Betrayed:

the story of Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*

George Cole

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Introduction

It is a scene that is played out thousands of times a day: a man and a woman sitting together in a pub. From this ordinary event, Harold Pinter created an extraordinary play, *Betrayal*. *Betrayal* is one of Pinter's best known plays and one of his most widely performed. It has been translated into numerous languages; updated for the stage, made into a film, and spawned two BBC radio productions.

On the face of it, *Betrayal* seems like a simple play – the story of a love triangle. This explains why, when it was first staged at the National Theatre in 1978, many critics dismissed it as a lightweight examination of adultery amongst the literary chattering classes. But *Betrayal* is much more than this – it is an exploration of time, memory and betrayal. The betrayals in the play are multilayered – everyone betrays and is betrayed, by others, and sometimes, they betray themselves.

On first reading, *Betrayal* can seem sparse – many of the exchanges consist of short sentences, but there is great depth to the play, as director Michael Cabot explains. "I find Pinter a more interesting companion than any other writer in the rehearsal room. When you're working with a great writer, there's an energy in the room. You might enjoy a play after first, second or third reading, but the deeper you go; the more you discover that there isn't a lot of substance there. With Pinter, you feel like there are an extraordinary number of possibilities in the writing. And it's so well thought through and put together. There's a kind of ferocious intelligence to him. He creates a complete world." (All quotes in this section are from interviews with the author).

One of the most striking things about *Betrayal* is the different ways actors and directors have interpreted the work. Actor William Hoyland noted, "You can interpret this play in an infinite number of ways and you can have lots of different productions. All of them would be right and all would be different." Director Mitch Hooper, who has staged several productions of *Betrayal* in France, says, "*Betrayal* is a play that you don't

tire of because it's different every time. As soon as you change the actor, you get a new spin on it and the dynamic of the play changes." New ways of staging *Betrayal* are continuing to emerge. In 2017, the young British director Lekan Lawal staged a production of *Betrayal* at Derby Theatre in which the action took place inside a rotating glass box, and actors used video cameras to record the action, which was projected onto a large screen.

Betrayal is both of its time and yet timeless. It marks a time before smartphones, social media and the internet. It occurs in a period when lovers corresponded by letter and phone, including public phone boxes; when Kilburn was a run-down area of London, and when a literary agent earned enough money to run both a home in a pleasant part of London and a rented flat in Kilburn. Yet the themes *Betrayal* explores are timeless and resonate just as strongly today.

Two things are often cited about *Betrayal*: that the play was based on Pinter's affair with broadcaster Joan Bakewell, and that the play goes backwards in time. But both interpretations are not entirely correct. *Betrayal* was indeed *inspired* by Pinter's affair, but it is not *about* it. Nor does the play simply scroll back through time. "Harold was fascinated by time," says director Di Trevis. Pinter wasn't the first writer or director to explore time. The director Nic Roeg, for example, whose films include *Don't Look Now* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, often told the story through a fractured narrative, using flashbacks and flash-forwards. In the theatre, playwrights such as J. B. Priestley and David Hare had written plays with scenes that went backwards in time before *Betrayal* was staged.

But it is fair to say that *Betrayal's* cultural impact encouraged more writers and directors to explore time and memory. Since *Betrayal*, many TV, film and stage productions have manipulated time, such as Christopher Nolan's 2000 film *Memento* and Mary Lambert's 1987 film *Siesta*, as well as TV shows like ITV's 2007 crime drama *Fallen Angel* and BBC TV's 2017 police drama *Rellik*, both of which spool back in time. Alan Ayckbourn's 1992 play *Time of My Life* (which, like Scene 7 in *Betrayal*, takes place in an Italian restaurant) tells the story of one couple in reverse chronology. In 1997, the US sitcom *Seinfeld* included an episode, *The Betrayal*, a homage to *Betrayal*, which used reverse chronology to tell the story of various betrayals amongst friends, including Jerry, who is

sleeping with his friend's girlfriend. The episode even included a character called Pinter Rannawat.

But why write a book about *Betrayal*? It is a question more than one person put to me as I researched this book, with some suggesting that other Pinter plays like *The Homecoming* or *The Caretaker* were more worthy of detailed exploration. I have been fascinated by Pinter's work ever since I first saw one of his plays, when I went to college in 1975. The college drama department put on a production of *Old Times*, and I remember thinking that I had never seen a play like this before. Instead of telling you a simple story, providing lots of exposition and having the lives of the characters clearly marked out, *Old Times* was mysterious, ambiguous and open to so much interpretation.

This is the beauty of Pinter's work: he leaves a lot for his audience to interpret. Some people find this approach baffling or frustrating, but I find it liberating, because it opens up your mind to many possibilities. When Pinter said that he often didn't know what was going on in his own plays, people thought he was being deliberately obscure, but as Trevis explains, "Harold rarely talked about his work; he accepted its mystery. People thought he was being rude whenever he was asked a question about his work and he said, 'I don't know.' The fact that he didn't talk about it was because he really didn't know how it happened to him, and he accepted that."

The language Pinter uses is the language we all use – the pauses, the silences and using words to disguise our feelings or defend a position. "Harold was an actor," says Trevis, "He understood actors; he liked actors and he understood the power of punctuation. Harold's punctuation gave actors clues as to how the text should be spoken. Harold also knew the mechanics of the theatre."

Old Times inspired me to join the college drama group and I acted in a number of productions including John Osborne's *West of Suez,* and *A Terrible Beauty* written by Frank Oates. The latter play also marks the only tenuous connection I have with *Betrayal*. *A Terrible Beauty* was produced by Jack Emery, who was then married to Joan Bakewell. When we took *A Terrible Beauty* to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1977, Bakewell was in the audience, and in the post-performance discussion, she commented on the play (from what I recall, her reaction was mixed).

Although I never had a career in the theatre, I have always been drawn to it and to the plays of Harold Pinter in particular. I have read *Betrayal* many times and seen and heard many productions, but every time I return to the play, I discover something new. I have always been fascinated by the way a theatrical production comes together, how people with differing backgrounds, skills, experiences and interests join forces for a period of time to create a play.

When many people think about the theatre, the actors and director (and sometimes, the playwright) instantly come to mind. But there are many people in the background, all as highly skilled as the actors who deliver the lines or the director who shapes the play. My aim in writing this book was to tell the stories behind many of the key British productions of *Betrayal*, from the 1978 world premiere at the National Theatre to the 2012 Crucible Theatre production. I also decided to include film, radio and Broadway productions of *Betrayal*, plus a televised scene.

I began contacting people – actors, directors, designers, composers, stage management and more – to see if they would be willing to share their memories of the productions they worked on. More than a hundred people kindly agreed to help and the result is this book.

For me – and I hope you – they provide a fascinating insight into how *Betrayal* keeps being reinterpreted and the myriad ways that people can approach his work. It was interesting, for example, to see how some actors and directors like to do lots of research before the first line is spoken and how some directors run through *Betrayal* chronologically or use role play and exercises to help actors gain further insights into their characters. Others, like Hooper, take an opposite approach. "I don't do any games or exercises – I just get on with the text. Actors have asked for it to be run through chronologically, but I don't see the necessity for that. There's so much in Harold's text that you don't need to add anything."

Some of the actors who played Emma felt that she was very much like Joan Bakewell; others took the opposite view. Some thought that Ned was Robert's child; others that he was Jerry's; and for others, the answer changed during each performance. Some set designers took a minimalist approach, with the set little more than a table and two chairs; others used multimedia or sophisticated technology to deliver props and scenery. There are many ways of creating for a *Betrayal* production and all are equally valid.

I also gained new insights into Harold Pinter, who had a reputation for not suffering fools gladly. But the Pinter in this book is also caring, considerate and compassionate. One actor was almost in tears when he recalled an act of kindness by Pinter. Yes, there were times when Harold Pinter was not pleasant to people, but the vast majority of people I interviewed had nothing but warm memories of him, even those who had been on the wrong side of him.

The aim of this book is simple: to document the story of what I consider to be one of the most important plays of the twentieth century, and which will, in many years ahead, still be entertaining, enchanting and intriguing the audiences that watch it.

George Cole
East Anglia, January 2018

Chapter One

Life on a Stage: The story behind *Betrayal*

"This moment could not be denied; we couldn't pretend it hadn't happened."

Joan Bakewell, writer and broadcaster

"Harold never denied, to me, that the play was partly inspired by the affair with Joan. But he also insisted *Betrayal* was not simply ABOUT that."

Michael Billington, Pinter's biographer

On 31 January 1978, a hand-delivered package arrived at the home of television broadcaster Joan Bakewell. Inside the package was a new play written by her friend, the playwright Harold Pinter. That night, alone in her bed, Bakewell opened it and began reading the play. By the time she had finished reading, she was in a state of shock. "I was completely shocked…I was reduced to a jibbering wreck…I couldn't sleep," she recalled in an interview with David Frost. The play was called *Betrayal*, and for Bakewell, it opened a door that had been closed many years ago. Behind the door lurked a secret known only by a small group of people. But now, *Betrayal* threatened to bring that secret out into the public.

Betrayal is about three people: Robert, Jerry and Emma, all highly educated, middle class and middle-aged. They have – on the surface at least – very comfortable lives; they holiday in Venice and the Lake District; lunch at Fortnum & Mason and hold dinner parties. Robert and Emma are married with two children. Jerry – who is married to Judith (a doctor) – also has two children. Robert is a publisher, Jerry a literary agent and Emma runs an art gallery. Robert and Jerry are not only connected through their work (Robert publishes some of Jerry's clients) but they

are old friends; close friends, who have lunches together and play squash together.

Jerry and Emma have a seven-year affair, and the twist in the tale is that for the last two years of the affair, Robert knew about it. But neither Robert nor Emma told Jerry this fact until two years after the affair had ended. When *Betrayal* first opened, some critics dismissed it as a plot from a story in a women's magazine. Some called it trite, others called it lightweight, but what most critics didn't know at the time was that the origins of *Betrayal* had their roots firmly in reality.

Harold Pinter *had* had a seven-year affair with Bakewell, whose husband had discovered the affair, but concealed this fact from Pinter. Bakewell didn't reveal this to him this until after the affair was over. The experience inspired Pinter to write *Betrayal*, but in doing so, he opened up his life in way that seemed inconceivable for person who was normally so protective of his private life, and who often gave little information about the characters in his plays. This is what makes *Betrayal* unique in Pinter's canon of work; and this is the story of how it happened.

Harold Pinter was born in Hackney, East London on 10 October 1930, the only child of Jewish parents Jack and Frances. Pinter's father was a tailor, and Pinter recalls that there were few books in the household, although his father did buy him a *Collected Shakespeare* for his fourteenth birthday. Pinter grew up at a time of great political upheaval. The 1930s saw the rise of the Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, which spread violence and intimidation in areas with large Jewish populations, like the East End. The climax came on 4 October 1936, with the Battle of Cable Street, which saw thousands of fascists and anti-fascists clashing on the streets.

Three years later, fascism reared its head again, with the outbreak of war, which saw Pinter evacuated to Cornwall, although he would spend most of his childhood in London. Pinter recalled seeing flying bombs while out in the street, and several times, his back garden was in flames. But even after the defeat of Hitler's Germany in 1945, Jewish people like Pinter and some of his friends still faced harassment and threats from fascists during the post-war period. Pinter began writing poetry when he was twelve and developed a love for reading (including Shakespeare and James Joyce). The local public library gave Pinter access to books he could

never afford to buy, and when he attended Hackney Downs Grammar School at fourteen, his intellectual horizons were further expanded.

It was at school that Pinter met a group of friends – which included Henry Woolf – who shared Pinter's love for literature. The group would walk the streets, talking about books; they would sit in cafes and read, or gather at Pinter's home for discussions and reading sessions. Some of the group – like Woolf – would remain lifelong friends with Pinter. Another major influence on Pinter was Joe Brearley, an inspirational English teacher, who introduced him to the works of the Jacobean dramatist John Webster; took him and other students to the theatre; and gave Pinter his first acting experience while at school, with Brearley directing plays such as *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Pinter and Brearley would also go on long walks together around the East End, discussing literature.

Pinter left school just before he was eighteen, and although he was highly intelligent, his lack of Latin precluded any thoughts of going to Oxford or Cambridge. But his interest in the theatre had been fired, and on leaving school, he attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in North London. But he was unhappy at RADA and left after two terms. "I was quite of my depth, really," he told writer Miriam Gross, "with what I took to be the general sophistication, the knowingness about the place. I was pretty lost." In October 1948, when aged eighteen, he received his call up papers for National Service, but he became a conscientious objector. It was an act that could have resulted in imprisonment, but fortunately for him, he was merely fined twice by the same magistrate.

In 1950, Pinter had two of his poems published in *Poetry London*, and in September he got his first professional acting job in a BBC radio broadcast, *Focus on Football Pools*. The following year, he spent a term at the Central School of Speech and Drama, before joining actor-manager Anew McMaster's repertory company on a tour in Ireland. The company included actors such as Kenneth Haig, Barry Foster and Patrick Magee, and Pinter stayed with McMaster for five seasons. He would later describe this time in Ireland as a 'Golden Age'.

After leaving McMaster's company, Pinter struggled to get work – as he told writer Dave Calhoun, "I wasn't getting any work…as an actor. Not much anyway. Then, in 1953, when I joined the Donald Wolfit

Shakespearean company, I started to play a few parts and later I went into rep, proper provincial rep." Pinter stayed with Wolfit for only one season, and the following year, decided to take the stage name David Baron, with the hope that a change of name would result in a change in fortune.

Over the next couple of years, Pinter would find acting jobs in repertory theatres around England, including Doncaster, Torquay and Colchester. During this period, he also supplemented his actor's income with a variety of casual jobs that included waiter, dishwasher and bouncer. In 1956, he was in Bournemouth as part of a company that included the actress Vivien Merchant. Merchant was born Ada Thompson in Manchester in 1929, and her first stage appearance was in Peterborough when she was fourteen.

Dark-haired, vivacious and highly talented, Merchant was a leading repertory actor while Pinter was still a struggling actor and writer. Pinter and Merchant had first met in 1953, when they were both were part of Wolfit's company, but there was no emotional spark between them. In fact, the two of them seemed to have started off badly when they met again in Bournemouth, because around six weeks into the season, Merchant told the company manager that, if Pinter was staying, then she was going, and she left. Merchant returned, but this time, she and Pinter fell in love, and were married on 14 September 1956. Merchant would subsequently take lead roles in a number of Pinter's plays including *The Lover*, *The Homecoming* and *Old Times*. On 29 January 1958, Pinter and Merchant had a son, Daniel.

Like Pinter, Joan Bakewell came from a modest background (her father worked at a local engineering company). She was born Joan Dawson Rowlands in Stockport, Cheshire, in 1933, and by coincidence, was brought up in Bakewell Road in Stockport. Rowlands was an intelligent girl from a working-class background and part of a new generation who reaped great benefit from the 1944 Education Act. The Act introduced free schooling in England and Wales – previously, many bright working-class children had had to abandon their education, because their parents lacked the money to support them. Educational opportunity also paved the way for upward social mobility, and Rowland's route from grammar school to university scholarship (in her case, Cambridge) was a classic progression for many people of her background and generation. Rowland's

Chapter Four

Betrayal: An analysis

"Harold's biggest influences were Joyce and Beckett."

Di Trevis

"Harold said not to be oppressed by the pauses, but they are always there for a reason"

Mitch Hooper

Background and influences

Creativity does not exist in a vacuum: it feeds off our talents, interests and experiences. And so it proved with Harold Pinter and *Betrayal*. There is no doubt that the play was *inspired* by his affair with Joan Bakewell, but Pinter denied that *Betrayal* was *based* on it. "In terms of *Betrayal's* origins, the affair with Joan is simply the framework for Harold Pinter's ruthless examination of bourgeois self-will-run-riot," says actor Harry Burton. "To some extent the play is about grief — an examination of what happens when we fall short of our own moral values."

There is much evidence to suggest that *Betrayal* was influenced by various factors, namely:

Pinter's affair with Joan Bakewell: The affair lasted for seven years and Pinter used many elements of the relationship in *Betrayal*, such as, the lovers' flat, the husband discovering the affair while the lover was kept in the dark over the discovery, and the image of a child being thrown up into the air. But there are also many new elements, which came from Pinter's imagination. This topic is discussed in further detail in Chapter One.

in the first scene, when he talks about two men having a drink together), while Robert has three: in Scene 4 when he talks about a game of squash; in Scene 5, when he describes his visit to the American Express office, and Scene 7, where he makes his outburst about publishing. "*Betrayal* is linguistically spare," says Cohn. "No words are savoured for their own sake and the clichés are those of polite society."

But the genius of Pinter's writing is in how so much can be conveyed by so little, as Sakellaridou notes, "The sparse and cryptic language of the play is full of hidden feelings. One has to follow the clues, listen hard and watch intently to spot what is actually happening beneath an often glacial surface." She also references a review of the 1978 National Theatre production in which the reviewer noted that, despite the characters' apparent icy demeanour, "Underneath [they] are screaming."

Sound Play, Echoes and Repetition

Cohn has noted the way Pinter deploys sound play in a number of scenes. For example, Jerry's monologue about drinking, "burbles in p's and b's," and the "volleying of 'no' and 'know,'" between Jerry and Robert in Scene 2. "If Pinter is abstemious of such sound play and alliteration in *Betrayal*," adds Cohn, "he is prodigal of repetition, which erupts in such banalities as questions, exclamations and routine courtesies." Steven H. Gale has noted how the word 'honesty' and its variants appear on six pages in the play, while 'squash' is on seven.

Bernard F. Dukore has observed how many of *Betrayal's* scenes are linked and often balanced. Below are just a few of the examples he cites:

Scene 1 Jerry and Emma sober	Scene 9 Jerry drunk, Emma (giddy?)
Scene 1 Jerry tells Emma she's pretty	Scene 9 Jerry tells Emma she's beautiful
Scene 1 Jerry and Emma discuss the affair	Scene 9 Jerry and Emma start the affair
Scene 3 Love is over	Scene 8 Love blooms
Scene 5 Emma and Robert discuss Spinks and Jerry's letter	Scene 6 Emma and Jerry discuss Spinks and Jerry's letter

After: Dukore

There are many other echoes and repetitions throughout the play, such as Robert expressing surprise that Jerry is drinking whisky at lunchtime (Scene 7) and Jerry surprised that Emma is drinking vodka at lunchtime (Scene 8). Jerry is unwell in Scene 1 and Scene 6, and mentions throwing Charlotte up into the air in the same scenes.

Pauses, Silences and Hesitations

Critic Clive Barnes notes that *Betrayal* has 134 pauses – seventy-seven in the first three scenes. There are also sixteen silences, although there are no pauses or silences in Scene 9. Pinter also deploys moments of hesitation, defined by three dots (...). These are often used when someone is struggling to explain themselves, not because they are lost for words, but because they are feeling intense emotion. An example is in Scene 3, when Emma recalls how imaginative she and Jerry were when it came to meeting each other, at the same time realising that the relationship is now over.

Pinter uses pauses with great effect throughout the play – for example in Scene 1, a pause is often used as a segue to another topic of conversation, such as when Emma talks about the flat they shared together on one side of a pause and Jerry brings up Casey on the other. The Pinter silence is often a sign of crisis, and none more so than the one which precedes Emma's confession to Robert in Scene 4, where she reveals she and Jerry are lovers. Director Mitch Hooper says, "Harold said not be oppressed by the pauses, but they are always there for a reason and they work dramatically. If the actor doesn't understand, you don't have to explain the psychology, because once they've performed it, they understand why it works." Further discussion of pauses and silences can be found in Chapter Five.

The Structure

Pinter scholar Austin E. Quigley was the first to note the symmetrical structure of *Betrayal*, with Scene 5 (Robert's discovery of the affair) being the pivotal scene and the only one not featuring Jerry.

Scene 1 Jerry and Emma	Scene 6 Jerry and Emma
Scene 2 Jerry and Robert	Scene 7 Jerry and Robert

Chapter Eight

Back to the Beginning: The 1998 National Theatre Production

"When I came across *Betrayal*, it was the first time I was able to be absolutely honest as an actor."

Douglas Hodge

"I think *Betrayal* is a tremendously sad play, but it's also very funny. Pinter was a very funny writer, especially with the scenes between the two men."

Imogen Stubbs

Emma – Imogen Stubbs
Jerry – Douglas Hodge
Robert – Anthony Calf
Waiter – Arturo Venegas

Understudy to Anthony Calf and Arturo Venegas – Julien Ball
Understudy to Douglas Hodge – Mark Carey
Understudy to Imogen Stubbs – Corrinne Wicks

Director – Trevor Nunn
Designer – Es Devlin
Lighting Director – Rick Fisher
Sound Designer – Paul Groothuis
Video Designer – Chris Laing
Music – Roger Eno
Musicians – Paul Higgs, Paul Kellett
Staff Director – Fiona Buffini
Stage Manager – Alison Rankin

Deputy Stage Manager – David Milling
Assistant Stage Managers: – Emma Gordon, Richard Reddrop
Production Manager – Mark Dakin

Lyttelton Theatre
First Preview: 14 November 1998
First-night: 24 November 1998
Last-night: 7 April 1999
Tour: Theatre Royal, Bath
27–30 January 1999
Performances 65 + 7 Tour

Twenty years after *Betrayal* was premiered at the National Theatre, it staged a major revival. The National had undergone much change since *Betrayal* had last played there. In 1978, the artistic director (and *Betrayal's* director) was Peter Hall, a post he held until late 1988. His replacement, Richard Eyre, remained in post until 1997, when he was succeeded by Trevor Nunn, who would direct the latest production of *Betrayal.*

Nunn was born in Ipswich, Suffolk in January 1940. His father was a cabinet maker, and his mother, a seamstress. It was a hard, working class background, as Nunn recalled to writer Andrew Dickson, "I was very aware that we had to be frugal. My mother made us clothes, my father did an enormous amount of work in the little house we had."

Nunn took a great interest in drama at grammar school, working at the local repertory theatre as a teenager and directing a youth theatre group. In 1959 he won a scholarship to Downing College, Cambridge, where he threw himself into the theatre scene – his contemporaries included Derek Jacobi, Ian McKellen and Corin Redgrave. At Cambridge, Nunn was involved in more than thirty productions, which helps explain why he graduated with a 2.2 degree (as did Peter Hall, who also got heavily involved in the theatre while at Cambridge).

He left Cambridge for an assistant director's job at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. Aged just twenty-four, Nunn was asked by Hall – then artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) – to join the company, with Nunn arriving at the RSC in 1964. A year later, he was appointed associate director. In 1968, when Nunn was still only twenty-seven, he was asked by Hall to take over his role. After some

serious consideration, he accepted and would remain the RSC's artistic director for almost twenty years, leaving in 1986.

During the 1980s, Nunn directed a string of highly successful musicals including *Cats*, *Starlight Express* and *Les Misérables*. He also directed opera at Glyndebourne and had worked in television and film (including Tom Stoppard's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* for BBC Playhouse, and the 1986 film *Lady Jane* which featured Helena Bonham Carter).

In March 1996, Nunn was named as the National Theatre's new artistic director, a role he took on the following year. One of his first decisions was to stage a revival of *Betrayal*. The 1978 production had received mixed reviews, but since then, the play had been performed all over the world and was now recognised as a Pinter classic. Despite all his theatrical experience, Nunn had never directed a Pinter play. The year 1998 would also mark the twentieth anniversary since *Betrayal's* world premiere at the National.

Nunn auditioned a number of actors for *Betrayal*, although Douglas Hodge was asked to play Jerry. Hodge was born in Plymouth in 1960 and attended RADA and the National Youth Theatre. He brought a lot of acting experience to the role. His previous work had included Alan Ayckbourn's *The Norman Conquests* (1984, Nottingham Playhouse), Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* (1986, Almeida) and *King Lear* (1986, the National). He had also been in many Pinter productions, which explains why he was initially reluctant to accept the role of Jerry. *Betrayal* was also a new play for him, "I didn't know it at all," he says, "Trevor offered it to me, and at the time I had just done *The Lover* at the Donmar with Lia Williams. I had also done *Moonlight*, *No Man's Land*, *The Proust Screenplay* on radio, and the movie *The Trial*. And I'd done various things with Harold, such as readings. So I said, 'Listen, I can't do this. I need to do something else with a different writer.'"

But the power of Pinter's writing – and a personal intervention by the playwright – convinced Hodge to change his mind. "I had been working exclusively with Harold on his work and I felt that I should take a break from it," he explains. "Then I read the play and it knocked me for six – I thought it was a wonderful play. I recognised an enormous amount of Harold in Jerry, which I'd never seen in any of his plays before. I felt a great affinity with Harold, despite him being a genius, and me being just

an actor. I felt we were quite similar people in lots of senses. Harold came round – I think I was on tour with *The Lover* – and he talked to me very simply about the play and, so I bit and said 'Yes.'"

Hodge explains why *Betrayal* is a classic Pinter play. "I think it's his most accessible. The genius of the simplicity of the idea of doing it backwards meant that he was able to dramatise memory. Harold was so in love with Proust and Proustian memory; whether a memory was true if you remembered it as being such or whether historically it happened – that whole conundrum is very hard to put into drama. By simply reversing the scenes and doing it backwards – which seems the most simplistic idea now and has been followed a thousand times in films and all sorts of media – suddenly enabled him to articulate memory. I thought that was fantastic. I also find it tremendously sexy as a play."

There is also honesty in the writing, adds Hodge. "I went through quite a phase where I had a problem with my acting – I just found it to be so ultimately untruthful. I would be playing Shakespeare and someone would say, 'The king is dead,' and I would have to respond there and then with a forty-line speech and that just didn't respond to the way I was living my life. I always felt like I was acting at being dishonest. If someone gave me a tremendous piece of news or if I had a terrible argument or said something terribly hurtful, it would perhaps emerge three hours or even four years later. Invariably, as an actor, somebody says something to you onstage and you have to react immediately, and I felt I was becoming falser as an actor. When I came across *Betrayal*, it was the first time I was able to be absolutely honest as an actor."

Betrayal's structure enables a more honest response, adds Hodge. "Someone would betray you in year one and then in year three, you would see the fault lines of that betrayal have begun to come through to the surface, while on the day of the betrayal, you were polite and nice and took it on the chin – you didn't have to respond there and then. So, you were able to show the damage and the conflict and the emotion in a truer time space as an actor – that's what I felt."

An example of this occurs in the first scene, where Jerry and Emma meet in the pub, and Emma discloses that Robert knows about the affair. "You could play the first scene, where the person is absolutely destroyed and slowly show how that came about. And at the moment where you are

being destroyed, you don't necessarily have to weep or cry, as you would in other plays. So you'd say, 'I see, well you'd better go then,' and not have the words to match the situation, which I thought was much truer. It was a real revelation to me as an actor and a tremendous door opened for me."

Emma was played by Imogen Stubbs, who was born in Rothbury, Northumberland in 1961. Stubbs read English at Oxford, where she also got involved in student dramatics – her first role was Irina, in a student production of Chekov's *Three Sisters* at the Oxford Playhouse. She went on to study at RADA and got her professional break in 1985 – while still a drama student – when she was chosen to play Sally Bowles in the musical *Cabaret* at the Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich. By 1998, Stubbs had been in various stage productions including Patrick Marber's *Closer* (1998 Lyric Theatre), George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1994 Strand Theatre), Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1996 Haymarket), and Royal Shakespeare Company productions *Othello* (1989, with Trevor Nunn), and *Richard II* (1987, with Barry Kyle). Her television work included *The Browning Version* and *Relatively Speaking*, and film work, *True Colours* and *Sense and Sensibility*. She married Trevor Nunn in 1994 and they had two children.

"It was the first Pinter play I had been in, and it's the only Pinter play I've done," she explains, "I didn't know *Betrayal* before I got the part, but I was in Patrick Marber's *Closer*, which is like *Betrayal* without the children. It's also like [Ingmar Bergman's] *Scenes from a Marriage*, although that is much more harrowing." She adds that *Betrayal* "is a beautifully written play. The scene where Jerry declares his love to Emma is so poetic; it's heart-breaking and there's so much tenderness and sensitivity. I think the part of Emma is so well written, it was a great part to play, although I think she's a very sad person. I think *Betrayal* is a tremendously sad play, but it's also very funny. Pinter was a very funny writer, especially with the scenes between the two men."

When it comes to *Betrayal's* structure – nine relatively short scenes, with many going back in time – Stubbs says, "Each scene has a real power, and as an actor, you're carrying and playing stuff that the audience doesn't know yet. You're always in possession of knowledge that the audience doesn't know, but particularly in *Betrayal*. If you played it back the normal way, it would be very clear to the audience what the process

was. They have to do lots of working out. Whereas you're playing it with the knowledge of experiences that they haven't seen yet. You're playing things slightly perversely and people think, 'Why is she saying that in such a strange way?' and in three scene's time, you know what the significance is."

Stubbs believes *Betrayal* should be performed with an even more radical structure. "I've always said that I think that *Betrayal* should be done the way Pinter wrote it and then you should have an interval before going back to the beginning. So, you take the scenes backwards and then forwards. Then, I think people would really get what Pinter was writing. You get the impression that a lot of people find the play riveting, but if you went back again, most people who missed a detail – and some of the detail is crucial to understanding what the play is about – would be fascinated."

Robert was played by Anthony Calf, who was born in London in 1959 and trained at LAMDA, His first stage performance was as the delivery man in Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park*. Prior to *Betrayal*, his stage work included Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1986 New Shakespeare Company), Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* (1982 Queen's Theatre) and Alan Bennett's *The Madness of George III* (1991 National Theatre). His television work included *The Monocled Mutineer*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *A Touch of Frost*. Film appearances included *To Catch a King* and *Anna Karenina*.

"I hadn't read *Betrayal* before I got the part, but I had studied *The Birthday Party* at A-level," Calf recalls. "My mother was an English teacher and she admired Pinter's writing. When I was seventeen, she took me to see *No Man's Land* with John Gielgud and Ralph Richardson. I found the play incredibly strong and I remember coming out of the theatre with this incredible emotional response. That was my experience of Pinter, and I was slightly frightened of the man! His plays are so muscular and robust, and very heterosexual, but with an extraordinary kind of sadomasochistic homosexuality about them. Certainly in *The Caretaker*, there's a nasty streak of bullying. So, the plays excited me enormously, but I was also frightened of them."

He adds, "Pinter's plays are not romantic, but on the other hand, *Betrayal* is quite romantic. What I learnt from him was that he took great

store by male friendships, almost to a romantic level. One of his favourite movies was *The Dead,* a movie by John Huston which is also one of my favourites. It's almost romantic and I was surprised that Harold liked it so much."

Calf recalls how he got the part. "I had only done one play at the National Theatre before *Betrayal*, *The Madness of George III*, and I played a part that was significant but quite small. The play ran for a long time, so I was not unknown. This was during the time when Richard Eyre was running the National, and then Trevor Nunn took over from him. I'd never worked with Trevor Nunn. I'd done other plays, although not an enormous amount, however, the casting department knew me and suggested me for the part."

Nunn auditioned Calf. "I met Trevor in Rehearsal Room 2 and he was extremely kind, and sensitive and intelligent, and you came out of the half hour audition (which involved reading a scene from *Betrayal*) feeling that you had learnt so much that it didn't matter whether you got the job or not. I knew that if I got the job, my mother would be incredibly proud of me! But that wasn't the main motivation for wanting it; the play was magnificent and I wanted to do it."

The waiter was played by Arturo Venegas, who was born Chile 1944, but left the country after the political turbulence in the 1973 coup and came to the UK in 1975. He trained at the London Drama Centre and did various community theatre, TV, film and radio work before *Betrayal*, including *Death and the Maiden* (Brockley Jack Theatre) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (Cambridge Theatre). "I did mostly film, TV and radio because I never really got rid of my accent. It suited me fine because it helped me get a lot of work as a foreign representative in a production," he says. Television included, *Highlander*, *Poirot*, *Taggart*, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* and *Spender*. Film work included *Notting Hill* and *Truly, Madly, Deeply*.

Although the waiter is a small part, Venegas was keen to take on the role, "The opportunity to work in the National and with the people involved was a big attraction. I had worked with Trevor Nunn before at the RSC. When Trevor was doing *Betrayal*, he rang me, and I jumped at the chance, because I don't get many opportunities to do theatre and theatre is a passion of mine. So I was never going to turn it down, even if the part was small."

Venegas was familiar with *Betrayal*. "I knew the play but had never seen it staged before. I knew the background and had read Pinter in translation in Spanish in Chile. It is a traditional play in so far that it needs to be very precise, and all the actors were very skilled for that sense of reacting – that level of skill in the delivery and wanting to match them – I did work on that." Venegas also met Pinter. "We had more talks of a political nature. When I went for the interview for the part he was there. [General Augusto] Pinochet was arrested shortly before in London, so for me, the whole thing had come full circle politically. So, we talked about Chile and Pinochet and he gave me a book of his poems."

Nunn also cast the understudies. The understudy for Calf and Venegas was Julien Ball, who was born in Macclesfield in 1961. It was through Cheshire Youth Theatre that Ball developed a love of acting, and he took a drama degree at Bretton Hall, Yorkshire (part of Leeds University), before moving to London. Ball joined the Children's Theatre Group and got his Equity card. He also played Menzies in the West End production of Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*.

"Serena Hill, the casting director at the National, had seen me in a fringe play and had been trying to get me in the National for a while," says Ball. "I covered Paul Rhys in *The Invention of Love*. I was asked to audition for *Betrayal*. I first met staff director Fiona Buffini, because it's such a small cast and if you went on, it was such a big responsibility. We then auditioned with Trevor."

The audition with Nunn went well. "We had a chat and it was very entertaining. He got talking about actors he had worked with and not remembering them. When he was doing *Cats* on Broadway, he introduced the whole company, and went round, giving everyone's name, until he got to the last dancer, who he couldn't remember! I read a scene – I think it was with the casting director – and he gave me some notes. I did it again and then Trevor gave me the green light." Ball knew the play. "I had done *Betrayal* at university for my own enjoyment at the end of term, so it was very funny to be doing the play at the National years later. I saw the [1991] Almeida production, which was very good. I didn't enjoy the [1983] film because it's a very theatrical piece and somehow those lines sound a bit too arch when they're on-camera."

Hodge's understudy was Mark Carey, who was brought up in Exeter. He got into acting aged thirteen, when he appeared in the BBC series *The Onedin Line*, which was being filmed locally. Carey also took part in school productions and was mentored by the school's head of music and drama. He appeared in a production of *Henry V* at the Northcott Theatre and went to Central School of Speech and Drama in 1980. After leaving drama school, he worked in repertory theatre, including a ten-year association with Northampton Theatre. He also did television work, commercials and radio. "It was my first role as understudy. I was so keen to go to the National that I didn't mind," recalls Carey.

Carey had met the casting director at the National several times and read for various understudy parts, before getting the part in *Betrayal*. "I met Trevor at the audition for around thirty minutes. I did Jerry's last speech in the play, and then Trevor and I worked on it together – make Jerry more drunk, less drunk, emphasise this word. I think he was seeing whether I could take direction. At the end of the audition, he didn't say I had got the job, but he was positive and that gave me some encouragement. A couple of days later I got the call. It was fantastic – one of the best jobs I've done."

Carey admits that he wasn't initially impressed with the play. "I wasn't aware of *Betrayal*. I had done some Pinter sketches and *The Lover*, and we did Pinter at drama school. To be honest, when I first read *Betrayal*, I thought, 'This is a very light piece – there's not much here.' It was clever that it told the story in reverse, but then I thought, 'It's slightly gimmicky. Harold Pinter has just done that to make a not very interesting play more interesting' – how wrong could I be! It's one of those plays that creep up on you; the more you read it, the more you discover. I love it; it's one of my favourites."

The understudy for Imogen Stubbs was Corrinne Wicks. Wicks was born in Cheltenham, Gloucester in 1968, and had always wanted to act, but felt too nervous about going into the profession. As a result, she kept her acting ambition a secret. She worked at her local theatre – the Everyman in Cheltenham – as director's PA and took over the casting role. She moved to London and worked with casting agent Doreen Jones for three years, working on major TV productions like *Prime Suspect*, *Dalziel and Pascoe*, and the *Ruth Rendell Mysteries*. It wasn't until her

late twenties that she applied to Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art, where she trained, from 1996 to 1998. When Wicks left drama school, she didn't have an agent, and went to the National Theatre for an understudy part in *Betrayal.* She was recalled, met Trevor Nunn and was offered the part.

Wicks knew *Betrayal.* "At Webber, we had worked on four scenes in one of our activity classes, so I was aware of it, but didn't know it in detail. *Betrayal* is such an amazing play – I just love it. Emma gets to kiss both boys, so from a girl's point of view; it's a good part to play! I'd love to be in a production again, but not as an understudy." She describes the audition process – "The audition with Trevor involved reading a couple of scenes, and I remember dropping my bag and script on the floor and thinking, 'He's not going to want an idiot like me anywhere near his theatre.' But I got the part. I think part of it was to do with personality – yes, you can act, but are you going to be a good company member; will you fit in? I think that was an element."

The selection of Wicks for the role was a big gamble – she had no acting experience outside of drama school and could be called at any time to perform onstage with Hodge and Calf in a key role in a major Pinter production. It shows the remarkable courage Nunn has when it comes to giving unknown or inexperienced actors pivotal roles in key productions. It was an act that he would repeat again in this production.

With the cast in place, Nunn's next task was to find a set designer. The National Theatre had a group of designers it could call upon, but Nunn chose a young and relatively unknown designer with limited theatrical experience. Es Devlin was born in Kingston-upon-Thames in 1971, and grew up with an interest in art and music. But when she reached eighteen, she decided not to go to Art College, but instead, studied English at Bristol University. It was only after getting her degree, that Devlin felt ready for Art College. In 1994, Devlin studied at Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design, where her interest in set design was ignited. In 1995, Devlin enrolled at the Motley Theatre Design Course. At the end of the course, Devlin won the Linbury Prize for Stage Design. Through this she gained her first professional commission, Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* for the Octagon Theatre in Bolton.

In 1997, Devlin was commissioned by Mike Bradwell, artistic director of the Bush Theatre in London to design the set for a play he was directing Joe Penhall's *Love and Understanding*. "I was at the beginning of my career when I got the *Betrayal* commission. I had met Mike Bradwell and set up a meeting, where I showed him my work," recalls Devlin. "*Love and Understanding* was the first piece I did at the Bush. I was so pleased with myself getting the job that I thought I'd write to everybody and invite them to come! I wrote to Trevor and I was pretty amazed when his secretary rang up to say that he wanted to come! He came, and a few days later, he invited me to work on *Betrayal* with him. I was twenty-seven, which isn't particularly young for someone starting out, but I hadn't done a lot of theatre design work – my first piece was in 1996. So it was very fortunate."

The decision to choose Devlin to design the set for *Betrayal* was another example of the remarkable leap of faith that Nunn takes on people with limited experience. Stubbs says this is typical of him. "Trevor has always championed people at the beginning of things. He picks the people he thinks will work for him and he's not influenced by whether they have a Twitter following or are famous. So many people have been given their break by Trevor – he's got faith in people and he's a great humanitarian. Trevor follows an instinct and goes with it. He loves discovering people. Look at Es, who's now the most successful designer around."

"Trevor never stated explicitly why he chose me," says Devlin. "I think that Penhall follows in the footsteps of Pinter, and the end of one scene resonates with the beginning of the next, with both of them in a very explicit way. What interested me were – in quite a filmic script – the scene changes. I really emphasised and focused on how one scene would chime with the beginning of the next. I was determined that the changes wouldn't be purely functional, but that the energy would sustain. The way that candles were moved across the scene, or the way beds would turn into benches, would be driven by the quality of the language at the end of one scene and the beginning of another. I think probably what Trevor recognised was that he would get an environment and a mechanism that was driven by language and the music of the language."

It was a decisive step in Devlin's career, and she has gone on to become an internationally acclaimed set designer for theatre, film, opera, dance,

Chapter Fourteen

Betrayal: The Film

"The film was built on an intensity of concentration."

Patricia Hodge

"Harold was absolutely insistent that every word and every syllable had to be correct. He never worried about cuts – the only thing was that everything was said precisely as written."

John Bloom

Emma – Patricia Hodge
Jerry – Jeremy Irons
Robert – Ben Kingsley
Waiter – Ray Marioni
Charlotte (aged five) – Chloe Billington
Charlotte (aged nine) – Hannah Davies
Sam – Caspar Norman
Ned (aged two) – Michael König
Ned (aged five) – Alexander McIntosh
Mrs Banks – Avril Elgar
Uncredited – Man in Party (played by Lucien Morgan), Michaela (au pair), Denise (au pair)

Director – David Jones
Director of photography – Mike Fash
Sound mixer – Brian Simmons
Production designer – Eileen Diss
Costume – Jane Robinson, Jean Muir
Editor – John Bloom

Music – Dominic Muldowney (score), Mike Moran (party music)
Unit stills photographer – Graham Attwood
Producer – Sam Spiegel
Shooting period – March–May 1982
95 minutes
Released: 1983

By the time Harold Pinter started writing *Betrayal* in late 1977, he was not only an established playwright, but a noted screenwriter too. At this point in his career, Pinter had written thirteen film screenplays, including *Accident*, *The Servant* and *The Go-Between,* and sixteen of his plays had been televised.

Peter Hall told director Philip Saville that "Harold Pinter's not only a great dramatist; he's one of the best screenwriters in the business." Steven H. Gale, author and editor of several studies of Pinter's screenwriting, wrote in 2001, "While Harold Pinter is considered one of the premiere dramatists of the twentieth century, for years he also has been a master screenwriter." Joanne Klein, author of a study of Pinter's screenwriting, notes that "Pinter's screenplays carry his signatures as unmistakably as his stage plays," adding, "His stage plays of time and memory have their counterpart in the screenplays dealing with the inner processes." Klein also states that "Pinter's work for cinema involves structural and dramatic transformations and therefore becomes almost an analogue of the original work." It's an assessment that Pinter would have concurred with, as he explained to Leslie Bennetts, when discussing the stage and screen versions of *Betrayal*, "It's the same work, essentially; I don't think it differs at all."

Not surprisingly, Pinter's screenwriting influenced the form of his plays. One of the most obvious examples of this is in the opening scene of *Old Times*, where Anna – who has been standing silently upstage in half-light – suddenly joins the conversation between Deeley and Kate, the theatrical equivalent of a cinematic jump-cut. *Betrayal* includes many more cinematic elements – from its treatment of time to its multiple disparate scenes – and this was no accident, as Pinter told Bennetts, "[*Betrayal*] was originally written for the stage in a kind of cinematic way, with a structure that possibly owes something to the films I've worked on in the last twenty years. My early plays…were linear. Then I did more

Chapter Sixteen

Betrayal: The 2012 BBC Radio Production

"We still performed it as if we had an audience. Andrew Scott and Charles Edwards are such beautiful actors to work with, and you have to have eye contact to see what each character is feeling."

Olivia Colman

"I'm much more interested in a play about love than about power."

Gaynor Macfarlane

Emma – Olivia Colman
Jerry – Andrew Scott
Robert – Charles Edwards
Waiter/Narrator – Gerard McDermott

Producer/Director Gaynor Macfarlane
Recorded BBC Maida Vale Studio MV6 on 15/16/17 May 2012
Length: 71 minutes

Broadcast history
14 July 2012 14.00–15.10 (BBC Radio 4 Saturday Drama)
22 April 2017 14.30–15.40 (Rebroadcast)

Music
Link music between scenes: 'The River II' from *The River* Ketil Bjørnstad/David Darling
Scene 9 'Listen To Me' The Hollies and 'Darlin' The Beach Boys

Twenty-two years after the 1990 BBC Radio 3 production, the BBC broadcast a new version of *Betrayal*, produced and directed by Gaynor Macfarlane from BBC Scotland. Macfarlane's radio drama production credits included Alexander McCall Smith's *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, and F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. She had also worked with the Stellar Quines Theatre Company, the Globe and the National Theatre, amongst others. "I first read *Betrayal* while studying English at university," Macfarlane recalls, "and I loved it. It's arguably Pinter's best play and certainly one of his most accessible. It's a brilliant play." It was while considering possible productions for Radio 4's afternoon *Saturday Drama* slot that *Betrayal* came to mind, "It was the first thing that came into my head," she says.

Betrayal has many great qualities, says Macfarlane. "It's proper writing and there's so much latitude – there's not one way of doing it. Actors always respond to parts in which there's just not one obvious way of doing it. There's a massive amount of choice, and an ability to shape that, from my point of view," she says. "The temperature in the room is something that Pinter is brilliant at. The way the temperature shifts in the room is something I think works best on radio. Where the tension builds and you have a palpable sense of what's happening between two people – I think that's what is so thrilling about him."

But staging *Betrayal* for radio posed some challenges, "I had to think deeply whether reverse time would work on radio," says Macfarlane. "I thought about it a lot before I offered it [as a possible production]. Because you have to help the listener as much as you can. On stage, you've obviously got all the signifiers of fashion changes; you can do music and there's a whole range of things you can do to make people look younger or older, that you don't have access to on radio. So I had to be very clear that it would work backwards and I think that it does."

The 1990 *Betrayal* radio production had shown that such challenges could be overcome, but although Macfarlane was aware of Ned Chaillet's production, she had not heard it – and nor did she have any desire to do so at that point, "For me, 1990 was a long time ago, and I don't like doing anything that might colour the way I work – you have to do your own thing." The BBC generally leaves a twelve-to-fifteen-year gap before doing a new radio production of a classic series or play, so the twenty-

Chapter Seventeen

Betrayal: A Televised Scene

"Harold taught me that you have no responsibility in terms of how the audience reacts to what you are doing. Your only responsibility is to connect with them and be a vessel for the piece."

Michael Sheen

"It was really thrilling the way actors can come together and do what they do, and their bravery and instinctiveness to celebrate and commemorate."

Ian Rickson

On 7 June 2009, the National Theatre hosted a special event, *Harold Pinter: A Celebration*, featuring a company of leading actors from stage and screen, including Colin Firth, Lyndsay Duncan, Douglas Hodge, Harry Burton, Gina McKee, Jeremy Irons, Stephen Rea and Penelope Wilton. The one-off event included a selection Pinter's poems, plays and prose, and was later broadcast on BBC Four on 24 January 2010 as *Arena – Harold Pinter: A Celebration.* The driving force behind the event was Pinter's widow, Antonia Fraser, who asked director Ian Rickson – a friend of Pinter's – to organise and direct the celebration.

"After Harold died, Antonia asked me to do the memorial, a celebration. I was thrilled and absolutely delighted and it gave me something to do in terms of my grief," says Rickson. "Then, it was about gathering and selecting the material – which poems, what excerpts. The planning took around six months. Antonia was a great support."

The event took place in the Olivier Theatre and included excerpts from a number of Pinter's plays including *The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming* and

Betrayal. Rickson decided to include Scene 5 from *Betrayal*, the Venice bedroom scene, where Robert discovers Emma's affair with Jerry. The actors he chose for the *Betrayal* scene were Michael Sheen and Janie Dee. Janie Dee was a friend of Harold Pinter and Antonia Fraser, and had played Emma in the 2003 Theatre Royal, Bath production, directed by Peter Hall. She recalls her reaction to Rickson's offer, "Ian Rickson called me and said, 'I'd like you to do this' – I was thrilled. He said he had thought about the Torcello scene." Dee's biographical details can be found in Chapter Nine and Rickson's in Chapter Eleven.

Michael Sheen was born in Newport, Wales in 1969, although he grew up in Port Talbot, South Wales. Both of his parents were involved in the arts, chiefly amateur operatics and musicals, and when Sheen was a teenager, he joined the Glamorgan Youth Theatre and the National Youth Theatre of Wales. In 1988, he moved to London and trained at RADA. He got his first professional role in his final year of RADA, when he played in Martin Sherman's *When She Danced* at the Globe Theatre in 1991, in a cast that included Frances de la Tour and Vanessa Redgrave.

In 1993, Sheen was a member of the cast for the world premiere of Pinter's *Moonlight* at the Almeida Theatre. He also played in the title role of Shakespeare's *Henry V* at RSC Stratford in 1997, and in the same year played Lenny in the National Theatre's production of *The Homecoming*. In 2006, Sheen played the part of television interviewer David Frost in Peter Morgan's play *Frost/Nixon* at the Donmar Warehouse; Sheen reprised the role in the 2008 film version. Sheen also gained national prominence for his portrayal of British prime minister Tony Blair in the 2003 Channel 4 film *The Deal*, and the 2006 film *The Queen*.

Sheen remembers when Rickson contacted him. "I was first of all, very excited to be a part of the whole event, but I was also a little intimidated because it [the Venice scene] was one act out of context from the play. Janie had played the part in a very celebrated way, so that was quite intimidating. But once we started rehearsing I thought, 'This is good stuff.'"

Sheen first met Pinter in 1993, during rehearsals for *Moonlight*. "I often find the best way of meeting someone is during the time when you're just sitting around and having a cup of tea. I remember having a great conversation with Harold in rehearsal break and talking about [Pinter's 1959 sketch] *Trouble in the Works*. I'd always loved that sketch