her you've got to thank for this roadblock. Some of her lefty friends have got up a demo. They were marching on the Station. We didn't want any trouble so we headed them off. We can't stop them protesting but we can make sure nobody sees them.
- FI: If you hadn't arrested her there wouldn't have been a march in the first place.
- PLOD: That's not fair. We haven't arrested her. We're only holding. We're just doing our duty. I suggest you turn round quietly and go home. Ring her from home, there's a good girl.
- FI: This is disgraceful. *[She reverses the car. Crossfade to THUG who knocks on a door. EVE comes to it, half asleep.]*
- THUG: I have a warrant to search this house as the residence of Sarah Brigham.
- EVE: It's three o'clock in the morning!
- THUG: Oh, it's you again, is it? Out of my way, darling ... *[Barges past, goes in. Door slams. Gong.]*
- [Crossfade to PLOD again. DARREN drives up. PLOD flags him down.]*
- PLOD: Can I see your documents, please, sir?
- HOST: *[Irish accent.]* I've got my driving licence. I'm sorry, but I don't carry my insurance.
- PLOD: This your car?
- HOST: Of course it is.
- PLOD: Bit posh, isn't it?
- HOST: What's it to you?

PLOD: Careful, sunshine. You're Irish, aren't you?

HOST: Yes.

PLOD: Where have you been?

HOST: Really, Constable. Is that any business of yours?

PLOD: I can make it my business, sir. Would you mind stepping out of your car?

HOST: Why?

PLOD: So I can search it, sir.

HOST: You've no right –

PLOD: I've every 'roight'. 'Sorr'. How do I know you're not a terrorist?

HOST: Do I look like a terrorist?

PLOD: That's for me to find out, isn't it? 'Sorr'.

HOST: Keep a civil tongue in your head.

PLOD: Don't speak to me like that, Mick.

HOST: I'll write to my MP!

PLOD: You do that, mate. Now, are you going to get out of that car?

HOST: No I bloody well am not.

PLOD: In that case I have no choice but to arrest you ...
[Gong] ... and warn you that anything you say ...

[Sound fades away. Crossfade.]

[THUG enters and knocks on door. GILL comes to the door as Mother.]

THUG: Sorry to disturb you, ma'am, but I have a warrant to search these premises for evidence relating to Miss Sarah Bringham.

MOTHER: Sarah? Is she in trouble?

THUG: You could say that.

MOTHER: What's she done?

THUG: Look, you don't want to be discussing this sort of thing on the doorstep, do you? The neighbours ...

MOTHER: No, of course not. Please come in.

[He does so. Door slams. Gong. Crossfade to another door. PLOD knocks. FI comes.]

FI: Can I help you?

PLOD: Can I see the doctor?

FI: She's in surgery at the moment.

PLOD: Do you mind if I come in? PC Plod...

[He goes in. Gong.]

[THUG comes back. Knocks. No answer. Knocks again.]

THUG: All right, you bent bastards. Open up, this is the law
[No answer.] Reasonable force ...

[He kicks door open and goes in. Gong]

[PLOD re-enters.]

PLOD: Lesbian Line? I have a warrant to search ...

[Goes in. Gong.]

[THUG re-enters]

THUG: CND? I have a warrant to search ... *[Goes in. Gong.]*

[PLOD re-enters.]

PLOD: Highbury Playgroup? I have a warrant to search ...

[Goes in. Sound of baby wailing. Gong.]

[THUG re-enters.]

THUG: County Hall? I have a warrant to search ... *[Goes in. Gong.]*

[PLOD re-enters]

PLOD: CHE? Campaign for Homosexual Equality? I have a warrant to search ... *[Goes in. Gong.]*

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HEATH VERSION OF LAST SCENE

[PLOD knocks. ANNA DURRELL comes to the door.]

PLOD: CHE? Campaign for Homosexuality?

ANNA: Thank god somebody's come at last. We're so short-handed. I've been trying to get out a mailing all day and that phone never stops. No, don't say anything. Just sit down and start licking those envelopes ... *[She drags him in.]*

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[THUG re-enters]

THUG: Gateways Club? I have a warrant to search ...

[Goes in. Gong.]

[PLOD re-enters.]

PLOD: National Film Theatre? I have a warrant to search ...

[Goes in. Gong.]

[THUG re-enters.]

THUG: Dusty Springfield Fan Club²³? I have a warrant to search ... *[Goes in. Gong.]*

[PLOD re-enters]

PLOD: British Library? I have a warrant to search ... *[Goes in. Gong.]*

[THUG re-enters]

THUG: Tufty Club²⁴? I have a warrant to search ... *[Goes in. Gong.]*

[PLOD re-enters, knocks]

PLOD: I have a warrant to search ...

[The lights fade as PLOD and THUG keep repeating 'I have a warrant to search' louder and louder. The Gong also gets louder and more insistent, until it is sounding continuously. Lights up on the HOST who is banging it furiously.]

²³ Dusty Springfield was a hugely popular singer of the 1960s and 70s who was generally thought to be a lesbian – she admitted bisexuality, which was brave for 1971 – and was a queer icon to both men and women. Her distinctive blond beehive and heavy black mascara made her an instant stand-out, and she introduced unusual items such as French chansons on her British TV shows. After a period of comparative neglect she worked with the queer Pet Shop Boys in the late 1980s and returned to the charts.

²⁴ Tufty Fluffytail was a cartoon character of the 1950s created to raise very young children's road safety awareness. The Tufty Club was a 1961 offshoot of that campaign, creating local road safety groups. At its height it had two million children as members. For some obscure reason, wearing a Tufty Club badge was the height of lesbian chic in the 1970s and 80s.

- HOST: That signals time is up for this week. Let's have a last look at the scoreboard. 141! What a pity. Those cadets just pipped you. But give them a round of applause, ladies and gentlemen for being such sporting players.
- THUG: We've really enjoyed it. Haven't we, Plod?
- PLOD: Yeah. I've never been on telly before. Hello Mum; hello Dad; hello Doreen.
- HOST: I'm sure they're all proud of you. And what a close-run thing it was. If only you'd managed to detain some juveniles for their own protection ...
- THUG: I know, I know. Still, you can't think of everything.
- HOST: And thanks to you too. Don't forget to tune into next week's episode, which is called Shop the Steward, or How many ways can you harass a Trade Unionist, with special guest star Norman Tebbit²⁵. So it's goodbye from all of us here, and see you again next week for Put The Boot In.

[Theme music again. Everyone goes off duty, relaxes. Glasses appear and everyone celebrates. BASHER starts questioning members of the audience – make it as real as possible. The HOST uses his trick buttonhole on THUG, laughs.]

- THUG: All right, you're nicked,
- HOST: It was only a joke.
- THUG: I'm charging you with possession of an offensive weapon, to wit, one flower.
- HOST: The show's over, Sergeant.

²⁵ Norman Tebbit, Tory MP for Chingford 1970 – 92. Ran Department of Employment 1981 – 83 and Trade and Industry 1983 – 85. Right-wing opponent of collective bargaining and the closed shop, and supporter of anti-Union activity at Grunwick, during the Miners' Strike.

THUG: The law never sleeps, sonny. Name?

HOST: Everyone knows my name. It's a household word.

DEBBIE: Like cesspit.

THUG: I'm afraid I shall have to run you in. Here, Plod.

[They haul him off. BASHER sees SARAH, forgotten at the back of the stage.]

BASHER: All right, you can go.

SARAH: What?

BASHER: You can go. And think yourself lucky you haven't been charged. Next time we won't be so lenient.

SARAH: You mean I've been in here for four days – for nothing?

BASHER: I wouldn't say that. It's been a most useful exercise. We thought we were onto something.

SARAH: You weren't.

BASHER: We couldn't take your word though now, could we? Next time, show a bit of respect. Now collect your gear and shove off.

[SARAH can't believe she heard that. DEBBIE is left holding two glasses, watching her.]

DEBBIE: Cocktail?

SARAH: Molotov?

DEBBIE: Possibly.

BOTH: Cheers. *[They Drink.]*

THE END