

MA in Writing Screenplay Module:

‘Cheapjack The Journeyman & Word Whisperer’

Based on Cheapjack the Biography of Philip Allingham
1943 & 2010

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Outline

This is a story about Philip Allingham who reinvents himself through the discovery of a new hidden world in Britain by meeting new types of people in different outlying towns and coastal villages across the country. Many of his encounters are with Gypsies, racial minorities and in some cases with clients who don't even speak English.

He travels as a stranger and visitor at first, to fairs and markets in a top hat and tails telling peoples' fortunes as a tick-off and later emerging somewhat triumphant as a man who has brought new words to the English language and as someone who has experienced working as a grafter in some of the roughest and toughest parts of the land.

'an astonishing autobiography of an English gentleman turned country fair mountebank' was the advertising slogan used by the publishers.

Philip decides to document his experience in writing and with messages home to family in London. He is the journeyman and the author of the book *Cheapjack* published in 1934. This story is an adaptation of the book and focal points in it.

In the beginning, Act I we find him visiting family, discussing life and celebrating St George's Day with a feast. He is closest to his sister **Margery Allingham** and father **Herbert Allingham**, both writers. Also at the table is his future brother-in-law **Pip Youngman Carter** and the **Bombay Twins** cousins. He is dissatisfied and perhaps prompted by a passage he has read from the book *Orlando* by **Virginia Woolf** and decides that evening to take off and travel, leaving the capital behind. In a conversation at the dinner table we find that Harry Selfridge, Philip's employer (and owner of Selfridges) has asked him 'where could I find a dictionary to translate English slang into normal English?' It's briefly discussed but no one has an answer because such a book doesn't exist at the time. This is a further TRIGGER POINT for Philip to go out and look for an alternative source or perhaps write his own.

Philip leaves the party with a silk that he and his sister had won at a fair as kids. His dad throws him the keys to his motorbike and tells him to stay in touch whatever he does next. Philip speeds off into a dark damp lane with plans for the morning.

The TURNING POINT 1

The next morning he posts his letter of resignation and decides on an early morning coffee and to look over some of the press he's never seen before.

A former colleague **Wolfie** spots Philip in the corner restaurant and they sit down and catch up. During this chat Philip **reveals all** about what he always best liked at work.

Later that week at his first gig he is robbed but turns that into a positive.

The core part of his journey is outlined in Act II in which key people and events take place and importantly how Philip learns from these encounters and the attachments and friendships he develops.

The screenplay is not a summary of the book but rather highlights that appear to matter to him the most, which are indicated by the way in which he writes and speaks about the characters and by my interpretation.

Philip confronts **The Militant Clergyman** in a market square and decides to literally stand up on a hay cart and thereby standing out from the crowd shouts back. It is here he learns confidence in public speaking and how to sell a point.

Three-Fingered Billie, Barney and Alfie are introduced with whom he partners in Manchester to go door knocking with what results in a successful business venture. This partnership is a new experience for Philip and one he chooses not to repeat. Knocking on people's front doors and interrupting breakfast time, trying to sell people stuff they don't want (or can afford) is often met with hostility. Unemployed men and tired housewives with too many children are a hard sell. But on this occasion Philip and his partners come up with a solution. Again he learns that **perseverance and rejection** can be used with **innovation** to provide these households with something they had never been offered !

The Screenplay is written from Philip's time at the **Newcastle Town Moor with Ezra Boss**, the chief of a Gypsy clan who seems to most people to be an intimidating character but ends up coming to Philip's rescue in a violent punch up.

Here at Newcastle, Philip gets into serious trouble that involves the local slags, Ezra's Gypsy clan, the crowd and eventually the rozzers who are called in to break it up and make arrests. Friends, acquaintances and 'legends' appear including **Tommy Tomlinson, Lionel, Inspector Joe, the Newcastle 'slags', the Little Major & Flash Jackson, tipsters & bookies, the Club-footed Colonel, 'coloured grafters', the London & Scottish windbag workers** and the **Liverpool RO boys**. The biggest fair of the year included a week of horse racing.

It is here at the MID/TURNING POINT 2 where Philip has his fortune told by a Gypsy called **Betsy Boss** who calls him the **Word Whisperer** and he realizes that part of his journey and future is to WRITE a book using his journals.

The **Whizz Mobs** and **Flash Jackson** are examples of people Philip comes to **distrust** and avoid – all part of the journey. He teaches himself by building his own **moral compass** which is **not to lie and use deception** at the cost to others in order to make a living although he has been **elastic with the truth** once when he claimed to have been a palmist to the royals. He later learns truths about people that have been arrested and done a stretch or more for fraud and theft 'and given real grafters a bad reputation'. One of them is **Daisy Gypsy Lee Boswell**.

Throughout his travels he doesn't want to be seen or treated as a misfit which means he chooses to stay in lodgings with other grafters, sleep outside under tarpaulin in the rain, drink with the Gypsies and write his diary/journal by paraffin lamp in a doss house. However Philip blends in naturally to this way of life without conscious effort.

Sally Fisher a teenager and his main hair model for his new product the hair wavers **teaches him** something about children and his **vulnerabilities** in being able to care for a child responsibly. He builds up a very close relationship with Sally over the months they are on the road because he has met the family and seen the utter poverty from where she has come. And although a very quiet girl, Philip senses a **certain wisdom in her silence**. Perhaps it is her unflappable patience in a crowd, but when she rarely speaks it is quite profound for a girl so young. Philip likens her to a little white kitten.

During the final days of his journey for which he has never had a destination or time attached, Philip is offered a job by Pip Youngman Carter back in London but his final task is to take Sally Fisher home to the slum lands of South Shields. He delays a direct journey back to her place of birth by stopping off at every available market on the way, regretting that he hadn't stayed in Banbury longer. Then upon 'bumping' into trusted old mates, **Little Major and Three-Fingered Bill** at a pub to say his farewells, Sally speaks quietly, putting further doubt and confusion in his mind;

"There's enough gear in the back (of the car) to take nearly thirty pounds"

Philip tells her that he "can take it back to the swag shop. What's the difference"

Sally retorts "The difference between thirty shillings and thirty pounds"

Philip notes that, 'She spoke with the quiet indifference of one who knows what she is talking about'. (Quoted from page 301 of *Cheapjack*, the last page of the book) ! Sally Fisher a teenager and his main hair model for his new product the hair wavers teaches him something about children and his vulnerabilities in being able to care for a child responsibly. He builds up a very close relationship with Sally over the months they are on the road because he has met the family and seen the utter poverty from where she has come. And although a very quiet girl, Philip senses a certain wisdom in her silence. Perhaps it is her unflappable patience in a crowd, but when she rarely speaks it is quite profound for a girl so young. Philip likens her to a little white kitten.

End of Act II.

The final third part and CLIMAX is Philip achieving his OUTER GOAL and how he reunites with his family back in London going through his many diaries, letters and a draft manuscript to bring his journey to life in the book. Excitement and drama pursue as Margery Allingham helps Philip with editing work and brings in her connections within the publishing world.

They team up together with the publisher and find an illustrator for the dust jacket.

The legacy of this story is the book which is an instant best seller both sides of the Atlantic and it is a fact today in 2014 after a recent re-print that the book stills shows life for an adaptation.

Cheap-jack (noun) *A seller of low-priced, shoddy or second goods; a hawker*
(Websters Revised Unabridged Dictionary)

Act 1

Philip Allingham, dissatisfied with his life as a copywriter leaves work at Selfridges and is on his way to his sister Margery's family get together in East London, Essex. He's in a London black Austin taxi going around Piccadilly Circus. It's 23rd April, 1927, St George's Day. There is a light afternoon spring rain.

Philip arrives at Margery's sits and writes a message in a book. It is a first copy of Virginia Woolf's new book *Orlando*. He sits down at the writing bureau and grabs a top hat off a bust of Wellington on the piano. It is a dusty old hat that Margery and he had won at Hampton Court fair as children.

Dearest Marge,

'Lady Orlando covertly escapes Constantinople in the company of a Gypsy clan. She adopts their way of life....'

I hope the book gives you the same pleasure as it has me. Sorry I've already read it – you know how I love to explore new things.

Love Philip xxxx

Phillip joins the others and goes on to tell them how he met Harry yesterday 'I love his American accent and smart clothes. A really friendly bloke... Yeah he dropped into the advertising department with some new ideas for a magazine and I offered him a coffee and we sort of got chatting. He was fascinated by the differences in the English we use here compared to his home in America. He asked me if there was a type of dictionary or book explaining the London slang he comes across so often.

Pip Youngman Carter tells Philip that he's not heard of one yet and that it sounds like a great idea for someone to sink their teeth into. 'If you hear of one please pick me up a copy. I could do with one right now. I mean with all the dialects and cockney rhyming slang around the city even I get confused'

Margery agrees that she's looked up words she'd heard in Billingsgate fish market and elsewhere when she's out shopping and that they're not even listed in the dictionarythe OED she relies on, when writing.

The family move into the library for some after dinner entertainment but Philip tells Margery that he has 'to go and see a man about a dog and prepare for his journey to work in the morning.

Philip pulls open the doors to the garage and lifts the cover off Herbert's sidecar motorcycle. He gets it started after a few attempts and then drives off up the dark lane. His top hap is safe in the covered sidecar.

Next day, Philip posts his resignation letter to Harry Selfridge and decides to wander around central London for inspiration. But he first picks up several newspapers and magazines from a news-stand and sits down for a coffee at the Corner House on Coventry Street. He lights a cigarette, cleans his silk hat and starts browsing through the press deep in thought.

What he enjoyed most was telling peoples fortunes – and so decides to start making notes and starts writing on one of the restaurant napkins. He has decided to keep a diary of sorts.

He's reading the World Fair magazine and begins circling adverts of fairs and markets around the country. Wolfie a former colleague at Dorland's Advertising Agents knock on the restaurant window to get Philip's attention.

They sit comfortably and chat about the past couple of years in each other lives. Wolfie agrees with Philip that he always seemed to perform best at work when he wasn't actually working 'I mean you'd stay on at those office parties for hours telling people about their future, fame and fortune' Philip agreed that the only thing you could learn at school was what was already written in books and they didn't allow you to be creative.

Philip decides that the best place to start should be his home town of London, pays for his coffee and begins walking down the West End into New Compton Street looking for punters. He then goes into a pub in Whitehall and approaches a group of drinkers and is politely asked to get out.

He doesn't have much luck in Westminster where the bowler hat brigade scoff at him, eccentrically dressed in his full evening kit. He manages to get some advice at the Silver Slipper Club which was to move on.

Philip goes back to his flat in Fulham Road and hands the keys back to the landlord and tells him he's off on his new career journey to Southall Fair. He packs his few belongings into the motorbike and hits the road.

At his first fair he manages to hire a palmistry tent for a few shillings but after a very hard days graft doing the tick-off he realizes when packing up that the bag where he had kept his takings had been swiped from a whole in the back of the tent.

More note taking took place on what not to do and in the back of his diary he scribbled the new 'lingo' that he had learnt. "Well if nothing else I might one day get a book out of this"

Philip heads to Leeds in the north of England for the well know Hunslet Bank Holiday Feast. In setting up his pitch and chatting with other grafters in the early morning he meets **Prince Bullayow, Professor Ali Singh** aka **Sammy York** and gypsy boss **Ezra Boss**.

Philip seems to generate an aura about him that combines **fascination, intrigue and naivety** because it is the tough but fair minded Ezra that studies him from a distance and makes the first contact.

He learns from chatting with his new friend Ezra how important it is to be part of a clan in Gypsy life and how one and other look out for each other in times of trouble and strife.

Ezra makes Philip a promise after they part company in Leeds. They meet again in Newcastle and become aware of what it really means when a man says he'll keep his word.

Philip's next destination is the coastal village of Whitby where the annual regatta is held. He meets new friends **Little Major, Doncaster Jock** and **Sheeny Louie**.

His skills are getting better, putting up signage advertising what he does and his income is £3 17 shillings for the day.

In the evening he makes careful notes on some of the new language he has learnt – R.O for Run Out, parny for rain and gazers for people with no fixed pitch.

He's beginning to enjoy himself and discusses how business was for the day over a couple of drinks with his new mates in a local tavern.

In Aston-under-Lyne Philip has a stand-off shouting match with what he calls the **Church Militant** and for the first time he climbs up on a hay cart to voice his opposition. Philip decides that being 'mounted' means more people can hear him speak so he decides to become a 'mounted pitcher' from then on. So at his next fair he decides to build a small platform from which to speak.

The somewhat aggressive exchange and delivery of words and ideas with the clergyman has brought out a new confidence in Philip – an ability to speak out in public with his own strong ideas.

At Oldham in Lancashire there were over 50 stalls and he meets the infamous **Madame Clarissa**, the first palmist to ever give him advice of a good fair to go to next. Grafters are normally always in competition with each other so the less of them the better.

He writes two new words in his diary – that splits and rozzers means policemen. He also makes a note to himself whether this new slang is used across the whole of the UK or just in the north?

In Llandudno, Wales. Philip is shocked by a few new appearances of the somewhat macabre Mary Ann... Firstly he meets **George Dell the Ring Master** Head of a Gypsy travelling caravan who is suspicious of everyone and talks very little. They are known as 'living-wagons' attached to a large tent with huge gold inscription "The Original Royal Gypsy, Palmist" – who is never seen or does she even exist?

He befriends the gentle **Mary Ann Bevan** who makes her money as the **Ugliest Woman in the World** who got the job when her employer, a farmer told her to stop picking spuds and to start charging people to look at her! After all her ugliness was her greatest asset whilst she was alive.

Still in Wales it is an autumn day and Philip rents a room at a B&B, the Red Dog run by several sisters in a place called **Mold**.

He feels lost in this unexplored part of the country where most families were very poor and travelling by rail was considered a luxury. He admits to being amongst foreigners where the strong English Welsh accent was difficult to understand and since half of the townsfolk spoke in Welsh or a combination of the two communication resorted to hand gestures and body language.

In a pub off the beaten track he came across a man (**Stranger FF**) who claimed to work for the FARMER'S FRIEND who knew all the local farmers and said he would introduce Philip to the locals on a commission basis.

The Stranger acted as Philip's doorman and introduced many farmers at a highly inflated 15 shillings. Philip felt obliged and desperate, to think up anything worth this much to tell them about their future and admits; 'I had quite a good day at **No Name** in the end. Of course I had been most dishonest'.

No Name was the name of the hamlet and field where he had worked that day. That evening Philip made few notes in his diary that evening and scrawled them in red ink after several large whiskies back at the Red Dog.

Back in Mold he meets **Napoleon Jack** working the street with the flip and muzzel (flip meant racing tip and muzzel a Jewish word for luck – sold lucky charms).

Described as ‘a tall African nigger with a closely clipped head rose to a dome like a coconut...bright red jacket...embroidered with gold and bright blue loosely fitting trousers....well over 6ft and exceptionally long arms’

Next morning Philip checks out of the Black Lion after a double brandy and cider for breakfast and has had enough of Wales and heads for the **Royal Gypsy** caravan in Hull.

In Hull he meets many strange and interesting people including **Mad Jack the Jew**, **Peter the Whistler** who was a gazer and **Madame Suzie Sixpence** who tries to marry him off for business.

He disgraces himself by accident whilst lodging in digs of a Jewess by ‘asking for milk in my tea while we were eating meat’

Left Hull and matrimony behind and decide to head back to the ‘Smoke’ known as London.

Philip goes out on an all-night bender visiting all his old haunts and wakes up in a **Kings Cross police station** with little memory of the night before but grateful to the kind policemen who took care of him so well.

Robbed by the two men with gloves. It had been raining that morning when Philip left the police station and hung over he wasn’t quite himself. (1) Outside a swanky hotel he had allowed a porter to hail him a taxi (‘a magnificent fellow with the splendor of a pre-war Russian uniform’) and over tipped him by mistake. Out of kindness.

(2) Chatting with **Blue Eyes**, an odd foreign man outside an open-all-night-café who spoke non-stop gibberish - Philip grabbed another taxi out of desperation and overpaid the driver. Blue Eyes had also been wearing gloves.

Philip writes vivid notes on the ‘double-glovers’ in two different letters which he posts to Margery and Philip the following morning from Euston trains station. He’s heading to Carnarvon Castle in Wales for his first winter on the road.

Meets new grafters **London Joe, Clarry and Cross-Eyed Charlie.**

Carries out the Door Knocking scam and spends an evening in front of a fire, writing pages of new rhyming slang he has picked up....Romany, Yiddish & Italian.

Ends his second diary with ‘very useful to speak a language that is universally known by grafters!’

In the city of Manchester Philip teams up with **Three-fingered Billy, Barney & Alfie** to sell the best door knockers pitch ever.

They act as members of the Shopkeepers' Protection Association and sell enamel signs to nearly everyone – to hang on their front doors. The sign reads '**NO HAWKERS, CIRCULARS, CANVASSERS!**

In London Philip meets one of the worst conmen he has ever come across – **Flash Jackson FJ** who acts as a Theatrical Agent conning 'investors' out of £300 or more from a seedy office off Leicester Square.

The only great thing to emerge from their brief acquaintance was **FJ's** introduction of the new **Hair Waver**, a metal device that allowed women to curl/wave their hair. This was to be Philip's new business venture.

First attempt at selling his new product the hair WEVERS using a life sized dummy head, a wig and a Primus stove.

'The waver is a tin cylinder, flattened slightly and sealed at one end with a two legged clip attached....using a very hot iron pin with a wooden handle thrust into the cylinder'. Much could go wrong and there were many lamentable failures.

Philip learns the art of confidence in speaking and selling to an audience.

He meets **crook Alfie Holmsworth** who 'hire' dancers for on-stage auditions selling tickets to a crowd who were allowed to bombard the new dancers (Gloria Eve & Ms Smith) with tomatoes, cabbages and anything else they could find. Alfie called it stage training! He was a dark character.

London was unlucky for Philip.

Screenplay Starts

At Newcastle Town Moor he tries the mounted pitcher for the hair wavers but gets into serious difficulties with a belligerent mob but is rescued by his Gypsy friend **Ezra Boss** and his tribesmen.

Very mixed bunch – **club footed colonel, Gray Brothers, Little Major, Napoleon Jackson, the Whizz Mob's Little Peter & Black Diamond with Birmingham Bob.**

At the end of that long bittersweet day Philip opened a second diary and wrote with great concentration, speaking to no one except himself occasionally. His company was brandy and a paraffin lamp.

Every day he improved as a pitcher averaging £30/week. The secret of making money was to start early and work the whole day.

South Shields was a landmark fair for Philip. He met his first permanent real life model, a young teenager from a squalid background named **Sally Fisher** who he went on to work with for many many months ahead.

As he noted 'my model was my chief difficulty and ever present problem. Children made the best models....less self-conscious...and more likely to sit still'

He sought permission from her parents to travel with Sally and met them at their home in what he found to be 'the most terrifying slum I had ever seen'. **Very shocked and sad.**

Mrs Coleman became the landlady for his home in the north and a maternal caretaker to Sally.

In his letter to his mother Emily the following morning, Philip wrote '**I eventually found kindness in that household which I had never before known**'.

Back in Whitby with Sally, Philip realized he had become one of the best grafters on the road. Encountered Mad Jack the Gazer who was possibly mentally insane. At Darlington Philip bought a car for the first time – an old bullet-nosed Morris for £15. Three-fingered Billy teaches him his new graft selling “**Scarperfly**” using a huge mutton bone and a decrepit cod’s head.

Sally returns home for school and Philip is lost without her. Times were getting harder and he meets Ted Riderout a famous crocus/doctor who travelled with animals selling a type of skin salve. Ted used a real **Grizzly Bear**.

Honest Brother Adams joins the show and is a former Salvation Army man selling herbs and he and Philip become friends (the majority of grafters didn’t like the Army because they had a loud band that took business and attention away from them).

Another new illusion is performed by the Little Major known as **Ernie Berners Spider Woman**.

Philip rehires Sally and takes her south to London in his old Citroen and turns up at his sister Margery Allingham’s home in Essex to leave Sally while he heads for a night out in the West End.

Back to Hull with Sally a week later in a brand new Austin Morris. Winter was again approaching but Philip felt he had accomplished quite a lot with the week he had spent with Margery discussing letters and telegrams he had sent her and leaving behind his precious diaries and notes. Herbert his father had dropped by for a couple of evenings to discuss Philip’s future plans.

The rain was heavy and business bad. Philip looked to the Little Major for ideas and they came up with the ‘**Stinker**’ using a goldfish bowl, tea strainer and saucepan lid to perform **The Mystic Writer** aka **The Gypsy Queen**. Sally was disguised in an old dressing gown, cheap pearls and a mask he had bought from Woolworths. **Failed** to make any real money.

Christmas 1933 Philip took Sally back to London to meet all of his family. **Pip Youngman Carter** his brother-in-law had been chatting with friends at the **Tatler** magazine where he worked and thought he could get him a column on a full time basis. **A job offer for the following year – 1934.**

In January 1934 Philip decided it was time for Sally to go home. Set off from London for South Shields at dawn. On the way he spots the Little Major and Three-fingered Billy at the Turk’s Head pub near Banbury standing outside chatting. Time to say his goodbyes and farewells.

Sally is left in the car. Philip heads back to the car after an hour chatting with his mates and gets back into the car.

Philip and Sally have a short conversation. The conversation is observed from the pub but not heard. The car starts and they head off ‘back on the road again’ for a few more months.

ACT III

It had been a busy few months for Margery Allingham who has been devoting her time and literary skills to Philip's manuscript, which when handed to her in the beginning, was little more than a pile of notes scribbled in 3 or 4 scruffy diaries, pieces of torn stained paper, backs of damp envelopes and some newspaper cuttings. Philip was not fond of using dates.

Margery had the literary skills and the pressure of her father to turn this into a book. Indeed she 'cut and shaped the manuscript, did rewrites, kept an eye on it for balance and added rhythm'. But Philip added the really crucial element to it all which was his quality of energy and directness in writing, from events that actually happened on the road over a number of years with real people.

Philip did bring home a currency all the Allinghams understood – words.

Margery has drafted in her publisher, Dwey Evans from WILLIAM HEINEMAN LTD who have a pedigree of success with J B PRIESTLEY'S *Good Companion* a few years earlier in 1929.

Dwey, Herbert, Philip, Margery and Pip meet at the offices of the publisher in Fleet Street on a snowy afternoon in December 1933. Their aim is to go through the first draft of the manuscript of the book with a publication date of June the following year – a summer book launch is set.

Dwey is working studiously with his colleagues and partners at The Crum Creek Press in Carmel in the United States. They communicate by mail, telegrams and telephone to make alterations to the US version of the text so it is more reader friendly to the American market.

There are countless meetings at their offices to make corrections, rewrite certain chapters and find the correct illustrator for the book's cover.

It is all agreed that Pip Youngman Carter should illustrate the dust jacket for the first UK edition so he goes ahead with this and produces a cartoon like image of Philip Allingham skipping down a woodland path toward a fairground in the horizon. He's carrying a leather suitcase in his left hand and tucked under his right arm are a pair of sticks that unravel into a sign. He's dressed in a top hat and tails.

The cover simply reads as a heading in red, 'CHEAPJACK' and below this it says 'First Cheap Edition' and at the foot of the cover it has the author's name 'PHILIP ALLINGHAM'.

It was launched in June 1934 at the price of 7 shillings and six pence. It was an immediate best seller!

Treatment

There is much language that is never spoken and that is the job of the producers, sound engineers, costume department and cameras in collaboration with the writer. Let's call it a visual language. It needs to be **added to** the story **Outline** to help the settings in the **Screenplay** work better. Bear in mind that this is a **type of period drama** set in the 1920'-30' in towns, cities and villages – and in some cases hamlets such as No Name in Wales. But in reaching these various destinations, great areas of green farming landscape must be traversed – some of it unchartered.

Where does much of it take place?

The routes of Philip's journey criss-cross the map erratically but we know many of the key locations : London's Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square, West End theatres, Kings Cross police station, Essex, Whitby fishing village, Newcastle Town Moor and race course, Manchester and the South Shield slums, Newbury & Slough, Wales and various pubs, hotels, inns and lodgings. Fairgrounds and markets!

I have added Big Ben and Houses of Parliament in the final part of the screenplay

How does Philip and his partners get around the country?

Philip uses the 'rattler' and GWR train, the London Underground, London taxi (Austin 7), Citroen and snub-nose Morris cars, a fishing boat in Whitby and a motorbike with sidecar. Horse drawn carts were also a mode of transport. There was of course a lot of walking and climbing.

Branding and Product Placements

These elements of the play add authenticity and in some cases appear in the book. Additionally they are used by studios, producers and financiers to fund a project through sponsorship.

Common advertising signage and products that could appear because they were a common day consumer items of the time are:

STAR vacuum cleaners, **Belling** range cookers, **CADBURY's**, **WRIGLEY'S**, **BRYLCREEM**, **Gillette**, **Schweppes**, **Bovril**, **Woolworths** and **Selfridges** (where he shopped and worked respectively). **Colman's Mustard**. **HEINZ**. **Rhino Stationery**

Nash's Women's magazine, Motion Picture, Daily Telegraph, Daily Sketch, News Chronicle, Sunday Times.

Cigarettes - **Wills's Flag**, **Golden Flake** and **Wild Woodbine** brands. **Pall Mall**. **Camel**, **Lucky Strike** and **Chesterfield**. **Union Workman's Chewing Tobacco**.

I elaborate on this in the **Commentary** from my own work life experience.

Screenplay

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE OF NEWCASTLE - 1930

It's early morning. A classy looking Austin 7 makes its way along the road heading into the town. The car continues towards TOWN MOOR where a large banner can be seen, it reads WELCOME TO RACE WEEK - NORTHUMBERLAND PLATE.

EXT. TOWN MOOR - DAY - SUNDAY

PHILIP ALLINGHAM parks his car on the grassy verge of the roped off market grounds, gets out and gazes around his new territory. The green fields are sun bleached in places where cattle have been grazing and on this clear day the horizons are punctuated by church spires and there is the faint chiming of bells in the distance.

PHILIP stretches, lights a cigarette and is delighted by the amount of activity going on. Hundreds of colourfully dressed strangers are setting up tents, painting signs and chatting with one another. A familiar sight.

He opens the boot of his car to check his gear. Packed inside is his kit, bottles of hair tonic, a new product designed to help women or anyone, who wants to curl their hair. Philip can set up shop at a moment's notice. Satisfied that everything made it through the journey without casualty, he closes the boot and looks around.

He spots a quaint Tudor looking pub further down on the quayside surrounded by a small crowd of drinkers and after claiming his pitch, decides to head over to quench his thirst.

PHILIP
(makes a mental note
out loud)

If you want to know what's going on in town always head to the busiest looking pub. People chat and gossip about local news.

INT. HORSE & GROOM - PUBLIC HOUSE- DAY

PHILIP orders a pint and heads straight over to a man standing at the bar.

TOMMY TOMLINSON is dressed in a crumpled trench coat, wearing a flat cap, red silk waistcoat with bloodshot watering eyes. His tobacco-stained fingers play constantly with a shilling coin and he speaks in a Geordie accent.

He's a tall man, well fed and rather rough around the edges and looks as he doesn't like to shave. PHILIP leans in to gain TOMMY'S attention.

PHILIP

You're Tomlinson aren't you? We met briefly at the Potteries market yesterday.

TOMMY

Yeah that's right... You're Philip the bloke who sometimes calls himself Orbando or something like it.

PHILIP

Orlando actually, but that was when I was doing the tick-off, I'm now a mounted-pitcher selling hair wavers. Just call me Philip. Can I get you a round?

TOMMY

That'd be grand of you... I'll have a pint of the brown stuff and a double.

PHILIP

What is it you do? Something to do with the races?

TOMMY

Cheers... thanks mate.

PHILIP

Cheers... thanks Tommy.

TOMMY

Yeah, I'm a tipster and get to know what's going on with the gee gees, riders, owners and such like. And the bookmakers give me a nod and a wink with a couple of phunt here and there to find out what's really bloody going on... that way the only people who really lose big are the poor bastards betting. The bookies get the gelt!... 'ow it's always bin.

He knocks back the double.

PHILIP

That sounds complicated. How do you know who's going to win or lose?

TOMMY

I don't most of the time. That's the job of the bookies and how they decide to fix it. 'eres my tip from one grafter to another. Don't bet on others, bet on yourself.

PHILIP

You mean the races are fixed?

TOMMY

(laughs)

I didn't say that did I... but I can tell you that at the end of this week the real winners aren't the 'orses! You're from the Smoke aren't ya Phil? Bet this the first time you been 'ere right?

PHILIP

Yeah to Newcastle, but I've been on the road off and on for a couple of years now. And yes, I'm from the Smoke... the Essex Smoke originally.

TOMMY

(laughs)

So you don't know much about the reputation of this 'ere quayside other than there's a bunch of boats and some merchant sea guys?

PHILIP

Well, no. What more is there?

PHILIP orders two more rounds and pays with coins from a leather purse around his waist. TOMMY rolls a couple of smokes from his Virginia tobacco tin, passes PHILIP one and they both light up. TOMMY strikes a match on the heel of his boot and passes the flame to PHILIP first.

TOMMY

(hacks, coughs and spits on the floor)

I'll do my best to explain it in language that you'll understand.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

The quayside is supposed to be free tober but it's really in the 'ands of several slags. Not your usual run of the mill type slag but your Newcastle special... He makes up part of the race gang you see?

PHILIP

I think I'm with you so far...

TOMMY

Well our slags 'ere will pick a fight with anyone for a bit of silver... and they control the quayside and who's allowed to work on it. Don't forget Phil that this is the toughest part of town and you've got to watch yourself.

Don't ask any questions!

PHILIP

(shows concern)

Jesus, I hear what you're saying. Thanks for the tip. Shall we have one more round and head down that way?

TOMMY

It's not a tip mate it's advice from experience and someone who bin in a few scraps!

PHILIP

Let's leave and go and get comfortable in Orlando.

TOMMY

Mate, who, what and where is Orlando?

PHILIP

Orlando is my old jalopy the car that has taken me all over the country - she's sometimes the only roof over my head when I can't find lodgings and a very reliable od soul.

TOMMY

Why do you call her Orlando?

PHILIP

Well partly because of the fabulous new book Orlando by Virginia Woolf, and also because my godfather bestowed that name upon me when I was baptized.

TOMMY

Okay, Saint Orlando here we come.

PHILIP

(smiles mischievously)

I like that Tommy - Saint Orlando!

Philip and Tommy finish their drinks and decide to check out the morning activities down at the quayside. Tommy waves to a couple of guys across the room as they leave, and they salute back.

EXT. QUAYSIDE

Philip and Tommy walk towards Philip's car. It is a second hand Austin 7 that Philip has given the magical touch. The large eye like headlamps are brushed with gold and the cream body is highly polished. Her tyres are thick and reliable with gleaming steel spokes.

Tommy takes a moment to admire the car, in the background the quayside market is getting ready for business.

TOMMY

(whistles)

She's nice.

PHILIP

(smiles)

Cheers. Hop in.

INT. PHILIP'S CAR - ORLANDO - QUAYSIDE

The men take seats in the front of the car and wind down the windows to give them a great view of the world around them.

PHILIP

(excited)

Tommy I didn't expect so many people at ten in the morning. What an amazing kaleidoscope of colours, shapes and sizes.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

(beat)

I mean those tipsters why are they dressed like jockeys? They look like they eat Guinness and mutton pie five times a day washed down by a few yards of ale!

TOMMY

(smiles)

Yep. Biggest market in the country. You should fit right in with your top hat and tails. There's grafters from all round the country 'ere and they liked to get dressed up for the party... It's only once a year and don't cost you anything to just watch and soak it all in.

PHILIP

Who's that bloke with the club foot and enormous stomach?

TOMMY

You'll have to be a bit clearer than that Phil, there's thousands of people all over this monkery.

PHILIP

(frustrated)

Okay he's fat, wearing blue silk trousers that look like they're about to split, a sort of threadbare swallow-tail glossy coat and race-glasses around his neck! And maybe a wig?

TOMMY

(flips his shilling
in the air)

Oh the good old Colonel. He's bin 'ere every year since I've been alive. Tells folk he fought in the Crimean, fell of a 'orse and that's why he's got a dodgy leg. I think it's gout from too many late nights in the boozier...

PHILIP

Don't tell! me! He's riding the favourite at 2-1!

TOMMY

(laughs out loud)

Na. He's a tipster like me. I think the rozzers'd probably cuff 'im if he tried to mount a horse - or anything else for that matter.

Both men laugh and then sit quietly watching the activity outside. After a moment Tommy shifts in his seat.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Well, I suppose I'd better get on with my day.

PHILIP

Yeah, I need to find some lodgings so I'm set for tomorrow and get an early night.

TOMMY

Thanks for the drinks. And if you happen to bump into Ezra Boss, be careful.

PHILIP

I know that name from somewhere. I think we've met. Who's Ezra Boss?

TOMMY

He's one of the gaffers, one of the big Gypsy bosses and you won't want as an enemy... 'e don't have many friends and don't say a lot... but he's a good bloke. If you stay on the right side of him. He'll surely notice a new guy in town - so watch your step.

PHILIP

Thanks Tommy, I will.

The two men get out of the car and head off in opposite directions.

EXT. QUAYSIDE FAIR. LATE AFTERNOON

Philip wanders around taking in all the sights and sounds of the fair, soaking up the carnival atmosphere.

The quayside represents the diversity of the crowds with men in working overalls, hobnail boots, slicked back hair and pale complexions who probably mined during daylight as a living.

Others are wearing black waistcoats and colourful bow ties with ironed cream linen trousers and top hats.

Children are running around playing tag and hide and seek whilst being shouted at by their mums who seem to be uniformly dressed in their Sunday best - mainly lilac and yellow floral attire, lace collars and glossy handbags.

The Gypsy community keeps to themselves but stand out in their multi-coloured silk patchwork dresses, bold gold and diamond jewelry, wrap around scarves and highly polished black leather knee-high boots.

Philip spots a sign offering lodgings in a small but clean looking cottage window and decides to call it a day.

INT. LODGINGS. NIGHT.

Philip writes in his new leather bound diary. He is sat on the rough wooden floorboards in his room with an oil lamp. He writes with great concentration and enthusiasm but with secrecy as if others could hear his words on the page.

He suddenly remembers to call his confidante and close sister MARGERY ALLINGHAM to share his thoughts. He stands up and leaves the bedroom heading downstairs.

INT. LODGINGS - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Philip climbs down the narrow stairwell and walks through the front room and then peers into the kitchen.

INT. LODGINGS - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The landlady and some guests sit around a small wooden table as several animated conversations take place. Philip waits patiently for the opportunity to interrupt, but none present themselves and he eventually he chimes in.

PHILIP

Excuse me. May I use the telephone?

LANDLADY

Okay Philip, that will cost you a shilling. Help yourself it's down the hall.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Philip picks up the candlestick telephone clumsily and dials '0' for the Operator.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Name and number please?

PHILIP

I'm Philip Allingham and I'll have to find the number here -

OPERATOR (V.O.)

(frustratingly)

No sir. Who are you calling?

PHILIP

(smiles)

Oh I see, I'm still quite new to this... Margery Allingham, Essex 1934.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Thank you sir. Connecting you.

Philip listens intently as the call connects.

MARGERY (V.O)

Hello?

PHILIP

Hi Marge it's your brother Philip, I know it's late but I wanted to read you some notes I've made. I'll be sending you a copy - bit tired but here goes... Day one - made it safely to Newcastle and thankfully bumped into Tommy Tomlinson who filled me in on much of what's going on. Many interesting characters including a fat Colonel, the strongmen Gray brothers selling lotions to cure rheumatism. The Delmo brothers were doing a type of tick-off that I hadn't seen before.

(turns page of notebook)

Bumped into the Little Major again and Napoleon Jackson. Dozen or so different coloured grafters selling lucky charms,

PHILIP (CONT'D)
snake oils and all sorts of medicines.
(pauses to take a
breath)

MARGERY
Philip slow down. I know you said
you are going to send this to me
in writing but do you want me to
tell dad Herbert?

PHILIP
No thanks, please let me finish.
There were the windbag workers
from London and Scotland while the
Liverpool RO boys were doing good
business. Think I saw all the
people I had ever met on the
fair- grounds. Looking forward to
working tomorrow. I won't ask you
for any comments yet but thanks
for listening. Sleep well and
love to dad. And of course keep
that great mind of yours working
with your writing on the
detective Campion novels!

EXT. TOWN MOOR.

Quick shots of PHILIP setting up shop. He is confident.
He has worked up his spiel, fanny and tale until it is
practically nark proof.

PHILIP slowly attracting customers.

PHILIP working, taking money looking pleased with
himself.

PHILIP now working the mounted pitcher where he climbed
up upon his stage and shouted for two hours or more to a
crowd of 200-300.

PHILIP hires a girl model for the wavers and business
improves. Within two days he'd taken £18 all in
shillings. Philip thought that the wavers must be new to
Newcastle.

EXT. TOWN MOOR - DAYS LATER

LIONEL, an odd looking character dressed like he's come from a funeral approaches Philip with a quizzical look on his face. He wears rose tinted round lenses in his glasses, which match his pointed pink crocodile shoes.

Philip is clutching a newspaper and attempting to do the crossword puzzle.

LIONEL

Morning Philip how come you're not up on your mount?

Philip looks up surprised.

PHILIP

(raspy voice)

Sorry do we know each other?

LIONEL

We might I'm not sure yet... but I'm Lionel, a tipster mate of Tommy's and I heard you yelling yesterday and thought you were doing good. Thought I'd say hello and get to know you.

PHILIP

Cheers. Problem is today... I've nearly lost my voice and don't think I'll be doing much pitching.

LIONEL

Well what you need is to start drinking olive oil to lubricate your throat. Hang in there and I'll get you a bottle... Don't worry it happens to us all. You'll be right as rain by this afternoon and the entire tober will be hearing you!

Philip watches as Lionel walks away and then into an alley. He shakes his head not knowing what to think and returns to his puzzle. A minute later Lionel returns with two pints of olive oil. Lionel hands the olive oil to him and Philip tucks the paper under his arm and accepts the offering.

PHILIP

Thanks Lionel. Where did you get it?

(CONTINUE)

PHILIP (CONT'D)

And who is Olive and why does she make oil?

LIONEL

(chuckles)

Good old Gypsy Lee keeps a stash for her mates. Olive's not a person the oil is made from the fruit, an olive. Can I ask if you're one of the Allinghams from Essex - because you look familiar?

PHILIP

(surprised)

Well yes, as a matter of fact I am how do you know that?

LIONEL

I wasn't certain but I worked with a great journalist on the London Gazette a few years ago during the war. He was a great guy who loved to talk and show us all pictures of his family. He was called Herbert Allingham so I've actually seen a photo of you with a young girl at about ten years old.

PHILIP

(momentarily lost for words)

Yeah that sounds like my dad and he's writing a daily column for the Daily Express these days. What were you doing at the Gazette?

LIONEL

(grins to show a gold tooth)

I'm still there drawing political cartoons, reporting on the theatre in the West End and setting the odd puzzle or two.

PHILIP

So that's you. The girl you saw in the picture next to me was almost certainly my sister Margery, who's also still an Allingham. She's doing pretty well herself as a writer these days. She's writes-

(CONTINUE)

LIONEL

(interrupts)

Yes, I've been following your sister's work for a while now. Herbert and I are still in touch sometimes and when we meet up in London for a drink he fills me in on the Allingham clan. I hear she's writing detective novels now?

PHILIP

(looking happy and confident)

Yes. She's invented this character Inspector Albert Campion, two of them have been published and she's working on her third right now. In fact, I'm keeping diaries of my travels around the country that I'm going to give her when I finally return home. And see what she thinks of them as a book idea!

LIONEL

Sounds interesting have you got a name for it yet?

PHILIP

No, it's still wishful thinking at this point but I'm sure Marge or dad will come up with an idea...

There is a lull in the conversation as they both ponder what has been said. Philip gets out his diary and jots down a note as Lionel polishes his glasses holding them up to the sunlight.

PHILIP

You mentioned Gypsy Lee earlier- seems to be many of them?

LIONEL

Daisy Boswell is the original. Queen of 'em all.

PHILIP

Sorry Lionel. I'll have to ask you do most of the talking until the oil does its thing.

Philip drinks about half the bottle without stopping.

(CONTINUE)

LIONEL

No worries Phil. Daisy's only just come out of stir... Bet she got gelt out of the wardens. She can get more gelt in five minutes than any other tick-off will find on the tober in a week. But problem is she don't know 'ow to spend 'er dough.

PHILIP

(confused)

Please elaborate.

LIONEL

Whenever she walks into a hostelry she stand everyone for a drink.

Even people she don't know. Mind you, in her scarlet boots laced to her knees, diamonds and fur coats she doesn't have to say much to get attention, which is why she gets so many customers.

Problem is she's been in trouble with the rozzers about how she runs her business. It ain't right to be honest!?

PHILIP

You mean she's done a stretch?

LIONEL

Na, just a wooden last time... You know a moon?

PHILIP

No I don't know what a wooden moon is.

LIONEL

A month inside for the fur coat job... she told a customer that their fur coat carried a bad spell and they 'ad to leave it with her for safety. Well, she went an' sold it for some good gelt and the rozzers caught up with her...

PHILIP

(voice improved)

This oil stuff works.

(MORE)

(CONTINUE)

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Well fancy hoping to get away with a thing like that... A person with her reputation can't just expect to get away with that and disappear into thin air!

LIONEL

Well she disappears alright but to the nearest jail cell. Like me now I'm going to leave ya and have a chat with me book maker. Good luck this afternoon with the voice.

PHILIP

Thanks Lionel, it was a fantastic pleasure meeting with someone who knows my family. Let's please stay in touch I'm going to write our chance meeting into the book.

EXT. PHILIP ON MOUNTED PITCH.

PHILIP is on the mounted pitch shouting to the crowd.

A very drunk aggressive man lurches into his pitch, the crowd begins to disperse and the man refuses to be silenced.

PHILIP jumps down and grabs the man to lead him off.

PHILIP

Now come along old boy. Get out of this.

DRUNKEN MAN

(slurred speech)

Git off me... Go back to London... or I'll bloody make ya.

PHILIP swings at the man and catches him on the chin.

PHILIP is taken by SURPRISE as SOMEONE jumps him from behind and decks him with considerable force.

It is one of the slags, a tall bony man with a drooping eye and enormous yellow teeth. The fight continues and the crowd sweeps in between the fighting men. Things are out of control but EZRA BOSS steps in.

(CONTINUE)

EZRA BOSS
(whispers)
Scarper and mind your smash son.

The crowd is growing denser and more dangerous. PHILIP had asked for trouble and he got it. A STRANGER grabs him and punches him in the face.

STRANGER
What's the bloody idea?

Blood is trickling down PHILIP's face, his temples are throbbing and his eyes full of blood. He manages to get up once more but then immediately falls again.

Ezra Boss arrives back with his enormous family, a dozen or so Gypsies shouting in their own strange language, carrying peculiar truncheons and hit out viciously on all sides.

The fight carries on and Philip tries to join in but the 'gladiators' are now using broken bottles and spanners wrapped in muslin.

EZRA
(appears out of the
darkness)
Make for our vardoes. Scarper!
Quick!

Philip watches as the gang quickly disperses, and a few seconds later a policeman rushes over to question him. Most of the others have already disappeared.

INSPECTOR JOE
Can you identify any of those of those men?

Philip shakes his head.

INSPECTOR JOE (CONT'D)
We know some of these men well,
but we can't put our hands on 'em.
Whatever you do to 'em though,
will be in self-defence... we know
that. I should look out for
yourself for the rest of the week
and although those truncheons
aren't right- I'd get myself one!

EZRA
Fightin' never gets no one
nowhere.

(CONTINUE)

PHILIP

I agree with you but on this occasion what could we have done?

EZRA

(shouts from a distance)

Scarper son, like I told ya in the first place... Anyhow will always help out a mate when he needs one. Remember what I told u when we first met in Leeds?

PHILIP

(walks over to Ezra's caravans)

Yes I think so. That was a couple of years ago at the Hunslet Feast. I felt you watching me from the vardo at a distance and then you came over.

EZRA

(looks Philip deeply in the eyes)

That's right... we don't take to every one and we ain't naturally mixers... I also told you that I can't read or write but do you remember what else I told you?

PHILIP

(embarrassed)

We ended up chatting in a pub about your clan and gypsy life right?

EZRA

(slowly and seriously)

Yeah I told you we didn't bother much about eddication... BUT more importantly I said if ever you're in any bother or find yourself in a hole somewhere, just let me know and we'll all see as you're all right.

PHILIP

Like you and your boys did today. A man of your word.

EZRA

(winks)

Those were near the same last words you said to me sonny..." I shall keep you to your word, Mr Boss." Ain't nuffing wrong with my hearing or memory.

Ezra signals over to one of his caravans speaking in Romany. A large lady walks over to EZRA and PHILIP. She is dressed in bright fuchsia and purple linen and silk wearing a bandana and large gold earrings.

EZRA

Hello Betsy my dear sis, I'd like to introduce to my pal Philip. Philip this is my sister, probably one of the best Gypsy fortune-tellers in the land. Wot she knows she's learnt from our mammy... now passed over.

PHILIP

(looks confused)

Hello Betsy. Your good brother has saved my bacon today and I don't know how to ever really thank him.

EZRA and BETSY speak to each other briefly in Romany.

BETSY

Ezra tells me you can thank 'im by letting me read your fortune and tell you sum stuff about you... Stuff you probably don'ts know? Says you can make a donation to the family if you like wot's you 'ere?

PHILIP

(blushes and speaks to them both)

I'd be honoured and privileged where shall we go?

BETSY

Follow me to the main caravan and we will get comfortable.

INT. GYPSY CARAVAN. COMFORTABLE

The caravan is a wooden structure pulled by horse on wooden wheels so the décor compensates for this with many large hand-stitched plush coloured silk cushions. The windows are opened louvre doors with linen cream curtains hanging casually. Betsy has hidden the vaulted floor with thick Persian carpets and it is surprisingly spacious on the inside. A section is closed off to the public by a thick red curtain on rails. There are several glass decanters filled with different spirits and the sweet smell of smoky burning candles fills the air. Wind chimes clang in the breeze.

BETSY BOSS pours Philip a hot dark coffee from a Russian urn and then ties her crimson hair back, which looks beautiful with her new pale violet cottonware. She plays with glass rosary beads in one hand.

BETSY

Let's us 'ave a look at your palms. Relax and turn your hands over.

PHILIP

So you've obviously done this before...

BETSY

Many hundreds of times but this be the first time me brother 'as asked me to do it for a friend of 'is. He don't have many pals but thinks you special... We'll see.

PHILIP

Okay I think I follow you.

BETSY

(smiles)

You don't need to say much 'less I asks you something that was a question!

PHILIP

Sure... right... fine... yep.

BETSY

Well, I not seen lines like yours... never before... Except mapped in a book. You certainly aren't hexed... in fact the opposite... You ain't ever been fearful 'ave you?

PHILIP

(chuckles)

Only fearful of being stuck in a dead end job!

BETSY

No not that type of fear. Fear of dying... I watched you fight today and I saw that what you were trying to do was keep the peace...

(staring at him.)

You're a peacemaker. A kind-hearted soul that never means no 'arm. You travel a lot... but you're not sure what your looking for or where your going or why you going there? And why are you writing about it every day?

PHILIP

(perplexed)

How do you know about my journals?
I don't tell anyone about those!
Except family and yes you're right
I am on a journey to somewhere..

BETSY

Don't worry luv, it's your palms
that's telling me and Ezra saw
something different in you too.
He ain't wrong about much - ever.
In our folklore we hear whispers
from the other side sometimes and
what I can tell you... is that
you're doing the whispering... but
from this side... you're a word
whisperer?

PHILIP

I'm trying to understand you but I
don't do any whispering...?

BETSY

Yes you do, but it's with a nib
and the ink that you carries
around all the time. You are a bit
like a pupil and teacher at the
same time. It's a good thing.
And no people can't hear the words
that you are writing!

PHILIP

Well, can I say that you sure are
good at your job and thank you for
clarifying things.

BETSY smiles and continues to examine PHILIP's hand.

BETSY

It 'ain't a job when I'm doing it
to help me brother and 'is friend.
You will probably get married... but
to a foreign woman after the war.

PHILIP

What woman? And what war?

BETSY

The next war... and I don't know
who she is. I'm feeling a bit
tired so that's all for now, but
we'll see each other again.
Please leave whatever you wish in
the box on the way out. So long,
word whisperer.

BETSY extinguishes the candles with her fingers.

EXT. THAMES. OPPOSITE BIG BEN - DAY

MARGERY ALLINGHAM meets dad HERBERT ALLINGHAM to read him Philip's correspondence. It is a bright crisp November day and the leaves have started falling and now rustle gently across the pavement. Margery has picked one of their favourite benches facing Big Ben. It is near a news stand and chestnut vendour and a great place to watch the barges go up and down the river. Herbert is throwing food to the pigeons. They are both dressed warmly. The clock finishes striking three.

PHILIP

So I hear you've got something to read me from Philip this morning?

MARGERY

Yes, thanks for meeting me dad. I'm just gonna read you his notes.

Margery removes letter slowly from envelope.

MARGERY (CONT'D)

You know what his scribble is like. So I'll do my best.

(Reading aloud)

Realized today that if it had not been for the gypsies (Ezra Boss) I might have had a pretty bad time of it. Can see their use in the tribe. They appear to be hanging around doing nothing but proved they were ready for action whenever necessary. Profoundly grateful... They all arrived on the scene as soon as trouble started. Gypsy King rescues Prince Orlando! Love Philip P.S Betsy Boss called me the Word Whisperer.

HERBERT

Well, he certainly has found a calling... Marge I think there's something else on the back of the letter?

MARGERY

Oh, thanks. I missed that, do you mind reading it to me?

MARGERY passes the letter over.

HERBERT

Sure. He goes on to say
(reading aloud)

I have been keeping journals and diaries of most of my travels and encounters of the new life I have found. Will return at Christmas with a surprise..

HERBERT hands her the letter back.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Do you know how to get in touch with him?

MARGERY

No dad he never seems to stay in the same place more than a couple of days.

HERBERT

How many of these has he written to you?

MARGERY

I stopped counting after the tenth, I've got a box full that I've been collating by date to try and add some order.

HERBERT

So that's going back to about 1930 then?

MARGERY

Yes. He's been back and forth for about three years now.

HERBERT

Well, I guess Christmas is going to be another great family get together?

HERBERT & MARGERY look at each other smiling and both speak at the same time.

HERBERT/MARGERY

So let's see what Philip brings us in 1934?!

Sound of barge horns in the background.

EXT. CAR. EARLY - THE NEXT MORNING

PHILIP reads a map on the bonnet of his car and circles a point on it. Lights a cigar, smiles at cows in the field, brushes off his silk hat and gets into the drivers side.

The engine starts and he drives off.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Commentary

I was born Paul Vince in 1965 in Epsom, England with a twin sister Susan. We were adopted at a young age and we became John and Jayne Crampton.

At the age of 6 we were at school in The Netherlands studying in Dutch but soon afterwards were moved to The British School of The Hague.

Three years later Jayne and I were attending the British School of Brussels in Belgium and at 11 there was the common parental split, so father headed to Paris with his new found Dutch colleague at IBM.

Mum, June brought us back to the UK at around the age of 14 where I went to numerous schools finishing at the Windsor & Maidenhead College.

I arrived in the Far East in Hong Kong to visit a South African friend for a three week holiday. I stayed 11 years ! During that time, Hong Kong was still a British colony and I worked almost exclusively in publishing, media and marketing with some valuable time with the *International Herald Tribune/Washington Post Co.* (responsible for Japan, China, Macau & South Korea), *Far East Trade Press & Singapore Straits Times Press*, *The Law Gazette* and *Spectrum Entertainment Management* where I was the Advertising & Sponsorship Director for the *Salem Open ATP Tennis Hong Kong Open* (title sponsor was part of R J Reynolds tobacco) and a Pro-am Golf Tournament.

I worked in between jobs writing advertorials and selling beer of the back of a lorry in Wanchai, the bar district where the visiting US & UK navy enjoyed their 'R&R'.

A major life and near death experience occurred in taking up a job offer in Bangkok for the BTS elevated Skytrain. One typical Saturday night on the way home, I was involved in a very serious RTA between a Tuk Tuk, a parked car and a pavement – at least that's what the translation of the Thai police report said. I was in a clinically induced coma for several weeks and my family, June and Jayne flew out and brought me home.

I suffered a head fracture and seven years of Epilepsy followed by a MI heart attack. Generally things were a bit glum ! My mum and twin joined me in a search for our biological mother Eileen Theresa Vince who had sadly passed to the other side. I can conclude by saying I was forced to find a way of living which is how I got into writing and set up my website Heritage World Media. I now do some correspondence work for the *South China Morning Post* and the Western Front Association.

My preference in reading tends to be non-fiction and two of my greatest reads have been *The Measure of a Man* by Sidney Poitier and *barefoot soldier* by Johnson Beharry VC.

Sometime in August 2013. I was in Waterstones in Staines and found a single copy of a book which was Cheapjack by Philip Allingham. After reading it I wondered if the movie would do it any justice ? There exists no such film for Cheapjack of any kind so I went into R & D mode and after a carefully written letter of introduction, I ended up with a hand written reply from Barry Pike, the Chairman and trustee of the *Margery Allingham Society* who own the rights to the book, giving me permission to write the Screenplay.

Cheapjack, the book alone is not sufficient to develop a sincere and cohesive screenplay or a dramatic television drama series because so much more happens in the real life of Philip Allingham as an individual. In order to bring the writing of Philip to life it is necessary to understand the context of the book, which means we need to know all about his family influences, his life before and after the journey he takes in writing the diaries and journals of his voyage into the unknown world of the fairgrounds and market places of Great Britain.

Bear in mind that the events in the book take place during the inter-war period (WWI 1914-1918 & WWII 1939-1945) after a bitter conflict with millions of casualties. So Britain exists at this time in a period when the First World War has ended and the country is dealing with economic and emotional trauma, lost souls and broken families but during a period of recovery.

What's also important to background the theme of the play is that of new media, which is evolving with silent cinema turning into talkies, live radio broadcasts are taking place with football from Wembley, the newspaper and the publishing industry is growing and is becoming more vocal.

Philip was born in 1906, sets out on his Cheapjack tour in 1928 aged 21, publishes the book in 1934, plays a part in the second war and sadly takes his own life in 1969 aged 63 from cancer.

It is for this reason that I also explore Philip's life outside his book to create the storyline and screenplay.

The Allingham clan can be broadly grouped under the umbrella of entertainers when television hadn't been invented and the printed and spoken words were the best forms of communication. Radio was still in its early days.

Herbert Allingham describes his family as the 'Little Fiction Factory'

The Allingham Family

Philip Allingham (Benedict Cumberbatch, James Nesbit)

Sister Margery Allingham (Olivia Coleman)

Father Herbert Allingham (Michael Caine, Bill Knighy, Gabriel Byrne, Dennis Waterman)

Brother-in-Law Pip Youngman Carter (Richard E Grant)

Other Key Players

Wolfie (Ben Kingsley)

Ezra Boss (Bob Hoskins)

Betsy Boss

Tommy Tomlinson (Ray Winstone)

The Militant Clergyman (Bill Knighy)

Mary Ann Bevan, Ugliest Woman in the World

Sally Fisher

Napoleon Jack (Stephen K Amos)

Three-fingered Billy, Barnie & Alfie (Jasper Carrot, Frank Skinner, Gryth Rhys-Jones)

Flash Jackson (Billy Connolly)

Editor Dwyer Evans (Stephen Fry)

*Actors names have been selected as an indicator of the style and type of character acting

What struck me as rather unique about *Cheapjack* and Philip Allingham is that he never really set out to write a book in the first place. The publication of the book was more a result of his adventures around Britain within an almost foreign community of grafters and traders –

which he then decided to document day by day as the events became ever more extraordinary.

Some Etonians and high profile writers at the time such as George Orwell, Christopher Isherwood and Ravelston went on a mission to penetrate the ‘underworld’ of the poor working class of Great Britain to see what it was really like, so they could write and report on it for the benefit of others. Orwell admitted to being embarrassingly hopeless at a cockney accent and his journey ended, while Ravelston tried mistakenly to order a whisky in the poorest looking pub he could find and was told ‘this is a beer ‘ouse’ – many pubs couldn’t afford a spirit licence!

‘It turns out to become an important historical record of a way of life that was in transition, a society that was secretive and one that would ultimately close its doors to outsiders by the 1940’s’. (*Foreword in Cheapjack 2010 by Professor Vanessa Toulmin, National Fairground Archives, University of Sheffield Library*)

Philip came from a family of writers, journalists, entertainers and advertising agents going back at least two generations. His sister Margery Allingham was the most prolific of them all, writing crime novels with the invention of *Detective Champion* which the BBC turned into a mini-series for television in the 1980’s. In fact the Margery Allingham Society is still alive today.

It was with the help of his father, Herbert Allingham and his sister Margery that *Cheapjack* was born. They collectively kept the notes, letter and telegrams sent to them by Philip and worked with his diaries and a crude draft manuscript that he written to take it to press.

Philip’s great grandfather, James William Allingham and grandfather, Albert John Allingham were founders of the *Christian Globe* and *the Boys World, Our Boys’ Paper* and the *New Boys’ Paper*, respectively.

His memoir is never literary in the conventional sense and he writes with frank openness so when I read his book I felt like a spectator more than just a reader – remember this is a book of non-fiction or perhaps we can call it faction ?

I think his innocence right from the beginning has always worked in his favour. He had no agenda, political or otherwise when he set out on his journey which had a very sudden beginning and ended when he thought he had learnt enough.

The autobiography reads as a non-stop continuous journey whereas *Cheapjack* actually covers a period of four and a half years from August 1928 to March 1934. He spent several months for example as a manager in *Madame Clara Novello Davies’s* voice training academy above the *Aldwych Theatre* in London.

It is for this reason some artistic licence was needed in adapting the book to a Screenplay – using some imagination and the reference books written on Herbert and Margery by Julia Jones.

Philip brought new words into the English language and the *Oxford English Dictionary* today cites the source of some of them as being *Cheapjack* ! I have left the full Glossary of Slang within this Screenplay due to its significance along with an Appendix that will allow you to read ‘What the Critics said in 1934’ – ranging from the *New York Times* to the *Observer*.

There were two slightly different editions of the book published in 1934. One for the American market and one for the UK reader. Its second publication was in 2010.

Philip's nature of bonhomie allowed him to become part of the fairground community and he was accepted and on one important occasion warmly embraced by, Gypsy boss, Ezra, who with his clan rescued Philip from a beating in Newcastle.

The real thread throughout the book is Philip's raw emotional revelations - those that he experiences with people, places and events. Yes, he does like to literally take note of what has happened to him. In some cases they are judgment calls of what he thinks is right and wrong and in other cases he feels it necessary to write down something about life - something that is new to him that he wants to eventually share with others.

For Television

Collective book chapters for Episodes.

Episode 1 : Chapters 1-5 Starting Out/In & Around London

Episode 2 : Chapter 6 The Hunslet Feast

Episode 3 : Chapters 7&8 Whitby & The Church Militant

Episode 4 : Chapter 9 My First Big Fair

Episode 5 : Chapters 10&11 Royal Gypsy In Love

Episode 6 : Chapter 12 The Town called No Name

Episode 7 : Chapter 13 Hull and the New Strangers

Episode 8 : Chapters 14&15 Back to London

Episode 9 : Chapter 16 Manchester & a New Idea

Episode 10 : Chapters 17&18 Sad Flash Jackson & I Start as a Pitcher

Episode 11 : Chapter 19 The Fight in Newcastle

Episode 12 : Chapter 20&21 I Meet SALLY

Episode 13 : Chapter 22 Salvation Army

Episode 14 : Chapters 23&24 Giving Up ?

Appendices

(A1) Glossary of Grafters Slang by Philip Allingham (A2) What the Critics Said in 1934

(A1) GLOSSARY OF GRAFTERS' SLANG – Language that evolves during Philip Allingham's journey and recorded by him as 'new' language.

Many of these words may be familiar to a number of people, but I have included all those that I had not heard before I joined the fair people and the market folk. Some are rhyming slang, some Yiddish and some Romany, but together they make up the principal vocabulary of most grafters.

Abbreviations : **RS: Rhyming Slang**, **Y : Yiddish**, or words originated by Jews. **ROM : Romany**, or words originated by gypsies.

Blue Highlighted & Underlined Words Used in The Screenplay

Apples (Apples and pears), RS : stairs

Bar : One pound sterling.

Half-bar : Ten shillings.

Barney : A quarrel; a fight.

Barker : One who stands outside a show at a fair-ground to address the crowd and persuade the people to enter

Bat : Price. "To come to bat" : to mention the price.

Bevvy : To drink. A drink.

Bevvy'omey : A drunkard.

Bird : Jail.

Bogey : One who spoils one's game or interferes with one's pitch.

Bottle : "Not much bottle" : not much good.

Brass (Brassnail), RS : Prostitute.

Bunce : Profit.

Burster : A very successful day or season.

Busk : To perform in the street.

Carpet : Three months' imprisonment.

Caser : Five shillings.

Charver, ROM : To despoil. To interfere and spoil one's business.

Chavvy : ROM : Child.

Clod : A penny.

Clobber : Clothes.

Coal : A penny.

Cobbler : A ball.

Cockern, RS : Ten pounds sterling. A pen.

Collar-and-cuff, RS : An effeminate.

Crackers : Mad.

Crocus : A doctor. A quack doctor. A herbalist. A miracle worker.

Daisy (Daisy roots), RS : Boots. Shoe.

Denar : A shilling.

Dook, ROM : A hand. “Dook-reading” : palmistry.

Dookering, ROM : To go around from door to door telling fortunes.

Donah : A woman.

Dropsy : Bribery.

Fanny : A grafter’s sales story.

Feather (Feather and flip), RS : Bed.

Finger : A man.

Flash : A grafter’s display. Anything to attract the crowd.

Flim : Five pounds sterling.

Flip, RS : A racing tip.

Fly pitch : A place in the street, market or fair-ground taken for a few minutes by a wandering pedler from which to make his sales.

Fly pitcher : One who makes a practice of selling his wares from fly pitches.

Funkum : Perfume.

Gaff ; A fair or market.

Gaffer : A market master or fair-ground superintendent.

Gazer : A pedler who walks about a fair or market selling as he goes.

Gear : A grafter’s stock or possessions.

Gee, Y : A grafter’s accomplice or assistant who mingles with the crowd. “To give a grafter a gee” : to buy something from him to encourage the crowd.

Gelt, Y : Money.

Gezumph, Y : To swindle.

Gezumph, Y : A swindler.

Goy, Y : One who is not a Jew.

Groiny : A ring, a diamond or other precious stone when in a ring.

Grafter : One who works a line in a fair or market, as a fortune-teller, quack doctor, mock auctioneer, etc.

Homey (‘Omey) : A man.

Hole : A shilling.

Jam (Jam jar), RS : A motor-car.

Kettle : A watch.

Kie Show : Wild-man or wild-beast show.

Kip : A bed.

Lakes (Lakes of Killarney; Stone lakes), RS : A lunatic.

Lark : A line (of business)

Letty (Lettary) : Lodgings.

Lolly : A shop.

Lolly worker : A swindler who starts a shop and immediately sells the alleged good-will.

Lurk : An occasional customer.

Moll : A woman.

Mounted pitcher : A grafter who talks and demonstrates from the top of his stall high above the crowd.

Monkery : A district.

Moody : Gentle persuasion, blarney, flattery.

Moon : A month’s imprisonment.

Mug-faker : A camera.

Munjary : Food.

Muzzel, Y : Luck, a charm. “To work the muzzel” : to sell charms.

Nanty ! : Cave ! (Beware!)

Nark : (see bogey).

Nicker : One pound sterling.

Palone : A girl.

Parney, ROM : Rain, water.

Peter : Suitcase, grip.

Phunt : One pound sterling.

Pitch : The actual space in the fair or market rented by the grafter or fair worker.

Pitcher : A grafter who addresses the crowd. One who spouts from his pitch.

Pucker, ROM : To talk.

Punter : A grafter's customer, client or victim; a "sucker".

Rattler : A train.

Rick : (see Gee).

R.O. (The run-out) : A fake auction.

Rosy (Rosy Lee), RS : Tea.

Rozzer : A policeman.

Scarper : To go away. To run. To get out quickly.

Screw : To look at.

Shice, Y : An unprofitable undertaking. A wash-out. "To catch a shice" : to have an unremunerative deal.

Slum (Cough) : Cough lozengers.

Smash, RS : Loose money. Change.

Smoke, The : London.

Smother : A fur coat or overcoat.

Smudge : Photograph.

Snodder, Y : One who dislikes spending.

Spiel, Y : To talk. Or a tale, a set-piece. (See Fanny). To gamble.

Spieler : A barker. A gambler.

Splits : The police.

Spraser (Sprasy) : Sixpence.

Spread : "To work the spread" : to graft as a herbalist with the herbs spread out in front of one and to lecture upon their properties.

Stretch : A year's imprisonment.

Stinker, The : "The Mystic Writer"; a fortune telling device.

Suzie : Sixpence.

Tab : Cigarette.

Titfer (Tit-for-tat), RS : Hat.

Thrummer : Threepence.

Tick-off : Fortune teller. This word includes any sort of seer or any method of fortune-telling, and dates from the time when grafters working this line sold cards on which were printed various conflicting statements, thus : "You will never marry" ; "You will be poor"; "You will be rich" etc. The grafter looked at the hand of his client or into his crystal or ink, and put a tick by – or "ticked off" – the statements which applied. The client then bought the card. This was done to evade the law, inasmuch as the client was supposed to receive something for his money.

Tober : The fair-ground or market.

Tober 'omey : The toll-collector.

Tosheroon : Half-a-crown

Tod : Own. "To be on one's tod" : to be alone, or unmarried.

Two-ender : A florin.

Vardo, ROM : A wagon. A caravan.

Yock, Y : A fool, a chump.

Wide : Intelligent, informed, sophisticated.

Whizz mob : [A gang of pickpockets.](#)

Windbag : [A mystery packet.](#)

Wooden : [One month's imprisonment.](#)

(A2) What the Critics said in 1934

It is brisk and lively and colourful and human – even if its humans are not always admirable – and its people and its little world are always and profoundly English, as English as Dickens.

New York Times

Odd personality. Worries friends by relapsing into incomprehensible jargon of fairs, using such words as 'monkery', 'chavvy', 'gelt', 'groiny', 'tosheroon'. Fortunately his autobiography *Cheapjack* contains a glossary for the unenlightened.

William Hickey, *Daily Express*

Anyone who enjoyed *The Good Companions* will find here the raw material of that masterly effort in the picaresque.

Everyman

Cheapjack is certainly a book well worth reading. Its humour is excellent...We must forget all about it, however, when we go to the fairs – otherwise Mr Allingham's former companions will have a thin time.

J.Bilibin, *Observer*

A surprising and delightful book....It is just the simple but vividly told story of how a young man who couldn't make his living in the ordinary routine of business life, branched out for himself to cultivate the only talent which Nature had given him, and in doing so found romance and adventure, privation, good fellowship, bed-bugs, and an entire new world within this old one, yet one which is essentially England.

Tatler

Other insightful reviews worth reading are in the opening pages of *Cheapjack*.

Roger Pippit, *Daily Herald*

W H Davies, *Sunday Times*

Ethel Mannin, *Daily Mirror*

E B Osborn, *Morning Post*

Clifton Fadiman, *New Yorker*

Robert Lynd, *News Chronicle*

Daily Telegraph & Daily Sketch