

MOVING OFF THE SHORE

By Michael Dickson

His hands were shaking and his voice was broken, and he hadn't even started to speak yet.

Once he had known bravery, even a swaggering kind of bravado that comes with the absolutely certainty of power and of reason and of a delinquent kind of authority. Once he was in charge of hundreds of people whose lives could be ruined by his caprice. Once he was filled with arrogance he saw as being essential to his life and to his ability to prosecute his wishes at the expense of all others. Once he was at the top of his game and commanded a salary higher than anyone else could imagine ever earning in their entire lives. Once he was *in command*. But right now, all that was reduced to a speck of miniscule singularity as he spoke to the voice that had once been the most familiar he had ever known. When the familiar becomes unfamiliar, we lose track of our reason.

- Caroline, are you there? Can you hear me?

There was a long pause on the line. It crackled and popped at random, the breathing at the other end distant and ominous. It waited and it judged and it terrified.

- Can you hear me?
- I hear you.
- Oh my god...

He hadn't expected to even reach her, far less to be able to speak to her. He was talking to a voice from so far ago he could barely even remember the face that went with it, but the voice was familiar, even reassuring. The tone was less forgiving.

- What do you *want* from me?
- Caroline...I...I don't know what...
- Look...Ken. I don't know what you are looking for from me, or what you want me to say or do. We've moved past all that now, haven't we?
- I'm sorry.

He could feel his throat tightening up, knowing that he was in the process of making a fool of himself. He had just apologised again, but he never knew what it was for.

- Are they looking after you?

TRANSLATION: *You're not right, are you?*

- Yes, the place is nice enough and they come to see me often, yes...
- Do they let you out?

TRANSLATION: *You're not fit to be let out.*

- Yes, of course. It's really my place. I have to fend for myself...they even said so.
- Still in the same place?

TRANSLATION: *I don't want to think you are anywhere near me.*

- Yes, same place. It's not *so* bad, you know Caroline...and not so far away.

The voice turns sharp, the handset on the other end rattling as though the speaker had switched hands. He pulls away from the handset with a wince as the words strike him tight and hard.

- It's not happening, Ken. No way, no how. We both acknowledged that. Remember?
- I'm so much better now, though...please...I need you.
- You do not need me and I *certainly* do not need you, Ken.

Lengthy pause. The pauses give hope. They are not the sound of a phone being slammed down in a finality of cold reason. She still has feelings for me. Love. Faith. Even pity would suit me. *I just do not know how to lose her yet.* His hope sometimes gave him courage, but mostly it just gives him emptiness.

- How are Susan and Jocelyn?
- *Suzanne* and Jocelyn, you mean...
- Yes, yes of course. Suzanne.

Shit. Shit. Shit. Shit. Shit.

- They are *fine*. Doing *well*. Did they speak to you recently?

Wrack. Think. Remember.

- Yes.

Lie, is another alternative. I realise this as I think slowly, ten paces behind her as ever. He gripped the phone in anxiety.

- Yes, they did. Well, Jocelyn did anyway. She told me about the...erm...the exam. You know, that...exam. The important one. The one she was busy preparing for. The last one.

The breathing on the other end of the phone deepens into a sigh. Syllables become more abrupt. Patience erodes.

- What exam was this, Ken? Same as the last one?

Last one? Did he mention another one? He didn't even *remember* the last one. Or the last week. He looked at the clock. The last hour has vanished, ticked off into the emptiness like the one before that, and the one before that, and the one before that.

- There was a last one?

My voice is now wrecked. The sound of his own crying now making him feel more and more distant. Her voice recedes, more out of a defence system than anything else. Receded, but still there. Still a presence.

- That school exam you keep on about, Ken? That Higher Grade? What is it now, Ken? Art? History? Latin?
- *Stop attacking me...*

I am shocked at my own bitterness. His own venom tasted foul.

- Ken...you poor, poor, poor lost old soul. When will you ever be fixed?
- Caroline...don't....please...don't...

She sighed.

- She's twenty four, Ken. Your daughter Jocelyn. *She's twenty four.*

His mind suddenly twisted, hearing that savage, biting ululation all over again. It never leaves you. It never left you. He breaks. I shout.

- Where have you *been* Ken? Do you know what this costs them both? *And why are you shouting?*

The phone - now seemingly a useless instrument of suffering to his mind - was pulled out of the wall with an animal scream he heard coming from somewhere deep inside himself and was thrown across the room, through the archway to the dining room where it skittered over the table top and crashed through the 144 identical and polished wine glasses I had spent several hours arranging into a classic Fibonacci spiral. The broken glass scatters everywhere.

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17th February 2012, Room 25 Chatsworth House

Present: Dr GJ C [REDACTED] (GJC for transcription), Kenneth P [REDACTED] (KP for transcription)

Transcription begins at 07:45 into the consultation

GJC: So Ken, did you take up the offer that Rebecca made to you last week?

KP: No, not yet. I still have to look through N-AB4 for that one yet. I'll get to it in time. Is there any real rush?

GJC: No, but better you do it now than later. There are programmes that will give you far less than she is offering you. She knows her stuff and has taken the research we spoke about last week further. She is confident that it will do you some good.

KP: Okay. I'll look at it tonight and call her tomorrow. Was this in the same consultation? I'm writing this all down in G38.

GJC: Yes, it will be in N-AB4 as well, I think. Maybe just after it?

KP: Alright. (*indistinct*)

GJC: It's nothing drastic, just something she suggests that might ease the more painful feelings you were describing to her.

KP: Medication?

GJC: Partly, and partly therapy of some form. She is the expert, not me.

KP: Okay...I made notes.

GJC: (*pause*) I've read the writings you jotted down for me about your latest *confrontation*, shall we say? How did you feel afterwards?

KP: (*pause*) Angry. Frightened. I feel so alone, you know. So profoundly alone.

GJC: When did you write it?

KP: Um....maybe an hour later. I had to stop crying first. She's like a (*indistinct*) to my life, you know. Like a sort of *tether*, you know? When I feel her slipping off the moorings I feel like I am losing all control again. You know...like you get it *back* and it slips away. And when it's *back* she's here and yet when it slips she drifts out onto the waters...you know what I mean?

GJC: Like someone drifting out to sea? Away from you?

KP: No, not like that. She's fixed. It's me who is drifting. We're *together* and then she is still *there* and I am moving away from her and stand and watch her on the shore and it's not moving but I am and it's not getting any clearer how or why she isn't with me, just that I am moving.

GJC: Okay...(*pause*) One thing I did notice from your brief account is that it has an odd structure. Did you notice it when you re-read it just now?

KP: Structure?

GJC: Yes, I mean like the way that the words are formed and the sentences constructed. Do you see what I mean?

KP: No.

GJC: Well, take this extract, for example: "*I realise this as I think slowly, ten paces behind her as ever. He gripped the phone in anxiety.*" Do you see what I mean?

KP: No.

GJC: Ken, the passage concerns a fight between you and Caroline, yes?

KP: Yes.

GJC: And no one else, right? There is no one else who features in it, is there?

KP: Susan and...Suzanne and Jocelyn are mentioned...

GJC: Yes, but they don't *appear* in the narrative, do they?

KP: No.

GJC: Well...it starts off in the present tense, first person and moves into third person past tense. It does this throughout the passage, really. It doesn't occupy one time or one person, but a crossover of each. Can you say why?

KP: No. I don't understand.

GJC: Well, to some it looks like it might be the clumsy work of a child who doesn't understand how to write, but you do don't you?

KP: Yes. You know what I used to do, don't you?

GJC: Yes, well that is my point. But now you are crossing tenses and narration points in the same paragraph, and in one case in the same sentence. It's just interesting, you know? I was wondering why you wrote it that way.

KP: I don't understand.

GJC: Well, to someone with a greater understanding of your *needs* you might be forgiven for thinking that you don't know the difference between yourself and someone else. Or between the present and the past, for that matter. It's as though you write in a compressed form where you cannot place yourself fully in the world or the time around you. Do you think this is a manifestation of your *bigger issue*?

KP: I still don't understand.

GJC: Well then, tell me about Jocelyn.

KP: You know I *cannot do that*.

GJC: And yet you managed to write something about her and write it with a sense of detachment, almost. You realise your error and manage to narrate it. That takes self-awareness, which is a good sign, really.

KP: (*raising his voice*) You told me to write down everything I hear and see and want to try and work out, didn't you?

GJC: Calm down, Ken, I am just trying to understand a confusion that your writing contains and which might give clues as to your condition. I am only here to help you. Just trying to understand you.

KP: (*calmer*) Then why do you mock me? (*indistinct*) reaches as far as you can.

GJC: Yes, I know but I'm not doing that to you. I'm just trying to understand you and help you understand yourself.

KP: *It's so difficult.*

GJC: (*lengthy pause*) Let's talk about Jocelyn.

KP: OK.

Transcription ends

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12th March 2012, 10:45. A woman comes to the house with the food and the necessary stuff for me to keep going. As requested, Moleskine notebooks (12 of them, full sized), 120 packets of Post-It notes in three colours (yellow, green and red), 12 Platignum fibre-tipped permanent ink pens, and 12 reams of A4 paper, plus assorted staples, sticky tape, paper clips and wallets. The paper says it is 'recycled' and feels low in quality. The printer may not care for it. I load it nevertheless. I take the camera (Sony Cybershot, 12MP) and load it with card SD-24 (per the rota on the sheet by the printer) and photograph her, the things she brought and the bags she brought them in.

She waits patiently. I consult list 45B by the fridge door (directed by printer sheet 21) and find that by description she is Evelyn. I ask her and she says she is and smiles a kindly smile. She's patient and sympathetic, but probably irritated by me deep down. I apologise for my slowness offer her a cup of tea. She accepts. I am guessing she doesn't want it, but I am also aware that she is under orders. Printer sheet 11 directs me to cupboard 2 where I find tea bags, sugar and cups. For a minute I fail to find the milk, but then Evelyn recovers it for me from the fridge (need to modify sheet) and offers it to me.

I follow the red sticky in the cupboard swiftly but nonetheless somewhat slavishly, as I have to. Fill kettle with water. Turn on kettle at wall switch *and* flip switch (note modified to stress 'and'), place tea bag in cup, let water come to boil, add water to cup, stand for a minute, lift out teabag with spoon, squeeze excess fluid from it, deposit used bag into bin, add milk and sugar to taste, or in case of guests allow them to choose. I give her the cup. She smiles and takes it from me. I wait to see her reaction to it, but she is far too professional to let it slip.

We chat about trivialities like the weather and plans for the day as though I had any. Ten minutes later she makes her move and I allow her to leave. She drives off in grey car called a Rover which she had parked down in the yard at the back. I watch her leave. Back to the kitchen I find the pot plant that had to be watered was now watered. My notes (236 refers) indicate that it had to be watered later this afternoon. How and why was it watered now? Had I done that already? I feel the wet earth and am amazed to find it warm. Before it slips from my mind I take a red note and, using black ink, write DO NOT USE WARM WATER on it and stick it to the pot plant's dish.

I review the photographs in the camera. They are not Post-It notes. They are Lyreco Sticky Notes. They are not the real thing, but they will do.

I put card SD-24 into the printer and press the square button, then select PRINT from the menu and then SOURCE followed by EXTERNAL CARD and then PRINT ALL (directed by printer sheet 14). The printer starts to print the pictures I have just taken. To save some time, while it is printing, I write this account (N-AB5) by date and then précis it onto a new note which I stick onto the wall by the bookshelf and cross-refer it into the green book, checking my progress though the Master Sheet.

I take the pictures and fix them together with a stapler (pink, cheap, no brand, going to break inside a fortnight) and write under the image with one of the permanent pens, giving the date (checked twice) and time (checked once) and then file it into F-H56, adding it to the master record file.

I eat four apples in quick succession. I eat the cores as well, because I cannot remember if they are edible or not. I swallow them hard and find their taste pleasant but the texture dry and abrasive. I note this down in grey book 27 under A. I am surprised to find a note (dated 12th April 2009) which quite clearly states that I do not like Bramley apples, yet the name BRAMLEY is clearly visible on the bag. The cross reference on the grey book states that note 12042009-13 refers, which I locate within the files in the spare room (directed by printer sheet 18) and locate together with its associated post-it note. The note expands to say that the apples I had that day were Bramley apples but that in fact they were perhaps not fresh and were of a poor consistency. It refers to photographs F-E12 (directed by the adjacent note) which I

manage to locate *despite being slightly misfiled* (triumph noted in grey book for this date) and it does clearly show the best before date as being a week prior to the picture being taken, and that the apples are darker than they should be. Satisfied that my notes are accurate (despite F-E12 being misfiled) I replace everything by reversing all the above processes and sit at the dining room table.

The apples give me indigestion. I consult on them and find that they are actually best eaten *cooked* because of their acidity and sourness. This makes me feel worse. I turn on the TV (printer sheet 10 refers) and watch the same recording I made six weeks ago of the game show. I cannot watch more than fifteen minutes of it, always with the sound down, trying to guess the rules. By the time I watch it again I have to start learning again. The game seems deliberately opaque. Obtuse. The apples stay where they are. I'm in pain.

13th March 2012, 12:18. Yesterday's stomach cramps have receded. I had to call J to find what I could do for myself and he suggested a product called Milk of Magnesia, which I found in the medicine cabinet in the bathroom. He didn't give me the dosage, so I drank about half the bottle and gagged on the chalky consistency. I was sick. The cramps gave way though in time and I lay on the sofa, the game show paused at 4:23 on the video tape. I could not enter a grey book entry because I did not want to get up. I slept there all night. The grey book called to me in my dreams, a sign of unfinished business.

13th March 2012, 16:22. Inventory count taken per Red Book 12. Count so far is

Notebooks – 132 (eight shelves)

Post-it Notes – 2641 (three rooms, three walls of each)

Photographs – 2348 (all in F files, aside from the *special quality* ones which were loaded into the digital frames – listed as DF1 through to DF45 and which hang on the walls of the kitchen.)

Results noted in Master Count Book 2 and plotted on graph paper in the back pages.

13th March 2012, 18:54. I know I forget. I know this but cannot remember learning. I forget remembering. I forget forgetting.

13th March 2012, 20:23. I turn off the VCR at 4:23. The fat woman is just talking, her mouth juddering back and forth with the silent pause on the jerky tape machine. HD told me (per diary entry **11th March 2013, 11:12**) that I ought to vary my viewing, as he has seen that tape playing here about fifty times. I correct him and he has to wait. By a feat of cross-indexing I manage to determine that I have watched that the fifteen minute start of the game show has been watched 147 times. I show him my evidence, but he seems to be unimpressed by this. He promised to bring me some pornography

on tape but I told him not to bother as I have no interests in that direction whatsoever, any longer. He asks if it is the medication, which I refer to on printer sheet 1, but although I lie in agreement I know that it has nothing to do with that. (Latter check on BF17 through last year indicates I have only enjoyed 13 erections in seven months, with prior note reminding me to research what used to arouse me in the past)

I close off all lights, blinds and appliances (per check in printer sheet 3) and retire to my bed. I have rejected the bed for the sleeping blanket on the floor. I undress and lie in it and then turn to the camera (VCR-Camera 12) to my left which I switch on. The red recording light barely illuminated through the black masking tape. The room is deathly silent again, aside from the far off rumble and distant calls of the trains as they pass over the bridge two miles up the road which I have yet to see. The sound triggers my mind into closing. I think of unseen trains moving across an unknown bridge filled with lives I will never know. Unconsciousness takes me. The camera turns slowly, watching me in the darkness through its infra-red eye.

sonder

n. the realization that each random passer-by is living a life as vivid and complex as your own, populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you'll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk.

The sonder of distant passing trains. A tiny sound in the distance, remembered across years, without any knowledge or memory of the vivid lives aboard them.

14th March 2012, 04:02. I awake suddenly from a dream that I cannot see any more. I hear the camera movement to my right and flounder for it until I reach the switch, then turn it off. I sit up, flick on the pen torch (£12.99, Maplins) and note the time and position I wake in the blue book, then pop the tape from the recorder and note the sequence number and time and date along with the blue book reference.

I get up, use the bathroom and then realise that I will not be able to resume sleep. I spend my time downstairs with the sticky tape that Evelyn (45B) delivered to me yesterday. I repair some of the F volumes that I notice were coming apart, prompted by a reminder (#34) on the short-term wall of the bathroom.

14th March 2012, 07:05. Per note #223 (orange wall, red note TO BE REPLACED) I have to watch the night VCR recordings for this week. N-AB5 reports that breakfast today has to vary from schedule 3, and photographs indicate that I was visited less than 24 hours previously by Evelyn (45B), which cross-references to F-H56 which shows me that I have Corn Flakes and porridge in cupboard 3, together with whole milk in the fridge (porridge) or semi-skimmed beside it (Corn Flakes).

14th March 2012, 07:09. With Corn Flakes now and whole milk from the blue jug. I operate the remote (printer sheet 10 refers) and turn on the VCR to watch the night recordings for that week. The greenish hue of the room is accentuated by the speed of the tape as I turn it up to 8x. I toss and turn in my sleeping bag. Notes consulted previously allow me to anticipate the fact that I seem to be fighting something off in my sleep, weakly flailing my arms in front of me. It looks even weaker in normal speed. My hands form an odd shape which I study on pause. This time it is clearer, the hand open but the fingers together, the arms moving in a wide arc and in more or less opposite and symmetric movements. I recognise the movement, but I cannot place the name for now. Movement. Transport. Air. Water. *Swimming*. It looks as though I am swimming, underwater...trying to climb upwards.

14th March 2012, 08:57. I have finished the Corn Flakes and have moved on to the blueberries. (F-H56) The VCR date refers to 11-03-2012 02:23:45 when suddenly there is a sharp and alarming movement on the screen, which makes me jump in fright. I rewind the tape (printer sheet 10) and watch again, this time at normal speed. I can see myself in the darkness, slowly flailing again, barely moving, as though suspended in cold fluids, my movements dictated by the movement of the water.

Then I sit up quickly. Really quickly. And I stare at close range into the camera lens, my eyes wide open, my face a hollow mask of abject and indefensible terror. I cry out on my sofa, such is the fright my own face gives me. Silently shaking on the screen. Saying nothing. Just shaking. My mouth hangs open and in time I watch myself salivate down my face and onto the sleeping bag. Just drooling. I don't want to watch, but I cannot look away either. Then on the screen my mouth moves and I say a word, the percussive first syllable spraying a little spittle over the lens, my mouth moving independent of my face. I say the word and the camera records it.

- *PAIRCY...*

My image on the screen shakes more and reaches a critical mechanical point, then scrambles from the sleeping bag as fast as I can, falling over myself in my haste to escape the bedroom. I bounce off the door, yelling incoherently as I go. There are far off crashes from the tape, as though I was falling. Then silence. The sleeping bag is empty. In fear I fast forward the tape through the remainder of the footage, hardly daring to watch to see me re-enter that room in the same terrified condition.

But I do not. The sun comes up quickly. The room is lit. An unseen force then turns off the camera at 08:34:11. I am nowhere to be seen on the screen. I never re-entered that bedroom.

Something else must be in the house with me.

I leave the sofa and make my way through to the bedroom quickly, my legs quaking as though all strength had left them. I pick up the blue book and read the entry for 11th March 2012. I woke at 06:10 and rose to use the bathroom, then returned to bed to read a mathematics text book. I go back to the lounge and rewind the tape to that point and see the bedroom is empty.

I drop the remote. I don't remember. I cannot remember.

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Wiltshire JG, Ohotsuka KJ, Adelaide-Burroughs VM. Traumatic Event Amnesia. Lancet 2011; 351: 1687-92.

The patient (KP) presented an interesting case history which bears repetition. He is a middle-aged man with an extremely successful career in law, business management and (later) politics. According to other (unreferenced) sources he joined with a cult organisation (see references) whose intent and methods were unclear but whose ultimate end came in September 2005 when eighty or more of his colleagues were caught within the collapse of a disused structure by the sea which claimed the presumed lives of all but five souls, the remainder being 'lost'. The patient was fortunate enough to find himself on the shore some minutes later having presumably been washed there by the strong tides that manifested themselves there in the autumn months.

For several days afterward the patient – suffering from minimal physical injuries – was interviewed by the authorities and later by a psychologist who assessed that the patient was genuinely unable to recall anything of the events that led to the incident, nor even what they were doing there.

KP spent time in recovery either writing or sketching, usually in silence. His sketches were all childishly drawn but were very similar, depicting waves or water of some kind with metal structures similar to the collapsed pier. Within the waters – sketched dark grey or even black – was some form of amorphous creature which appeared to have a malevolent but abstract appearance. No other details were given and interviews with the subject registered a blank with him. The pictures (all 264 of them) were retained and compared; the only significant differences between any of them were due to KP's technical deficiencies as an artist. It was clear he was re-enacting a deep-seated fear or trauma which simultaneously obsessed him and yet was eradicated from his conscious mind. Similarly, his writings were monolithic block of numeric data, the content of which have never been decoded, but which were repeated so often and so accurate that they were felt contained some key to the patient's trauma. An example of the writing is given here:

53454350 41495243 59205345 43504149 52435920 53454350 41495243
59205345 43504149 52435920 74926861 69207968 75207572 756B2D61
6C206E6F 6E926465 20667265 65693A20 6B68612D 6C612D64 6875206D
6F6E2062 69727269 6B206465 65692074 92686169 206D6F6E 20646592
49207572 756B2053 45435041 49524359 20534543 50414952 43592053

Again, KP's commentary on these numbers is to register a complete blank. On several occasions he appears to have genuinely been surprised to see the numbers and denies ever having written them.

There have been numerous florid outbursts during which the patient became emotionally unstable and incoherent. These outbursts were treated with conventional stabilisers which reduced the symptoms to manageable levels. The outbursts became fewer and further apart until they all but disappeared. The only reoccurrence was when the patient was given greater freedom and was allowed to mix with other patients within the hospital, and found himself almost obsessively trying to pick out a tune or phrase on a piano that was in the main recreation room. On one occasion he appears to have found

the sequence he was looking for and ran from the room, never to return to the piano again. On other occasions he was found to be singing loudly to himself in his own room, but to deny the fact that he had. He later arranged other patients in the recreation area to clap along to a chart he had written out, encouraging others to beat a rhythm on the furniture. His reaction to this was described by staff as that of '*a man in deep fear of finding what he was looking for*'. (Staff report 26/25664/2007 Mitchum and Webster)

In time his symptoms retreated to the extent that he was allowed a Domiciled Care Order which gave him limited freedom within a managed framework. Although his supervision confirmed that his outbursts had all but vanished, they emphatically confirmed that the patient had lost his memory almost completely and instead relied upon an extensive and elaborate system of diaries, journals, video recordings, photographs, notebooks, ledgers, aide memoirs and (above all else) Post-It notes arranged copiously through his home. In moments of greater lucidity he is aware of the fact that he has no active memory and that the note-keeping acts as an inorganic replacement for that. He is also aware that this gives him a purpose in a life which is otherwise without purpose; he has lost his former life by circumstance and by the effects of his amnesia. He is in occasional touch with his estranged wife but concocts elaborate fantasies predicated on them still being together. He has two daughters but has been denied contact with them by their mother.

An obsessive, driven man in his previous life, he manifests some of the same traits in his 'amnesiac' life, with the copious notes, video recordings and an extraordinary and self-devised system of triple book keeping to link all notes and events in his life via a colour coded series of notebooks and pens. Recognition of people and events is caused by photography. During a residential break at a care home the opportunity was taken to examine his book-keeping system. Not only did it make little or no sense to anyone else (much of it was not even written in a comprehensible language), the patient also recognised immediately on his return that someone had been reading his files.

Work was on-going to register the time that the amnesia was made effective. It appears to have exactly coincided with the traumatic events of September 2005, memories prior to that event being wiped down to a basic 'functional level'. CAT scans revealed no physical damage to the hippocampus, the diencephalon or to the median lobes whatsoever. Long-term memories were not damaged but were vague. For example, he could remember the pet name he used for his estranged wife after some unprompted effort, but could not remember her actual name whatsoever. His daughter's names were easier to recall but he occasionally confused the name slightly, e.g. 'Jane' instead of 'Janine'.

Intellectual, linguistic and social skills were undamaged. He was able to form new memories but his ability to learn new material was severely reduced, as was his ability to recall material learned over two weeks previously. Tasks carried out one minute could be forgotten the next (particularly in terms of his writing and drawing). He appears to be uninterested in other patients in a social sense and sought only to use them (for example, in the 'clapping' routine) as a means to discover his own end. He showed no interest whatsoever in the 'wet books' left for patients in his condition and had to be compelled into maintaining his personal hygiene and changing his clothes. It was later realised that the latter condition was precipitated by the patient not knowing (or recalling) when he last bathed.

A light vaguely shines into my eyes. Hands vaguely lift me. I remember vaguenesses about the room in which I am found. I vaguely remember paper. Lots of paper. There is a strong breeze. The paper flutters around me and falls like a million blossoms. My life has just ended in a scattering of pink Lyreco stick notes. Not the real thing, but they will do.

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23rd April 2012, Room 25 Chatsworth House

Present: Dr GJ C [REDACTED] (GJC for transcription), Dr HK M [REDACTED] (HKM for transcription)

GJC: Any ideas?

HKM: None. None at all. How is he now?

GJC: Same place, same diagnosis, same prognosis, same everything. We're out of answers on this one.

HKM: You said earlier there were five others.

GJC: Four. Five in total.

HKM: Okay, four others. Where are they? What state are they in?

GJC: That's a remarkable question to ask.

HKM: I was thinking we might do something rash....

GJC: Such as?

HKM: Well...what would happen if we *reunited them*?

GJC: We considered it.

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REF FILE EXTRACTION: Dr GJ C [REDACTED] Room 25 Chatsworth House

FILE REF: 2334/22/2006

Application granted to withdraw file on strictest understanding that the contents are not to be divulged **to either patient**. File ref coded SIREN.

Approved per DDG section 14, ref AAB/45645/12