

# **JOHN DRAKE - DANGER MAN**

## **A Series Of 72 Cards Issued By Somportex Ltd London**

### **1. Introducing John Drake.**

Name: John Drake. Occupation: Danger Man.

When secret department M.9 need a man for a special assignment, a tough efficient man who can act on his own without Whitehall being involved, they send for Drake. Drake likes to work alone, and doesn't think much of the department, but he is the best man they've got. And if you're on the other side- watch out – he's very dangerous!

### **2. No Holiday for Drake.**

This is Rome airport, and John Drake is changing planes. He's just got back from a tough assignment on the Tibetan border, and he's on his way to St Tropez for a few days' rest. But that isn't a transistor in his hand, it's a special radio linked with headquarters in London – and Drake has just picked up a call sign that tells him he is wanted urgently by M.9. No time for that holiday now!

### **3. The Well-Dressed Man.**

No customs man is going to take a second look at this case of Drake's, packed with shirts and socks and ties. But in the false bottom are the tools of his trade: mini-camera, torch, case of tools, hacksaw, tape recorder, spanners, radio transmitter and receiver, a miniature radio disguised as a cigarette lighter, pliers, spare batteries, and various little 'bug' microphones. And Drake is going to need them.

### **4. A Change of Plans.**

John Drake's ticket is made out for Nice, but he must return to London as quickly as possible. The airline girl at the desk does not speak much English, and Drake does not want to reveal that he speaks fluent Italian. A girl standing by is persuaded to act as interpreter, and very soon Drake is aboard the first flight for London. What can M.9 Headquarters want with him now?

### **5. The Mystery Radio Signal.**

This is the secret monitoring centre below M.9 headquarters. The commander is worried: every few days a strange signal is picked up on a particular frequency. Other British stations throughout the world have been alerted, but every bearing they get gives a different position for the transmitter – sometimes even in the middle of the sea!

### **6. The Portuguese Doctor.**

Signals sent out by the mystery transmitter are in code, but the last message has been partly decoded, and seems to contain the name “Braganza”. Two agents from the Hong Kong station tell John Drake that Braganza is the name of a crippled Portuguese nerve specialist who suddenly disappeared about two years ago.

### **7. John Drake on the Trail.**

Drake’s enquiries lead him to a village in Hampshire, where a new nerve clinic was opened about a year before. He books a room at the local inn. In the bar he questions the barman, and learns that many famous scientists and politicians visit the clinic for rest-cures. Nobody has seen the owner of the clinic since the day he moved in – but he was carried-in in a wheel chair.

### **8. The Mysterious Clinic.**

Is the stranger in the wheel chair the vanished Dr. Braganza? And what goes on at the private nerve clinic? Acting on a hunch, John Drake drives his car to the gates of the drive, and tunes in his own portable radio monitor. Without any doubt, a radio signal is being transmitted from the clinic on the special frequency that has been puzzling the experts at M.9.

### **9. A Surprise for John Drake.**

Drake walks without noise through the shadows round the clinic. It is very quiet; hardly a light shows in the windows of the house. He edges his way towards the back of the house, where there are garages and large sheds, and there is the hum of the generator. But suddenly his arms are seized from behind, and a hand from the shadows menaces him with a gun!

### **10. Will Headquarters Hear?**

Drake is hustled into the cellar of the nerve clinic, where several prison cells have been built. His captors are two Chinese! They take his jacket and shoes – but the heel of the shoe contains a small emergency radio transmitter, and the pipe in Drake’s mouth is a disguised microphone. He can only hope that headquarters are listening in.

### **11. An Interrogation.**

In his stockinged feet, John Drake is taken into a sort of office lined with red lacquer Chinese screens. Here he is left alone with a half-caste man wearing only a pair of Malay seamen’s trousers. The man begins to question him calmly, repeating the same question over and over again; but Drake manages to needle him into a sudden outbreak of violence.

### **12. Break for it.**

This is the chance John Drake has been looking for, the opportunity to take the initiative and get to grips with his questioner. The fight is fierce but short, and as the screens lining the wall come crashing down, Drake brings up a short forearm cross

smash and lays his opponent out cold. Then, picking up a big curved Chinese paper knife from the desk, he breaks open the lock on the door.

### **13. Trapped Again.**

Time is short. John Drake has only a few seconds to escape before the noise of the fight brings the guards running. In the next room a man is asleep on an iron bed, but as Drake tries to creep past him he suddenly sits up with a gun. "Stay where you are" he says: "Don't come a step nearer or I shall fire."

### **14. The Guard Outwitted.**

The man beside the bed holds his gun on Drake. But the Danger Man distracts his attention for a split second by glancing quickly at the spot behind the man's left shoulder, and thrusts the bed forward with a push of his knee. The man loses his balance – and Drake knocks the gun from his hand. The room is full of arc lamps and tape recorders – all the equipment for brain washing!

### **15. The Way Out.**

This is where John Drake's fitness shows. He is trained in all the tricks of unarmed combat, and the fat and flabby guard is no match for him. Drake has no need to carry a gun when he can immobilise a man in this way. "If you make a sound" he says. "I can break your arm like a stick of celery. Unlock this door and let me out."

### **16. The Call of Duty.**

So John Drake has escaped from the prison cells in the basement of the nerve clinic, and he relaxes with a book at the inn in the village where he is staying. But in less than half an hour, a message reaches him from M.9 headquarters saying that he is to try and get back into the clinic at the earliest opportunity. M.9 want some information on the mysterious Dr. Braganza.

### **17. Another Way In.**

Next morning, the heavy gates at the end of the drive up to the clinic are locked, and two or three men are patrolling the grounds. John Drake decides that his only way in is through the high wire fence that extends all the way round the property. He checks on his watch and makes his final radio call to headquarters.

### **18. Taking No Chances.**

The wire fence may be electrified, and John Drake is not going to take the risk of finding out the hard way! Out of the car he takes heavy rubber gloves and big wire cutters: his first cut shows him that, sure enough, the fence is electrified. It will be a long job cutting a large enough hole, and after that there is a second fence before he is into the grounds of the clinic. Can he do it without being spotted by the guards?

### **19. Caught Again.**

This is not Drake's lucky day! He has cut his way through two electrified fences and crept past all the guards patrolling the grounds of the nerve clinic. He has forced a window on the ground floor and climbed into a darkened study. But suddenly the lights are switched on, and Drake is caught in the middle of the room, without cover or anything he can use as a weapon, by two experienced strong-arm men!

### **20. Into the Surgery.**

"I think the doctor will want to see you" says one of the thugs, and Drake is hustled along the corridor of the clinic. One man forces him into the surgery – and he is confronted by a man in a wheel chair, who wears dark glasses and is muffled in thick clothes as if he feels the cold. This must be the mysterious crippled Portuguese nerve specialist. Dr. Braganza!

### **21. The Missing Doctor.**

But is this Dr. Braganza? John Drake does not stop to ask questions: snatching up a pair of crutches in the corner of the surgery he lays out his guards with one blow. The doctor has a radio and a set of buttons on the arm of his wheel chair, but before he can call for help Drake pinions both his arms in a ferocious lockhold, and gags him with a roll of cotton wool from the table.

### **22. A Quick Change.**

Working against time, John Drake snatches off the Doctor's cap, macintosh and dark glasses, as the crippled man struggles with the roll of cotton wool in his mouth. Swiftly disguised, Drake muffles the doctor in a blanket, trusses him up with a surgical bandage, and bundles him without ceremony into a corner of the surgery. Now it is time to escape again.

### **23. A Tricky Operation.**

Disguised as the crippled doctor, John Drake trundles his wheel chair down the corridor of the nerve clinic, past a door marked Operating Theatre. Suddenly the door opens, and a surgeon in overalls comes out and speaks to Drake in Portuguese. Drake attempts to mumble a quick reply, but his knowledge of Portuguese is not faultless. A quick look at his face shows that he is not Dr Braganza and the surgeon whips a gun from the pocket of his overall.

### **24. The Hands of a Surgeon.**

By turning the wheels of the chair forward with his hands, at the same time tipping himself backwards, Drake sends the chair crashing against the surgeon's legs, while he is kicking the gun out of the man's hand as he somersaults away. The dark glasses and cap go flying, and as he struggles to his feet the surgeon's hands are about his throat. Can Drake break the stranglehold?

### **25. Recalled to Headquarters.**

As always, science triumphs over brute force, and John Drake has little difficulty in breaking free from his assailant's grip and knocking him out with a well placed karate blow. After this, he boldly lets himself out of the front door of the nerve clinic, and returns to his car hidden in the woods to report back to headquarters. "You'd better come in" his chief says drolly; "we've got some new little toys for you to play with."

### **26. Mind If I Smoke?**

This is one of John Drake's 'new little toys': a sub-miniature camera disguised as an ordinary cigarette lighter. As Drake holds the lighter to his cigarette he points the side containing the lens toward the person he is photographing: then, as he presses the lighter release, the camera shutter is operated and the film is automatically wound on for the next exposure.

### **27. Please Go On Talking!**

Here is another of John Drake's 'little toys'. It looks like an ordinary camera, and Drake is the innocent tourist, peering at his focusing screen as he takes snap after snap of the scenery or his fellow travellers. But hidden inside the snap-up hood is a miniature tape-recorder, on which Drake is recording every word spoken near him.

### **28. Looks Like Rain.**

One of the most ingenious of the "toys" invented for John Drake by scientists at M.9. The umbrella is a dart gun, with its trigger in the handle, and the fountain pen holds two darts. The darts are radio transmitters which will send out "bleep" signals; Drake can fire one into the body of a speeding car, and then follow it at leisure by means of his own radio.

### **29. A Visit to Paris.**

John Drake does not use elaborate disguises: a pair of glasses or a hat will change his appearance completely. He has been sent to NATO headquarters in Paris, to watch two Vietnamese filing clerks who are suspected of having contacts in Macao. The typewriter is really a camera, and one day Drake gets a photograph of a man who is on the files of Interpol.

### **30. A Trail to Follow.**

Picking up his umbrella, John Drake follows the man out of the NATO building, and is just in time to see him climb into a black Citroen DS. It is the work of a second to slip the radio dart into the breach of the umbrella handle and aim at the bodywork of the moving car. Drake presses the trigger in the handle, and the Citroen is now broadcasting a steady "bleep bleep" which he can follow on his own car radio.

### **31. Cross Country Run.**

Following the 'bleeper' stuck in the body of the Citroen, Drake finds himself driving for several hundred miles across France from Paris. His quarry moves fast, but Drake

has a Mercedes, and can keep track of the signal picked up on his car radio. Finally, he locates the signal in a chateau among woods on the Swiss border.

### **32. The Drake-Shooting Season!**

Leaving his car in the pinewoods, John Drake decides to take a closer look at the chateau. He makes his way silently through the grounds and prowls around the outhouses and servants' quarters. Everything is quiet and apparently normal – but suddenly Drake hears a sound behind him. It is one of the gamekeepers, armed with an automatic rifle!

### **33. An Old Acquaintance.**

Drake is marched, at the point of a gun, into the main room of the chateau. The obvious leader among the several men is a heavily built man with a black mask covering half his face. "Sit down Mr. Drake" he says triumphantly: "this is not the first time we've met. I knew you before the unfortunate accident that resulted in...this. And I think you've interfered for too long in my private affairs."

### **34. John Drake for Export.**

"It's time we got rid of you, Drake" says his captor. "We're going to export you – eastward!" Three of the other men seize Drake and rope him up securely. He is bundled into a large wooden packaging case, the lid is nailed down, and John Drake is loaded aboard a freight train for Czechoslovakia.

### **35. Jump For It.**

One of the nails in the lid of the packing case is sticking out of the wood, and John Drake lies there for hours rubbing his roped wrists against the point. Finally, as the freight train rumbles on eastwards, he succeeds in fraying the rope to breaking point; then, with his knees and shoulders, he forces the lid of the create. As the train slows on an embankment beside a road, Drake jumps for it. He is somewhere in central Europe. But Where?

### **36. Delay is Dangerous.**

Stranded somewhere in Central Europe, John Drake must reach the Swiss border as soon as possible. He gets a lift from a girl who is driving westward at high speed, but they are stopped by a police patrol and questioned. Drake puts on his glasses, with a small radio receiver in the sidepiece, and attempts to call up the M.9 agent in Zurich with a radio-transmitter disguised as a cigarette lighter in his hand.

### **37. A Bad Choice of Companion.**

Unfortunately for John Drake, the girl is urgently wanted by the police, and they discover this as soon as they take a look at her papers. She tries to pull out a gun, but before she can use it one of the policemen snaps handcuffs on her wrist and on to Drake's and they are both taken off in the patrol car to the police post.

### **38. Drake in the Hot Seat.**

John Drake and the girl are marched into the police post and taken to separate interrogation rooms. For hour after hour, under blazing lights, Drake is questioned by the inspector, who wants to know what his connection is with the girl. As Drake, in fact, knows nothing about her he can only tell the truth, but the inspector will not be satisfied.

### **39. Out of the Net.**

Held in the police post for interrogation on a crime he knows nothing about, John Drake is in a tough spot. He cannot tell whether his message for help has reached the M.9 agent in Zurich, and as the hours go by he is increasingly sure that it hasn't. The time has come for action, and, watching his moment Drake succeeds in knocking out the policemen guarding him.

### **40. Never Too Late.**

The police post is littered with the unconscious bodies of the inspector and his men. As Drake bends over one of them a voice says "Maybe I wasn't needed after all." It is the M.9 agent from Zurich, with a fast car to escape over the border into Switzerland. "I'm sorry" says Drake; "perhaps I should have kept the last man for you."

### **41. No Time to Call His Own.**

Back in Zurich, John Drake takes a night off to recover from his recent activities. But hardly has his evening begun when he receives instructions on his wrist radio to leave as soon as possible for Djibouti. An agent from Hong Kong has arrived there on his way to England with vital information, but he has been arrested by the local police and must be got out of jail.

### **42. Feeling a New Man.**

The next morning, as he leaves Zurich on his way back to the airport for a plane to Djibouti, John Drake has assumed a new personality. He is now a happy-go-lucky French artist, travelling to the Near East to paint pictures for an exhibition. Will he be able to get the agent from Hong Kong out of prison?

### **43. On the Beach.**

The British Consul in Djibouti makes contact with Drake on a lonely beach. He suggests that Drake should use a small but powerful local gang to help him get his man out of prison. "Actually" says the Consul "I could so with some information on this crowd myself"; and he offers to lend Drake his miniature tape recorder.

### **44. No Close Shaves for Drake!**

John Drake has no need to borrow the miniature tape recorder from the Consul in Djibouti: he is quite well equipped for himself. As well as the set of equipment hidden in the false bottom of his suitcase (see card 3), he has quite a number of other useful

devices. One of the most ingenious is this miniature recorder hidden in the double head of an electric shaver.

#### **45. Someone Knows I'm Here!**

On his way back to the hotel through the narrow back streets of Djibouti, John Drake is suddenly set on by a thug. The tough is no match for Drake, who frees himself from the man's grip with a single twist of his body, and sends his head cracking against the wall of the alley. But the encounter worries him. Was it just an ordinary attempt at robbery, or does someone know of Drake's mission?

#### **46. Can't You Let Me Sleep?**

In the middle of the night, Drake is suddenly wakened by a sound. Almost before he has time to roll from his bed, a Malay seaman armed only with a narrow silk scarf is attempting to throttle him. Drake knows that is useless to fight against the scarf; instead he goes for the fingers that are holding it, and coolly breaks the hold.

#### **47. Morning After.**

Next morning, at breakfast, John Drake is exhausted after his disturbed night and the two fights for his life. Suddenly a man is behind him with a gun. Drake snatches up the French loaf from the table and spins in his chair, striking at the gun. But the man steps back and laughs "Good morning Mr. Drake. I understand you want to have a little talk with me." It is the local gangleader.

#### **48. The Smallest Camera.**

John Drake has one of the smallest cameras in the world. It is little bigger than a wristwatch and yet with the right lens, it can take extremely sharp pictures at almost any distance. Up in his hotel bedroom, Drake loads the camera with film before going to meet the other members of the local gang. Will they help him to get the British agent out of jail?

#### **49. 'No Shooting'.**

The local gang is certainly small, but the leaders of it are intelligent and wield a lot of power in Djibouti. The youngest man is an expert marksman and he suggests that they should shoot their way into the jail. "No" says Drake "there won't be any shooting – someone might get hurt!"

#### **50. The Genuine Bedouin Arab.**

John Drake's plan is that he and one of the members of the gang should dress in Arab robes, overpower the guards at the local jail, and release the imprisoned British agent with his vital information. The raid can be carried out discreetly, and nobody will be able to recognise them.

#### **51. Sabotage Suspected.**

All goes according to plan, but as Drake and the gangster escape from the jail with the British agent they have released, they are set on by more men in Arab dress. Using one of them as a human shield, Drake defends himself against a second man with a knife, and the man stabs his own comrade. But what has happened to the agent, and what has happened to the local gangster? There is no sign of either anywhere in the street!

### **52. The Last Straw.**

With his clothes rumpled and torn after his fight, and with the man he has been sent to save missing, Drake is in no mood to be attacked by yet another Malay seaman. The man screams in agony as Drake twists his wrists and hurls his hulk of a body into the filth of the gutter. “Sorry” grunts Drake: “afraid I lost my temper for a moment.”

### **53. A Time for Revenge.**

Where is the missing British agent? Obviously, John Drake has been double crossed by the local gang – perhaps they are in the pay of the other side. After a day of searching, Drake finds the agent’s body far out of town among the sand dunes; and he swears that he will revenge him before the mission is completed.

### **54. Another ‘Toy’.**

The laboratory experts at M.9 headquarters have dreamt up another device for John Drake. It looks like an ordinary briar pipe – but in reality it is a flashbomb of blinding brilliance. “Twist the stem and throw it” says the scientist; “it might get you out of a nasty corner somewhere.”

### **55. Smoke Without Fire.**

John Drake puts the flashbomb disguised as a pipe in his mouth. “Do you think this style suites me?” he asks quizzically. The scientist laughs. “You should be quite safe unless you try to light it” he says.

### **56. Sabotage Again.**

Drake flies out to Hong Kong, and takes the boat across the bay to Macao. This is the far end of the trail left by the mysterious Dr. Braganza, and he hopes everything will soon be cleared up. Drake hires a car, but discovers a small box hidden in the upholstery. When he digs it out, he finds that it contains ampoules of contraband drugs. Someone is trying to frame him!

### **57. Too Much of a Coincidence.**

The local police surround the car while Drake sits there with the ampoules of drugs in his hands. This is far too much of a coincidence, thinks Drake; obviously they have been tipped off. He is taken under armed guard to the prisoner, and ordered into a cell.

### **58. Time for Action.**

“There’s no time to argue” thinks John Drake; “I can’t afford to be held here while the police make their inquiries about the contraband drugs.” Putting on his dark glasses, he pulls the flashbomb pipe from his pocket and hurls it to the ground. Blinded by the glare, the police guards hold their hands to their eyes.

### **59. Drake Breaks Out Again.**

As the blinding glare from his flashbomb throws the police guards into confusion. John Drake dashes for the stairs. Only the sergeant bars his way, and Drake snatches up a suitcase from a chair and swings it full into the man’s face. The policeman stumbles down the stairs, and Drake has made another getaway!

### **60. Gone to Ground.**

Wearing an old straw Panama hat, and in entirely different clothes, John Drake is unrecognisable again. Looking a tough and rather disreputable soldier of fortune, he haunts the waterfront bars of Macao, and in one of them he spots a well known Russian agent deep in conversation with a Chinese whom he recognises as one of those from the nerve clinic in Hampshire!

### **61. The Darkness Lightens.**

Drake leaves Macao, and flies back from Hong Kong to London. At M.9 headquarters a naval liaison officer has some very interesting news for him. He thinks that the way in which the position of the mystery radio transmitter moved every time has been explained: a strange submarine has been reported off one of the islands in the Outer Hebrides. Perhaps the signals have been sent out whenever the submarine surfaced?

### **62. The Road to the Isles.**

Driving to northern Scotland and taking a boat from Mallaig, Drake arrives in the Outer Hebrides. He learns from the local fishermen that a house on one of the islands is owned by a Portuguese, and persuades one of them to land him there. Using a skeleton key Drake manages to break into the house through the kitchen – but he is discovered there and taken into the study by the housekeeper and his daughter.

### **63. Nothing to say.**

In the study of the house on the remote Scottish island, the housekeeper holds a gun pointed at John Drake, while his daughter keeps another firmly pressed into his back. Drake tries to make some plausible excuse for his presence in the kitchen, but with the evidence of the skeleton keys in his hand there is nothing he can say.

### **64. Into the Vault.**

Two sailors, obviously members of the submarine’s crew, drag Drake along the jetty under the pier. They lift an inconspicuous hatch cover, and force him down an iron ladder into a concrete vault far below ground. The submarine lies there in a pen connecting with the sea by means of an underwater tunnel.

### **65. Turning the Tables.**

This is why John Drake regularly takes refresher courses in unarmed combat. There are three sailors in the concrete vault beside the submarine pen, and Drake has to deal with them all. The fight is fierce, and his opponents are tough seamen, but Drake knows every trick. The struggle is over much sooner than the sailors expect.

### **66. A Secret Revealed.**

The fight is over, and in the rough and tumble a door has been burst open. Beyond, Drake sees piles of gold bullion, and everything begins to click into place. The submarine brings smuggled gold from Macao in return for scientific and political secrets that the Portuguese nerve doctor obtains from the distinguished patients at his clinic.

### **67. The Last Stage.**

John Drake has immobilised the submarine and taken the only boat from the island, leaving the stranded members of the gang to be collected by Scotland Yard's Special Branch at their leisure. Picked up by a fishing boat, Drake sits on the foredeck and reflects that his assignment is nearly over. He has only to find Dr. Braganza and all the pieces of the puzzle will be in place.

### **68. A Little Nightwork.**

When Drake gets back to the nerve clinic in Hampshire, he finds that the whole building is locked up. There may be somebody inside, however, Drake is taking no chances. He climbs up an old ruined tree beside the house and swings himself on to a second storey window sill, where the window is not quite closed. Silently, he slips into the house.

### **69. What a Gas!**

There is somebody inside the nerve clinic; an armed caretaker. But John Drake has come prepared for many more than this. Out of sight in a dark doorway he slips on a gas mask, and then tosses a gas capsule to one side of the caretaker. The man turns to see what the noise is, sways – and Drake has stepped forward just in time to catch him as he crumples to the floor.

### **70. Try Try Again.**

John Drake opens a window to let the gas out of the nerve clinic, and calls up M.9 headquarters. "There's nobody else in the building" he reports; "the place is deserted". "Braganza must be there" replies his chief; "Look again", "Very well" says Drake resignedly. "Just as soon as I've changed out of these overalls. But where can he be?"

### **71. The Mirror's New!**

Dressed once more, Drake begins his search of the nerve clinic. It is completely deserted, but everything looks untouched. Then, in the ground floor room where he had been captured (see card 19), Drake suddenly exclaims “The mirror’s new!” But it isn’t a mirror: it is thick polished metal foil that rips away – to reveal the dead body of the crippled Dr. Braganza!

## **72. It’s Starting All Over Again.**

The assignment is complete, the spy chain has been broken, Dr. Braganza is dead. John Drake deserves an evening off, and takes it at his club in London. Late at night, as he gets into his car, a hand with a revolver appears at the open window. It’s starting all over again for the Danger Man!

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