

BIG YELLOW TAXI

A "Green Thriller"

by

PETER YATES

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

BIG YELLOW TAXI

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THE CAST

Douglas Mitchell	<i>Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the Environment Party</i>
Matt Lazenby	<i>Journalist for <u>Ecology Now</u></i>
Delfin	<i>A tramp</i>
Stephanie Danton	<i>Presenter of <u>Greenwatch</u></i>
Gracie Edwards	<i>Reporter on <u>Greenwatch</u></i>
Aide 1	<i>Mitchell's Assistant</i>
Aide 2	<i>Mitchell's Solicitor</i>
Mr. X	
Mr. Y	<i>Men in Grey Suits</i>
Mr. Domino	
Yob 1	
Yob 2	
Yob 3	
Yob 4	
Journalist 1	
Journalist 2	
Journalist 3	
Policeman	
Detective 1	
Detective 2	
Establishment Party Candidate	
Waiter	
Andrew	
Father	
Managing Director	
Warder 1	
Warder 2	
Mayor	
TV Director	
TV Floor Manager	
Radio Voice	
Make-up Girl	
Other journalists, policemen, firemen, crowd.	

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SCENE 1

The scene is a hustings. DOUGLAS MITCHELL is addressing a crowd from a podium.

Yobs: Rubbish! Get him off! Boo! Hiss! *(etc. ad lib)*.

Mitchell: *(through mike)* Yes! Go on! Shout me down! You don't have to listen. But you wait and see what happens. You wait. It may not be you that suffers. But what about your children? And your children's children? Do you want them to live in a desert? *(mimicking)* Shall we go for a ride dear? A Sunday afternoon jaunt? Take our gas-guzzling-non-catalytic-convertible ozone-machine and visit the countryside? If we drive up the M1 and dodge all the wrecks we can get out into rural Hertfordshire. I believe the oasis at Whipsnade still has a couple of trees. *(An ESTABLISHMENT PARTY CANDIDATE, sporting a large rosette, steps up onto a low platform in front of podium).*

Candidate: Rubbish! This is just alarmist. All you hippie conservationists are the same. Communism's dead you know - or don't you read the papers? *(laughter)*.

Mitchell: Capitalism's dead too. And in the graveyard that once was the government of this country you'll find an acid tree, a mad cow, an oily seagull and a polluted seal. But no whales, no fish, no fresh water, no ozone-layer, no air, no life at all. *(Mounting applause and cheers drown out his final words).*

Candidate: Pretty talk. But where's the money coming from to pay for all your cosy green schemes? Answer me that. Meanwhile I'm going home to my coal fire, in my leaded-petrol-driven car with my fox-fur clad, animal-intensive-perfume-smelling wife. And when I get home I'm going to spray every aerosol in sight. And then I'm going out to vote for the Establishment Party!

Mitchell: You'll be the only one who does. *(laughter)*.

Yob 1: *(pointing at MITCHELL)* I thought HE was a Establish-Mental.

Yob 2: Nah. He's a Environ-Mental. *(pointing)*. HE'S the Establish-Mental.

Yob 1: But I don't like Establish-Mentals, do we?

Yobs: Nah! *(they chase off CANDIDATE)*.

Mitchell: But for the rest of you, the ones with minds of your own, who can think

for yourselves, the choice is simple: you can vote for the established parties - and choose the Doomsday Scenario. Or you can choose the planet, choose creation. Choose Environment. (*applause etc. People shake hands with MITCHELL. Crowd starts to disperse. As MITCHELL leaves with his AIDES, DELFIN, a tramp, ascends the podium. MITCHELL pauses to listen for a few seconds, then exits*).

Delfin: Here it is! Here it is! You can only get it here! Help the world! Stop the rot! Cut the waste! Recycled ballot-papers, 50p a sheet. A bargain. Use them for writing letters to your MP. How about you sir? Recycled ballot papers. Yes, here it is! Get them from me. Me, Delfin the Green Tramp. You've heard of the Green Man? I'm the Green Tramp! Get them here. Recycled ballot papers. You sir? (*he continues ad lib - whilst the crowd disperses. Some stop and laugh and lead him on. A POLICEMAN sends him on his way*).

Policeman: On yer bike!

Delfin: Unhand me sir! I am a law-abiding member of the public going about my lawful business....

Policeman: Your awful business was that? (*DELFIN continues to protest as he is shoed away by POLICEMAN. Lights fade to BLACKOUT*).

SCENE 2

Lights up on TV studio. MITCHELL walks straight in, AIDES briefing him, being made-up as he goes. STEPHANIE DANTON, the presenter of the show he is about to appear on, gets up and shakes his hand.

Stephanie: Welcome, Mr. Mitchell.

Mitchell: Sorry I'm late. Held up at the hustings, I'm afraid.

Stephanie: We're used to fine deadlines, Mr. Mitchell.

Director: O.K. Stephanie. That's ten, nine, eight....

Floor Manager: Quiet please, everyone.

Stephanie: Are you ready, Mr. Mitchell? (*MITCHELL nods. Make-up Girl finishes*).

Director: four, three, two, one. Go music.

Floor Manager: Go titles. (*Theme music - plays and fades*).

Stephanie: Good evening. Tonight on Greenwatch we have Mr. Douglas Mitchell, a writer and campaigner on Green issues and a prospective parliamentary candidate for the Environment Party, whose chances of being elected ahead of the Establishment Party in the constituency of Hexham, where the issue of pollution of the local water supply is having a major influence, look better

than even - according to a glut of opinion polls. Would you put a bet on yourself, Mr. Mitchell?

Mitchell: I take myself more seriously than that.

Stephanie: We'll be returning to Mr. Mitchell in a few minutes when we'll be discussing his forthcoming book and getting his views on what is being called the ECN phenomenon. Before we do, a report on the background to ECN by Gracie Edwards. (*Lights down on Studio and up on another location*).

Gracie Edwards: I'm standing on a mound of earth in the middle of the Lincolnshire countryside. Nothing particularly unusual about that - except that I'm breaking the law. This is Ministry of Defence property. A quarter of a mile to the west - in that direction - are massive double security fences topped with razor wire. Behind me are several aircraft hangars and a runway. And, underneath me, is enough poison to destroy the.... (*BLACKOUT. The report cuts. Lights up on Studio*).

Stephanie: (*slightly flustered - obviously listening to DIRECTOR in ear-phone*). I'm sorry.... we seem to have lost that report from Gracie. We'll come back to it later. But in the meantime if we can turn to you, Mr. Mitchell....

Mitchell: Why has that report been stopped?

Stephanie: (*regaining composure*) A technical problem. We'll get it sorted out and we'll return to it later in this programme. Now with your new book about to be published, do you think....

Mitchell: No. Let's get back to it now.

Stephanie: I'm sorry. We haven't traced the fault yet but I'm sure that as soon as we have....

Mitchell: What kind of fault?

Stephanie: What.... ?

Mitchell: (*looking around the Studio*). Come on. Someone fill us in. What kind of fault is it?

Stephanie: Mr. Mitchell, I assure you everything is under control. But can we discuss....

Mitchell: Well let's hear the report then. If everything's under control we can continue.

Stephanie: Look....

Mitchell: No, you look. Don't you find it just an incy bit fishy that such a controversial report, which young Gracie risked life and limb preparing, with all its attendant publicity and media hype, suddenly develops a technical fault just as it's going out on the air?

Stephanie: All I can say, Mr. Mitchell, is that....

Mitchell: What about the CFC's report?

Stephanie: What?

Mitchell: Don't treat me like a nerd, Ms. Danton. The CFC's report that should have gone out three weeks ago but also developed one of your mysterious technical faults - shortly before the programme this time - and hasn't been heard of since.

Stephanie: Well....

Mitchell: (*getting up*). Funny, eh? Who's suppressing this stuff? Come on. What's going on back there?

Stephanie: (*losing her cool*). For heaven's sake, Mr. Mitchell, we're whistle-blowers here. Greenwatch has been setting the pace on green issues for over a year. You can't accuse us of a cover-up.

Mitchell: Open your eyes, girl. (*exit*).

Stephanie: Mr. Douglas Mitchell obviously rather hot under the collar about issues that I think we all - occasionally - get hot under the collar about. We'll see if we can bring you the rest of that report later in the programme. Now Update. How are Green issues affecting life in your area?

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

MITCHELL and AIDES are outside.

Aide 1: That was a bit strong wasn't it, Douglas?

Aide 2: Bloody good TV I thought. Great publicity, too.

Aide 1: I don't know. I think it might be going a bit far for us to accuse the BBC of spiking their own reports.

Mitchell: Someone did. Someone got to it. Is it here?

Aide 2: Yes. Here comes the Mayor now. (*Enter MAYOR, his party, press etc.*)

Mayor: (*shaking hands with AIDE 1*) Mr. Mitchell.

Aide 1: (*Coughs. Indicates MITCHELL with his eyes.*)

Mayor: Ah. Mr. Mitchell. It gives me great pleasure, as Mayor of Southwark, to present you with this, the Forests of our Future Award for an outstanding achievement in a green field. What did you do - clear up the cow-pats? (*he laughs*). Cow-pats.... green field.... yes? (*muted laughter, great embarrassment. Clears throat*) We feel that your book... (*reading*) The Green Children shows the way to all our youngsters. This little book (*someone hands him a copy: it's quite big*) makes our kids care about the planet. Makes them want to preserve our precious Earth. Makes them feel part of one world. And, after all, there is only one world! Isn't there? (*half-*

hearted laughter). If I may be so bold....

Mitchell: Thank you. I dedicate this award to the government of this country - of whatever political colour. Without them there would be no need for investigative journalists. Without them there would be no need for ecological whistle-blowers. Without them there would be no need for the Environmental movement.

Mayor: Oh, I.... er.... (*He is drowned out by JOURNALISTS with a crescendo of questions. AIDE 1 selects a JOURNALIST and controls the ad hoc press conference*).

Journalist 1: Joe Thornton, The Sun. What do you mean by your dedication?

Mitchell: Exactly what I said.

Journalist 2: Oliver Bage, The Times. Do you blame this government for the ecological damage in the country?

Mitchell: Don't you?

Journalist 2: What should the government be doing?

Mitchell: Listening. Watching. Caring.

Journalist 3: David Felton, Southwark Gazette. What is your opinion of the Minister of the Environment?

Mitchell: You mean we've got one?

Journalist 3: Merry?

Mitchell: Most of the time, I think.

Journalist 1: What is your advice to the voters of this country in the forthcoming election?

Mitchell: Ignore anyone who says they are making Green issues a priority.

Journalist 2: Doesn't your party do that?

Mitchell: All issues are green issues.

Journalist 1: But that means....

Mitchell: Don't interrupt me! My Party makes no division between any aspects of government and the environment because they go hand in hand. They are inextricably linked. Now if you'll excuse me gentlemen, I've had a hard day and I could do with a cold beer and a couple of hours' sleep. (*JOURNALISTS talk amongst themselves as MITCHELL turns to leave with AIDES 1 & 2*).

Lazenby: Mr. Mitchell, why the outrage on TV this evening? (*MITCHELL turns slowly and picks out LAZENBY. Everyone has fallen silent*).

Mitchell: Do I know you?

Lazenby: Matt Lazenby. Ecology Now.

Mitchell: I thought they renamed it "Ecology Then". (*Laughter*).

Lazenby: We're on the same side, Mr. Mitchell.

Mitchell: There are no sides, sonny. This isn't cowboys and indians.

Lazenby: What's the subject of your forthcoming book, Mr. Mitchell?

Mitchell: Read it. I'll send you a copy. (*MITCHELL and AIDES exeunt. JOURNALISTS chat, compare notes. Enter DELFIN.*)

Delfin: Here it is! Here it is! Recycled newspapers. Very cheap. Only 50p! Look! The Times (*holds up dustbin liner*). Recycled as a bin bag. You can put garbage in it - instead of reading garbage in it! Yep. Here it is! Ecology Now. Great magazine. Recycled as tree! (*holds up twig*). Oh yes. And finally, what you've all been waiting for: The Sun - recycled! (*holds up toilet roll. JOURNALISTS jeer and cheer. DELFIN throws roll at them, produces more to throw, continuing his patter. JOURNALISTS throw them back and DELFIN gets entwined in them. Lights fade slowly. Music. JOURNALISTS disperse leaving DELFIN alone in a green spotlight.*)

Delfin: *Delfin the Green Tramp
Haunts the night
Scavengin' and scroungin'
He sees that things ain't right
Take your refuse
And eat it for your lunch
This world's gonna blow soon
That's Delfin's hunch. (Music gets louder).*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

Lights up on a room in a Gentlemen's Club: old books, leather furniture, dark oil paintings. MR. X, MR. Y and MR. DOMINO are standing around a table playing a game that involves the moving of toy cars around with croupier rakes.

Mr. X: How near is he?

Mr. Y: I haven't read the book.

Domino: Boring anyway. The last one. Couldn't finish it. Mind-blowingly boring.

Mr. Y: Best seller.

Domino: So's the Bible.

Mr. X: He's not religious, is he?

Domino: Not so's you'd notice.

Mr. X: Pity. Got to find some dirt. Somewhere.

Mr. Y: Gay?

Domino: Probably. Most of them are. Who cares?

Mr. Y: Straight?

Domino: Now THAT might be useful.

Mr. Y: Child molester?

Domino: Hates children. Despite writing a best-seller for them. Hates everybody ,
in fact.

Mr. X: What about - money?

Domino: Hasn't got any. Nor has the Party. We made sure of that.

Mr. Y: (*laughs*)

Domino: In the red. In hock to the hilt. Says he can't even pay his Council Tax.

Mr. Y: Know the feeling. You know mine's nine hundred and twenty three? More
than I earn in a day.

Mr. X: Tut tut. (*shakes his head sympathetically*)

Domino: Criminal. (*pause*). Should live in Wandsworth. Like me.

Mr. X: Naughty money?

Domino: Not a trace. He needs it. But not a hint.

Mr. Y: There's always a hint.

Domino: Well....

Mr. Y: Man's not a man without a hint of naughty money. I got those expenses in
the end, you know.

Mr. X: Good for you. If there isn't a trace - perhaps there should be.

Mr. Y/Domino: Ye-es.

Mr. X: And perhaps the law and order brigade should be involved.

Mr. Y: Oh yes.

Domino: And perhaps Mr. Mitchell should be taking the yellow taxi....

Mr. Y: All the way to the holiday camp....

Domino: The one in Brixton or the one in Wandsworth?

Mr. X: Your move, I think. (*pause as they play*). He keeps ranting on about the
television programme. Do we know who pulled the plug on it?

Domino: Yes.

Mr. Y: Oh?

Domino: I did.

Mr. Y: Cutting it a bit fine weren't we?

Mr. X: Perfect timing, I thought.

Domino: Thank you, Mr. X.

Mr. X: You're welcome, Mr. Y.

Mr. Y: Well done Mr. Domino.

Domino: Thank you Mr. Y.

Mr. Y: Well, Mr. X, I must go and arrange some shooting.

Domino: Shooting?

Mr. Y: Grouse, Mr. Domino.

Domino: Of course. And I have to arrange a taxi.

Mr. X: It would be appreciated. In all the right places. (*MR. Y and MR. DOMINO turn to go*). Keep taking the CFC's, gentlemen.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

A street. A building with a sign saying: "GREENFINCH - THE ECOLOGICALLY SOUND PRINTERS. ALL MATERIALS USED ARE RECYCLED". DELFIN is asleep on the ground in a bundle against the wall. Enter YOBS 1,2,3 & 4, very noisy, larking about. YOB 1 has a spray can and he sprays graffiti on the wall: the letters F O T E. The noise wakens DELFIN.

Delfin: What's that mean?

Yob 1: FOTE.

Yob 2: It's our clan, man.

Yob 3: Foes of the Earth.

Yob 4: Anything green makes us puke.

Delfin: You shouldn't be defacing walls like that.

Yob 2: It's a political statement.

Yob 3: It's our Party.

Yob 4: And you'll cry if we want you to. (*YOBS move in on DELFIN*).

Yob 3: You'll support us won't you?

Delfin: Now fellas....

Yob 2: 'Course he will.

Yob 1: Vote for FOTE. (*YOBS start pushing DELFIN around and pinch his hat which they throw around and taunt him with*).

Yobs: Vote FOTE! Vote FOTE! (*Enter MITCHELL with AIDE 1*).

Mitchell: (*grabbing YOB*) Pick on someone your own brain-size. (*Throws him across street. Other YOBS back off and go into a huddle in a corner. Exit AIDE 1*).

Delfin: Well, thanks Mr. Mitchell. (*Picks up hat, straightens himself out*). Can I interest you in some recycled matches? (*DELFIN goes up to MITCHELL and presses a match-box into his hand*)

Mitchell: Piss off. (*pushes him away. Exit. POLICEMAN enters - passing MITCHELL. He stops, watches YOBS*).

Yob 2: Well if it isn't the law man himself.

Yob 3: Mr. Copalot.

Yob 4: The original floating voter no less.

Yob 1: Vote FOTE!

Policeman: Have you got business around here? If not - get lost.

Yob 3: Oh yes, Mr. Copalot.

Yob 4: We will, Mr. Copalot.

Yob 2: No need to hopalot Mr Copalot.

Yob 3: Notalot to stopalot for Mr. Copalot. (*They drift away*).

Yob 1: Vote FOTE!

Yobs: (*Sing - to the tune of Yellow Submarine*).

***We all vote for the Foes of the Earth,
Foes of the Earth,
Foes of the Earth etc....***

(*POLICEMAN stands for a moment, then uses personal radio*)

Policeman: Nine-seven-six to X-ray Bravo. Nine-seven-six to X-ray Bravo.

Radio: X-ray Bravo. Go ahead nine-seven-six.

Policeman: Present position: Amazon Crescent. Have confronted a gang of youths, now heading down South Lane towards the Sainsbury's Superstore area. Over.

Radio: Copy nine-seven-six. Will alert mobile unit in Superstore area. Over. (*Pause. POLICEMAN then notices smoke coming from the building. Investigates. Uses radio again*).

Policeman: Nine-seven-six to X-ray Bravo. Present position premises of Greenfinch Printers, 312 Amazon Crescent. Smoke is emitting from lower storey window - and I can see flames. Looks like the makings of a major conflagration. Alert appropriate services. Dispatch back-up units ASAP. Over.

Radio: Message received nine-seven-six. Action immediate. Over. (*Fire erupts, Sudden activity. Screaming people running out of building. POLICEMAN helps. More people arrive. SIRENS. More POLICE arrive, FIRE BRIGADE etc. MANAGING DIRECTOR approaches POLICEMAN*).

Managing Director: Lawrence Jameson, Managing Director of Greenfinch. There's a major fire in the print room. Two people not accounted for.

Policeman: O.K. sir. Leave it to me. (*POLICEMAN talks to other Policemen. Enter MITCHELL. Looks around then moves to MANAGING DIRECTOR*).

Mitchell: Laurie. What the hell happened?

Managing Director: Who knows? A fire out of nowhere. Jim and Sid are still in there somewhere.

Mitchell: What about the book? Did you move it? Where is it?

Managing Director: What are you talking about? There was no time. We had to get the people out. Jim and Sid are still in there for god's sake!

Mitchell: My book. What have you done to my book? You idiot. What sort of

security do you have here? You amateurs. (*Pushes him away - moves to POLICEMAN*). Where's the fire brigade? There's a book going up in smoke in there.

Policeman: My concern is the people who are still trapped. Move, sir, or I'll have you arrested. (*Exit MITCHELL. Fire and confusion in street continue. LIGHTS FADE*).

SCENE 6

Police Station - Interview room. POLICEMAN is standing at back of room. YOBS 1,2,3 & 4 are being interviewed by DETECTIVES 1 & 2.

Detective 1: No - YOU tell US what you were doing outside Greenfinch at 5.17 p.m. on Thursday evening.

Yob 2: We told you. We was just fooling around.

Yob 3: Yeah. We didn't do nothing. Did a bit of graffiti.

Detective 2: Graffiti is a very serious offence.

Yob 3: So's selling Christmas puddings. (*to other YOBS*). Did you know they never repealed that law? Some jerk died from inhaling one. So they banned the sale of them.

Yob 2: That's very interesting, that is.

Yob 4: Not a lot of people know that.

Detective 1: What else did you do?

Yob 4: There was this geezer. Delfin they call him. Total loony. Hangs around selling things.

Detective 2: We know him.

Yob 4: Well we had a bit of fun with him.

Detective 2: Fun?

Yob 4: You know. Pushed him around a bit.

Detective 1: Pushed around? Elaborate.

Yob 2: Elabor - what?

Detective 1: (*grabs him*). Don't get smart with me, sonny. We've got you for graffiti, loitering with intent and suspected arson. You could go down for years, sunshine.

Yob 4: We didn't do the fire - we keep telling you.

Yob 3: Yeah, we only pushed him around a bit.

Detective 2: GBH then, too Guv.

Detective 1: You are in deep mire. All of you. Now tell us about the fire - you. (*points to YOB 1*).

Yob 1: What fire? (*YOBS laugh*).

Detective 1: O.K., book 'em.

Yob 1: A jest, a joke. A FOTE joke. Vote FOTE. (*DETECTIVES get up, threaten*).

Yob 1: (*mock fear*) Oh no, sergeant, please no.

Detective 1: Inspector.

Yob 1: I know who torched the printers.

Detective 1: Well?

Yob 1: What's it worth?

Detective 1: Not getting banged up for obstructing a police investigation.

Yob 1: What a hard bargain he drives. Does the name Mitchell ring a bell?

Detective 2: What that Green guy?

Yob 1: Seen him on TV.

Yob 2: Yeah, he got all stroppy with us. Chased us off. Stopped us having our bit of fun with the tramp geezer.

Detective 2: One guy sees you lot off. So you're not so tough after all.

Yob 4: There was two of them.

Yob 1: We could've taken them. But you know us, sarge. Law-abiding citizens. We wouldn't want to disturb the King's own so green and very peaceful highway.

Yob 2: We respected the gentleman's wishes and moved on.

Yob 3: Didn't want any witnesses, I reckon.

Detective 1: Constable?

Policeman: It's true sir. He was there. I saw him before the fire. I recognised him from TV too. Then he gave me a lot of hassle during the fire while I was trying to sort things out. Said something about his book going up in smoke. Seemed a bit odd.

Detective 1: This was only the print run, wasn't it? He must have copies of the original, surely.

Policeman: Seemed to be over-playing it a bit. (*Silence*).

Yob 4: What did we say?

Detective 1: Get out of here.

Yob 1: What, no reward? Come on sarge.

Detective 1: (*shouting*). Get out!

Yob 2: Not even a thank you. Now that's justice for you. Blind, deaf and skint. (*YOBS exeunt noisily*).

Detective 2: Shall we bring him in?

Detective 1: Circumstantial evidence? Why not? I'm sure we can pin it on him somehow. And you-know-who will be extremely pleased.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

Press conference. LAZENBY is standing away from other JOURNALISTS.

Lazenby: Mr. Mitchell, do you think there is a connection between the Greenfinch fire and your forthcoming book?

Mitchell: I thought you were dumb. Now I know you're a complete dick-head as well. A controversial book on the presses. Arson. Of course there's a connection. Surely even you can work that out?

Journalist 1: Who do you think's behind it?

Mitchell: A drug-crazy renegade in a pin-stripe suit.

Journalist 3: Mafia boss?

Mitchell: Establishment Party government. The drug's power. The motivation's money. The victims are you and me. Next question. (*Enter DETECTIVES and POLICEMEN*).

Detective 1: Douglas Jardine Mitchell. You are under arrest for the suspected arson at the premises of Greenfinch Printing. I must caution you that anything you say will be taken down and may be used in evidence.

Mitchell: You see what I mean? If they want to silence you they'll stop at nothing. (*JOURNALISTS burst into life. POLICEMEN lead MITCHELL away with DETECTIVE 1. DETECTIVE 2 stays to answer questions with POLICEMAN. Lots of noise from JOURNALISTS*).

Policeman: Shut up! (*eventual silence*). Thank you.

Journalist 1: Why has Mitchell been arrested?

Detective 2: He is... er.... helping us with our enquiries.

Journalist 2: Give us a break! We heard the warrant.

Journalist 3: Enquiries as regards what?

Detective 2: Off the record?

Journalists: Yes!

Detective 2: Douglas Jardine Mitchell has been arrested in connection with our enquiries into the fire at Greenfinch Printing.

Journalist 2: Evidence?

Detective 2: Enough to satisfy us that there is a case to answer.

Journalist 1: Good case?

Detective 2: I should say - watertight.

Journalist 2: What's the nature of that evidence?

Detective 2: You know I can't divulge that kind of information. Suffice it to say that there was commendable work by Police Constable Stocker (*acknowledges POLICEMAN*) who was on the scene of the crime shortly before it was perpetrated.

Journalist 1: Why didn't he prevent it then? (*laughter*).

Journalist 3: Did he see Mitchell there?

Detective 2: You'd better ask the constable.

Journalist 3: Well, constable, did you see him?

Policeman: We have good reason to believe that Douglas Jardine Mitchell was in the vicinity of the said premises at some point during the preceding twenty-four hours to the commission of the alleged crime of arson that allegedly took place at 5.17 on Thursday 12th December at the said premises.

Journalist 2: In other words - yes. *(laughter)*.

Lazenby: Detective Sergeant Heggety? Could you tell me why a known Green sympathizer and environmental activist would set fire to the printers that are in the process of completing the printing of his own apparently controversial manuscript?

Detective 2: Who are you?

Lazenby: Matt Lazenby, Ecology Now.

Detective 2: Suffice it to say that the Green God works in a particularly mysterious way, Mr. Lazenby. *(Turns to POLICEMAN and whispers, then exits)*.

Policeman: O.K. gentlemen. That's it for today. Press briefing over. *(JOURNALISTS ask lots of questions all together. POLICEMAN exits. DELFIN has been hovering around)*.

Delfin: *(holding up the remnants of burnt books)* Here it is! Here it is! Recycled ashes. The paper was recycled in the first place so they're doubly recycled! Recycled ashes! *(puts books back in sack and takes out some feathers)*. Go on - ask me what sort of bird it is.

Journalist 2: Phoenix, by any chance?

Delfin: 'F he nicks it, it won't be rising from any ashes, will it? Here it is! Here it is! Recycled ashes! Only 50p! *(JOURNALISTS disperse. Lights fade to Green spot. LAZENBY is left with DELFIN)*.

Delfin:
*Delfin's not a con-man,
Delfin's not a liar.
You'll get those nice green fingers burnt
If you play with fire.*

(LAZENBY is bemused. DELFIN goes off cackling. Light fades)

SCENE 8

Police Cell. MITCHELL with AIDE 2 who is his solicitor.

Mitchell: Why the hell would I set light to my own book for god's sake?

Aide 2: Motive is irrelevant now. It's subservient to evidence.

Mitchell: Evidence.... !

Aide 2: When arrested you had a box of matches in your pocket.

Mitchell: Don't make me laugh, Simon. A guy has matches in his pocket so suddenly he's an arsonist. They will laugh it out of court. And if you can't do better than that I'll get a lawyer who can.

Aide 2: You can't afford one. I come without a fee, remember.

Mitchell: Big deal. (*pause*). Everyone carries matches.

Aide 2: Do you smoke?

Mitchell: You know I don't.

Aide 2: So does everyone in the country. You're the anti-smoking campaigner of the age. So why carry matches?

Mitchell: To light the gas.

Aide 2: You've got a microwave.

Mitchell: Well.... to light....

Aide 2: And storage heaters.

Mitchell: For when I go camping. To cook my meals, O.K.?

Aide 2: Planning a trip this weekend, were you? In the middle of an election campaign?

Mitchell: The date of the General Election hasn't actually been set yet, remember. So we're not in the middle of a campaign.

Aide 2: Yes but it's only a matter of time. Everyone's behaving like it's a campaign. I bet the PM's not planning a camping trip.

Mitchell: Who's side are you on?

Aide 2: Yours, Douglas. Believe it or not. But if I can drive a coach and horses through your defence sure as hell a government inspired prosecution will. (*pause*). Now, the paraffin and firelighters that were found at the flat.

Mitchell: Who knows? I don't actually know what IS at the flat - the police have a far better idea of that having taken it apart inch by inch, no doubt. I do all my writing on the road. I've been there for two months and haven't looked in most of the cupboards. It's a furnished flat. There's bound to be that sort of stuff there. And if not the boys in blue have had every opportunity to plant them there, before, after or even during the event.

Aide 2: And what were you doing at Greenfinch that day anyway? Jameson, is it? - (*looking at papers*) - the managing director, claims you didn't go to see him but you spoke to him outside when the fire was going.

Mitchell: He's a berk.

Aide 2: What were you doing there?

Mitchell: I had a feeling.

Aide 2: A feeling?

Mitchell: A suspicion. That something was going to happen.

Aide 2: Astrology now, is it?

Mitchell: (*seriously*) I don't know. Astrology. Déjà vu. Who knows?

Aide 2: Douglas, a feeling, an astrological twinge, déjà vu even, is not a credible defence to take into a court of law where the cards - Tarot or otherwise - are already heavily stacked against you.

Mitchell: And I got a parcel.

Aide 2: A parcel?

Mitchell: A dead greenfinch. With it's wings singed. I am so sorry. About the bird. (*sensitively*). A small harmless creature. Murdered because someone wants to make political capital out of it. I was so angry. I didn't care about the book. I've got copies coming out of my ears. It'll get printed. But I wanted to meet the person who would do that to a harmless living creature. I wanted to meet him and do the same to him. So I went down there. I knew someone was going to torch the place.

Aide 2: You were set up.

Mitchell: So it seems.

Aide 2: It was a bit crass. wasn't it?

Mitch: O.K. So it was crass. Guy was with me. What's he got to say about it?

Aide 2: Was he with you the whole time?

Mitchell: Yes. No. I don't know. I think he disappeared just before the fire started.

Aide 2: Disappeared is the word. Sunk without trace.

Mitchell: What? Aren't the police looking for him?

Aide 2: The police don't even believe he exists. Back at Party H.Q. they've decided he was a plant.

Mitchell: Great.

Aide 2: This bird. In the parcel. Where is it?

Mitchell: In the Thames. Back to nature.

Aide 2: Oh, terrific.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 9

The Club.

Mr. Y: They all deserve the O.B.E.

Domino: Except for a man called Lewington.

Mr. X: Lewington?

Domino: Yes. I'm afraid it was only eleven good men and true. My informant on the jury tells me that this man Lewington kicked up quite a fuss. Suggested there might be a conspiracy. Against Mitchell. Seemed to be a bit of a

crypto-green himself.

Mr. Y: Wasn't he vetted? How did he end up on the jury?

Domino: Some of them are getting quite clever.

Mr. Y: Disgraceful. Someone of those views being allowed to sit on a jury. Next thing we'll know juries will consist of ordinary members of the public.

Domino: Working class people, even. (*expressions of disgust*).

Mr. X: Lewington....?

Domino: Is about to go out of business.

Mr. Y: What business?

Domino: Sub-postmaster. It's rumoured that he will be held up within the next couple of days. Hope he doesn't have a go. Could end up getting hurt.

Mr. Y: Is Mitchell going to appeal?

Domino: If he does we'll make sure his sentence is increased. Three years for arson - ludicrous.

Mr. Y: Disgraceful.

Mr. X: Unacceptable. The Judge?

Domino: Being taken care of. Watch the tabloids.

Mr. X: Now what about these copies?

Domino: Mitchell put the book on floppy disc and had twenty copies made.

Mr. Y: I thought that had been organised.

Domino: We got to his computer and fed in a virus so that the original copies are worthless. He cottoned on to that and whilst remanded in custody awaiting trial he had access to a computer....

Mr. Y: What! These new prison reforms have gone too damn far!

Domino: Exactly. But his solicitor smuggled in his original manuscript and he put it all on disc whilst in prison. He got twenty copies out - seventeen of which we have.

Mr. X: Those left?

Domino: We're working on them.

Mr. Y: Still he can't print while he's in prison.

Mr. X: Who says? Anyway he could be out in two years.

Mr. Y: Too late. The moment will have passed. A dead issue.

Mr. X: There'll be other issues.

Mr. Y: You mean....?

Mr. X: Exactly.

Domino: You're right. So it's got to be the Big Yellow Taxi, this time. When he comes out. Or now, even.

Mr. X: My move, I think.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 10

In Prison.

Lazenby: Thank you for seeing me Mr. Mitchell.

Mitchell: Passes the time. I've got three years.

Lazenby: You decided not to appeal.

Mitchell: Hah! THEY decided. It was made very clear to me that if I appealed the most likely outcome would be that my sentence would be increased.

Lazenby: Who's they?

Mitchell: Grow up, Lazenby.

Lazenby: You seem to be suggesting that your solicitor is part of this mass conspiracy.

Mitchell: I'm suggesting everyone is. Even you.

Lazenby: Sounds like a rather serious persecution complex to me.

Mitchell: Get out of here, right? *(long pause)*.

Lazenby: I want to help you. *(pause)*. Tell me what was in the book.

Mitchell: So you can grab all the glory for yourself?

Lazenby: O.K. I admit it. I'm an investigative journalist. I'm looking for a story. A scoop. Glory if you like. But you're a bigger story than what you found out. You've been framed, right? If I can find out who's done that then that's news. Meantime I can try and get the book published.

Mitchell: You're naive, Lazenby. You've spoken to me. So your words - here, outside, everywhere - are already back to the guys who've got it in for me. They probably know the book off by heart already - that's why it's been suppressed. That's what I'm doing here. You won't have a chance.

Lazenby: The yellow taxi eh?

Mitchell: What?

Lazenby: Maybe I'm not quite as naive as you think. I've been doing some digging. You've been given a ride in a 'yellow taxi': it's a code for being put away, temporarily silenced. A final warning.

Mitchell: Before what?

Lazenby: Before being silenced permanently. By being bought off. Or terminated. With extreme prejudice, as they say. The big yellow taxi.

Mitchell: You live in a fantasy world, don't you? It's all a game to you. Cops and robbers. James Bond. John Le Carré. Grow up, will you?

Lazenby: It's a game all right. But not to me. To the guys who've got you stitched up in here. The men in grey suits. The power brokers. The ones who really run the country. It's a kind of elaborate executive trivial pursuit. Keeps their intellects sharp. Mitchell's a trouble-maker. A greeno-leftie with ambitious tendencies. What's the best, the most fun way to shut him up? They're

backed by the City and they buy themselves a controlling interest in how government policy is formulated. You KNOW what I'm talking about, don't you? You've had warnings before?

Mitchell: Anonymous 'phone-calls in the middle of the night. Slogans daubed on the front door. Threatening letters. Threatening parcels, even. I've given up having a car - it got damaged so frequently.

Lazenby: It's you who's the threat, though. To their cosy financial stability. So they're sorting you out. At some point, having softened you up in here, they'll be laying out the final options for you. The big yellow taxi.

Mitchell: No-one warns me off. No-one buys me off. How do you know all this?

Lazenby: I've been working on it for over a year. As soon as I get to a point that I think I've got enough to blow the whole thing wide open another angle comes up - like you.

Mitchell: What about all this yellow taxi garbage?

Lazenby: Raymond Bartell. You remember him?

Mitchell: The nuclear freak. Got Hinkley Point closed down. He's a nutter.

Lazenby: They did everything to him. Lost him his job, his house, ruined his marriage. He still went ahead and released classified information. So they said if he didn't stop they'd have him committed to an asylum. He called their bluff. As everyone now thinks he's mad he's relatively safe and he can talk as much as he likes to anyone he likes.

Mitchell: And he's been talking to you. And you believe him.

Lazenby: Everything he's told me checks out. And believe me there's some very interesting stuff.

Mitchell: About yellow taxies.

Lazenby: He gave me a number to ring. When I rang it a guy said 'Yellow Taxi Company'. I got the number checked by a friend in Telecom. The number was in the Department of the Environment building though it wasn't listed in the Ministry directory. *(pause)* O.K., so they know what your book's about. They're probably listening to us now. And you say I won't have a chance of getting the book printed. What have I got to lose?

Mitchell: Go and see Grace Edwards. Say this to her. *(writes on a piece of paper)* She's got a video stashed which she'll let you see.

Lazenby: *(takes piece of paper)* Who's playing James Bond now?

Mitchell: Do you want to do this?

Lazenby: O.K., O.K. I'll see her. What's on this video?

Mitchell: You're the investigative journalist. Work it out.

Lazenby: Gracie Edwards. She's the one.... It's the suppressed video from that Greenwatch programme you were on.

Mitchell: Give the man a medal.

Lazenby: So it was your report. You made it - together with Gracie. No-one knew this?

Mitchell: With such an impressive intellect, amazing intuition and awesome speed of thought I can't understand why you're still just a low paid hack on a journal few have heard of and even fewer read.

Lazenby: Nice to have your confidence Mr. Mitchell.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 11

LAZENBY is sitting in his flat. He puts a video in machine and watches. Light comes up on another location revealing GRACIE EDWARDS as before.

Gracie Edwards: I'm standing on a mound of earth in the middle of the Lincolnshire countryside. Nothing particularly unusual about that - except that I'm breaking the law. This is Ministry of Defence property. A quarter of a mile to the west - in that direction - are massive double security fences topped with razor wire. Behind me are several aircraft hangars and a runway. And, underneath me, is enough poison to destroy the entire Iraqi army at a single stroke. Yes this, along with nine other known - and I stress KNOWN - sites in the UK is a secret dumping ground for various extremely virulent forms of toxic waste. This is not your ordinary common or garden form of toxic waste. This is a cocktail of highly volatile leftovers from a major government defence project known as 'Alchemy 2000'. As yet we do not know what 'Alchemy 2000' is: suffice it to say that it has been under research and development for nine years and during that time the waste has been dumped at locations like this. *(New camera angle)*. So how does this affect us? E - C - N. For the uninitiated ECN stands for Extended Cerebral Neurosis, a disease that particularly affects the very young and which is sometimes known as BPS or Brain Pause Syndrome. It's principal symptoms are long periods of listlessness and inactivity interspersed with sudden bursts of enhanced hyperactivity - EHA. Behind all the jargon and the current vogue for medical buzz-words in initial form lies a very real problem which affects, as yet, only a minute percentage of the child population but which seems to be growing at an alarming rate. *(New camera angle)*. Three years ago there were 18 recorded cases. The last six months has seen a surge to 4,322. The most alarming evidence is that clusters of ECN cases have been discovered around nine MOD sites. Seven are suspected of having these waste dumps. Two are definitely known to have them. I'm standing on one

of them right now. *(New camera angle)* The government denies the existence of such dumps. All requests for interviews have been denied. The Chief Medical Officer will not officially recognise the medical condition ECN.

Tell that to someone like Andrew Parry. Andrew's family lives less than a mile from here and his behaviour could not be described as that of a normal eight-year-old boy. *(Light has been coming up slowly on ANDREW in a different location. He is sitting in a chair, grasping a teddy bear, staring blankly ahead. His FATHER enters).*

Father: Andrew. Andrew. It's time for tea. Andrew. Andrew. *(LAZENBY gets up and switches off TV. Lights go down on GRACIE EDWARDS and ANDREW. LAZENBY sits in chair. Spotlight on him. He hears a noise. Listens. Noise again, louder. He gets up to investigate. Noises build into echoing sound. He starts to panic. He moves around frantically searching. Echoes continue to build. Noises get louder and louder. A dull echoing shout of 'TAXI' accompanied by long screeching of brakes, skidding, car crashing etc. The sounds suddenly cut and there is a loud banging on the door. GRACIE EDWARDS rushes in, hysterical).*

Gracie: They're after me! They're going to get me! They're going to kill me! You've got to help me! You've got to! You must help me! *(Her screams echo).*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 12

A street. Shadowy. Green light. DELFIN is searching through overflowing dustbins.

Delfin: *Commies are red,
Rich kids are blue.
Mother Earth's gone green
'Cos she's got pollution 'flu.*

(Two PASSERS-BY enter). Here it is! Here it is! You can only get it here! Help the world! Stop the rot! Cut the waste! Recycled taxies! Yes, you can only get them here! Used to be a handsome cab. Now it's a pretty ugly police car. (holding up toy). It used to take you where you wanted to go for an unfair fare. Now it will take you for a ride and it won't cost the earth. Here it is! Here it is! (A few more PASSERS-BY have stopped. Enter POLICEMAN who moves over to arrest DELFIN). What's going on? Put me down! You

can't do this! What's the charge?

Policeman: Disturbing the peace. Obstructing the Queen's highway. Loitering with intent to sell dangerous objects to innocent bystanders and in the process ripping off an unsuspecting public.

Delfin: Cobblers! (*struggles*).

Policeman: You are nicked, mate!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 13

Prison.

Mitchell: So what did Gracie say? She must have told you something.

Lazenby: I watched the tape. I heard all these weird noises....

Mitchell: (*dismissive*). Yeah, yeah.

Lazenby:Gracie comes rushing in in a hell of a state. Said some guys had come in, wrecked her place, pushed her around and walked off with most of her videos - including stuff from Greenwatch.

Mitchell: Nothing sensitive presumably. She's not that stupid, I hope.

Lazenby: She was pretty shaken up.

Mitchell: Cops.

Lazenby: What?

Mitchell: Has to be cops. Thieves would take more. Pro heavies would never do it while she was there.

Lazenby: Unless they wanted to hurt her.

Mitchell: In which case they would do it away from her pad and they WOULD hurt her. Was she?

Lazenby: No. Just shaken up. But now she's disappeared.

Mitchell: They've got her. Or they've sent her away - paid her off. Or....

Lazenby: Or....

Mitchell: Exactly.

Lazenby: The tape's disappeared too.

Mitchell: What? You're a complete liability, you know that Lazenby.

Lazenby: I couldn't help it. After Gracie left the tape had gone too.

Mitchell: She obviously took it.

Lazenby: Why would she do that? Without telling me?

Mitchell: Obviously didn't trust you. Wise girl. Never trust anybody.

Lazenby: We were getting along fine.

Mitchell: Look, you fancying her and her trusting you are not the same thing.

Have you made any progress with the Department of the Environment?

Lazenby: Well, following up what I knew before and exploring the banning of the Greenwatch report a name keeps cropping up. Mr. Domino. He's connected somehow with the Department of the Environment.

Mitchell: Domino? You're still playing games.

Lazenby: No. I told you before it's these people who treat the whole thing like a game. It's obviously not his real name.

Mitchell: Another code-name.

Lazenby: But this Domino character keeps figuring in the leads that I follow up. You ask someone a question, they whisper 'Mr. Domino' knowingly and then shut up and refuse to answer any more questions. Anyway, I've pinned him down and I'm going to meet him tomorrow. With a wire.

Mitchell: Sssshh! Watch it. You have to be careful.

Lazenby: I will be. (*Bangs on door. PRISON WARDER enters to let him out. Another WARDER enters with DELFIN.*)

Mitchell: What's going on?

Ward: New prisoner.

Mitchell: Delfin? He's harmless. What's he supposed to have done?

Ward: You'll have plenty of time to discuss that with him.

Mitchell: What? Oh no. He's not sharing my cell. I'm not having him in with me. He's a tramp - you can't put him in with me. You can't do this to me - I want to see the Governor! (*WARDERS leave. Pause. DELFIN and MITCHELL look at each other.*)

Delfin: Recycled mail bags?

Mitchell: Just - keep away from me. You stink to high heaven.

Delfin: *There was a little greenie
Got zapped by a blue meanie.
When he searched for a solution
All he found was more pollution.*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 14

An Office.

Lazenby: Very good of you to see me Mr.... er.... Domino?

Domino: Mr. Lazenby. Matthew. May I call you Matthew?

Lazenby: Let's stick to Mr. Lazenby for now, shall we?

Domino: As you wish. And you work for Ecology Now. A most excellent

magazine it is too, may I say.

Lazenby: You read it?

Domino: With great interest, dear boy. All the time. Especially your stuff. Breathtaking. You write so well, so fluently.

Lazenby: (*offering pen*) Have one of these then. With our compliments.

Domino: (*boyishly excited*). The Ecology Now pen! Well that is thoughtful of you, Mr Lazenby. I'll add it to my collection. In fact I think I've got a complete set now. (*taking pens from pocket*) Ecology Now; Les Miserables; Smollensky's in The Strand; Tottenham Hotspur Football Club; The Establishment Party and The Yellow Cab Company. Do you think I'll get a gallon of petrol?

Lazenby: You might. Unleaded, I hope. Actually it was taxies I came to see you about. Yellow taxies. Big yellow taxies. (*long pause*) I have it on good authority that you arranged a yellow taxi for Douglas Mitchell. (*Pause*). Do I get a gallon of petrol?

Domino: (*attitude changes*) Take off your shirt.

Lazenby: What....?

Domino: (*angry*) Take off your shirt!

Lazenby: Surely not here, dear.

Domino: Yes here. Now. Either take it off or there are a couple of gentlemen outside who will delight in ripping it off you complete with some handfuls of flesh. (*LAZENBY removes jacket and shirt revealing transmitter*).

Domino: (*back to normal*). A-ha! What have we here? Just as I suspected, I must confess. A hot little wire ready to relay our entire private conversation back to whoever may be listening. I'm disappointed in you Mr. Lazenby. So very disappointed. (*rips wires from transmitter*) Now you want to hear about taxies. Yellow taxies. I think I may just be calling one for you soon. Yellow taxi: code-name for frame-up; a veritable stitch-up; a short, handsome journey to the holiday camp at Brixton. Or Wandsworth. Or wherever. And, as you guessed, or learnt, or whatever - it doesn't really matter - it's exactly what happened to that joker Mitchell. I fitted him up. Got him a yellow taxi to take him all the way to the joint - I think that's the technical name for it. The big yellow taxi? That either buys you off or takes you all the way to the morgue.

Lazenby: It's all a little childish, isn't it? Yellow taxies. Code-names. I-spy. Are you trying to frighten me, Mr. Domino?

Domino: (*angry*) Mr. Mitchell has had his fare paid. And you're next. Dear boy.

Lazenby: (*getting up*) Thank you, Mr. Domino. Yes, I think that might well get you a gallon of petrol. In fact you're probably in line for a far bigger prize. I must be on my way. (*DOMINO looks at LAZENBY, then at the pens on the*

desk. He makes a sudden grab for them, scattering them over the floor, grabbing the ECOLOGY NOW pen and pulling it apart).

Domino: You bastard! You bastard! You've - fitted me up!

Lazenby: Good day, Mr. Domino.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 15

A. A street. DELFIN sitting amongst dustbins.

Delfin: *Elections are coming
The polls are getting fat
Please put a monkey in the PM's hat.
If you haven't got a monkey
A wilderbeast will do
They don't live in the wild no more
But there's plenty in the zoo.*

Here it is! Here it is! Recycled money! Here you are - used to be five pound notes. Now they're deutschmarks. Look: a five mark note. Took twenty fivers to make it! 'S called Euroflation. Here it is! Here it is!

B. TV Studio.

Stephanie: We interrupt our Greenwatch Update with a newflash. It's just been announced that Douglas Mitchell, the environmental activist who was jailed for arson less than a month ago, has been released from prison. Originally jailed for three years the Crown has taken the almost unprecedented step of indicating that they would not contest his appeal and thus a judge has awarded his immediate release. It was originally thought that Mr. Mitchell would not appeal but apparently new evidence came to light recently that changed that situation. Mr. Mitchell said that he would start campaigning immediately for the General Election which was announced yesterday. He is Environment Party candidate in the constituency of Hexham. This is wonderful news for this programme as many of you will be aware Greenwatch has campaigned for Mr. Mitchell's release ever since his trial. Now I think we can go live to our special reporter at the Environment Party headquarters, Matt Lazenby. Are you there, Matt?

C. The Club. MR. DOMINO is talking to a WAITER.

Domino: Look. I meet them here every Thursday evening. Regularly. I've seen you before. You know me, don't you?

Wait: I see a lot of people, sir. And this room hasn't been used for almost a year.

Domino: Yes. I know you are meant to say that. But I must find the men I meet here. Urgently. Mr. X....

Wait: Mr. X, sir?

Domino: Yes, and Mr. Y. You must know who I mean.

Wait: And you would be.... er.... Mr. Z then sir?

Domino: Now don't you try getting smart with me. I can have you dismissed very easily.

Wait: Yes, sir. Of course, sir. But as I say this room hasn't been used for eleven months. Nobody answering the descriptions you gave me is a member of this club. And I haven't heard of any Mr. X or Mr. Y. I'm sorry, sir.

Domino: And I suppose you've never seen the table laid out with toy cars from one week to the next?

Wait: Toy cars? Excuse me for asking, sir, but do you have your membership card with you? (*MR. DOMINO pats his pockets*).

BLACKOUT

D. A street.

Delfin: (*downcast*). Here it is! Here it is! More recycled money! I won't even charge you 50p. (*throwing notes around*). Deutschmarks, pounds, dollars, shekels. Thousands of them! Recycled! Used to be fifty pieces of silver.

E. Outside the Environment Party HQ. JOURNALISTS crowding round.

Lazenby: Yes, Stephanie, I'm at the Environment Party HQ where Douglas Mitchell is about to give an impromptu press conference.

Stephanie: Matt, I believe you were instrumental in discovering this new evidence.

Lazenby: Well, it was more to do with uncovering the conspiracy that put Douglas behind bars in the first place. I do have some crucial evidence which Douglas now has in his possession and he'll be doing a special feature on it for tomorrow night's Greenwatch. Now it's pretty dramatic stuff and it involves a taped conversation I had. Here he is now.

Mitchell: A brief statement, gentlemen. (*reading*) I am very pleased that my name has been cleared and that I have been proved innocent as I always maintained. I would like to thank the police for their help in this matter and

do not blame them at all for being taken in by what was a very sophisticated conspiracy to frame me. I would also like to thank both Ecology Now and Greenwatch for the help and support they have given me during this extremely difficult time.

Journalist 1: Are charges to be brought for the conspiracy?

Mitchell: Ask the inspector.

Detective 1: Conspiracy, I feel, is rather an emotive word. At this point we are working on the theory that an ultra-zealous official at the Department of the Environment over-stepped his duty resulting in Mr. Mitchell's unfortunate arrest and conviction. We are hoping to make an arrest soon.

Journalist 2: Who did set fire to Greenfinch then?

Detective 1: A vagrant known variously as Zachary Samphire, the Green Tramp or just plain Delfin appeared before magistrates this afternoon charged with arson. I understand that the evidence that will be presented at his trial includes a signed confession.

Journalist 3: Remanded? I saw him round the corner just now.

Detective 1: He's on bail.

Journalist 1: How much?

Detective 1: £100,000. Police did not oppose bail.

Journalist 3: Let me get this right. A tramp confesses to arson, is remanded on £100,000 bail unopposed by the police and so is now walking free. Who put up the money?

Detective 1: That's all I have time for this evening, gentlemen.

Journalist 1: I think I preferred it when Mitchell was in the dock. It didn't make sense. But it makes more sense than this.

BLACKOUT

F. A street.

Domino: *(on mobile 'phone)* Look, this is a special number. I've used it many times before. It's for me to contact Mr. X. *(Pause)* All right! If it's disconnected what's the new number? *(Pause)* Do you have a listing? You do? For a Mr. X? You what? You can't give it to me. Why not? Mr. X is ex-directory. *(Enter YOBS).*

Yob 1: Oh look! We've found ourselves one of those big City yuppie-type idiots complete with mobile 'phone! *(YOBS push DOMINO around, take 'phone etc.)*

BLACKOUT

G. A street. DELFIN is sitting alone amongst the rubbish with piles of cash in front of him. He mutters to himself, counting it, throwing the occasional note away. He then burns a note.

Delfin: *Money's lovely
Money's green.
Money's what you dream about
And it's never ever clean.*

(YOBS enter, playing about with mobile 'phone).

Yob 2: Is that the operator on the line? Yes. We'll get off there's a train coming.
(YOBS fall about laughing)

Delfin: Hey buddy, can I spare you a dime?

Yob 3: It's our mate Delfin.

Yob 4: What's all this he's got?

Yob 2: It's bread! He's got loadsa cash!

Yob 1: *(picking up a handful).* It's no good. It ain't pounds. It's monopoly money.
(YOBS throw some around and turn to go).

Yob 4: What's monopoly?

BLACKOUT

H. Outside the Environment Party HQ. JOURNALISTS are leaving.
DETECTIVES approach LAZENBY)

Detective 1: Mr. Lazenby?

Lazenby: Yes?

Detective 1: Matthew Joseph Lazenby?

Detective 2: You have the right to remain silent. Anything you do say will be taken down and may be used in evidence.

Lazenby: What?

Detective 1: I arrest you for the murder of Gracie Edwards, formerly a reporter for the television programme Greenwatch.

Lazenby: You're joking? You have to be joking. Douglas, tell them. *(pause).* You're not joking. This is serious. My god, it's another conspiracy! I've been set up, haven't I. But you can't do it. They can't do it, can they Douglas? Tell them. Tell them I've been set up. Tell them how. Play them the tape, Douglas, come on!

Detective 2: We have to go now, Mr. Lazenby.

Lazenby: For god's sake Douglas! What are you doing? Tell them! They're arresting me! For murder! *(DETECTIVES start to take LAZENBY away as he becomes frantic and starts to struggle).* Mitchell! Mitchell! What are you doing to me? They can't have bought you off too! No! Mitchell!

(LAZENBY'S voice echoes as they leave).

BLACKOUT

I. A street. MR DOMINO sitting on ground, alone. He hears a sound. He gets up. Sound turns into footsteps. He moves around. Footsteps get louder, echoing. He starts to panic, running, shouting. A shadowy figure appears. MR. DOMINO pulls gun and shoots him. It is DELFIN. MR. DOMINO backs off slowly, exits. We hear another gunshot, echoing).

BLACKOUT

SCENE 16

The Club.

Mr. X: Do we have a replacement?

Mr. Y: Yes. Mr. Backgammon. Good man. Reliable. Not prone to panic.

Mr. X: Or to over-confidence, I hope.

Mr. Y: No. Definitely the right man.

Mr. X: And Mitchell?

Mr. Y: Douglas likes his freedom. And his new found wealth. And really does appreciate our point of view now, I believe.

Mr. X: 'Alchemy 2000'?

Mr. Y: A necessary evil.

Mr. X: Not at all. Nature's way of keeping the world's population manageable. The Third World literally submerges while the strong Western economies survive. The natural order. And if our scientists wish to invent fancy names like 'the Greenhouse Effect' or 'Global Warming' who are we to argue? After all we're rather partial to fancy names ourselves, aren't we?

Mr. Y: The latest figures project a stabilisation of the world's population by the year 2000. Then a yearly decrease starting at three per cent and rising to sixteen per cent by 2020. Then it really gets going.

Mr. X: Interesting figures, Mr. Y. Very interesting. You know it is we who will be the saviours of the world. Only we can save it from those little green men. Incidentally, I have a new game. It's called "Mass Transit". By the way, what DID happen to our dear Mr. Domino?

Mr. Y: Took a big yellow taxi, I believe.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 17

TV studio.

Stephanie: All other issues give precedence this week to the sensational news that Matt Lazenby has been charged with the murder of Gracie Edwards whom he replaced as a reporter on this programme. Lazenby claims he has been framed and is the victim of a conspiracy though he does appear to be the last person to have seen Gracie alive. I have with me Douglas Mitchell, himself the subject of a sensational turnabout of justice. I believe Matt Lazenby had a lot to do with your release, Mr. Mitchell.

Mitchell: He did some work behind the scenes as you all did on Greenwatch - and I'm very grateful to you all.

Stephanie: But I was led to believe that he worked closely with you in disproving the conspiracy theory.

Mitchell: I don't know how far he got involved.

Stephanie: Is that not something you discussed?

Mitchell: As you know, Lazenby is very much a loner, a journalist who likes to work by himself. I've never met him in person.

Stephanie: He said on this programme yesterday that you had evidence in the form of a tape that would prove the conspiracy theory.

Mitchell: Yes, I heard that he had said that. But I haven't a clue what he is talking about. I do have one piece of news, though, that might interest your viewers.

Stephanie: Do go on.

Mitchell: (*reads*) Due to the unseemly squabbling that took place at the top of the Environment Party whilst I was in prison and the subsequent loss of credibility in the public's eyes I have decided to leave the Party. I have been offered a post as adviser at the Department of the Environment which I readily accept and I will be standing as an Establishment Party candidate at the general election. I have had assurances that the environmental issues nearest my heart will become Establishment Party policy.

Stephanie: (*after pause*) A bit of an about-face, isn't it? I might even suggest a U-turn?

Mitchell: That is the end of my statement.

Stephanie: Don't you have the slightest twinge of conscience in taking this course of action?

Mitchell: The human race needs saving from itself. I see that as my mission, a mission to be carried out in which ever way is the most effective. You can spend your time on meaningless parochial issues if you wish. I have far more important work to get on with. If you'll excuse me.... (*gets up*).

Stephanie: You're an arrogant sod really, aren't you Mr. Mitchell?

Floor Manager: Come on now Steph. That's not called for.

Director: It's all right, Douglas. The transmission ended after your statement. That didn't go out.

Mitchell: I know. We'll discuss tomorrow's programme in the morning. I have some ideas. Good night.

Director/Floor Manager: Good night, Douglas.

Mitchell: *(starts to go, stops, turns)* And Ms. Danton. Find another job. You're sacked. *(MITCHELL exits. DIRECTOR and FLOOR MANAGER look at STEPHANIE DANTON and then look away. She runs off in tears).*

(Lights fade on the Studio. Dim light comes up on LAZENBY in prison, sitting despondently, head in hands. Behind him, in a misty green light, DELFIN appears. He sings but his voice is distorted, echoing, disembodied).

Delfin: *(sings to the tune of Singing in the Rain).*

There's acid in the rain

There's acid in the rain

The forests are burning

For financial gain

There's no more fresh air

But the world couldn't care

There's acid, there's acid in the rain.

(The voice echoes. Lights fade to BLACKOUT).

THE END