

## Scene: The Studio

*ALEX enters he is carrying a 'heavy' petrol can (This can of course be empty). He is furtively looking around to familiarize himself with the lay-out of the studio. After a moment he unscrews the lid of the can and then starts to slosh the petrol about, over the floor, he does this in a very business-like way. Suddenly he freezes as he thinks that he has heard something. He darts behind the projector screen. KIRSTY enters. She is examining the script in her hand and is pretty absorbed in it. She takes up her position in front of the screen. She looks to the front gives a very false looking smile and addresses the audience*

**KIRSTY:** *(Doing an imaginary presentation. She is not word perfect and refers to the script as necessary)* Well today we've had a lovely hot day across much of the North and West of the region.

*If we look at the situation for tomorrow (She points at the white screen) we can see that it will be a pretty grey start across much of the South, there might even be one or two rain showers, but it should get brighter as we go through the day. The clouds getting burnt away and leaving us with a predominantly dry day.*

*Most of the North (She points to the top of the white screen) will again be dry, with a cold start but there will be plenty of sunshine as it will eventually brighten up across the whole of the 'Gone South' region. As we go through the day the temperatures will rise, giving us a cracking day again particularly in the North and West of the region.*

*Down the Eastern Side (She points at the white screen) there will be a keen North Easterly wind. Here we will have a grey start, even giving one or two spits and spots of rain until the clouds break up. Eventually, even here, it will become a pleasant day.*

*So over all, another dry day and where we do get the sunshine it could easily give us temperatures of 21 Celsius.*

*As for the rest of the week, there should be spells of sunshine and temperatures typical for this time of the year. For the Scouts fete in Pulborough there will be that rather keen wind blowing making it feel cool compared with what we have had through the weekend, so if you are going along to the fete make sure that you wrap up warm. I will be back at half past eight tomorrow morning. Until then bye bye*

*As she finishes, KIRSTY's fake smile instantly vanishes and she starts to sniff. She has clearly become aware of the petrol smell. After a couple of loud sniffs she gets to her knees to sniff the floor. As she does so she sees ALEX's legs behind the screen*

**KIRSTY:** Christ, who are you? *(No movement from ALEX)...* Come on get out, I can see you *(ALEX stands on one leg, but no other movement)* I can still see you

**ALEX:** (*Slowly edging out from behind screen*) Is this the weather room then?

**KIRSTY:** Of course it is, what did you think I was on about? And you're not meant to be in here (*Going to leave and indicating ALEX to follow*) Come on, I'll show you out. I was going down to security anyway, this room smells funny to me

**ALEX:** It's me.

**KIRSTY:** You?

**ALEX:** Well, not me exactly. I mean that it's the petrol

**KIRSTY:** Petrol?

**ALEX:** Yes, the petrol I've poured it all over the place, it's gone everywhere and it's over everything, so don't light anything

**KIRSTY:** Well that was a stupid thing to do... What did you do that for? Do you work for BP or something?

**ALEX:** No this is what I do

**KIRSTY:** Arson?

**ALEX:** Look, my name is Alex... Alex... 'The Jackal' and I'm a Freedom Fighter

**KIRSTY:** (*Un-worried*) Oh right. Well that's all we need isn't it?

**ALEX:** No, you don't get it, I'm dangerous

**KIRSTY:** (*Unworried*) Are you now? I tell you it's bloody ridiculous. People are always getting in here, they need to do something about the locks. They need some of those pads with numbers on or something – The way that it is at the moment I don't know why they don't just fit a cat flap

**ALEX:** Yeah, well... You need to watch it, you're in danger... deep danger

**KIRSTY:** That doesn't make sense does it?

**ALEX:** No?

**KIRSTY:** Don't you mean deep trouble?

**ALEX:** Yes...That's what I mean. So don't try anything

**KIRSTY:** (*Astonished*) Let me get this straight. You're holding up a weather studio?

**ALEX:** Yes... So no funny stuff. (*Pause*) Hands by your side. To be honest I was aiming for the Newsroom, but it's bloody confusing in here. I got a bit lost. I've been in here for hours, wandering around, so this will have to do for now.

**KIRSTY:** What did you want to go to the newsroom for?

**ALEX:** We always strike first at the media. Immobilise the means of mass communication. That's how it works

**KIRSTY:** It's only the local telly

**ALEX:** Yeah I know... I'll paralyze the means of mass local communication

**KIRSTY:** (*Puzzled*) I see. But you do know that this is just where we do the weather... Nothing else?

**ALEX:** Yeah, of course. I said I know (*Re-gathering thoughts*) But it's too late now. I've done it now and besides: Any inconvenience is good inconvenience as far as us revolutionaries are concerned. Well that's not strictly true, but you know what I mean

**KIRSTY:** So you're hoping that everyone will die of cold because they won't know that they need to wear a second vest?

**ALEX:** This is serious sweetheart don't muck about

**KIRSTY:** Don't you 'Sweetheart' me

**ALEX:** (*Producing a lighter from his pocket*) Look I've got a lighter and I'm not afraid to use it

**KIRSTY:** (*Thinks for a moment*) Ok. Put it away

**ALEX:** Right, well just do as I say and we'll both get out of this in one piece

**KIRSTY:** I promise that I won't try and do anything

**ALEX:** Good. We're staying here together right?

**KIRSTY:** I won't try and escape, if that's what you're worried about

**ALEX:** Promise?

**KIRSTY:** I already have (*Giving a scouting salute*) Pulborough Scout troop honour.. Dib Dib... I won't try and escape (*Wearily sits in one of the chairs*)

**ALEX:** Good, behave yourself and no one will get hurt. I've not got any quarrel with the weather... Not as such, although we haven't really had much of

a summer this year... Worst I can remember... But the fact is that I quite enjoy the weather forecast... you know... 'Spits and spots' ...' Mixed bag' and all that. (*Pauses and gets back to subject*) Anyway keep calm. (*Looking around and spotting the completely white projection screen*) Not much weather today then (*Pause*) Expecting snow?

**KIRSTY:** What?

**ALEX:** You know, what the white screen

**KIRSTY:** (*Looking behind her*) Oh that. No that's just the blank background they superimpose the map later on

**ALEX:** That's clever innit...So just now when you came in... that wasn't the forecast was it?

**KIRSTY:** No, that was just a rehearsal.

**ALEX:** For later this evening?

**KIRSTY:** (*Looks at watch*) We go live in about 20 minutes

**ALEX:** Bloody hell

**KIRSTY:** What?

**ALEX:** I didn't realise that I'd been lost that long...You're calm. I'd be bricking it if I was going on live telly soon

**KIRSTY:** I thought that was the point... To get your message on to live television

**ALEX:** Yeah, but you know what I mean

**KIRSTY:** I thought you'd have nerves of steel in your line of business

**ALEX:** I have... You know for revolution and that.... Just not for live telly

**KIRSTY:** You soon get used to it

**ALEX:** Yeah?

**KIRSTY:** Yes. It's like anything really... You know, it gets a bit boring really after a bit. Anyway this is my last week here.

**ALEX:** It's not?

**KIRSTY:** It is

**ALEX:** What? Moving to a bigger studio or something?

**KIRSTY:** No, I'm packing it in

**ALEX:** But you're Kirsty James aren't you?

**KIRSTY:** Yes. How do you know that? You're not a fan of the show are you?

**ALEX:** No. It's just that you're sometimes on, you know... At my Mum's place, she watches a lot of the local stuff now she can't get out so much... She'll be disappointed. You're packing it all in are you?

**KIRSTY:** Yeah... At least I'm packing in 'Gone South'

**ALEX:** Oh right, well she will be disappointed....What are you going to do then?

**KIRSTY:** I can't tell you

**ALEX:** Oh go on

**KIRSTY:** It's a bit hush hush at the moment

**ALEX:** (*Suddenly holding up lighter again*) Tell me... Remember who's in charge here

**KIRSTY:** For Goodness sake!

**ALEX:** Yeah... Sorry... It's just that I get a bit wound up when I do a raid

**KIRSTY:** I see (*Pause*) Well I suppose it doesn't hurt to say...I've got a job presenting another programme

**ALEX:** What... Local stuff

**KIRSTY:** No...National

**ALEX:** Bloody hell... Well done

**KIRSTY:** The lottery

**ALEX:** (*Disgusted*) No?

**KIRSTY:** Why not?

**ALEX:** Well, it's alright I suppose

**KIRSTY:** No go on... What's wrong with the lottery?

**ALEX:** You know what's wrong with it

**KIRSTY:** What?

**ALEX:** Well....Because it encourages the government to shirk its responsibilities in looking after the weak and the vulnerable

**KIRSTY:** Oh come on... The weak and the vulnerable probably like the lottery show... They probably like gambling as well for that matter

**ALEX:** No that's not the point... You should look at the bigger picture

**KIRSTY:** That sounds like one of my forecasts

**ALEX:** All I'm saying is that it's up to you Kirsty...I just don't know how you could... that's all

**KIRSTY:** Why not, it gets me out of this place and besides, it's the natural progression from weather forecast to lottery.

**ALEX:** I suppose so

**KIRSTY:** *(Pause)* Anyway, why are you in here?

**ALEX:** *(Shrugs)* You're the forecaster, you tell me *(Looking around)* It's pretty rubbish in here isn't it?

**KIRSTY:** I know

**ALEX:** Really amateurish....Why did they make the studio so small?

**KIRSTY:** It used to be a stationery cupboard. Some people haven't worked out yet that they've changed it. During Thursday's lunch-time update the Head of Regional Sport came in looking for some Blu-Tak

**ALEX:** That's ridiculous. Why don't they put you in the studio with the newsreaders, that's what they do with all the other regional news programmes? They're all in together like rabbits in a hutch having pretend banter and pretending to laugh at each other's inane jokes

**KIRSTY:** Yeah well, it's one of the reasons I'm going. I'm treated like a second class citizen around 'Gone South'. Apparently there's no room for me in the studio with the news presenters

**ALEX:** That's terrible

**KIRSTY:** I know

**ALEX:** Have you complained?

**KIRSTY:** Yes but everyone's pushed for space around here, that's the trouble.

**ALEX:** You should do a protest

**ALEX:** That's your answer to everything is it? They talk about moving us to a new building every so often, but it never happens. Look (*Looking around*) There's no space for anything. I can hardly change sides from left to right when I'm in front of the map

**ALEX:** It's ridiculous... You think they'd do something about it

**KIRSTY:** They won't even let me have a desk

**ALEX:** No? Why's that?

**KIRSTY:** I don't know, they didn't say

**ALEX:** Can't you move that table across

**KIRSTY:** They won't allow it, I tried it once, they made me put it back

**ALEX:** It'll probably be so that they can see your legs

**KIRSTY:** It wouldn't surprise me, that's how I'm treated around here...But it's not right though is it? They didn't make Kenneth Kendall or Huw Edwards stand about when they were doing the news do they?

**ALEX:** Who'd want to see their legs?

**KIRSTY:** I'm a trained meteorologist for God's sake

**ALEX:** In that case why do you do a regional programme after the news? Shouldn't you be doing the shipping forecast or something? (*Attempts an impression*) 'Fisher, Dogger fair to middling' I mean those local programmes, they're all... (*Thinking of a suitable word*) well... rubbish

**KIRSTY:** You've got to start somewhere in this business, they're a good place to begin

**ALEX:** What... And build up to fronting the lottery from there you mean?

**KIRSTY:** (*Irritated*) Don't take the Mickey... None of it may be your cup of tea, but people like the lottery and they like the weather for that matter... Your Mum to name one

**ALEX:** Yeah, fair enough. I suppose that it's alright for old dears but I can't stick it. All those stupid puns. Worst of all is when they try and get all the viewers involved

**KIRSTY:** It's harmless enough

**ALEX:** Have you got your own 'Kirsty's weather website'?

**KIRSTY:** So what if I have

**ALEX:** I knew it. It's ridiculous, and what about that stupid A-Z of weather you did

**KIRSTY:** So you watched that then?

**ALEX:** A for Anticyclone.... B for... (*Can't think of anything*)... Bored stiff

**KIRSTY:** Blizzards actually

**ALEX:** It's ridiculous

**KIRSTY:** What is?

**ALEX:** You know, the way that all the viewers start thinking that they're part of the show.

**KIRSTY:** Believe me, stuck away in here I'm glad of any contact at all with the outside world. Anyway, people seem to like it. What's wrong with that?

**ALEX:** It's just patronising the proletariat

**KIRSTY:** Is that right? I thought that calling people 'proletariat' would be more patronising. Look the viewers just like seeing the photographs that they've sent in being used as the background behind me as I say goodnight.

**ALEX:** But those photos are... well... rubbish... A crow in a cornfield, Bluebells next to some bloody reservoir. Snow on some old gits bird table

**KIRSTY:** It's harmless.

**ALEX:** And those God awful jumpers they make you wear...

**KIRSTY:** People send them in for me

**ALEX:** They should send them to people who need them... People starving in Africa, or somewhere

**KIRSTY:** Yes well if they sent them all to Africa they wouldn't be able to see their handy-work on the telly then would they?

**ALEX:** They would see them alright if they actually sent the cameras over to cover the real news in this world... Famine and floods and... other things. You know, rather than filming talking dogs and publicising local fetes

**KIRSTY:** What's wrong with that?

**ALEX:** And the one thing that's even worse than the local fetes... When you say 'For more information keep tuned to your local radio station' - That's got to be the worst of the lot

**KIRSTY:** Why? It doesn't do any harm does it? It seems to me that you terrorists...

**ALEX:** (*Interrupting*) Freedom fighters

**KIRSTY:** Freedom fighters then, watch an awful lot of daytime television...What's wrong with mentioning the local radio?

**ALEX:** Everything. If that was the news team speaking they wouldn't go.. Sorry can't be arsed today, go and listen to another radio station

**KIRSTY:** But it isn't the News is it? That's the point... I'm not dealing with facts in the same sort of way am I?

**ALEX:** What do you mean?

**KIRSTY:** Well, weather forecasting is not an exact science, not like News. Everyone knows that the weather is just a harmless bit of guessing, what's wrong with that?

**ALEX:** It's the death throes of a totally outmoded and bankrupt form of broadcasting

**KIRSTY:** Death throes.. What language is that?

**ALEX:** It's the language of revolution.

**KIRSTY:** (*Scornfully*) Revolution? So what is the name of your Freedom Fighters then?

**ALEX:** (*Slightly bashful*) It doesn't matter

**KIRSTY:** Yes it does. I've got a right to know who is holding me hostage

**ALEX:** Alright then (*Pause*) Parent Against Closures

**KIRSTY:** I see (*Pause*) I was going to ask if there was anyone else in the group, but I think that I know the answer to that one

**ALEX:** Don't underestimate us

**KIRSTY:** No, alright then... Sorry

**ALEX:** It wasn't always just me. There were others in it as well

**KIRSTY:** What happened to them then?

**ALEX:** Well...We had a bit of a disagreement... You know.... About our methods

**KIRSTY:** So they all left the group?

**ALEX:** Yes (*Pause*) It was a 'Him' really and yeah, he left me to it in the end. (*Pause*) I wouldn't have minded but he was the one with the kid.

**KIRSTY:** I see

**ALEX:** You can join me if you like. We are Anti- Government and Anti-Educationcuts.

**KIRSTY:** I don't think so, I'm more 'Anticyclone' really.

**ALEX:** Oh God... That's one of those jokes isn't it?

**KIRSTY:** Sorry

**ALEX:** You write them all yourself do you?

**KIRSTY:** Of course. Anyway, I don't comment on political matters... Only fetes.

**ALEX:** If you change your mind about this lottery job you let me know, I could use someone who is... You know... Media savvy

**KIRSTY:** Well you could do that part surely

**ALEX:** You reckon?

**KIRSTY:** Yes, it only takes a bit of practice really... There'll be a vacancy here after today if you fancy giving it a go

**ALEX:** Can you see me as Michael Bleeding Fish... I don't think so

**KIRSTY:** Go on then, what exactly were you going to do once you were in the news studio with your petrol can?

**ALEX:** Look I'd love to tell you, but I can't. It's a secret we don't reveal our plans, or at least only to other members of the group

**KIRSTY:** But there aren't any?

**ALEX:** No, no I suppose not... Anyway, I hadn't worked that part out yet.. It was enough to have breached security. I didn't really think that I'd get this far. I thought that they'd catch me at reception and then I could be filmed being led out shouting a few slogans. (*Points to his bag*) Look, I've even brought grappling irons and pulleys and stuff to break in, but as it turned out... Well the old boy on the entrance was asleep.

**KIRSTY:** So you had no plans for when you actually got in the studio then?

**ALEX:** No... Well sort of. I was going to take a hostage or maybe start a little fire, that sort of thing... Just enough to make sure it was reported on the TV news

**KIRSTY:** Fat chance of that being shown

**ALEX:** What do you mean?

**KIRSTY:** Well, you've seen it, that's far too violent. The only things that get shown on Gone South are if someone has a blocked sink or has trained a parrot to say the newsreaders names.