

## Death notices

Ladies and gentlemen, roll up! Roll on up! Step inside!

You'll find it all in here, you've never seen anything like it, I promise you.

Oh, what a show awaits you, roll up!

You want sick jokes? You want vicarious excitement? You want prurient voyeurism? You want emotion-by-proxy? You want the morally insulated buzz of seeing *other people* behave appallingly? You want sex? You want clashing egos? You want bitching, scheming, clawing, back-biting? You want deceit? You want betrayal? You want violence? You want horror? You want balletically choreographed and spectacularly executed brutality? You want anguish, suffering, humiliation? You want blood? You want death? You want murder?

And you want all of that delivered neatly in a package that lets you lap it up but still feel good about yourself?

Course you fucking do! You're British!

So step right this way! Roll up! Log on! Download the podcast! Tune in! Sky-Plus it, so you can replay the best bits!

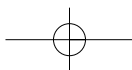
It's all here, I tell you. A freak show like nothing you've seen before.

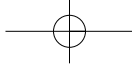
But don't worry, it's perfectly safe. The weirdos, the psychos, the nutters and perverts are all safely insulated on one side of the glass, one side of the CRT, the TFT, the LCD.

Yeah.

*Your side.*

Napoleon really nailed the British psyche with his 'nation of shopkeepers' remark. He didn't merely mean to disparage our modest ambitions and cowering insularity: he truly understood that what went on in those shops defined us more than what went on in our parliaments, palaces or places of worship. His perceptiveness and indeed outright prescience is vindicated in that the quintessential shop he envisaged hadn't even come



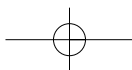


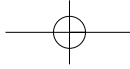
along yet: the local newsagent, wherein we purchase our beloved tabloids, and over whose counter, accompanied by smiles and please-and-thank-yous and self-satisfied civility, passes the judgmental gossip, envy-driven spite, petty-minded prejudice and that secret delight, that most deliciously savoured hypocrisy, a wee bit of postured outrage.

A nation of shopkeepers, yes, serving a nation of curtain-twitchers: hermetically sealed behind the glass as they spectate upon an absurdly hallowed elite whose lives mean more to them than their own timorous limbos. Never really doing, never really being, always merely looking on, watching other people fight, watching other people fuck. Vicariously living their lives through the attention-gluttonous conduct of the crass and vulgar, and worse, of cyphers just as dull as themselves, but upon whom this latter-day sanctified status of 'celebrity' has been conferred merely by the act of being spectated upon, after which every aspect of their future lives is considered valid and eligible for presentation to the watchers behind the glass.

And listen, listen to that sound this nation of curtain-twitchers makes as it gazes, rapt. It's like the humming of tens of millions of little cicadas in concert, so get yourself close to just one window and concentrate: isolate the sound. Hear it? Yes, there it is: tut-tut. Tut-tut. For disapproval is the keystone: the pitifully unconvincing façade behind which they hide their pallid cowardice, the means by which they try to fool themselves that this emotion they are feeling is something other than jealousy. Tut-tut. It's the talisman that protects them from confronting the truth: that they also have all of the appetites, the lusts and hungers they profess to be disgusted by: they just don't have what it takes to feed.

That's why I've never exactly been inclined to hang my head in shame any time the newspapers called me a monster. I *was* a monster. I am a monster. But let's not pretend for a second that they anything other than fucking loved me for it. I'd have more respect for the cunts if, the next time a serial killer embarked upon his squalid pursuits, one of the tabloids officially sponsored him. They could be honest for a change, have a champagne celebration every time he killed again, in anticipation of their sales going up. Your Soaraway *Sun*: Proud Sponsor of the Summer 2007 Derbyshire Prostitute Slaughter





Spree. In tomorrow's *Mirror*: the only *official* coverage of the New Gay Ripper. They could run competitions, like the old spot-the-ball grids you used to get: 'Put your cross in the square on the map showing where YOU think the next mutilated corpse will be abandoned, and you could win a white Escort van, *the* vehicle of choice of several top serial kiddy-murderers!'

Those ridiculously excitable little midgets pulled the head off it every time I pulled off a job. For an industry that practically runs on moral opprobrium, I wasn't merely a tanker of fuel, I was an oil strike, a gusher of the black gold, a gift that kept on giving. They competed to say who hated me the most. I particularly relished the keyboard vigilante types, the ones who called *me* cowardly and wanked on about how much they'd like to be left alone in a room with me. (Careful what you wish for, children.) But deep down, I knew, they were grateful. Christ, look at where they're reduced to getting their moral impetus when I'm not around to provide it. Witch-hunting Jade Goody, I ask you. Almost as much invective spunked out over her as was ever expended on me, not to mention three times as much column acreage, when all she did was be herself – her charming, charitable, literate, intelligent and highly photogenic self – and in the process give the nation a collective showing up. I killed several hundred people, but I think I'd have won a popularity poll against her after Shettygate.

They called me a monster, but they lapped up my every performance. No show without Punch, after all, and my goodness, doesn't this nation of curtain-twitchers love a show.

So roll up, roll up, roll up! Ladies and gentlemen, step this way, and the best part is it won't cost you a thing. The only price is what you're admitting about yourself, and that's no price at all, because we both already knew that about you anyway.

Inside is the reality show you *really* want to see, the star-studded entertainment you're truly craving when you're forced to settle for all that insipid fly-on-the-wall tedium.

It's called *I'm a Celebrity and I'm Never Getting Out of Here*.

