

# The Tower (Second Series)



# Foreword

**by Writer and Series Executive Producer for Windhover Film, Patrick Harbinson**

When I was sent Kate London's novels in the summer of 2019 I was living in Los Angeles but looking for stories that might bring me closer to home. I read all three novels in one weekend and thought, in my gloomy way: I'll have to be completely incompetent if I can't get all three books on screen. Well, our adaptation of book one was warmly received and Damien Timmer and I are now very proud to present the second book, *The Tower 2: Death Message*. What's more, thanks to Kevin Lygo and Polly Hill at ITV, and our wonderful actors and director Faye Gilbert, we are even prouder to announce that we will soon be back in Liverpool filming *The Tower 3: Gallowtree Lane*. Am I still gloomy...? Yes. I've just read the manuscript of Kate's fourth novel: *The Misper*. It's brilliant. I'll have to be completely incompetent if I can't, etc. etc.

This isn't just false modesty: Kate's novels are a gift to any adaptor. They're packed with complicated, conflicted and funny characters; they tell authentically dramatic – never hyper-dramatic – stories, dripping with detail; and they fiercely challenge preconceptions, they make you hesitate and think. Kate has always said that she's telling stories about people, not sending messages. That's certainly true but what I have found in adapting the books, some eight or nine years after they were written, is that they have uncannily captured 'today', they zoom in on the issues we care about most and, again, they make us think.

People who have read the books have asked why I called the series *The Tower*. First, it's a good title, simple and striking. Second, the incident at Portland Tower, which was the story of series one, brings our four characters, Sarah and Lizzie, Steve and Kieran, together. And third, it's still part of their lives: it looms over them, metaphorically and literally. The tower destroyed some lives and re-made others. There is unfinished business; every deed has a consequence, even if that consequence takes a long time to play out.

*The Tower 2: Death Message* tells two stories of violence against women, one in the past, one in the present. The story in the present starts with an ordinary, everyday incident of domestic violence: a young couple and their daughter: the beater, the beaten and the scared. This is the first call-out that PC Lizzie Adama (Tahirah Sharif) answers on her return to Farlow Police Station at the beginning of the series. The story in the past is more unusual but far from unprecedented: a schoolgirl disappeared twenty-five years ago; her body has never been found. On the basis of a new lead – which the police believe is just a cynical ploy by a prisoner trying to impress at his parole hearing – the case is reopened. Like a poisoned pill, it's handed to the new arrival at Homicide Command, Detective Sergeant Sarah Collins (Gemma Whelan.)

These two stories become intertwined through our leads, Sarah and Lizzie. They illustrate, once again, their different ways of working. Sarah is calm, dogged and forensic; Lizzie passionate and empathetic. Through their different personalities the series explores the nature of violence against women, and the reality of how hard it is to investigate these cases, and even harder to convict. Why? It's called domestic violence for a reason: most cases happen within the home, out of the public eye. Usually they involve just the perpetrator and the victim, where the victim is often in a dependent relationship with her attacker. If there is a witness it is often a traumatised family member, usually a child, therefore easily swayed and, as a witness, unreliable. At the key moments – arrest or charge or witness stand – victims and witnesses often choose silence or denial. Because Lizzie is so persuasive she manages to break that wall of silence, but only briefly: the case is thrown out, the abused returns to her abuser... In Sarah's case – the missing child – the wall of silence has been standing for much longer and is even harder to break. Eventually Sarah will get through, will persuade people to reveal traumas they have buried for twenty-five years. As she says in a later episode: "There's a reason why abused girls stay silent. Yes, they're ashamed, they think it's all their fault, but they also think that they won't be believed, they won't even be listened to." Sarah listens.

At a time when we can hardly turn on the news without hearing another terrible story about violence against women, and more specifically about police failures in cases of violence against women, it seems important to tell a story that shows that most police working the street are doing their incredibly difficult jobs to the best of their abilities. Are there institutional problems? Resource problems? Corrupt and indifferent officers? Of course there are, and *Death Message* doesn't shy away from giving voice and life to them and showing how easily the rot can spread. But in Sarah and Lizzie, Kate has created two police officers who can stand for the majority. They will make mistakes, they will have failures, but they will – in this series almost literally – die trying.

Telling these sorts of stories meant, naturally, that we had to find a lot of brilliant actresses. The scripts were made immeasurably better by Tamzin Outhwaite, Niamh Cusack, Ella Smith, Camilla Beeput, Rosa Coduri-Fulford, Shonagh Marie, Laurie Delaney, Rosalie Craig, Rebecca Calder, and the amazing young Faith Delaney. We also cast some very fine men.

We hope you enjoy their journeys.

## Author and executive producer Kate London

**Since your first book Post Mortem was adapted for ITV by Patrick Harbinson as The Tower has that fed into the way you are now writing your plots and characters?**

I asked Patrick if he wanted to talk to me about what was going to go into book four, which is published this summer, and did he have any input that he wanted to give? He said, 'Absolutely not.'

That's an interesting choice – and I imagine that's because he wants material that is separate to him that he can then develop. For me it's an endlessly fascinating process. The TV series isn't the books, it's something different, and that's how it should be. And yet Patrick is remarkably faithful to the intent and mood. He's really very good at this, of course.

When I started writing the fourth novel, I was a little inhibited by the idea of, 'Oh, this will be very difficult to adapt for television' but then I returned to the books and I found my own way again. Book four, *The Misper*, is a whole new subject area and that was always my intention with the books. Sarah Collins leaves the Met and is drawn into an investigation into County Lines that leads her right back to London.

**The most noticeable change in adapting Death Message for television is that missing teenager Tania Mills now disappears on the day of Princess Diana's funeral rather than the great storm of October '87. What necessitated that change?**

It's very clear why Patrick needed to change it. He wants it to be contemporary. If it were the day of the Great Storm, our characters would be too old. It's a very successful change. On the day of the funeral normal activities were suspended and people's attention was elsewhere. Like the storm in the book the funeral is an event that creates a context where there is a feeling of destabilisation. The night before the Storm the weatherman Michael Fish dismissed the fears of a woman who had rung in afraid that a hurricane was on its way. The funeral shares something here – that the fears of a woman were dismissed. Whatever your views on the Royal family it is clear that Diana was pursued and hunted in an extraordinary way.

## **Author and executive producer Kate London**

**This series begins with PC Lizzie Adama's hearing by the Met to adjudicate her alleged breaches of the Standards of Professional Behaviour. What would be considered the most serious aspect of her alleged misconduct?**

We are seeing a lot of these hearings at the moment. And the question is often whether police officers should be sacked, or be given a second chance, and who should be making those decisions. I think our job as writers and dramatists is to put that out there for other people to consider. In series one Lizzie is young and inexperienced and she has been led astray by older officers. Should she be given a second chance? The most serious thing that she has done is that she has lied, but this is not the subject of the disciplinary hearing because the team investigating have been unable to produce any evidence to substantiate this allegation. So the disciplinary charge against her is that she hasn't assisted a police investigation. She has gone absent without leave for three days. Police are not employees; they are crown servants. They are not allowed to just disappear and not tell people where they are going. Lizzie says that she was extremely traumatised. She had seen people fall from the top of a building, but we know that there is more to it than that.

**Visually the shadow of Portland Tower and the tragedy that unfolded looms over the whole neighbourhood...**

Which I think is fantastic. This is a good example of the difference between how novels and television work. You can do that in television. You can put that tower there in shot, whereas if you kept describing it in the book it would sound quite heavy handed. In series two Patrick and director Faye Gilbert place Portland Tower in the background at the right moment and without any words we understand the backdrop to the rest of the story.

**What different areas of police work felt dramatically rich to explore second time around when you wrote Death Message?**

When I was asked to write a sequel to Post Mortem I knew that I wanted the characters to develop and to be affected by the

## **Author and executive producer Kate London**

events of the previous book. I also wanted the area of investigation to move. I had experience of working in the field of violence against women, both in a community support unit and in homicide. I wanted to write about the complexity of domestic violence. My homicide team did investigate a cold case and so I was very much aware of the enduring loss and the continuing need to see the perpetrator identified and brought to justice.

I worked on a terrible murder – well, they're all terrible, course. Anyway, the next of kin was to me a very admirable person. She was clear she didn't want the perpetrator to die. She wanted him to go to prison and be forced to consider what he had done. For her this was a genuine gut response to what had happened. She wanted the perpetrator to have to stand in court and face what he had done.

### **What do you remember of delivering your first death message?**

The first one was not particularly dramatic, to be honest but the first homicide notification was hard. The next of kin was in extreme denial. They couldn't believe it. Any sudden or unexpected death is difficult. It's such a terrific and awful shock. People's lives are changed. I had a death message delivered to me and even though I had been the bearer of bad news myself I found myself doing exactly the same thing: simply struggling to believe. And all the time part of my brain was saying, 'But you know how this works.'

### **DS Sarah Collins has moved across to Homicide Command. What are your memories of your first day working as part of a Major Investigation Team on Homicide Command?**

It's the first call to a murder that I really remember: suddenly instead of being the DC doing the handover you are the DC taking over. Your whole position has moved. You are now the person taking actions in the very important first stages of a murder investigation. Obviously, it is the Detective Inspector and the SIO who take charge, but on the scene when you respond to<sup>7</sup> the

## **Author and executive producer Kate London**

murder you are one of three people in the immediate response, and you are very busy. You feel so purposeful. You end up doing a long shift, but the adrenaline carries you through. Every decision you make matters. There is something really fantastic from the policing point of view about that feeling that you can do the job properly. And it's exhilarating being part of a team that is aiming to make a quick arrest, because that can make a huge difference to capturing evidence.

### **There is an instant where Sarah picks up a ringing phone in Homicide and Elaine tells her the team are going to hate her for that. What should Sarah have done?**

That was based on something that happened to me when we were very, very short. We had a live murder that we had taken and the team had been told that while we would continue to be part of the immediate response we wouldn't take another live job. We were on night duty, and we were about to go off duty. It was 6.30 in the morning and the phone rang. We had all been on duty since 10 o'clock at night. Basically, the Met was so short that they didn't have anybody to send to the murder except us. We went from the night duty to an early turn murder and whilst we were attending it a call came in for another murder. In the end our Detective Chief Inspector, an Inspector and a DC attended that second murder because the Met had nobody else to send. At that point the Met had disbanded some murder teams in order to send experienced detectives to child protection and sexual offences investigations because there was a massive backlog in those areas. But the result was that the Met's homicide teams were stretched to the bone. The Met had had £700 million taken away from it.

### **Ella Smith says that DC Elaine Lucas wears the nickname Fat Elaine as a badge of honour. Can you explain that?**

Elaine is not going to let her team have a secret nickname. She's going to say it right back at them. But she's furious. In the book she calls one of the other detectives one of the 'Fat Elaine Brigade.'

## **Author and executive producer Kate London**

### **Was Elaine someone you enjoyed shining a light on who has become demotivated but still has plenty to give?**

I love Ella Smith, who plays Elaine. She's fabulous. When she was cast, I thought, 'You are just right.' She has everything: the disenchantment but also the wit and the warmth of Elaine. Elaine is a good officer who works extremely hard. She is not lazy. When she arrives at work she sits at her desk and works flat out. There's no time to sit around chatting if you're working part time. And then she goes home and looks after her children and works flat out. So, her problem is not laziness. The problem is that she's been side-lined and disrespected. Policing is an incredibly pressured job. Investigations do need everybody to work very long hours, and it is hard to accommodate somebody who can't work those long hours. But the problem is that this difficulty can translate into disrespect and that leads to the loss of that person's talent and enthusiasm. Some senior officers absolutely understand this. Others don't. Elaine is a brilliant cop and part of what makes her brilliant is her life experience.

### **Tamzin Outhwaite is another stand-out performance as Cathy Teel.**

Tamzin is brilliant as Cathy. She's a fine actress - so real and so human. She's brilliant technically too: economic and precise. Watching the scene where she receives the death message: I've seen that in real life and I found Tamzin utterly convincing. That is really saying something. But she doesn't just stay with that one emotion. She allows herself breadth and strength, and moments of wit. Fantastic.

### **What do you admire about director Faye Gilbert's work on series two?**

It was lovely working with Faye. One of the things about her is that she is incredibly diligent, which sounds boring, but isn't! It's an important part of her creativity. She gets under the skin of the story. She understands the characters' journeys and pays them a lot of nuanced attention. That's visible in the performances and in the editing. Faye has got a strong sense of drama – series two is exciting and nail-biting – but she also has a sense of quietness and letting the story breathe. Death Message is

## **Author and executive producer Kate London**

packed with story and it's all told in four episodes. Those quiet moments cannot be long, and yet Faye manages to find the time for them. There is real emotional resonance in her direction, which is very important to me.

### **DS Collins interviews sex offender Ray Walker (Brian McCardle) who delights in goading her. How do you remain detached when an interview becomes emotionally charged?**

Brian McCardle is good, isn't he? He's nasty. He's great. In the book Ray Walker is even worse. You can't put everything he says on ITV. The answer to your question is that in real life interviewing everything a suspect says might be useful and you have to think on your feet and stay professional. Ray is allowing himself to be drawn. He's also using sexual language to try to exercise power over a woman. He's showing his true colours, and he's also providing an account of his actions. Sarah is a good detective, so she knows this is useful.

### **What makes Matthew Brannon an interesting character to dig deep into?**

Well, I know him. I know how he can be absolutely charming and completely credible and loving and remorseful and make promises and then be terrifyingly violent. He is deeply damaged and he can be violent in all aspects of his life. He'll be the guy who gets out of his car in a road rage incident. He's got that thing that he can kill. Charley Palmer Rothwell does a fantastic job. Brannon is a person to whom face is very important, and also control and power. He frightens me, that man.

Gemma Whelan is DS Sarah  
Collins



# **Gemma Whelan is DS Sarah Collins**

## **Can you explain what a death message is?**

A death message is when as a police officer you go to the home of the immediate next of kin, and inform them of a death, which is what Tahirah Sharif's character PC Lizzie Adama has to do this series.

## **What conversations did you have on set with the show's police advisers about such sensitive procedures?**

A lot of the supporting artists on The Tower are ex-police officers and detectives, so they are a rich field to plough during downtime. A few of them shared some desperate situations they found themselves in and messages they had to deliver. They were very clear that when you are doing that kind of message there has to be no ambiguity. Nothing like, 'They've gone to a better place.' You simply say that they are dead. It seems to be very important to not be ambiguous. It's not a job I would like to do in real life.

## **How has the investigation into what happened at Portland Tower in series one affected Sarah?**

She feels resigned to the fact that it went the way it went. She knows that a crime was covered up – by police officers – and she knows Lizzie Adama was part of it. At the same time, she understands why Lizzie acted as she did and the pressures she was under. Almost despite herself she's impressed that Lizzie stayed in the police and now she's waiting for her to prove herself.

## **What is Sarah's reaction when she sees Lizzie for the first time since the internal inquiry at a crime scene?**

Very quickly it appears that Lizzie can be quite useful because she is part of the investigation that Sarah has been called to. She says to Lizzie, 'You were in the house. Come in and see if anything has been moved.' Sarah gives her a chance. I don't think Sarah is one to hold a grudge. She's like, 'You're here. Let's get on with it.' She is obviously going to test her, and she does test her. She doesn't give her an easy ride, but Sarah is very much a 'get on with it' sort of woman.

## **Gemma Whelan is DS Sarah Collins**

**Sarah has discarded her orange duffle coat. What discussions did you have about her wardrobe for series 2 with costume designer Darren Finch?**

We did give the duffle a moment, but it ends up being left in the back of Sarah's car. Darren has absolutely nailed it. It was quite difficult last season because I was pregnant so they had to try their best to cover up a woman who clearly would not have children at this juncture in her life. This year everything that Darren brought along felt like Sarah. It was great to be able to move it on without doing anything drastically different. She's looking smart and the clothes aren't getting in the way. But there is no more orange duffle coat.

**How does Sarah feel about being given a missing girl cold case from 1997 on her first day at Homicide Command?**

**Everyone else is getting excited about a chicken shop shooting...**

She would definitely like to be part of the chicken shop shooting case, and she knows that being handed a 25-year-old cold case is a thankless task which everyone, especially her new boss, expects her to fail. But I think she rises to the challenge. She thinks outside the box and fairly quickly – just by looking at people, thinking about people in a different way – she develops a vital new lead. She prides herself on that. Even though she knows she's being disrespected, she says 'Right, I'm going to prove myself, I'm going to crack this.' And she does.

**What is Sarah's reaction when she spots DC Steve Bradshaw in the office?**

She was really betrayed by Steve. They had Lizzie Adama on the ropes and could have nailed her but for his own reasons Steve decided that wasn't a good idea. Steve was more lenient with Lizzie because of her inexperience, and that clashed with Sarah. In Sarah's world, that's a matter for the courts to decide, not the police. They had been good partners, close partners, but at the final moment he let her down badly. So she's surprised to see him at Homicide Command and that, somehow, he got there

## **Gemma Whelan is DS Sarah Collins**

**Sarah has a new work partner. What can you tell us about DC Elaine Lucas (Ella Smith) who also answers, to Sarah's horror, to the nickname Fat Elaine?**

Ella is just perfect. We had great fun. Elaine is so cantankerous and grumpy. They don't initially get on because Sarah is very much dedicated to the job and thinks how dare Elaine also have a family life outside of work. It's all about the job with Sarah. But slowly, slowly Elaine begins to prove herself. Elaine comes alive with the excitement of solving the case. It's an interesting partnership. We struggled at first playing those scenes because we got on so well.

**"What surprises me is how untouchable some people think they are." That is Sarah to DI Shaw. Has she still got her eye on him this series?**

Yes absolutely. She knows something went down there. Something was not right about the way that case was handled by him, but she can't put her finger on it. She's got her eye on him because he is slippery. I don't think that she thinks underneath that Kieran is a good cop. She thinks he is a wrong 'un. She can explain away most other people's behaviour – Lizzie's for example, and even Steve's – but I think she finds Kieran very, very difficult.

**Sarah bumps into Portland Tower victim Farah Mehenni's teacher Julie Woodson (Camilla Beeput) at her local supermarket. Is Julie a better match than Sarah's ex-partner Angie?**

I think so. I think Julie is more understanding and more aware of what the job is. She doesn't seem to be so demanding but what is also quite nice and what I think Sarah finds quite refreshing is that Julie calls her out on her behaviour. At one point she says, 'This isn't good enough. I'm going.' And that kind of shocks Sarah. She's always been able to get away with that. It's the job first but if someone is going to ask more of her maybe that's what she needs. Julie challenges her in a good way to step out of her work sometimes, to enjoy a glass of wine.

## **Gemma Whelan is DS Sarah Collins**

**Do you have a favourite interview scene this series? Sarah does a respectful & empathetic one with park keeper Robert McCarthy...**

I really, really enjoyed that one. The actor Benjamin Beresford who plays Robert McCarthy was wonderful. To work with someone with special needs was something new for me. Something we are often asked to do as actors is to be present, but we are sometimes so caught up in ourselves. Benjamin was so present and so professional. He knew his dialogue, he was really directable, and I just really enjoyed working with him. He was really nice to talk to off set. His dad is an Oscar winner, Bruce Beresford (director of Best Picture Driving Miss Daisy). He was on set as well and it was just a really special day. I learned a lot from Benjamin. I also enjoyed interviewing Shonagh Marie who plays Marley Daniels. I just think she's brilliant. It was fun to spark off her. She's so nice but onscreen she is so hostile and impenetrable as Marley. A great challenge. We were very fortunate with our guest cast this series. Watching Tamzin work was also fantastic and every scene I had with Niamh was wonderful. She's a very special woman and we got to play some quite strong emotions together and she was so accessible and easy with that.

**Sarah gets into the thick of the action in later episodes tackling an armed criminal. Do you enjoy working with a stunt coordinator?**

I really enjoy it. We did a bit of the fight at the end, which was shot very cleverly from our bumbling around. It's nice to be part of the physicality of that and the pod-car driving where the driver is on top of the vehicle and you are underneath. You are driving really fast, but someone is doing it all for you: it's weird but exhilarating.

# **Gemma Whelan is DS Sarah Collins**

## **What has series two director Faye Gilbert brought to the series?**

It's all about detail. You can decide as an actor that this is probably how Sarah would behave but then Faye would come in with a detail or suggestion and just set you alight with something else. Faye is patient as well. When everyone around us is going, 'We've got two hours to shoot 10 scenes!' Faye would take the time to sit and talk through with everyone.

## **What is it about the whole atmosphere of set life that you love?**

You are being told what to say, what to do, what to wear and you are fed and watered and driven everywhere. You are kind of like a little baby. I love it. (laughs) Also wonderfully I was allowed my little baby Freddy on set this series. They provided an amazing Winnebago facility so we could feel safe and comfortable every day where we were. I was a bit moved by how kind they were to me as a working mother. It is an extra thing to have a breastfeeding mother on set. Obviously, you should be welcome as you are in every other workplace, but it requires more thought. There was so much thought and attention and kindness and checking in. I was of course happy to meet them more than halfway. 'I'll bring the nanny, I'll bring the milk.' You can really make it work.

## **Didn't you continue filming series one till just before you gave birth?**

I was doing pick-ups for the first series of *The Tower* five days before I gave birth. We were filming in Camberwell, and I live down South-East, so I finished my pick-ups and then I walked to the hospital for my first sweep. It was that close. Freddy arrived five days later. The thing is I'm not an invalid. I felt well. As long as they were happy to shoot around it, I'm game. Again, they were lovely and accommodating and nobody viewed me as a liability.

Tahirah Sharif is PC Lizzie Adama



## **Tahirah Sharif is PC Lizzie Adama**

### **How was it returning to The Tower after your costa del crime spree in A Town Called Malice? A bit less 80s flamboyant?**

Very much less 80s flamboyant! I was back in uniform. Out went my shoulder pads. It was such a whirlwind. I didn't have very long after I wrapped on A Town Called Malice and started on the second series of The Tower. I was still a bit shell-shocked. But it was great to revisit Lizzie and my whole Tower family again. We all really wanted to get this second series made.

### **You received a BAFTA nomination for the first series. Did you have a great night at the awards with your mum as your plus one?**

My mum got on really well with Patrick Harbinson, which was really nice because I think she was a little bit nervous about coming. The BAFTAs are very high profile and very prestigious. She was very much, 'I don't want to be in any photos! I'll just be in the background.' She wasn't sure she would have anyone to talk to but her and Patrick were just chatting away the entire evening over dinner.

### **We see more of Lizzie's home life this series. Her proud dad ironing her shirt. Is your mum the same about your acting achievements?**

My mum is definitely proud of me and my achievements. She is maybe not the most outwardly vocal person. She always brings me back down to earth. The first series of The Tower she really enjoyed. We watched it together every episode and she thought it was brilliant. And my mum doesn't mince her words at all. When she says she has enjoyed something I know she is definitely telling the truth.

### **How is Lizzie feeling about her professional misconduct hearing at the start of series 2?**

She is feeling really nervous but as this series unfolds, she gathers more and more confidence in herself. You see a slightly.

## **Tahirah Sharif is PC Lizzie Adama**

different Lizzie. She's not as green or naïve. She is still very early on in her career so there are still mistakes she makes compared to more senior police officers, but she still has a very firm belief in herself and her abilities and morals and values as a person as well as a police officer. She is always going to protect people at any cost. In season two I wanted her to be changed in some way. Not a lot of time has gone by story-wise since the end of series one, but I just think as a human being you can't go through something like that – you can't watch your partner and a teenage girl fall off a 20-storey tower block - and not be forever changed. I just wanted her to have a bit more grit this time round and be a bit more unapologetic about her actions.

### **DS Sarah Collins testifies at the hearing and points out Lizzie's shortcomings. How does Lizzie feel about Sarah now?**

We left them at the end of series one with this part of Lizzie where she is wanting to prove herself and prove Sarah wrong. Sarah thinks she shouldn't be on the force basically and that she's not a good cop. This time round Lizzie and Sarah's storylines cross over a lot. And by the end of season two there is a lot more respect for one another, which I think is all that Lizzie really wanted.

### **What makes Lizzie choose to go back to Farlow Police Station? Wouldn't her job be easier if she moved away from the shadow of Portland Tower?**

Lizzie is not someone who runs away from anything. Her home is in that part of London. Her family are there. Her life is there. And she has a lot of love for Farlow Police station and for most of the police officers there. She is teamed up with PC Arif Johar (Michael Karim) this time round. They got on well in the first series and are really fond of each other.

### **What does she think of DI Shaw now? Does she trust him? In the past she accused him of 'handling' her?**

Oh gosh there is so much that has happened in such a short amount of time. Emotions are still raw. If I'm honest I think Lizzie is

## **Tahirah Sharif is PC Lizzie Adama**

still grieving. She is probably kind of numb. That's how I felt playing her. That is such a traumatic experience to go through, the sight of what she would have witnessed in season one. I don't think emotionally she has got over that at all. Maybe as unhealthy as her relationship with DI Shaw might have been it is still a bit of a comfort for her. I just don't think her feelings for him have gone. I don't think you can just switch them off like that.

### **DI Shaw tells Lizzie it's not her job to be a social worker, she's a police officer. Should she listen to him about anything after all the trouble he got her into?**

Despite all the trouble that DI Shaw caused Lizzie still really respects him as a detective. Speaking as me, I would say that Lizzie needs to take on other people's advice a little bit more. She is like me. She can be quite stubborn and then in hindsight she will think, 'Maybe I should have listened to that person.' That's just people. We need to experience things for ourselves first to learn the lesson. That is Lizzie to a T. She is a little bit headstrong, and cares for people deeply. I don't know if that is sustainable in the line of work that she's in. You just can't take on every single case so personally and so emotionally. It will eventually exhaust you and you won't be able to do your job properly.

### **Lizzie and Arif are called out to a Domestic Violence incident on the Deakin Estate. How does Lizzie assess the situation when she arrives and first meets Matt Brannon, Georgina Teel and their 6-year-old daughter Skye?**

Even though Lizzie is quite new to her job I think she is naturally empathetic and observant. When she first gets to the house Brannon doesn't give her good vibes. She gets that weird energy coming from him, which is what leads her to wanting to find out more. I don't think it's that hard for her to put the pieces together when she meets Skye, who she gets on with instantly, and then meets Skye's mum, Georgie. It's quite clear what is happening even though Georgie won't admit it. Maybe Lizzie doesn't handle the situation as professionally or as by the book as she should have but again, she sees herself as human being

## **Tahirah Sharif is PC Lizzie Adama**

first and as a police officer second. She is talking to Georgie on that sort of level.

### **Lizzie is tasked with delivering a death message. Did you speak to any on set police advisers about the process?**

I spoke to Faye the director about this. When we did the first couple of takes it was interesting. I always thought that with doctors or police officers who have to deliver death messages, that it would be better for you to be more personal and empathetic to what's going on but actually Faye said, 'You are getting too emotional. You need to be a bit more closed off when you are delivering it.' You have to tread the line between being quite stoic in delivering the message but sympathetic to this person's grief. It was really hard not to get emotional actually because Tamzin Outhwaite played that role so brilliantly. I had to remember that I am a policewoman and a professional and this is part of my job and not end up in floods of tears. Lizzie has never been in that position before.

### **You have dramatic action scenes with Gemma Whelan and Charley Palmer Rothwell. Were you used to that after A Town Called Malice?**

I love working with stunt coordinators and getting stuck in and doing fights and action scenes. It is just being able to trust your fellow actors and keep each other safe on set, which is super-important. After that, and this sounds weird for fight scenes, but you just have to have fun. They are really hard work. You can't sometimes 'act' being physical with someone. A lot of the time the actual struggle is real. After a lot of those action scenes on the weekend I went off to the spa and had a good soak in the hot tub and went to the steam room just to give your body a bit of TLC



Jimmy Akingbola is DC Steve  
Bradshaw

# **Jimmy Akingbola is DC Steve Bradshaw**

## **You are busy on both sides of the Atlantic. Were you determined to make room for a second series of The Tower?**

Yes, I was. Being both an actor and a producer myself I'm very loyal. When I sign up for a project, I am 100 per cent committed so when I booked Bel Air one of the first things that I said to my team was, 'Let's make sure we create space to do The Tower.' Because it's a very special show. Having someone like Patrick at the helm and Kate London's original books I just think we've created something unique. A bit edgy and gripping and I'm loving that we are following the female narrative through all these fantastic characters.

## **What first grabbed you about Death Message as a story?**

A lot has happened since season one of The Tower. What really excited me is that you can see our characters evolving. Characters being opposed to each other but somehow able to say 'Yeah, I don't like you, you're a bit of a dick, but I can see your good points and I need you.' That's what I love about the scripts and the storytelling. Our characters are all traveling in very different directions but still find a way to exist and work together.

## **Which of the cases this series resonated most with you? Steve understands the bond between care home kids Marley Daniels and Matt Brannon...**

Yeah, I appreciate you bringing that up. That is where art imitates life. I've been through the care system myself. My documentary Handle with Care came out recently, so exploring this on this series of The Tower did resonate with me. Both characters Marley and Matt came out of the care system and bonded in the care system. Steve understands that, understands how kids like this are often judged – maybe it's class, maybe the colour of their skin – and this gives him an empathy which helps him connect with them.

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## **How does Steve feel his career is going since we left him at the end of series one? How has he ended up on the Homicide Task Force?**

At the end of season one he was spiralling a bit. His personal life wasn't great. He had just blown up a friendship – with Gemma's character Sarah Collins – that actually meant a lot to him. But what he had left was his career and the knowledge that he was really good at his job and that his colleagues knew this and valued him for it. So he has used this to re-centre himself; he's enjoying where his life is right now. But I think there's a slight itch, that boxer's itch. He knows there might be something more out there, a challenge that might be worth getting back in the ring for.

## **What are his feelings when Sarah pops up in the Homicide Incident Room?**

He's surprised, maybe a bit embarrassed, but deep down he knew it was always going to happen at some point. There's still, on his side, a love and respect for her, but at the same time some impatience. The world for Sarah is very simple, very clear-cut. Steve knows it's not like that, so there's some sadness too: we're not partners anymore and maybe we won't be partners or friends ever again.

## **Why did Steve and Sarah fall out?**

Steve decided to help Tahirah's character Lizzie Adama. He felt he couldn't stand by let this young rookie cop take all the blame for the faults and failings of her senior officers, so he told her how to get through a crucial interview and save her career. Since the series aired, I've bumped into people in the street and some have said, 'He shouldn't have done it!' And others have said, 'No, he should have.' Which, as far as I'm concerned, is the perfect response to a scene: it's complex, it's human, it divides opinion. But Steve helping Lizzie in this way basically fractured his and Sarah's relationship. She felt she couldn't trust him anymore. He felt she wasn't seeing the full picture. It brought up so many things for them, their friendship, their working relationship, life,

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politics, race, the different ways we view things as a society. Their relationship went to a place where you can't come back from.

### **Steve did save Lizzie's life when she stood on the ledge of the tower in series one.**

Yeah, and that feeds into the connection that Steve and Lizzie have. He has an instinct about her: what she's suffering, how far she might go. People said to me about him helping her get through the interview, 'It's so out of the blue.' No, not if you examine the journey and Steve's opinion of Lizzie throughout the series. He knows what she's gone through as a young black woman, what it cost her to join the police, because he went through it himself. The scripts didn't make a big deal of this because Patrick prefers to leave it to the actors to find the nuances in the scene, but in those few moments Steve and Lizzie have together, their relationship is expressed very powerfully. The fact that Steve is willing to destroy his friendship with Sarah in order to help Lizzie says all you need to know about his feelings for her and his respect for her. Against the backdrop of everything that's going on in the Met with diversity and inclusion, I think it's really valuable to have this subtle relationship between two black officers. It doesn't need a lot of words, the looks and actions say it all.

### **Steve and Sarah have a scene where he suggests she will get the best out of DC Lucas, played by Ella Smith. Was it nice to hang out a bit with Gemma Whelan again?**

Yeah, it was. In terms of how his relationship with Sarah starts up again, it felt very real. Yes, we've had a serious falling out, but we're basically the same people. And professionally, we need each other because our skills complement each other and we are better together.

### **How does Steve feel when DI Shaw approaches him about going undercover again?**

That is one of my favourite scenes in season two. DI Shaw pulls up outside Steve's home when he's saying goodbye to his kids

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and tries to recruit him to go undercover. Kieran's audacity in intruding on Steve's domestic life gives Steve the excuse to ask him all the hard unanswered questions still hanging over from season one: is he still having an affair with Lizzie Adama? Where is the dead teenager Farah Mehenni's missing phone? And Kieran, because he's desperate to get Steve to work with him, has to put up with the questions. It's the dance of two people who don't like or trust one another but who know that they have to work together, that they have the right combination of skills to be a really good team.

### **What have you enjoyed about working with director Faye Gilbert this series?**

Faye was amazing. What I loved is her attention to detail. You could do a really good take, but she would always find a nugget or two just to drop in your ear to go again. I'm one of those actors who love that. She really understood the story and she was also very collaborative because we all knew our characters so well.

### **What have been the TV police dramas that have gripped you recently?**

I recently watched season one of the US show *The Sinner* with Bill Pullman and Jessica Biel, which I absolutely loved. I was watching Pullman's performance as Harry Ambrose and every so often he was making me think of Steve. He's quite gruff and a bit of an observer and at time can come across as an oddball. That series has been amazing. That is something that I would say is a must-watch.

### **You have talked about loving helping people. Did it ever cross your mind to become a police officer?**

I did have a moment when I thought of that when I was about 15. I wanted to be a footballer first, but I also thought about a policeman or a fireman. It was a mixture of wanting to help people and being athletic. It was interesting growing up in East London because it wasn't that everyone loved the police. But it did flash through my head as a kid. The fireman was a much

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more popular choice! There was a sense of camaraderie in the community and there were shows like London's Burning on the TV at the time. Then a year later I fell in love with acting and I've not looked back.

### **You describe your production company TriForce as giving 'a bridge of access' to people. What do you mean?**

TriForce productions and TriForce Creative Network, my company, have always been about inclusion and diversity. Creating a bridge of access is basically about us using the positions that we have in the industry to create bridges for talent to be seen by people like Mammoth, people like Patrick Harbinson. We do that via actors' showcases, writers' showcases, film festivals and via the content we make, which is shows like Sorry, I Didn't Know, a comedy panel show about black history. We have given new talent an opportunity to be on the panel as well as mainstream comedians. Also, we give people the opportunity to write for our show and be behind the cameras. To bring this back to The Tower what I love is that this is a female-led story written by an ex-copper who is female. You've got a black actress lead, a white actress lead and in season two we have a female director as well. We had a great female DoP (Anna Patarakina) in season one. And that's intentional. It's not ticking boxes. We are sometimes used to stories being told where no one looks like the main characters in the room and that's what my company TriForce Productions is about, and it is so nice to be part of a show where they have been trying to do this from the beginning.

Emmett J.Scanlan is DI Kieran  
Shaw



## **Emmett J Scanlan is DI Kieran Shaw**

### **What does DI Shaw have to say in defence of PC Lizzie Adama at her professional misconduct hearing concerning the tragedy at Portland Tower?**

That was the very last scene I shot this series. Kieran knows that Lizzie is a good cop, but she has the potential to be a great cop if they can see a way to let her back on the force. He backs her up. He puts his own name and reputation on the line to do so. And he doesn't have to. Lord knows, life would probably be less complicated for him, but Kieran Shaw is nothing if not a little complicated himself.

### **Sarah Collins tells DI Shaw she hopes the deaths at the tower and the building itself haunts him. How has Kieran processed what happened in that case?**

Easily. There is a great quote from Kieran in the third book by Kate London, *Gallowtree Lane*. It's a real insight into him about the world that he lives in. He says, 'What's going on is what's always going on. Sometimes more of it, sometimes less.' There is a real simplicity in that and a detachment to that. It allows him to do his job without much emotion. As callous as this might sound, to him, innocent people dying is its own little tragedy but it happens all the time. And he doesn't let that distract him from the greater picture. It's not that he is indifferent to damage. His job is and will always be to catch the bad guys and he is great at catching bad guys. So no, in answer to your question, it doesn't trouble him. That acceptance and that detachment allows him to do his job.

### **Kieran told Lizzie in series one that he wouldn't let her drag him down with her. Does he consider her a potential risk or was it said in the heat of the moment?**

I think he meant what he said. I remember that scene like it was yesterday. We were shooting it all day. One of the reasons why I fell in love with acting is to dance opposite people like Tahirah and get to say words like that and do a scene like that for a show

## **Emmett J Scanlan is DI Kieran Shaw**

like this. It was a really exhilarating and fulfilling day. Kieran always means what he says. Lizzie wasn't going to take him down. People need people like Kieran Shaw. The public need an officer like him because when it all hits the fan, he takes care of business. By any means. That's who you are going to want. His feelings for Lizzie are the same, maybe even stronger in season two. The book likens him being around Lizzie to being like an animal in one of those wildlife programmes. So resisting Lizzie is cheating himself and lessening himself and rejecting his very nature. He isn't good at that at all.

### **How is Kieran getting his home life back on track after the family home was searched and his wife Mary saved his skin by hiding the incriminating mobile phone?**

It's not without its tensions. The trust his wife had in him if it's not broken it's certainly fractured as a result of everything including Lizzie and the affair. Kieran and Mary love each other, and they have a beautiful daughter, Anya. They are trying to make their marriage work and Kieran is prepared to do whatever it takes to facilitate that. He's had some tough jobs in his life, but this may prove to be the toughest – if he's not careful.

### **Do you think Kieran had already been unfaithful before Lizzie entered the picture?**

If he was, I wouldn't be surprised but I would be surprised if any of them meant as much as Lizzie does to him.

### **Lizzie says to Kieran that he lies easily. Kieran corrects that he lies well, not easily. Is that any more reassuring considering his job?**

I thought that was a gorgeous line. We played that many different ways but basically, it's just a moment. It's a tender, vulnerable moment. It's where he lets her in on something about himself that maybe not even he had thought of until that moment. Maybe it's a glimpse into seeing him being vulnerable. That he actually carries stuff with him despite the mask he

## **Emmett J Scanlan is DI Kieran Shaw**

wears that says otherwise. Or maybe it's just a line, one of his better lines. Maybe he's used it before.

### **What lengths do you think DI Shaw would go to save his own skin?**

(laughs) When I hear that question, I get a little bit protective. Basically, he will protect himself like anyone else would. But he puts his own skin on the line every time he puts on that uniform, every time he endeavours to take down the bad guy. He is a brave man. He isn't a coward. Even though he flirts with and partakes in selfish acts he himself isn't selfish. His core isn't selfish. Or maybe it is. You decide.

### **Were you able to have any conversations about DI Shaw's journey through series two before you began shooting?**

It was a little more difficult for me with my time frame. I wasn't around a lot because I was shooting season two of *Kin* at the same time. Kieran isn't heavily featured in Kate London's second book, so Patrick Harbinson had the liberty of writing whatever he wanted for me and Kieran but he was also shackled by this fact that we only had a small window to shoot me out; two weeks. So those conversations that I might have had with Laurie Delaney who plays Mary or Tahirah or with Patrick himself were few and fast. It was hectic but they were always on speed dial for any questions. Even through all those difficulties and obstacles *Mammoth* and *ITV*, Patrick and Damien Timmer and Polly Hill, worked really, really hard to facilitate me being able to do the show again. It has to be a massive shout out to them. I'm forever indebted to them and I'm there till the end now. I really am.

### **What is DI Shaw's reaction when he's told he needs to work with DC Steve Bradshaw on Operation Perseus, a task force to bring down local crime lord Shakiel Oliver?**

He is not overjoyed at all. They don't like each other. They maybe respect each other but trust each other they do not. On a side

## **Emmett J Scanlan is DI Kieran Shaw**

note to that, it was a lot of fun to share some scenes with Jimmy. We joked about it that in season one we had no scenes together, just one moment where we walked past each other at the Portland Tower crime scene, and gave each other a look: that was it.

### **Didn't you film each other on your mobiles?**

Yeah, we did a slow-mo vid. We knew it wouldn't be in the shot, but we just thought we would create it ourselves. I love Jimmy. We get on great. We have a lot of things in common.

### **Kieran has a lot of brass neck trying to recruit Steve when he is seeing off his kids...**

Yeah, he doesn't give a damn. 'Yeah, that's lovely, you've got kids. Me too. Anyway, do you want to catch the bad guy? Shakiel Oliver, let's do this.' It's down to business. Forget about these distractions.

### **Why is Kieran so fired up for bringing Shakiel Oliver down? Is it the greater glory that matters to DI Shaw rather than a refugee teenager like Farah Mehenni?**

Yeah, 'It's big. It matters.' When Alexander saw the breadth of his domain, he wept for there were no more worlds to conquer. Kieran gets a buzz from conquering lands, from conquering kings and Shakiel Oliver is a king. I've not doubt that if Kieran defeats him, he'll weep when it's over.

Tamzin Outhwaite is Cathy Teel



## **Tamzin Outhwaite is Cathy Teel**

### **Is this the first time you've worked with Patrick Harbinson since starring in Red Cap in 2003?**

Yeah, it came out of the blue with an email straight from Patrick just saying, 'I'd love you to consider this.' It was a no-brainer because I know what his writing is like. His taste is impeccable. The minute he asked me I thought, 'This is going to be good.' Before I even finished reading it, I knew it was right up my street. Patrick said something to me like, 'I know you are really in touch with your emotions. You really don't shy away from the rawness of stuff. I think you'd be perfect for this.' It's a gift to allow a character to go to that kind of depths, that kind of grief and anger and rawness and ugliness. And to work with Patrick again after 20 years feels like I have come full circle.

### **Was Cathy someone you felt you already knew?**

She's a mixture of many different people that I know or that I've come across in life. There are a couple of people I can think of that you hope you are not going to get a phone call about. There is always that feeling that if I got a phone call from their nearest and dearest my immediate thought is, 'Please, no.' Because they are teetering on the edge in their life. They are not that now but there were definite times where it felt like it could have gone either way. I think Cathy has lived her life on that brink pretty much since her 20s.

### **How is that reflected in Cathy's appearance?**

We decided she might have been a bit of a hippy. That's where the blue hair, trying to hold onto her youth, comes in. We thought she was a bit of a traveller. She got in with a group of people just drinking and smoking weed which turned into something deeper and heavier and grimier. She was a hardcore crack and heroin user to the extent where she lost the custody of her own child. That time you never get back. Now she's clinging onto the Cathy before, the Cathy that had her life in order, the Cathy that was a mum, that could have got it together but just went off the rails. It feels like she is stuck in a time yet at

## **Tamzin Outhwaite is Cathy Teel**

the same time is desperate to move forward onto something new. She is so complex really. There is so much to her. It was tough to be inside her as a character but so fulfilling at the same time. Characters like this are not written all the time. She is not a villain and she's not a hero. She's a very flawed character but you want her to be all right.

### **Did you feel the need to do any specific research for this part?**

With the human emotions involved in this I just felt like life was the research. I've had a lot of pain in my life, but I still don't feel like I've really suffered. I don't feel like a victim even though I have experienced an awful lot of loss.

### **How would you describe Cathy's relationship with daughter Georgina?**

I think that their relationship is probably better than it has ever been with Cathy not using and being sober. The only time a relationship is going to work in a family with an addict is if they are not using. There is probably hope, a lot of hope.

### **What does she think of Georgina's partner Matt Brannon?**

Any time they come over to visit Cathy is not allowed to do anything. She can't even smoke. She has to hide the ashtrays. Although she has given up all the hard illegal stuff Cathy is still trying to be angelic for the sake of her daughter's bloke who is actually very far from angelic himself. They have a history. She knows all about Matt Brannon. It's all right not liking your kid's partner but knowing that your kid is in danger is a whole different thing.

### **You have several desperately emotional scenes. How were you able to prepare for them?**

It's more about (dealing with) the repetition. In theatre you know you've got a journey to get to that place and you are only doing it once for each performance. For this I had to do those scenes many times and to be honest it was so harrowing that I

## **Tamzin Outhwaite is Cathy Teel**

don't think I ever came out of it. It took a couple of hours, and it was just getting back to that emotional place each time. But to be honest that's an exercise that reminds me of why I'm an actor. It doesn't happen often that you have to go to those places. I kind of relish it and I always have. I think that might be why I don't love therapy because I use acting as my therapy!

### **What was the atmosphere like on set for those scenes?**

The other actors were all very generous and respectful. It's lovely when you are on a set and they get that. When we were having to do that stuff, which was harrowing there was a beautiful deathly silence. That comes with experience. As actors you know what it is like to try and stay in that moment when everyone else having a joke and a laugh around you.

### **Do you have a way of decompressing from days like that?**

Those traumatic scenes were not all on one day. It was very spread out. I was on a family holiday at the time in the UK. One of the days I was travelling back, and I wasn't sure why my body ached. Then I remembered that the previous day I had slid down a wall, reacted many times to some awful news and been sobbing. Your body is traumatised, absolutely.

### **Cathy finds it easy to talk to PC Lizzie Adama and share stories of her addiction. What do you think makes her open up to Lizzie?**

Cathy has an affinity with Lizzie. That might be because Lizzie is a young girl who might go either way herself. Lizzie could easily abuse the fact that Cathy opens up about stuff that is really unsavoury and that could really put her in a bad light to the police. I think Lizzie and Cathy could be good friends in another world.

## **Tamzin Outhwaite is Cathy Teel**

### **You have an emotional moment with Faith Delaney who plays six-year-old Skye. What was that scene like to play?**

Faith is lovely and just a gorgeous little actor. Our scene is making me tear up now at the thought of it. Thankfully our scene was quite a happy one. I know she also did a lot of scenes with Charley Palmer Rothwell as Matt who is a lovely gentle man but menacing in the role. We were on the other end of a scene of him knocking on a door trying to get in. That sounded menacing enough and we weren't even in the same room as him. I can imagine what she must have gone through, little love, but she seemed mature enough to deal with the reality and the fantasy of it.

### **Did you have a favourite day of filming?**

Every day was incredible because you are working with people like Jimmy and Emmett and Gemma and Ella and Tahirah and her lovely police officer partner Michael Karim and saying words by Patrick Harbison. Whoever you were playing with on the day was like a game of tennis. That is a joy in itself. Then actually exercising your acting muscles to those depths and trying things but also trying to be in the moment, all of that, was like, 'Yes, I feel like I've done a day's work.' For me every day felt like this is where I'm meant to be.

### **Has what you look for in a role changed in the last 20 years?**

I'm in a position now where there are a lot of different factors apart from just a script: geography, timeline, all sorts of stuff as you get older, and your responsibilities change. This script had everything and everything else about it worked too. Something has to get you about the job, and something has to get you about the script, for sure. Playing a character like Cathy, it sounds a complete contradiction, but it is a joy. Lead females are not generally in their 50s. Playing characters like this and supporting roles that are full and dense. That's what seems to be suiting me now.

Ella Smith is DC Elaine Lucas



## **Ella Smith is DC Elaine Lucas**

### **This is your second police TV series involving The Met. How would you contrast Babylon and The Tower?**

Yes, Babylon seems like a long time ago now. The Tower, for me, is about real time policing and specific cases and examining the nuances with a delicacy that I think is needed to bring real justice to people in terms of police work. Babylon had a broader look at the difficulties that come with communication and the politics in the Met police and what happens when people make decisions at the top and the human ramifications of those to the PCs on the beat and the public. You can see how Jesse Armstrong went from writing Babylon to Succession with acidic characters making horrific decisions. I love Jesse's writing, but Patrick Harbinson is equally brilliant at cutting through the crap of humanity and saying it like it is. I've been very lucky.

### **When DC Lucas introduces herself to DS Collins and reveals her work nickname 'Fat Elaine' Sarah almost has a minor coronary. Was the unflinching humour in the script part of the appeal of this role?**

Yeah, I think Elaine is a character who very much sees abusive name calling at work as the badge of honour that it is in policing. She's almost embarrassed at the snowflake-y attempt by DS Collins to defend her. Elaine is hard policing and she doesn't suffer fools. She can fight her own battles and doesn't need DS Collins to sweep in and save her from anything. Elaine puts her in her place immediately about that.

### **Is it fair to say DC Lucas is feeling demotivated over at Homicide Command? How long did you decide she had been there?**

Many years. I think despite being good at her job she has been put on a dusty shelf doing paperwork. She essentially took time off to bring up her family and I think her dreams of doing exciting police work have all but vanished until DS Collins comes into her existence.

# **Ella Smith is DC Elaine Lucas**

## **What are her first impressions of DS Collins?**

I think she sees her coming a mile away. All her good intentions. Also, DS Collins made a name for herself in the previous story as a bit of a rookie. Similarly, DS Collins sees Elaine as lazy, so they misunderstand each other at first, which is a great starting point for the characters. They start off with a major stand-off. Gemma Whelan and I spent the whole summer scowling at each other in scenes and then would take breaks for lighting set-ups and be good pals again. Gemma's a real joy and a real talent. Her brain works in ways that I can't really fathom. She learns lines like a magician.

## **Why does Elaine not bother to answer any of the phones in Homicide?**

From my point of view, I thought that Elaine is beyond believing that the police can do their job properly. She's complacent and it takes someone like DS Collins to shake her out of that state. I would say that Elaine is very much the sandbag on Sarah's sailboat at this point in the story.

## **What conversations did you have with Kate London?**

I had a lovely long chat with Kate whose passions for policing and frustrations are abundantly clear. She's witty. She's tenacious. She had a really clear vision of Elaine, and I enjoyed hearing about where the character came from. I think she and Patrick Harbinson gave me the freedom to make my own version of the character, which was nice. They created something and set me up for a volley and I really enjoyed smashing it!

## **Does Elaine's journey through the course of Death Message feel like an important one?**

Yeah, it tells people that some very good police can get their wings clipped by personal circumstances. And Elaine, maybe she can't run very fast, but my god can she interview a suspect. I think it's about the need to champion yourself or you can get lost.

## **Ella Smith is DC Elaine Lucas**

### **Elaine does an excellent interview with Sarah of one of the prime suspects. What were those scenes like to shoot?**

Interview scenes as an actor mean that you have to do a lot of mind-mapping so that your character's line of questioning has a specific journey. Otherwise, those scenes can be quite mentally taxing to do several times in a row and the character can get a bit lost. It's question and answer but it's not necessarily got a through line like you have in a normal conversation so it's harder to learn. You just jump in and go to the next question and then the next question. But I like those scenes. They are intense. You get to look highly suspicious at people in front of you, which can really unnerve the actor opposite you!

### **For those interview scenes will you avoid seeing the actor you are questioning beforehand or is that impossible with rehearsals?**

Yeah, I'm afraid to say I am not that type of actor. I am perfectly happy to be quipping about houmous just before a take and then directly go into the character. I don't need a great big work up to that. I certainly respect people who do but I stay out of their way because they annoy me!

### **Elaine reveals many different facets. She helps Cathy Teel through the incredibly difficult scene of identifying her daughter. What was that like to play with Tamzin Outhwaite?**

It was quite emotional. I was seven months pregnant at the time with my daughter so let's just say my emotions were probably easier to suppress that summer than to bring out. I was pretty much a boiling pot of hormones. Watching any scene like that it is hard to keep it all in, which the detective needs to do. Tamzin played it so beautifully. It is hard not to watch that and feel something. As an actor you just let your imagination do the work and try to stay very sensitive to the truth of it. That's the best job as an actor.

# **Ella Smith is DC Elaine Lucas**

## **What useful notes did you get from director Faye Gilbert for Elaine?**

I think Faye is a rare talent in that her director notes to actors are both encouraging creatively, and they are very focused and specific. I would work with her a thousand times, plus she has a great wardrobe, which is something that I feel any person should know about Faye. She was always coming in with the cool outfits. You immediately feel like you want to impress her. I enjoyed working with her a lot.

## **Elaine and Sarah interview a classical musician who cracks a joke about viola players. You play flute and violin. Ever played viola?**

I've played quite a few instruments in my time. I gave the viola a go because I am a bit of a classical music geek. It's got a tone similar to the human voice. People make jokes about viola players but I secretly stan them. They will probably all bond together and save the world one day. They're a sensible lot. If viola players started a government, I think we would probably be in a much better position than we are now.

## **We really hope that DC Lucas returns. What would you like to explore more with the character if you get the chance?**

Oh, I think Elaine has got plenty of opinions left to give so let's watch this space. And I would love to play her again without having to carry my baby. Next time I will be a little lighter on my feet

Niamh Cusack is Claire Mills



# **Niamh Cusack is Claire Mills**

**Does it take something special to lure you away from theatre to film or television? You did *The Virtues* with Shane Meadows...**

Yes, *The Virtues* was very special. And I felt with Claire Mills in *The Tower* that even though it wasn't a huge part, there was meat on it that I could really do something with. Gemma Whelan is a wonderful actress, and all my scenes were with her. Gemma is one of the calmest, most centred people I have ever worked with. She's really special, so I loved working on this. It was a real pleasure and a real surprise. It came out of the blue.

**Haven't you worked with Patrick Harbinson before?**

Yes, it turned out that Patrick, when he was starting out as a writer, had worked on *Heartbeat* (Niamh played Dr Kate Rowan for four series). So that was very special as well. Patrick was very present when we were filming, and I really liked having him there. He's a very gentle spirit and very supportive in helping you mine your way into a character.

**Did you have any specific questions for Patrick?**

No, it was much more to do with just making it more my own. Patrick understood that completely, and made the odd adjustment now and then. He wanted it to sound as natural as possible. I think we were on the same page as far as the character was concerned.

**What research could you do for this story of a mother whose daughter has been missing for 26 years?**

I did do a little bit of research, but, to be honest, I found it quite upsetting to watch interviews with people who had lost children in that way. It's sort of unimaginable. I think what Patrick did was deft and subtle. A very delicately painted story.

# **Niamh Cusack is Claire Mills**

## **What conversations did you have with costume designer Darren Finch about Claire's wardrobe and with production designer Anna Mould about her home?**

Darren was so clear about Claire being stuck in the 90s. The way she dressed. That was really helpful. The set of the sitting room looked like a shrine to Claire's lost daughter. There were lots of pictures of Tania, a girl full of promise. They even used a picture of me as a young mother. That was a bit of a shock. It reminded me of the hopes you have when you have a young child. All the creative choices, from the writing, to the costume, to the set, made it easier to imagine the place this woman is in. Details like her having a plate of Tania's favourite biscuits for tea just in case... It was really clever in terms of conjuring a woman who is not able to let go because her child's death has never been confirmed.

## **Did you do a photo shoot to create some of the photographs on display in Claire's home?**

We did do a photo shoot with Tania, played by a lovely young woman who was about to do her A-levels. She was so full of life. There is something very unsettling about even imagining a situation like this. We were acting but I was aware that there are real people out there going through this. You feel a certain amount of responsibility. You have to be very mindful of that. Even now I feel I don't want to talk too much about it, because it's not my lived experience.

## **Do you ever use music to help with characters?**

I do. For me it is very often classical music. I did listen to Strauss' Four Last Songs. They are so sad and beautiful.

## **What sort of relationship did Claire have with her daughter?**

Claire is very proud of her daughter's achievements. You feel that she was probably living through her daughter. There is no-one else in her life-her marriage is over. Perhaps she is a little bit overcontrolling without meaning to be. Overprotective. Her life is

## **Niamh Cusack is Claire Mills**

with that child. And she has been betrayed and let down by her ex-husband. Her core relationship, the love of her life, is Tania, her only child. Nothing has replaced that. When I talk about Patrick writing deftly, all that information is there in a few scenes.

### **Her ex-husband Ben is described as an impatient man, quick to see other people's failings, less so his own...**

Yes. Obviously, we didn't have any scenes together, but I read those scenes. He's a delightful man ,the actor who plays him, Tim Berrington, a really sweet man. I had a cup of tea with him one day. But that's acting. You don't always play yourself.

### **What is Claire's reaction when DS Sarah Collins visits her to ask about Tania?**

I think there is something about DS Sarah Collins that is different to everybody else. Claire spots that immediately . I think also the need for a conclusion, to be able to draw a line one way or the other is there for Claire.

### **Sarah reveals to Claire that she lost her sister Suzie in a car crash.**

Yes, I think that's the big glue between them. Once Sarah has told Claire about her sister it's a much more personal relationship and one that she has never had with any of the police before.

### **What discussions did you have with Gemma Whelan and director Faye Gilbert about this first interview scene?**

We didn't need to talk. We did one little rehearsal with Faye on a Zoom. At the time Gemma had a very young baby, Freddy, so it was a very brief chat. Instinctively sometimes there is just a chemistry with an actor, and you are almost better not talking about it. I feel that was how it was with us. We just gelled very easily.

# **Niamh Cusack is Claire Mills**

## **How did Faye Gilbert help to create the right atmosphere for some of your most emotional scenes?**

Faye just has a way with her. I thought she was fantastic. Both she and Patrick have a very delicate approach without being tentative at all. They know what they want. And the crew were just there, very quiet. Doing the scene in the morgue was particularly profound because we were in a real morgue. It is a hushed environment. Sombre. That definitely added to the atmosphere.

## **There is an outdoor scene with Gemma Whelan where it looks like it was absolutely tipping down. Were you battling the elements?**

Oh my god that was by the Thames barrier. It was a nightmare. Patrick was there. He made hot water bottles for us both and cups of tea to get us through. We could barely speak. It was so cold I could hardly get my lips to move, and the rain just did not let up. It pelted down. But we got through it. I don't quite know how we did. We were both sopping wet.

## **What do you hope viewers take from this series?**

I hope they are moved by it, and I hope that it makes a police detective like Sarah seem, as Gemma plays her, incredibly human. That's what you want people to take away – an understanding of this particular woman, Sarah, and what she grapples with, working as a detective.



# EPISODE SYNOPSSES

## Episode 1

DS Sarah Collins joins Homicide Command and finds her new team in the thick of it as they attempt to track down the culprit behind a chicken shop shooting. At the helm of the investigation is DS Steve Bradshaw, but Sarah's kept away from the action as her new boss, DCI Jim Fedden, tasks her with a cold case. With young DC Lee Coutts already making headway with inquiries, Sarah is left to trace the missteps of the last police investigation and makes a fresh discovery.

When a new lead points to murder and offers up a convicted sex offender as the prime suspect, it's 'case closed' for Fedden. But dead or alive, Sarah is determined to find Tania and uncover the truth about what happened to her 25 years ago. Teaming up with DC Elaine Lucas, Sarah follows a new line of inquiry. But her life becomes more complicated when she ignores Elaine's advice and puts her team up for a murder case. Her and PC Lizzie Adama's paths are about to cross.

Meanwhile, Lizzie has been cleared of misconduct for her role in the Portland Tower incident and is back at Farlow Police Station, hoping to prove she can be a good cop. But whether she's willing to do everything by the book is soon put to the test when she responds to a domestic violence call at the home of a young couple and their six-year-old daughter. Having put their affair behind them, Lizzie and DI Kieran Shaw try to keep things professional, but their mutual attraction still remains.

## Episode 2

Sarah and Lizzie find themselves working the Georgina Teel murder scene, their mutual distrust still apparent. But with the killer Matt Brannon still at large, and his daughter Skye with him, Sarah and Lizzie must work together if they're going to find Skye alive. Sarah orders Lizzie to deliver the death message to Georgina's next-of-kin, Skye's grandmother Cathy Teel. While she and PC Arif Johar are with Cathy, Matt Brannon turns up, armed with a knife, making threats. Lizzie bravely pursues Brannon on foot while back at the station Kieran helplessly waits for word on her safety. Lizzie narrowly escapes a fatal encounter with Brannon. She and Kieran reignite their affair, unable to hide their feelings for each other.

While Sarah and the homicide team try to locate Brannon's hideout, Lizzie develops a bond with Cathy Teel. Lizzie realises that Cathy's stories about her troubled past could shed light on Brannon's current whereabouts and passes this information to Sarah. Meanwhile, Brannon sends his own warning to the police. He puts out a YouTube

## EPISODE SYNOPSSES

video blaming them for Georgina's death and warning them that 'this isn't over'.

Meanwhile on the Tania Mills case, going public with information about the new suspect Ray Walker backfires, and Sarah has to stave off a PR embarrassment for the police. The evidence is stacking up against Walker, but Sarah thinks there's more to the story and a new suspect from Tania's past emerges in the investigation.

Back at Farlow, Kieran gets an approach from an old colleague DCS Tim Bailie. He is setting up a task force to go after a major drug dealer. He wants Kieran to lead it but only if he can persuade DS Steve Bradshaw to join his team.

### **Episode 3**

The team are left reeling when Brannon's Youtube video goes viral and even more so when he appears to have a sympathiser inside the police. When Sarah discovers Brannon's friend Marley Daniels has been lying about her contacts with Brannon, she and her old partner Steve Bradshaw team up in a successful bid to get Marley on side.

Lizzie takes Cathy Teel on a cruise around her old junkie haunts. The drive turns up a potential location for Brannon's hideout and a specialist unit is brought in to do the take-down. But Brannon is one step ahead, tipped off by someone inside the police. Thanks to PC Arif Johar, Brannon's sympathiser is caught, but the police are no closer to catching Brannon. In fact his whereabouts is even more twisted than they could have imagined: Brannon breaks into Lizzie's flat. Lizzie spends the night with Kieran, unaware of what is waiting for her at home.

Sarah's investigation into Tania's former violin teacher Adrian Stephenson draws the ire of Stephenson's powerful lawyers, who threaten legal action. Fedden tells Sarah to back off, but Sarah and Elaine show him evidence that suggests Stephenson might be a serial predator. What's more, Sarah has an idea where Tania's body might be buried.

But the excavation of the park next to Tania's school turns out to be a dead end. This, combined with the failure to catch Brannon is a low point for both of Sarah's cases. Attempting to distract herself, she calls Julie Woodson, Farah Mehenni's old teacher. But their drink is interrupted by something Sarah sees on her laptop. She realises she may have been wrong about where Tania was buried, but only by a hundred yards. Sarah's romantic life is on hold, but finally, after 25 years, Tania Mills has been found.



## EPISODE SYNOPSSES

### Episode 4

While Sarah gets her boss's congratulations for finding Tania Mills' body, Steve Bradshaw questions PC Colin Ryle who enabled Brannon to evade the police. When Colin reveals Brannon's vendetta against Lizzie, Steve guesses Brannon's next move and the real danger Lizzie is in. Unable to reach Lizzie, Steve calls on Sarah for help. Sarah races to Lizzie's aid and arrives in the nick of time to find Lizzie and Brannon in a desperate and brutal fight. Sarah helps Lizzie take Brannon down and rescues Skye. While Lizzie is rushed to hospital with serious stab wounds, Sarah returns Skye to her grandmother Cathy Teel.

With barely a moment to catch her breath, Sarah heads back to the station to interrogate Adrian Stephenson. As the custody clock ticks down, the alibi given by Stephenson's ex-wife Abigail seriously damages Sarah's case against him. Having learned about the abuse that Tania's school friend Katherine Herringham also suffered at Stephenson's hands, Sarah begins to believe that Abigail is lying to protect him. But when Sarah and Elaine question Abigail, her revelations turn the investigation on its head. Only after Sarah works out the exact details of Tania's murder does the full extent of Stephenson's abuse and manipulation become apparent. Tania, and all the other women who have been silent for so long, can finally get justice.

In hospital, the recovering Lizzie shares some life-changing news with Kieran. As he absorbs this, Kieran is approached by Steve. Steve agrees to join Kieran's task force, even though this will mean him going undercover.

Charley Palmer Rothwell is Matt  
Brannon



# CHARACTER CREDITS

DS Sarah Collins  
PC Lizzie Adama  
DC Steve Bradshaw  
DI Kieran Shaw  
DC Elaine Lucas  
Cathy Teel  
Claire Mills  
Matthew Brannon  
PC Arif Johar  
DCI Jim Fedden  
Skye Brannon  
Ray Walker  
DC Lee Coutts  
Katherine Herringham  
Abigail Levy  
Adrian Stephenson  
Julie Woodson  
PC Colin Ryle  
Mary Shaw  
James Adama  
Nabila Adama  
Pathologist

GEMMA WHELAN  
TAHIRAH SHARIF  
JIMMY AKINGBOLA  
EMMETT J SCANLAN  
ELLA SMITH  
TAMZIN OUTHWAITE  
NIAMH CUSACK  
CHARLEY PALMER ROTHWELL  
MICHAEL KARIM  
STUART MCQUARRIE  
FAITH DELANEY  
BRIAN MCCARDIE  
BOBBY LOCKWOOD  
ROSALIE CRAIG  
REBECCA CALDER  
TRISTAN STURROCK  
CAMILLA BEEPUT  
JACK SHALLOO  
LAURIE DELANEY  
MARK MONERO  
BUCKSO DHILLON-WOOLLEY  
KIRSTY HOILES

Faith Delaney is Skye Brannon



# PRODUCTION CREDITS

Writer, Series Executive Producer for Windhover Film  
Executive Producers

Director

Producer

Director of Photography

Production Designer

Line Producer

Make-up & Hair Designer

Costume Designer

Music by

Editors

First Assistant Director

Supervising Location Manager

Production Sound Mixer

Casting Directors

Creative Director for Mammoth Screen

Director of Production

Production Executive

PATRICK HARBINSON  
SHEENA BUCKTOWNSING

KATE LONDON  
DAMIEN TIMMER

FAYE GILBERT  
ANDY MOSSE

ASHLEY BARRON ACS  
ANNA MOULD

LISA CORKILL  
ROWENA DEAN

DARREN FINCH  
NAINITA DESAI

WILLIAM BLUNDEN, MIGUEL LLORO JAVIERRE  
JOHN WILLIAM TURER

JAMES MUIRHEAD  
LEE SHARP AMPS

KAREN LINDSAY-STEWART EMILY JACOBS  
REBECCA KEANE  
JON WILLIAMS  
IAN HUGHES