

THE SEEDS OF REVENGE

Written by Ian D. Richardson

TV drama in two or three parts

Script/treatment - second draft

TV host Jock Strait has become rich and famous by exploiting the vulnerable. But his past is catching up fast and someone is out to destroy him. Who is it? And why?

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SEEDS OF REVENGE, IAN D. RICHARDSON:

INT. CORRIDOR, STRAIT TV STUDIOS, LONDON - DAY

An empty corridor leading to a TV transmission studio with large double swing doors bearing the logo and name of the television show, *Strait Talk*. Two prominent signs: "No unauthorised entry" and "Do not enter when red light is on".

The red light turns off seconds before the double doors fly open and are held back by identical twin brothers in their early 30s: TOM and BILL. They are muscular and wear identical clothes: tight-fitting black short-sleeved shirts, tight black trousers and black boots. Their shirts bear the *Strait Talk* logo and "Security" front and back.

Tom and Bill nod respectfully at the show's star, JOCK STRAIT, as he comes out in animated conversation (indistinct) with producer, MONICA, and followed by members of the studio crew, including ALISON, the studio director, RONNIE COSSAR, the show's early-50s resident counsellor and psychologist, and assistant producers GERAINT and WINSTON.

Jock is in his late-40s, wearing designer smart casual clothes and still with his studio make-up on. He speaks with an educated Glaswegian accent. He is unreasonably handsome and tanned with carefully-shaped grey hair. Monica is mid-30s and a lesbian, wearing jeans and T-shirt. She speaks with a soft English regional accent and has a natural air of authority about her.

As they come closer to the camera...

JOCK
(to Monica)
Wonderful! Most exciting show for
months! A real cracker!

MONICA
Yes, but I'm worried about--

Tom and Bill let the studio doors swing closed, but they immediately fly open again as a man crashes through them. He is HARRY SUTTON, a participant in the show, wearing T-shirt and jeans, heavily tattooed, aged 30, with a London accent.

Harry confronts Jock. Tom and Bill move to restrain him.

HARRY SUTTON
I really will kill that bitch.
Believe me, mate!

JOCK
Calm down, will you! Calm down!

Tom and Bill grab Harry, who tries to struggle free.

HARRY SUTTON
Let go of me, you bastards!

JOCK
Just calm down, please Harry.

Jock signals to Tom and Bill to relax their grip on Harry and he motions Ronnie Cossar over.

JOCK (CONT'D)
Look Harry. Making threats won't get you anywhere. Talk to Ronnie and he will help you sort things out. Okay?

Harry nods reluctant agreement.

JOCK (CONT'D)
Right then. Off you go with Ronnie and maybe you can come back on the show to tell us how things go with your Tracy.

Ronnie guides Harry back into the studio. Jock, Monica and the rest of the team continue along the corridor.

JOCK (CONT'D)
(to Monica)
What a scumbag!

MONICE
And a dangerous one, Jock!

INT. EDITING SUITE, STRAIT TV STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

A VIDEO EDITOR is preparing to edit the final minutes of *Strait Talk*.

Jock and Monica enter, followed by a MAKE-UP GIRL. Jock takes a seat while his make-up is removed.

MONICA
(to Jock)
We should remove the knife bit and death threats from the replay.

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JOCK

Oh, we should leave all that in.

MONICA

Well, let's have a look at it.

The video editor pushes the "play" button. Harry Sutton and wife TRACY are seen nose-to-nose, shouting at each other.

HARRY SUTTON

You bitch! You dumped me and the kids so you could go bonking that arsehole salesman.

TRACY SUTTON

It's not true, Harry. You're a thug. I wanted to take the kids, but you threatened to beat me up.

HARRY SUTTON

Bitch! Bitch! (PRODUCES KNIFE) See this knife. I'm going to track you down and use it on you. Do you understand?! No matter where you hide, I will find you and kill you! Do you understand?!

Tracy is alarmed. So is the studio audience. Tom and Bill leap forward, grab the knife and wrestle Harry to the ground.

JOCK

Now look, Harry, do you understand that you can't go making threats like that, otherwise you'll be in serious trouble with the police. We're here to bring people together to sort out their problems, not to cause conflict. (BEAT) Now, time has run out for today, so I suggest you and Ronnie Cossar, our resident conflict resolution counsellor, have a little chat. Is that okay?

Harry nods agreement without conviction and stands up.

JOCK (CONT'D)

Excellent! (TO CAMERA) So until we meet again, it is goodbye from me, Jock Strait - the Straight One. May God go with you and all those you love and who love you."

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The audience cheers and claps enthusiastically. As the credits roll, Jock moves along the front row of the audience shaking hands and kissing the women.

The video editor stops the replay, just as MATT PATEL, the show's publicity officer, walks in. A sharp-suited Anglo-Indian in his 30s. Speaks with an educated middle-class English accent.

JOCK (CONT'D)

Ah Matt!

MATT

Great stuff, Jock.

JOCK

(to Monica)

See! Matt thinks it's okay!

MONICA

(still unsure)

Okay. We can probably get away with it, on this occasion. But make sure we look as though we were keen to avoid it going too far. You don't want to become another Jeremy Kyle.

JOCK

Oh, he was just unlucky as well as being careless. He's yesterday's man. My show's better.

MONICA

I hope you're right.

JOCK

(to Matt)

Make sure your mates in the tabloids are across this. See that they emphasise how I disapprove of what happened.

MATT

(grinning)

I'll stream it to them.

JOCK

Good. And see if one of the hacks can stir up some extra controversy by denouncing the programme.

MONICA

But what about the knife? That will take some explaining.

JOCK

What do you reckon, Matt?

MATT

Mmmm. (BEAT) I'll tell the hacks that we take great care to avoid situations like that and I'll tell them that he must have got the knife when he visited our canteen.

JOCK

Yeah. That should do it.

Jock's mobile rings. He doesn't recognise the number but answers anyway.

JOCK (CONT'D)

Yes. (LISTENS) Christ! Who gave you this number!? (LISTENS) Yeah, well, look Babe, don't ring me again. We've had our little bit of fun. I enjoyed it; so did you. Let's just leave it at that, eh!

Jock ends the call. Monica winces with disapproval.

JOCK (CONT'D)

Don't go all Christian Lady on me, Monica. I bet you've had plenty of one night stands with your girlie friends.

MONICA

You're without shame, Jock.

JOCK

Jeez! These women just want to be fucked by someone rich and famous. So, if they're tasty enough, I fuck them. Simple as that.

Monica shakes her head and Matt gives a nervous laugh.

INT. MAIN WORK AREA, STRAIT STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

Jock goes to a desk where JANICE, his mid-40s personal assistant, is working. He drops his mobile on the desk.

JOCK

(curtly)

Janice, get a new SIM card for this. And make absolutely sure the number is restricted to those on the "need to know" list.

JANICE

Yes, Mr Strait.

Jock goes to his office and dials a number on his desk phone.

JOCK

Hi Tommy. It's Jock Strait. I'd appreciate it if you could pop around to one of the scumbags we had on today's show and point out to him that if he attempts to go anywhere near his wife or make any threats to her you'll have him in the slammer before he can say 'handcuffs'. (LISTENS) Good lad. Janice will text you his name and address. We'll pop the usual appreciation in your letterbox.

I/E. OUTSIDE STRAIT TV STUDIOS - LATE AFTERNOON

Jock leaves at the end of his day. KEVIN, his muscular 40s-something suited chauffeur and bodyguard, opens the rear passenger door of a top-of-the-range Mercedes with smoked glass windows and personalised number plates, STRAIT 1.

JOCK

Evening, Kevin.

KEVIN

Evening, Sir. Had a good day?

JOCK

Excellent day. Very successful.

I/E. JOCK'S CAR, TRAVELLING THROUGH LONDON - CONTINUOUS

Jock settles down, lights a cigar and picks up a copy of the *Financial Times* folded neatly on his seat. He goes straight to the share prices and rings several of them with his gold fountain pen.

Jock's mobile rings. The screen tells him it is SARAH.

JOCK

Hello, Darling. Just on my way home now. (LISTENS) Yes, sorry about another mobile number change. (BEAT) Has the move gone well? (LISTENS) Good. Love you!

He goes back to his FT.

The car pulls up at red lights. He spots a mini-skirted TEENAGE GIRL crossing in front of the car. He leans forward to get a better look. He likes what he sees.

EXT. JOCK'S HOME, VILLAGE NEAR LONDON - LATER, EVENING

SARAH, Jock's wife, supervises REMOVAL MEN taking the last few cartons and pieces of furniture into the large Tudor-style house. Sarah, 40, is a glamorous statuesque blonde.

Jock's car pulls into the driveway and Sarah goes to greet him. They give each other a cursory hug as Kevin backs the car out the driveway and heads back down the road.

Jock admires the house.

JOCK

(to Sarah)
Classy, Eh!

SARAH

Yes, very nice. (BEAT) How was work?

JOCK

Didn't you see the show?

SARAH

(irritated)
What with all this going on!?

JOCK

Well, you missed a great one.

A REMOVAL MAN comes over, as his four workmates clear up and slam shut the back doors on the van.

REMOVAL MAN

(to Sarah)
Well, that's it, Mrs Strait.

SARAH

Good. Thank you.

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JOCK
(to removal man)
Yes, thanks.

Jock counts five £10 notes and hands them to removal man.

JOCK (CONT'D)
Some beers for you and your mates.

REMOVAL MAN
Thanks, Mr Strait.

Jock shakes hands with the removal man who climbs into the van. It drives off.

INT. JOCK'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

The doorbell rings and Jock weaves his way through the removal cartons and junk to answer it. He is still in his pyjamas and dressing gown.

Kevin is at the door with copies of all the daily newspapers. He hands them to Jock.

KEVIN
You've done very well today, Sir.

Jock takes the papers into the breakfast room while Kevin finds a seat among the cartons.

Jock spreads the papers out on the bench. Sarah and children FINLEY "FINN" and KATIE eat breakfast at the table. Sarah is still in her dressing gown with no make-up. The children are in neat school uniforms. Katie flicks through a celebrity magazine. Finn is tuned to his phone and rocks to music. Jock's pet bloodhound slurps from a bowl in the corner. Jock gleefully scans the tabloids, which all give prominence to the death threats in yesterday's show. The headlines include: "KNIFE-WIELDING THUG THREATENS TO KILL WIFE ON LIVE TV", "STRAIT SHOW DEATH THREATS", "I'LL KILL YOU, SAYS MAN ON LIVE TV".

Jock holds up the headlines to show Sarah and the children.

JOCK
Great, eh!

Sarah isn't pleased, but the children are interested.

KATIE
(posh English accent)
Cool, Dad.

Jock opens the *Times* and sees it is also running a story including some criticism. POLICE CONCERN ABOUT DEATH THREAT TV. He holds it up to show Katie.

JOCK

See! I'm even in the posh papers!

SARAH

(curtly to Jock)

Sit down and have your breakfast!

JOCK

I'll have something later. I think
I'll take a walk to meet my public.

EXT. JOCK'S HOME - SOON AFTER

TV CREWS, REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS are in the street.

Jock, now dressed in smart casual, appears out the front door with his dog. The journalists cluster around him.

WOMAN TV REPORTER

Any comment to make on what
happened yesterday, Mr Strait?

JOCK

(affected sincerity)

Well, you know, it saddens me
deeply to see that two people who
once loved each other enough to
exchange marriage vows should fall
out in such a spectacular and
public way. We're upset about the
death threats, but I'm sure our
counsellor, Ronnie Cossar, will
restore peace to the family, and
that the death threat will be seen
as nothing more than actions of a
man who is seriously stressed by
circumstances beyond his
comprehension. (BRIEF PAUSE) Is
that the right length for you?

WOMAN TV REPORTER

Yes, Mr Strait. Perfect.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Would you mind us taking a few
shots of you outside your lovely
new house?

JOCK

That's fine, guys, but just make sure you don't reveal the address or the name of the village.

REPORTER

Sure, Mr Strait. (PATS DOG) Nice dog you have. What's his name?

JOCK

My Best Friend, but I just call him MBF for short. (laughs)

Jock poses with MBF for more video and still pictures.

JOCK (CONT'D)

Well, if you'll excuse me guys, I have to give MBF some exercise.

The press step back and Jock and MBF walk off.

EXT. VILLAGE PARK - SOON AFTER

A group of WOMEN DOG OWNERS are with their pets. They are Women Who Lunch and they are in deep conversation. An ELDERLY MAN is also there with his aged spaniel.

Jack appears with MBF and nods to the Elderly Man, who shows no sign of recognising him.

JOCK

Good morning. Nice day.

ELDERLY MAN

Yes. Good morning.

JOCK

Nice dog. How old is he?

ELDERLY MAN

About as old as I am in dog years, I guess. (laughs)

Jock walks past the group of women and their dogs.

JOCK

Morning ladies.

They interrupt their conversation.

WOMEN DOG OWNERS
(in chorus without
enthusiasm)
Hello. Good morning.

The women have recognised him, but turn back to their own conversation. Jock is annoyed, but goes on his way.

WOMAN DOG OWNER #1
(sneeringly to others)
Have you seen his show?

WOMAN DOG OWNER #2
Only when I was flipping through
the channels one morning. Dreadful.

WOMEN DOG OWNERS
(chorus)
Yes. Yes. Very common. Awful.

Jock plays ball with MBF briefly, then turns towards home.

Several GARDENERS are tidying the park gardens and immediately recognise Jock.

GARDENER #1
Hey! Mr Strait!

Jock waves and goes to the gardeners.

GARDENER #2
Great show you have. That guy you
had on yesterday was somethin'
though, wasn't he!

JOCK
(smiling)
Yes. He certainly was.

Gardener #1 pulls a *Daily Mirror* from his jacket pocket. The front page headline is "DEATH THREAT ON STRAIT SHOW".

GARDENER #1
Can you autograph this for me?

JOCK
Certainly.

The other gardeners also produce tabloid newspapers and he signs those too.