

BLIT

a short story by David Langford

It was like being caught halfway through a flashy film-dissolve. The goggles broke up the dim street, split and reshuffled it along diagonal lines: a glowing KEBABS sign was transposed into the typestyle they called Shatter. Safest to keep the goggles on, Robbo had decided. Even in the flickering electric half-light before dawn, you never knew what you might see. Just his luck if the stencil jumped from under his arm and unrolled itself before his eyes as he scrabbled for it on the pavement.

That would be a good place, behind the 34 (a shattered 34) bus stop. This was their part of town; the women flocked there each morning, twittering in their saris like bright alien canaries. A good place, by a boarded-up shop window thick with flyposted gig announcements.

Robbo scanned the street for movement, glanced at his own hand to be reassured by a blurred spaghetti of fingers. Guaranteed Army issue goggles -- the Group had friends in funny places -- but they said the eye eventually adjusts. One day something clicks, and clear outlines jump at you. He flinched as the thick plastic unrolled; then the nervy moment was past, his left hand pressing the stencil against a tattered poster while in his right the spray-can hissed.

The sweetish, heady smell of car touch-up paint made it all seem oddly distant from an act of terrorism.

He found he'd been careless, easy in this false twilight and through these lenses: there were tacky patches on his fingers as he re-rolled the Parrot. A few hours on, in thick morning light, the brown women would be playing the wink game.... Jesus, how long since he'd been a kid and played *that*? Must be five years. The one who'd drawn the murder card caught your eye and winked, and you had to die with lots of spasms and overacting. To survive, you needed to spot the murderer first and get in with an accusation -- or at least, know where not to look.

It was cold. Time to move on, to pick another place. Goggles or no shatter-goggles, he didn't look back at the image of the Parrot. It might wink.

SECRET * BASILISK

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... so called because its outline, when processed for non-hazardous viewing, is generally considered to resemble that of the bird. A processed (anamorphically elongated) partial image appears in Appendix 3 of this report, page A3-ii. THE STATED PAGE MUST NOT BE VIEWED THROUGH ANY FORM OF CYLINDRICAL LENS. PROLONGED VIEWING IS STRONGLY DISRECOMMENDED. PLEASE READ PAGE A3-i BEFORE PROCEEDING.

2-6. This first example of the Berryman Logical Image Technique (hence the usual acronym BLIT)

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