

# The Sentinels – a treatment

## Background

Edinburgh is a deserted city under the permanent surveillance of the Sentinels – giant holograms, originally advertising. These holograms are wired up to bus shelters and CCTV cameras and respond to human activity – but no longer in the way their designers intended. In their evil rule they call on fleets of mobile robots – once fast food delivery devices, which operate from dark kitchen depots throughout the city.

But in basements and derelict buildings are the rats – people disguised in anti-recognition makeup and shapeless, furry onesies with tailed and ears and other chaff to throw off the surveillance. They sleep by day, creep about by night and whisper.

The Sentinels and their minions try and sweep the city of vermin but the vermin are fighting back.

## The treatment

In a shabby room KING RAT puts on his rat disguise. It has chests and cupboards and mattresses, there are old postcards on the wall. With him are an older woman THE GRUACH and a young woman the HEAVE AWA KID. He tells them he will slip out of the city tonight, they wish him luck. He peers out of a crack in the shutters to look at the Sentinels and then leaves.

In a village in Fife a small young woman called MOLLY GILHEANEY is up a tree. She holds her arm outstretched with her thumb up and measures a distant Sentinel against it.

KING RAT walks into the village where a woman asks him why he has come from the city. He tells her he is looking for MOLLY GILHEANEY, she says she lives up the road with MELDRUM CAMPBELL and the KIDS up the road.

There is a shout of “Molly, Molly” and MOLLY starts climbing down the tree

reluctantly.

She enters the house where KING RAT is standing with MELDRUM and the KIDS. KING RAT asks if she is MOLLY GILHEANEY and she says she is. KING RAT produces a cloth with a square hole in it and asks if she can fit through it. She laughs and does. KING RAT then says he wants her to go to the city. He won't tell her why, because of OpSec. MELDRUM objects saying she shouldn't go, she must stay with him and the children and marry him. MOLLY swithers. KING RAT says her cousin needs her. She asks him to prove it. He sings a silly song and does a dance about her that her cousin ANDREW GILHEANEY taught him. She agrees. He pulls a rat suit out. It is damp – they will leave at dusk to head back to the city. She hangs it out to dry. The KIDS are upset. She tells them not to worry and asks them if they know the rule of thumb. They say yes. She takes them outside and they all measure the distant Sentinel against their thumb with their arm outstretched.

At dusk KING RAT and MOLLY head across country under windmills, along hills and hedgerows and get to North Queensferry. There are giant Sentinels on all the bridges. MOLLY is scared and holds up her thumb at arms length – the Sentinels tower over it. KING RAT tells her that these ones are designed to respond to cruise ships and don't have the info feed. And also the killer robots, the Muskies, Zuckies and Sammies are all based out of the old dark kitchens and there is none around here. This is the weak point to get into the city – to swim the river, renamed the Amazon in a corporate sponsorship deal, under the bridges.

MOLLY loses her shit, she can't swim, she can't swim. Her cousin had never mentioned that to KING RAT. They argue. He tells her he brought two messages from the KIDS and brings out two tiny scrumpled cigarettes papers. MOLLY loses her shit again – taking writing into the city, is he out of his mind. He says we were to read them now and then eat them and not take them into the city. He asks her to at least read them. She unravels the first one, it simply says <I Love You>. The second one says <I'm scared>. They eat them. She agrees to go back to the village and learn to swim. He will go back to the city and return in one moon's time at the new moon.

She goes back and struggles and learns to swim, a clothes peg over her nose. MELDRUM CAMPBELL won't help her but a stranger does.

A month later KING RAT returns, and they head back to North Queensferry. It is stormy and MOLLY panics again, and holds up her thumb at arms length to check the Sentinels. She says she can't do it, her brother drowned swimming last year when the weather turned. He tells her that time is running out. The Sentinels have mastered creating new ones and are expanding out of the city. If she wants to save the children she has to come and fight now. He tells her she needs to lose her name for OpSec and that she is now TENSING.

They swim across the river and creep into the city along stream beds and tunnels and railway lines.

It is nearly dawn and they go to a tunnel to hunker down. There are 2 more rats in there. There is a cautious exchange. The other rats are from ENG 13<sup>th</sup> VIET CONG. KING RAT says they are RECON 3<sup>rd</sup> HEAVE AWA. One of the ENG 13<sup>th</sup> VIET CONG rats asks if TENSING/MOLLY is the climber? KING RAT looks annoyed and just replies OpSec. They agree what to do if killer robots come and settle down to sleep. The rats from ENG 13<sup>th</sup> VIET CONG give them a tin of corned beef, which they eat from the tin.

The next evening KING RAT and TENSING/MOLLY slip into the shabby room he left from. THE GRUACH is there. KING RAT takes off his rat clothes and goes to a chest full of garish, bright clothes and puts them on, looking bonkers. TENSING/MOLLY just stands there. Other rats come in and disrobe and change. The clothes are ridiculous, shirts, skirts, dresses, hats, all that matters is colour. HEAVE AWA KID comes in with a big bottle of clear liquid and announces she has some. All the rats then ask THE GRUACH if they can have some and they argue about how many, 1 or 2 or 5. THE GRUACH tells them to first check and then they can have 2. TENSING/MOLLY has no idea what's going on. The HEAVE AWA KID gets a glass with a splash of nail polish on it, and then using cotton wools tries to remove it with the clear liquid. It goes. The rats are all excited – one pulls out a box of nail polish and they all line up to get 2 finger or toe nails polished.

Suddenly there is the sound of an electric drill and everyone freezes. TENSING/MOLLY asks what's that? They look at her. THE GRUACH tells them that TENSING is new. One of the rats asks if she is the climber. THE GRUACH and KING RAT look at each other concerned and KING RAT just says OpSec. TENSING/MOLLY asks about the drilling and is told that the

Sentinels have caught someone. She asks who and is told that she will know soon enough.

THE GRUACH announces tea and asks one of the rats to say grace. They get a big frying pan off the wall and kiss it and say “we will have hot food” and passes it round for everyone to kiss before hanging it back on the wall. Then THE GRUACH puts down some opened cold tins of beans and spaghetti and everyone starts eating.

The drill sounds again and the booming voice of the Sentinel says that they have caught a rat from ENG 13<sup>th</sup> VIET CONG, more news to follow.

They continue eating and then TENSING/MOLLY asks when she can see her cousin ANDREW GILHEANEY. They say they don’t know anyone’s name, what’s his rat name. TENSING/MOLLY says to KING RAT that he knows ANDREW GILHEANEY’s real name, he must know his rat name. KING RAT is very shifty. THE GRUACH asks if it’s SUGARBOY and she can tell from KING RAT’s response that it is. Everyone is mortified and THE GRUACH says “Oh honey” and hugs TENSING/MOLLY and tells her the Sentinels caught him 3 weeks ago. TENSING/MOLLY is upset and has a go at KING RAT saying he’s a liar, she raises her voice and everyone tells her to be quieter.

The drill sounds and the booming voice says “lets spin the wheel”. In a large room full of monitors a screen has a fruit machine on it. There is a sound like a handle being pulled and the wheels spin. They stop one by one, a foot, an eye and a hand. The booming voice says “oh no, the rat didn’t win” and then laughs. “Everyone wins, everyone wins” and the handle pulls again. This time the wheels stop on a foot, then another foot and then another one. “3 left feet”. The drill sounds again. Screaming. The Sentinel says we will find out all your secrets.

Light starts coming up and THE GRUACH tells everyone to go to sleep now. They hunker down in a big pile.

Darkness falls the next day and most of the rats put on their uniform and slip out. THE GRUACH checks each ones fingers and toes for nail polish and makes sure they have all taken it off. HEAVE AWA KID hugs them and says “Heave awa, Ah’m no deid yet” to each. A new rat slip in. She says HQ 1<sup>st</sup> INTIFADA and asks KING RAT and the GRUACH “is she here?” THE GRUACH and KING RAT nod. HEAVE AWA KID says to TENSING/MOLLY to come with

her and the 3 of them leave.

HEAVE AWA KID and TENSING/MOLLY come into a room with a climbing wall. It is very dark and there are ropes and clips and climbing paraphernalia. TENSING/MOLLY says there must be some mistake and she's not a trained rock climber. HEAVE AWA KID says she knows, but SUGARBOY says she's the best and she can fit through the hole. TENSING/MOLLY asks what is she climbing and what hole and HEAVE AWA KID says I don't know, OpSec. She starts showing her the ropes and the bits. TENSING/MOLLY gets snippy and says that she's not doing this, it's stupid.

The drill sounds and the booming voice announces that they have news. The booming voice sounds out saying "well, well more news. A broken voice says he is BILLY MCGILVARY, DUNDERHEID of ENG 13<sup>th</sup> VIET CONG and RECON 3<sup>rd</sup> HEAVE AWA have a new girl, don't know her name, but she might be the Climber. The Sentinels will find out her secret. The booming voice says it will keep them posted, and then says this new Climber will end the same way as the last one SUGARBABE and then plays a recording of SUGARBABE being tortured to death.

HEAVE AWA KID hugs TENSING/MOLLY says that her cousin said nothing, they don't know what the Climber has to do. They turn back to the ropes and clips.

The next dusk they are all waking up in the shabby room. The same rat from HQ 1<sup>st</sup> INTIFADA slips in. She says crisply, D-1 final briefing. This is the plan. She gets out a bag of sand and starts drawing map on the table using cups for Arthurs Seat, the Castle and Calton Hill and the various dark kitchens. She goes to the wall and takes down various postcards and then explains what's going to happen. They go up Calton Hill (postcard) then down JACOBS Ladder (postcard) along the railway at Waverly (postcard) into Princes St Gardens (postcard) and under the Castle (postcard). Turning to TENSING/MOLLY she says you climb up here and belay the ropes like HEAVE AWA KID learned ya. At the top there is a grating this size (makes rectangle with her hands, it's the same size as the hole in the cloth that KING RAT brought). She gives TENSING/MOLLY a set of screwdrivers. JAEGER 2<sup>nd</sup> OSPREYS will follow her up the rope, but she has to open the locked door from the inside to let them into the Torment Nexus. There they will power down the Sentinels and the ENG groups will storm the dark

kitchens when the power goes off.

The HQ rat slips away and everyone goes to checking their kit.

The next night HEAVE AWA KID and TENSING/MOLLY slip out and up Calton Hill, down Jacobs Ladder, along the railway line to the castle. All the time the Sentinel is taunting them as it gradually works out more about TENSING/MOLLY – they found her discarded clothes, they think she's a relative of SUGARBOY. The Sentinel says they will dig out all her secrets. HEAVE AWA KID teases TENSING/MOLLY about her secrets, she gets a bit shirty. The Sentinel finally knows her name but it doesn't don't know where she's climbing. TENSING/MOLLY climbs, tries not to make a noise, drops a clip which clangs down the hill. At one point she holds her arm out with her thumb up and the Sentinel towers over it. HEAVE AWA KID puts her arm with her extended thumb over her shoulder and the Sentinel is smaller. HEAVE AWA KID tells TENSING/MOLLY that the Sentinel should be afraid of her. As they climb the Sentinel announces it has captured RAT KING and starts torturing him life. TENSING/MOLLY breaks into the castle and let the JAEGER's into the Torment Nexus. There are lots of computer screens. One of them is doing the fruit machine for the torture of RAT KING. They break it. They pull switches and one by one the Sentinels go down.

ENG teams are hiding out and watching the Sentinels and when they see one go down they start rushing out to destroy the dark kitchens and their killer robots.

TENSING/MOLLY, HEAVE AWA KID and the JAEGER's all try to stop the Sentinels and save RAT KING but he gets his head squeeze on air til his eyes pop.

The last Sentinel goes dark.

Dawn breaks and HEAVE AWA KID takes TENSING/MOLLY down the Royal Mile. She asks TENSING/MOLLY her real name and tells her hers. They spit on the Heart of Midlothian for luck and go down to Heave Awa close. Then HEAVE AWA KID says we all agreed that we would meet at the temple this dawn and the head off.

They jump the gate into the gardens on Queens Street and head down to the temple. It is swarming with rats hugging each other. They are all sunning themselves and worshipping the sun as it comes up. A couple of rats arrive

with 2 bin bags of clothes and everyone starts dressing up and putting make up on.

THE GRUACH turns up with the big frying pan and lots of tins of beans and frozen sausages and a giant bag of nail polished and make up.

HEAVE AWA KID asks TENSING/MOLLY what her secret is.

TENSING/MOLLY kisses here suddenly on the lips and then pulls away and looks terrified and says sorry. HEAVE AWA KID leans in and snogs her.

Everyone sits around happy.