



# STRUNG OUT

6 x 30 minutes comedy series

*Written & created by Victoria Taylor Roberts*

# Where We Are



London's musical nirvana  
**Denmark Street**

# Tell me why

Denmark Street (or Tin Pan Alley as it's lovingly called) epitomises the world-famous rock and pop culture we Brits are so proud of. From its earliest days in the 50s, where its rebirth from song publishing mecca to guitar shop nirvana began, through the cool 60s of the Beatles, into Bolan's wild 70s, this tiny street has kept its big influence on the global stage.

Hendrix, The Who, The Stones, Black Sabbath and The Kinks (to name just a few) have recorded and rehearsed in its many hidden studios; both Bowie and Elton John once worked on the street, the Sex Pistols even lived at number six – and Yungblud loves it so much, he's opened his own shop!

# This is How We Do it

**The key to this project's success is the creative team's close connection to both the music industry and Denmark Street (one being a multi-platinum selling British artist & composer, the other's partner owning not just one but four guitar shops on the street over the past 25 years). When we say 'We know this world' we really mean it!**

**With extensive contacts and access to musical artists from all genres, we can ensure a 'revolving door' of some of the industry's most impressive icons and emerging talent to leave the viewers wondering whose famous face will grace each episode – and what part they'll play in the antics.**

ELECTRIC GUITARS & BASS

What's going on  
at JJs?



**In this adult comedy series set in one of the world's most iconic musical streets, pop star wannabes and Rock God has-beens not only drift in and out of JJ's Guitars on a daily basis, they run the place.**

# **It's a Wonderful World**

**STRUNG OUT** brings a fresh twist to music-themed television, blending comedy, relatable characters and feel-good entertainment in a way that is both modern and distinctly British.

With cameo artists gracing each episode, our distilled world of Denmark Street pays witness to dreams and disappointment forever butting heads, turning banal surroundings into a place of possibilities as viewers are kept wondering 'Who's going to pop up next?'

**Let's meet the regulars, shall we?**

# JJ McIntyre



Working class  
Glasgow boy with  
big dreams and  
a sharp eye for a  
great instrument

**Who ↑ Are You?**

**James John (Jackie) McIntyre**, owner of JJ's Guitars, is a roguish Glaswegian who, relatively new to this unassuming road in the heart of London's Soho, isn't well tolerated by its other residents. It's not really his fault - cocky though he is. JJ has had to fight hard for his place on the street among the long-established guitar retailers.

Arriving in London in his early 20s, JJ's original dream was to make his fortune through music – specifically, his love of old-school Rhythm & Blues. But, after numerous band break-ups & failed signings, the dream began to fade. Knowing that 'going home' meant a life in the shipyard where most of his school friends ended up, JJ took a gamble (and a bank loan) with his ambitions now set on building a modest empire of his own.

**Elisa Miles** is a driven woman with very few weaknesses – except JJ. In her mid-30s and rapidly making a name for herself as corporate conveyancing solicitor, Elisa won't be the junior partner in her father's firm for much longer. Sadly, her patriarchal family has other plans for her. As his only daughter, Elisa's father, still steeped in the old world of back-scratching trade, is set on using her for a good 'business' marriage. A guitar shop owner would not be considered eligible in terms of usefulness!

If that wasn't enough, JJ's landlord just happens to be The Big G, one of Central London's most enduring gangsters – and fiercely protective Godfather to Elisa. Things wouldn't go well for JJ if someone let slip of his and Elisa's romance.



# Elisa

Confident  
career  
woman  
&  
JJ's guilty  
secret



Lila

Bob

Will

Every shop in Denmark Street has its own set of wannabes growing older whilst waiting to live the life they were destined for. A few lucky ones make it off the street and onto the big stages of their dreams, most don't.

**Will** is one of JJ's shop assistants. Skimming 30, Will's bid for stardom is starting to feel desperate. He has the looks, the attitude – even a decent collection of songs – so why not him?

**Bob** is a jazz freak, the muso's muso. He's happy as long as he has a double bass in his arms. Fame holds little interest, which makes him a rare creature in this story world.

**Lila** sings like an angel and writes like a poet. She deserves to find her fame, but in such a fickle industry, success still eludes this 20-something nightingale. One of Dave's staff, Lila is the Juliet to Will's Romeo.

**Dave Wenlock** (owner of the street's oldest shop, Dave's Guitars) views JJ as his nemesis. The younger man represents everything that Dave knows he isn't any more: dynamic, sharp-witted, aspiring and charismatic. The truth is Dave has never been any of these things. Taking over the shop from his father in the 80s, Dave has wallowed in the inherited comfort of a steady income from flogging an instrument he never learned to play very well. It is thanks only to his empresario father (RIP) that Dave's Guitars cemented a reputation in the 60s that, somehow, Dave hasn't managed to destroy yet.

**Colleen Wenlock** is Dave's third wife and less keen on her husband than she is his bank balance. There may have been love – a little – at the start, but all that's left now is gritted teeth tolerance. Just hitting her 50s, she still has a thirst for life and a libido as high as her back combed hair. As fond of it as she is, Colleen is on the search for meaning beyond money; she's just not sure what that looks like. One thing she does like the look of is JJ – and is not above blackmail in the quest to get her leg over.



# Dave

World-weary,  
mean-spirited  
& furious at  
JJ's rapid rise  
on the street

Proud owner of a  
deep cleavage &  
a roving eye that  
often lands on JJ

# Colleen



# The Big G

Old-school gangster  
JJ's landlord  
& Elisa's Godfather

**The Big G** – aka Gerald Staines – is from a long, proud line of petty criminals (mostly on his mother's side) and East-End money launderers. His father and grandfather before him ran most of the bookies between Stratford and Clapton. Things went a little south when a bad debt led to a shoot-out that laid waste to the family's heavy players.

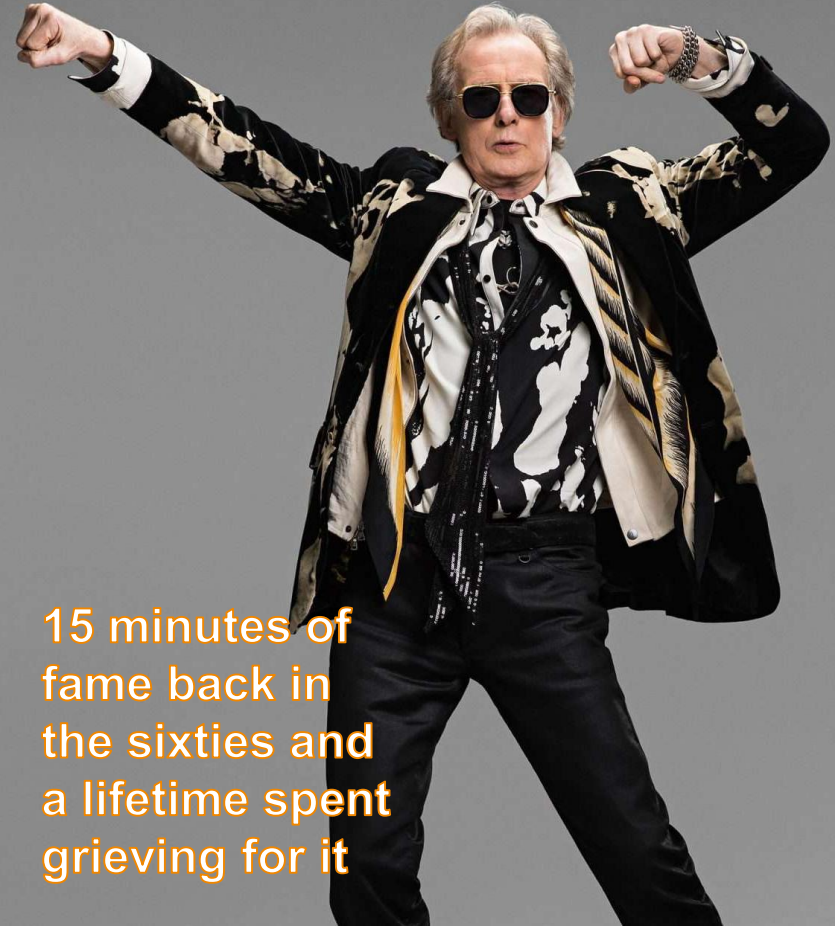
With his father gone and only in his twenties, Gerald (still years off from becoming The Big G) set his sights closer to the West End. Using what was left of the old empire, Gerald wheeled and dealt his way to creating a new one, nightclub by nightclub, with the odd barbers, restaurant and guitar shop on the way.

Now in his sixties, The Big G is a satisfied man with nothing to prove. He's just ticking over and as long as you stay out of his way, he'll stay out in yours.

**Mick Velan** would seem to many as just a mild-mannered, conscientious pensioner with the sniff of a sad past about him. Few would believe that JJ's right-hand man was once a Bonafide sixties rock icon - or would've been if not nudged into the shadows by the Rolling Stones' sexier, loose-hipped frontman. Although Mikey Velour (an adopted name to match his outfits) strummed through to the late sixties with a handful of top twenty hits, his time in the spotlight was pretty much done. Still the optimist, Mikey's dream did not die instantly, with failed hits piling up through the 70s and 80s turning his 'jive' in to a joke.

The decades rolled on and a new century saw Mikey Velour fade back into Mick Velan, guitar-lover turned salesman. Drifting from shop to shop on the street in between a bit of heavy work for The Big G to top up the electric key, Mick now resigns himself to his memories of what once was – and what should have been.

# Mick Velan



15 minutes of  
fame back in  
the sixties and  
a lifetime spent  
grieving for it



**Prunella**

**Prunella Fisch** isn't evil, she's just greedy – and bitter, of course, with Dave being the primary cause. Married to him for five hard years in the nineties before he dumped her and their young son in search of a younger (more malleable) version, Prunella reverted to her maiden name with one vow: to be a thorn in her ex's side.

She's doing quite well at present; having clawed to the top of the council's planning department, Prunella is now reaping in the backhanders from developers with their hearts set on owning Soho. If it happens to screw over Dave in the process then all the better; the other shops? Well, that's just collateral damage.

And as for the street's cultural heritage? Who needs history? Prunella knows that in the real world, it's money that matters. Arts & culture is for hippies and nerds.

**Daniel Donaldson** has a job to do and always does his job – even if, deep down, he'd prefer to be 'riffing' with the boys on Denmark Street. (Daniel is the kind of guy who says riffing instead of jamming: hard as he tries, he never quite gets it right.) A trained classical guitarist, a musician's life had beckoned during college, but accounting exams won't do themselves and Daniel, borne and bred with Home County sensibilities, likes to know what his bank balance will be each week.

His beloved guitar might be in his arms most nights, but by day Daniel's holding a clipboard, issuing fines and passing on forms like an obedient council minion. As much as he wishes to be 'one of the gang', his sincerest ambition is to find a wife and build a family. In Daniel, Prunella has found herself the perfect foot-soldier: a fearful man who tows the line.



**Daniel**



# Max

**Max** is, by far, the most mysterious of our street's wildlife. Dave's shop assistant, or 'foot-soldier' as many on the street call themselves, moves like a shadow: you won't know he's there until he's gone. The kind of guy that lives under the radar, Max takes cool to another level.

But there's a lot more going on Max's world than the quirky microcosm that is Denmark Street. It's his cunning (& fame as an underground social media figure) that saves the day in series one when the diggers move on to the street.

**Joe** came to the street for work experience sometime in the noughties – & never left. JJ inherited Joe like one does a cat who moves through the neighbourhood.

Now every work experience kid is called Joe – boy, girl or other – merely for the sake of simplicity. As JJ says, "They come, they go, they're all called Joe."



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James McAvoy

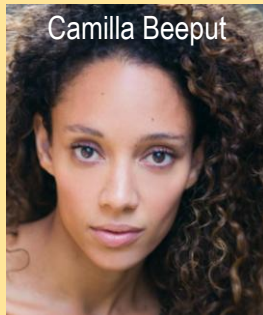


Aidan Turner

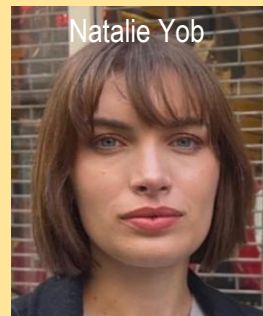


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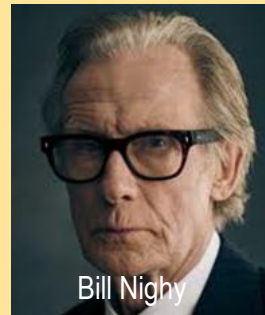


Natalie Yob

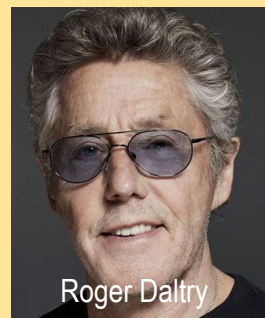


Elaine Cassidy

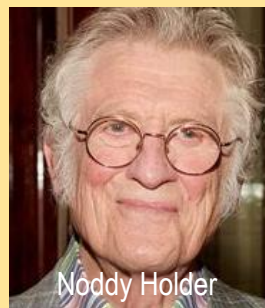
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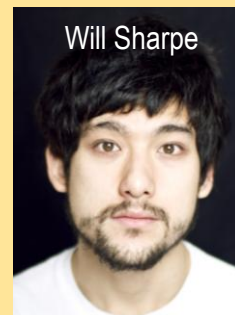


Roger Daltry

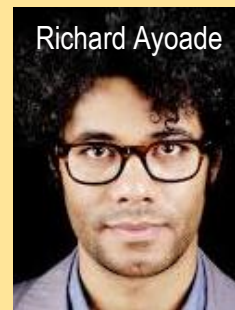


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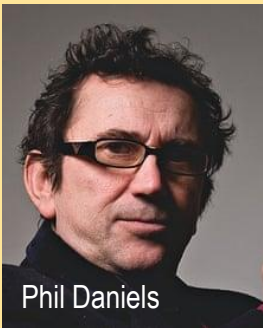
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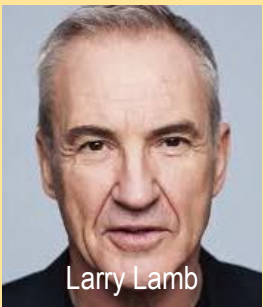
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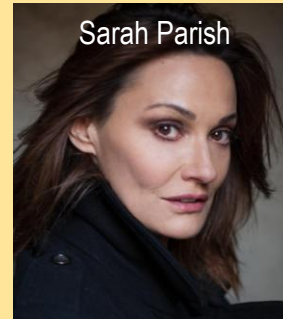
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Dervla Kirwan



Angela Griffin



Sarah Parish

# Beautiful people

## Non-exhaustive wish list for (current) musical cameos

**We suspect that once artist management learn of the chance to raise their artists' profiles in a unique way, this list of musical and celebrity cameos will get longer and broader!**

*Yungblud*  
*Sam Fender*  
*The 1975*  
*Lola Young*  
*Raye*  
*The Weeknd*  
*George Ezra*  
*Florence Welch*  
*Ellie Goulding*  
*Jesse Ware*  
*Tom Odell*  
*Paloma Faith*  
*John Newman*  
*Michael Kiwanuka*

**What's to say that Sting, Robert Plant, Liam Gallagher, Billy Connolly, Stormzy and many more musicians can't be coaxed into sticking their heads around the door of JJ's Guitars!**

## Start Me Up

## So, what's in the pilot then?

As Denmark Street wakes to a new day and the shops' shutters roll up, London's most musical quarter comes alive. Dave watches grimly from across the street as JJ's right-hand man, Mick, stares at the empty space in the display window, grieving for his lifetime companion – a Gibson guitar called Betty – stolen from the shop earlier that week.

We follow JJ on his journey to work, getting a feel for his character. He arrives on the street just in time to watch yet another thief emerging from his shop holding a guitar. Will, walking back hands full from the coffee shop is useless to help and it is Max, Dave's foot soldier, who steps in and trips over the thief, whisking the guitar out of his hand. JJ and Max, who is one of Dave's, silently agree that the moment never happened.

Back in the shop, JJ has a go at Will and Bob for almost losing their third guitar that week. Joe, the new work experience boy, returns from one of the fool's errands JJ's team are fond of. During the general banter, we learn about Bob and Max's ongoing battle of wits on the street (with Max obviously winning). Prunella's lacky, Daniel, drops off some council documents for JJ. It's clear that he loves the shop and the boys and would rather be part of that gang. JJ realises from the plans that the next-door shop will be demolished, meaning that the walkway from the station will go right past JJs. He decides that, as annoying a Daniel is, keeping him on side could be useful and instructs Will and Bob to 'take him drinking'.

Dave's wife, Colleen, comes in to the shop to flirt, offering up some more information in return for JJ's attention. Will mentions Elisa, JJ's girlfriend, but is quickly silenced – just in time as the The Big G appears. He brings more bad news about the shop: it seems that, to keep his lease, JJ must sacrifice the basement (essentially, his bass shop). The Big G's heavies appear with the two stolen guitars from JJ's shop; one of them is Betty. Mick returns, delighted to discover her back and the night ends with JJ sending the boys out to All Bar One (much to their disgust) to meet Daniel and gather more information about Prunella's plans.

After shutting up shop, JJ wanders down to the bass floor to sit among them while he still can. Upstairs, Mick holds Betty once more, reliving (in the imagined cries of overwrought teenagers) the memories of his brief stardom 50 years earlier. On this sentimental note, another day on the street comes to a close.

## What's The Story (Morning Glory)?

**SERIES ONE** introduces us to the street's buzzing atmosphere as JJ and his nemesis, Dave (owner of the street's oldest shop, Dave's Guitars) lock horns on a daily basis – usually over the pettiest of things. The world of guitar sales is a competitive one and any 'interloper' is given a hard time - with good reason. Things are getting tougher: the council's planning department is in the process of handing over substantial chunks of Soho to the highest bidders. To make way for new developments, shop after shop along the street is getting demolished. Soon there will be nothing left of Tin Pan Alley (it's origin name) but the memories of its one-time residents. Despite their mutual animosity, Dave and JJ must join forces to fight the council's head of planning, Prunella Fisch who, beyond the benefits of reaping backhanders from shady dealings with foreign investors, is taking personal joy in the street's demise. In the face of new versus old, money versus sentiment, JJ and Dave know that only a unified defiance will save their street and the beating heart of British musical history from the diggers.

Along the way, we meet JJ and Dave's eclectic bunch of employees, Soho's reigning gangster, the Big G, and the street's other unhinged as they trade their way through the days, visited by the famous and not-so-famous in search of that holy grail - the perfect guitar.





## Break It Down

- EP 1: a) We meet enemies JJ & Dave, while discovering the street  
b) Mick's stolen guitar – his beloved 'Betty' is returned to him  
c) Colleen offers JJ a lifeline in the form of access to plans
- EP 2: a) Prunella's role in the street's 'regeneration' plot unpicked  
b) Elisa shuns her dad's interference at their family law firm  
c) Will's search for management ends in disappointment
- EP 3: a) Daniel has a loyalty dilemma between JJ and Prunella  
b) Elisa & Colleen clash over JJ  
c) Will & Lila's romance hots up with a open mic duet
- EP 4: a) Dave & JJ crash a developer's meeting in disguise  
b) Bob's mum visits & The Big G takes a shine to her  
c) Bob's mum takes a maternal shine to Max – to Bob's horror
- EP 5: a) Dave & Prunella lock horns when their adult son resurfaces  
b) Lila breaks Will's heart by rekindling an old flame  
c) Mick's covert 'dirty' work for The Big G brings trouble to JJ
- EP 6: a) Bulldozers move on to the street and Max rallies a crowd  
b) Max is discovered to have a famous internet alter ego  
c) Elisa confesses to JJ that she is pregnant

# Same as it ever was



# Same as it ever was

**The potential for a long-running returning series is huge.**

Strung Out's collective of cool, crazy characters offers up repeated antics and misunderstandings on the street. Beyond the constant, the show's revolving door of visiting characters and cameo appearances also give us the opportunity for episodic and series arc dilemmas and 'justice seeking' or 'holy grail' adventures.

# The Beat Goes On...

Here's STRUNG OUT's returning series theme – NOT as story beats, but as the characters' wants/needs. Unusual, you're thinking – yes, maybe, but as interesting as **what** and **when** is, **why** is the key. (WHAT is plot, but WHY is people – and all this show is ALL about the people & the street they love!)

**JJ's want** is to keep his shop from going under in the face of Denmark Street's 'facelift' and the then inevitable hike in council business rates. His need is to prove himself to the naysayers who said that a working-class Scot could never make anything of himself in the world of commerce.

**Dave's want** is also to stay afloat in uncertain times. His shop epitomises the 'old' Denmark Street and its loyal clientele, and he's uncertain of its place in the street's 'modern vision'. Dave's need is to get to retirement with the status quo, not fall at the final hurdle of a long, successful career.

**Elisa's want** is to prove herself, independent of her family's powerful connections. Her need is to escape their misogyny and its pressure to see her 'make a good marriage with a useful ally'. A life in which men make the money and women do lunch is not what she has planned for herself.

**Mick's want** is to be needed. His need is to stay sober through the disappointment of reaching old age, knowing that in his misspent youth, for a short few years at least, he was Britain's answer to Elvis.

# ...And The Beat Goes On

**Colleen's want** is to be desired and have fun – with JJ if he'll let her – and stockpile Dave's money (whilst he still has it). Her need is to ward off invisibility, to be of some relevance to the world whilst it will still let her; as to how, exactly, she's undecided.

**Will's want** is to be a famous songwriter, a troubadour the likes of Shawn Mendes – but richer. His need is to be adored, to have the musical genius he's so certain of recognised, to be redeemed - from what, we don't know yet, but it's dark and when love-interest Lila shows up, all bubbles to the surface.

**Daniel Donaldson's want** is to climb the council ladder to the heights befitting a man with a future family to provide for – and to do his pretty unpopular job without being hated for it. His need, equally humble, is to fit in, to find love. He also happens to be a fabulous guitarist – something the series arc reveals.

**Prunella Fisch's want** is to bring the archaic Denmark Street into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, regardless of its inhabitants' resistance. Her need is to persecute the man (Dave) who abandoned her when she was pregnant and vulnerable: nothing short of vengeance will set her world to rights.

**Bob's want** is simple, like him; Bob wants to be the next Roy Ayers. His need is just as simple: to make his widowed mother proud and be as good as the man from whose loss she's never recovered.

**Lila's want** is to crack the industry's determination to make her a marionette. Her need is to prove (mainly to herself) that talent can come in pretty packages, that she's worthy of the respect she fights for.

**Max's want** is to stay under the radar – something he's very successful at. His need? Your guess is as good as ours! We're not even sure he's of this world.

# Voulez-vous



Strung Out promises to deliver the energy and tone of such shows as **People Just Do Nothing**, alongside the wit and absurdism of classics like **The IT Crowd**.

# Who We Are



## Victoria Taylor Roberts

An award-winning writer (Kenneth Branagh Drama Award, EDALYA Award), producer and director, Victoria has been creating for stage, screen and audio for over twenty years. Passionate about life and art reflecting one another, Victoria's work often focuses on social issues told through a comedic lens. *Strung Out* reflects a world Victoria knows extremely well having been a songwriter in her youth. In fact, she met her husband on Denmark Street while buying a guitar. (It was him that sold it to her!) Thus, her love affair with Tin Pan Alley never ended.



## Shelly Poole

*Strung Out's* world is second nature to Shelly who, in the late 1990's, formed the chart-busting band *Alisha's Attic*, alongside her sister Karen, scoring 11 hit singles and 4 gold and platinum selling albums, securing nominations for 2 Brit awards and an Ivor Novello. A multi-platinum selling award winning British composer, creative producer, music supervisor and member of the Ivor Academy senate, Shelly has achieved international success in an ever-increasing variety of music, film and TV settings, remaining at the centre of the UK's music industry.



## **Michelle Farr-Scott**

MICHELLE is a critically acclaimed producer & exec, working in the comedy industry for over two decades. She is best known for *Avoidance*, *Bluestone 42*, *Whites*, *Romantic Getaway*, *Two Pints of Lager* and *a Packet of Crisps* and *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*. Michelle was previously Head of Scripted at Romesh Ranganathan's Ranga Bee Productions and now works as a freelance producer and script consultant, most recently script editing on popular Netflix series *Geek Girl*.

[www.michellefarrscott.tv](http://www.michellefarrscott.tv)

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