# Jean Smart reflects on the loss of her husband Richard Gilliland and the challenges of her career in comedy



Jean Smart, the 72-year-old star of "Hacks," recently opened up about the sudden death of her husband, Richard Gilliland, who passed away from a heart condition in March 2021 at the age of 71. The couple had been married for nearly 34 years and shared two sons, Connor and Forrest. Smart expressed that the loss was devastating and something she will never fully recover from.

In an interview on "Who's Talking to Chris Wallace?" Smart recalled initially suspecting her husband had COVID-19 when he experienced chest pains, only for the actual cause to be later revealed as a heart condition. She revisited the clinic to question the medical staff about the lack of an EKG test during his visit.

Jean Smart and Richard Gilliland first met in the 1980s on the set of the TV show "Designing Women." Gilliland, whose acting career included roles in series such as "24" and "Dexter," had a significant impact on Smart’s career, with Smart acknowledging his sacrifices that enabled her to pursue her opportunities.

Despite the tragedy, Smart continued her work on "Hacks," for which she received critical acclaim and two Emmy Awards for her portrayal of Deborah Vance, a Las Vegas comic. Gilliland’s death coincided with the final week of shooting for the first season of "Hacks," making it a challenging period for Smart.

Smart also highlighted the gender disparities in comedy when discussing her role and the challenges women face in the industry during her interview with Chris Wallace.

The third season of "Hacks" is currently airing on HBO and streaming on Max.