



8x50m for BBC1

by Mike Cummins

Powerful people make serious mistakes. It's time to blow open the cover up.

Previously on Whitewash...

At the height of New Labour's media paranoia the Cabinet Minister, **David Cromwell (36)** sets up a phantom network to ensure bad news stories are buried through the use borderline-legal pressure and coercion. The members of this network report to and are known to only one man, retired senior civil servant, Sir Sanjit Soni. A single encrypted text message to him sets the whitewash team into action. The team has no other structure, and most of its members are unaware of the existence of others.

Three years later Sir Sanjit dies and with him the only way to contact the network. They are assumed disbanded.

5,400 miles east: A small group of influential North Koreans meet in Hamhung. This will be their last meeting until they hear of the death of Kim Jong-il. They have their plan ready – to seize control of the country and reoccupy the demilitarized zone to the south – *all with the blessing of European governments.*

UK, April 2010: Ten days before the General Election, Cromwell confides to **Dame Margo Buchanan (62)** that IT infrastructure has been exported to Pyongyang under permits forged in her name by his department. She is furious but neither of them knows how to correct the problem before the likely change of UK government. Adding pressure, a whistleblower is planning to speak to the press about the export deal. Then Cromwell notices Dame Margo sending an encrypted text... Within 24 hours the problem is 'resolved' - with the apparent suicide of the whistleblower. Cromwell suspects that the whitewash network is still in operation.

The result of the general election removes Cromwell's leverage to find out if his suspicions are correct and he has to be careful, knowing that he set the network up in the first place.

So what's happened...?

With no leadership, accountability or infrastructure the whitewash team proved easy to take over. Someone has taken over Sir Sanjit's duties but their identity is unknown. What is clear is that they

are employing more extreme methods of cover up and – as we will learn – that they sympathetic to the plans of the North Korean faction.

Slowly but surely the network is acquiring influence over high ranking European politicians, business leaders, and other important people. The network make their problems go away; and in the process learn what those problems were. The influential people whose problems are dealt with assume that they are dealing with the old network from Sir Sanjit's days. They don't know that they now open to being blackmailed into providing political support for the faction, the greater of the two North Korean evils, when they begin their coup against Kim Jong-un's new regime, split Western hostility towards them and seize control of the country's nuclear programme.

All of this is unknown to everybody outside of the network including Cromwell who is now languishing in opposition. He needs to know what the whitewash network is up to. And cover his own tracks in the affair. He covertly engages the services of a dismissed detective chief inspector, **Iona Shreeves (53)**, to track and monitor the network's activities.

In response to Dame Margo Buchanan's encrypted text, the renegade whitewash team not only dealt with the whistleblower but needed to cover the financial irregularities involved in the exporting of IT to North Korea. Their solution was **Scanlan Brown (42)**, small time trader in government bonds who is targeted to take the fall for a fictional short-sell that went wrong.

One month into his 14 month prison sentence his wife and son stop visiting – they disappear. Six months later he gets a new visitor...

And now, Episode One...

An Argentine banker boards a direct flight from Buenos Aires. When the plane touches down in London she has vanished.

Iona Shreeves needs to find the banker and discover why she vanished. She discovers a cover up involving short selling UK government bonds from within the Treasury. This brings her to Scanlan Brown's cell. She wants him to spill the beans on his short-sell that apparently went wrong. He doesn't trust her. But he is desperate for release so he can find his family. The pair strike a deal.

Scanlan Brown has just entered a world where a single text message can change the truth for ever. And his mission to find his family will involve unravelling cover ups and squaring up to the whitewash network, and in turn some of the most powerful and desperate people in the world...

...powerful and desperate people who believe that the cover ups are for a greater good.