



The Con (Season 3) – 2026-07

THE CON (SEASON 3) from the BBC World Service and CBC	
What are we looking for?	A new season of The Con, from the BBC World Service and CBC.
Language of Podcast:	English
Duration	Podcast version: flexible, approximately 25 to 45 minutes per episode.
Contracting	Expected to be between September and December 2025
Guide Price per episode	£8,000 to £11,750 per episode. This range is intended to be a guide. Budgets will be agreed based on what's involved in creating the story/investigation, episode length, any travel and other costs etc.
Radio version required:	Yes – Radio version: 26 minutes 29 seconds per episode.

What is The Con?

The Con is a podcast about scams, catfishing and con artists, from the BBC World Service and CBC Podcasts. Each season tells a gripping, character-based story over multiple episodes, looking at the impacts on victims, and tracking down the perpetrators — exposing the art of deception.

First there was *Love, Janessa*: The award winning series that delved into the murky world of online romance scams. An adult entertainment star, Janessa Brazil, becomes the unwitting human face of a digital con when her stolen images are used in global catfishing schemes.

Then, there was *Kaitlyn's Baby*. A pregnant woman in crisis takes dozens of birth workers through a series of traumatic disasters. One by one, the doulas struggle to support her, to grieve with her, and even to save her life. Or so they think. Then the truth comes out – it's all lies.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w13xtvq7>

Editorial Opportunity

The Con was the first podcast to come out of an exciting commissioning collaboration between the BBC World Service and CBC Podcasts in Canada. After two highly successful seasons, with millions of downloads and scores of glowing reviews, we are now looking for season 3.

We'd like to follow *Love*, *Janessa* and *Kaitlyn's Baby*. Do you have the story which will become *The Con*, Season 3?

Once again, this new season needs to revolve around some kind of scam. It could focus on 'romance gone wrong', love, dating, scammers, online identities, someone who isn't who they say they are, and/or mistaken or stolen identities. Or something entirely different. Surprise us. *Kaitlyn's Baby* was very different to *Love*, *Janessa* but still worked well as the second season of *The Con*.

The story probably involves a central person, or in storytelling terms, "character" – but that's not mandatory. We are looking for a story that is hopefully global. So far, *The Con* has taken us to UK, Italy, Ghana, Canada and the United States. Ideally, your story will take us to other countries.

It will have a similar tone, high production values and topics.

Most of all, we want to be taken into a new world, to keep listeners guessing, and to learn something new.

Your Proposal

Your story should be enthralling, gripping and a real 'page-turner'. It should grab the listeners' attention from the very first sentence to the very last word. It should have the twists, turns, revelations, unexpected moments and developing characters that are the traits of successful multi-episode storytelling.

The storytelling must be propulsive.

This is a podcast-first commission, so must be designed specifically with podcast listening in mind. It needs to be a personal, intimate, immersive experience and first-class storytelling is essential.

We are looking for a similar style, with the lightness of touch of the previous seasons.

The strength of the story is crucial. Without an original "unputdownable" story that works over multiple episodes, you won't get this commission. There are plenty of incredible true

stories out there but very few lend themselves to episodic storytelling. It's going to take a very special kind of story to become the idea that we choose for this podcast, with compelling characters and narrative drive.

By their very nature, these stories may well be editorially and legally complicated. We expect high journalistic standards, with the values of the BBC and CBC at the heart of the production. The production must be familiar with our Editorial Guidelines and Journalism Standards. Our expectation is that the production team will have the highest journalistic standards, treating contributors with fairness and respect, delivering content that is impartial, legally safe and with all rights cleared.

Podcast commissioning from the BBC World Service and CBC is a collaborative process. If successful, our teams will be closely involved in the production process, as we seek to make our podcasts work as well as possible.

Please don't submit a pitch if you are reluctant to work in this way.

We want top-class journalism but also require a lot of emphasis to be put on the production itself, with an expectation of multiple audio drafts of each episode being made before the final version is created.

You will be required to deliver the podcast version (episode lengths are flexible) and a cutdown, re-versioned radio programme (number of episodes to be decided) of 26 minutes 29 seconds.

Please consider all these questions when creating your podcast proposal:

Why does your story work as a multi-episode podcast? Does it have the story arcs required for this treatment?

Who are the key characters?

Who is the presenter? If you are suggesting a presenter, our expectation is that you would have approached them and they will have expressed an interest in being involved. Please don't suggest names of people you aren't in touch with.

Who is/are the target audience(s)?

Why is this a podcast series and not a radio programme/series?

How could you get the listeners to feel part of a podcast community?

Why will your podcast stand out among the hundreds of thousands of other podcasts that exist?

Contacts

Jon Manel

Podcast Commissioning Editor, BBC World Service English
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Arif Noorani

Director of CBC Podcasts
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Evaluation Panel

The following people may be involved in the evaluation of your proposal:

- BBC World Service Podcast Commissioning Editor: Jon Manel
- BBC World Service Controller: Jon Zilkha
- Senior Editorial Policy Adviser, BBC: Cathy Derrick
- CBC Director of Podcasts: Arif Noorani
- CBC Executive Producer of Content: Chris Oke

Please note: Independent production companies submitting to CBC that are not already considered as approved suppliers by the BBC may be subject to the same or similar approval requirements and safety vetting.

For submissions to the BBC: We do not accept proposals from individuals – submissions MUST come through an inhouse supplier or registered independent production company.

For independent suppliers: details of how to register your company for the database can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio>

Diversity & Inclusion, & Sustainability

BBC Radio aims to be the best organisation in the audio sector to work with and for - with an inclusive culture, diverse teams and representative programmes. For the BBC World Service, it is a priority that our programmes and series truly reflect the world to the world. This means we are committed to ensuring diversity of thought, production and presentation is a key element in our approach to commissioning content. Further, the World Service's importance to the reputation and reach of the BBC globally underpins our commitment to representative storytelling.

There will be opportunities through the process to discuss how programme-makers and suppliers might approach this commitment.

Additional information / delivery requirements:

- The proposed production budget must cover all aspects of the production, including presenter fee, recording costs and expenses.
- It will be assumed that all elements included in proposals can be successfully delivered within the proposed budget.
- Production teams will be expected to adhere to BBC and CBC Values and Editorial Guidelines, ensure content is legally cleared and will be responsible for third party rights clearances; and deliver all necessary production related paperwork in a timely fashion – e.g., Compliance Forms, Music Reporting Forms etc.
- Production credits will be given in line with applicable standard terms and guidelines.

- The podcast is expected to be BBC and CBC branded and made available to listeners via BBC Sounds, BBC.com and multiple podcast and audio streaming platforms worldwide.
- The BBC reserves the right at any time prior to the award of a commission, and without incurring any liability to the affected suppliers, to accept or to reject any proposal, or to annul the commissioning process rejecting all full proposals.

Data/Privacy

As this is a joint commission with CBC the Proteus Privacy Policy will apply, with the following changes:

We will share your proposal with CBC, who are based in Canada. CBC will process and store your proposal in [Canada] for the purposes of reviewing the proposal. If your proposal is successful in this commissioning round, the BBC and CBC will store and process the data for the purposes of commissioning you to produce programming based on your proposal. If your proposal is not successful in this round we may retain your proposal for up to 12 months in case we are able to commission your proposal at a later date. The BBC and CBC will act as 'joint data controllers' for these purposes, which means they are jointly responsible for how your information is handled and the purposes it is used for. The BBC and CBC's principal legal basis for processing your data is the legitimate interest in doing so for the purposes of promoting our respective and journalistic, artistic and/ or literary purposes.

THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

We do not accept proposals from individuals – submissions **MUST** come through an inhouse supplier or registered independent production company. For independent suppliers: details of how to register your company for the database can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/radio>

World Service has yet to migrate over to the new PiCos system. Therefore the Proteus system will be used for submissions for this tender process. All proposals must be delivered in Proteus. We do not require hard copies of any proposals.

BBC departments access PROTEUS via <http://proteuslive.radio.bbc.co.uk/proteus-web/login.action>

Independent companies access PROTEUS via a portal: <https://ext-proteus.external.bbc.co.uk/proteus-web/login.action>

Enter in: World Service Podcast round 2026/27
Commissioning Year: 2026/27

Commissioning Round: 2
Slot: The Con

THE COMMISSIONING TIMETABLE

Friday 30th May 2025

Tender Document will be published. Proteus opens.

Stage one submission:

As we are commissioning multi-episode seasons (as opposed to one-off documentaries), we require more information, so please submit up to one page of A4 – and please make the most of that space.

Tuesday 1st July 2025 – 12 noon

Deadline for initial proposals to Proteus.

Tuesday 22nd July 2025 – 12 noon

Results of stage one will be available in Proteus. Second stage will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Tuesday 2nd September 2025 – 12 noon

Deadline for full proposals

Results to be published before the end of September 2025