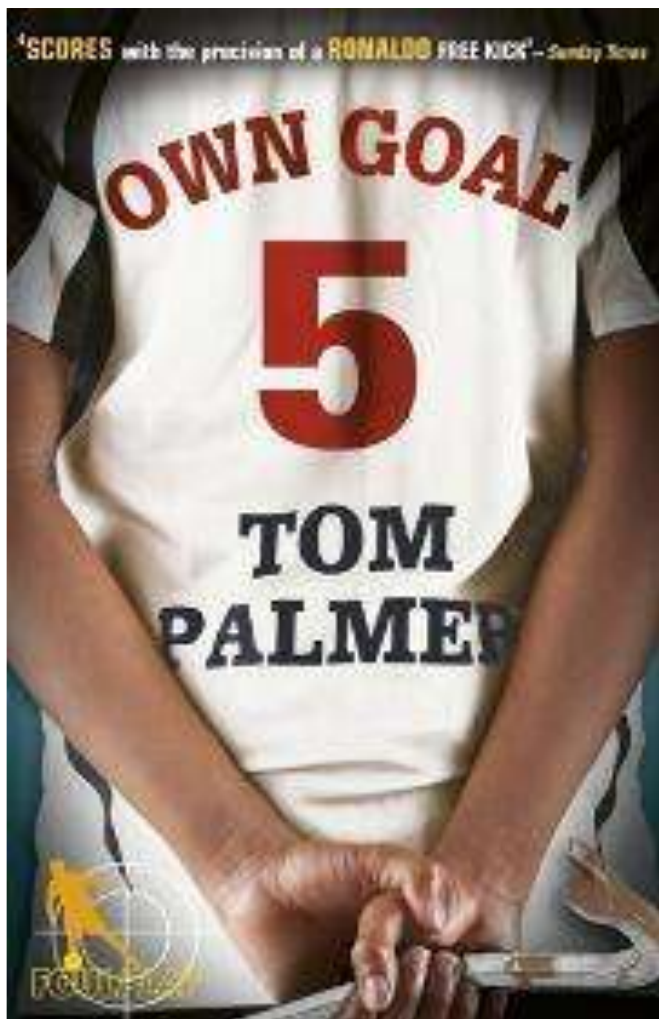




**Tom  
Palmer**

**Writer's Pack**



**Foul Play 5 :  
Own Goal**

# Tom Palmer

## Foul Play 5 : Own Goal

### Writer's Pack

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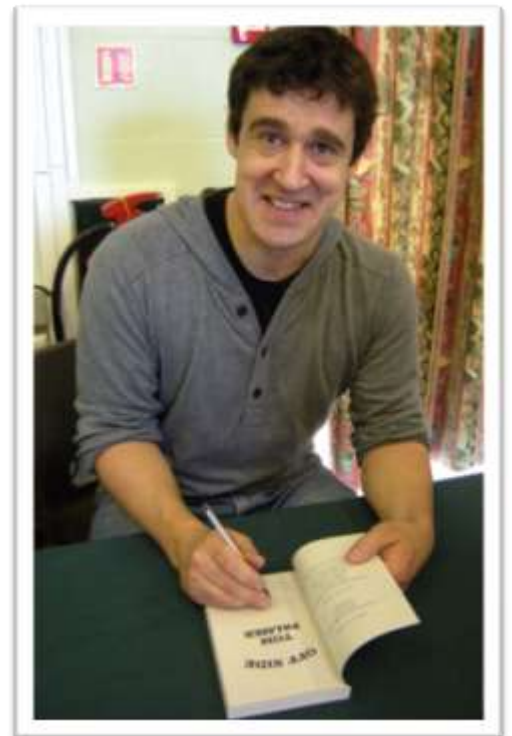
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Hello,

I hope this pack will give pupils an extra insight into how writers write, as well as the story of *Foul Play 5 : Own Goal*.

It's divided into 6 sections. Each section has a short introduction, some discussion topics and a writing project. They can be worked through in any order, one at a time or as you choose. I also have certificates I can sign and dedicate for pupils who have enjoyed the pack.

I hope you will enjoy the pack. I'd love to see photos or anything inspired by it. If you or your pupils would like to email me any questions, please email [info@tompalmer.co.uk](mailto:info@tompalmer.co.uk)



Best wishes

*Tom Palmer*

Foul Play 5 : Own Goal (Puffin) ISBN 978-0141331195

## Research

Here are two blog entries written when I was researching *Foul Play 5 : Own Goal*. Its important for me to be accurate so that the reader believes in the story, and therefore in me as a writer.



<http://footballdetective.blogspot.com/2010/07/milan.html>

"I'm off to Milan next week to research *Own Goal*, the fifth *Foul Play* book. I need to go to the San Siro and some city centre sites for settings.

I am also going to Lake Como where my villain will live in a villa on an island. It'll be nice to go back there with my wife, seeing as this is where we went on our honeymoon nine years ago. Good to take our daughter there too.

In the book Danny is going to have to swim off the island across half a mile of lake. I like to do as much research as I can, so I'm planning to do the same. Just so I can get my facts right."



<http://footballdetective.blogspot.com/2010/07/lake-como.html>

"I am just back from Milan and Lake Como, where I was researching the fifth *Foul Play* book, *Own Goal*. The story is about an Italian football club owner who also owns lots of TV channels. An entirely fictional character who Danny Harte has to come up against.

My family took a boat up the lake, searching for a good house this evil villain could live in. And this is the one we chose. We took lots of photos and I made some notes.

Imagine Danny is being chased across this outcrop. He reaches the statues you can see on the edge of the grounds. If he doesn't jump he's dead. So he jumps...

Now I just have to write it. I made a good start today in Todmorden's Bear Cafe, where I'll be every morning in the summer, writing. I did 2000 words."

## Discussion Topics

- At what points in the book does Danny Harte go to the settings I researched above (a stadium and a villa)?
- Why do you think I like to go to these places myself?
- When I am at a real setting, what methods could I use to record what I am seeing, feeling and imagining so I can remember it when I am writing it up?
- There are hundreds if not thousands of beautiful villas in the Italian lakes. See if you can find some pictures of Italian villas on the web, including Villa Balbianello. Why do you think I chose Villa Balbianello?

## Writing Project - How to research a setting for the story you are writing.

Find pictures of villas on Italian Lakes like Lake Como or Lake Garda on the internet. Some villas were built in ancient Roman days, some were used in the war as hospitals, some are now hotels and some are lived in today by celebrities like George Clooney. Now write a short fictional story based at your villa. Think about how to use different rooms of the building and its gardens and setting (the mountains or lakes) for different scenes. You could make a floor plan or map to help.

## Creating Characters

In earlier *Foul Play* books, the archetypal villain was businessman Sir Richard Gawthorpe.

In *Own Goal*, the villainous character of Salvatore Fo was inspired in part by Silvio Berlusconi. I researched real figures like him by reading books like this:

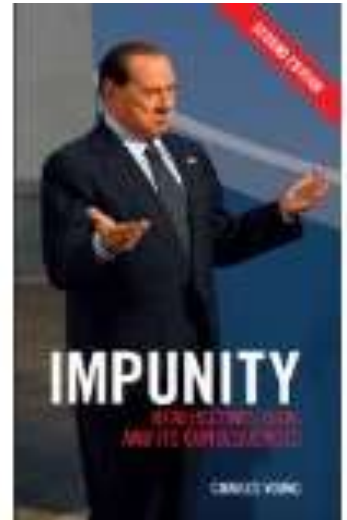
In *Own goal*, Danny researches Salvatore Fo on-line (see page 54 and 68).

You can look up online biographies of Silvio Berlusconi to get a glimpse of the lives and lifestyles of businessmen in other countries.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11981754>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1298864.stm>

<http://www.thebiographychannel.co.uk/biographies/silvio-berlusconi.html>



When I write, I try to show a character's personality through their behaviour rather than simply telling the reader what they are like.

### Discussion Topics

- How have I tried to show Salvatore Fo's character? Look at Danny's online research pages 54-68. Now compare Fo first meeting with Danny's Mum (page 110-114) with his manner at the press conference (pages 195-204). What are the differences?
- What characteristics does a really convincing villain need to have? Why do successful people make convincing bad characters in stories? What attributes or personality do successful business or sports people have that bad characters share?
- Can you find five real successful business or sports leaders in this country that are good examples in their professional and personal life?
- Which countries do fictional villains in British stories and films often come from?
- Which countries portray British people as villains in their films?

### Writing Project - This is a good way to develop and show characters for any story/writing

A ) Start the homework set for Danny by fictional Mrs Page on Page 10 of *Own Goal*.

Create a quick profile for a living person you admire or an author you like to read, someone controversial or someone you don't like.

- Think about what are the real facts you know.
- Can you tell fact from rumours?
- Write up your facts in a list format to **tell** the reader.

B ) Think of a new fictional character based on your profile. You can make them a hero or turn them into a villain. Give them a new name and a new background. Think about how far can you exaggerate and distort facts before they become unbelievable? Now write up a short everyday scene, like ordering a coffee in a café, and try to **show** the reader how they are.

## Themes



As a football fan and follower for 35 years I've seen the "beautiful game" at its best and worst. There's been fraud, match rigging, club takeovers etc. This hasn't alienated me. Perhaps it even keeps me interested.

Football ownership is at the heart of my stories. Each club's business model is unique, but the questions around ownership are shared with every other business.

In *Own Goal*, the fans protest about what is happening at an away match.

## Discussion Topics

- Who owns football clubs?
- Who pays the players? Where does the ticket money go?
- Who watches every week through the cold? Who watches in hospitality suites?
- What happens when a club is taken over and the fans don't like it? (eg Manchester United)
- What happens when a club is taken over and moved miles away? (eg MK Dons)
- What happens when a club runs out of money? (eg Portsmouth)

## Writing Project

Think about your school as a business. Where does its income come from? What are its expenses? Who makes the decisions about what the money is spent on?

Now write a short local newspaper report about what might happen if someone tried to take over your school. They might be charging customers (that's pupils) money (fees / lunch money, etc.) or offering less services (less hours at school, more children in the classroom, etc.) They might even move the school to a new area or change your curriculum.

Think if anyone in the school might try to challenge this? Who might they be? What could they do? How could their voices be heard or be seen to disagree (without breaking any laws)?

Think about how you want the reader of your article to feel. Do you want to give both sides of the story? Do you want to motivate them to do something?

You could add a photo of a publicity stunt or demonstration.

## Writing

**Planning:** Before I start to write, the story will have been whirling round my head for months, if not longer.

**Drafting:** I start by plotting the story on paper. I do a one page summary then a chapter by chapter breakdown. I make graphs to show what's happening in each chapter to each character - if it's good or bad - so there's a developing emotional journey to keep the reader's interest as well as a solid plot.

**Revision and editing:** I share my first draft with a writer's group and my wife and ask them what they think. I change bits they found unclear. Sometimes they encourage me to make huge changes.

**Publication:** It takes 9 months from when I deliver the final draft for Puffin to publish the book. They will have already produced the cover but need time to fit the printing in with all their other books.



Here's a blog from when I was writing *Own Goal* ...

[http://footballdetective.blogspot.com/2010\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html](http://footballdetective.blogspot.com/2010_08_01_archive.html)

I've finished the third draft of *Own Goal*. Now one draft to go before I deliver it on Friday...

This last draft before delivery to Puffin is one I really enjoy. I read the whole book aloud in 10 page chunks over two days. It helps me weed out some of my bad writing.

If I read it aloud I spot things I just don't see if I read it silently. Such as repetition of words close to each other, sentences that don't flow so well and using real people's names.

One big change in between draft two and three is Danny's fate. I had to decide between keeping him alive - or not...

### Discussion Topics

- What do I need to plan before I start to draft my writing?
- Why do I need more than one draft?
- When revising my writing, how do I spot "bad writing" like repetition, etc.

### Writing Project - How careful revising of text make reading more interesting for the reader

Look over a small passage that you or someone else has written in the past and re-write it.

- Read it out loud to yourself, putting yourself in place of the reader.
- Ask yourself if you can actually see what is imagined.
- Appeal to different senses as you go along – describe the touch, scent, sounds as well as what can be seen.
- Substitute any repetitious words.
- Change words that are clichés for more interesting descriptions.
- Tighten sections that are clumsy or vague.
- Vary sentence structure – short and long sentences.
- Vary how sentences start and finish.
- Check verbs used in sentences are in the same tense all along.

## Blurb

This is the blurb on the back of the book, written by the publishers, Puffin, to attract readers to reading (and buying) the book.



“Danny loves supporting his local team, City FC. So when everyone starts supporting the Italian team Forza FC, Danny is angry. His club is in jeopardy and needs their support. Danny decides to investigate the sudden popularity of the new team – starting with Forza’s billionaire owner – and that’s when the danger really kicks off. . .”

### Discussion Topics

- How does this text make you want to read on?
- How does this text sum up what’s in the book?
- Has it exaggerated anything?
- Has the publisher left anything out?

### Writing Project

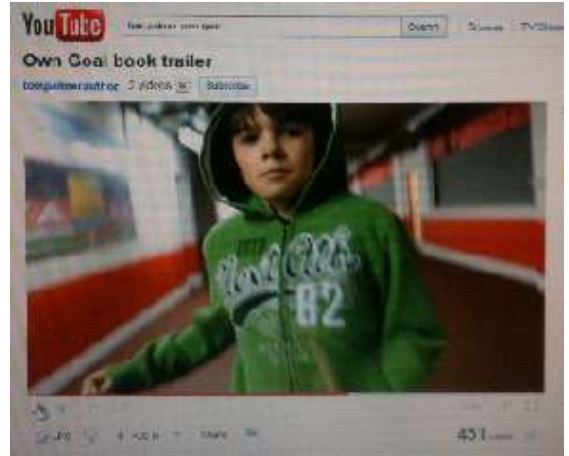
Now can you write your own blurb (60 words or so) either about this book or another book you have enjoyed? 60 words may sound easy but to get it right can take many attempts and re-writing. You can read your blurbs out in class and vote on which book sounds the most appealing and would make the most sales.

## Film Trailer

A trailer is mini-film to transform 200 pages into 2 minutes.

There is a Foul Play 5 Own Goal: Film trailer you can watch on You Tube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJmgBfbdwIY>



This is my blog of making the trailer with Ghyllgrove Junior School

<http://footballdetective.blogspot.com/2011/03/own-goal-trailer.html>

“I was at Charlton Athletic FC yesterday with Ghyllgrove Junior School. We were making a trailer for my forthcoming book, *Own Goal*. Filming scenes in corridors, under stands, on staircases. Chases. Protests. Keepy-uppies. *Own Goal* is about an Italian football club owner who is using his TV channels to hypnotise people into supporting his team. Danny realises no-one is supporting their home teams any more, so he is forced to investigate. The children of Ghyllgrove Junior have planned, written and performed the trailer. And I am HUGELY grateful to them.”

### Discussion Topics

- Is there any dialogue in the trailer? Do you think there should have been more or less dialogue?
- What written words used in the trailer? What impact do they have?
- What scenes from the book have they included?
- How does the music make you feel?
- Who is chasing Danny Harte down the corridor? Look carefully...
- Can you guess which scenes were filmed at Ghyllgrove school and which at Charlton Athletic?

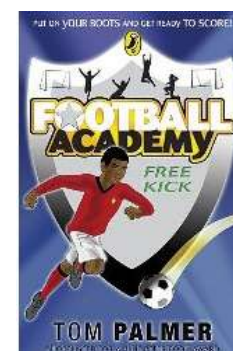
### Writing Project

Think of a book would you like to make into a film trailer. You could use *Own Goal* or any other. What scenes would you choose and why?

Now write a plan for filming just one of your scenes. You could make a storyboard to help you.

- What location could you set it?
- Who would you cast in it?
- How would you costume it?
- What props might you need to set the scene?
- Do you need any special effects? (makeup, stunts etc.)
- What sort of music would you choose? (classical, modern, slow, fast etc.)
- Would you need one camera in one spot, a moving camera, a hand-held camera?
- Would you need extra lighting? Is it a night scene?





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Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

[info@tompalmer.co.uk](mailto:info@tompalmer.co.uk)

Puffin Books, 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL

[www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk)