

QUIZ

PRESS PACK



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SERIES SYNOPSES

When television producer Paul Smith puts everything on the line to make ITV quiz show and overnight sensation 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?', one family's much loved pub-quiz hobby turns into outright obsession. As the family's attempts to win the ultimate prize fall short, all eyes turn to an unsuspecting Major Charles Ingram to take his turn in the coveted hotseat. While his first night on the show is a disaster, on the second, he is a brand new man with a brand new strategy. The audience on the edge of their seats, Charles dithers and about-turns all the way up the question ladder while an increasingly suspicious production team launch an investigation that will lead them to an incriminating pattern of coughs in the studio audience. Charged with fraud and persecuted by the public and press Charles, his wife Diana and the alleged cougher head to court. At first it seems the trial is a fait accompli, but as the case for the defence gets underway, the jury learn there is far more to the story than they know.

EPISODE SYNOPSES

Episode One

Major Charles Ingram doesn't even like quizzes... but for his wife Diana, and brother-in-law Adrian, knowing the answer is a way of life. When television producer Paul Smith puts everything on the line to make ITV quiz show and overnight sensation 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' a much-loved pub-quiz hobby turns into outright obsession. As Diana and Adrian's repeated attempts to get into in the hotseat fall short, all eyes turn to an unsuspecting Charles to win the million-pound prize. Meanwhile, the repeated re-appearance of middle-class, professional quizzers has not gone unnoticed by the ITV team and Paul makes a vow to stop them by any means necessary.

Episode Two

At last, it is Charles Ingram's turn in the hallowed hotseat. The first night is disastrous. Two lifelines down when the buzzer goes, Diana determines that they need a new strategy. It is only when Tecwen Whittock, a fellow quiz-fanatic and acquaintance of Adrian and Diana, develops a cough in the audience the following night, that Charles' fortunes begin to change. As Charles stumbles and about-turns his way to a million, the production team grow suspicious - is this man a genius or a cheat? Sure enough their suspicions lead them to a damning a pattern of coughs on the studio recording and the Ingrams are arrested.

Episode Three

Persecuted and hounded by the public and press - Charles, Diana and Tecwen head to court. At first it seems the case for the prosecution is a fait accompli, but as the case for the defence gets underway, the jury learn there is far more to the story than they know. Alas, when faced with a fifty fifty question, they return with a verdict of guilty. Paul Smith triumphs over those who sought to hack his life's work, but victory does not taste as sweet as he might have imagined. The Ingrams return to a life in tatters to find that, despite losing everything, their love for one another remains.

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

Charles Ingram (Matthew Macfadyen)

A proud and eccentric army major with a taste for classic theatre and a dislike of game shows. Previously a NATO peacekeeper and trained engineer, Charles takes a desk job to bring his wife, Diana and their children closer to her family in Wiltshire. Charles soon learns that being reunited with his wife's family has its drawbacks when Diana and her brother Adrian become obsessed with getting on to TV quiz show 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'. When both Adrian and Diana fail to win the top prize, Charles finds himself reluctantly drawn into playing the game. Despite giving a patchy and unorthodox performance in the hot seat, Charles becomes an unlikely winner of the coveted one-million-pound prize. His joy, however, is short-lived - when a suspicious production team accuse him of cheating, and he finds himself at the centre of a national scandal like no other.

Diana Ingram (Sian Clifford)

After following her husband across the world for his army job, teaching assistant Diana Ingram is happy to find herself finally settled close to her father and brother in sleepy Wiltshire. A family of pub quiz fanatics, moving home sees Diana and brother Adrian become obsessed with TV quiz show 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'. When both she and Adrian crash out of the chair with only 32K, Diana pushes her unsuspecting husband Charles to enter the show. After Charles appears to guess his way to the one-million-pound prize, Diana is charged with being the strategist behind an alleged plot to cheat their way to the top.

Paul Smith (Mark Bonnar)

The workaholic TV producer who risks everything to make his brainchild 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' an international hit. When obsessive fans of the show figure out how to hack its systems - turning TV for the masses into a platform for the elite pub-quizzers of Middle England - Paul will stop at nothing to protect the show. Determined to stamp out any cheating, Paul leads the investigation into the suspicious Ingram family.

Chris Tarrant (Michael Sheen)

The charismatic and popular host of the radio show that inspired 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'. Persuaded by Paul Smith to host this risky new TV game show format, Tarrant becomes the face of an overnight sensation. When contestant Charles Ingram is arrested, Tarrant finds himself dealing with the responsibility of being the star witness in a very different kind of arena, a criminal trial.

Sonia Woodley QC (Helen McCrory)

A highly regarded criminal defence barrister, with a dislike of trial by media, Woodley QC has a take on the 'Coughing Major' scandal at odds with the rest of the nation. Taking on the case amidst piling media pressure, Woodley steps in just when it looks like there's no hope left. Woodley systemically challenges and unravels the prosecution's case, revealing a startling new version of the story the world had already accepted as fact.

Tecwen Whittock (Michael Jibson)

A Business Studies lecturer with a litany of coughing conditions, Tecwen Whittock worked his way up from tough beginnings, to build a successful career and family. With the rise of WWTBAM, Tecwen's obsession with game shows sees him tracking down Adrian Pollock through the electoral register, who in turn connects him with Diana. When Diana finds out Tecwen will be on the same show as her husband, several overnight calls between them sees him thrust into centre of the cheating scandal - with press, public and police charging him as the fateful man who coughed...

Adrian Pollock (Trystan Gravelle)

A failed online estate agent, Diana's competitive brother Adrian is in debt and a huge 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' fan. The first to get onto the show and lose at 32K, he encourages his sister to pursue a million in his place. Although he is not involved in the cheating scandal his behaviour and affiliation with a rule-bending group called 'The Syndicate', appears suspicious.

David Liddiment (Ristead Cooper)

Liddiment is the new Director of Programming at ITV and a man with a vision to finally beat the BBC. When he commissions 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' and it becomes the lynchpin of his success in the ratings war, he becomes increasingly keen not just to build on its international success, but to protect it from the syndicate of contestants that threaten to weaken the show's integrity.

Claudia Rosencrantz (Aisling Bea)

Head of Entertainment at ITV, with an eye for talent, Claudia persuades David Liddiment to hear the pitch for WWTBAM, the show every broadcaster has rejected. Claudia has a front row seat not only to the show's stratospheric success but the inbound scandal of the 'Coughing Major'.

David Briggs (Elliot Levey)

Co-creator and producer of WWTBAM. David is Paul's right-hand man who suspects something is amiss when Major Charles Ingram takes to the hot seat.

Nicola Howson (Jasmyn Banks)

The no-nonsense Communications Director for ITV. Nicola is always first to speak her mind in a crisis.

Ruth Settle (Seraphina Beh)

Head of Press and PR for Celador. Pragmatic, Ruth is at first unconvinced of the Ingrams' guilt when faced with the coughing evidence.

Nicholas Hilliard QC (Nicholas Woodeson)

The charismatic prosecuting barrister in the Ingrams' trial. The provider of a confident and seemingly airtight case against the Ingrams.

Kevin Duff (Andrew Leung)

The WWTBAM sound engineer and witness for the prosecution who noticed the pattern of coughs during Charles Ingram's performance - the theory that would form the police investigation.

Kerry the Floor Manager (Maggie Service)

A suspicious floor manager who watches the man she deemed 'Tim-nice-but-dim' in his practise rounds, stumble his way to a million pounds and a witness for the prosecution.

Paddy Spooner (Jeremy Killick)

Founder of 'The Syndicate' - a group of quiz fanatics who work out how to hack the flawed systems of WWTBAM. A three-time contestant, Paddy teaches his clients, including Adrian, how to get on the show multiple times. But as things heat up and the information age begins to loom, even Paddy begins to wonder if he's in the right game...

Arthur Pollock (Tony Turner)

Diana and Adrian's father. A passionate quiz show contestant who never had his big win.

INTERVIEWS

Matthew Macfadyen is Charles Ingram

Q: Were you among those watching Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? when it first came to the screen in 1998?

I was certainly aware of Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? when it first launched. The first TV show to offer a prize of £1 million. It was real event television attracting enormous audiences. People would make an appointment to sit and watch it.

When this production came along, I vaguely remembered the Charles Ingram case. But I had to be reminded of it. People think they saw the actual episode featuring the 'Coughing Major' but it was not transmitted at the time. They most likely remember the ITV documentary about it.

Why did you want to be involved in Quiz?

It was a different kind of part for me. Really good fun. Quiz barrels along with a slight tongue in cheek. There's a twinkle all the way through it. But then because of that it allows interesting questions to be asked. It's also quite moving at points.

When the role came along, I watched the episode in question and wondered if there was any way I could play this guy. The prospect of working with the director Stephen Frears was also very exciting. I'm a big admirer of his work.

James Graham's script is very interesting and has several layers. Among other things it's about perception. People who thought Charles Ingram didn't look like a man who knew the answers. Also deciding what is real and what isn't.

I also found it quite affecting as a love story. It's about Charles and Diana Ingram and their relationship. Sian Clifford, who plays Diana, and I found that very touching. They have stuck together all of the way through this experience.

How did you approach playing Charles Ingram?

I played it straight and as truthfully as I could. On the page I found Charles and Diana Ingram quite sympathetic. I think that's all you can do as an actor. You just play it straight down the line and then allow audiences to project whatever on to that.

In the shooting of it we allowed ourselves a bit of leeway. We would do takes that were a little more innocent than others. Just so that in the cutting room putting it all together there would be options. Because you never know how it's going to hang together or which way you want to go.

I'm still in two minds as to the guilt of Charles and Diana Ingram or their innocence. I haven't come to a conclusion about whether they are guilty or not. I don't know how you can. I played it as it was written. Who knows? I didn't know what to think by the end.

What is certain is Charles Ingram is a clever man with real achievements in life. He had a very good career in the Army and is a member of Mensa.

It's true to say their lives were totally ruined by what happened. Whether they were guilty or not, I don't think they deserved the consequences that followed. Their pets were attacked, people spat at Charles, they had to move house and he lost his job in the Army. It was pretty hard going for them. It feels like they have suffered disproportionately. It's a game show. Nobody died.

Did you meet Charles and Diana Ingram?

I met them briefly when they came on set towards the end of filming. They were lovely. Sian Clifford and I said a quick hello. We didn't have time to sit down and chat with them.

It's an odd thing because I'm not doing an impersonation of Charles Ingram. It's a re-telling of the story. So, it's always only an impression of a person. It's a funny thing playing a real person in this way. As an actor you are aware this is somebody's life. It's a peculiar thing to do.

I haven't played many real people before. You just hope they approve. Because you don't know what really happened and how people feel about it. You just have to do your job as an actor.

Quiz reveals the lengths some people went to in order to get on Millionaire. Did you have any idea about that?

I had no idea about how obsessed people were with the show. I knew nothing about that. And it's all true. There's a very funny line in the script which says, 'People love a good pub quiz. A uniquely British invention. Combining our two greatest loves: Drinking and being right.'

There was this whole other side to it with things like a group of quiz experts, who we call The Syndicate in the drama, who cracked how to get on to the show and more. While we see Diana's brother Adrian practicing on a Fastest Finger First machine in his garage to increase his speed of reaction for when he actually got a place among the real studio contestants competing to get in the chair.

Charles and Diana Ingram were not part of that 'Syndicate'. They were a very ordinary middle-class family and certainly weren't terribly wealthy. He was a Major in the Royal Engineers and she was a teaching assistant in a school. After their conviction a newspaper offered them a sum not far off what Charles would have won, if they admitted their guilt and did an expose of how they almost got away with it. And they politely said no.

Charles Ingram didn't like quizzes that much. In contrast, Diana and her brother just loved quizzes and they became obsessed with this TV show. Both appeared on Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? before Charles did.

You sing a Gilbert and Sullivan song in the drama. How was that to do?

That was such a lovely thing to film. I had to learn that from scratch as I'm not versed in Gilbert and Sullivan at all. It was fun learning that. We also have a fantasy dancing sequence. Again, a really great thing to shoot.

Where did you film?

We filmed at Wimbledon Studios where they built an exact replica of the Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? set as it looked in the late 1990s. The whole thing exactly as it was. Walking on to that set for the first time was fantastic. No acting was required because you are there under the lights feeling all of that fear real contestants would have felt as they tried to get into the chair.

Sitting in the chair itself was great. Although it wasn't very comfortable. It was so weird sitting opposite Michael Sheen as Chris Tarrant in that studio.

The first scene we actually shot was where Chris Tarrant was in the witness box at the trial and we are in the dock. Michael was so good in the role. I hadn't seen him for a while, but we've known each other since I was at drama school. We did Frost/Nixon together in 2008. So, it was very nice to be reunited with Michael on this.

We filmed the exterior court scenes outside Southwark Crown Court where the real trial took place. With the interiors shot in a former court building in Hammersmith that is no longer used.

Having been found guilty, the Ingrams expected to go to jail. But instead they were given suspended sentences. You get all of the stigma and shame of it but no real custodial punishment. It's odd.

Are you a fan of quizzes?

I'm not remotely obsessed with quizzes. If they asked me to appear on Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? I would probably pass. I feel like I've had the experience now.

Television has moved on so much in a relatively short time and is far more sophisticated today. I stumbled across an old episode of Bullseye on TV the other day and that was very strange. It looked like East Berlin. The host Jim Bowen was getting the cash notes out of his jacket pocket and putting £50 notes into a tankard. They would give speedboats to people who lived in the middle of a landlocked city.

How do you reflect back on filming Quiz?

People may think they know this story but there is so much more to be discovered in this drama. I think the audience will find it both very interesting and surprising.

It's the sort of story where you can all sit down as a whole family, from grandparents to kids, and everyone will have a different opinion as to what happened. Whether they did it or not. It's nicely nuanced. I was thrilled to bits to be a part of it.

Sian Clifford is Diana Ingram

What are your memories of the launch of Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?

I had forgotten just what an impact it made at the time. But it all came back when I read the scripts for Quiz. You couldn't escape it when it first came out. It gripped the nation. You don't have to dig very deep to get back into that world and remember how obsessive it was. For people to make an appointment to watch Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? It really was event television. With the biggest amount of prize money ever given away on TV up until that point. Our perception of £1 million has changed in the last 20 years. It's still an awful lot of money, but back then, it meant even more. It was overwhelming that all you had to do was answer 15 questions to win it. And what's so brilliant about the show is it makes you feel like it's so simple and achievable. Especially because of the multiple-choice format which you think will help you. Like, 'As soon as I see the answer, I'll know it.' And, of course, it's there to bamboozle you and plant doubt. The beauty of Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? is its simplicity. It's tapping into something universal. That is why it was such a hit. Because they didn't over-complicate it. It was something that everyone could participate in. It's just so brilliant and I love how in Quiz you get to see how that all evolved and how invested the people behind the show were in it. It's really important to understand their side of things.

Did you know the writer James Graham before this role came up?

I love James and I'm a huge fan of his work. I've known him almost as long as I've known Phoebe Waller-Bridge. He was a part of DryWrite, the theatre company that Phoebe set up in 2007. I've known him since then. So, it was so wonderful to finally get to work together. He is a master of what he does. How he laces his work with what is topical and pertinent now, regardless of its subject matter or when it is set. In Quiz he is examining our relationship to Truth. Charles Ingram's episodes were filmed just two days before 9/11, it's an undeniably important moment in history to revisit if we want to have some understanding of where we are now and how we got here.

How would you describe the relationship between Diana and Charles Ingram?

Diana and Charles Ingram have stuck together through all of this. That was the one thing that really stood out to me when I first joined the project and I started watching as much footage of them as I could. Certainly, with Diana who has been portrayed as this Lady Macbeth character - I just knew intuitively she wasn't that person. After just a few seconds of watching footage of her I knew that wasn't who she was. It immediately struck me how introverted she actually is and shy and sweet.

"It was very moving to film some of the scenes of them together. I think there is a deep love and respect between them. We were very careful to be sensitive towards them and their story because no-one has portrayed, up until this point, their side of things. Matthew Macfadyen, who plays Charles, and I talked about their love story very early on. The fact that they have stuck together throughout this entire experience. We really wanted to honour that relationship. We felt they were such a solid unit.

What was it like walking on to the replica vintage Millionaire set?

It's amazing how much the lighting and the cameras affect how it appears on a screen. When you walk on to the set you think the colours are all wrong. It's like, 'This is sort of what I remember but not quite.' And then suddenly it comes alive. We had a full lighting and sound rig which was amazing. Everything was going all guns blazing when we would roll. Which was thrilling. And everything would change. You would see it on the monitor, and it was the show we remember. Honestly, it was extraordinary. So much fun. Of course, we all just wanted to sit in the chair and have a go. Unfortunately, the computer wasn't quite set up to be that sophisticated. It was just designed to show the questions we needed for the shoot. But it made things very easy for us as actors. That music is designed to get under your skin, and it works. Sitting in that chair you get a real sense of how there is so much at stake. Your one chance to take part. It's so easy to watch from your sofa, but it's very different when you are there. I filmed the episode when Diana was in the chair and

you do suddenly feel this pressure. It's so weird. Even though you are acting, and you know it's not real. You can imagine being told you'd given the wrong answer and you'd lost a huge amount of money.

How was it facing Michael Sheen as Chris Tarrant?

"Michael Sheen is just brilliant as Chris Tarrant. It's such an extraordinary transformation. I couldn't actually imagine how they were going to make him look like him. Because Michael has this shock of dark, curly hair. Our makeup designer Julie Kendrick has done the most extraordinary job. It wasn't the most comfortable experience for Michael, but it certainly paid off. He looks and sounds exactly like him. It is very convincing."

And working with Matthew Macfadyen as Charles Ingram?

Matthew is someone I've admired from afar for a long time. I cried when I found out he had been cast because I was so overwhelmed. He is a wonderful actor. Matthew embodies Charles so beautifully. It was an utter joy to work with him. He is the nicest man in all of England. We had such a great time filming this. And I think he is absolutely extraordinary in it.

Did you meet Diana and Charles Ingram?

Yes, they visited the set on the last day of filming. They were very lovely. It was really nice to meet them, but we were careful to wait until the end because we wanted to honour James' scripts and make sure we weren't too influenced in either direction by meeting them. They were so sweet and kind and have been so generous with their time and the information they have provided to James."

Have you come to any conclusion about their guilt or innocence?

Whether you believe they are guilty or innocent the consequences they subsequently faced and what happened to them do appear disproportionate. I can only imagine what it's like having your lives thrown into the press like that, the negative psychological impact and how damaging and frightening it would have been. We've changed the story slightly, but some of their animals were attacked and their dog eventually died. That's really dark, messed up stuff. And that's just their family pets, let alone what happened to them and the bullying their children were exposed to. Plus, the daily minor aggression of being coughed at for years. Maybe one day we will stop harassing people for our own entertainment."

Did you know about the separate group of fans who infiltrated the show?

I had no idea about any of that. I'm sure if any of us had, we all would have wanted to be members. That, in a way, humanises the whole thing more than anything else.

That was a total revelation to me and just wildly fascinating and bizarre. But then, of course, people are always going to talk to one another and share information. Especially when a million pounds is at stake. Even now, you'll see a lot of similar faces on today's daytime TV quizzes. It is a community of people who enjoy taking part in these shows.

What was it like working with the director Stephen Frears?

I hope to work with Stephen Frears forever. I loved him to bits. He is just brilliant. I found him incredibly inspiring, wonderful to work with, really collaborative and we had a blast.

Are you a fan of pub quizzes?

They are not really my thing. I enjoy a quiz, but I don't think I'm very good at them. So, they're not something I put in my calendar. But I have attended them occasionally, although my general knowledge is pretty rubbish.

Would you consider taking part in the present-day version of Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

Matthew Macfadyen and I joked about it. So, I think we will have to cross that bridge if it comes to it.

How would you describe the experience of the recent awards' season, including the Golden Globes when Fleabag was a double winner?

It's all just been a complete whirlwind and truly magical. Phoebe summed it up when she said, if this has all been a dream it's been the most beautiful dream. It really has. It's been so fun. Overwhelming. But wonderful.

How do you reflect back on Quiz?

I had such a good time working on Quiz. I felt privileged to be there playing that role and working with such extraordinary people. It was a deeply fulfilling experience for me and I really hope I get to work with lots of those people again. It was very rewarding and I'm just so happy it has turned out the way it has because I do think it is a brilliant drama.

Michael Sheen is Chris Tarrant

What are your memories of Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? when it first came to the screen in 1998?

I remember being really struck that a TV quiz show was on every night of the week in primetime. It was unheard of at the time. Then watching Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? and being blown away by the tension of it. It was so compelling and really groundbreaking.

In doing the research for this it was fascinating to be able to watch the experimentation they did before they got it right. The version of the show they did before they had all the tense music, the lighting and all of that. It just looked like any game show at that stage.

Apart from the £1 million on offer and the structure of how you could win it, the show was completely different and not in any way gripping. It was really interesting to see the difference the tweaks they made had and how it suddenly became a massive hit. As soon as it hit its groove it was mind-blowing.

Why did you want to be involved in Quiz?

It is an extraordinary story. It's one of those things that has such potential. At first you think, 'Oh really? A story about Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? Is that going to be that interesting?' Initially you think it's going to be a little bit flimsy, maybe. Then you realise that actually it's a way to explore all kinds of much bigger, complicated, complex issues. That you can't take anything for granted when it comes to how it looks on the surface.

I was drawn to Quiz because I remembered what happened. And the fact James Graham had written it and Stephen Frears was directing. You think, 'This is going to be interesting.' Then as I started reading the scripts you really get drawn into it. So, I hope that's the experience for the audience watching it as well. I'm sure it will be. It's a story about far more than just the 'Coughing Major'. And yet it says so much about us as a nation as well in so many ways. It says a lot about television, about entertainment, about how public perceptions can be influenced by all kinds of different things. It's a very British heist that happened.

It very much reminded me of the sort of stuff Peter Morgan was writing when we were doing things like The Queen, The Damned United, Frost/Nixon and all of those. Peter's eye for what makes a really good story, that is both something that catches people's interest and yet takes them into places you wouldn't expect to go with that story. Then you are able to tell a much bigger story about who we are as a nation, as

a culture, as a society. Through telling a very specific story about something very familiar. Quiz was very much in that groove.

Stephen Frears is the person who got me involved with Peter Morgan in the first place. So, I'm not surprised that Stephen wanted to do this. Plus, the producers. We were all part of that team who did *The Deal*, *The Queen*, *The Damned United*, *Frost/Nixon*, all of those. There was a lot of the same team here. Which was great.

How do you approach playing someone as recognisable as Chris Tarrant without making it a straight impersonation or caricature?

The difficulty with playing Chris Tarrant in Quiz is that the other real-life people I have played are usually the lead character or one of two lead characters. You get a much bigger canvas to work with. Whereas he's very much a supporting character in this. So that made it more difficult, I found. Because you don't get as much to stretch out with. You come in more short bursts.

Part of the challenge of playing characters that are very familiar to the audience watching the show is you want to make sure you deal with expectations. So, an audience who are going to sit down and watch me play Chris Tarrant, Tony Blair, Kenneth Williams, Brian Clough, David Frost or whoever it might be, you know the audience need to believe this. They are going, 'I want to see this actor convince me they are like that person.'

You've got to meet that expectation immediately. But you've also got to try and put that expectation aside as quickly as possible. So, the audience are not thinking about that anymore. You want to be able to make the audience go, 'Oh yes. I get the thrill of recognition of this. Yes, I believe this. I'm willing to go on this journey.' And then you want them to forget about that and go on the journey with you and watch it like they would watch anything else.

Playing a very familiar character who is not one of the lead characters, it's much harder to get the audience to forget and to just go with you. Because you don't get as much screen time. That was the challenge that was a bit harder with this one.

It's also a challenge with people who can be easily caricatured. I've heard Chris Tarrant himself saying he hoped the portrayal of him wouldn't be this over the top caricature. And I hope that's not what it is.

He is someone who is incredibly familiar to us as an audience with a very particular kind of voice. The characteristics that make him such a popular TV personality are also the characteristics that can make someone easy to caricature. You look for things to hang on to in playing someone like that. You go, 'Right, I'll use that.' Because audiences will recognise that and, hopefully, it will help them believe I'm this person. But at the same time, if you make too much of those things then it does just become a caricature.

The process I've done for all the real-life characters I've played is pretty much the same. Whereby I try and put off the point at which I start trying to 'sound' like them or 'act' like them for as long as possible. And just try and immerse yourself in the world of that person. I watched as much of *Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?* as I possibly could. Especially the early shows.

Because Chris Tarrant is so brilliant at what he does on that show, I had to watch it over and over again in order to see what it is that he is actually doing a lot of the time. Because a lot of what he is doing is covered up. He is being brilliant. He is doing so many things at the same time. And he makes it look effortless. Creating the tension and yet at the same time being very accessible, entertaining and funny. But not ever letting that break the tension. That is a really difficult thing that not many people can do. And he does it without drawing attention to the fact he does it.

So, I watched *Millionaire* over and over again to see what he's actually doing in the show as well as trying to find within that, who is he? Who is Tarrant? What's going on to do with his inner life aside from his

technical brilliance at what he is doing on the show. Just immersing yourself in all of that and letting things jump out at you eventually.

At first, it's just like white noise because there's so much going on. There's so much information you're getting off a person. Because any person is an incredibly complex creature and people are giving off massive amounts of information all the time. So much so that you can't see it. You can't see the signal for the noise. So, I start off by just having a bath in that white noise until eventually things start to stand out.

Then eventually once I start to get a real feel for who the person is and what they are doing, much further down the line, I'll start to look at the more obvious things like how someone sounds. What their voice is like, their accent, their mannerisms and all that kind of stuff. Hopefully it comes out of something that's a bit more organic than that. That's how I try to avoid caricature while still trying to do something which, I guess, is akin to impersonation but I wouldn't describe it as impersonation at all.

Did you meet Chris Tarrant?

I was at The Pride of Britain Awards just after we'd finished filming Quiz. Walking down the red carpet having the photographs taken. Then I hear a voice behind me, saying, 'Nothing like me!' I turn around and there's Chris Tarrant.

It was extraordinary because I hadn't met him before. Obviously, he was hugely familiar, like he would be to anybody in Britain. But I'd also been spending this obsessive amount of time focusing on him. So, it was a very weird experience to suddenly be there having a chat with him.

He was lovely. Very friendly, very warm, very generous. He was talking about Quiz as if I was still doing it or about to do it. And I remember thinking, 'Oh no. I've already done it. It's too late now. I wish I'd met him earlier.' But it was great. It was lovely to meet him. And I hope he likes it. I know he was concerned about being caricatured. I hope that's not the case.

What was your reaction when you walked on to the replica 1990s' Millionaire set?

I remember asking what the set would be like. The actual Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? set has changed quite a bit over the years. The sets on most quiz shows now include a lot of computer graphics. Whereas when the Coughing Major stuff was going on it was in the days before all that.

I assumed they would just build bits of the set, like you do on films. Little aspects of it. But no. They built an absolute replica of the classic set from the 1990s. As you walked into the studio it was like walking into the studio to film that show. That does a huge amount of work for you.

I've had two other experiences like that. I was filming Frost/Nixon and we did one day at Universal Studios in Los Angeles. Filming on this back lot that was meant to be a London street or something. And in between takes, while they were re-setting the lights, I wandered down to the end of the set of the street we were on. Just to see what was round the corner. I suddenly found myself in somewhere that was incredibly familiar. But I'd never been there before. And I realised it was because I was in the Town Square from Back to The Future. Because that set was there permanently. It was an extraordinary feeling.

The other time that has happened was when I was doing the press tour for the film The Queen. Going from city to city. We were in Dallas, Texas. I had never been there before. I arrived there on the flight, got in the car to take me to the hotel and then on to the screening and then off to the next city the next day. I'm in the car looking out of the window and, again, I found myself somewhere that was incredibly familiar. I couldn't understand it because I had never been there before. Then I realised, we were in Dealey Plaza where JFK was shot and there was the grassy knoll and the Book Depository.

It was weird, and like being in a dream. Being somewhere you know really well and yet you've never actually been there before. That was exactly the same as walking on to the Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? set. Somewhere that's so familiar but you're now in the middle of it for real. It was a very odd feeling.

But it helped so much, of course, with everything I had been thinking about, like, 'Would Chris Tarrant have heard the coughing? How close was he? What's the actual physical relationship between all these people?' Because when you watch shows on TV you assume things are much bigger than they actually are. Then when you actually go somewhere and see if for real you realise, 'Wow, it's really small. It's not like it is at all on the TV.'

It was very interesting to be able to see, for example, Tecwen Whittock was literally right there. Really close to where Chris Tarrant was sitting.' It made all of that three dimensional for me. Giving an understanding of what might have played out. It also does so much work for you when you've got that music and the lights and the effects and the screens and everything happening as it actually would. It really helps. It certainly helped me. And I'm sure it helped Matthew Macfadyen, who plays Charles Ingram, as well.

What was it like being reunited with Matthew Macfadyen on screen?

Matthew is a fantastic actor. But also, just one of the most enjoyable people to be around on set. I had such a great time with him when we did the film of Frost/Nixon. I just laughed and laughed. So, it was lovely to be able to work with him again on this. I think he deserves all the success he gets.

Were you there when Charles and Diana Ingram visited the set?

No, I wasn't there for that. In everything I've done when I've played a real person, I've always resisted actually meeting the people if it's possible - if they are still alive and around. I've resisted meeting them whilst you're working on it because I've always been worried that it might compromise what I'm doing. Not that you are trying to do a hatchet job on anyone. But you want to make sure you don't feel compromised in how you portray someone. I always worry about actually meeting the people. So, I'm kind of glad I wasn't there for that. Although it is always, obviously, fascinating to meet the actual people.

Have you come to a conclusion about the guilt or innocence of those convicted in this case?

Like most people, I assumed there was no question about the convictions of Charles and Diana Ingram and Tecwen Whittock. They cheated, they were found guilty and they were convicted. I had no reason to assume anything else.

I watched the ITV documentary about it which was very much about how they did do it. But by the end of the documentary I was like, 'I'm not sure about this.' I had no reason to question the received opinion about it all. And yet watching a documentary that was very much saying they were guilty; I came out of it with some big questions about it. Feeling a little bit dubious.

Then I read the scripts for Quiz, which are not saying, necessarily, one way or another. But they certainly open up questions again. And I was very open to that. By the end of it I certainly didn't feel as sure they were guilty as I had in the time between when it happened and then coming to work on this. I don't really feel qualified to say either way. But it certainly made me question stuff and be open to the possibility that the truth is still to be discovered.

Did you have any idea about the separate group of people who infiltrated Millionaire?

That was a huge revelation to me. The idea of what we call 'The Syndicate' which infiltrated the show. That's fascinating. I think people will be really interested in that. That's an area that will really shock people. And, of course, it wasn't illegal.

Would you consider going on the present-day show?

I love a pub quiz. I love anything like that. All of that stuff I'm very much into. And I love TV quiz shows. I'm slightly obsessed with them. That's pretty much all I watch a lot of the time when I'm back at home. I did The Chase last year. I did Pointless Celebrities. I had this plan that I wanted to try and do every single quiz and game show on British TV. So absolutely. I would definitely do Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? Having played Chris Tarrant, though, I would also like to host an actual show as Chris Tarrant. Because I loved doing that. I'm the sort of person that when you play board games with the family, I really like to be the question asker and the person who's in charge. I love that.

To get in to do it on Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? for Quiz and getting to be the person who is so brilliant at doing it as well, I loved that. So, I would both like to take part in Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? as a contestant but I would also like to host it. Not as me. As Chris Tarrant.

James Graham – Writer / Executive Producer

It is easy to forget the impact Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? had when it appeared on screen in 1998. Were you among those watching the first show?

I remember very vividly the first night it was screened. I was 16 years old and watched it with my grandparents. I just couldn't believe it. That was one of the challenges for the drama. Re-communicating both to an audience which is overly familiar with it now as just part of life - and the younger audience who maybe haven't engaged with it in a similar way - just how shocking it was. The idea that they were possibly going to give away a million pounds just with questions and answers.

If you add to that the drama and the music. We show a clip featuring one of the first ever contestants, who was virtually in tears talking to her dad as her phone-a-friend. I was spellbound by the high drama of it.

Another challenge of making a television drama about the recent past is the danger of it all feeling inevitable. You have to remind an audience that this show's arrival on screen wasn't inevitable. I spent a lot of time with Paul Smith, one of the main creators, who features as a character in the drama. He walked me through stage by stage the number of rejections they had from every major broadcaster in the UK when they first went out to pitch it.

Also the aesthetic and stylistic challenges of how they eventually found the format and template for what became the most successful game show in the world. Without spending too much time on that in the drama we wanted to explore a little bit of the DNA of what makes a good game show. With the challenges they had in getting there. Also the personal stakes for Paul both in terms of his financial investment in the show but also how much it meant to him emotionally.

How did your stage play originate?

Like probably most of the audience, I assumed this was a relatively cut and dried story. I was captivated by the trial of the 'Coughing Major' when it was happening in 2003. I was a student at the time. I remember being enthralled by the follow up Martin Bashir documentary and what felt, at the time, the audacity of the crime. How brazen it was to try and steal a million pounds in front of a live studio audience, television cameras, lights and microphones.

I never doubted for a second, based on how the trial was reported in the media, that they were guilty. So when the journalists James Plaskett and Bob Woffinden wrote a book called Bad Show, it was introduced to me by the producer of the stage play William Village who is also an executive producer on the TV drama. It was like a breath of fresh air. It took what felt very familiar and completely disrupted it for me. Presenting new information and alternative viewpoints that suggest it possibly wasn't quite as cut and dried as I thought.

Stage plays and television dramas are exciting spaces to lead an audience into something that feels very familiar - whether that be a referendum campaign which I did last year with Benedict Cumberbatch in *Brexit: The Uncivil War* or a trial that everyone thinks is an open and shut case - then challenging people's views.

One of the things that really excited me was using as a quite unusual vehicle - the history of the game show and someone who allegedly cheated upon it - to interrogate what I think is the most important issue of the age. Which is truth and post-truth and the threat to objective reality. I'm always looking for more populist, entertaining and strange ways of accessing that more difficult stuff. To just even lightly touch upon that through the unlikely story of the coughing Major was an really attractive proposition to me.

How many times have you watched that particular episode featuring Charles Ingram?

Probably a dozen times from beginning to end. I can quote it almost verbatim. I'm always very happy to watch it because I find it so thrilling.

How did the stage play evolve into the TV drama version?

I often find it really hard to adapt my own work from one medium to the other. It's much easier to start from scratch on a completely different idea. But for whatever reason, writing this one was an absolute joy from start to finish. Even though it's a completely different form.

The stage play embraces the most powerful and exciting thing about theatre, which is its live-ness. So, we had the audience voting as a 50-50 on keypads over the characters' innocence or guilt. We had people up on stage playing old fashioned game shows. And it was more abstract. The court room and the game show studio tended to mix into one. It was quite a heightened piece.

The play was split into two halves. The first half was the prosecution and the story the audience is more familiar with, discussing the Ingrams' guilt. And then the second half was the defence, which is more surprising with new information. We got the audience to vote after the interval and then after they had heard the defence. Remarkably and joyfully, on every single show we did both in Chichester and the West End, the audience converted from majority guilty after the first half to majority innocent once they had heard the defence. Except, really weirdly, the matinee shows. They always thought they were guilty all the way through.

Obviously television is the world of naturalism and you have to embrace a more literal storytelling form. But ultimately it just translated much easier than anything I'd ever done into a screenplay. Because essentially you have all these wonderful television tropes to lean into. Which we do, hopefully, quite mischievously. Whether that be the heist movie or *Ocean's Eleven* and *Mission Impossible*, only with incredibly respectable middle-class people obsessed with quiz shows. But it's the same thing. It's a huge, audacious crime that we are alleging may have taken place."

Do you think viewers will realise just how obsessed a section of the audience were with getting on Millionaire and how an expert group helped them 'crack the code' of entry?

I don't think many people will know. It's a gift as a writer when beyond the experience of your central characters you realise something bigger is happening. A huge cultural phenomenon. The story of the Ingrams doesn't exist in a vacuum. It is part of a wider zeitgeist.

Paddy Spooner, who helped members of the public get on the show without the knowledge of ITV and Celador having cracked the way in, came to see the play and spoke to the stage actors.

We call this expert group The Syndicate which is based on what Paddy Spooner called his Consortium. A series of expert quizzers and talented individuals who both grew to understand ways in which you could

manipulate the phone line system to be selected to go on the show and then offered a bespoke service to clients who hired them to help them get both 'chair-wise' as they called it - how to work out being in the chair and to play the game - and also, infamously, the phone-a-friend being diverted to this special secret room which we depict in the show and did exist.

And as we reveal in the drama, nearly 10 per cent of winnings in the history of the show came through that system.

I was just so charmed by the notion of normally quite reserved, polite people, often majority middle class in the south of England, quiet villages, becoming obsessed by this game show. And becoming so determined to crack the formula about how you get on and how you win. It does speak in a way to something peculiarly British. There is something competitive in our instincts throughout history, whether it's wars or game shows today, that drives us a lot.

So, to be able to put those joyful oddballs on screen and really enjoy the lengths and breadths they go to is, hopefully, a surprise to the audience. It was certainly a surprise to me. We wanted to take these people with their cardigans and notepads and present them as Mission Impossible types performing an incredible robbery on a bank vault. But with answers to questions rather than absailing and guns.

Did you meet the Ingrams and others involved in this story?

We wanted to meet people on both sides of the debate. So, I spent time with Paul Smith - the founder of Celador Productions and executive producer who brought Millionaire to the screen - who was very generous in allowing me access to his world. Even though he understood the premise of both the play and the TV drama was essentially to question whether or not the guilty verdict was accurate. He was a really good sport. I also met ITV executives like former Director of Programmes David Liddiment and former Controller of Entertainment Claudia Rosencrantz who helped me to realise the high stakes of programming that show and the impact it had.

On the other side we spoke to the Ingrams on a number of occasions. They both came to see the stage play and talked to me then. And we've been in contact ever since all the way through developing and producing the TV drama, including them visiting the actors on set one day when we were filming. So that has been a constant journey.

The Ingrams were understandably maybe a little bit wary at first and not hugely enthusiastic about dredging up, essentially, a 15 year old story just as they try to maintain a normal a life as is possible. However because they had a good relationship with the journalist Bob Woffinden, who co-wrote the book, and because they understood we would be asking the question that possibly it didn't play out exactly as people think, they were happy to give their point of view.

I also met Tecwen Whittock. He came to see an early preview of the stage show and we spoke to him a lot afterwards. I was in email contact with him and members of his family who we also welcomed on to the set during the filming. And through Diana Ingram, I spoke to her brother Adrian Pollock when I was writing the scripts and then he came and visited very recently to see a cut of the tape.

There is a scene in episode three where Paul Smith meets Paddy Spooner in a pub and they have a reconciliation. That actually happened towards the end of 2019. One of those fun and quite surreal examples of how making a TV show about a real event started to affect the real event that we are depicting. Because it opened up new worlds and possibilities for Paul. He became re-intrigued by the story and wanted to reach out to find out more information about The Syndicate, as we call them.

So very brilliantly Paddy Spooner, now retired from his days of getting people on to the show, was happy to meet with Paul. We greatly benefited from that conversation they had in understanding more about quite the extent to which Paddy penetrated the show. All of that information is new and we are revealing that in our drama for the first time.

I haven't personally spoken to Chris Tarrant but he came to see the stage play and we had contact with him after that. He also met Michael Sheen by chance at an awards ceremony.

You reference a quote by Pablo Picasso, "We all know that Art is not Truth. Art is a lie that makes us realise Truth." Why choose that?

For me, it perfectly encapsulates the contract between artist and audience. I spend a lot of my time making drama about real life and I loathe but understand the necessary requirement to have some sort of legal announcement at the beginning of any show that says, just be aware in the dramatising of this the cast are playing real life people but they are actors. That sort of thing.

An audience is way more sophisticated than I think we give them credit for. They know the game. So we thought it would be fun and fitting for the themes of the show about truth, manipulation and deceit, to embrace that very early on and acknowledge this drama, in and of itself, is another piece of fabrication. A conceit. We are adding more layers of fiction on to fiction. So to embrace that and invite the audience into the mischief of that. To begin immediately addressing the themes but, hopefully, in a fun and cheeky British way."

What is at the heart of this drama?

It's the anxiety I have and most people have at the moment that for a variety of reasons to do with technology, the changing shape of the media, how we communicate with one another, the lack of reliance we can have now on the information we receive. And how we all walk around in our own uniquely crafted bubble and a unique frame in which we see the world. How, obviously, our perception is different to other people's. Which may go some way to explaining the hugely divided and polarised culture we live in at the moment.

You can overstate it. But I do think there is a correlation between the world we are currently in today of post-truth and alternative facts and what began 15 or 20 years ago, around this time. The invention of reality television shows and how programmes such as the news were breaking out of their frame and becoming 24 hours. The proper blending of justice with entertainment and politics with celebrity.

Those kinds of things all emerged around the time of this coughing Major trial which was therefore one of the first symptoms of the post-truth age in terms of how quickly this story gathered pace and ran away with itself. The obsession by the media in whipping up a mob outrage in the public. And the potential for that story to be manipulated.

The evening of the Major's allegedly cheating performance was the night before the 9/11 attacks. I found that unbelievable at first. Again, that being a huge trigger towards a different kind of age. Whereby that whole Iraq campaign had doubts and question marks over it in terms of the misuse of information, the over-selling of the threat.

We couldn't fit this into the TV drama but we hinted at it in the play, utterly bizarrely, even the military - of which Charles Ingram was a member - used the tropes and techniques of the game show when they were trying to rebuild following the invasion of Afghanistan. "They launched an Afghan version of Pop Idol to introduce the concept of democracy to people who had never voted before. So you had television producers out in the desert working with the military and the intelligence agencies. A crossover of institutions, techniques and tactics which began about this time that mean we are living in a very fuzzy age.

Given the TV drama is basically about a quiz show where there are right and wrong answers, provable truths, it feels like a very good opportunity to reminisce about a time when things felt more certain than they do today. We're in a very uncertain, unknowable and dangerous place now. I don't know how we row back from where we are. But it's unsustainable at the moment.

How did you approach writing the character of Major Charles Ingram?

My starting point always is a desire to be sympathetic and create empathy in an audience towards people who they might not be predisposed to like. To do that I just had to imagine, 'What if they are innocent? What if he didn't do it?' Imagine the horror of that? Of being put through such public humiliation on a national and international scale and have your life torn apart. All because of your involvement in a game. It's not life or death. Nobody was killed.

Also, I think Major Charles Ingram is a genuinely endearing character. It's very easy, especially for the British tabloids, to mock some of those traits. About him being well to do, military and slightly eccentric. But on a human level there is something very affectionate about Charles and Diana and clearly their loving relationship which lasted through an extraordinary amount of stress.

Again, for an audience who think they know this story, I think the first episode of this drama will be really surprising. Because Charles Ingram is not actually at the centre of events. There was a whole cavalcade of people who came before him from his brother-in-law and wife who all managed to get on the show before him and he was just the next one to arrive. Charles Ingram is a clever man with real achievements. He applied successfully to Mensa which means he has got the top two per cent IQ in the country. And his training and qualifications, his promotion through the British Army speaks to the fact that it's not quite as simple as those who have portrayed him as 'Nice But Dim'.

Were you surprised at the lack of security surrounding Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

The driving approach I had towards that was empathy and understanding towards the producers. I found that quite endearing on their behalf. And when you speak to Paul Smith it's quite moving to hear how his trust was broken by that. He just took it on good faith that people were playing in the spirit of the game. And then he discovered some people were manipulating the holes and the vulnerabilities in the system.

But then equally I think there are questions about the evidence presented by the prosecution in court. The audio volumes of those coughs were isolated to emphasise them more. The tapes that we watch online on YouTube or in the ITV documentary are not what they were like in the studio. I understand why. The prosecution explained this but the fact is Chris Tarrant said he never heard any coughing whatsoever that night is just one of many doubts we can raise in the audience's mind.

Did you film on the real TV set?

"We built a replica of the Millionaire set. We considered possibly using the modern Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? studio which is up in Salford, now that Jeremy Clarkson has returned the show to our screens. But because it is so modern and up to date it doesn't actually look like the original late 90s' set. So we decided to build our own in the exact same shape and footprint as the original.

"I can't tell you the thrill of that. Being a writer, when you're working in a world of your own head for so long, it's like walking into a playground that someone has built for you. It was incredible to walk into the set that first day and see this replica that we built. The actors were so excited to sit in the chair for the first time. It's child like but definitely thrilling. I also sat in the chair and immediately thought how terrible I would be on this show. It's so intimidating. I wouldn't even have the confidence over my own name."

Where did you shoot the court scenes?

"We filmed outside Southwark Crown Court where the real trial took place. But for the interiors of the court we located to an old court, unused now, in Hammersmith. The production designer wanted a very modern court interior to match the one at Southwark."

You examine the issue of justice as entertainment. What are your thoughts about that?

“It’s the idea that we think, assume and hope that our trial begins the minute we sit down in the dock. But, of course, that’s not the case in Britain and across the west because the media plays such an intrusive and prevalent part from the moment the story begins to get traction. It’s very hard to argue with any conviction that the criminal justice system is completely immune from the influence of institutions like the press and media.

“When you look at what happened in that courtroom there were some absolutely absurd and bizarre moments you wouldn’t expect in an altogether British and professional environment. There was an outbreak of coughing that took hold of the court, the jurors and the press gallery. Just because everyone was talking about coughing so much and they had to suspend the trial that day. You couldn’t make it up. Along with some of the jokes people made when Chris Tarrant arrived. You can see how the frenzy and the excitement towards how entertaining this story was maybe got ahead of some people. And the people in the dock might not always have been as well served as they should have been.”

Do you believe there is reasonable doubt about the convictions of Charles and Diana Ingram and Tecwen Whittock?

Charles Ingram’s defence barrister Sonia Woodley QC, played by Helen McCrory, made clear in her closing argument at the trial that we can never absolutely know for certain that Charles Ingram didn’t know the answers to those questions. We can only make an educated guess. And the entire premise of our criminal justice system is based on the fact that you cannot convict anybody unless you can be absolutely certain of the truth. Yet ultimately the jury found them guilty.

Were there consequences for the Ingrams aside from their conviction?

Whether they did it or whether they didn’t, we can all feel sorry for quite the scale of reaction they received. To this day people will still cough if they recognise them. Those coughs have been following them around for nearly two decades. They had to move their children out of school, their pets were attacked, their reputations were damaged and Charles lost the thing that gave him the biggest sense of purpose in his life, which was his duty in the military. Being stripped of that. The Coughing Major no longer being a Major. Just left with the coughing part. There is a valid question about whether or not that is proportionate to the crime they are convicted of.

What were your thoughts about the actors cast in the main roles?

“I was, of course, absolutely delighted the moment the names Matthew Macfadyen, Michael Sheen and Sian Clifford were being raised. I think it’s a world class cast. While our director Stephen Frears gets to the very heart of what this story is and tells it with such emotional integrity.”

Were you surprised ITV were so co-operative with this drama?

I think they saw it for what it was. Both the fun of some light-hearted satire towards the TV production industry and them bearing the brunt of that. But also it’s remembering one of their great successes and celebrating that. I can honestly say I never received any word from ITV about the way they would be presented in this. They were very up for it. The power of television and how it penetrates all of our lives.

Is this a puzzle that will ever be solved?

One of the great pleasures of making this is that different people working on it, including the cast, have wildly different views. It was all we would talk about at lunch. ‘Did they? Didn’t they?’ It was a live topic constantly about what may have happened that day.

In a case like this I don't think the rest of us can ever really know the whole truth and nothing but the truth. There are only a few people on Earth who know exactly what happened. But this story is certainly not over. It's got some way to run yet.

CREATIVE BIOGRAPHIES

Stephen Frears - Director

Unanimously regarded as one of Britain's finest directors, Stephen Frears has always embraced a wide variety of styles, themes and genres. He worked almost exclusively for the small screen in the first 15 years of his career, with programs such as *One Fine Day* by Alan Bennett and *Three Men In A Boat* by Tom Stoppard. Stephen's more recent TV work includes *Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fight* for HBO and Channel 4's *The Deal* starring Michael Sheen and David Morrissey. In the mid-1980s he turned to the cinema, shooting *The Hit* (1984), starring Terence Stamp, John Hurt and Tim Roth. The following year he made *My Beautiful Laundrette* for Channel 4, which crossed over to big-screen audiences and altered the course of his career. After directing its companion piece *Sammy And Rosie Get Laid* and the Joe Orton biopic *Prick Up Your Ears*, he began working in Hollywood, with *Dangerous Liaisons* and *the Grifters* (for which he was Oscar®-nominated) among his most notable titles.

Returning closer to home, he directed *The Snapper* and *The Van*, two Irish films based on Roddy Doyle stories and, after a second spell of making American films (*The Hi-Lo Country* and *High Fidelity*), based himself largely in Britain. Frears showed his versatility with two vastly different movies – *Dirty Pretty Things*, a realistic account of immigrant life in London, and *Mrs Henderson Presents*, a nostalgic backstage comedy-drama. For his 2006 film *The Queen* he was again nominated for an Oscar. His subsequent films included *Cheri* and *Tamara Drewe*. He followed these with *Philomena*, starring Judi Dench and Steve Coogan, which won a BAFTA and was nominated for three others, along with three Golden Globe and four Oscar nominations; *The Program*, which starred Ben Foster as seven time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong; and *Florence Foster Jenkins*, starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant, which received various accolades including a Golden Globe nomination for Best Picture and an Oscar nomination for Streep. Frears followed this with *Victoria & Abdul*, which starred Judi Dench, who received a Golden Globe nomination for her performance. Frears' return to TV was with the acclaimed three-part BBC television series *A Very English Scandal*, which starred Hugh Grant and Ben Whishaw, and won Stephen a BAFTA for Best Director. His most recent work is the Emmy award-winning short form series *State Of The Union*, written by Nick Hornby - starring Rosamund Pike and Chris O'Dowd.

James Graham – Writer

James Graham is a playwright and screenwriter. James' play *This House* premiered at the National Theatre's Cottesloe Theatre in September 2012, directed by Jeremy Herrin, and transferred to the Olivier in 2013 where it enjoyed a sell-out run and garnered critical acclaim and a huge amount of interest and admiration from current and former MP's for his rendition of life in the House of Commons. It went on to have an Olivier-nominated sell-out revival in the West End in 2017 and it was chosen by popular vote as the best play of the 2010's for the major theatre publisher Methuen.

Ink, his play about the early days of Rupert Murdoch, opened to critical acclaim at the Almeida and transferred to the West End in September 2017 where it played in the theatre next door to James' other new play – political romantic comedy *Labour of Love* - creating theatre history. *Labour of Love* went on to win an Olivier Award. *Ink* went on to transfer to Manhattan Theatre Club on Broadway and be nominated for six Tony Awards.

James wrote the book for *Finding Neverland* the musical, with music by Gary Barlow. It opened in Boston in Summer 2014 and transferred to Broadway in Spring 2015.

His first film for television, *Caught in a Trap*, was broadcast on ITV1 on Boxing Day 2008. His single film *Coalition* aired on Channel 4 and won plaudits for its retelling of the 2010 general election and the formation of the coalition government.

His most recent film for Channel 4, *Brexit: An Uncivil War*, tapped into a national conversation, garnering huge public attention and critical acclaim. It was broadcast on Channel 4 and HBO and starred Benedict Cumberbatch. It coincided with James being featured on the leading arts programme *Imagine*. The show explored James's influences and was nominated for an Emmy for Best Single Film.

His film *X and Y* was produced by Origin Pictures and BBC Films and starred Rafe Spall, Sally Hawkins & Eddie Marsan. He is currently developing films with Lenny Abrahamson, Paul Greengrass and Jeremy Herrin and adapting his play *Ink* into a screenplay.

Alice Pearse – Producer

Alice began her career at Revolution Films, working on *The Trip to Italy* with Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon. She went onto join Shine Pictures where she worked as a Creative Executive under Stephen Garrett and Ollie Madden. Alice was nominated for a BIFA in 2014 for producing indie feature *Gregor*, written and directed by Mickey Down and Konrad Kay. She later worked as a Development Executive at Kudos for a number of years, where she script edited shows such as Ronan Bennett's *Gunpowder*, and David Farr's *Troy*. In 2017 she was named a Broadcast Hotshot.

Alice first joined Left Bank Pictures as a Story Producer on *Origin*, Mika Watkins' thriller for YouTube Premium, and went onto produce a number of episodes of the series. She is now a Development Producer, working across several projects on the slate, and is producing an adaptation of James Graham's play *Quiz* for ITV and AMC, which airs in 2020.

Dan Winch - Executive Producer

Dan spent the early part of his career as a first assistant director working on television dramas and feature films including award-winning productions - *'Boy A'*, *'The Mark of Cain'*, *'Appropriate Adult'*, *'See No Evil: The Moors Murders'*, *'House of Saddam'*, *'Birdsong'*, Lynne Ramsay's *'Swimmer'* and Paddy Considine's *'Tyrannosaur'*.

In 2017 Dan produced *'A Very English Scandal'*, written by Russell T Davies, based on the book by John Preston and directed by Stephen Frears. Hugh Grant stars as British Liberal Party leader Jeremy Thorpe who was accused of conspiracy to murder his ex-lover Norman Scott, played by Ben Whishaw.

'A Very English Scandal' was received with critical acclaim after transmission on BBC ONE in the UK and Amazon Prime in the US, nominated for twelve BAFTA Television Awards, three Golden Globes and three Critics Choice Awards. Ben Whishaw won a Golden Globe, Emmy, Critics Choice and BAFTA Award for his performance in a Supporting Role. The series also won the Royal Television Society, Broadcasting Press Guild, Broadcast and Sky Arts Southbank Awards for Best Limited/Mini-Series.

Andy Harries - Executive Producer

Andy Harries is Chief Executive and co-founder of Left Bank Pictures, a multi award-winning film and television production company. Named one of the UK's "most influential TV drama producers" by Variety, Harries is credited with producing a slew of globally successful series including the highly-acclaimed Netflix Original *The Crown* and YouTube Premium's sci-fi thriller *Origin*.

Established in 2007, Left Bank Pictures has produced an impressive range of award-winning TV and film including *Outlander*, *Wallander*, *Mad Dogs*, *Strike Back* and *Dark River*. With a majority stake acquired by Sony Pictures Television in 2012, Left Bank Pictures were named Production Company of the Year in 2017 at the Edinburgh International Television Festival.

Prior to establishing Left Bank Pictures, Harries was Controller of Drama, Comedy and Film for Granada Productions. During this period, he produced countless British classics including *Prime Suspect*, *Cold Feet* and *The Royle Family*, winning Golden Globes, Emmys and BAFTAs and receiving an Academy Award nomination as a producer of *The Queen*, which saw a run of six Academy Award nominations. In 2007, Andy was awarded the Special Achievement award by BAFTA and, in May 2011, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Television Society for outstanding contribution to the broadcasting industry.

Harries is also a theatre producer whose credits include the Tony and Olivier award-winning play *The Audience*, which starred both Helen Mirren and Kristin Scott Thomas.

William Village - Executive Producer

William Village is a theatre producer and general manager. Credits include James Graham's *Quiz* (original commission, Chichester Festival Theatre, Noel Coward Theatre, nominated for the Olivier Award for Best New Comedy) the West End transfer of *Crazy for You* (Novello Theatre) and the UK tour of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (and at The Barbican).

William is an Executive Producer of the ITV three-part drama *Quiz* based on the stage play by James Graham.

William is Executive Director at Regent's Park Open Air. Together with the theatre's Artistic Director, he has produced 16 seasons at the 1,250-seat venue, including 44 plays, 2 operas and 18 musicals. Of these, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Into the Woods* and *Crazy for You* each won the Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival with *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Hello, Dolly!* also winning the London Evening Standard Award for Best Musical. He was the originating co-producer of the revival of *Into the Woods*, which ran at the Delacorte Theater, Central Park, New York (2012) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* which transferred to the Lyric Opera, Chicago in 2018 ahead of a US tour from autumn 2019. Regent's Park Open Air Theatre was voted London Theatre of the Year in 2017.

As freelance Executive Producer and General Manager, credits include *Motown the Musical* (West End) and UK tours of *The Mousetrap*, and Vincent and Flavia's *Tango Moderno*, *The Last Tango* and *Dance 'Til Dawn* (also West End) (all for Adam Spiegel Productions Ltd).

William read music as an organ scholar at Cambridge University. He is vice-chair of the UK Theatre Employment Relations Committee and is chair of the UKT/Equity Commercial Theatre negotiating committee.

About Left Bank Pictures

Left Bank Pictures is a multi-award-winning film and television independent production company, established in 2007. Left Bank Pictures prides itself on nurturing and championing exciting new talent to create the bold, innovative hits of tomorrow. In 2012 Sony Pictures Television took a majority stake in the company signaling a significant move into scripted production for Sony in the UK. Since its inception, the company has produced a range of hit shows including 'Wallander', 'Mad Dogs' and 'Strike Back' – currently in its explosive eighth series. Since 2016, Left Bank has produced 'The Crown' and has garnered 26 Emmy nominations and critical acclaim since its debut. Alongside this, Left Bank is currently producing the fifth series of international hit 'Outlander'. Also in the pipeline are the upcoming thrillers 'Behind Her Eyes' and 'White Lines' for Netflix, the motion picture 'Misbehaviour' starring Keira Knightley, 'Sitting in Limbo' based on the Windrush scandal. Named Production Company of the Year in 2017 at the Edinburgh International Television Festival, Left Bank Pictures has been recognized at a number of other award ceremonies including the Golden Globes, Emmy Awards, BAFTAs and Royal Television Society Awards.