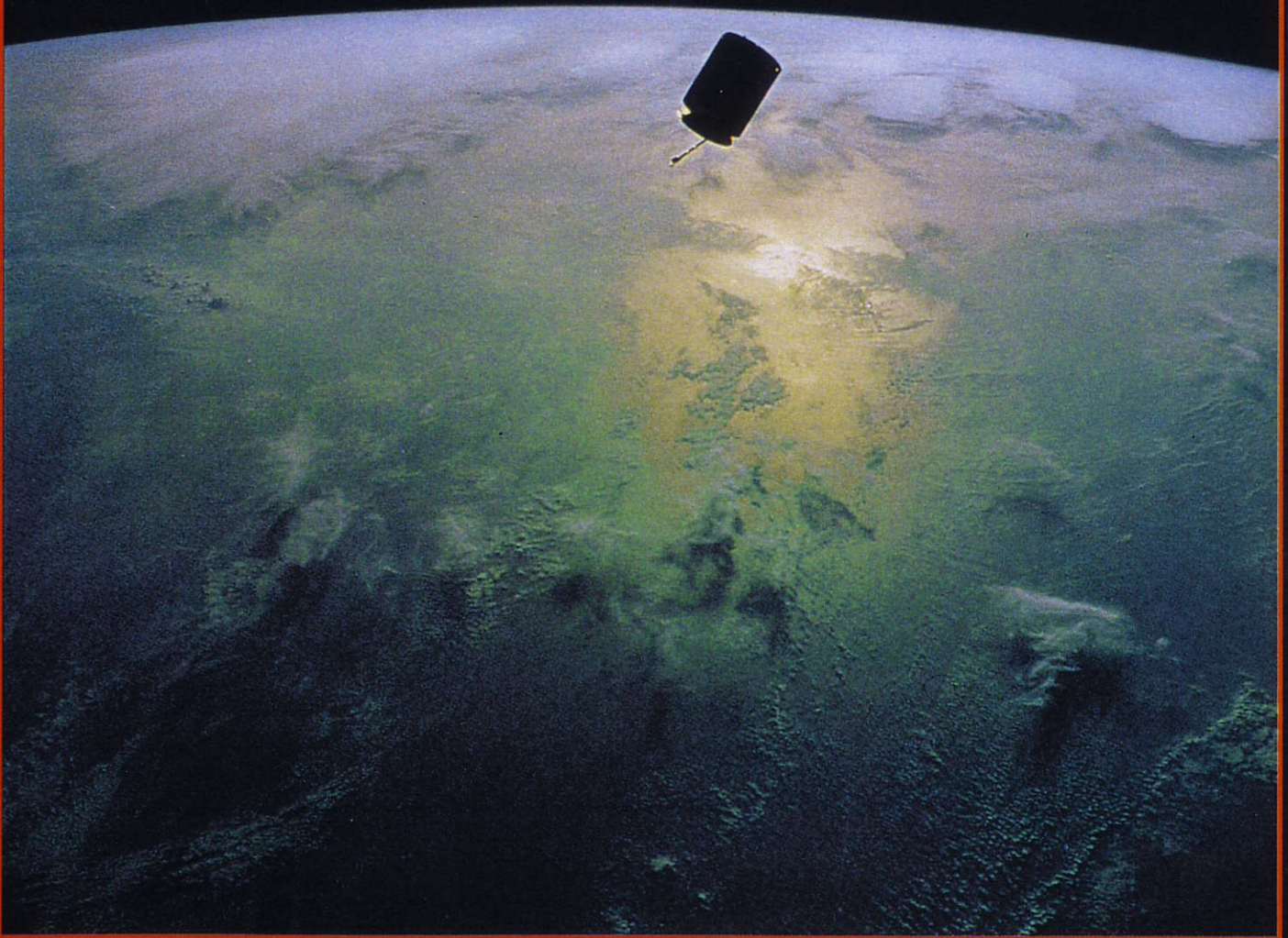




THE ESQUIRE INVESTIGATION

# CODENAME ECHELON



Your emails and phone calls are being monitored from space by the largest spy network in the world. They know all about you. And they are beyond the law. **By Eamonn O'Neill**  
Photographs by **Richard Dean**



**Y**ou're being watched. No one needs to climb a drainpipe or rake through a filing cabinet in order to build up a profile of you.

You used that credit card this morning: that means they know your address, employer, bank, salary and mother's maiden name, too. You withdrew money from a cash machine: they know your PIN number, credit history and mortgage details. You send emails: they know your address and those of your personal and professional contacts. The UK is the most heavily closed-circuit-monitored nation on earth, so when you went on a lunchtime stroll, you were captured on a camera. As you crossed the road during a political parade, your face was frozen and logged, using a satellite that tracks movement, downloading a digital, 10-frames-per-second film to base. Your personal habits and tastes are noted by what you choose to surf on the internet. Driving home, your number plate was scanned by a computer, the information cross-checked with court records of speeding fines. Every phone call and email may be analysed using software that can index and reference relationships, habits, locations, addresses, DNA samples, photographs, telephone numbers, bank accounts, email addresses – even shoe sizes.

That cellular phone on an overnight charge

is a mobile tracking device – a bleeping prison tag around your ankle couldn't do a better job of locating you. If you type a letter, they can park a van outside stacked with oscilloscopes, demodulators, hidden antennae, wide-band receivers and monitors, and tap into the electromagnetic radiation emissions given off by your PC: "tempest monitoring" enables them to read the words off their screen as fast as you type them on to yours.

But you've done nothing wrong. You simply got caught in someone else's world. Remember that wrong number call you took on the mobile on the drive home? It was from somebody else... under surveillance. The caller hit the wrong digit on his keypad, accidentally reached you and now you're as hot as he is. That's all it took. Now you taint everyone who you come into contact with.

As you sleep, an impressive illustration of your relationships is appearing on a computer screen like a spider's web: it charts who you've talked to, where you've been, where you're going, quite literally, who you are.

The material will be warehoused for future reference. In the event of a criminal trial there's a high probability you'll never discover what the authorities really know about you. If you are just part of another investigation, then you'll definitely never find out what intelligence was gathered about you.

About 99 per cent of the time you – the

target – will be innocent. The system exists, we're told, to catch the one per cent involved in illegal activities: terrorism, money-laundering, murder... whatever. That's the black-and-white version. The grey version, where the reality usually hides, suggests the system is utilised for more sinister reasons.

Your secrets have become their secrets.

#### **The A59 in Yorkshire is desolate and**

lonely. A midnight shroud of rain covers the nearby Yorkshire moors. But, suddenly, an astonishing sight appears: a galaxy of blinding orange sodium lights, in distinct lines and grids, neat and exact in their patterns. Enormous, hulking shapes are silhouetted against the brilliant glare: colossal globes of varying sizes.

A small road sign says: "RAF Menwith Hill". Other signs read: "Ministry of Defence Property: trespassers will be liable for prosecution" and "Warning! Guard dogs on duty."

A relatively modest-sized gate fronts the complex. Two flags flap nearby: one an RAF flag, the other a US Stars and Stripes. The land here is *technically* British Crown property but its purpose defines its true ownership rights. Everything in this base is bought and paid for by the taxpayers of the United States of America. The foremost clandestine intelligence organisation in the world, the United States National Security