

T.V. Eye



Melissa Anne Rogan

A "New Woman" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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T.V. EYE

By Melissa Anne Rogan

I remember well how it all started. I was working late one evening in my office. I say office; it was really a room above one of the many small and anonymous shops on one of the side streets in the centre of the small town where I lived. I say worked, in reality I was desperately scouring my books to find anyone who may owe me money. I was flat broke; an independent small time private investigator who, like many others, was really struggling to survive.

The liberalization of the divorce laws had put many of us out of business and was seriously threatening to do the same to me. Who needs detectives when adultery is no longer any big deal?

I should have stayed in the police force, at least I was getting a regular pay cheque each month, even if the system frustrated me half to to death.

I leaned back in my chair. Looking for inspiration, I glanced at the photograph on the wall. It was of my hero, Humphrey Bogart, in classical Sam Spade guise, the archetypal private eye.

Often, in my less busy moments, I fantasized about being a private investigator in '30s Chicago, bringing gangsters to justice. My other fantasy was that of a second world war spy, infiltrating the enemy and learning their secrets, helping to save my country, in the nick of time. Anything to get me out of this rut.

I was surprised, and somewhat relieved to hear the timid knock on the door. A client at last?

"It's open," I shouted.

In reply, the door opened and a young man poked his head round.

"Are you Mr. Paul Rogan, the private investigator?" he asked.

"That's what the sign says," I replied, "come in and tell me your troubles."

He sat opposite me and sipping a mug of the atrocious coffee that I drank, he gave me his story.

"Do you look for missing people?" he asked.

Did I? After adultery snooping, missing persons was the private eye's second most important money earner. Better really, because you could spin out the expenses, but more work was involved in solving the case.

"Give me the details. Then I'll be able to tell you if I can help."

"It's my brother, Bill, William French," he replied, "he's gone missing. I don't know why. I just know that he was supposed to meet me last night and didn't turn up. When I checked his flat there was no sign of him and his landlord hasn't seen him for days. He hasn't been to work for a week. He always tells me when he is going away. Since our parents died, we're all the family we have."

“I can make no promises. I’ll need to look at his place to see if I can find any leads. The initial investigation will cost \$250, payable now. If I decide to take the case it will cost \$50 a day, plus expenses.”

He sucked in his breath.

“That’s pretty steep.”

I could see he was desperate. Well, so was I.

“Take it or leave it. Your choice.”

He thought for a few seconds.

“OK, I agree, but I want to know every day what you are up to. This is a lot of money for me.”

He gave me all the details of his brother, including a recent photograph, as well as five crisp, new 50 notes and left.

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The following day, after paying off some of my more urgent bills, I paid a visit to the home of Bill French, letting myself in with the keys provided by my client, John French.

As apartments go, it wasn’t bad, but nothing special; completely self-contained with living room, a single bedroom, kitchenette and bath room. A typical bachelor’s pad. A cursory inspection revealed no clue as to the occupant’s where abouts.

However, I was nothing if not thorough and started to snoop in earnest. In due course, I came upon a locked suitcase in the bedroom. Now most people leave suitcases empty unless they are going away, so a locked one was immediately suspicious.

My little pocketknife made short work of the rather flimsy lock.

The contents were a puzzle.

It was filled with women's clothes.

A full wardrobe was inside, but nothing else.

A second locked case really aroused my curiosity. The women's clothes in this one were rather odd. I mean the average female does not have a skimpy French maid's outfit and a nurses outfit locked away with sexy black basques and leather underwear, not to mention the wigs, make up and cheap jewelry.

My growing suspicions were confirmed by the discovery of some transvestite magazines and story books, and some photographs of an attractive lady who on closer attraction was obviously my quarry.

My time in the police had taught me that as foibles go, cross-dressing was usually harmless.

The photographs could indicate that somebody was blackmailing him, perhaps by threatening to reveal his secret to family, friends, work colleagues.

Had he fled in shame?

Having unearthed no other clue I decided to peruse the magazines to see if anything caught my eye. After an hour or so of this I was reassured of my original opinion, that, though not my cup of tea, transvestism was basically harmless.

Finally, something caught my eye. Bill had ringed in pen a small ad. On reading, it was a cryptic message with a phone number and a box number postal address. Basically, it was offering TV's the opportunity to live out their fantasies in privacy and security.

Could it be the front for a blackmail gang?

I had nothing else so it was worth following up.

I was disturbed by the ringing of the door bell. I quickly piled the clothes back into the case and, closing the bedroom door, went to open the front door.

It was my client, John French.

“I thought I’d come and see if you’d found anything,” he said.

I was annoyed. “I don’t take kindly to clients trailing after me,” I growled.

“I’m sorry,” he muttered, “it’s just that...”

He was obviously worried, so I relented.

“It’s OK, just don’t do it again.”

I let him in and told him to go and make some tea while I continued with my search. After the refreshment, I decided to question him about his brother. It was dicey ground, but at the end of the day, John was my client, so Bill’s privacy was not my prime concern. I braced myself.

“Does your brother have any foibles? Any sexual quirks?”

“What do you mean?” John demanded. The look in his eyes told me that he knew something, but was keeping it from me.

“Did you know that your brother is a transvestite?”

“Yes, I’ve known for years,” he replied, “but how?”

“I found some things in his bedroom.” I then showed him all that I had so far discovered and put to him my blackmail theory. “How did you find out about your brother’s ‘habit’? Did he tell you?”

“No,” said John, “I accidentally found out when he was still a teenager. I found some things hidden in our room. Even as a child he used to play dress up with mother’s clothes.”

“Does he know that you know?”

“No, I don’t think so. But what difference would that make?”

My next question was crucial. “How would he react if you disapproved?”

“I would never disapprove,” he yelled, “Bill is all the family I’ve got. I would never do anything to hurt him.”

“Yes, I appreciate that, but think, John. Bill doesn’t know that you know.”

“In that case,” replied John, pensively, “he would be very worried. I am all the family he has, and we’ve always been close.”

“If someone was blackmailing him by threatening to tell you of his secret, would he be scared enough to give in?”

“Yes. He would do anything to avoid hurting me.”

“Thank you,” I replied, “that is what I needed to know. I have contacts who will help me to find the addressees of these ‘phone and post box numbers. I think I’ll give them a closer look.”

“Is that legal?” he asked.

I didn’t reply.

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Four hours later I was sitting in my car in a less salubrious part of town. True to my word, I had used my contacts and called in some favours owed from my days in the police force to identify the address of the ‘phone number. All my attentions were now on it; a nondescript warehouse/office building registered to some company called ‘WIHP’. I could find out very little about it from official sources. Given the nature of my inquiries, the name was a little disconcerting, even if the spelling wasn’t quite right. Of course, there was no guarantee that it wasn’t just a convenient contact point.

I had been watching it for over half an hour and seen no signs of activity.

Finally I decided that I could learn nothing more without taking a look. I quickly circumnavigated the building and again found nothing, so I located the fire escape and started climbing. On the roof I found an unsecured skylight, and, checking that I was unobserved, forced it open and climbed in. All was quiet. I was on a short corridor with a couple of doors on each side. They were unlocked. A quick inspection showed them to be offices. I could find nothing of interest in the cursory inspection that I gave them.

I methodically began to quarter the building.

Finally, I heard voices, so I very cautiously eased my way towards them. I was on what appeared to be the warehouse floor, though it was more like a large open plan office, and there seemed to be a lot of activity.

Secreting myself behind a stack of boxes, I insinuated myself into a good position to observe what was going on without, I hoped, myself being seen.

What I saw left me amazed.

The scene in front of me was of a transvestite fantasy land. Although the advertisement hinted as such, I was still unprepared. Everywhere were men engaged in various female activities, dressed as secretaries, brides and bridesmaids, French maids, little girls, even babies.

I heard a soft noise behind me. As I turned to investigate, the stack of boxes collapsed, with me underneath.

It suddenly, and painfully, went dark!

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When I awoke, I had a terrific headache. I winced at the light as I opened my eyes.

“Ah, our little prowler is awake,” said a sweet voice.

Forcing my eyes to focus, I turned to the direction of the voice.

There stood a nurse, the sweetest girl I had seen in many a long year. If I had not been feeling pretty rotten, I would have been making a pass in five seconds flat. Funny, the things that go through your mind when you can't do anything. She quickly checked me over, pulse, blood pressure, light in my eyes, you know the setup.

“Well,” she replied, “no harm done. Lucky for you that you appear to have a hard head. I'll go and get Dr. Formyle.”

She flounced out of the room. My eyes gave her stocking clad legs an appreciative leer while my mind pondered on who Dr. Formyle was and what I was going to say to get out of this mess.

I found out in short order.

Dr. Formyle was a lady in her mid-forties I would guess, though still well shaped and attractive, despite the severity of her dress, a stark but expensive two piece business suit, navy pinstripe with skirt half way down her shapely calves. I think the modern term is ‘Power dressing’.

The doctor also examined me.

“You have a large bruise on your head where the boxes fell on you, and a rather nasty cut which I've put some stitches in. Apart from that and a slight concussion you are fine. Luckily for you, we have a small but well equipped medical facility here so you were given treatment very quickly. Now, do you mind telling me just exactly what you are doing, trespass-



ing on my property. We know from your wallet who you are.”

I knew even as the words were leaving my mouth that my hastily concocted story would never fool this obviously intelligent woman.

I was right. She didn't believe a word I said.

Threatened with the police, who could revoke my private investigator's license and put me out of business, I had no choice but to tell her the truth.

Looking at the photograph I showed her, she smiled.

“You could have saved yourself a lot of trouble by simply asking. This organization is discrete but hardly top secret. We offer such people as your Mr. French the opportunity to live out their feminine fantasies in complete confidence.”

“With due respect,” I replied, “from what I saw, your establishment is hardly like the seedy dives these people usually go to.”

I remembered too well from my days in the vice squad just what those places could be like. They were usually cellars or seedy back street tenements with a Miss Whiplash type dominatrix clad in leather and spiky heels forcing her poor unfortunate cross dresser into what could only be described as degrading positions.

“I agree,” replied Dr. Formyle, “we are not in it for the money, nor do we wish to degrade or dominate our clients. I am a psychologist and I and my staff are doing research into what makes a transvestite tick. We want to know in what way they differ from ‘normal’ males. That is why we have medical facilities. If you give me your word that what you learn here is kept in confidence, I can give you a guided tour, and let you talk to Mr.. French.”

I readily agreed.

I saw again what I had seen earlier, transvestites indulging in their fantasies, or so I thought. I was able to talk to them and they seemed very relaxed about themselves, not in the least self conscious.

As with any such group there was great variety; some were obviously just men in frocks, but others seemed to me to be totally convincing as females, even down to the four foot man acting in every way, to my admittedly untrained eye, like a baby girl.

Regardless of their look, they all had one thing in common; they all seemed to exude femininity.

At the time, I thought it must be the after affects of the concussion mucking up my judgment.

Finally, I was allowed to see Bill French, or Yvette, as he preferred to be known 'En Femme'.

He was dressed as a French maid, and although I thought he looked ridiculous, he seemed quite content to prance about in his short skirted uniform, stockings and heels, polishing and dusting.

There were several such maids, who between them kept the place spotless.

"This Dr. Formyle is some psychologist. She must save a fortune in cleaning bills," I thought, wryly.

Finally I left, convinced that my client's brother was safe and well, and my commission was completed.

Making my way back home, I stopped off for something for my pounding headache. I most definitely would be taking the doctor's advice to rest.

Walking past a news agents shop, I popped in to pick up the local paper. I liked to keep abreast of the news, you never knew when a job might depend on it.

Finally, I was sat down in my little flat, washing the pills down with a good cup of tea. I picked up my paper and was startled to see the date. I had been in that place for two days. That was some knock on the head I had received!

I still had the headache and the lump to prove it. I couldn't concentrate so I decided to hit the sack. I needed sleep.

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It was two or three days later when I got a nagging feeling that all was not quite right. My head had healed, just a slight ridge where the box had fell on it, barely a graze; and the headache had gone.

I had informed my client of my findings, assuring him that his brother was alive and well.

Although he was far from happy about the situation, at least he accepted it and, more importantly for me, paid up in full, and in cash.

Even so, my detective's instincts were firing on all cylinders. Now my mind was clearer, I could think straight, and the more I thought, the less convincing was Dr. Formyle's story.

Again, I thought about my vice squad days.

This was nothing like that. Why had I got an overwhelming sense of femininity from each man, regardless of his physical appearance? Was it really true, or a figment of my injured mind? Why was each group supervised by a woman clad in a nurse type white dress uniform carrying a funny little keyboard? Were they taking notes on a pocket computer, or something more sinister? On the face of it there was no actual evidence of anything untoward, just a hunch.

My hunches were never wrong.

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That afternoon, I was contacted by a friend in the police computer division, passing on information that I had asked her to find a couple of days ago.

Dr. Formyle was a noted psychologist who had for some years been assistant to a Professor Keatings, a brilliant physiologist who was working in nerve impulses and the functions of the brain. He had disappeared some eighteen months ago and despite rigorous inquiries, had never been found. Some hint of contacts with the drugs world had been uncovered and the best theory was that he had crossed a drug baron and had been eliminated as a consequence.

Dr. Formyle had continued his work for a while but lacked the insight to do it justice, so it too died. She continued in her own field, studying sexuality and gender variations.

This fitted in with her story until I read her Special Branch file.

She was down as a subversive, having been active in various feminist movements both legal, (burn your bra, equality of the sexes) and illegal, trying to force the pace of social change by less ethical methods. As is the case in many of these files, there was insufficient evidence to actually charge her with anything, but enough to create an interest in her.

WIHP apparently stood for Women In High Places and was dedicated to getting more women into positions of power in government and business, by any means.

Further, the more I thought about what she had told me and showed me, the fishier it became. The people I had met did not in any way fit the pattern of cross dressers that I had previously encountered. T.V.s were usually the soul of discretion, keeping themselves very much to themselves. Even when they met, they tended to mix only with either other

TVs or with a very few well trusted friends. The behaviour of the ones in the warehouse was wrong in so many ways, though if I was asked to be more specific I couldn't.

I just had a gut feeling that something was not quite Kosher. Maybe I had better look into this warehouse again. Only this time I would be both more careful, and more thorough!

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When I re-entered the warehouse it was in the early hours. I was dressed in dark clothing and I carried a small but powerful hand torch and some useful tools; screwdriver, small wrench, picklock.

Carefully, I eased my body through the skylight that I had helped open, and dropped into the corridor below. It was the same one I had been in before.

Quickly, I entered the first office and speedily, but efficiently, searched through desk and filing cabinets, which were all unlocked.

I found nothing untoward, the usual supplies of general office stationary, and some publicity literature, stating the aims of WIHP, exhorting women to stand for office whenever they could, from union office right up to government. There was plenty of advice on challenging and overcoming bias in the work place and on the extent of protection offered by current equal opportunity and sexual equality legislation.

There was nothing remotely subversive or illegal.

Hell, I agreed with most of it myself.

Searching other offices was equally unrewarding. I even had a look at the medical unit. Fortunately, the place seemed to be deserted. Unfortunately, I'm not medically qualified, so I couldn't tell if it was an ordi-

nary unit or not, though the site of a small, but fully equipped operating theatre gave me pause for thought. This was supposed to be a psychological study.

What did a psychologist need with a surgery?

I continued my search.

Finally, I found an office with a computer terminal. Maybe this would help. In my five years in the fraud squad, I had spent two in computer fraud, so I knew my way around most ordinary systems. The first thing I had to beat, once I'd booted it up was the request for a password. It is a simple fact that most people are rather naive when it comes to passwords. They pick a number or word that they can easily remember: birthday, anniversary, name of loved one. This was not much help without knowing the user. The other thing that many computer users do is write down their password and secrete it near to the computer, in case they forgot it.

Ah, here it was, stuck beneath the keyboard, silly cow.

The password was 'Amazon', rather apt, considering the nature of the business but demonstrating just the lack of imagination I'd come to expect of most computer users.

Now, let's see what could be learned.

Almost immediately I was engrossed in the information held in the computer data files. As I had originally thought, there was a blackmail network set up here. They had found sexual skeletons in the broom cupboards of many eminent men; politicians, high flying businessmen, even a member of the government. They were blackmailing them not for money, but to advance their particular cause.

I could understand this but where did ordinary transvestites like Bill French fit into the picture? They were hardly important in the great scheme of things.

I dug further, to see if an answer was forthcoming.

Suddenly, the light snapped on!

“Well, well,” drawled Dr. Formyle, “now why aren’t I surprised to see you? Somehow I knew you were too good at your job to accept my little story for long. As soon as you accessed the computer, It set off an alarm.”

I was never going to talk my way out of this one. Already I knew too much, and I’d barely scratched the surface.

Jumping from my seat, I made a dash for the door.

Dr. Formyle snapped her fingers and the nurse who accompanied me raised one of those funny keyboards and pointed it at me, all the while feverishly pushing buttons.

“Stand still,” barked Dr. Formyle, and I did, instantly. I didn’t know why, but I obeyed her, instantly and without question. Although in my mind I desperately wanted out, I just couldn’t bring myself to do it. At her order, I docilely followed her through to a small sitting room by the medical centre. Soon, I was seated comfortably on a settee, along with Dr. Formyle and the nurse, the same little sex kitten that had helped treat me the last time I was here.

“Now we’re all sitting comfortably,” began the doctor, “I suppose I had better give you the true story. I thought from the outset you were too smart to be fobbed off, and my investigations into your police record confirmed that. Oh, yes,” she smiled, noting my surprised expression, “we are very well connected.”

As she talked, the nurse slipped into the surgery, returning with a little box which she passed to the doctor.

“This is what it’s all about,” said Dr. Formyle, opening the box and removing a little device. It was basically a flat metal and plastic disc about an inch in diameter with two wires, one of which separated at the end to lots of little gold plated electrodes.

“This was Professor Keatings’ pride and joy,” she continued. “I know you know of him so I won’t lie to you. This is a transceiver which is surgically implanted into the patient’s skull. These tiny electrodes are then embedded deep into the brain. Using a special computer, we can send signals directly into the patient’s brain, bypassing his or her own will. We can control them totally.”

I squirmed uncomfortably, as the import of this information sunk in.

“Yes,” she smiled, as my hand rubbed the little ridge at my temple, “I fitted you with one, just in case, and the nurse has just activated it. The handsets are connected to the main computer through antennae in the walls and ceiling. They have very limited range but the main computer can reach anywhere in the city, so don’t try to escape.

“Professor Formyle was a totally ethical man. He meant to use them to treat mental illness and perhaps remove criminal tendencies. You see, any suggestion or instruction sent via this device becomes an integral part of the patient’s make up. He believes implicitly anything he is told. He will brook no argument, no matter how reasonable.

“As part of my studies, I discovered it was actually far more powerful than even the good professor realized. I found that by controlling the mind, you can control the body. It has long been known that in cer-

tain extreme circumstances the body can be changed by the mind. How many cases of terminal cancer have spontaneously cured themselves, confounding the doctors? If the brain believes something strongly enough, it will force that belief on the body by causing mutations and hormonal changes.”

“But this is fantastic,” I replied, intrigued, despite my fears. “With this device you can cure any illness.”

“Very true,” the doctor replied, “and in time, I may use it for that. For now, I am curing a social ill and using it to advance the cause of womankind.

“What happened to Professor Keatings?” I asked. “Surely he would never agree to this monstrosity.”

“Again, you are right. And I am right about you, you are very perceptive. I managed to drug the professor and fit him with one of his own devices, giving me total control. I never waste valuable resources, human, or otherwise, and Professor Keatings’ knowledge is essential to my researches. I simply changed him into a form more in keeping with my plans.”

She grinned smugly and pointed to the nurse.

“Mr. Rogan,” she announced dramatically, “meet Professor Keatings.”

The nurse smiled and curtsied daintily.

“A rather apt conversion don’t you think?” asked this terrible woman.

The horror of the situation left me momentarily speechless. As soon as I regained the use of my tongue I asked the question uppermost on my mind.

“If Professor Keatings was as brilliant as you say he was, how could you be so immoral as to destroy his mind?”

Again, she grinned.