

22496 accepted a university staff card with a photograph of me on it as ID; although I suspected it would have pleased him to arrest me for not possessing a non-existent UK ID card. When I was asked what I worked as, I said novelist because while true it was not quite identical with the work for which I'd shown a staff card. Warrant no. 22496 wrote down a description of me and this included the detail I was wearing black boots, although I was actually wearing black shoes, which made me further wonder what the real point of all the 'counter terrorist' activity that goes on in London is when mundane details like this aren't correctly recorded by the old bill. No. 22496 also noted my SDE Code, this is self defined ethnicity (according to the Mets "what ethnic group you say your origins are from"), although since this was done without me actually being consulted I somehow doubt that it went down as "Afro-Celtic"; the detail was entered with the code W1. This functions as another example of how in reality I was just being hassled and the activity had nothing whatsoever to do with so called 'counter terrorism'.

"Next No. 22496 got onto a question which reminded me of how I was endlessly harassed by

"Never mind the terrorists, Brit cops decide to hassle people on their way to the pub instead..."

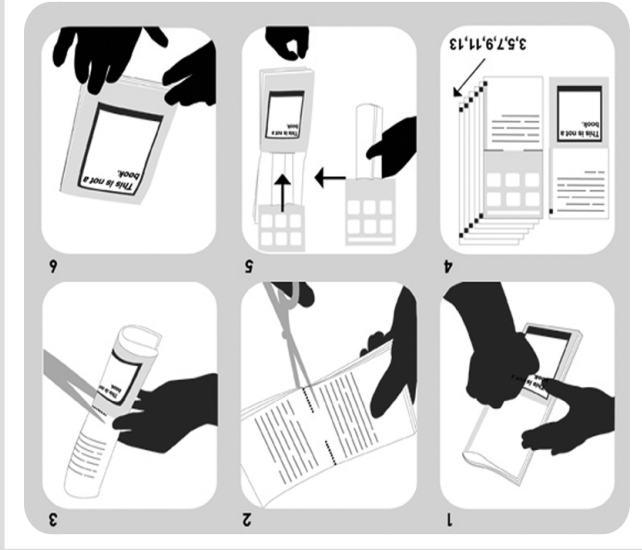
On Wednesday I got stopped under Section A4 of The Terrorism Act 2000. What had I done to arouse suspicion? I'd walked out of Ladbroke Grove tube station!!! Naughty naughty naughty!!! So the old bill with warrant no. 22496 - who wasn't allowed to give me his name because he was conducting a 'counter terrorism' search ("'Allo, 'allo, 'allo wot's goin' on ere then? Why have you got two arms and two legs?") - demanded to see my ID. This was an odd thing to ask for because there is no identity card system in operation in the UK. I therefore asked if I'd understood correctly and was required to show ID and was told this was the case. Warrant no.

phenomenon:
low key manner) had it not been for the blogging would have entered the public domain (albeit in a unlikely that either of the following two incidents pertinent and will also quote in full. I think it harassment, one of which I found particularly recounting their own experiences of police of 23 February 2008 because it led to readers stories in the comments. I reproduce below a blog

There's been a lot of talk about Web 2.0 over the past few years, and I've found being active on social networking sites has provided the best place not only to research it but to an extent also to discuss it. My explorations started on MySpace in the spring of 2006 and initially I set up an account as Mister Trippy. My gimmick was to behave as if I was someone else pretending to be me, so I deliberately fudged facts and got minor things wrong about my life and work. This led to a certain amount of speculation as to who was running what was taken to be a 'fake' Stewart Home site. I next set up an account for my girlfriend Tessie, one of my ventriloquist dolls. I was familiar with phenomena like radio ventriloquism so I figured internet ventriloquism would work just as well. In comments she posted, Tessie claimed to be pregnant and would become enraged when I responded by pointing out plastic dolls can't have babies; it was curious that quite a few women supported Tessie by posting messages saying their boyfriends were just like me, since these men had insisted their other half wasn't knocked up when they really were in the club.

Click This? MySpace + the Pornography of Corporately Controlled Virtual Life

Stewart Home



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Stewart Home

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MySpace divide their user profiles into different sections: a main profile with self description, pictures, videos, music and comments; a blog whose most recent headlines if any are displayed on the profile page; and finally a section for uploaded photographs. I exploited all these features but decided to focus on blogging, despite finding the MySpace blog culture extremely competitive and bitchy at its top end. There was a core group desperate to ride high in the MySpace blog charts. Because the charts were compiled on the basis of daily hits, bloggers in the USA were getting up in the middle of the night to post immediately after each 24 hour counting switch over, thereby ensuring they maximised the hits they got on the first day each new blog was up. Being based in Europe I could roll out of bed at my usual time and get a blog up at the beginning of the MySpace day. Titles of blogs were and are important, most people wanted to read about sex and blogs that categorised themselves as being about 'romance and relationships' tended to get the most hits. The overwhelming majority of the blogs weren't in the least bit interesting; reading about busts-ups between top bloggers who'd also become lovers just wasn't my bag. That said micro-worlds tend to develop around successful

blogs and I had one of my own that may well have appeared boring and impenetrable to casual visitors.

My Mister Trippy blog was a little unusual in that both I and the core of those commenting on it (and identical clones of each other's profiles), so there was always an air of uncertainty over exactly who was leaving comments. These identity games played in virtual space found their pre-web crystallisation in Neosim, were brought onto the net via The Luther Blissett Project in the 1990s, and can be traced back through mid-twentieth century cultural-political movements such as Lettrism to Dada. New readers who responded to my blogs and/or profile tended to describe them and these practices as both intriguing and disorientating.

When I joined MySpace it was still plagued by profile comment spam advertising adult dating sites and webcam services. Taking out free membership with these sex contact sites often allows a profile to be created but doesn't allow responses to the 'bot girls' (fake female swingers) who immediately come on to males who don't

started to blog again I did so with WordPress software that I stuck onto the back end of my own website. Now I control the horizontal and I control the vertical, and I don't have to worry about Rupert Murdoch and his minions deleting material I've posted because they disagree with it. For me this is the way forward to Web 2.1, running software on our own sites that allows others to interact with us online....

Another favourite trick of mine was to respond to those offering help with internet business start up schemes with the following: "Hey I was unemployed and homeless after losing my job and my relationship broke up because I had erectile dysfunction, but I kept checking my emails at the local library and I scraped together the money to get some shares after I was sent

happiness' as it is sometimes called, when the road house owner came over: 'Phew man!' he said to me, pointing at Marie. 'You gotta get that thing out of here. It's starting to stink the place up and people are complaining. Are you nuts or something?' Well Marie wasn't feeling that hungry and I felt something other than food was on the menu, so we left and I drove her to a remote beauty spot where we made passionate love. I even got her back in the hospital cooler without anybody noticing Marie had been missing for half the night. So I had a great weekend. I trust yours was a groove...." "Strangely I've never had a reply to this style of comment but then usually the people I was leaving them for wanted punters to part with cash for adult dating and/or webcam and pornography services.

have a premium paid subscription; these sites have virtually no female members, and they are unlikely to do much for the thousands of heterosexual males who take out subscriptions to them. Over the past few years MySpace has cracked down on such spam merchants because they cut into the operation's revenue base by making users distrustful of all advertisers. That said, I found it fun replying to spam comments.

Back on MySpace I couldn't resist responding to the bot girls who left me and millions of others messages along the lines of "How was your weekend?" One of my standard replies to this was: "Hey my weekend was great. I managed to sneak one of the unidentified bodies out of the hospital morgue. I've named this stiff Marie and I took her for a date. Thus did midnight find the two of us - I and my Marie - enjoying an intimate candle-lit tete-a-tete at Shoop's, a local roadhouse on the far edge of town. Romance was in the air, and Marie, whose only fault as a dinner companion was a tendency to keep slipping sideways out of the booth, had never looked lovelier. I had about decided to order the fish cakes and had climbed on top of the table, the better to urge Marie to try the

the Pussycat Dolls, never mind the political agenda!... I boycott an awful lot - companies who test on animals, use sweat shops, fund the Bush administration, etc., and tend to act upon my beliefs that the consumer should vote with their wallet. But having one's voice heard is also important, which is why I also try to make clear precisely why I avoid certain brands and so on. MySpace is a very good platform for getting my views read. BUT - and here's the problem - expressing dissent on MySpace seems to be becoming increasingly difficult and the platform appears to be becoming more adept at silencing the dissenters, one way or another...' Other comments pointed out the commercial benefits to MySpace of allying themselves with soldiers: "When push comes to shove, a mass-market phenomenon like MySpace is going to go for Apple Pie and Motherhood every time."

I didn't and don't feel I need Myspace to get my voice heard. I went into MySpace as a virtual environment with the intention of understanding it and proving that I understood it by operating successfully within it. I did that, then I got off the platform. When I'd finished with MySpace I felt like I wanted a break from blogging. When I

some anonymous hot stock business advice, and I started making a bit of money and got a flat to rent, then I bought Viagra on the net and that solved my relationship problems and as I got into doing more business on the web I found I was making a lot of money and I bought a house in London and then a holiday home in Spain and some really nice cars. Now I've got maids and a successful marriage too (although most nights these days I stay our late snorting cocaine and having sex with high class hookers - in fact I'm getting a blow job right now from a pre-op transsexual and I'm using my Palm mini computer to write you this message). So I can really recommend these business techniques you're offering people. But what your friends need even more than these techniques are the unsecured loans I can arrange for them because they can't start a successful internet business without proper financial back up. People are conned into thinking they can build up one of these operations without the financial wherewithal but that just isn't true, because all the most successful businesses on the net are properly capitalised..."

I tended not to bother responding to spam messages that ran along the lines of "Hey check

March 2008 I got a message from MySpace: "On March 10th, 2008 *Operation Myspace* will bring the troops in Kuwait and all of MySpace a LIVE show in Kuwait HD that they'll never forget. Disturbed, Pussycat Dolls, Jessica Simpson, Filter, Carlos Mencia, Metal Sanaz, DJ Z-Trip AND MORE will all be a part of this spectacular event that will be streamed LIVE only on MySpace... It's 2008 and the world has changed but our troops still need our support. Please drop by and leave a special message for the troops..." It was obvious Myspace weren't in the business of helping me deliver my personal message to the troops, which might be summarised as: "Fuck the army! The only good soldiers are those who desert taking their arms with them..."

Since I'm against imperialism and oppose racist sadists in uniform, I quickly reached the conclusion I wanted to delete my MySpace accounts... but before doing so on 10 March 2008 I tried to discuss it via a blog I posted on 7 March. The following comment from Christopher Nosnibor is pretty typical of the reaction to my suggestion everyone who opposed war should get off MySpace: "Fucking hell, I'm inclined toward boycotting any site that has anything to do with

out my band, we've got new tracks up and we'd like you to let us know what you think"; although very occasionally when I did click through to a band site I would leave a comment along the lines of: "Yeah I checked out your music man, and it sucks worse than an infant that missed a feed but since the market distorts everything, if you carry on with your promotions then there's a one in a hundred billion chance you'll be the next U2 (and they suck even worse than you)."

To build my profile and blog I had to be proactive, commenting on other people's pages and responding to comments on my own. I simultaneously extended my network by consenting to be 'friends' - one of the two profiles involved has to make a friend request - with other users. Only friends can leave profile comments but you can opt as I did to allow anyone to leave blog comments. I found profiles on the whole less interesting than blogs, since often they were little more than a list of consumer preferences in terms of music, movies and books. It took me about 6 months before I was able to make the MySpace Top 50 blogs on a regular basis. This required around a thousand hits a day. What I eventually worked out was that it was easier to get around

feature in February 2008 they made mine the first profile they endorsed through it. I knew from other sources that MySpace had been tracking my activities for some time, since the hits I was getting had attracted the attention of their data analysts. I got the impression they hadn't looked at the actual content of the blogs too closely. In some ways I found this odd because the key to creating a good blog is content. It was where a lot of people fell down in their online activities. Bloggers often appeared unable to move beyond trivia to broader concerns, and many postings were badly written to boot; a little bit of rewriting could have massively improved many of them.

Initially I'd wanted to pipe people off MySpace and onto my own website (<www.stewarthomesociety.org>), but it quickly became apparent this wasn't going to happen in any big way. I wasn't doing badly on MySpace but the contradictions of working in a web environment controlled by media mogul Rupert Murdoch eventually became too much for me. Increasingly I found comments and other material deleted from my pages presumably because it was deemed offensive, and some of my friends had whole accounts deleted. Then early on 7

100 people to look at the same blog 10 times in a day than it was to get 1000 different people to look at it. So when someone commented on the blog I'd comment back, then they'd come back to see what I'd said; by such means I was building a following as much for the comments as for the actual blogs (in effect the comments section of my blogs became a chat room, people commenting started talking to each other as well as to me). This was hard work, since it meant continually interrupting other work I was doing to log on to MySpace, but it was effective, for a while I was ending up with ten or so pages of comments on each blog, or about 250 comments from other MySpace users and 250 replies that I left. Naturally my replies weren't always detailed; I developed catch phrases such as 'toot toot' to deal quickly with much of what was left by way of response to my blogs.

Some of my standard replies to comments were a little more involved than a catch phrase such as "beep beep", since the cut and paste function on computers means that I never need to be short of scores of reusable lines. Being Mister Trippy my off the peg responses included: "Wow I'm really stoned... really tripping... out of... I've gone

alleged act forthcoming, which wasn't a surprise, seeing as it never sodding happened in the sodding first place! Some fucking bullshit wanker stitch-up copper taking advantage of my state and trying to make himself look good to his bosses or something, I can only guess. (?) I never did get my shoes back from the swine either, or the jacket I was wearing. Suppose they took them apart looking for bombs or something. Anyway, I wasn't charged with anything of any kind, or even cautioned in the end, and it all got quietly swept under the carpet, eventually. But only after the massive fucking headfuck experience of being in custody trying to prove myself innocent to people who didn't want to fucking listen, though. Yeah, suppose it could've been much worse and it could've been a copper with a gun who wanted to make himself look the big 'hero' there... All probably sounds incredible, but a true story, I kid you not. The shittiest thing that's ever happened to me."

and... I shouldn't have gotten this high... I didn't take enough acid to get this high... even my playthings walked to Saturn... bend pencil erasers... delicious... apples explode into butterflyes... I gotta get outta here... one two three four... I can hardly see... toombs interlocking... too much acid... too many colours blown up in my face..." But I would stress I was interested in building a community and what is important is the flow of relationships on and off line; so meeting people face to face was also important. Some of those commenting on my blog I'd known for years, others I met in the flesh as a result of my activities on MySpace, some I didn't ever meet but they managed to hook up for drinks or whatever with other people coming on the blog.

Building my blog took slightly longer than thinking up and appropriating comments. I used a mixture of material I'd already produced such as cultural essays and interviews from my own website (which by this means found fresh readers,) and texts created especially for the blog such as reviews of trash films. My movie focus was on exploitation and sleaze from around the world with some sociology of culture thrown in. I also

being escorted away. Anyway, next thing I know it's daytime and I wake up fully clothed (but minus jacket and shoes) in some private hospital way out in the sticks in bloody Chichester (WTF? That's 40 miles away from Crawley police station, where I was first taken to!), like when *The Prisoner* wakes up in The Village for the first time or something! Really fucking weird experience, particularly as the place seemed empty at first. I find an unattended reception desk, start shouting "Hello?" to no response for what seemed like bloody ages until eventually someone in charge turns up. I'm then told that I had 'tried to scale a fence at Gatwick airport itself'! (which I was absolutely nowhere near, incidentally.) Fucking ludicrous allegation, not only was I not anywhere near any fences, I was INSIDE a bloody train station, but seeing as I'm arthritic in both knees (and just about manage to walk unaided), I wouldn't even ATTEMPT to climb any sodding fence, anyway! In any case, I was asking people at the train station how I could get HOME, so WHY the fuck would I have tried to do THAT?

"Anyway, after much pleading from me for the cops to try and prove this complete and utter bullshit, there wasn't any CCTV footage of this

parodied the very popular list blogs format, throwing some political and theoretical content in with the comedy. One of my reworkings of a formula blog list was the following; and I liked it so much I posted it twice, once in Spring 2007 and again a year later on 17 February 2008:

"10 Down & Dirty Sexually Perverted Things About Me

"1. Although I am the illegitimate son of US president John F. Kennedy, I think his cold war policies sucked and he was a war-mongering jerk. On my paternity, please note this is not the kind of joke comment you often get in these "lists", my mother was part of the Keeler set of British women with whom Kennedy enjoyed sexual congress and the Prez visited London 9 months before I was born - that said JFK wouldn't face up to his responsibilities so the space for my father's name on my birth certificate is blank (but this doesn't mean that my passion for communism is some kind of Oedipal rebellion).

"2. I have never felt the maternal need to have children because I am a "bloke". I do have an illegitimate daughter called Britney Spears, compare how the two of us look and you'll clock

"Yep. Complete and utter bollocks. Happened to me about 4 years ago, and I did actually get arrested under the terrorism act. What happened was that I was pissed, and I'd got on the wrong train home that went miles in the opposite direction (which has actually happened to me a few times embarrassingly, most recently about a year ago....) I would've got a cab back from Croydon, but none of the stroppy drivers would take someone a bit wobbly on their feet, and so obviously pissed, so there ya go. So a train it was, there were still some running, though I could get one to Crystal Palace or something. Got on a train, and as soon as the doors shut, I realised it was fast to Gatwick. Fuck. Well, Gatwick station seemed like a maze trying to find your way around when pissed, I tell you. Anyway, after much wandering around platforms seeing how the fuck I can get back, I eventually get collared by a solitary copper in uniform who tells me I'm being placed under arrest under the terrorism act.

"Don't remember anything after that, I really don't. I must've blacked out, fainted or something, I don't know. (I was very pissed) Last thing I remember is being seized by the arm and

"3. I love psychedelic drugs and music that is red with purple flashes; a lot of people think this makes me a hippie, but I'm actually an Afro-Celt. Getting off my face on psychedelic drugs just happens to be a really cool way of connecting with myself. Likewise, I can't help considering bands like The Creation, The Birds and The Flies (1960s London freakbeat music, not to be confused with Californian groups like The Byrds), a total groove.

"4. I fantasize about having sex with myself - I bet you all do! Don't Lie.

"5. Styrofoam gives me goose bumps all over.

"6. I'm addicted to *Cheez-Its*. I love them. I eat them all day. I take them to work with me. I keep a little zip lock bag of them next to my bed in case I wake up in the middle of the night and need some *Cheez-Its*. I plan what day I'll do my food shopping based on how much *Cheez-Its* I have left. I can shake a box and guess how much longer that particular box will last me based on how many *Cheez-Its* are left in it.

"7. I like to make animal noises; I caw at crows, meow at cats, bark like a dog and moo at cows.

the likeness.

and everyone still calls The Warwick has had the name shortened to The Castle and turned into some sort of gastro nightmare in an as yet unsuccessful attempt to clear out the deadbeats who congregate there. While the change of decor and shortening of the name hasn't got rid of us yet, I'm sure the price increases will... or police harassment. Come to think of it next time I arrange to meet anyone in a pub I think I'll go to a Weatherspoons on the other side of town.... After all at 227 Westbourne Park Road opposite The Warwick is an equally notorious tourist attraction, the site of the "Blue Door" in the film *"Notting Hill"* that led to the former residence of the director Richard Curtis. In one of the film's endless low moments Hugh Grant's Welsh flatmate appears there in his underpants. The actual door was shipped to Devon in 2000 after being sold at Christie's for 5000. Likewise, the old bill stopping me on my way to The Warwick under the guise of 'preventing terrorism' is clearly complete and utter bollocks just like the Richard Curtis movie *"Notting Hill"*.

This drew from Mark - a bloke in his mid-forties from south London who generally responded to my blogs with witty one-liners the following story:

However, most of all I like to squeak like a bat because I think it will entice my friend Kelly to contact me.

"8. I don't wear make-up very often. However, when I do, I go for eye liner, eye shadow, powders and lip gloss. I enjoy looking nice.

"9. I never lie and would instead find interesting ways to "bend" the truth if this became necessary; but since the notion of "truth" is socially constructed and isn't "out there", it can't be "found" and therefore I don't need to adjust it.

"10. I hate lists and refuse to compile them."

I also wrote fictional pieces about myself and some of the regulars who contributed comments to my blog. In doing this I often adopted postmodern literary techniques, by for example taking newspaper stories and adapting names and other details to make them about me and my readers. For example: "A kinky sex escapade ended this week with the electrocution death of a Belfast man and the arrest of his boyfriend for manslaughter. According to cops, Stewart Home, 45, first claimed that his boyfriend Michael K was shocked by his hair dryer. But he then admitted that the couple was 'into weird sexual

behaviours,' according to a probable cause affidavit. Home then explained that he hooks clips to his boyfriend's nipples and 'plugs the cord into an electric strip' and shocks him. On Tuesday evening, Home said, Michael who was visiting him in Bloomsbury (London) removed his clothes, attached the clips, and shocked himself. Home then picked up the electric strip and shocked K several more times, adding that he had placed a piece of electric tape over K's mouth during the jolts. After the last shock, Michael, 40, 'fell over on to his face.' Home initially thought his boyfriend was joking, but quickly realized he was unconscious. He then dressed him in preparation for getting to the hospital, but instead called 999 when he stopped breathing. Home told investigators that the couple had 'been engaging in electric shock sex and other types of extreme bondage for about 2 years.' He was charged yesterday with involuntary manslaughter and reckless endangerment and was jailed in the West End Central police station (where he remains in custody on 100,000 bail)."

My blogs could and did get more serious than the above example might indicate. And some of my more obviously political blogs drew out interesting

the old bill as a teenager: "Have you ever been in trouble with the police before?" I queried this formulation by asking: "What do you mean before? I'm not in trouble now." I was evidently correct since I wasn't arrested and all the standard criminal charge sections on the form No. 22496 filled in were circled on the 'n' rather than the 'y' section - damage caused none, injury caused none, property recovered/seized none, offensive weapon none, give details none.... It was almost Hegelian in the way we were constantly getting closer to nothing!

"On being asked why I was in the area I said I had long standing connections with it and that my mother had lived in nearby Bassett Road when I was born and had died in Cambridge Gardens (both of which run off Ladbroke Grove where I was stopped). I also pointed out that my mother being found naked and dead on her bed with the door to her bedsit open and the lights on hadn't been considered suspicious by the local police, so I didn't really see why me walking out of Ladbroke Grove tube station appeared suspicious to them. I was then asked where I was going and said "The Warwick" and was told I could go although actually what was the Warwick Castle