

WHISTLEBLOWER
Treatment March 2025
Terry Morgan

LOGLINE:

Jim Smith, an ex-British politician, forced to flee abroad after threatening to expose massive corruption in international aid returns home to renew his campaign. An international political thriller and study of an eccentric man steadfastly refusing to fit into the stereotype of a modern politician.

KEY SETTINGS:

Thailand:

Deeply rural area, forested hills and a primitive wooden house on stilts. Local small town with main street, open-fronted shops with low canopies and a basic eating place with wooden frontage and tin roof. Central Bangkok: Busy, noisy side street with bars and street food.

Windsor, England: Hotel in sight of castle.

Central London: Park Lane, Marble Arch, Kensington, Piccadilly.

Delft Holland: Canals, narrow cobbled streets, old, 3-4 storey red brick houses/shops.

Central Zurich, Switzerland.

Milan, Italy: Nondescript industrial estate on outskirts near Linate airport.

Torno, Como, Italy: Lakeside villa on steep hillside.

Freetown, Sierra Leone: Freight terminal and chaotic central area around Sani Abacha Street.

MAIN CHARACTERS

JAMES (JIM) SMITH:

Ex businessman and short-time politician. Sixties. Gaunt, deeply sunburned with long, untidy grey hair and heavy beard. Lives in a simple, wooden hut in rural Thailand. A deep-thinking, emotional character who talks to himself, often to his dead mother. A man not driven by personal wealth or a need for fame but by a desire to fight corruption, unfairness and inequality and who finds contentment in a simple lifestyle free of material possessions. A hidden talent for painting.

GUIDO: Italian. Middle-aged, short, overweight, sinister, volatile, excitable. The mastermind behind the criminality.

TONI: Italian. Tall, mysterious, middle-aged woman. Guido's partner.

TOM HANRAHAN: Irish. Ex news reporter sacked for disciplinary reasons who finds and helps Jim.

JONATHAN WALTON: English. Owner of Walton Associates, a company specializing in international aid.

JAN KERKMANN: Dutch. Tall, fair-haired. Ex banker. The 'mole' who works inside the 'Commission'.

JACOB JOHNSON: Nigerian. Fraudster who Jonathan and Jan use to uncover how the fraud works.

DIRK EISCHMANN: Austrian. Middle-aged. Senior bureaucrat in the 'Commission' and a key part of the fraud.

KATRINE NIELSON. Danish. Twenties. Assistant to Dirk Eischmann and close friend of Jan Kerkmann.

SCOTT EVORA: American. FBI agent working for US Embassy in London.

COLIN STAFFORD: USA Senator determined to stop fraud and corruption with US aid programmes.

HUGH MCALLISTER: Owner of London art gallery. An old friend of Jim's, once married to Anne, Jim's parliamentary assistant.

DOUGLAS CREIGHTON: Jim's constituency chair when a MP.

MITCHELL: Sierra Leonian truck driver. Mid-twenties. Happy-go-lucky.

SULEIMAN: Sierra Leonian. Mitchell's boss at Mambola Transport Enterprises. Cousin of UK lawyer Cole Harding.

OPENING SCENES

Thailand. Dawn is breaking behind Jim Smith's run down, isolated house in rural Thailand. He wakes having, yet again, been dreaming of the past. There are flashbacks of his time as a MP in the UK Parliament, about the questions he asked about fraud and corruption. He relives the threats made in anonymous phone calls, the public ridicule, the false accusations of indiscretions and bribery and corruption involving his business and the effect on him and his wife, Margaret. With his love of nature and daily walks into the forest to meditate, Jim has learned to cope and, as the day begins, we watch and listen to him talking to himself as he paints in the shade of a mango tree.

Milan. Guido, talks to Toni about problems with their network of criminals in the Middle East and Central Asia and how to deal with them. *"Akram still has two hands, doesn't he? Can he work with one? And that prick Tawfik. Tell him Guido will cut off his salary or, worse, Guido will cut off his balls and spread rumours for the ears of the provincial authorities and police. You know what that means, Toni? Yah - they are very nasty people especially to those without any balls."*

Bangkok. Jim has a chance encounter with an old acquaintance, Colin Foreman. Jim finds himself discussing his past and his plans. Colin, taken by Jim's isolation, his ongoing fear of persecution and desire to prove he was right all along, suggests someone (Jonathan Walton) who might help.

ACT ONE

Amsterdam. Jim meets Jonathan Walton who agrees to help and suggests Jan Kerkmann as a 'mole' to work inside the Commission.

Amsterdam. Jim meets both Jan and Jonathan and Jim pinpoints Dirk Eischmann as a key suspect. Jan agrees to push for a place on a committee overseeing funding bids chaired by Eischmann and managed by Katrine Nielson.

Belgium. Jan meets Eischmann who is taken in by Jan's story that he wants to make money. Eischmann tells him to wait for a call.

London. Jonathan meets Nigerian, Jacob Johnson with a dubious plan to find funds for a tourism project in Sierra Leone. Deciding it would make a good test case with Jan now sitting on the funding committee Jonathan agrees to help Johnson.

Amsterdam. A Belgian fraudster meets two Lebanese conmen, Hamid and Farid, wanting to set up a phoney company, Cherry Pick Investments with plans for fake projects in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Milan. The Lebanese meet Guido who aggressively tells them they are amateurs and that unless they agree to his methods, he will ensure that Cherry Pick fails.

Sierra Leone. Mitchell, makes a delivery of second-hand laptops for a charity called School Aid to Mr Moses at Rocki General Supplies in Sani Abacha Street. From there he picks

up more boxes to deliver to Sulima Construction on the border with Liberia. Already suspicions of Moses' business, Mitchell returns to Freetown to tell his boss Mr Suleiman.

Delft. Jan gets the call he's been expecting and meets Guido who explains how they steal funds by hacking into the Commission's IT system using a hack called Puff. (*"Just like Puff the Magic Dragon, it makes things disappear"*). As Jan leaves, Guido describes what will happen if Jan even considers exposing him.

Lahore, Pakistan, a team of CIA agents, led by US Senator Colin Stafford are tracking a US fraudster, Sylvester Mendes and listen in to the Pakistani finance minister talking to a criminal banker based in Dubai and another working for the Pakistani Central Bank. For the first time, they hear mention of someone called Guido.

ACT TWO:

Thailand. Jim collapses with a heart attack but recovers enough to ride into town to check for messages from Jonathan. Sitting in his usual roadside eating place (Lek's café) a foreigner enters. Nervous of being recognised, Jim decides to leave but then collapses again. Two days later he wakes in hospital to find the stranger (Tom Hanrahan) at his bedside.

Jim invites him to his house. Tom is shocked at how Jim is living. That evening, during a tropical thunderstorm Tom finds Jim's collection of paintings packed in boxes beneath the leaking roof.

So starts a plan for Jim to return to London, for Tom to help Jonathan and Jan prove that Jim's accusations were right.

Windsor. Jim and Tom agree on a plan. Tom will meet Jonathan and Jan, then fly to Sweden to find Polly, a night club

hostess who Jim was falsely accused of being involved with. Jim decides to meet Hugh McAllister with a plan to exhibit his paintings. Jim also tells Tom he wants to see his wife, Margaret.

London. Jonathan gets a call from FBI agent, Scott Evora, seeking views on international aid fraud.

Delft. Jan meets Guido again to learn how to use ‘Puff’ and other hacking software – ‘Slush’ and ‘Flush’. Guido makes more sinister threats against Jan.

London. Jonathan meets Scott Evora and mentions Jim. Jonathan then meets Johnson again and discovers that Johnson knows Guido.

Milan. Guido realises Johnson is talking to others and becomes furious.

Belgium. Jan uses ‘Puff’ to make illegal money transfers to numbered accounts and finds that money is also being paid into his own private bank account, further tightening the hold Guido has over him. Jan and Katrine are now dating and Katrine admits to her distrust of Eischmann. She also describes how funds disappear after system glitches. Jan pretends to be unaware.

Milan. Toni tells Guido that Johnson has taken over their Lebanese clients and Guido becomes uncontrollably angry.

Windsor. Jim calls Douglas Creighton to say he has returned to finish the job he started so long ago.

London. Jim meets Douglas. Douglas, nervous throughout, is embarrassed when Jim says he wants to see Margaret. Douglas tells Jim that, while he was away, Margret has divorced him. Jim, distraught, remains determined to see her. Jim returns to Windsor by train and, during the journey, relates his day talks to his dead mother. *“Hugh McAllister agreed to exhibit my paintings, mother, but this is interesting. Hugh was once*

married to Anne, my assistant at Westminster. Anne is now married to a Spanish billionaire called Daniel Acosta who she met after resigning from her job with me and moving to Brussels. And guess who offered her the job in Brussels, mother? Dirk Eischmann.”

Sierra Leone. Suleiman, increasingly suspicious of Moses, discovers there is no Daisy children’s charity in Sierra Leone and that Sulima Construction is a fake with links to companies called Cherry Picking. He calls his cousin Cole Harding, a UK-based lawyer specialising in African fraud. Harding agrees to help and, after looking for a company specializing in international aid, contacts Jonathan.

Stockholm. Tom calls Jim to say he’s met Polly. *“Everything was a set up,”* he tells Jim. *“I recorded a full interview.”*

London. Scott Evora calls Jonathan to ask if he’d help with the FBI investigation into Sylvester Mendes. Jonathan agrees to wear a wire during a set-up meeting with Mendes in London.

Milan. Guido finalizes his revenge plan for the Cherry Pick deal, threatening to deal with everybody involved.

Windsor. With Jan due to meet Guido again in Delft, Jim tells Tom to head to Delft.

London. Jonathan, primed by Scott Evora, meets Silvester Mendes in a London pub and catches everything on tape. Guido is mentioned again.

London. Jim meets Scott Evora and, without telling him about Jan and Tom, asks for FBI help. Scott explains the importance of Senator Colin Stafford’s political influence and says he’ll fix a meeting when Stafford visits London.

Delft. Tom arrives in Delft but Guido calls Jan with new instructions. Jan must find a seat in the town and use a laptop that will be given to him by a stranger - a tall woman. (Toni)

Jan is instructed by phone to use the laptop to hack the system and change details of the Sierra Leone bid that Jonathan has submitted for Johnson to show a “*change of consultants*”. That done, Guido threatens Jan by saying there are records of all the illegal transactions he has completed.

Tom, seated close by, watches the tall woman retrieve the laptop. He then follows her BMW to a MacDonalds on the Belgian border where he gets his first sighting of Guido. The laptop is transferred to his Mercedes. Tom follows the Mercedes to the Hilton Hotel in Antwerp where he then watches Guido meet Eischmann. Tom reports to Jim.

Sierra Leone. Suleiman tells Mitchell to deliver more boxes to Rocki General Supplies and to plant a voice recorder in Mr. Moses’ office. On arrival, though, Mitchell finds a new person in charge, a Nigerian called Dada, who tells him that Moses has gone “*to visit the angels.*” Moses is dead and Rocki General Supplies has been taken over by a Swiss company called Freeways. Mitchell reports to Suleiman but still manages to plant the voice recorder.

Brussels. The steering group that Eischmann chairs with Katrine as his assistant meets to reassess Jonathan’s Sierra Leone bid on behalf of Johnson because of a “*change of consultants*”. The new consultant is Freeways in Zurich, Switzerland. Eischmann demands that the project is put on hold.

Belgium. Jan confesses to Katrine that he was the one who changed the details of the Sierra Leone bid and had been hacking the system to move money. He explains his involvement in the undercover plan to expose the fraud and asks Katrine to get someone in the Treasury Department to video computer screens as he hacks the system again.

London. Cole Harding tells Jonathan that the news from Sierra Leone is that Moses is dead, that Rocki Supplies is now owned by Freeways and is under Nigerian management.

London. An angry Jacob Johnson calls Jonathan about his bid being cancelled and gives Jonathan the rough location of Guido's Milan base.

Jim tells Tom to head to Zurich to meet Jan, to investigate the Freeways company and then to head to Milan.

As Jan leaves for Zurich, Katrine hands him screen data obtained during the latest hacks. Jan sends it to Jim in Windsor.

Brussels. Eischmann summons Katrine to his office and asks about Jan who has disappeared. Katrine denies knowing anything, but Eischmann demands she reports to him if Jan contacts her.

Windsor. Jim uses his old laptop to watch the screen-shot videos. Stopping the video on a single frame he sees evidence of a money transfer to a bank account in the name of Paula Eischmann, Eishmann's wife, and another to 'Acosta Freeway'. He calls Jan and Tom at a hotel in Zurich.

Belgium. Eischmann calls Guido about Jan's disappearance. Guido calls Toni. *"I never panic, Toni. Do not say that. But Mr. E is very mad. Oh, mio dio. I dreamed last night. It is that asshole, that bastard, that faccia di merda. I never liked him. He has a comportamento sospetto. It was a nightmare, Toni. Kerkman shot me with a gun. But I am not nervous, Toni."*

London. Jim meets Hugh McAllister to finalize the exhibition. He asks more about Hugh's ex-wife, Anne, now Anne Acosta. Jim meets Jonathan, Scott and Senator Stafford at the US Embassy where he gives details of the fraud, hands over the screen evidence linking Eischmann and Acosta and convinces them to use the media to openly link key names *"To flush them*

out.” Stafford also agrees to alert police forces across Europe and to be the keynote speaker at Jim’s exhibition.

Zurich. Tom meets Jan for *“a bit of Irish skulduggery, subterfuge and jiggery-pokery to prove I should have been the best investigative reporter in London”*

By pretending to work for Freeway, they trick their way into the Freeway office in Zurich and come away with an address for Guido in Milan.

Brussels. Eischmann panics. Other key bureaucrats disappear. Eischmann himself heads to the Sheraton Hotel in Brussels to meet Daniel Acosta and his wife, Anne, but are met by the Belgian police for *“routine checks linked to cross-border financial fraud”*.

Milan. Tom and Jan head to a bleak industrial estate and learn that Guido is often seen in the area driving a Mercedes. Rumours say he lives a lavish lifestyle near Lake Como in northern Italy.

Lake Como. From a villa overlooking the lake Guido talks to Eischmann. *“You can live on five million Euros – OK, six million - OK seven. It is like the gold watch for good service, Herr Dirk. Take your wife, Petra. OK - it is not Petra, it is Paula. It is the same letter P. Pay the police and they will leave you alone. Ciao, buonanotte.”*

Tom and Jan drive to Como. With night-time approaching they find the villa but decide to return in the morning. As dawn breaks over the lake, Jan remains with the car as Tom hides in the garden. Lights come on. A taxi arrives. Toni emerges from the villa with bags followed by a short, fat woman in knee-length skirt, make-up and high heeled shoes.

ACT THREE

A few days later and Jim slips away unnoticed from his exhibition. He takes the train back to Windsor. *“Seeing Margaret was a disaster, mother. I got emotional and she told me to stop pontificating. Do I pontificate, mother?”*

He checks out of the hotel and takes a taxi to the airport, with one painting beside him. *“I told Hugh this one’s not for sale, mother, but he still wanted to know who the woman and the little girl were. I told him that Noy and Oy saved me during my time away. That’s another story, mother.”*

As Jim checks in at the airport, Tom arrives desperate to see him before he leaves. Jim asks Tom to come out to Thailand again soon.

“By then I should also have finished my book - it’s just some scribblings about the transience of life and the evil of accumulating wealth at the expense of others.”

Tom agrees to go but: *“Did you see a doctor, like I told you, Jim?”*

“I know what’s wrong,” Jim replies. *“Why spend money just to delay the inevitable?”*

“And Margaret, Jim?”

“She’s re-married,” Jim replies, *“I know who it is. He was the only one I invited to the exhibition but the only one who didn’t attend. I hope she and Douglas have a happy life together.”*

Sierra Leone. Mitchell is still sitting outside the old Rocki General Supplies warehouse listening in to conversations. Suliman calls to say he can now stop this spare time surveillance but Mitchell is not convinced.

The new business, Freeways, is run by a Nigerian he tells Suleiman. *“And today him talk on phone to man call Mr.*

Gweedo. But Mr. Gweedo, he don't sound like man to me, Mr. Suleiman. Mr. Gweedo sound more like woman."

Suleiman immediately calls his lawyer cousin, Cole Harding.

Terry Morgan, March 2025