

Straitjacket  
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INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

4 middle aged MPs in black suits and a PRIME MINISTER (50), wearing a straitjacket, are sitting around a circular table in a moderately sized room. A fancy chandelier provides the lighting.

MP 1 adjusts his tie.

MP 1

Great, everyone got here on time. And thanks to those who fitted our leader with such hard to get hold of clothes.

The PRIME MINISTER is constantly frowning.

PRIME MINISTER

I'm only starting to get used to them. You all better know precisely what you're doing.

MP 1

Of course.

MP 2 wipes the sweat from his forehead.

MP 2

Can you run by our plan again, please? I just want to make sure I fully understand it...

MP 1

For the last time, there are too many people out there who are experts on body language. We can't have them seeing how uncertain the PM is about how he is handling the post-covid economy. Furthermore, we convince everyone he's had a psychotic break from reality, and everyone should go easy on him. When I say that I will be taking over from him, most of the attention should be on the PM's condition.

MP 2

But what about his facial expressions? How will we mask them?

MP 1

That's a tough one. We COULD make him wear black and white makeup - corpse paint, for those in the know - and say he's gone mad and started a black metal band... Any other suggestions?

MP 2

A black metal band? Aren't such groups a bit... psycho?

MP 1

Good thinking. Maybe we could make him wear clown makeup?

MP 3

That could work. Make him likeable. I'll find someone to write some jokes for him...

The PM rolls his eyes.

PRIME MINISTER

This is madness! I have an idea. A good idea, this time. All people on TV wear makeup, right? What we do is say a makeup artist who started work just today screwed everything up, went OTT and made me look like a beauty queen. Sorted.

MP 1

That's a very good idea, sir. Are you prepared for such an... intense situation?

PRIME MINISTER

Desperate times call for desperate measures.

MP 1 nods with respect.

MP 1

You're very brave.

PRIME MINISTER

I guess we should discuss the things I'll be saying...

MP 4

How about this: What's 'economy' mean? I'm crazy! Wooohooo!

MP 1

I like your thinking.

PRIME MINISTER

Me too. It's going to be a tough gig, that's for sure, but once it's all finally over with, I take a long holiday in a quote 'mental institution' and when I'm finally sane, the economy should be back to normal.

MP 1

Exactly. That's just what happens. There are highs and low, recessions never last forever.

PRIME MINISTER

Fine. Let's get writing my speech then, I guess...

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

The PRIME MINISTER is wearing the same straitjacket as MP 1 stands him. They are on a wooden stage. The former does indeed look like a beauty queen. He is also wearing roller skates, to make it easier to move him. His 20 strong AUDIENCE consists mainly of JOURNALISTS taking photos with fancy cameras.

PRIME MINISTER

Hello, audience. Thank you for turning up. So...

The PM take a deep breath.

PRIME MINISTER

... any questions?

JOURNALIST 1 has wide eyes.

JOURNALIST 1

What in GOD'S name do you look like?

PRIME MINISTER

Yes. First up, I'm wearing a straitjacket because I've gone mad. Too mad to even begin commenting on the economy, that's what I've come here to say. I won't be better in a good few weeks at least. Secondly, my makeup artist is somewhat of a noob who is desperately trying to impress, and consequently she went absolutely overkill on me. Red faces all around.

JOURNALIST 1

Wow.

PRIME MINISTER  
Yes. Any more questions?

JOURNALIST 1  
Ummmm... Ummmm...

MP 1 whispers in the PM's ear.

MP 1  
It's working.

JOURNALIST 1  
So errr... Can you say when the  
economy should be better at very  
least?

PRIME MINISTER  
Bleb.

MP 1  
Bleb? Oh no. Now he's gone TRULY mad.  
We may have to end this event early.  
A very bad sign.

JOURNALIST 2 scratches his head.

JOURNALIST 2  
What condition is he suffering from,  
exactly?

MP 1 coughs nervously.

MP 1  
A classic case of paranoid  
schizophrenia.

JOURNALIST 2  
It's just that, I've never heard even  
a mentally ill person say a word like  
'bleb' before...

MP 1  
It's a neologism. It's very  
technical.

JOURNALIST 2  
I see. So who's going to take over  
from the Prime Minister?

MP 1 is casually dismissive.

MP 1  
I will.

JOURNALIST 2  
And do YOU know what you're doing?

MP 1  
Sure do.

The PM tries to capture attention.

PRIME MINISTER  
What's economy mean? Wooooo!

JOURNALIST 2  
I'm so sorry about your condition.

PRIME MINISTER  
Thanks. I'm sure I'll be fine once I  
get some rest.

JOURNALIST 2  
You're very pretty, by the way.

PRIME MINISTER  
Cheers.

JOURNALIST 3 shakes his head in disbelief.

JOURNALIST 3  
Hello. I'm a body language expert,  
and whilst I can't read the Prime  
Minister, I can tell that the person  
he is with is hiding something.

MP 1 starts to sweat.

MP 1  
Rubbish.

JOURNALIST 3  
I want you to come clean. Why have  
you made the Prime Minister look like  
a mad, yet beautiful woman?

MP 1  
As explained, a harmless mistake.

JOURNALIST 3  
You're lying.

MP 1  
No. No lies.

JOURNALIST 3  
You're trying to get him out of the  
spotlight for a while.

PRIME MINISTER  
I don't FEEL out of the spotlight...

JOURNALIST 3  
You know what I mean. You're acting crazy so you can get a period away from public scrutiny.

PRIME MINISTER  
Errr...

A WOMAN (30) runs to the stage with a makeup up kit and desperately gets to work on MP 1.

MP 1  
Not now!

JOURNALIST 3  
What's going on?

MP 1  
I'm so sorry. She's a complete noob.

MP 1 whispers in the WOMAN'S ear.

MP 1  
Great job.

JOURNALIST 3  
She's not hiding your suspect facial expressions, then?

After completely coating the MP's face, the makeup artist jogs away.

MP 1  
She's just keen to impress. That's all.

JOURNALIST 3  
You're lying.

MP 1  
Anyway, it's not me you want to hear from, it's the Prime Minister. So... I think I'll go.

JOURNALIST 3  
But you say he's crazy...

MP 1  
Oh yes of course. We'll both have to go then. Bye.

JOURNALIST 3  
You can't just end this meeting  
whenever you feel like it!

MP 1  
I can if it's for the best.

MP 1 starts crying.

JOURNALIST 3  
You're crying...

MP 1  
Ah, but can't people also cry with  
happiness?

JOURNALIST 3  
Why the HELL would you be crying with  
happiness in this situation?

MP 1  
I'm mentally ill, too. I'm so sorry.  
Bye!

MP 1 rolls the PM away to the sound of loud boos.