



DID YOU KILL HER?
BY
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A SMITH SCRIPT

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Did You Kill Her?

By Geoff Rose-Michael

Characters

Jan (early 30's – late 40's)

Kim (mid 20's - late 30's)

Newsreader (can be pre-recorded.)

Voiceover (optional – see notes at the end)

Scene One.

(A living room. A two or three seater sofa and at least one armchair. A desk and chair, plus a dresser or unit tall enough for an actor to stand behind. On the sofa are a throw and various small cushions, and in front of the sofa is a large rug. On the desk is a table lamp, a pen holder, a wooden ornament, a radio, a tray with various drinks bottles, including a gin bottle and at least two glasses, one being opaque. This furniture and props are the minimum required, other bottles, glasses and household items can be added to accessorise, together with other furniture on the set.)

(Late morning.)

(Jan is pacing. She holds a glass of gin in one hand, and keeps checking her watch.)

Newsreader: (On radio.) And two years after their daughter Emma was murdered in Burrows Wood, Steve and Cathy Porter are appealing for police to re-open the investigation. The only suspect in the enquiry, Jan Solomon, was cleared eighteen months ago, after a judge threw the case out for lack of evidence.

(Jan turns off the radio.)

(Sound effect of a door knock.)

(Jan stops pacing, drains her glass and puts it on the tray.)

Jan: Coming.

(Jan exits.)

Jan: (Offstage.) Hi. You must be Kim.

Kim: (Offstage.) Yes. Jan?

Jan: (Offstage.) Yes. Come in.

Kim: (Offstage.) I recognise you from the photos I've seen.

(Enter Jan, followed by Kim, carrying a large handbag.)

Jan: Not complimentary ones, I would imagine. They go for the worst they can find.

Kim: It's a bit unkind, isn't it?

Jan: Thanks for agreeing to come. How was the journey?

Kim: Long. When you said it was a fair distance from the bus stop, you meant it.

Jan: It is a bit.

Kim: You are very private here.

Jan: Have to be. Prevents unwanted attention.

Kim: I see.

Jan: Can I offer you something to drink? Tea, coffee, something stronger?

Kim: I've got some water, thanks.

(Kim takes a bottle of water out from her bag.)

Jan: Okay. Mind if I? **(She holds up a gin bottle.)**

Kim: Not at all.

(Jan pours herself a large gin into her own glass.)

Kim: It's nice to finally meet you after all our email correspondence. I have to say I am intrigued.

Jan: Yes, I guessed you would be. And I am hoping the public will be too.

Kim: You're somewhat of a celebrity.

Jan: For all the wrong reasons. That's why I have to live as a recluse. Please sit down.

Kim: Thank you. **(She sits.)**

Jan: Okay. So, what do you know about my case?

Kim: Well, I did a fair bit of research before I agreed to accept your offer. My understanding was that you were initially just helping police with their enquiries into Emma Porter's murder, as you were seen near the woods that day, but you were subsequently arrested, but with no real evidence against you, the case was thrown out of court. The press seemed to give you a very hard time over it, though. You had lots of coverage, none of it pleasant.

Jan: That's pretty accurate.

Kim: And now?

Jan: Now I want to come clean about something. Reveal something that I was not able to say two years ago.

Kim: Okay.

Jan: You see, I was protecting someone.

Kim: Protecting?

Jan: Yes. I was physically threatened to keep quiet. Death threats. Threats which I am confident are no longer active.

Kim: Shouldn't you be going to the police?

Jan: No. I want the truth told. My way. I want the person concerned to suffer the public humiliation first. If it means a further police investigation, I shall happily co-operate.

Kim: You want to reveal in the book what really happened that day?

Jan: Yes. But I have full right of veto before anything goes to print.

Kim: Yes.

Jan: And confidentiality. Everything I say to you will be treated in utmost confidence.

Kim: Of course.

Jan: Everything, Kim.

Kim: Yes. But, as I said in the email, whatever you are going to say to me, there are libel laws, so getting this published, the onus will be on you to prove it.

Jan: Oh, I have proof. Don't you worry about things like that. But first, tell me a little more about yourself.

Kim: There's not much to tell. Without repeating the email, I did my degree in forensics a few years ago now. I live alone, not dissimilar to you, in a cottage, where I get most of my writing done. I hope to move to America one day, where there is some interest in a few fictional crime dramas I have written.

Jan: And what assurances can you give me that you won't share what I tell you with your partner or flatmate?

Kim: I don't have one. A flatmate or a partner. As I told you, I live alone.

Jan: And any exes or close friends? Confidants?

Kim: I have one very dear friend. She and I are extremely close.

Jan: Is she your lover?

Kim: Good heavens, no. She's a good friend. She's like the sister I never had. I tell her most things.

Jan: This is what I was afraid of.

Kim: She understands I can't tell her anything about you.

Jan: So you've told her something already?

Kim: Er, I – I mentioned your name when you first contacted me. That was only because she was with me when I got your email. Or rather when I got an email from a Jan Solomon. I said, I wonder if it's the Jan Solomon, not believing that it would be. When I opened the email and realised it was, I told her I couldn't tell her anything else. And she understood that, and is sworn to secrecy. I trust her.

Jan: But this is exactly what I didn't want, Kim. I don't want anyone knowing I have even contacted you. I said so, in my email.

Kim: I know. And I am sorry. She won't say anything to anyone.

Jan: She'd better not. I need another drink. **(She crosses for drinks bottles.)**

Kim: (Opening her notebook. Throughout the following, Kim makes notes.) Okay. So what do you want to tell me?

Jan: (Pouring herself another gin during the following.) Where to start? I had been seeing someone, a celeb who did not want to go public with our relationship, or be connected to someone who was a murder suspect. Even though we were in love, when the police launched their investigation, I received death threats from her, to keep the relationship secret. Because I saw them commit the murder.

Kim: You saw your friend murder Emma Porter?

Jan: Yes.

Kim: Oh my goodness. And you didn't say anything to the police?

Jan: I couldn't. I was threatened that if I did, I'd be dead.

Kim: Your original defence was that you didn't know the victim?

Jan: Correct.

Kim: And that you didn't even see her in the woods?

Jan: Correct.

Kim: But now you are saying that you saw the murder?

Jan: Yes.

Kim: So you committed perjury when you told the court two years ago that you saw nothing?

Jan: I had to. I was being threatened. There was no real evidence against me, and my solicitor said it would probably get thrown out, which it was. But if I told the truth about what happened, I would find myself in a body bag. If I covered it up, I would be perjuring myself in the courts. I went for the one which would keep me alive.

Kim: I see. How long had you been seeing each other?

Jan: It was over two years. We met before shebecame famous. It's a woman, okay? Emma, her ex, had been blackmailing her, and when my friend arranged to meet her in the woods, I only went for moral support. But while we were there, this Emma bitch wound my friend up, till she snapped and my friend hit Emma over the head with a heavy stone. But you are right, it's someone who doesn't want her sexuality splattered over the papers.

Kim: And that's what killed her? The stone? Because they never found the murder weapon.

Jan: Yes.

Kim: So why are you telling this now?

Jan: Because she has got herself engaged. To a man. A great big P R stunt, if you ask me. And when our book comes out, I am sure she will deny the affair. Not to mention the murder. She will already have a water tight alibi. But I have proof. And I will use it to nail this bitch.

Kim: And you're sure there won't be any more death threats?

Jan: No, I am not sure there won't be any more death threats, but I will jump off that bridge when I come to it. See, I foolishly hoped that we might get back together. I did love her. Not for the fame, because she wasn't successful when I met her, but for who she is, or rather, was. **(Pause.)** I need another gin. **(She gets up and moves to the drinks. She holds up the bottle.)** Shit, the bottle's empty.

Scene Two.

(The same. A week later. Late afternoon.)

(Jan is sitting, reading some typed pages, while Kim looks on.)

Jan: **(Putting notes down and taking off glasses.)** Hmm. Good.

Kim: You like it?

Jan: Yes, I think you've pitched it just right. I love the way you've intimated that I am the victim here.

Kim: Well, you are.

Jan: Yes, good work, Kim. And this is your only copy? **(She picks up the papers and moves them.)**

Kim: Yes. Finished it late last night.

Jan: Excellent.

Kim: So, where do we go today?

Jan: I want to re-enact Emma's murder.

Kim: Okay.

Jan: (She puts her mobile down on the desk.) When I say re-enact it, I want you to see where I was, where my friend was, and where the victim was at the time.

Kim: Okay.

Jan: For today, we'll call my friend, Serenity.

Kim: That's freaky. That's my friend's name. Serenity.

Jan: Is it?

Kim: Yes. Did you know that?

Jan: How could I? You haven't told me her name.

Kim: No, I haven't. Of all the names you could have picked.

Jan: Okay, we'll call her Susan. Do you have a friend called Susan too?

Kim: No. Sorry, it was just really spooky you should choose that name.

Jan: It's only a name. I bet there are loads of people called Serenity in the world. Right, Emma was standing here. I'll be Emma. And you be Susan.

Kim: Me?

Jan: Yes. Stand up. I want you to start right over there. **(She points.)**

Kim: (Moving into position.) Okay.

Jan: Emma and Susan had argued and we had walked away. We were way over there somewhere. You have to imagine it's about three times the distance of this room. Emma calls something out to us. Susan stops and turns.

Kim: Did you catch what it was?

Jan: What what was?

Kim: What Emma called out?

Jan: Something about wanting her money and calling Susan a slut. I said, leave it hun, she's just goading you. But Susan's having none of it. She marches up to Emma, right up to her face. So,

you march up to me until we're really close.

(Kim marches towards Jan.)

Jan: She doesn't actually march, Kim. She just walks over.

Kim: Oh, okay.

(Kim walks up to Jan, so that their noses are almost touching.)

Kim: About here?

Jan: A bit close, but it will do.

Jan: And you say, say that again, bitch.

Kim: Me? Okay. Say that again, bitch.

Jan: No, come on, Act it, Kim. Did you do drama at school? Make it sound believable.

Kim: Sorry. Say that again, bitch.

Jan: Better. Emma says, why, are you deaf as well as stupid? I want my five grand, you slut. And you say, I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Kim: I say that?

Jan: Yes, when I say, I want my five grand, you slut. You say, I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Kim: Okay. **(In an American accent.)** I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Jan: Wait for me to say the line.

Kim: Okay. Sorry.

Jan: And she's not American. We're not in a film.

Kim: Sorry, I didn't know.

Jan: I want my five grand, you slut.

Kim: I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Jan: No, you need to say it with more conviction, Kim. Say it, like you're really angry with me, and you are not scared of anything. I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Kim: Okay. I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Jan: No, no. Again. Louder. Ready? I want my five grand, you slut.

Kim: I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Jan: Shout it!

Kim: (Shouting.) I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Jan: Again! Scream it.

Kim: (Screaming.) I'll kill you for that, you bitch.

Jan: And Susan picks up a large stone and whacks it over Emma's head. Just pretend.

(Kim picks up an imaginary object and, in slow motion, pretends to hit Jan over the head.)

Jan: It's not a movie, Kim.

Kim: Sorry.

(Jan falls to the ground.)

Jan: Emma hits the ground, and doesn't move. Susan swears. **(She looks at Kim for a suitable expletive.)**

Kim: Oh, bother.

Jan: She looks round and then shouts, run.

Kim: Run.

Jan: We both leg it out of the woods, get back in my car and I drive off. Susan keeps well down in the passenger seat while I drive. Some man spots my car and identifies me, and well, the rest you know.

Kim: I see.

Jan: Do you want to act it out again?

Kim: No, no. That was sufficient. I get the picture. Lucky you don't have any neighbours nearby.

Jan: Yes. Nobody would hear a scream out here.

Kim: And how far away were you? You said about three times the length of this room?

Jan: About twenty metres.

Kim: And you heard all that dialogue?

Jan: (A beat.) Yes, yes. Don't forget they were shouting. And what I didn't catch, my friend told me afterwards.

Kim: Right. **(She returns to her chair and starts to make notes.)**

Jan: I need another drink. Are you alright with your bottled water? **(Jan pours herself another gin.)**

Kim: Yes, thanks. What did you do with the stone?

Jan: I took it home. It had Emma's blood and hair and DNA and stuff on it, so we put it in the car, and threw it away somewhere in the local park.

Kim: That's why they didn't find the murder weapon. You threw it away.

Jan: Disposing of evidence.

Kim: Did she ask you to cover for her?

Jan: Yes. The witness had seen my car, so I couldn't deny being there. My friend said, you must say you were alone. So I did.

Kim: And you were happy to do this?

Jan: Not really, but I didn't realise I would end up being charged with Emma's murder. There were many times I wanted to grass her up, but as I knew I wouldn't be convicted because there was no evidence against me, I stuck to my story.

Kim: Did your friend contact you during all this?

Jan: Only via a third party. Death threats and the like. It was a horrible time. I couldn't breathe a word to anyone.

Kim: (Looks at her watch.) Look, I need to be getting back soon. It's starting to get dark.

Jan: Already?

Kim: I've been here for seven hours. That's an hour more than we originally agreed, but I won't charge you for it. Oh, by the way, can I ask you to chase the bank again? That deposit money still hasn't arrived.

Jan: It hasn't?

Kim: No, it wasn't there this morning.

Jan: That is so strange. I will check my app and get onto it, right away. Are you sure you have to leave now? We've still got a lot of ground to cover.

Kim: I know, but I don't fancy walking down that path to the bus stop when it's dark. It gives me the willies.

Jan: Well, what about this? Just an idea. How about next week, if you're free, you stay the night? I'll pay you extra. Come down on the Saturday morning, I'll do lunch and we can work all day on Saturday. I'll get some pizzas in for supper and we'll have some bubbly. You can sleep here on the sofa. It's pretty comfortable, and we could hopefully be finished on Sunday.

Kim: I don't know.

Jan: I could do with the company.

Kim: I'd have to check with S'ren.

Jan: S'ren?

Kim: S'ren. Serenity.

Jan: Why with her?

Kim: Well, we often see each other on Saturday evenings.

Jan: Like a date?

Kim: No, not a date. I told you, we're just friends.

Jan: Look, if you're gay and you want to come out, it's not a problem.

Kim: I'm not gay. Honest.

Jan: Okay. Have you mentioned me to her again?

Kim: No, honest. I promise. I kept my word. I swear I did.

Jan: Good. Look, have a think about next weekend. It'll be fun. We won't spend the whole weekend working. I can get a good film and we can have a nice girlie Saturday night. And don't worry, I won't make a pass at you.

Kim: Okay, I'll think about it.

Jan: Do. Let me know during the week. Oh, and again, let's keep it completely to ourselves. Yes?

Kim: Sure.

Jan: If Serenity asks where you are going, I am sure you can lie convincingly.

Kim: I'll try. But I told you I'm not a very good liar.

Jan: It's easy. The secret with telling lies is to look them straight in the face, don't break eye contact. Otherwise they'll know you are lying. And say the first thing that comes into your head.

Kim: Right.

Jan: Come on, give it a try. With me.

Kim: What?

Jan: With me, now. I'll be Serenity and you be you.

Kim: Oh, no.

Jan: Yes, come on. I'll pretend to be her asking you what your plans are, and you come up with an excuse why you can't see her. What's she like? Strong willed?

Kim: No, despite being a redhead. She's quite docile. Like me. That's why we get on so well.

Jan: Okay, I'll be her. And I'll just pretend to catch you off guard, and see how you respond.

Okay?

Kim: Must we?

Jan: Yes, come on. It's just a bit of fun. See how good you are. Ready?

Kim: Okay, then.

Jan: Hey Kim, I've got two tickets for Phantom of the Opera on Saturday. My sister can't go now. Do you want to come along?

Kim: Er, no, I can't. Sorry.

Jan: You can't? Oh, why not?

Kim: Er, because I'm busy.

Jan: You can't be busy on a Saturday night. You're a saddo, like me. What are you up to?

Kim: I'm going away for the night.

Jan: Who's the lucky guy? Where's he whisking you off to?

Kim: Er, no, no, it's nothing like that.

Jan: Come on, dish the dirt, girlfriend. Where are you going to?

Kim: No, it's nothing like that.

Jan: What, then?

Kim: Sorry, I can't do this.

Jan: Oh, Kim.

Kim: I can't do it.

Jan: Sure you can. You started okay. Just keep on lying. Watch this. You be Serenity and I'll be you.

Kim: What do I say?

Jan: Say what I said, or make something up.

Kim: Okay. Hey, do you want to come over for a pizza tonight and watch a film with me?

Jan: Oh, S'ren. That's what you call her, right?

Kim: Yes.

Jan: Okay. Oh, S'ren, I would love to have come. I really would. But one of my aunts has been diagnosed with breast cancer yesterday and we're all going up north to see her this weekend. I'm really sorry. Another time.

Kim: You're so good at that. I don't have the guts to lie like that.

Jan: You just say what comes into your head and say it confidently. People will believe anything. Try it.

Kim: Okay, I will. Bye, Jan.

Jan: Good girl. Bye, Kim. **(She suddenly hugs Kim and kisses her on the cheek.)** I like you. **(She steps back.)** Not that way, don't worry. I'm so glad you're doing my story. My gut feeling about you was right.

Kim: Thank you.

(Exit Kim.)

(Jan drains her glass and the false smile disappears from her face.)

Scene Three

The same. A week later. Early evening.

(Kim is sitting on the sofa, her notepad and pen in hand. Jan is pacing.)

Kim: Scarlett Shaw? The TV actress? Really?

Jan: I didn't think you'd believe it.

Kim: But she comes across as a pure, simple girl.

Jan: I know. That's what everyone thinks about her. Butter wouldn't melt in her mouth.

Kim: She's just got engaged to Zak Bullet of The Fashionistas.

Jan: Yes.

Kim: You are telling me that you dated Scarlett Shaw for two years, and then in a fit of rage, she murdered an innocent girl in the woods who pushed her too far?

Jan: Excuse me, she wasn't an innocent girl. She was a greedy little dyke.

Kim: It's just so hard to imagine.

Jan: Are you calling me a liar?

Kim: No. No, I'm just staggered by it. That's all.

Jan: I knew you'd have this reaction. I knew I shouldn't have told you yet.

Kim: It's just so incredible. If it's true, then this book will....

Jan: What do you mean, if it's true?

Kim: I mean, when people read this in the book, they will be astounded. I don't mean to appear rude, and please don't take this the wrong way, but you are absolutely sure about these facts?

Jan: Are you telling me I'm wrong about the identity of the woman I slept with for over two years. The woman who arranged for two heavies to practically knock my door down, with death threats if I even hinted about Scarlett's identity, the woman who I loved and who said she loved me, who I could never be seen with in public, without her wearing a major disguise, who I watched in horror strike down her ex for bad mouthing her. Are you telling me I may be mistaken about all that?

Kim: No, no. I don't mean it like that.

Jan: I have proof.

Kim: Okay, are you happy for me to print the proof? Because I am sure the public will wonder whether. **(Pause.)** It's true.

Jan: Whether I'm lying or not.

Kim: I don't mean that. I mean any accusation like that will be met with a strong degree of scepticism.

Jan: You think I'm lying? **(Moving closer to Kim.)** Look me in the eyes, Kim. Then tell me you believe me.

Kim: Whether I believe you or not is not really relevant. I'm just writing your book.

Jan: Look me in the eyes and say, I believe you had an affair with Scarlett Shaw and you witnessed her kill someone in cold blood.

Kim: Okay. I believe you had an affair with Scarlett Shaw and witnessed her kill someone in cold blood.

Jan: Bollocks.

Kim: I'm finding it hard at the moment.

Jan: Let's take a break. I need a drink. Do you need more water?

Kim: No, thanks.

(Jan gets up and pours herself another large gin from the bottle.)

(Kim takes out her mobile and types into it.)

Kim: (Looking at her mobile screen, she holds a hand to her mouth.) Oh God. No.

Jan: What is it?

Kim: No, no, please.

Jan: What's the matter?

Kim: No. Please let it not be true.

Jan: Kim, what is it?

Kim: I don't believe it. I've just had a message from my friend's mum. She's been knocked over and killed.

Jan: Your friend? **(She takes the opaque glass and pours a drink from a different bottle for Kim.)**

Kim: S'ren. Near her home. The driver didn't stop. They were going too fast.

Jan: Oh, Kim. When was this?

Kim: Yesterday. Her mum's just sent me a message. She died at the scene. **(She starts crying.)** No, not S'ren.

Jan: Oh, Kim. I am so sorry. Any witnesses?

Kim: I don't know. Oh God, not S'ren. She was my best friend. She had so much going for her.

Jan: Bloody careless drivers.

Kim: Why her?

Jan: I wish I could answer that, Kim, I'm so sorry. **(She hands Kim the opaque glass.)** Here, drink this. It will make you feel better.

Kim: **(Taking the cup.)** Thank you. What is it? **(She takes a sip.)**

Jan: It's a herbal remedy.

(Jan sits next to Kim and puts her arm round her.)

Jan: Just sit for a moment.

Kim: I'm sorry. I just can't believe it.

Jan: Look, let's not do any more now.

Kim: No, I'll be fine.

Jan: We've been working most of the day. Let's stop now, eh?

Kim: If you like.

Jan: Listen, sorry about being a bit short with you just now. Especially in the light of your tragic news. I feel so bad.

Kim: That's okay.

Jan: I guess I am still very emotional that after two years, my story will finally be told, and I can start to live a relatively normal life.

Kim: I guess we all have our moments. I did have one question but I guess it can wait. Off the record, what kind of response do you think we will get from Scarlett's solicitors? I'm worried she will come after me with death threats like she did with you.

Jan: You'll be safe, Kim. You work under a pseudonym. I imagine nobody knows your real name or address.

Kim: Only my publisher.

Jan: I know you said you come from the suburbs. Can I ask which part?

Kim: A little village called East Horsley.

Jan: Never heard of it.

Kim: That's why I love it. My cottage is at the end of a quiet little side turning as you come into the village. So small and overgrown, it's so easy to miss.

Jan: Must be blissfully quiet.

Kim: Same as you, I would imagine.

Jan: But your neighbours must know you quite well. I can't venture out often, for fear of verbal assault.

Kim: Actually, I have never met my nearest neighbours.

Jan: I can't imagine Scarlett will issue any more threats once everything is in the open. It will look like an admission of guilt if she does that.

Kim: I guess so.

Jan: God, it feels good to be able to tell someone finally. You don't know what it's been like, bottling this up for so long. Not being able to tell a soul.

Kim: I'm the first one you have told? The first you have confided in?

Jan: Yes. It's such a relief.

Kim: So. Where are we now?

Jan: Hey, take your time. We don't have to do any more now. Have a drink first. My story can wait. Let's get you sorted.

Kim: Ok, thanks. **(She sips her drink.)**

(A long pause.)

Jan: Have you ever seen a dead body?

Kim: Not in the flesh, no. I've seen lots of pictures. Victims of earthquakes, terror attacks, but only on screens or in papers.

Jan: I have. It's horrible. It's just so final. When she hit the ground, it was like this heavy thud, her body all limp and lifeless. She just lay there, eyes open. Scary and yet peaceful.

Kim: (After a pause.) Who?

Jan: Who what?

Kim: Who hit the ground with a heavy thump?

Jan: Emma. Who did you think I meant?

Kim: I thought you might have been talking about Serenity.

Jan: No, no. I was nowhere near Wimbledon yesterday. Hey, drink that, it will help to calm your nerves. **(She sits next to Kim, raising her glass.)** To Serenity. God rest her soul.

Kim: (Quietly.) Gonna miss you, S'ren. **(She sips her drink.)** Hang on. How did you know Serenity lived in Wimbledon?

Jan: What? You said so, didn't you?

Kim: No. I've never told you where she lives. How did you know?

Jan: You told me.

Kim: No, I didn't.

Jan: You did, Kim.

Kim: Look, I think I ought to be off now. **(She puts her mobile in her bag.)**

Jan: (A change in her tone.) But you said you'd stay, Kim. I got a film and everything. I really don't think it's a good idea to try to leave now.

Kim: I want to get back. **(She stands.)**

Jan: That's not a good idea. **(She pushes Kim back down into the chair.)**

Kim: What? You can't keep me here.

Jan: Oh, I can. I've drugged your drink and you will be asleep in a few minutes.

Kim: What? **(She breathes heavily.)** Why? What have I done to you?

Jan: You've told someone about me.

Kim: What? No, I haven't. I swear I haven't.

Jan: Yes. You have. And I can't have people knowing that you've been coming to see me.

Kim: I haven't. I swear.

Jan: You're learning to lie very well, Kim.

Kim: I'm not, honest. What makes you say that I've told someone? Who do you think I've told?

Jan: You've told the police, haven't you?

Kim: No, I haven't. I promise. What's this all about?

Jan: It's about telling the truth, Kim.

Kim: I have been. **(She yawns and tries to stand. She sits back down.)** The only person I ever mentioned your name to was Serenity.

Jan: And she's no longer with us, is she?

Kim: What do you mean?

(Kim struggles with her breathing several times during the next speech and her eyes start to close.)

Jan: Within a few minutes you're going to join her. Let me be honest with you, Kim. For only the second time today. I don't want a book published. I don't know Scarlett Shaw, and she certainly doesn't know me. I've never met her, and certainly never had an affair with her. I just needed a sensational story to get you here.

Kim: (She tries to stand.) No, no. Please. **(She collapses on or near the rug.)**

Jan: Kim? Kim?

(Kim's body lies still, her eyes closed.)

(Jan checks she is asleep and straightens Kim's body out on the rug, and rolls her up in it.)

(Jan exits to the bedroom.)

(Kim unrolls the rug, steps out of it and, pulling the cushions off the sofa, places them on the rug, rolls the rug back up again. Checking the coast is still clear, she pours half of the liquid from her glass into Jan's glass and puts hers back. She grabs Jan's phone from the table and hides behind the tall unit, but partly visible to the audience. During the following, she types into Jan's phone.)

(Jan re-enters, with some rope. She crouches down to tie rope around one end of the rug, before she realises Kim is not in it.)

Jan: (Standing.) Kim? **(Looking around, shouting.)** Kim? Where are you? Kim? You can't get away. I've locked the doors. You're trapped here. With me. Come out now and we'll talk. **(She picks up Kim's glass and looks inside it.)** You were very astute to pick up on me knowing she lived in Wimbledon. That was my mistake. She was later home than normal. Before I saw her crossing the road on her own, on her way home. See, I couldn't risk anyone knowing about our

connection, Kim, so naturally Serenity had to be taken out of the equation, like Emma was two years ago. But that was different. Emma was different. She was blackmailing me. She got too greedy, so she had to be silenced. Kim? Come out and show yourself.

(Jan picks up Kim's handbag and starts rifling through it till she finds Kim's mobile.)

Jan: I have your mobile, Kim. Where's mine? Have you got it? You'd better give it back, or things will get very unpleasant.

(Kim steps out from behind the unit, Jan's mobile in her hand.)

Kim: I've contacted the police.

Jan: No, you haven't.

Kim: Don't you believe me?

Jan: No.

Kim: I must confess I was taken in. This whole thing was a ruse?

Jan: Yes.

Kim: And the whole re-enactment of the murder?

Jan: Complete bollocks. Apart from the large stone. But I do have a recording of you screaming your head off that you are going to kill me over some blackmail allegation. And if you have called the police, and it's possible you have, when they arrive, I can give them the carefully edited audio file of you, just before you attempted to attack me. That'll be proof enough.

Kim: But we were acting out a scene. You know we were.

Jan: No, I don't remember that at all. So, if you do attack me, you're digging your own grave.

Kim: Self defence against a double murderer. You killed Serenity and Emma.

Jan: I don't know what you're talking about.

Kim: Why me?

Jan: Oh, it took a long while to find you. A sad billy no mates writer, who lived alone. Invite you here on the pretext of writing a story. Insist of complete secrecy. I had to take a risk with Serenity. She appears so often on your Facebook page, I thought she might be your partner. You see, it was vital nobody knew you were here. I have connections to get myself a passport, in your name. Move abroad. You said yourself you were talking about the States. It will be a long time before they discover your buried remains. Nobody cares about me. People cross the road to avoid me, spit at me when I pass. And here is my chance to leave that life behind and start again. If you have contacted the police, I reckon we have about ten minutes before they get here. If so, I shall have to kill you, claiming self defence.

Kim: And if I haven't called them?

Jan: I kill you anyway and emigrate. As Kim Castle.

Kim: So either way I die?

Jan: Yes.

Kim: So, I'm in a no win situation.

Jan: Seems like it.

Kim: There has to be another way.

Jan: No. I've told you too much. You can swear all you like that you won't breathe a word to the police, but I can't take that risk. **(She produces a knife.)**

Kim: (She holds up Jan's mobile.) Then I'll take my chances with this.

Jan: What are you going to do, text me to death?

Kim: You're right. I haven't called the police. But if I press send on your mobile now, your confession goes to my publisher. I am sure she will listen to it, before forwarding it on. And just to let you know I have already sent all our email correspondence to an email account you could not access, so if anything happens to me, the police will search my emails and discover not only your confession, but from where I sent it, and I am pretty sure they will put two and two together.

(Jan picks up Kim's mobile and types into it.)

Jan: Easy enough to delete the email trail.

Kim: On my Kim Castle email address, yes. But you don't know my other email address or password.

Jan: You bitch.

Kim: I've been called worse. As have you.

Jan: What do you want?

Kim: Getting out of here alive is my primary concern. A financial incentive would improve things greatly.

Jan: Are you blackmailing me?

Kim: I wouldn't call it that.

Jan: Emma tried that and look what happened to her.

Kim: I prefer to think of it as payment for services rendered. I have spent a lot of time, and money on bus and train fares, to get here, and despite your promises, you've still not paid the deposit we agreed in our original email correspondence. So, technically, it's not blackmail, it's a breach of contract.

Jan: How much?

Kim: Let's start with a thousand.

Jan: You greedy bitch. I won't pay that.

Kim: No? **(Her hand goes to type on the Jan's mobile.)**

Jan: You wouldn't.

Kim: Watch me.

Jan: Wait. Let me think. I can do a hundred now and the rest next week.

Kim: No.

Jan: I could stretch to two hundred.

Kim: No. A thousand.

Jan: I haven't got that to hand.

Kim: You should have. The deposit you were going to pay me was five hundred. A thousand now or I press the button.

Jan: Okay, I will get a thousand in cash for you on Monday.

Kim: No. I want it now.

Jan: I don't have a thousand pounds in cash in the cottage.

Kim: I'm sure you don't. But you can transfer it to my bank account.

Jan: What?

Kim: You heard. Ping it across.

Jan: When?

Kim: Now. You bank online. You told me that last week.

Jan: I might have been lying.

Kim: No, that was true.

Jan: How do you know?

Kim: Because I've seen your Barclays app on your mobile. So you can do it now.

Jan: And if I do send you a thousand pounds now, you'll delete the audio file?

Kim: You can do that yourself. But I still have a copy. For security.

Jan: I'll need my mobile back.

Kim: And I'll need mine. I'll put yours down here. **(Kim places Jan's mobile on the floor.)** And you put mine on the table.

Jan: Okay.

(Jan puts Kim's mobile on the table, and they circle each other, Jan keeping the knife in her hand.)

(Jan picks up and types into her mobile, then holds it to her ear. After a few seconds, she grimaces and types into it again.)

(Kim picks up and types into her phone.)

Jan: There. Deleted it.

Kim: Well done.

Jan: (Typing into her phone.) So, I send a thousand pounds to your bank account, what happens then?

Kim: Once I see it, I will go home. I'm Barclays too, so it should be almost instantaneous. And your incriminating email will remain in my inbox until the day I die.

Jan: How do I know you're not lying?

Kim: I told you I was no good at it.

Jan: You don't seem to have had any trouble today.

Kim: I've had a good teacher. Or I was faking it. You decide.

Jan: I'm in a no win situation.

Kim: That's ironic. I said that five minutes ago.

Jan: (She types into mobile.) Five hundred?

Kim: A thousand. Not negotiable.

Jan: I'm having trouble getting a signal.

Kim: Funny, I'm not. And we're on the same network.

Jan: (She types into her mobile, then holds out her mobile.) There, all ready to send. Do you want to check these details?

Kim: Show me the screen.

(Jan holds the phone up.)

Kim: Can't read that. Put the knife down and come closer.

Jan: Don't you want to check the details?

Kim: When you put the knife down.

Jan: Don't you trust me?

Kim: What do you think? Put it down and step away.

(Jan puts the knife down on the table and crosses to Kim.)

(Jan holds her mobile out to Kim, but then drops it on the sofa and grabs Kim's arm, and grapples with her to get Kim's mobile.)

Jan: Give it to me!

Kim: No, get off!

Jan: Give it here!

(Jan pushes Kim to the floor as they wrestle for Kim's mobile. Jan grabs hold of Kim's phone and pushes Kim off. Jan gets up and reaches the knife before Kim. During the following, Jan picks up her own mobile from the sofa.)

Kim: (Getting up.) Okay. Didn't expect you to be so naïve.

Jan: I'm not the naïve one.

Kim: You've just raised the fee to two thousand pounds.

Jan: Have I now?

Kim: Yes.

Jan: I have both mobile phones, and a knife and you are issuing me with ultimatums.

Kim: You can't access my other email address.

Jan: I can when you tell me your password.

Kim: Not a hope.

Jan: Really? Sit down.

(Kim does not move.)

Jan: (Screaming.) Sit down!

(Kim sits. During the following, Jan binds Kim's hands behind her back with the rope.)

Jan: Never underestimate a murderer. Once they have killed once, they have no hesitation about killing again.

(Once Jan finishes binding Kim's hands, she ties Kim's feet together with the other rope. She stands and crosses to the table. She puts down her mobile, picks up her glass and drains it, and puts it down.)

Jan: I needed that. **(She picks up the knife. With her other hand, she types into Kim's mobile.)**

Jan: Right. **(Reading the screen.)** So, password.

Kim: No.

Jan: **(Holding the blade against her neck.)** Password.

Kim: No.

Jan: **(Pressing the blade against her neck.)** I said password.

Kim: No.

Jan: **(Pressing the blade harder against her neck.)** You are trying my fucking patience. Password.

Kim: Whatever you do to me, you will be caught. I am offering you a way out. A way of avoiding two life sentences.

Jan: Password, bitch. **(Jan rubs her eyes.)**

Kim: Think about it. I have protected myself. You kill me, you will be caught. Maybe not today, or tomorrow, but one day soon. And you'll get life.

Jan: Give me your password, you bitch!

Kim: I am giving you the chance to get away with murder. Quite literally.

Jan: I can't trust you. **(She fights for breath, and struggles to keep her eyes open and remain standing.)** You have to tell me your password.

Kim: No, Jan. You have to trust me. Think about it. I could have sent that email to my publisher, but I didn't. You can still walk away from this without a prison sentence.

Jan: And you won't breathe a word? Yeah, right. **(She collapses to her knees.)** What's happening to me? **(She drops the mobile and the knife and falls to the floor.)** You've drugged me. You put it in my glass, you bitch.

(Jan attempts to get up, then passes out on the floor, with her eyes closed, the knife and mobile near her.)

Kim: **(She struggles to free her hands during the following.)** Jan? Jan? I don't know if you're dead, sleeping or just faking it. You've just drunk your own concoction. Your herbal remedy, as you called it. I wasn't foolish enough to drink it, so I faked passing out. **(She frees her hands, and unties her feet.)** Like you might be. Are you awake? Jan? Can you hear me? **(She picks up the rope and approaches Jan. Using some of the rope, she binds Jan's feet and then her hands together behind Jan's back. She picks up the knife and her mobile. She crosses to the**

desk, picks up Jan's mobile and types into it.) You're still in your banking app, Jan. You haven't signed out. That was careless. Can I transfer my two thousand now? Please?

(Kim sits and types into Jan's mobile.)

Kim: Gosh, you've got loads of money, haven't you? Where did all this come from? You know what, I don't want to know. But I won't be greedy, I only want two grand. There. Thank you. Nice to do business with you.

(Kim crosses to Jan. She wipes Jan's mobile clean of her fingerprints and places it back in front of her.)

(Jan twitches.)

(Kim stands up, picks up her bag and jacket, and crosses to the exit.)

Kim: Goodbye, Jan. I don't know how long you are going to sleep for, but you should be able to undo the knots when you wake up. I haven't done them up that tightly.

(Kim exits, leaving the motionless body of Jan on the floor.)

(The following can be recorded as an offstage voice, or projected onto a screen.)

Voiceover: (Offstage.) Six months later, Jan Solomon was convicted of the murders of Emma Porter and Serenity Jones, following the leaking of a recording of her confession, and was given two life sentences. As for Kim, she moved to America, and has secured a generous retainer for the book she is writing, about her three days with Jan Solomon.

(Curtain)

Production Notes.

Properties – (the following are the minimum requirements. Additional furniture and/or set décor would help to accessorise it.

Scene One.

Two or three seater sofa
Armchair
Desk
Chair
Dresser or unit (tall enough for actor to stand behind)
Throw (on sofa)
Cushions (on sofa)
Large rug
Pen holder (on desk)
Table lamp (on desk)
Radio (on desk)
Tray (on desk)
Gin bottle (on tray)
One clear glass (on tray)
One opaque glass (on tray)
Other bottles and glasses (on tray)

Clear glass (Jan)
Watch (Jan)
Large handbag (Kim)
Water bottle (in handbag)
Notebook and pen (in handbag)

Scene Two.

(The same.)

Pages of typed notes (Jan)
Glasses (Jan)
Mobile (Jan)

Scene Three.

(The same.)
Bottle with “herbal remedy” (on tray)
Mobile phone (Kim)
Hanky (Kim)
Jan’s mobile (on desk)
Two length of rope
Knife (Jan)