

CUDDLE RESEARCH by PHILLIP BARRON

A white-coated scientist stands before a seated administrator.

ADMINISTRATOR: I'm not happy with the direction your research is taking.

SCIENTIST: What? Why not? My team and I are producing results, what's the problem?

ADMINISTRATOR: Your results are the problem. For example, your latest study...

The administrator reads from a piece of paper.

ADMINISTRATOR: When you get a cuddle, you feel better.

SCIENTIST: Well it's true.

ADMINISTRATOR: I know it's bloody true. I could have told you that without spending two-hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Of my money!

SCIENTIST: We are exploring the world of tactile stimulation. The work we do here is of great significance to the happiness of mankind.

ADMINISTRATOR: You're supposed to be curing cancer!

SCIENTIST: Cancer patients need a cuddle more than most.

ADMINISTRATOR: Yes, possibly, but not quite as much as they need a cure. How the hell do you spend two-hundred and fifty thousand pounds on cuddle research?

SCIENTIST: Well, there's physiology sensors; setting up a sterile environment; maintaining diet control... hookers.

ADMINISTRATOR: Hookers?

The scientist shrugs.

SCIENTIST: You've got to cuddle someone.

ADMINISTRATOR: Couldn't you just cuddle each other?

SCIENTIST: God no, have you seen my team? There's some right mingers.

The administrator leafs through a sheaf of reports.

ADMINISTRATOR: Look at this research, it's a travesty. Red heads feel more pain than blondes or brunettes. More hookers?

SCIENTIST: Oh yes.

ADMINISTRATOR: Red wine is bad for your heart. Red wine is good for your heart. Red wine is okay but I prefer a nice Chablis.

SCIENTIST: What's your point?

ADMINISTRATOR: The bloody point is: I need some proper results or you're fired!

The scientist looks momentarily crestfallen.

SCIENTIST: I think I understand what you need.

He opens his arms.

SCIENTIST: Do you want a hug?

END OF SKETCH