

## **Documentary.**

### **Government's Chief Salesman Tells All.**

After the Labour Conference I got this call from the Big M. (We always call him this now since he issued a memo saying he 'abhorred' use of his abbreviated surname.) He tells me the P.M. is in one of his best blue funks, fed up with the media, and wants some immediate sell-offs. The idea is to make as much money as possible - quietly of course - and pay off some of the big bills before the election. Then he can appear a hero, the man who knows the economic stuff. And win another term. The Big M. says I'd better get going on it. There wasn't much time. Usual bonus etc.

I'm the government's Number One Salesman. Jason Briggs. Appointed to sell whatever I can that's British, so the government can pay off the galactic National Debt with the proceeds. There wasn't much left to sell of the good old UK when I started, but thanks to my native creativity and true British grit, I've managed to sell the Isle of Wight, the SAS, Cambridge University, 800 churches, Philip Larkin, both Tates, Hackney Wick, and a few other assets which I'm not allowed to divulge under the new Freedom of Information Act.

As a result of my unstinting efforts I have a tidy little bonus. So I'm off. South of France, and the PM can take his economic problem and spin it. I've run out of enthusiasm for being the Numero Uno salesman. There's nothing left to sell. Well, almost nothing.

In any event, I firmly believe the good old UK is about to be repossessed. What nobody knows is that the PM has taken out a mortgage on Great Britain with the Sino-Arabian Bank and the terms are not what you would call customer-friendly. In my humble, repossession is in the offing. So, it's time to shove off. But I may as well make a last killing before I go.

How to make immediate sales? That is the question. I give it a lot of thought and make a few calls. Then I e-mail the Big M. and tell him I want to make a power-point to the P.M. with an immediate sale idea.

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It's ten o'clock in the morning and coffee time in the PM's office. He looks like a haggard blood-hound as usual. His rinky-dink Chancellor is in attendance, as is the Big M. I like the Big M. He's not as stupid as the rest of them. And he's a lot wittier. Not difficult of course.

I set up the large screen, take a sip of revolting coffee, and say my introductory piece. "Yes, yes. Get on with it!" shouts the PM. I get on with it and say I can make £2.53 billion in two months for them.

Unfortunately the PM is looking out the window angrily, as I say the number.

"Can't we get rid of those damned demonstrators?" he shouts.

"What the hell is the Defence Minister doing about it?"

The Big M. is tapping at his mobile and says,

"I'll have them moved on, Prime Minister." The PM grimaces.

"Good. Pity we can't send them to Kabul. Right, Briggs. What have you got for us?"

So I start again to power-point my idea to the PM. This time I race through it to avoid his being diverted again knowing that his attention span has been measured at four seconds. I have his attention for longer than that, though, because I repeat I can make £2.53 billion for the government in two months.

Of course, such dosh doesn't come from selling any old asset. Oh no. So I tell them what the asset is. Well, the PM doesn't seem to like it. His eyes bulge (very rare) and his face goes beetroot coloured. I give a quick glance at the rinky-dink chancellor - he's gone white. The Big M. is impassive. Then the PM erupts.

'Are you out of your mind, Briggs?' he screams.

'Have you gone raving bloody mad? Sell the House of Commons! Get out! Get out!'

But the Big M. intervenes.

'Prime Minister. Perhaps we should ask Briggs to expand on this proposal.'

'What for? He's completely mad!'

'It's a lot of money.'

'Good God! Have you taken leave of your senses as well?'

'There would be no need to let it become public news, Prime Minister. And there is that payment to the IMF coming up next week. Briggs. Would you tell us your proposal again, in the simplest of terms?'

'With pleasure,' I say. 'You sell the House of Commons to a buyer I have identified and then lease it back. The buyer would pay £2.2 billion. Immediately. He would lease it back to you for a peppercorn rent.'

'Who is this buyer?' snarls the PM.

'Nanking Global Leisure Developments.'

'What?' He screams. 'Sell the House to a damned circus promoter? Get out!'

Again the Big M. intervenes. 'Prime Minister. £2.2 billion. And immediately. Tell us, Briggs, where is the rest of the revenue going to come from. The other point 33 billion.'

'Nanking want to have the right to allow conferences in the House---'

'Outsiders in the House?' screams the PM. 'Out, damn you!'

'----for which we would get half the revenue.'

'Ah,' says the Big M. 'But would such a thing work? What type of people would want it for conferences?'

'We already have expressions of serious interest from the Clintons, Tony Blair, Sarkozy, Berlusconi, Mugabe----

'What??'

'----and President Obama.'

There is a silence. The Big M. smiles in that Cassius way of his, leans forward conspiratorially and says to the PM,

'Prime Minister, there is some merit in this. We need not let it be known that the House

has been sold. Absolutely not. And, of course, there are good photo opportunities with the interested conferenciers.'

'H'm,' he responds.

'Briggs,' says the Big M. 'Thank you for your presentation. You may go now.'

So I leave. Not a bad outcome, really. Huge bonus on this. I knew it would be a bit hairy with the PM. But the Big M. was the one who put me in touch with Nanking in the first place, so I reckoned on his coming out on my side. Beaulieu-sur-Mer, here I come.