

## **COLOUR NOTES**

Colour is used in *Primary Allegiances* as a means of communicating the story, and at times is as - or more - important as the dialogue and other verbal elements of the script.

Mrs C perceives the world in terms of what colours it is - and in particular, whether things are her three favourite colours - red, blue, and yellow. Not coincidentally, these are also the three colours associated with the major political parties in Britain - Labour/red, Conservative/blue, Liberal Democrat/yellow - whose activities during the local election so affect Mrs C and whose perception of the world is shaped by those party colours as surely as her more individual world is.

### **Mrs C's colour scheme:**

Some parts of the story are drawn as if seen by Mrs C. The only colours used in these panels are red, blue and yellow, anything that isn't in these colours being left in b/w. These panels are noted clearly with the use of bold type as above.

### **Colour washes:**

On each of the first three pages of the story, there are four panels that are coloured using only shades of one colour - red, blue, or yellow - with a pale wash as the background and particular aspects picked out in more intense tones. These sections are noted as they occur with the term 'red wash', 'blue wash', and 'yellow wash' in bold type.

## **SYNOPSIS**

*Primary Allegiances* is a story about loyalties, and especially the loyalty that people have to themselves which underlies and overpowers friendships and social and political concerns. It's a familiar theme for *Hellblazer*, but is here tackled in a wider sense than it has been before.

There are several strands to the story, all of which are focused around a local election being contested by Olivia Pantone, Parliamentary candidate for an unspecified party. Olivia's desire for power could be satisfied by any party manifesto - not because she's a hypocrite but because she believes that what's good for her must by definition be good for the electorate.

Olivia's campaign office overlooks a stretch of wasteland on which there is a brightly coloured and battered caravan. In it lives an old woman, Mrs C, who could well be thought of as mad because of her insistence on living in a caravan full of junk of all sorts, piled into heaps according to whether it's red, yellow or blue. For Olivia, the case of Mrs C represents a classic case of neglect of the elderly and homeless by the incumbent MP, Donald Woodruff, and an ideal opportunity to humiliate him in a live TV debate. Never mind that Mrs C is perfectly happy with her life, Olivia knows that a nursing home is the best place for her, and if arranging it helps Olivia to win a seat in Parliament, then all the better.

Mrs C is an old friend of Constantine's, and since he knows what tends to happen to his friends, and he loves Mrs C for helping him to grow up when he lived in the area in his younger days, he doesn't see her very often. But there's a favour he needs doing, just a little one, and since Mrs C is only a few minutes away...

John has borrowed an apparently magical amulet from Rod Pierce, member of a dubious bunch of lifestyle occultists calling themselves Psykik Conspiracy - and he has every intention of returning it. What John's more interested in is the unassuming box the amulet came in, which he believes to be genuinely magical, whereas Rod and his friends, impressed by surface above all else, are fascinated only by the amulet it contains. John asks Mrs C to visit Rod and return the amulet, knowing that Rod will not want a distinctly unstylish old lady in his house for any longer than strictly necessary and won't notice that the box has been replaced by a paper bag as long as he's got the amulet

back. Out of loyalty to John, and with no other motives, Mrs C agrees. She returns home and says goodbye to John, who she can see wants to get away to do other things now that she's done him a favour - but she doesn't mind; that's what most people are like. Even - sometimes especially - friends.

Constantine puts Mrs C to the back of his mind - he's seen her, and now he can get on with his next project. Except things don't work out quite that way. Waiting in a chip shop queue, John sees a TV report about Olivia Pantone's concern for the disadvantaged members of the community - specifically Mrs C, who is bewildered by the glare of media attention she's receiving, and which provides the last-minute swing in opinion that secures Olivia her seat in the House of Commons.

John tries to act - Mrs C is, after all, his friend. But he's too late - if his attention hadn't purely been focussed on getting Mrs C to do a job for him he might have been aware of Olivia's likely ambitions, but when it came to it John was no more compassionate than Rod Pierce. Once again, John's fucked up - and once again a friend's life has been ruined because of it. John wanders round in drunken self-indulgence as Mrs C's caravan and everything in it are consumed in a bonfire, but for once he's fully aware of how self-indulgent he's being, and exactly how little that will help Mrs C, who - when we last see her - is sitting drugged and dazed in a nursing home.

It's a pretty grim story, and deliberately mundane in some respects because I wanted to focus on John Constantine the human being, rather than John the Magus - they are one and the same, but it's easy to get seduced by the magical aspects of John's life, as John himself sometimes does despite his ingrained cynicism.

Psykik Conspiracy plays a small part in the story but has definite potential for further involvement in John's life. Similarly, if given the opportunity I'd love to go further into Mrs C's past and her previous connections with Constantine.

## **SETTING NOTES**

Since the story is set in and around a fairly confined and unnamed area of London (although any large city could be substituted just by changing the name of the TV station where part of the story takes place), I thought it would be a good idea to do a vague map of the place, to give a feeling of what goes where and - more relevantly - what can be seen from where. Exact correspondence to the map isn't important as long as you've worked out in your own mind the approximate layout of the area.

Buildings date from the turn of the century (in the case of the pub and the nursing home) to early 80s (the office building where Olivia has her campaign office). Apart from specified locations, the area has a rundown mix of (mostly Indian) restaurants, travel agents offering knockdown holiday prices and competitively priced flights to the Caribbean, cheap supermarkets, off-licences, second-hand shops, a cinema converted to a bingo palace, a launderette and a betting shop. The general atmosphere is despondent - there's a lot of litter on the streets, stray dogs roam in packs, and only about half the streetlights and public phones actually work.

Dotted round on shopfronts and walls are posters for the election. We see them in the background - probably just 'VOTE' or 'LAB', 'CON' or 'LIBDEM' on a red, blue or yellow sheet, never close enough to make out their features. Ideally, there will be at least one poster for each party visible in exterior shots - more for atmosphere than realism. Later in the comic there won't be a need for wording on the posters since readers will recognise them for what they are.

## MRS C

Yes, I know appearances can be deceptive, and they're shallow and so on, but in the case of someone who has such an individual appearance as Mrs C it's bound to say something about her. She's seventysomething, and for a long time she's lived in an old, basically derelict caravan on some wasteland. She doesn't get a state pension - if records exist for her, she's not aware of it - and leads a hand-to-mouth existence from the food and items she finds and that some people in the area give to her.

Mrs C is not a character designed to make readers feel sympathetic to the plight of the homeless and elderly however - she is a strong person who chooses to live as she does because it makes sense to her, eccentric as it might seem to others who feel secure because their own lifestyle is shared by a majority of people. Equally eccentric to most people is Mrs C's peculiarity about colour - Mrs C sees things in terms of whether they're red, yellow, or blue. Doesn't matter whether it's a banana or a bicycle, a teapot or a tablecloth; colour counts for more than function. She dresses in a riot of those colours - red Dr Marten boots, blue longjohns, a long yellow petticoat, beneath layers of patched skirts and jumpers, a blue parka coat, all topped by a red and yellow striped woolly bobble hat. Her caravan is similarly hued, as are all its contents - stored in three different piles according to colour.

Mrs C is far from mad. She just sees things differently. She's been seeing things her way for forty years now, and it gives her some interesting insights. Mrs C is, for want of a better word, a garbomancer, able to take the pulse of a city through its waste, cast the I-Ching of litter, read the urban runes. For now at least, this side of her is only hinted at in some aspects of John's relationship with her.

It's as a person - a friend - that Constantine values Mrs C, and not an asset, part of an occult armoury. He doesn't come round very often, but she's maybe the only person he can open up to, feel comfortable with, who he's known for a long time. Which unfortunately suggests that she's in for a rough time.

## **OLIVIA PANTONE**

Just how ambitious and self-obsessed can a person get? Not much more than Olivia Pantone, which is why she'll make a great politician if she succeeds in her bid to become a Member of Parliament. Her party isn't specified - it doesn't matter, and her ideology could be tailored to the colours of any of the parties. What matters is that she's with the winners.

She's got the qualities that any self-respecting Parliamentary candidate should have - good looks, articulacy, a successful career, and selective hearing. That's not to say she's all bad - she'll go out of her way to help people, although always with PR value or the possibility of future favours in mind.

Like her or not, Olivia is a product of her times. A time when politics depends on soundbites, photo opportunities, and minor fluctuations in opinion polls. Those are what Olivia needs to manipulate to gain power.

And that's why Mrs C becomes one of her causes, living proof of the sincerity of Olivia's campaign slogan 'Couldn't Care More'. An old lady shamefully ignored by the state, left to rot on a derelict piece of wasteland, when she should be in the state-sanctioned care of a nursing home. Olivia takes up her case to embarrass the incumbent MP (party similarly unspecified - the idea isn't to duck out of pointing the finger, but to get across how similar politicians of all parties have become). In Olivia's rhetoric, Mrs C becomes a symbol for all the evils of a distant administration - it never occurs to her that Mrs C might be happy living the life she does.

Olivia is in her late 30s; tall, pale, and elegant, with shoulder-length black hair; a power dresser with padded shoulders and immaculate clothes - dresses in black, white, silver, and grey. She speaks in a dramatic up-and-down fashion which I've tried to reflect through lettering.

## YOGI

Yogesvaran Sanghera - universally known as Yogi since the English insist that they can't pronounce his name, even though it's no harder than the very English 'Montmorency' - is a 36 year old Ugandan-born Indian market researcher, who came to Britain with his family to flee Idi Amin's regime. The experience gave him an exaggerated respect for the 'mother of all Parliaments', and Yogi is more committed to his vague political beliefs than Olivia Pantone, whose campaign he is helping to run.

The market he's currently researching on Olivia's behalf is the electorate, using all the tools at his disposal to do so. Yogi is uncomfortable about the fact that politics is increasingly conducted in terms of slickly manipulated postures rather than issues and people. However, he tells himself that if this is the case, then his candidate should be better equipped for the task than her opponents. Olivia's conspicuous use of Yogi in a constituency with a high Asian population has made him increasingly cynical about the realities of political campaigning.

Yogi is about 5'6" and quite plump - he looks older than he really is, and his thick-rimmed glasses don't improve the impression. He doesn't look comfortable in the double-breasted suits that Olivia insists he wears.

## **PSYKIK KONSPIRACY**

A self-styled temple for the counterculture, an anti-religion for hip poseurs. The people controlling it do in fact have a certain amount of occult power, gained through exploiting their flock - they use religious imagery of lambs and wolves a lot, the followers little imagining that they are the sheep. We might meet the upper echelons at a later date, but for now we're concerned with three of their disciples, acquaintances of John's. Their occultism is a fashion statement more than anything, and noone would be more surprised than them if the magick they practice actually worked. Still, it's a chance to dress up and get laid with similarly shallow people.

**ROD PIERCE** - nobody's quite sure what Roddy actually does, but he's on the fringes of everything that's at the cutting edge of the artsy London alternative scene. He'll be found on the guestlist at concerts by intense industrial bands, attending installations of shower stalls, animal entrails, and videos of William Burroughs being read out by schoolchildren at fashionable galleries, complaining about the latest rejection of his anti-novel by bourgeois publishers. He gets by with some modelling work here, interviewing celeb chums for style mags there, and pushing the latest designer drugs to rock stars looking for the consciousness-breakthrough that'll inspire their first solo album. He's white, about 30, tall, slim, with blonde hair in a ponytail. Dresses expensively in Italian shirts and Japanese jackets, and a trademark enormous black leather coat. Always wears a gold medallion with the Psykik Conspiracy symbol on it - it's pretty tacky, but he's unable to see that for what it represents to him.

**MORI** - 27 year old Japanese jeweller, with a lucrative sideline in body piercing. She's done a lot of piercing on herself - what's visible are a pierced nose, lower lip, as well as the more usual earrings. She's Rod's girlfriend, and as immersed in the pretensions of the in-scene as he is, which is probably why they get on so well. Attractive in a model kind of way, dresses exclusively in black.

**LORENZA STREET** - 28 year old black film maker. His films are of the blink-and-you'll-miss-it variety produced by old people that dominate programming for young people; erratic images set to pounding drum and bass, working on the questionable theory that we live in a post-literate culture. This conveniently negates the need for anything resembling a plot or narrative in his work - or even a theme if his 23

minute jump cut and computer graphics masterpiece 'Breathing Breathing' is anything to go by, a piece whose visceral intensity was clearly proved by the fact that Channel 4 rejected it on three separate occasions. Lorenza dresses in a combination of expensively baggy suits, and colourful African hats and waistcoats. Both his ears are pierced, and he usually wears big gold hoop earrings.