

# EAVESDROPPINGS

## Catalogue shopping with a difference

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'Are you looking for a present for the man or woman who has everything? A "James Bond" gadget or maybe a bullet proof car?'

The surveillance and counter-surveillance world confidently takes on the gift market as another outlet for its increasing range of gadgetry. The catalogue shopper can browse through the pages with the assurance that clients include Governments, Embassies, VIP's, Diplomats and business people of integrity the world over. One catalogue available targets that well known commuter "... the businessman on the move (one day in New York - the next in the Sahara Desert)". The cab to camel market is big in the surveillance business. For example, the UHF Infinity Business Listener placed in the target telephone allows you to call that telephone from anywhere in the world (camels included) and instead of the telephone ringing, it merely transmits all conversations within a designated area.

Indeed, in the Bond tradition, many of the surveillance devices sold to '... the business person of integrity who wants to stay ahead of the game', are based on transforming everyday items into eavesdropping devices. Desk calculators, briefcases, cigarette boxes and of course, the Bond-style pen. A catalogue entry for this 'crystal controlled' item reads, "This everyday working ball-point pen has a micro transmitter (the size of a match head) concealed within its body. An unobtrusive way to monitor a situation, or allow a colleague to be 'present'." Nudge, nudge, wink wink - say no more - You can have an ashtray colleague, a button colleague and trouser belt colleague - all present at meetings on your behalf. A great time-saver.

Not trying to hide its function one little bit, is an item headed Wall Listening Device. This will penetrate 50cm of wall, effectively turning the wall surface into a microphone. Combine this with the automatic fax monitoring system and you will receive a duplicate print-out of all faxes, and outgoing numbers dialled. You can then send this information on via your handy satellite fax system. As the



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catalogue says, 'All you need is a clear view of the sky and a suitable power source. So from hotel room, remote location (that camel again) or simply from your car or truck you can send and receive information from anywhere in the world.'

On a serious note, Conrad Sandler, the Managing Director of SPYCATCHER-VASCON in London, clearly identifies why surveillance and counter-surveillance are such fast growing industries - the pursuit of information. He says "So what is the most valuable commodity today? INFORMATION and many people will take great risks to get it. It is today's currency." He adds, "At the same time, never has such a valuable commodity been at such high risk. Nowadays, information is sent along data wires, telecom wires and through the air making it a very easy target for those who do not protect themselves."

Not surprisingly therefore, a high percentage of such catalogues devote themselves to exhorting the wise business person to invest in counter-surveillance measures. These are devised to detect what are referred to in the business as parasitic or non-parasitic transmitters, hard-wire taps, voice activated taps, or infinity transmitters.

You can buy bug deactivators, bug alerts, bug tracers. Here you enter the

world of sweep functions. Inclusive 'packages' will cover at least five of the most desired sweep functions. As with all electronics, you can always add 'optional probe extensions' - a must for the businessman or woman who has everything. Of course, these gadgets look like their nanes. They do not have to hide - they are 'the good guys' or are they? Conrad Sandler again: "It is commonly thought that surveillance is the offensive part of the business and counter surveillance is what the good guys do to defend themselves. This is not strictly true. Many companies have covert video equipment to catch continual sexual harrassers in the workplace. On the other hand, a person buying a 'bug' detector might be seen as benign and trying to protect him or herself but indeed they might be VAT defrauders trying to beat the system."

Dear Father Christmas, please can I have a Spy Camera EC Set? As the catalogue says, "You will hardly believe your eyes when you see this ultra-minute camera which can disappear inside the palm of your hand, into your handbag, trouser or shirt pocket or anywhere else you want it to disappear." Now that is a clever idea.