

My moment as Today's pantomime villain

Down the corridor she came: my ears caught the hum of high-tech electrics. Eek! She's in a wheelchair! I was about to be

interviewed for BBC radio's *Today* programme for their new year's morning programme by their special guest editor. Her topic was a *Spectator* column I'd written predicting that when the burden of maintaining unproductive lives becomes intolerable our species will respond as Darwinists might guess: by evolving a morality that favours voluntary euthanasia. When confident of my argument I never much care whom I take on; "Baroness Campbell of Surbiton" should have rung bells but it hadn't.

So here I was in a claustrophobic Lords media room, and a brave and severely disabled baroness was whirring towards me, and calling for her face-mask ventilator. An attendant had to squirt fluid into her

mouth to help with swallowing. But her laughing eyes and fiercely prosecuting mind pierced any impression of helplessness.

"So you think people like me should be exterminated?" was the gist of her questions. The gist of my answers — "well, but we can't all be in the House of Lords and have vastly expensive help and technology to sustain us" lacked a certain grace for New Year's Day. I could almost hear the radio audience hissing. Well I stuck to my guns. That hard cases make bad law remains for me a luminous truth. But I admired Jane Campbell very much.

of lines 16-17-2015