

MANIAC. Thank you very much.

BURTON. Heart surgeon?! Bloody hell!

MANIAC. A theatre's a theatre, Inspector, be it West End or operating. I'm not fussy, I'll work anywhere.

BURTON. So I see. Translator for the Russian Embassy. You speak Russian then, do you?

MANIAC. Ha! No, not a word.

BURTON. So how did you manage that then?

MANIAC. Oh don't be obtuse, man. A good translation does not reproduce the source material word for word, it captures the essence, not the detail. And in the case of the Russian Embassy, the essence of every press release or communiqué is always 'The accusation is outrageous and anyway you did it first...'

BURTON. All told, we're talking... five, six –

MANIAC. Twelve.

BURTON flicks through the file as the MANIAC creeps round to read over his shoulder.

BURTON. Eight, nine –

MANIAC. It is twelve –

BURTON. Twelve arrests for impersonation –

MANIAC. But not a single charge. As you can see, my record is unsullied.

BURTON. Yeah, not for long. I don't know how you've got away with it so far, but you're getting sullied today, I promise you.

The MANIAC puts his arm around him coyly.

MANIAC. Please be gentle, Inspector, it's my first time.

BURTON pushes him away.

BURTON. So what is it now then? Therapist.

MANIAC. Psychiatrist, actually.

BURTON *finds a business card.*

BURTON. 'Senior Professor of Psychiatrics, Wadham College Oxford.' Ha! Well that's a crime right off. Inventing qualifications.

MANIAC. Of course it is. Fabricating doctorates, degrees, identities would be a criminal offence if I were sane. But I'm sadly not.

BURTON. You're what?

MANIAC. I'm not.

BURTON. You're not what?

MANIAC. Sane. I'm mad.

BURTON. Is that right?

MANIAC. It is. Certifiable. Literally, look.

He takes a framed certificate out of his bag and passes it to
BURTON.

None of it is my fault. I have a serious mental illness.

BURTON. Which is what exactly?

MANIAC. The desire to act. '*Istrionomania*' to give it its technical name.

BURTON *writes this down.*

BURTON. Istro... what?

MANIAC. Istrionomania. From the Italian *istrione*, meaning classical actor, with the hint of the ham. *Istrione al proscuitto crudo* if you will. The condition of compulsively needing to perform, anywhere, anyone, any time. Hence my pathological fear of the dark.

BURTON. What... Why?

MANIAC. Well because blackouts are very death to the actor. I am always on, Inspector. So it's essential that the lights are as well.

BURTON. Jesus... you're kidding me. You're like this all the time?

MANIAC. I'm afraid so, yes. All the world's a stage for me.
I think of daily life as a kind of *théâtre vérité* in which the rest of the cast are made up of non-actors who are unaware that a show is taking place. Which is lucky because I couldn't afford to pay them.

BURTON. Looks like you could afford it now though, doesn't it? You could afford to *build* a bloody theatre with the money you've been making as a so-called therapist.

MANIAC. Psychiatrist! How dare you!

BURTON. What's the difference?

MANIAC. Psychiatrists can charge far more.

BURTON. Right, yeah... Five grand per session.

JACKSON. Fucking hell.

MANIAC. I know. Very cheap really when you consider my training...

BURTON. What training's that? Drama school?

MANIAC. Almost. Mental hospital. Twenty years at sixteen different institutions, among the thousands of patients like myself. I've studied them up close, not just nine-to-five like your average workaday shrink, but twenty-four-seven. I've eaten with them, showered with them, slept with them. Among them, I've not – I've very rarely slept with them. QED I am prodigiously good at knowing what makes people tick. Or tock. Or quack, depending on the condition.

BURTON. I should hope so. Thirty-five grand you've charged people so far.

MANIAC. But, my dear Inspector, I had to charge that much. For my patients' sake.

BURTON. Oh it was for their sake, was it?

MANIAC. Of course. The more you cost, the more you're worth. The more people think you know what you're doing. Was it not Freud who said, 'To truly cure the mentally ill, add some zeros to your bill.' It has enormous health benefits, I assure you, particularly for the doctor.