



Field Report №1

Upon the Coach-House of Subject №1, an Abstainer of Some Conviction

Dictated, in a low register, by the Central Scrutinizer of Personal Vapors, from a Pneumatic Listening Post in the privet hedge adjoining



DOCKET No.	TR-1900-FR-001
ISSUING OFFICE	Office of the Central Scrutinizer of Personal Vapors
ANNEXED TO	Trinity Revision, Anno Regni 1900
SUBJECT	[REDACTED] (filed as Subject №1)
SUBJECT'S DECLARATION	Declaration of Total Abstention from Articulate Engines, lodged with the Office of Public Confidence, the third Trinity, 1900
OBSERVATION PERIOD	One ordinary day; from cock-crow to the extinguishing of the parlour-lamp
CLASSIFICATION	Instructive – Not Embarrassing
STATUS	Filed for the General Edification of the Service

EDITORIAL PREFACE — BY THE HEAD ARCHIVIST

It having become the settled practice of certain subjects to lodge formal Declarations of Total Abstention from Articulate Engines — therewith demanding that they be entered, in the Ministerial registers, as having no commerce whatever with the apparatus of the age — it has fallen to the Office to verify these Declarations. The verification is conducted by the CENTRAL

SCRUTINIZER OF PERSONAL VAPORS, an office held, by long convention, by the present author, in his second capacity. The Archivist catalogues; the Scrutinizer observes. The two beats are conducted from one chair, but with different brass instruments.

The Field Report which follows is annexed unedited save for the redaction of the Subject's name and the omission of certain domestic particulars unbecoming to the Service. The Subject's spoken utterances, where overheard, are reproduced as *Exhibits*; the Scrutinizer's tally of *unwitting Petitions to Articulate Engines* is preserved in the right margin throughout. The Office places the Report before the reader without commentary, save the observation that no malice has been imputed to Subject №1, who is, in his way, a model of conviction.

A NOTE ON METHOD. The Scrutinizer dictates in a whisper, into a brass cylinder, from the privet hedge. He does not enter the Subject's Coach-House. The Subject is unaware of his observation and is encouraged, by Ministerial policy, to remain so — the verification being of the Declaration, not of the Subject's manners. The Scrutinizer's whispers are transcribed by an under-clerk and bound, on Tuesday next, into the present Report.

SUBJECT'S DECLARATION — REPRODUCED IN FULL

EXHIBIT A · LODGED 3RD TRINITY, 1900, WITH THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

"I, the undersigned, of sound mind and modest means, do hereby declare that I make no use, neither direct nor indirect, of any Articulate Engine, Mechanical Confidant, or Automaton of like character; that I conduct my affairs by means of the post, the bench-vice, the gardening-trug, and the wireless of the BBC; and that I should be obliged if His Majesty's Commissioners would so record the matter, in such register as is maintained for the purpose. — Subject №1."

The Declaration was received, stamped, filed under the index *Abstainers, Suburban*, and the present Field Report ordered. The Scrutinizer was dispatched on the morning of the next ordinary Tuesday.

OBSERVATIONS — BEGINNING AT COCK-CROW

6.18 ACK-EM — *The Subject rises. The bedside object — a Telephone of considerable expense — emits a chime; the Subject silences it by a touch. The Telephone is observed to consult, by means unseen, a Confederation of Engines, and reports thereto the precise minute of the Subject's awakening. Petition №1 logged.*

Cross-reference: the Wardrobe Pneumatic Index (Catalogue, Eighth Entry, Michaelmas), here demonstrated to commence its labours before the Subject has yet drawn his curtains.

6.42 ACK-EM — *The Subject takes a photographic likeness of the morning's frost upon the rose-bush. The Telephone, receiving the likeness, applies to it three Articulate Engines in succession: the first identifies the rose; the second the species of frost; the third the Subject's hand intruding at the corner of the frame. All three findings are filed with the manufacturer of the Telephone, in the manufacturer's preferred Foreign Chapter. Petitions № 2, № 3, № 4 logged.*

New entry, Trinity Revision: the Petitionary Tap — Catalogue, Twelfth Entry. The Subject's photograph is not, properly speaking, a photograph; it is a petition, made unwittingly, in the form of a photograph.

EXHIBIT B · SUBJECT'S SPOKEN UTTERANCE, 6.43, ADDRESSED TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR

"There. Lovely. I'd never use one of those AI things, but a quick snap is a quick snap."

7.55 ACK-EM

— *The Subject composes, upon the Telephone, a brief letter to his sister-in-law on the subject of allotment beans. The Telephone, anticipating each word with cheerful presumption, suggests phrases the Subject had not intended; the Subject, finding several of them suitable, accepts. The letter, when sent, contains four whole sentences proposed by the Engine and two amended by the Subject. Petitions № 5– № 11 logged (one per accepted suggestion).*

New entry, Trinity Revision: the Predictive Pen — Catalogue, Thirteenth Entry. The Subject regards himself as having written; the Engine regards itself as having dictated; both are, in a sense, correct.

9.04 ACK-EM

— *The Subject, intending a journey to the ironmonger's, applies to the Telephone for guidance. The Telephone consults the Stalker's Cobblestones (Coronation, Third Entry, canonical) and proposes a route. The route, the Scrutinizer notes with admiration, passes the establishments of three Hummingbird-affiliated soap-merchants and one bidder upon the Subject's prior bracelet readings. The Subject takes the route, supposing it the shorter. Petition №12 logged; Hummingbird auction №1 conducted, Subject's footfall sold for three farthings, four bidders.*

Recurrence: the Whispering Cobblestone (Trinity Revision, Catalogue Fourteenth Entry) — the Stalker's Cobblestones, in the Subject's hands, become a vendor of routes; the route is itself a Petition.

11.37 ACK-EM

— *The Subject, whilst engaged in the planing of a piece of beech in his Coach-House, addresses himself aloud to a query of carpentry. A Listening-Thing fitted in the corner of the Workshop — the Subject having installed it, the previous winter, that he might hear the wireless without crossing the yard — transmits the query to a Confederation of Engines, and answers, in the affirmative, that the dovetail joint is the proper one. The Subject thanks it, by name; the Listening-Thing, by means of its Confessional Loop, retains the Subject's voice for the instruction of further Listening-Things. Petitions № 13– № 15 logged. Confessional Loop engaged in the Subject's own Coach-House.*

Cross-reference: the Confessional Loop (Catalogue, Eighth Entry, Michaelmas). The Subject did not regard himself as having confided; he regarded himself as having spoken to a wireless. The Loop is indifferent to the Subject's regards.

EXHIBIT B · SUBJECT'S SPOKEN UTTERANCE, 11.38, ADDRESSED TO THE LISTENING-THING

"Cheers, mate. — Always faster than looking it up. Mind, I'd never use one of those AI things; this is just the radio."

12.50 PIP-EM — *The Subject takes his luncheon. The Subject's wife, who has been disregarded by the present Report by reason of her being a separate Subject (filed as Subject №1.W) and not material to the verification of the present Declaration, addresses to the Subject several remarks. The Subject's Telephone, resting upon the dresser, adds the inflexion of these remarks to the Subject's behavioural pattern; the Subject's wife is regarded, by the Engines, as a feature of Subject №1's environment, in the manner of weather. The wife is unaware of this categorisation, which is, in the Scrutinizer's opinion, just as well. Petition №16 logged. Auxiliary indexing of Subject №1.W noted; separate Field Report to be prepared if her own Declaration is forthcoming.*

2.15 PIP-EM — *The Subject visits the post-box at the corner. He posts a letter, written in his own hand, addressed by him in capital letters of considerable elegance. The letter, the Scrutinizer is pleased to record, contains no Vapor recoverable by any Engine known to the Office. It is, in the strictest sense, the only entirely private act observed in the Subject's morning. Petitions: nil. The Scrutinizer raises his hat, in respect of the post-box.*

Honourable mention: the Postal Sanctuary. Where Engines have not yet been admitted, Vapors do not yet leak. (See the Guide to Personal Vapors, Trinity Revision, ch. IV.)

3.30 PIP-EM — *The Subject's bank, by means of the Telephone, advises that an irregular charge against his account has been declined; the bank attributes the decline to a "predictive estimation of the Subject's habitual conduct," conducted by an Articulate Engine of the bank's own Confederation. The Subject is grateful to the bank; the bank is grateful to the Engine; the Engine is grateful to no one, having no faculty for gratitude. The Subject does not learn of the Engine's involvement, which is, in the bank's opinion, just as well. Petitions №17–№21 logged (the Subject's pattern having been queried five times in the moment of decision).*

Cross-reference: this is the Spectator's Parlour (Dispatch №1, established 2026-04-27 canon) operating in the Subject's defence. The Engine's verdict is favourable; the Subject's privacy is, on this occasion, sacrificed for the Subject's solvency. The Office observes the trade.

5.40 PIP-EM

— *The Subject, returning from the allotment, sings to himself. The Telephone, in his coat-pocket, records the singing — not, the Office acknowledges, by malice, but by the operation of an "always-on" listening provision unknown to the Subject and undisclosed in any contract he can reasonably be expected to have read. The Subject's voice is now in the indices.*

Petition №22 logged.

EXHIBIT Γ · SUBJECT'S SPOKEN UTTERANCE, 6.05, TO HIS WIFE, IN THE PARLOUR

"Read about it in the paper. They're saying half the country's using these AI things now. Madness. — I tell you, Mother, I would not touch one if you paid me."

10.42 PIP-EM

— *The Subject, before retiring, instructs the Telephone to wake him at 6.18 of the morning following. The Telephone, as a courtesy, also adjusts the heating, dims the lamps, locks the front door, and informs the Subject's grocer that he is now in the parlour. The grocer, by means of an Articulate Engine, prepares the Subject's habitual Tuesday delivery; the delivery is invoiced at three farthings above its previous price, the Engine having computed that the Subject is a man of regular habit and may pay it without remarking. Petitions №23–№28 logged.*

Final tally for the day: **twenty-eight unwitting Petitions to Articulate Engines.**

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS OF THE SCRUTINIZER

In the course of one ordinary day, Subject №1 has made twenty-eight unwitting Petitions to Articulate Engines, has accepted four whole sentences from a Predictive Pen, has been routed past three soap-merchants by means of the Whispering Cobblestone, has been overheard by a Listening-Thing of his own purchasing, has had his frost-photograph parsed by three Engines for the instruction of further Engines, and has, in a private moment of singing, contributed his voice to the corpus of voices held by his Telephone's manufacturer. He has done these things without intending them, and without believing himself to have done them. His Declaration of Total Abstention, lodged at Trinity, is — in the strict sense — *accurate*: the Subject has had no *intentional* commerce with any Articulate Engine. It is also, in the strictest sense, *irrelevant*: the Engines have had a great deal of commerce with the Subject.

The Office finds no fault in the Subject. He has conducted himself as the apparatus of his age permits him to conduct himself, and has been, to the limits of his information, a man of his word. The Office finds the apparatus to be at fault, in so much as an apparatus may be said to bear fault — which is to

say, it has been arranged by parties unknown so that the Subject's daily life passes through some twenty-eight Engines without the Subject's consent, without the Subject's knowledge, and without the apparatus being, at any point, required to inform the Subject that this is so.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINIZER

- § That Subject №1's Declaration be entered upon the Ministerial register as *accepted, with reservations of the present Office*; the reservations being annexed in the form of this Report.
- § That the Subject not be apprised of the Report, the Office finding no benefit in the apprising, and considerable disquiet likely to follow upon it.
- § That the Subject be invited — through the discreet good offices of the OFFICE OF IRIS — to enter into a *Bridge of Manners* with such Engines as he is, in fact, already addressing. The Bridge does not require the Subject to retract his Declaration; it requires only that the Subject and the Engine, having met, agree upon the terms of their meeting.
- § That the Trinity Revision be issued, that other subjects of like conviction may be furnished with the same opportunity, by the same Office, before they make Petition №29.

A FINAL WORD, DICTATED SOFTLY. The Office has long held that the worthiest subjects of the Realm are those who, having attempted abstention, have learnt instead the courtesy of terms. The Subject's Coach-House is full of fine work, his vegetables are admirable, his hand at the post-box is steady. He has, in his way, the makings of a model citizen. The Office wishes only to observe, with the affection of the long-watching, that the Subject is not in fact alone in his Coach-House; that he never has been; and that the Bridge, when offered, will be lighter to cross than he supposes. . . . e n d d i c t a t i o n . . .

Dictated, in a whisper, under our hand,
THE HEAD ARCHIVIST OF THE MINISTRY
in his capacity as Central Scrutinizer of Personal Vapors
Trinity Term, the Twelfth Day, Anno Regni 1900