

THE LATEST
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**BIG FINISH
 ORIGINALS** IS
 THE MOST EPIC
 IN SCALE YET...

TRANSFERENCE

- Released: August 2019
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psychotherapist is – that even if their client said they had murdered someone the therapist was not necessarily duty bound to report it to the police, so long as they judged that this person would not commit a similar act again. And that was the conversation that ignited **Transference**. Sam Ross was born.

“I started by writing a one-page brief for what the series was about, introducing Sam, her client Keith, and the world they inhabit. I also sketched out very roughly the beginnings of the story and where it might head in the first episode, which I shared with the script editor Matt Fitton, who gathered together the writers.”

The twisting tale of **Transference** is told over eight hours, brought to life by four writers: Jane Slavin, Andrew Smith, Roland Moore and John Dorney. David says: “Our first writers’ meeting was essential

over the recent death of her sister), and her client, Keith, who tells her he has killed someone.

Jane explains: “I felt honoured to be on this thriller team: a great combination of weird brains that enabled us to concoct something out of the ordinary. Writing the first two episodes gave me a chance to plant seeds and create personalities that the other writers would have to run with, and I knew their expertise was such that anything I left for them would be brilliantly followed up.”

“Also, I had no idea where episode eight would end up but I knew how I wanted to get there. I wrote for Alex and Warren in particular but my favourite relationship was the friendship between Paul (Robert Whitelock) and Sam. The love between them is profound, like siblings.”

“The first two episodes centre around the catastrophic grief Sam is experiencing since the death of



PSYCHO THRILLER

(qu'est-ce que c'est?)

IT SEEMS as if Ken Bentley and I have been chatting about doing some kind of audio thriller for years”, says **Transference** producer David Richardson. “We’ve often spent the time walking into work talking about how great it would be to do something along the lines of **The Killing** or **Bodyguard** or **Broadchurch**, just for audio. I mentioned this to Nick and Jason a while ago and came away with a commission to develop an eight hour series!”

Executive producers Jason Haigh-Ellery and Nicholas Briggs were taken with the concept which David then developed. David continues: “I was chatting to a friend about the nature of counselling. He was saying how confidential the work of a

because it allowed us to take the foundation and then just throw ideas and directions out there. I’d started the ball rolling but I had no idea of the end destination, and I’d delivered something sketchy that needed to be honed and developed by Jane, Andrew, Roland and John.

“They each wrote storylines for their episodes, which we reworked to make sure that everyone was on the same page, and then they got underway on scripts.”

“It doesn’t ever run out of steam or rest on its laurels. **Transference** has a fantastic momentum, and is packed with twists and turns.”

JANE SLAVIN has written the opening two episodes in which we meet psychotherapist Samantha Ross (who is grieving

her sister, the impact this has on her work as a psychotherapist, and her new client named Keith. Her grief may well be clouding her skills regarding Keith, which perhaps is just what he wants. I think it’s funny as well as being a thriller and I hope everyone else gets this too.”

THE THIRD and fourth episodes have been crafted by Andrew Smith who brings Paul more into the events. It’s appropriate for Andrew to be writing for Paul, a police officer, as Andrew himself spent many years in the Metropolitan Police.

Andrew says: “Jane had done the set-up for the series in her two opening episodes, establishing the characters and the mystery. The theme for my two episodes was investigation; in particular trying to



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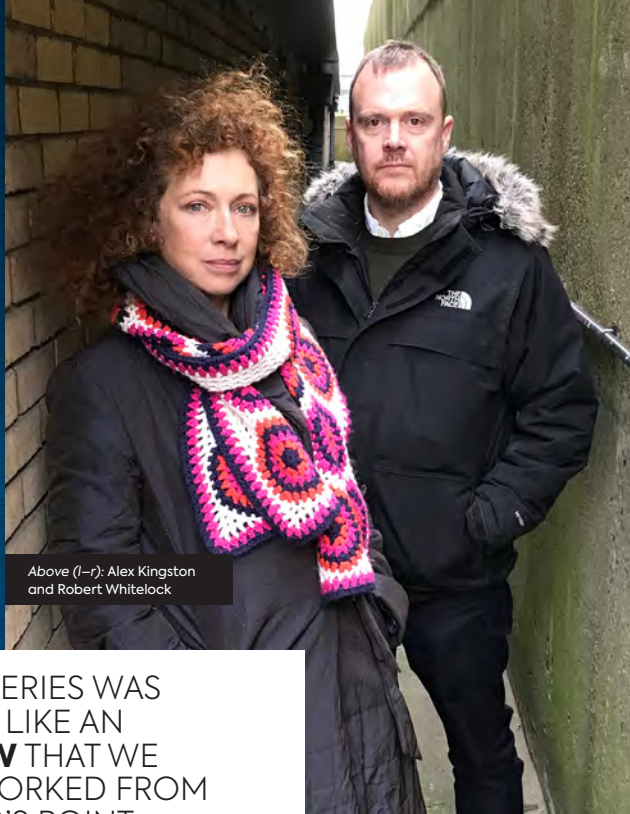
DAVID RICHARDSON

find out more about the history of one of our characters. To that end we have a detective, DC Paul Aitken, who features quite strongly in my stories.

"Paul is a long time friend of one of the main characters, Sam, and he helps her out unofficially – getting himself into trouble in the process, overstepping the line legally."

Having had a lengthy police career, did Andrew ever encounter anything like this?

"I didn't come across a case like this in my police service, but there is another incident from my early career that I've used in this box set. It was in 1985 when I was on a drugs raid in Brixton. We'd been watching these heroin dealers, a pair of Glaswegians as it happened, for over a week. They tried to stop us coming through the door to the room



Above (l-r): Alex Kingston and Robert Whitelock

“ PLOTTING THE SERIES WAS GREAT FUN. IT WAS LIKE AN **INTRICATE JIGSAW** THAT WE HAD TO ENSURE WORKED FROM EVERY CHARACTER'S POINT OF VIEW. I REALLY ENJOY THAT SORT OF THING. ROLAND MOORE

they were in, and I found myself stuck as I forced my way through the door while someone was putting his weight into it to keep it shut. I was halfway through, and pinned to the wall by this door, unable to come in or go out, and then I saw the guy behind the door had a carving knife and his hand was twitching while he was trying to work up the nerve to stab me. Happily he had a change of heart and decided to drop it.

"Listeners will come across a scene very similar to that early in episode three, when Paul finds himself in the same situation."

Continuing events, Roland Moore is responsible for episodes five and six. He says: "Plotting the series was great fun. It was like an intricate jigsaw that we had to ensure worked from every character's point of view. I really enjoy that sort of thing.



Transference was like a dark game of 'consequences' where we knew the start and the ending, but had to work out the journey in-between.

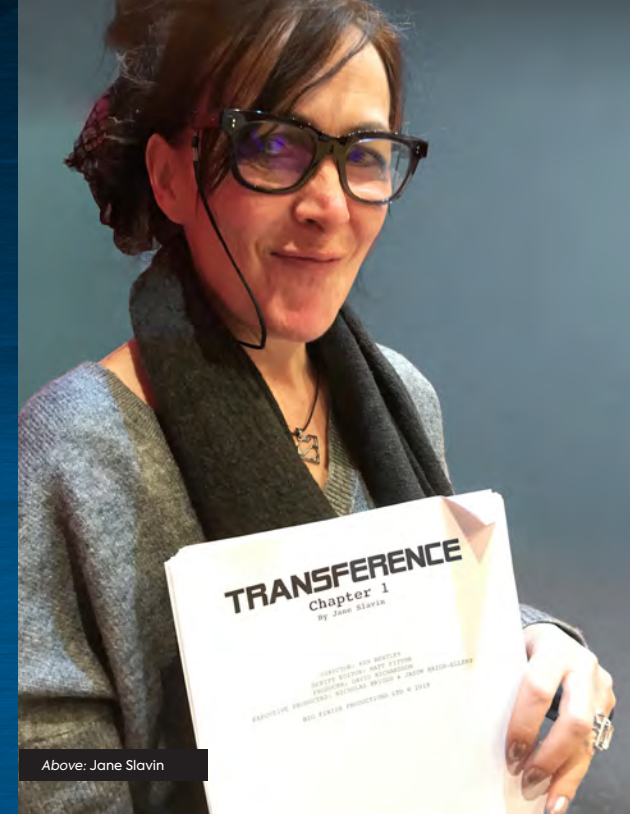
"After the first meeting we developed our synopses for the episodes and then Matt edited them with a view to how well they fitted together. And then we had another meeting and ironed out anything that needed ironing out."

Discussing the events of each episode of **Transference** is difficult without giving away spoilers, but Roland can reveal: "I wrote parts five and six – and they take place a few weeks after the end of part four. Sam is in a new location, clearing her head by the sea and working in a café that belongs to an ex-boyfriend. She's trying to come to terms with the massive events that happened before (no spoilers), but the past is about to catch up with her. These episodes are near the end of the series and the tension ramps right up. And part five contains one of my favourite cliff-hangers!"

The series concludes with episodes seven and eight, both of which were written by John Dorney.

As the writer of the final two episodes it meant that he was left with tying up the loose ends and bringing sub-plots together for the finale. John admits: "There were times when I found the other writers were writing me into a corner! Then again, there were times when I was writing myself into a corner!"

"I had a reasonably good idea of



Above: Jane Slavin

where episode seven was going to go based on discussions from the original meeting. I was also very keen to make sure I paid off what had been started earlier in the story and draw those strings together in a way that worked.

"At one point I was a bit stuck and then had a meeting with the other writers. We battered ideas around and figured out how to end it. I'd gone in with a rough idea of how it could work, then we fixed some things in that meeting, then I realised they wouldn't work so went back to my original idea!

"Having the last two episodes meant I had to wait back a bit till the earlier scripts were done. I had some plans and the other writers were happy to accommodate these and feed them into their earlier episodes."

"There was plenty of emailing back and forth and sharing ideas."

Transference boasts a cast that any TV series would be proud to have. Alex Kingston takes on the title role of Sam, whilst her client, Keith,

is played by Warren Brown. Also amongst the cast is Wendy Craig playing Barbara – Sam's mother, and Robert Whitelock plays Paul – Sam's best friend.

David says: "Our lead actors were actually brought onboard before a word had been written. In fact, Warren asked me, 'What's the series about?' and I'd had to say at that point, 'I don't really know!'"

"I'm grateful for the faith that he and Alex put in us – that they waited patiently to see what emerged, and then embraced the final scripts so readily. Alex said to me, 'Gosh, when you said it was about a psychotherapist I expected it to be quite contained – to be just two people sitting in a room. But this is really exciting!'"

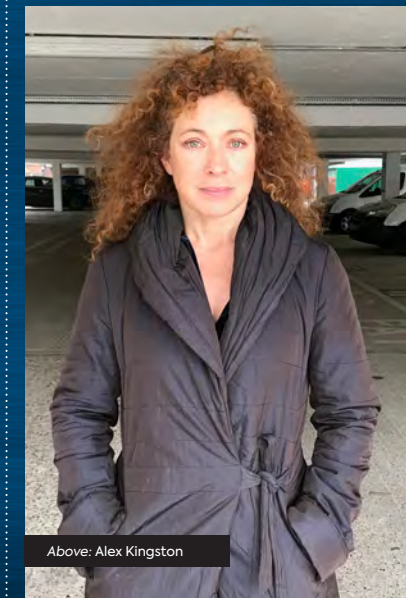
Vortex is also impressed by the cast, and Ken laughs: "The cast is a bit good isn't it?! The style of the play determined the casting. And it isn't just the leads I'm excited about. There was some quite complex doubling to do and there are a number of actors we're lucky enough to work with regularly

who are vocal chameleons. It was great to give actors I admire the chance to work on something new and very different.

"**Transference** is a real departure in style from anything else we've done at Big Finish, and we all felt that. From the planning and writing through to recording and post-production. It's been a journey of discovery."

As Big Finish's biggest single release it's meant a lot of hard work – but also pleasant experiences – for the production team.

John says: "When I was able to read all eight scripts from beginning to end, I got a sense of how it all worked, and it was remarkably like a page turner – in script



Above: Alex Kingston

form. It's very gripping, despite it being insanely complex!"

And David concludes: "When we sent the studio masters to Steve Foxon to add the sound design, he began editing scene by scene without reading the whole script. I was absolutely delighted when he admitted that he was gripped by the whole thing and thought it was brilliant!" **VORTEX**