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New six part murder mystery thriller The Loch from ITV Studios

The beautiful, haunting shores of Scotland’s most iconic loch is the stunning backdrop for new six-part drama, The Loch which is produced by ITV Studios.

Acclaimed actors Laura Fraser (Houdini and Doyle, The Missing, Peter & Wendy), Siobhan Finneran (Happy Valley, Benidorm, Downton Abbey) and John Sessions (Upstart Crow, Florence Foster Jenkins, The Rack Pack) star in the new series alongside Don Gilét (Brief Encounters, Holby City, EastEnders), Gray O’Brien (The Daniel Connection, Titanic: Blood and Steel, Coronation Street) and William Ash (The Tunnel, Moving On, Death in Paradise).

In a community nourished and sustained by myth and bordered by untamed nature, the search for a serial killer becomes a matter of life and death for local detective Annie Redford (played by Laura Fraser) who is trying to cope with her first murder case. When the body of local man Niall Swift is found at the foot of Carn Mohr Mountain and an isolated human heart on the loch shore, the town’s normality is shattered and the nightmare begins. Chillingly, The beautiful scenery, undulating highlands and vast expansive loch becomes a character in its own right adding a haunting depth to the community’s plight.

Written by Stephen Brady (Fortitude, Vera, Silent Witness) and overseen by ITV Studios Creative Director for Drama and Executive Producer Tim Haines (Beowulf, Primeval, Sinbad), The Loch introduces Annie and her family – husband Alan (played by Gray O’Brien), a tour boat operator on the loch and their only child Evie, who at 18, is about to leave home for Australia. The Redford’s are an ordinary loving family with an ordinary set of problems, yet the pressure of a murder investigation will undermine their stability and create tensions that threaten to disrupt and destroy their lives together. Within the tightly knit community, several local characters will come under suspicion as the monster lurking in their midst begins to terrify and rock the village to its core.

Executive producer Tim Haines commented: “Serial killers are monsters that lie beneath the surface of normal happy communities. Where better to hunt for one than in a place that has thrived off its own monster myth for centuries - Loch Ness.”
The Loch has been commissioned for ITV by former Drama Commissioner Steve November and Drama Commissioner Jane Hudson.

Working alongside Executive Producer Tim Haines, Alan J (Willy) Wands (*Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell, Stonemouth, The Field of Blood Whisky Galore*) produces The Loch with Brian Kelly (*Downton Abbey, Outlander, Dracula, Lewis*) as lead director. Cilla Ware will also direct the series. The Loch is distributed internationally by ITV Studios Global Entertainment.

The Loch filmed in the Highlands of Scotland during the summer of 2016 and is supported by Creative Scotland’s Production Growth Fund.

Robbie Allen, Senior Screen Executive at Creative Scotland said: “Creative Scotland is delighted to have worked with ITV Studios on this thrilling murder mystery, set on the shores of Loch Ness. The Production Growth Fund has allowed us to bring another high-profile television production to Scotland, further developing Scotland’s reputation as a key filming destination where productions can benefit from working with our world class craft and technical talent.”

Note to Editors:

**About Creative Scotland**

The Loch which filmed in the Highlands of Scotland during 2016 is supported by Creative Scotland’s Production Growth Fund, which aims to attract and grow film production in Scotland, creating employment opportunities, encouraging the use of production facilities companies and delivering significant economic benefit. Recent productions also supported by Creative Scotland’s Production Growth Fund include the ITV series Muncie produced by World Productions.
Introduction

Tim Haines, executive producer

Traditionally the Highland lochs have been an evocative source of mystery and dark secrets. In their peaty depths they have hidden all sorts of nightmares that in various ways can be visited on the people who live on their shores. Of course nowadays all this myth and legend stuff is strictly for the tourists. Lochs are simply, empty cold places to be enjoyed for their stark beauty. But what if one did hold a dark secret. One put there by a modern day monster. ‘The Loch’ opens with a body weighed down in its depths – he is the first victim of a serial killer.

This was the starting point for the writer Stephen Brady. The body and its relationship to the killer form the core of this six-part murder mystery. As the body is hidden beneath the surface of Loch Ness the residents of the local town of Lochnefoy are blissfully unaware of its presence, just as they have no idea that they have a ruthless killer in their midst. However, the apparent Highland idle of Lochnefoy is rocked when a second body appears and a full murder investigation gets under way. Like everyone in the community cop Annie Redford finds it hard to believe this is happening in her town. Glasgow detective Lauren Quigley is brought in to head up the investigation and she is under no illusion about the darker side of human nature. Soon the secrets beginning to bubble to surface as they expose the cover-ups and lies that eventually lead Annie and Lauren to the killer.

Central to the atmosphere and tone of ‘The Loch’ is the place itself. Set around the shores of Loch Ness the series contrasts the dark deeds of humans with the beauty of the setting. From a production point of view, we were determined to set as much as possible in the Highlands even though it was tough to find everything we needed round the Loch itself. Producer Alan J Wands oversaw a Scottish team that worked over the summer of 2016 between the Highlands and studios just outside Glasgow. Together with designer Andy Harris, they created Stephen’s vision of a naïve community that for years has thrived on pretend stories of monsters only to be faced with a real one. The beautiful Fort Augustus is the location for the fictional town of Lochnefoy whilst the wild countryside of the series is picked from across the Highlands.

A strong Scottish cast is led by Laura Fraser who brings a warmth but steeliness to her role as our heroine cop Annie. While Siobhan Finneran is DCI Quigley, the outsider who knows her killer is probably hiding in plain sight. These two form an unlikely team as first a young mangoes missing and then the town is swamped when the world’s press hears there is a ‘real’ monster at Loch Ness.

Directed by Brian Kelly and Gilla Ware the action swirls around the loch as the pressure of guilt tears the community apart. Meanwhile the body in the Loch remains undiscovered holding on to its grim secret until the very end.
Character Biographies

**Annie Redford played by Laura Fraser**
Annie is a dedicated but dissatisfied Detective Sergeant working in the rural community of Lochanfoy. She is a wife and mother to a teenage daughter but her safe world begins to unravel when the town is threatened by a series of sinister murders.

**Lauren Quigley played by Siobhan Finneran**
Bright and forthright, she is a single minded career officer, who is efficient, focused and unimpeled by sentiment if it means getting the job done, but there is a big heart somewhere inside a hard shell. She wants to get the killer caught and back to Glasgow to secure the promotion she's been working towards her entire career.

**Frank Smilie played by John Sessions**
Traditional, old school cop, on the verge of retirement. He'll do anything for a quiet life and he looks after his own, even if it means bending the rules. He was Quigley's superior when she joined the force. Now they're equals. Two Chiefs, one territory.

**Blake Albrighton played by Don Gilét**
An attractive, flirtatious, highly intelligent forensic psychologist, whose arrogance masks a deep childhood wound. Due to the unusual nature of the murder, he has been seconded to the case by DCI Quigley. Some officers see him more as hindrance than help as they embark on their search of the killer.

**Alan Redford played by Gray O'Brien**
He is a local 'Nessie' tour boat operator and husband to Annie, whom he adores. However, as Annie's involvement the in the case intensifies, Alan finds himself becoming more and more estranged from his wife.

**Evie Redford played by Shona McHugh**
Annie and Alan's spirited teenage daughter. A teenage prank puts Evie and her pals on the police radar. Her rebellious nature and desire to find out what's happened to her friend puts her in deadly danger.

**Leighton Thomas played by William Ash**
A damaged, brittle, frustrated man seeking rehabilitation in the small town. The tragic events remind him of a past he'd rather forget, a past that also makes him a prime suspect.

**PC Jason Denny**
A young officer, still wet behind the ears and although Jason is not the keenest of minds, he is eager to learn and always has people's best interests at heart.

**Kieran Whitehead**
Kieran is one of Evie's friends from college. He's quick witted, good-looking and helps his mother Bea care for his bedridden brother who's suffering from locked-in syndrome. He carries his responsibility with humour and grace, further fuelling Evie's crush on him.
Character Biographies continued

Jonjo Patterson
Friend to Evie and Kieran and the joker of the group. His parents Ken and Nicole run the abattoir and, like many teenagers, he has a tendency to push them to their limits. Jonjo suffers from bi-polar disorder which, when he neglects his medication, can result in erratic behaviour.

Ken Patterson
Runs the local abbatoir, father to Jonjo, husband to Nicole. His business is struggling. Events relating to the murder could finish it altogether. He soon realises his business is the least of his worries.

Nicole Patterson
Mother to Jonjo. Nicole is a determined, intelligent woman who helps run her husband Ken's business and also works as a probation officer.

Bea Whitehead
A qualified nurse, now, with Kieran's help, full time carer to her son Jordan who suffers from locked-in syndrome. She moved her sons to Lochnafoy two years earlier, to make a fresh start. Bea is a kind, gentle woman who would do anything for her sons.

Jordan Whitehead
When Jordan suffered from an aneurysm the doctors expected him to recover. Instead he relapsed into locked-in syndrome. He has an awareness of the world but is completely unable to move and reliant on the care of his brother and mother.

Dr Simon Marr
Simon is the local doctor and has been recently widowed. Like everyone in the town, Marr has truths about his past he would prefer remain undiscovered.

Craig Petrie
Craig is the Head of Lochnafoy college. He is an accomplished academic, exceptionally erudite with a propensity for arrogance. He has two kids he adores.

Kirsty Petrie
Kirsty is married to Craig Petrie. Theirs is a complicated relationship which under the microscope of the investigation begins to crack.

Niall Swift
The local piano teacher. In the twelve months he's been in Lochnafoy he's worked hard to make himself part of the community but, despite appearances, feels his efforts have never been reciprocated.
Can you tell us what drew you to The Loch?

“I’d had four years of working away from home so the fact it was set and filmed in Scotland was a huge draw. Then when I read the scripts I was fascinated by all the animal symbolism. There’s the Loch Ness monster, wolves, crows and the odd mutilated sheep. All this interesting imagery that I felt was quite unusual.

“I also liked the character of Annie, the village cop working on her first murder case. She is full to the brim of pent-up potential she has never got to use before. She’s on the edge and could go either way. If this case hadn’t come up that potential might have turned to bitterness. So although no-one wants to see a murder, for her as a police officer it enables her to focus her energies and start learning how to become a proper detective.

“It was also interesting the way she makes mistakes and is overwhelmed by it a little bit. Not knowing what’s the right way to go about things. Because she’s never done it before, even though she is 40 years old.”
Laura Fraser interview continued

So previously, has Annie had to contend with some less than challenging police jobs?

“When you’re 20 you can handle that. Maybe you get a wee bit grumpy but you can deal with it. But when you’re 40 and you know you can do much more it is very frustrating and a little humiliating.

“Annie had opportunities earlier in her life. She could have gone to a bigger city like Glasgow and progressed in her career. But she chose not to. Instead of taking responsibility for that I think she blames her husband Alan for not supporting her.

“Although that’s not really fair. It was her own decision. And at the same time she’s had a nice life in the village. She and Alan are fairly contented. They have a laugh and a giggle. Everybody knows her and it’s her community. Which makes it all the worse when this devastation rips through that community.”

Does Annie know secrets about certain people in her community?

“Yes she does. It must make it so strange being a cop in a small village when you know everybody and you know everybody’s secrets. You are the holder of all this information and you can’t even tell your family. I think that’s impressive but also quite alienating to be in that situation.”

How does Annie get on with the incoming English police boss DCI Lauren Quigley from Glasgow?

“At first Annie is desperate to impress Quigley. She admires and respects Quigley’s work ethic and wants to both prove herself to her and learn from her. But at the same time she is wrong-footed and compromised. Annie feels misunderstood and misrepresented. Then later on Quigley grows to like and respect Annie. Every scene I had with Siobhan, I couldn’t stop laughing. She’s just so hilarious. I couldn’t keep it together.”

Does The Loch ask the question: ‘Who is the real monster?’

“The wolf, in particular, represents wild, brutal violence. The beast within. Everybody has their own shadow. The shadow within. I find all of that really interesting. Maybe it explains why we all like to read or watch dark stories. Sometimes people want to look at monsters and hold the darkness up in the light. Then put it away safely.

“We’re all human beings and some are capable of truly hideous acts. As well as beautiful acts. It’s quite scary when you look at what people are capable of.”

One character describes the community as a group of people drawn together by lies. What did you think about that?

“I like that idea of a paper-thin veneer of civilisation. And when that is suddenly ripped apart by these murders it’s shocking. But there are things pre-empting her outlook and demeanour. Like these little ruptures occurring already in Annie’s life. The repressed resentment at her husband, the devastation about her daughter who wants to move to Australia.

“Where they live in the Great Glen in Loch Ness is actually an active fault line. At one point there was an earthquake there. All of that makes it really interesting. All of these little ripples and then the loch as a character in itself. It affects everyone.”
**Laura Fraser interview continued**

**Had you been to Loch Ness before?**

“I’d never been to Loch Ness before. And I’d never been to a lot of the places we went to. Which is disgraceful. Or if I did, I didn’t remember because I was probably just a young child. The Great Glen was impressive. And I really loved Glencoe. It was where they shot Skyfall. It’s the most beautiful place I’ve ever been to in my life. I thought, ‘Oh my God, this has been here all along. It’s ridiculous I haven’t been here before.’”

**Do you believe in Nessie, the Loch Ness monster?**

“It’s a bit like a tooth fairy, isn’t it? I don’t think anyone really believes it’s real, do they? A hundred years ago I would definitely have believed. But today? Sadly no.”

**We first see Annie in an ice curling scene. Had you been curling before?**

“No, never! I thought it was going to be a bit dull. But I actually got really into it and thought I’d want to do this. Although it involves setting up a whole team, hiring a lane and making it a very regular thing. So then I thought, ‘Och, that’s never going to happen.’ But I did love it.

“They made us take a very long lesson before we ever got on the ice. The guy teaching us was so sweet. It’s a very interesting sport. There’s something so clean and satisfying about gliding on the ice.”

**Annie gets very angry in one scene? What makes you angry in life?**

“That was a great scene. I really enjoyed doing that. Annie is so upset on so many fronts. In real life I’m very irritable, as my husband will testify. Too much coffee sets me off but it doesn’t stop me drinking it. At the drop of a hat I can get very annoyed and irritated. Walking along the street if someone bumps into me or I bump into them, of course it’s their fault and not mine. I anger very quickly.”

**The Loch is directed by Brian Kelly and Cilla Ware. What difference does a good director make to a TV drama?**

“A good director creates an atmosphere where you feel relaxed and concentrated enough to do your best work. You can’t perform well if you’re not feeling comfortable in the environment. You have to feel reasonably safe and that no-one is going to get laughed at or shouted at. Creating that atmosphere is very important. Along with being allowed enough time to have at least two or three takes. Not feeling rushed. Creating an atmosphere where everybody thinks everybody’s job matters.”

**When you’re watching a whodunit on TV, are you good at spotting the killer?**

“I am the worst. I am absolutely hopeless and honestly can watch something for a second time and still not know. I can re-watch something forgetting we had already seen it a year before. Then get to the last part and still can’t remember who did it.”
Laura Fraser interview continued

You must be pleased at how many screen dramas are now being filmed in Scotland?

“I was quite surprised. I moved back from America a year ago and was longing to be home and be with my family after four years of living in America. I thought it wouldn’t be as busy for work and I’ll probably have to travel quite a bit in Europe. But actually there has been so much work in Scotland and I’ve felt so lucky. I hope it continues.”

What’s next?

“I’m hoping to take at least three months off and just do normal things like taking my daughter to school and all the normal mum things I’ve been missing for a couple of years. So that’s my big plan.”
Siobhan Finneran plays Lauren Quigley

Can you tell us what drew you to The Loch?

“I received the first three scripts and I really enjoyed reading them. I was intrigued and excited about the character and I’d worked with the director Brian Kelly before on Downton Abbey. I’d heard very good things about the producer Willy Wands and I’ve always been a massive fan of Laura Fraser and her acting. So that was a winning combination for me.”

“I really enjoyed that the series has a lot of characters dealing with demons. It’s a very small community with a lot of people with personal problems. Then when this investigation starts after the first murder comes to light, that’s why we end up with so many suspects because there are people - as always in every walk of life - dealing with a whole load of stuff you never see.

“All the village has seen up to then is simply people getting on with their lives and getting by. Then suddenly this investigation takes us behind the closed front doors.

Who is DCI Lauren Quigley?

“Lauren Quigley is a very smart woman and a very good copper. She has worked her way up through the ranks to now be a DCI. She arrives in Lochnafoy wanting to get the job done as soon as possible. Back in Glasgow, where she is based, she is working towards a promotion as Superintendent. So this job is a bit of an inconvenience for her.
“There is also a history with the local police chief inspector Frank Smilie, played by John Sessions. They crossed paths when she was younger and they don’t have a very good relationship. So she arrives in the village to deal with a dead body and doesn’t think much of the local village bobbies. She brings her own team with her, including forensic psychologist Blake Albrighton, played by Don Gilét, who she also a history with.

“Quigley needs someone local to help them out and sees in Annie somebody who could have been potentially like her. Annie is a good, smart detective and knows the area. And this is the first big case she’s got to work on. Eventually she develops a friendship with her and a respect for the community. The experiences she has there change the way she feels about her job.

“The fact Quigley is English also makes a massive difference. She’s a complete outsider. While Frank Smilie isn’t best pleased to see her again, there’s also local police resentment that it’s assumed they can’t deal with this case on their own. They’re all completely competent but they have never had anything like this to deal with. So Quigley comes in as a bit of a whirlwind.”

Is Quigley not a fan of the beauty of nature and the countryside?

“I’m playing her as if she’s from Manchester. She will have been brought up near countryside but it’s just one of those things. She has obviously been a city girl and is now living and working in Glasgow. So not a fan of the countryside.

“It is really beautiful where we filmed. Speaking for myself, I can appreciate its beauty but I wouldn’t want to look at it all of the time. I remember my mum saying to me years and years ago, ‘Don’t move far away from a bus route.’ And I was like, ‘What are you talking about?’ We were moving and I was looking at houses on top of hills.

“But it’s true. Especially when you have teenagers. They can get to places. It’s not always having to get in the car. I can understand the joy of living somewhere remote and that amount of peace and quiet. I like being where I am because I’ve got that. But I can also go to the city quickly.”

Were the exterior filming locations challenging?

“The weather was actually more challenging in July than it was in September. When we shot some of the stuff on the top of the cairn the weather was horrendous. And then, of course, in September we had these glorious sunshine filled days when we were usually in the studio.

“But they’re very used to it up there, as am I coming from the north of England. Rain, snow, a bit of sunshine and hail all in the space of a couple of hours.”

Had you been to Loch Ness before?

“No, I had never been to Loch Ness before. I spent a lot of time based in Glasgow having never been up there for any length of time. It’s been one of my favourite places to ever work. I absolutely loved it.
Siobhan Finneran interview continued

“I’ve got a lot of friends in Scotland that I’ve accumulated over the past 10 years. So I managed to have lovely lunch dates and things like that with people up there. I just loved Glasgow as a city. It reminds me of Manchester. And I thought that was another reason why Quigley would have moved there. It’s not dissimilar.

“I found Glasgow a really fabulous, friendly city to be in. The architecture is gorgeous. The drivers used to laugh at me because I’d get back in the van on a Monday morning going into work and they’d be like, ‘Where did you walk to this weekend?’

“Because I would just set off and walk about. I just loved the architecture of nearly all of the buildings in Glasgow. I will go and visit Glasgow a lot more.

“A lot of my friends there are make-up ladies and crew members I’ve worked with over the years. When I worked on Benidorm we had a massive Scottish contingency on our crew. So a lot of them have become friends and I saw them lots whilst there.”

Do you believe in Nessie?

“There’s always that little bit of you that goes, ‘I wish that was real.’ But if it was ever proven then the whole thing would be destroyed. It’s like the tooth fairy. It’s nice to have the magic of all that. But if you sit down and examine the hard facts you think, ‘Don’t be ridiculous.’”

What was it like working with other cast members?

“I worked mostly with Laura Fraser and with Don Gilét and we just had a really great time. We all got on really well which, hopefully, will come across.

“I laughed like a drain most of the time. But I do that at work anyway. If I’m not doing that at work I’m really fed up. Laura and Don, all of us, even on days that were stressful we managed to have fun at the end of it. Which sometimes when the subject matter is quite bleak is a bit of light relief.”

One character, has what are described as ‘Krakatoa’ moments. Is there anything that makes you really angry in life?

“Injustice makes me angry. I’m not an angry human being. But any kind of injustice, whether it be a child being blamed for something they’ve not done to huge issues of blame, or people just being blamed for being themselves. That upsets me. People not being fair.

“I’ve got a lot of road rage. But that’s another story. People get angry behind the wheel, which is not good. But if I’ve got nice music on in the car I’m usually fine.”
Can you tell us what attracted you to The Loch?

“I’d never done anything like this before. I was very attracted by the fact Siobhan Finneran was doing it. I think she is a marvellous actress and is, as it turns out, an absolute delight to work with. A lovely woman. Really down to earth, no nonsense. And terribly good. It’s been a bit of an acting lesson working with her, to be honest. Because you don’t see any acting visible. I had also worked with lovely Laura Fraser 20 years ago and it was great to be back with her.”

Frank Smilie appears to have been named with a certain amount of irony?

“Frank is a seen it all, done it all copper. He’s quite chauvinist and cliquey and very old school. I suppose he’s what you would call a bit of a curmudgeon.

“Then DCI Lauren Quigley, played by Siobhan Finneran, is brought in. A woman, English, has her own way of doing things. This woman disturbs him because she also knows his past. He’s not crazy about her. Frank was her sergeant when she first started and Quigley has since flown up the ranks.

“She brings this other bloke in - Blake Albrighton, played by Don Gilêt who went to university, is clever, into all this psycho-babble that Frank thinks is all a load of nonsense and, on top of it all, is good looking. Pressing all of Frank’s buttons. Then Blake chucks in a firecracker, which is just about it for Frank.”
John Sessions interview continued

“Frank is old school. He’s that alpha male inside. Somebody refers to Frank as a ‘silverback’. Which means he’s a gorilla. Blake is smart and full of information that Frank knows nothing about. Albrighton is a scaremonger as far as Frank is concerned. Suddenly the world’s press arrives and Frank is absolutely incandescent. He still has to live there after the rest of the world has gone.”

So would you describe Frank as an angry man?

“Frank has what are called Krakatoa moments. When he shouts people jump. He can be terrifying to the younger recruits. The clock is ticking for Frank. Part of him is waiting for that pension. He moans all the time.

“Frank is known to cut corners. There is the world’s way and there is Frank’s way. He’s a smoke-filled back room until four in the morning kind of a guy. He takes people into corridors and holds them up against the wall. I think we can assume Frank can look after himself.”

Are appearances important to Frank?

“He has photos of himself with Gordon Brown and Rory McIlroy on display in his office. Which I guess says something about him. Appearances are important to him. But he doesn’t go to barbecues with them. He’s a big fish in a small pond. Lochnafoy is not Miami Vice. There are fishing infractions, driving and parking offences. They have never had a serial killer until now.”

You left Scotland aged two or three but still identify strongly with the country. Had you been to Loch Ness before?

“I had never been to Loch Ness before. So I’m not a Nessie expert at all. I think today it’s more of an entertaining myth. Unless you’re running a tour boat company. But it’s great so many dramas are filming in Scotland now.”

Is the choice of location important?

“Alan Wands our producer was very keen to give a sense of place and of a community. Obviously everybody knows everybody else’s business. Then Lauren Quigley comes in and doesn’t tread delicately.

“It’s part of the drama to indicate this monster isn’t in the loch but in the community. Who is the monster? Who is the killer? You’ve got to remember that 50 per cent of the work is being done by the viewer. The last thing you must do is plant real, incontrovertible seeds in their mind. You’ve got to keep them guessing. Hopefully we do that.

“The great thing about Alan is he is so experienced. He has a really good grasp of what he wants out of a series. And he will get that by talking principally to the directors. He has produced so much over the years that he just knows his job. He’s very clear about what he wants and he knows how to make good television.”
Gray O’Brien plays Alan Redford

Can you tell us what appealed to you about The Loch?

“I hadn’t worked with the director Brian Kelly before but I’d heard a lot about him. I walked into meet Brian and we really hit it off. The character was totally different for me because I don’t really play those kind of people. We had a discussion about Alan Redford being important in the respect his wife is a police officer and he is part of the local community. And yet he is apart.

“Without question, every one of those 20 principal cast thought those first scripts were really exciting. That’s why I wanted to do it. It’s also filmed in beautiful countryside with an almost dream cast with lots of people I’d wanted to work with in the past or had already worked with. A really good ensemble.”

Who is Alan Redford?

“Alan was born and bred in Lochnafoy. He’s a Highlander from that area. He and Annie live a relatively simple life together. Alan has his own boat and does boat tours for tourists looking for Nessie. While our daughter Evie is a teenager who is about to go on a trip to Australia.

“His boat has sonar and all the things the tourists come for. That’s his bread and butter.”
**Gray O’Brien interview continued**

**Coming from Glasgow, did you know the area well?**

“I know a lot of that area but I’d never been to Loch Ness. When I was younger I used to climb a lot of Munros. A Munro is anything over 3000 feet. I think I climbed about 58 when I was younger. So I knew the surrounding area quite well but had never actually been to Loch Ness. We shot a lot in Glencoe, which I know well. Including Glen Etive where I camped almost every other weekend from the age of 15 or 16.

“Loch Ness was quite an eye-opener for me. I’ve never been a sailor or been in water a great deal. We spent several days filming on the loch. The amazing thing with that is the boat changes, it moves all of the time with the swell. So it changes direction even when it’s not going forward. And the light and cloud comes in. So each of those hills changes constantly.

“It was almost like seeing time lapse photography happen in real time. The clouds moving over and the colours changing. It was quite incredible. You’re in the centre of the loch and it’s quite a view. Just beautiful.

“We didn’t have the best luck in the world with the weather. It rained a great deal last summer in Scotland. It was a very wet summer compared to the south of England, which had it really sunny. But it was just great. Beautiful.

“Most of the time we were out there getting soaked. There were two or three days where all we could do was shoot rain. Because that’s all we had. But generally what happens is it starts raining so you start shooting in rain. Then it stops and the sun comes out. So we have blue sky and the clouds have gone. Nothing matches on screen and it just looks like you’re shooting in different places. So you have to avoid that happening.”

**Was it difficult filming aboard Alan’s Loch Ness Monster hunting boat?**

“The guy who owned the boat, Ally, had just picked it up a few days before. It wasn’t a brand new boat but it was newer than the one he had and bigger and faster. And Alan’s fictional job is exactly what he did. He is a tour operator on Loch Ness.

“I was quickly taught how to navigate the boat but there was one point where Will Ash, who plays another tour boat skipper Leighton Thomas, and I had to sail quite close to each other. Ally said, ‘I only got the boat two days ago. Could you be very careful, please!’ Thankfully there were no mishaps. It was great fun.”

**Do lots of foreign tourists still go to Loch Ness in search of the monster?**

“It’s important for Alan to sell that make-believe. That’s his business. Apparently only months ago there were three seals swimming together and on sonar it looked like three humps. So it still fools people to this day. There’s no way Alan can say to the tourists it’s just a myth.”
The Loch poses the question, 'Who is the real monster?' What did you make of that?

“It’s a great idea. Who is the Loch Ness Monster? Not what or where is the Loch Ness Monster? Who is the Loch Ness Monster? So it becomes something completely different. It’s very interesting. I have to say not one of us knew who the killer was until we got the final scripts. So absolutely everyone is a suspect.”

Alan goes ice curling in the first episode. Did you enjoy filming those scenes?

“I loved the curling. It was a great thing to try. Laura and I were told we both had a proficiency and one of the teams was trying to poach us. I’d never done it before. My aim when I tried ice skating when I was younger was simply to stand upright. It’s very difficult to hold that balance but very good fun. We all had the right kit on and looked the part.

“It was funny at the end when we just wanted someone to roll this last stone in and make contact. And they couldn’t do it because it was over a shorter distance and they couldn’t get the weight of the shot right. Every single one of them tried and they were all pulling their hair out.”

One of the characters has moments of explosive anger. Is there anything that makes you really angry?

“What really annoys me is when you’re in the car and someone in front of you is driving along a main road at 20mph. Then they come to a slight bend in the road and brake. You think, ‘How can you brake? How can you go any slower?’

“We all have to count to 10. ‘Why is everybody not as important as me and has to get there as quickly as me!’ I’m not talking about speeding. Just that thing of you are already going ridiculously slowly. How can you go even slower than that? These are the people that bring the road to a standstill.

“It’s just silly things like that. I think the best thing to do in those situations, which I do try and do, is smile. Because there are people much more irate than you. You’ve just got to smile. And a little shrug sometimes is enough just to say, ‘Would you believe it?’ That can settle and deflate a situation.”

What difference does a director like Brian Kelly make to a series like this?

“A good director has to have a great but different relationship with both the crew and the cast. You have to be everything to everyone. Every actor will look at something and say, ‘Do you know, I don’t quite think I would say that.’ And it’s sometimes difficult to differentiate between the character and you playing the character.

“The director has to be a diplomat and stay true to the writing. It’s very important we put the writer’s words on screen. It’s too easy to say, ‘I wouldn’t say that like that.’ Well, you’re not Alan, you’re Gray, for example. A director has to listen to your thoughts and explain his thoughts. He’s seeing the whole thing, as opposed to just your character.

“He also has to have the crew on side so they completely understand his vision and what he is trying to do. The director has to be a bit of a magician because he’s got to be an ego carouser. He has to keep everyone happy and confident.
Gray O’Brien interview continued

While making jokes to the crew. That’s where directors struggle sometimes. They don’t have both cast and crew onside.

“Brian was a great diplomat like that. You always finished a scene thinking, ‘Right, that’s absolutely it. He’s happy. And if he’s happy, I’m happy.’ Because we don’t always know what we’ve done. If we play the truth, we play the truth. And you’ve got to trust someone else when you ask, ‘Did I actually get that? Did I tell that story with that look or with that line?’

“It’s the nuances in television. If the camera is in very tight you must do much less than if the shot is quite wide. So there’s a great deal of trust involved there. A good director has to be a bit like Mother Hen and a bit like the conductor. And I really liked that from Brian. I felt he got great responses from everyone.”

You must be pleased at the number of screen dramas being filmed in Scotland?

“It’s been a really good summer for filming in Scotland. There were lots of things being filmed there and that appears to be continuing. It’s great. People love to look at that scenery. I think a new, big Scottish movie is long overdue after Braveheart and Rob Roy. That’s over 20 years ago now. It’s about time we had another big blockbuster. As long as you can cope with the midges and the rain, it’s no problem.”

What’s next for you?

“Alan Redford in The Loch has a beard. It’s the first time I’ve ever had a beard in anything. I’ve always been clean shaven. I hadn’t shaved for a week when I went in to see Brian and he said, ‘Will you keep that beard?’ And as it so happens, people kept saying I suited the beard. So I’m holding on to the beard for a bit to see if they want it for my next role or not.”
Can you tell us who Blake Albrighton is?

“Blake is a criminal psychologist hired to help with the investigation and he tries to get into the minds of killers. He finds out how they think, why they do what they do. What kind of background they would have to do these kinds of killings. The clues they leave. It’s for Blake to work out what kind of person is behind that.”

Blake is described as 40s, handsome, energised with success.

“Well obviously that changed a lot when I came to it. If they want to call him handsome, that’s fine. I tried to play that. We had a good make-up department. They also give you a nice car. So you have to reflect those props. He’s got a nice car; he wears nice clothes. It’s the trappings of being successful. He can be quite a showman but not from a narcissistic ‘look at me’ point of view. He just likes the finer things. And he’s earned them to a certain extent.

“I’ve seen those characters that are very successful but they’re not showy. They don’t put on the best clothes. Blake just likes the finer things. He’s written books and is very successful. And I don’t mind being kitted out in the finest clothes for a character. I’m not going to complain!

“I also love the opposite of that. People who are experts and who are slightly eccentric or maybe introverted.
They have a brilliant mind but they don’t show it. And there are some subtexts to the man that demonstrate he’s not just showy. He’s had some tragedy in his life. Which is why he is driven to get his man every time. It somehow keeps him balanced. That he can still do things for other people. There is a human being there that is still, to a certain extent, suffering.”

How do we first meet him?

“We first see him arriving in a remote part of Scotland, driving through this great vista and taking in the scenery. This is not his part of the world. Blake is a city-based human being.

“He is driving in to a situation that he is familiar with in terms of the job description. But he’s having to deal with a woman - DCI Lauren Quigley who he has a past with but needs to just get on with the job. She’s got to get the best people for the job so she had to choose him. There is some kind of unfinished business there. But she can’t compromise on the job just because of her personal feelings.”

What did you make of The Loch scripts when you first read them?

“Everybody likes to think their scripts are different. But I really did think The Loch was different. I’m not a murder mystery, cop show fan. But once I started to read it I thought, ‘I like this guy.’ You can’t not like him. It’s that fine line between arrogance and confidence.

“I liked it for that reason. I like the clashes he has. And the history of his connection with Quigley, played by Siobhan Finneran. It’s not pushed in your face. There are just these nuanced moments where there is, or was, or is there still something there? Playing the awkwardness with the two of them alone together. I really like those touches.

So Blake is looking for a real Loch Ness monster in the local community?

“I totally didn’t get that straight away; the thought of there being another kind of Loch Ness monster. Certain nuances like that are lost on me sometimes because I’m looking too deep into a script. My character actually searches for this monster.

“But from Blake’s perspective he doesn’t see it as a monster. He sees it as people. Highly troubled people but people all the same. ‘Monster’ is a red top headline that is put upon these individuals. It’s for Blake Albrighton to flesh out the human side to people who have gone bad.

“One character says that for most people, the monsters are in their head. I love those touches. That there are other versions of ‘monster’ throughout the whole thing.”

Did all go smoothly during filming?

“The only Blake that sticks in my head - and it came unstuck a few times - is Blake Carrington from the Dynasty days. There were a few takes where I had to say, ‘I’m Blake Albrighton.’ And my natural default was, ‘I’m Blake Carrington.’ It just sounded natural to me. People were looking at me and laughing and saying, ‘We’re going to have to do it again.’ And when I asked why, they told me, ‘Because you said Blake Carrington.’ I wish I had his hair.”

Don Gilét interview continued
Don Gilét interview continued

**What was it like working with Siobhan Finneran?**

“It’s rare that anyone really has problems working with a fellow cast mate. This was a lovely set on both the technical and performance sides. I’ve watched Siobhan for many years. Including a thing called Apparitions, with Martin Shaw. And I thought she was absolutely brilliant. Then she just pops up everywhere. The Syndicate, Happy Valley, Benidorm and Downton. She turns up and nails those characters.

“So when I found out she was on this, of course I was a little bit coy at first. I’m not only in the same show as her but they’re putting my character against her character to work together. It really was daunting. And it was great to see she has a very down-to-earth, human side to her. She’s very professional and has the same ethos that I have. Take the job seriously but not yourself. And she does that.

“It’s great to be able to work with somebody who wants to play and flesh out things to find out different ways you can do things. I like that. Sometimes there isn’t time for that. Certainly if you’re doing a soap like EastEnders, there’s not really a lot of time to play around. You’ve just got to have it ready. Which is another skill in itself. That’s not a bad thing. But it’s great when there’s some wiggle room and some creative breathing space to really find the character and the nuance in the scene. So on that note she was great to work with. Up for trying anything.”

**How does Blake get on with Chief Inspector Frank Smilie, played by John Sessions?**

“Frank is not Blake’s biggest fan. We’re oil and vinegar in our approaches to our jobs. Blake can look at Smilie as a bit of a PC Plod with a small town mentality. Nothing like this has hit this town before. And its Blake’s meat and potatoes. Blake knows specific ways to get your man and how to do it. There’s no love lost between us in the way Blake conducts the case and the way Smilie wants to do it. It’s great storytelling. Very well written.”

**Had you filmed in Scotland before?**

“Many years ago I did a pantomime at the Glasgow Pavilion. So it was great to come back to Glasgow and see how much it has changed. But I’d never filmed there before.

“We were filming in Fort William and Loch Lomond. There wasn’t an awful lot of time to sightsee, apart from what was naturally around you. It’s a beautiful vista. I’ve never done anything before where I had to make the swatting of midges in character. How would Blake Abrighton swat away a midge? They are there so you might as well make a virtue of it.”

**Are you a fan of the great outdoors?**

“The last time I was in a tent was probably V Festival or Glastonbury or something like that. I’m not averse to it. But I don’t jump at the chance to do it. But if someone said there was a big holiday where we’d go up in the hills, I’d be up for that. Because I like being out with nature.

“I like the fact it’s cold but I’m wrapped up warm. As people say, there’s no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothes. I love being out with the elements, as long as nothing gets through to the skin.”
Episode one

Beneath the waters of Loch Ness, we see the pigment bleached body of an unidentified middle-aged man, stones tied to his ankles.

On her day off, Detective Sergeant Annie Redford is called upon by her boss DCI Frank Smilie to clear up a gory prank, which reporters are claiming, with tongue in cheek, to be the washed-up remains of the Loch Ness Monster. Annie, with a raging hangover, heads to the lochside where the inexperienced PC Jason Denny helps her clear up the decaying animal entrails. Among the remains Jason finds a heart.

Meanwhile, piano teacher Niall Swift is sacked by widower Dr Marr. When Swift accuses Marr of hypocrisy an argument ensues. Shortly afterwards Niall receives a text from someone who wants to meet him at a local beauty spot. A couple of hours later we see college principal, Craig Petrie, in fell running gear, standing over Swift’s twisted, broken, bloody body as it lies at the foot of a cliff.

The pathologist ascertains that Swift was murdered and a sliver of his brain removed. DCI Lauren Quigley is seconded to the case to head up the investigation. Later, Quigley is joined by forensic psychologist Blake Albrighton, whom she drafts in, much to Smilie’s ire.

Annie shows Quigley the spot where Swift was killed. In a gully she finds a newspaper from the day of the murder.
Episode one synopsis continued

The investigation is further complicated when the heart from the beach found among the animal remains turns out to be human. The teenagers responsible for the prank, Jonjo, Kieran and Annie’s daughter Evie, are brought in for questioning and Annie, now compromised, is off the case, causing tensions at home.

Elsewhere, we meet Kieran's brother Jordan, a young man with locked-in syndrome who awakens and begins to show signs of recovery.
Cast and Production Credits

DS Annie Redford
DCI Lauren Quigley
DCI Frank Smilie
Alan Redford
Evie Redford
Blake Albrighton
Leighton Thomas
PC Jason Denny
Craig Petrie
Ken Patterson
Nicole Patterson
Jonjo Patterson
Dr Simon Marr
Kieran Whitehead
Dessie Toner
Crawford Baxter
Isla Marr
Niall Swift
Don McGrellish
Angusina McGrellish
Bea Whitehead
Jordan Whitehead
Mhari Toner
Oliver Tench
Kirsty Petrie

LAURA FRASER
SIOBHAN FINNERAN
JOHN SESSIONS
GRAY O’BRIEN
SHONA MCHUGH
DON GILÉT
WILLIAM ASH
MURRAY FRASER
ALASTAIR MACKENZIE
MORAY HUNTER
JENNY RYAN
KEIRAN GALLACHER
JOHN HEFFERNAN
JACK BANNON
CONOR MCCARRY
EUAN STAMPER
CHERRY CAMPBELL
JORDAN MCCURRACH
GEORGE ANTON
VICTORIA LIDDELLE
ANITA VETTESSE
OLIVER GREENALL
SIMONE LAHBIB
FRASER JAMES
SHEREEN MARTIN

itv
Cast and Production Credits

Executive Producer
TIM HAINES
Writer
STEPHEN BRADY
Producer
ALAN J WANDS
Director (Block 1)
BRIAN KELLY
Director (Block 2)
CILLA WARE
Director of Photography (Block 1)
DENIS CROSSAN
Director of Photography (Block 2)
NIC MORRIS
Production Designer
ANDY HARRIES
Costume Designer
GILL HORN
Make Up Designer
STEPHANIE SMITH
Location Manager
MICHAEL HIGSON
Sound Recordist
STUART BRUCE
Casting Director
ORLA O’CONNOR
Editor (Block 1)
COLIN MONIE
Editor (Block 2)
JOE SAWYER
End