



RABBIT  
TRACK  
Pictures

## PRESS PACK



**BRAND-NEW LIMITED SERIES LAUNCHING ON ITV &  
ITVX**

**TX: JANUARY 2025**

### **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

Produced by STUDIOCANAL and RABBIT TRACK PICTURES

Executive Produced by Kitty Kaletsky and James Norton for RABBIT TRACK PICTURES, Joe Naftalin for STUDIOCANAL, and Kate Crowe. Grace Ofori-Attah and author JP Delaney also executive produce. Produced by Nick Pitt; Directed by Kate Hewitt. Adapted for screen by Grace Ofori-Attah. Based on the best-selling novel by JP Delaney.

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  - Niamh Algar as Maddie
  - James McArdle as Miles
  - Jessica Brown Findlay as Lucy
  - Poppy Gordon-Clark, Locations Manager

## **SERIES OVERVIEW**

Set against a sweeping Cornish landscape, two couples discover that their toddlers were switched at birth in a hospital mix-up, and face a horrifying dilemma: do they keep the sons they have raised and loved, or reclaim their biological child?

Living a waking nightmare, Pete (*James Norton*) and Maddie (*Niamh Algar*) are jettisoned into the world of the other couple; Miles (*James McArdle*) and Lucy (*Jessica Brown Findlay*). At first it seems all four are agreed on a solution, but it soon becomes clear that hidden motives are at play. How far can each couple trust the real parents of their child – or even each other? As Pete and Maddie are stretched to breaking point, they realise they will stop at nothing to keep their family together.

## **EPISODE SYNOPSES**

### **EPISODE ONE**

Pete and Maddie find out that their son, Theo, was swapped at birth with another boy. Will Theo's real parents want him back? Or will the couples be able to 'play nice'?

### **EPISODE TWO**

Pete and Maddie begin the fight to keep Theo. It's expensive and painful. The constant dredging up of their past starts to damage their relationship. Can they survive?

### **EPISODE THREE**

Pete is questioned by police, Miles leaks Pete's private email to the press, and Pete is subsequently fired. Pete realises to save his family, he has to dig into Miles' murky past.

### **EPISODE FOUR**

Now separated from Theo and only allowed to see him for painful supervised visits, Pete and Maddie must attend the final hearing to decide their family's fate.

## **CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES**

### **PETE**

Pete is an ex-journalist turned full-time devoted father. He is an optimistic, (yet avoidant) people-pleaser, always wanting the best for his family. Upon discovering Theo is not his and his partner Maddie's biological child, Pete is determined to keep the boy they have raised and not to have their family torn apart.

### **MADDIE**

Maddie is a passionate and loving mother who runs a successful restaurant in Cornwall. She experienced serious postnatal depression, from which she has only just recovered, and now with news of the baby swap is forced to relive and confront her worst traumas. Maddie is fiercely protective of Theo, but unlike her partner Pete, she can't help but long for the son that she gave birth to...

## **MILES**

Miles is a charming, competitive and extremely successful architect who presents as everybody's best friend. But preoccupied beyond all else with bloodline, legacy, and the notion of 'the perfect family', Miles becomes fixated with Theo... the son he feels he's always been missing. He will let nothing get in the way of what he wants.

## **LUCY**

Once a celebrated artist, Lucy is now a full-time mother to David, and a supportive wife to Miles. She is a gentle soul and peacekeeper, and upon discovering the news of the swap, Lucy's desperation to protect David becomes even stronger. Keeping her son safe must come above all else.

## **CAST CREDITS**

### **EPISODE ONE**

Pete Riley (*James Norton*)  
Theo Riley (*Alban Guo*)  
Maddie Wilson (*Niamh Algar*)  
Miles Lambert (*James McArdle*)  
Suzy (*Lucy Phelps*)  
Ollie (*Theo Ogundipe*)  
Martin Swale (*Philippe Spall*)  
Dr Hannah Wendle (*Miriam Lucia*)  
Naomi Relph (*Poppy Roe*)  
Lucy Lambert (*Jessica Brown Findlay*)  
David Lambert (*Fraser Cornelissen*)  
Tania (*Jude Mack*)  
Jen (*Amy Morgan*)  
Maya (*Witney White*)  
Alexa (*Athena Roldan*)  
Paediatric A&E Doctor (*Cara Mahoney*)

### **EPISODE TWO**

Maddie Wilson (*Niamh Algar*)  
Pete Riley (*James Norton*)  
Anika Chowdhury (*Sunetra Sarker*)  
Miles Lambert (*James McArdle*)  
Theo Riley (*Alban Guo*)  
Ollie (*Theo Ogundipe*)  
Lucy Lambert (*Jessica Brown Findlay*)  
David Lambert (*Fraser Cornelissen*)  
Rhoda Verran (*Michelle Greenidge*)  
John Riley (*Phil Davis*)  
Jill (*Madeleine Akua*)  
Stella (*Rebekah Murrell*)  
Cathy (*Becky Brunning*)

Kiera Keenan (*Posy Sterling*)  
Leonora (*Zöe Aldrich*)  
Ds Ridley (*Alisha Bailey*)  
Ds Chopra (*Akbar Kurtha*)

### **EPISODE THREE**

Ds Ridley (*Alisha Bailey*)  
Pete Riley (*James Norton*)  
Ds Chopra (*Akbar Kurtha*)  
Anika Chowdhury (*Sunetra Sarker*)  
Maddie Wilson (*Niamh Algar*)  
Kiera Keenan (*Posy Sterling*)  
Theo Riley (*Alban Guo*)  
Ollie (*Theo Ogundipe*)  
Lyn Edwards (*Sarah Edwardson*)  
Lucinda Pitt (*Rosa Coduri-Fulford*)  
Benji (*Dean Kilbey*)  
Miles Lambert (*James McArdle*)  
Jen (*Amy Morgan*)  
Edith Lambert (*Maureen Beattie*)  
David Lambert (*Fraser Cornelissen*)  
John Riley (*Phil Davis*)  
Lucy Lambert (*Jessica Brown Findlay*)  
Paediatric A&E Doctor (*Cara Mahoney*)  
Mr Kelly (*Sam Hoare*)  
Judge M Wakefield (*Maxine Finch*)

### **EPISODE FOUR**

Maddie Wilson (*Niamh Algar*)  
Pete Riley (*James Norton*)  
Lyn Edwards (*Sarah Edwardson*)  
Theo Riley (*Alban Guo*)  
Lucy Lambert (*Jessica Brown Findlay*)  
Miles Lambert (*James McArdle*)  
Anika Chowdhury (*Sunetra Sarker*)  
Mr Kelly (*Sam Hoare*)  
Judge M Wakefield (*Maxine Finch*)  
Dr Elliot Taylor (*Daniel Weyman*)  
Edith Lambert (*Maureen Beattie*)  
Woman At Harbour (*Kate Edney*)  
Stella (*Rebekah Murrell*)  
David Lambert (*Fraser Cornelissen*)

## **INTERVIEW WITH KITTY KALETSKY, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

### **Can you give us a brief outline of what the series is about?**

This is a show about what it is to be a parent, and what it is to find yourself in a marriage when a bomb goes off in it. In a really immediate sense, it's about a baby swap. Two couples who discover in the pilot episode that their two and a half- three-year-old sons were swapped accidentally at birth in hospital.

### **What initially drew you to this project?**

It's about human beings. It's about parenting. It's about what it is to have parents. It's about what it is to have children. It's about class and wealth, and it's incredibly thrilling. It's a psychological drama with incredibly thrilling genre elements. And that's what I want to watch at home.

### **Why did you want to adapt this book in particular for the screen?**

I fell in love with this book when I first read it because it captures everything I like in a psychological thriller on TV. It's about family. It's about a very specific community and what happens when a metaphorical bomb goes off in the middle of it. And it was hooky. It was constantly moving ahead with good guys and bad guys, and this sort of knotty-ness of what it is to be both a good guy and a bad guy, all at the same time.

### **How did the screenwriter Grace get involved and what was that process like of developing the script?**

It's been such a wonderful process working with Grace Ofori-Attah. We brought her the book after we optioned it and were working with STUDIOCANAL and ITV. She also fell in love with the material. I think it's not irrelevant that she spent many years as a psychiatrist in the NHS, so she understands psychology, she understands character and she's really interested in thrillers as well. It was a really happy balance of all of those things.

### **How much research went into the sort of various practices that we see in the series. Was it important to you this felt rooted in some kind of reality?**

It was definitely important that it felt rooted in reality. I think whilst the situation that our characters find themselves in is incredibly rare, it happens apparently 30 times a year in the Western world, which, given the billions of people in the Western world, is not very much. But for those 30 families it's obviously soul-destroying. And so, we did do research to not malign the system because it's there to protect children, and that's really important that we make that clear, but also to prove how couples or families can feel trapped in their situations.

### **And can you tell us a bit about the casting process for this?**

Yes, Fiona Weir, our casting director, has been a complete dream to work with. Obviously, James was attached as Pete from a very early stage and he and I worked together, and we fell in love with the book together and in love with the scripts as they were evolving. And then we have the wonderful Niamh Algar as Maddie, Pete's partner, James McArdle and Jessica Brown Findlay as our Lamberts.

I couldn't be more grateful for this – the three other cast. Obviously working with James, it's a dream team, and they were all in our mind's eye as we were starting discussions with Fiona, and working with her as our casting director, made the process such a delight. We just feel so lucky to have all four of them.

**What do you think the four of them bring to their respective roles, would you say?  
What kind of unique qualities?**

I think all three, and I should talk about James Norton, as well. But to start with the other three, because I work with James, all three of our other cast- lead cast members have brought such texture, such depth and such kind of originality to roles that could otherwise be much more skin deep. So, to start with, Maddie, you know, her postnatal depression historically and the anxiety that she's living with having discovered this horrible thing that happened in her past is bubbling inside of her. You can kind of almost taste it when you watch Niamh portray her on screen in a way that could otherwise have been kind of cursory. Her past is coming up to haunt her, and very few actors, I think, can do that as beautifully as Niamh does. James McArdle has brought real heart and humanity to a role that could otherwise be “moustache-twirling” and 2D as a villain. You don't forgive him. You despise him for what he did in the past and what he's doing now. But you understand it more. And Jessie, who's playing Lucy, you can see her trembling in every scene, and yet, she has such ferocity, such strength at the same time. Again, I think so many other actors wouldn't have done that role justice, and she really does.

**How has it been working with James Norton as the lead in this project and also as an executive producer? What's that sort of experience been like for you?**

I love working with James Norton, so much. He is the most extraordinary producing partner and actor and EP on set. I mean, I think I can speak for everybody, the cast and the crew, he is a leader, he's a friend, he's a collaborator. And I can speak personally for this project and for all of the projects that we work on.

He's somehow managed to both be, you know, opinionated, articulate, forthright yet never the loudest voice in the room. He always defers to me or to others who he feels know better or better to speak to a particular issue. But when he cares about something he's really passionate about it. And, obviously, he is one of the great actors of our generation. The project is very lucky to have him and I'm very lucky to work with him.

**How would you say the series is different from other sort of crime or domestic drama?**

I think what makes this project really special is that it manages to marry thrills. It's proper genre. It's a thriller or kind of a domestic thriller, and yet it's also psychologically-driven. At its heart, it's about four characters in turmoil and it's about marriage and it's about parenting and those are all themes that everybody watching at home cares about because it's what touches us all. And that, to me, is what makes it special. It's not just investigative, or detective work, or pure crime, it's a tragedy. It also has the criminal elements and the thriller elements that kind of keep you leaning in for more.

**How has it been shooting in Cornwall? Was it important to you to work with local crews?**

Yeah, it was incredibly important to work with local crews, because when you know the land, you're going to be best at the job. And also, because it's very important to support the local area wherever you're shooting. The book is actually set in London, so us relocating the story to a breathtaking part of the country felt really important to kind of elevate it both aesthetically and in terms of its themes.

The story is about being on the edge. It's about getting in too deep and, not to kind of mix metaphors too much, but Cornish people do literally live on the edge of our country, and they are surrounded by water in a way that our four sort of feel like they're drowning. So, thematically and visually, it felt really important to embrace the local area.

**What are some of the challenges of shooting on location?**

There are many challenges to shooting on location. The obvious ones being weather. We're shooting in the autumn, going into winter. So, if you need daylight, you've only got a finite amount of time to do it because we're losing hours every day. If you need it to be sunny, it's probably going to rain. We're also working with children, obviously, so looking after them is really important. Keeping them warm, keeping them feeling safe, and then it's just about literal locations. You know, you run out of time in a particular place. You're not building sets. They're not your own. You've got to protect people's homes, whether it's an art gallery or a hospital corridor -it's a more delicate process.

**Tell us about the look of the series. Who's been involved in developing that side of things?**

The look of the series has been inspired by and led by Darryl Hammer, who is our production designer, and obviously, Kate Hewitt our brilliant director. We feel so incredibly lucky to have Darryl on board. She is from South Africa, and I think there's something really useful about having a person who runs, especially an art department, be removed somehow from, you know, whether it's the local area or even the country as Darryl is.

She can come in, she can read the script, she can immerse herself in the story and think what is going to work best for this visually, what is going to elevate this most? Rather than being tied to convention. She's done the most beautiful job in painting a picture of Cornwall - it's very authentic.

It feels textured, it feels real, and yet also, kind of, otherworldly somehow. There's something breathtaking everywhere you look in Cornwall because of the cliffs, because of the beaches, because of the sea, because of the skyline. And she has, as well as a phenomenal DoP, Marc Wolff, brought that to life.

**What would you say are some of the main themes of the series?**

The main themes of the series are what it is to be a parent, wealth and class and whether one's wealth and one's class influences the kind of parent that you are. Of course it doesn't, but it asks that question, whether marriage can sustain heartbreak, tragedy and emergency.

The strength of marriage is another theme. Nature versus nurture and postnatal depression, whether that affects your ability to mother. Again, it doesn't, but women question themselves in really fundamental and quite frightening ways. Lots of others.

**What journey do you hope audiences go on when watching the series? I guess there's lots of twists and turns and guessing.**

I hope that when watching the series, audiences are desperate to know more because of the twists and turns bedded into the plot itself. How did this swap happen? Was someone responsible? If someone was responsible, is someone going to be punished for it? So, there is a kind of a story engine, that drives us forward and thrills us. If someone is punished, how badly is a child or an adult going to feel the consequences as a result of all of this?

Our show opens in a really frightening and mysterious way. And then beyond that, because of the themes of the series, nature versus nurture, what it is to be a parent, questioning who we really are deep down. That being universal, I think will also propel the story forwards. We want to know what happens to these people, and we care about these people. How the things that happen to them happen, is really important to us.

**If you could describe the series in three words, what would those be?**

Gut-wrenching, propulsive and human.

## **INTERVIEW WITH NICK PITT, PRODUCER**

### **Can you give us a brief outline of what the series is about?**

The series is about two seemingly nice couples who suddenly find that their child is not, biologically speaking, their own. It's one of those what happens if that happened, sort of moments. That is what I think is interesting about the series, is that it is one of those things you think, 'oh, my goodness, what would I do?'

### **What initially drew you to this project?**

Well, I have two daughters. That's what drew me to the project So, I'm sort of aware of how our characters might feel when you have a child aged nearly three, and someone knocks on your door and goes, 'By the way'-.

### **Why this book in particular did you want to adapt for the screen?**

The book had already been selected and STUDIOCANAL and Rabbit Track were already looking at scripts by the time I and Kate, the director, arrived. But I think what's intriguing about the book is its thriller quality, it's the psychology of it, the menace of that situation.

### **How much research went into the sort of various practices that we see in this series? Was it important that it was rooted in some kind of reality for you?**

In terms of the research, it's always important that there is a bedrock of reality. You know, it's like the bones are true, the flesh we make up. That's sort of how it goes, and inevitably we're compressing time, we're eliding things to make things more impactful, dramatically. But we had advisors, to input and put us straight if something was straying too far.

### **Can you tell us a little bit about the casting process for this series?**

The casting process was extensive because there are a lot of cast, four main cast, but a huge ensemble of other supporting cast as well. Getting that balance, getting the couples right, and of course the kids to go with them, was important. We looked at casting twins for the children. We looked at people of different ages. In the end, we went pretty close to the age of the children as scripted. But in terms of the lead, James Norton part of that proposition so then it was a question of finding people of a similar stature and ability, really. We ended up with an amazingly talented quartet of actors and this brilliant ensemble.

### **What do you think the four main character actors bring to their characters?**

Well, lots of different things. Jessica Findlay Brown has a vulnerability to her performance and that's her gift and her character's great strength, if you like. What's interesting about James McArdle, he makes you have sympathy for an unsympathetic character and that is an art in itself because playing people who aren't so nice, without giving too much away, isn't always easy. Having the sort of strength of character and the charm to play someone who really isn't nice beautifully, is his gift. Niamh brings incredible strength and purpose to her character. Maddie has been through a lot even before the story starts, let alone what happens within the story but she brings a strength and drive to her and - the intensity of her love for her children and indeed for her husband character shines though.

James Norton is the guy next door. He's the you and me. He's the everyman, the person who is trying quite hard, messing it up occasionally, and admitting his mistakes. I think what he brings to that character is enormous compassion. You see yourself in him and his failings.

**And of course, James is an Executive Producer on this as well. What's that process been like working with him kind of on and off screen as it were?**

It's great. Having a multifaceted leading actor who's got another head on as well. As an actor, he's very much focused on his character, on making the lines work and seem credible and fluent from his point of view. And then - he will pop out of that space and ask, "the weather doesn't look good today. What are we going to do for weather cover Nick?" He is able to move seamlessly from function to function. It isn't very often that you get that so it's great.

**How would you say the series is different from other crime or domestic dramas?**

The shockingness of the premise and the 'what happens if that happened' moment, is what gives you a different entree into it. It's character driven all the way throughout. You're enmeshed in these characters' dilemmas and their lives. But with this extraordinary premise, I think everyone who's had children, and indeed those that haven't, can relate to this shocking occurrence.

**How has it been shooting in Cornwall?**

Wet! In Cornwall it's mainly been wet. It's been great because not much shoots here - I know Poldark shot here, a period piece - but there's not that much that shoots here. So, it's an original sort of canvas and it's got a lot of variety within it, both of weather, but also topography and place and space. That has been a joy to sort of unpack that and explore.

**You've been working with a lot of local crews as well, haven't you? Was that a conscious decision to do that?**

It is definitely! We want to celebrate that talent. The great thing with a local crew is that you get much better access. They know where the good stuff is, they know where interesting locations are, they know where there's a little house or a person who knows someone who can get you this and all that connectivity is really, really valuable.

**In terms of the look of the series, who's been involved in developing that side of things?**

Well, definitely props have to go to, in terms of developing the look of it, to location manager, Poppy. Kate, the director and I try and put a shape on what we're looking for and where, and Poppy has the job of trying to find endless, endless versions of what we need. Our Production Designer, Darryl, once we've selected a location, then has the job of trying to turn that into something.

Unlike a studio, you've got an actual location with actual walls that you can't usually knock down so, the designer has to work within that envelope. Then on top of that, you've got the cinematographer Marc Wolff, who then has to bring the lens to the whole confection and make it look effortlessly beautiful in about 15 minutes.

Obviously in terms of the characters, costume and makeup, the two heads of department there making them look as though they sit within that world, they work complementary to the palettes that design and location have come up with. It's very much a team effort!

**What would you say some of the main themes of the series?**

The main themes of the series are, trust and it's not the most obvious one, but, faith, not in a religious sense, but in terms of, acting on assumptions that things are more or less what they see.

You know, when you put one foot in front of the other, your assumption is that yesterday, because there was solid ground underneath you, it will be there today. This is a story about people who put one foot in front of the other and suddenly find that they're in some sort of vertiginous freefall because the things that they were absolutely certain about, which was that their child was theirs, suddenly are questioned and put into question by somebody else.

**What journey do you hope the audiences will go on when they watch this?**

I think the audience do quickly get a sense for whose perspective they're seeing this from and who they can root for and feel for. I describe the narrative as a boa constrictor. You know, it's interesting and it's beguiling and it begins to wrap itself around you and you think, 'Oh, that's nice', but then you breathe out and it tightens and it's like, 'Oh, I didn't expect that'. Before you know it, you think, how are you going to get out of this? They've sort of walked into hell and have no idea how this is going to end and how the characters are going to get out of this

**If you could describe the series in three words, what would those be?**

Tense, gripping and emotional.

## **INTERVIEW WITH JAMES NORTON - PETE & EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

### **Can you tell me about the premise of Playing Nice?**

Playing Nice is about two couples who find out that their young boys aged two and a half were accidentally swapped at birth and the chaos, trauma and complications that follow. It asks the question; what would you do? How would you react if you discover that your two-and-a-half-year-old child is not your own and your real child has been brought up by another family? We then discover that these two families are very different in many ways and so adds to the complications set to unfold.

### **Can you tell us who your character, Pete, is?**

Pete Riley is a young, Cornish born and bred man who's popular amongst his peers and his family. Pete is a good time guy, gentle, sensitive, family-minded, loves Cornwall, loves Theo, loves his partner Maddie and doesn't like confrontation, doesn't love conflict so lives a relatively small contained, but very happy life. He's someone who's prioritized his family and he's never been particularly career-minded. He's been in a band or two, travelled a bit and tried his hand at journalism but then decided to give that up in order to bring up Theo and that is the point in which we meet Pete in our story. He's taken on a gardening job but his real life's work, his 'raison d'être' is his son.

### **Could you tell me about the relationship Pete has with his partner Maddie, and son Theo?**

This is an adaptation from the original book so though our version is close to the novel, it differs slightly and isn't defined by the book. In our version, Pete and Maddie met relatively recently before the story starts and had their son, Theo, quite quickly after meeting. There's a question mark over whether the Theo was intended or not, but they have very loving relationship. Maddie is career-minded, focused, ambitious and runs a restaurant whereas Pete's happiest in a slightly slower lane looking after Theo. He's very happy to be a stay-at-home dad, and both Pete and Maddie navigate the strange societal implications that come with that, supporting each other and their choices. Sometimes they rub each other up the wrong way and challenge each other in good ways and bad, but generally they have a loving supportive relationship. Pete and Maddie recognize that they parent in slightly different ways but those two ways complement each other. It's a family of love and time spent with one another.

### **How does Maddie and Pete's relationship differ from Miles and Lucy's?**

Pete and Maddie are not particularly wealthy, if anything they have money problems which is one of their strains and stresses, but they are a happy, modern, inclusive open family. Miles and Lucy are not any of those things. They are not inclusive and they're not particularly open. They have a more traditional family set up in that Miles is much more of a patriarchal figure. Miles thinks of himself as the provider, an alpha male who works to provide and Lucy's there to bring up his children. He plays lip service to the fact that he would like Lucy to take up her career again but really, Miles is keen on having a stay-at-home wife and a set up where children are seen but not heard. Miles and Lucy's set up is colder and more clinical whereas Pete and Maddie are warm and bohemian.

**How does the news about the children affect Pete?**

It breaks his heart. Pete is devastated. He gave up his job being a journalist, which is what he loved doing or at least that's where he had found his career path to be, to bring up Theo to allow Maddie to carry on the restaurant, because he knew Maddie's career was more valuable to Maddie than his job was to him. Theo became his job, he became Pete's world, so to find out that the little boy he'd been investing all his time and attention in over the last two years is not his but actually someone else's child, is devastating. Pete feels, as any parent would, confused, deeply sad but also, in a strange way, emasculated. He failed at the professional life but he succeeded as a father, but now this news makes it seem like he's failed at family life as well. The final pillar of his identity is taken away from him.

**Your character goes through a lot in the series, was the role emotionally challenging to play?**

The role is emotionally challenging to play and it takes you to a dark yet unusual place. Stories about bereavement, heartbreak or grief are more familiar, and this is a story which encapsulates all of those various forms of pain, but to find out that your child is not your own, is not an experience which people have often. It is a very unique and deeply traumatic experience and not one that you can compare with other people. There's not endless books or avenues to have a chat with others who've gone through the same thing. It's a parent's worst nightmare and that has been the challenge; to think about what one would go through if this happened, knowing that there aren't that many examples or experiences similar, and then trying to predict what that would feel like. Any type of story where you have to go to those dark places is challenging because you have to extract yourself from your relatively comfortable existence and investigate the darker side of life. You have to tap into pain, suffering and fear and that's always a challenge.

**What drew you to taking on this character? What was it about Pete?**

I like the fact that there's a simplicity to Pete. Often roles have lots of conflict and dilemmas and I've played a lot of roles which have a lot of darkness in them. I like going as far away from myself as possible because it allows you to learn a lot and it's always an exciting journey to really push to the fringes of humanity, however Pete offered something different. We all know a Pete; we all know the guy who can walk into a pub and everyone knows him so they buy him a drink, and he'll buy them one back even if he can't really afford it because he's that kind of guy. He's lovable, a bit roguish and a little bit immature but generally sees the best in people and brings out the best in people. I thought that'd be really nice to play; to take that man, that very normal, sympathetic warm individual and put him through this horrific experience. That for me was an interesting challenge and one that I hadn't done before.

**It's a complex story and there are some unexpected twists and turns. What are the main themes of the show?**

Parenthood, class, masculinity, nature vs nurture. Cornwall is very much intrinsic to the series with the foreboding landscape.

**What was it like to film in Cornwall? Can you tell us some of your favourite locations?**

I love filming in Cornwall! It's been an amazing experience. Miles and Lucy's home is located on the top of a hill overlooking a beautiful beach and on the second day of filming James McArdle [plays Miles] and I had to surf for a scene which was really fun. We had the dramatic Cornish landscape to work with and we filmed on some of the most beautiful cliffs and coastline in the country. St Ives is very beautiful and we went pottering around the town during lunch breaks. It's a really special thing to entrench ourselves in the community.

**You had to take on surfing for the role, how was surfing in the Cornish sea in winter?**

I loved it! We met a surf instructor called Pete, who's now become a friend, and he took us surfing to get us ready for the surf scenes. Luckily for me, my character Pete is not a good surfer! Instructor Pete runs a surf school called King Surf in Mawgan Porth and he was a hero. I loved it.

**What was it like working with your castmates, Niamh, James and Jessica?**

I've loved working with all of them! I know James very well because we went to drama school together and we were in the same class at Rada so we go way back. I've always wanted to work with him professionally as I'm a huge fan of his work so it's been lovely to work with him finally. Jessica and I did a short film together a few years ago and I remember thinking how wonderful she was. She's the most mesmerizing and intriguing actress, she draws you in by doing very little, so again a real pleasure. Niamh, my gorgeous Maddie! We've had to go deep with our characters, and it's been really special to work with someone who's so committed, someone who is so intelligent and sensitive at the same time. Niamh's very thorough. She works very hard and is the perfect Maddie. She's got all the colours of Maddie; she's fiery, formidable, opinionated and yet gentle, compassionate and a really good friend throughout this experience.

**What makes Playing Nice different from other dramas?**

It's the hook. I can't think of another drama which asks the question, 'what would you do if you found out your child isn't your own?'. It's also the alchemy of these four actors and this location. Every drama is different, just as every person is different, but this story has never been told in this way, in Cornwall, at this time of year.

**What journey do you want the audience to go on when they watch the series?**

Initially, we want them to really feel that panic, that feeling of dread that Maddie and Pete have. I want them to appreciate their relationship with their children or their own parents and to know that they are their own relationships, biological or not. The series asks questions about parenthood, nature vs nurture, and how much of it is genetics vs environment. I want them to appreciate the beauty of the Cornwall, hopefully invest in the character arcs - particularly Maddie and Lucy's - and ultimately just go on a four-hour thriller rollercoaster ride. It's a psychological thriller so I hope that they are encouraged to ask questions but also have a good time watching.

**Tell us about the look of the production and who has been involved in developing it**

The look and feel is Cornwall. Very early on in the development stage, we discussed where we were going to set this and we decided that we didn't want it to be set in London as we didn't want it to look like something we've seen before. We wanted something different so we were sitting on a zoom call and after looking through various locations we landed on Cornwall. We wanted something to truly define the world in which our characters live in and Cornwall does that with its foreboding seas, crashing waves, beautiful skies and clouds. The references Kate Hewitt brought in her early pitch were brilliant. She didn't want this to feel picturesque or pretty. She wanted it to feel real and to have a foreboding atmosphere so that the turmoil of these characters was reflected in the scenery.

**How did the series come about?**

It was the first book Kitty Kaletsky, and I optioned when we set up Rabbit Track Pictures. I was in America shooting a film and Kitty called me and said that I needed to read the book quickly and jump on a call at 4am that morning. The meeting went well and then we took it to STUDIOCANAL who came on board the project and that's where the journey started.

**Grace Ofori-Attah has adapted the book for the series. How did she get involved in the series? What is it like working with her on the scripts?**

Grace came on board about a year later when we were looking for a writer to take on the project. She read the book and really responded to it. She was already fascinated by the story and the hook as she's got a background in medicine herself and is versed in child's psychology and children's mental health. We knew of her work already, and she had immediate enthusiasm for the story and the material which meant that she was the perfect person to adapt *Playing Nice*.

**The series is a complex one which delves into family courts, social workers, and life in the NICU. How much research went into the practices? Was it important to make sure it was authentic and rooted in reality?**

The show is a piece of naturalism so we're not we're not in a fantasy world here. We are telling the story of real people in real situations. Grace, to her credit, was very keen to be as honest and respectful of the institutions that are present in the series. She did a lot of research and made sure no corners were cut in terms of the way these mechanisms work in society so that nothing was misrepresented.

**You're a lead cast member but also co-founder of Rabbit Track and an executive producer on the series. How do you juggle performing on-screen and off-screen?**

It's a new experience for me, it's the first TV show that we've produced as a company. We've done one movie but this is a different challenge. As far as juggling it all, I've got an incredible business partner, Kitty Kaletsky - she's a force of nature. She knew that I was going to disappear into my character Pete and my job as a lead on the show when we started filming and she allowed me the space to do that.

Usually, as an actor, you defend your corner of the story as you have your one character and that is your focus. You might be in every single scene or you might be in one scene

but you prioritize your attention on that. On this job I had to slightly split my attention and put as much as I could into Pete for that character to be honoured, realised and looked after but I also had to retain some attention to how the series was playing out as a whole. As an exec producer I had to also look at the scenes I'm not in, characters I'm not playing and the meta-narrative of the piece. If I was to sum up the experience; it's been a challenge to ensure that I serve both jobs adequately, particularly Pete. But because of Kitty's support and the other amazing execs, I've felt able to do that. I've also learnt so much. I've loved learning about how TV shows are put together. It's been a real baptism of fire but one I've really loved.

**What do Niamh, James M and Jessica bring to their respective roles?**

I mean they are luminous, gorgeous and complicated characters themselves and they bring all that texture to their roles. Their intelligence, their intuition, their emotional ingenuity - they are three genuinely gorgeous souls. They bring all of those rich positive attributes both to the set, and to the pub outside of work. We spent the weekends together in Cornwall where we'd go surfing and have fun together. It's been a total joy to work with them and to forge some really special, meaningful friendships.

**How would you describe the series in 3 words?**

Tense. Brooding. Knotty.

## **INTERVIEW WITH NIAMH ALGAR - MADDIE**

### **What is *Playing Nice* about?**

Playing Nice is a story about two families who realise that their children they've been raising for the last three years aren't theirs. There was a mix up at the hospital when they were born because they were born premature, and each family took home the wrong child. It's a psychological thriller which follows two couples over four episodes and how they navigate this discovery and how these four people slowly unravel as the story goes on. There's plenty of twists and turns. It's sharp and dark and psychologically intense.

### **What can you tell us about Maddie? Where do we meet her at the start of the series?**

At the start of the series, we meet Maddie, who is happy. She's with Pete – the guy she's in love with and has a son with, Theo, and life is good. She's living her best life, running the restaurant that she owns. When they discover the truth, and that Theo isn't really theirs, it's the worst news she could ever imagine receiving and up ends her world.

### **Can you tell me about the moment in the series where everything changes for Pete and Maddie?**

It's the moment they find out the child they've been raising isn't theirs. That is a huge obstacle for any couple. It's the fear of looking like you're not a good parent to the couple whose child you've been raising and how they are put under the microscope of how Miles and Lucy view them and their parenting.

### **Did you do any specific research into similar cases in real life when this has happened?**

Yes I read articles on it. I didn't realise that this – accidental baby swapping - actually happens quite regularly, especially around when babies are born premature because they do all look very alike. I sat down with Kate Hewitt, the director, to get into the mindset of this character and weaving in her back story to my portrayal of Maddie.

### **Do you think Maddie had an inkling that something might not be quite right?**

Yes, I think she's always had an inkling that things weren't quite right or they haven't been right. She suffered with postnatal depression, and at that time she had this feeling like the baby isn't mine as she felt she had no connection with him. When she finds out that Theo isn't actually her child and she meets her biological child, David, who has been raised elsewhere, she has a connection with him. It's almost like the missing piece. It finally makes sense to Maddie the way she felt in the period after giving birth.

### **How has it been building your on-screen relationship with James Norton?**

Oh, it's been a joy. James is so lovely to work with. He's very generous, very kind and a lot of fun. It's been really collaborative process. Working with him and Kate Hewitt [director], we discovered who these two characters were.

**Can you tell us a little bit more about Maddie's relationship with Miles and Lucy?**

Miles and Lucy are polar opposites of Maddie and Pete. It's a complicated relationship between them all. Maddie and Lucy are two women who are now bound to each other by this experience, each loving both children however there is no trust there so it's an interesting dynamic – they are all always second guessing each other. Maddie is great at reading people and instinctively she knows that there's something not quite right with Miles. James McCardle plays Miles so well - Miles so confident and he has this filter that Maddie's able to see behind - there's something just not right here. It's almost like when people are too nice, it's overcompensating for something else.

**Is it quite taxing playing these really emotionally-charged scenes?**

It's actually fun. The reward of playing in a role like this is that it forces you to, I suppose, dig deep into human emotions. It allows me to find something new and portray feelings and situations that I've never experienced or hope not to experience.

**Have you enjoyed filming in Cornwall?**

Yes, it's been so nice filming in Cornwall. I hadn't actually been here before and I remember just saying to everyone- 'I'm going to be in Cornwall for three months filming the series', and they said 'you're going to have the best time.' The four of us [me, James, Jessica and James] friends and we went surfing every weekend. It's been really lovely. A really great experience.

**What drew you to the role?**

Kate Hewitt, our director. She wrote me a letter about the role and immediately I knew I had to work with her. She's incredible. When I was signing on, I saw that I would have Jessica, James McCardle and James Norton to play in scenes with and that for me was enough to say 'I need to do this'. I wanted to get stuck into this character and play opposite these actors that I really admire. The psychological thriller was also another draw for me.

**Were you familiar with the book beforehand or was this all new material for you?**

I wasn't familiar with the book before but as our show is slightly removed from the book, I didn't read too much into it. I tried not to because then I would worry that I would draw a comparison and our production is doing taking their own take on this. Your script is the Bible.

**Do you feel any added pressure given that it's so different from the book? You're not playing someone that people are familiar with.**

You want the freedom to be able to bring your own take on this character and bring something that potentially isn't there on the page. It lets us dig deeper and find some new nuance - there was plenty to work with.

**What would you say makes the script so compelling for you?**

It's the situation in which these people find themselves. It's such an intriguing idea. There's this sense of loss, but yet they haven't lost a child. It's more grieving the memories. It's such a mind-bending thought for someone to think that the child that they've been raising isn't theirs. That alone is terrifying.

**What journey do you hope audiences go on when they're watching this?**

Gosh, I hope audiences invest in our characters and are forced to question their own morals of whether or not they would do the same thing. That's what I love about narratives like this, it's putting yourself in that situation and seeing how you would react or seeing parts of yourself in the characters. It's a thrill ride! I love a series that leave you guessing what's going to happen next. And I think this definitely does that!

**How would you describe the series in three words?**

Not playing nice.

## **INTERVIEW WITH JAMES MCARDLE - MILES**

### **What is *Playing Nice* about?**

Playing Nice is about two families who learn that their toddlers were swapped at birth, and the events that follow that discovery.

### **Can you tell me about your character Miles?**

Miles is a self-made man from Glasgow. We don't really know much about his past when we meet him but it's obvious that he's done really well for himself as a successful architect. He's created a life in Cornwall with his wealthy wife and is seemingly very amiable, charming and welcoming; the kind of guy that would bend over backwards to make everything work. But underneath, Miles is like steel; ruthless, ambitious and in everything for his own gain.

### **How would you describe Miles and Lucy's relationship?**

From the outset Miles and Lucy appear like the ideal happy couple. Miles does very well in orchestrating them to seem like a very together healthy couple when in reality, Miles is very controlling of Lucy and this behaviour has been going on for years and years. He's slowly managed to break her down and build her back up to his liking.

### **Obviously the two couples receive awful news about the children being swapped at birth, how does Miles handle this news?**

Miles knows about the swap by the time our story begins so how he seems to be dealing with it and how he's actually dealing with it are two different things. He appears to be going through it the same as everyone else but he's managed to turn that devastation into steely determination. Miles has always known that something wasn't quite right with David, the son he and Lucy have brought up as their own, as he's never felt a connection with David. Once he learns that Theo, the child Pete and Maddie have been raising, is his biological son, he knows instantly that he's his.

### **From the beginning, we get the sense that all isn't what it seems with Miles. Is there more to him than meets the eye?**

There's definitely more than meets the eye. It unfolds as the story goes on and as Pete starts to investigate where Miles came from. The more you learn about his past the more you realise where this steel and determination has come from and how formidable Miles can be.

### **What was it like working with your cast mates, Niamh, James and Jessica?**

We've been so lucky because we all knew each other before. James and I trained together, Jessica and I played brother and sister previously in another production, and I knew Niamh socially, so we had a great connection.

### **What makes the scripts so compelling and what was your initial reaction to reading them?**

It's such a great hook, such a great premise and it's unusual. It allows for a real psychological thriller to unfold. Once I knew Kate Hewitt was on board as well as STUDIOCANAL and then of course the cast; I knew I had to do this.

**Tell us about the shoot locations in Cornwall, and what it was like working with a local crew from the area.**

It's been amazing! The actual filming has just been a real inconvenience to my Cornwall adventure haha! We all learnt to surf and it's been incredible. We had a local surfing teacher who adopted us and every day I looked forward to being able to getting back into the sea.

**Did it help you get into character?**

The environment really helps you get into character. It's interesting for someone like Miles to hide out there, in a quite coastal town, when there's so much drive in him. I think Pete certainly encapsulates that more relaxed way of life and Miles hides his inner drive to assimilate into the surroundings. Miles and Maddie are more similar characters to each other than any of the others. Miles views Pete as a bit of a walkover and Miles knows that Maddie is the one he needs to face.

**Do you have a favourite moment from shooting in Cornwall?**

I really enjoy scenes when the four of us [James, Niamh, Jessica] are together. It's good fun as we bounce off each other and there's a real special feeling on set when that happens.

**What drew you to the role?**

Kate Hewitt. I really trusted her vision for the series, and I knew we could achieve something great with her on board.

**What makes *Playing Nice* different from other dramas?**

It's much more of a psychological thriller than a traditional terrestrial drama. It's about what these characters do to each other mentally rather than something that's more procedural or investigative led. It's looking at how these people play each other and pull the rug out from each other, sometimes in subtle ways and then in some not-so-subtle ways.

**What journey do you want the audience to go on when they watch the series?**

It would be great if the audience could really immerse themselves into thinking 'what would I do in that situation?' That would be the most rewarding thing.

**How would you describe the series in 3 words?**

Baby swap madness.

## **INTERVIEW WITH JESSICA BROWN FINDLAY - LUCY**

### **Can you give us a brief synopsis of what *Playing Nice* is about?**

Playing Nice is, in its simplest context, a story of two families who have young children and discover that their babies were swapped at birth.

### **Tell us a little bit about Lucy. Where do we meet her at the start of the series? Where is she at in her life?**

You meet Lucy at a point in her life where she has seemingly sort of settled into “role of mother” – a traditional role of mother. She used to be a successful artist, but she has given up her job and stays at home. She's the main caregiver to her son and very loyal wife to Miles, her husband. Lucy does also spend a lot of time raising money for charities.

### **Tell us a little bit more about her relationship with Miles and their son, David. What's that family unit like?**

The family unit of the Lamberts is seemingly incredibly shiny, very united. It's pristine and seemingly, perfect. They embody the notion of 'life goals'. Their house is magnificent. They have a very well-behaved little boy. They are established within society in Cornwall and everyone knows them.

### **Is there more going on behind the scenes that we don't realise at first, perhaps?**

When we first meet the Lamberts, they're sort of “on”. They're people who have that public figure energy and we witness them in that space. But behind closed doors, it is quite a hostile environment and old-fashioned in that sense of, children should be seen and not heard. The idea that there's certain expectations of what a little boy should be like. And for reasons, I guess at the beginning unknown to Miles, David sort of disappoints him in that way which is heartbreaking. Lucy, as a result, is incredibly protective of her son. From the outside, you could view it as a kind of helicopter parenting, but really she's protecting him from many other things.

### **How has it been building this on-screen relationship with James McArdle?**

Building an on-screen relationship with James McArdle has been so much fun. We played brother and sister a few years ago, and we've decided to take our relationship to the next level and get married [LAUGHS]. One of the things we really have to explore as actors within our roles as husband and wife in this story is quite a complex, dark relationship, very sort of coercive at best and abusive at worst. So, being able to dive into a role like that with an actor you completely trust and know is very far away from that. It makes it very easy to go to work.

### **What is Lucy's relationship like with Maddie and her partner, Pete?**

Lucy's relationship with Maddie and Pete, again, is multilayered in the sense that seemingly she's trying to be very open. It comes off as quite cold. She doesn't really trust anyone but she tries with Maddie and I think there are moments where you can really see that naturally they would get on. They have a lot of shared experiences and that there was one time where they were very similar women.

**You've worked with James McArdle before, but how has it been working with James Norton and also with Niamh on this?**

It's been amazing working with Niamh and James Norton, as well. I had never met Niamh before and she's heaven, so that's perfect. It's also brilliant because we have a lot of fun between very tense scenes, which is always a joy. James Norton is an incredible human being. We worked together on a short film years ago and got the train home together and just chatted for hours about life, about art, our passions, things that were important to us. I always sort of remembered that meeting and then when I was sent this, I could just see all the pieces coming together and I felt very privileged to be able to dive in with these actors.

**The premise of the series is every parent's worst nightmare. Did you do any sort of specific research into similar events to your character?**

Yes. Reading the premise of this story, I mean, even without being a parent, I think it would freak you out. That this situation could be a possibility. I did quite a bit of research. I read quite a lot of interviews and deep dives on things like IVF mix ups and stuff like that, which are really rare but also happen.

**What initially drew you to the character of Lucy, would you say?**

I think what attracted me to playing Lucy was I naturally, as a person and an actor, am very emotional. I find it incredibly difficult to hide what it is I'm thinking or feeling, whereas Lucy, that is the way she survives. She doesn't even really physically express herself. It's like she doesn't know how to hold her hands. She doesn't have a rest space. She's very un-grounded. I thought that was so interesting to explore because it's very far away from who I am.

**Were you familiar with the book beforehand?**

I wasn't familiar with the book before. I hadn't read it. I read it over the weekend when I first was sent the premise of potentially being in this series. I realised, very quickly, it's very different and then just was begging for the scripts and the way everything is sort of developed and modernised, especially for Lucy's relationship with Miles, I thought was really interesting.

**Is there a pressure when taking on a character that perhaps already exists in people's minds?**

When you're working from anything that has been based either on a book or perhaps in a film that has been remade or something like that, there is definitely a pressure. I felt it more acutely in maybe more historical classics, that have been depicted multiple times, or people have a certain idea of how they might look or feel. But with this, the script had developed into quite a different piece with quite different characters. This is almost like a cousin to the book. It's taking the premise of that and restaging it into a space that feels viscerally now, and setting it into the coastline is genius. There's a rawness to the way this show looks and where we are filming that really escalated the isolation, for me playing as Lucy. She feels very isolated and Cornish coastline really helps accentuate that.

**How was it filming in Cornwall?**

Filming in Cornwall is heaven. I've been lucky enough to film there before - I actually filmed there ten years ago right down the road – and that was one of the happiest shoots of my life. This time is just the same. We had the most impeccable crew. When you are dealing with quite a dark subject matter, especially involving children, you want a crew who are kind and fun and patient. And that's what we had. It was brilliant.

**Why do you think this story is so compelling?**

It deals with things that kind of resonate with everyone. Even if you're not a parent, you can relate to certain themes within this. One of the truly compelling parts of this story is that it taps into that nature-nurture question that is constantly in debate and how much does that influence who a person is? But, also, the idea of what parenting is. Just because you have a child, doesn't necessarily make you a parent, in that being a parent is a privilege. Unconditional love as well as is really thrown into the mix in this story and the delicacy of the dynamics of families and of relationships is fascinating.

**And what journey do you hope audiences go on when they watch this?**

The journey is very twisty. One of the really exciting notions within this story is the face value of someone or something. You're introduced to a group of people and their life, and then this sort of drop of dye goes into every inch of their being, and we see what happens when that, infiltrates everything. I want them to look at the way we think about ourselves; we give ourselves titles and we give ourselves boxes, even if we wish not to. When you realise parts of those are false, everything is kind of thrown into question.

**How would you describe *Playing Nice* in three words?**

Domestic, exposed and raw.

## **INTERVIEW WITH POPPY GORDON-CLARK, LOCATIONS MANAGER**

### **What drew you to this project initially?**

Well, I live in Cornwall, so it's ideal. I love to film at home and it's a psychological drama set in Cornwall, which is quite rare. Normally we're filming cream teas and ice cream and cosy crime.

### **Talk us through the process of choosing the locations. How do you first approach a project of this size?**

I get the scripts and I break it down and chat with Kate, the director and Daryl, the production designer, about what the overall look of the show is going to be, what the tone is and then start hunting. I'm from Cornwall, so it's slightly easier. I've filmed here a lot, so I know, which cliffs, which beaches, and which areas we want to be in. We go out for long walks, take lots of photographs and have many discussions about which location offers the most for, scenes that we want to film.

### **Can you tell us about some of the locations specifically that you've shot at?**

Miles and Lucy's house is a wonderful super modern and a very stylized property overlooking the sea. But that was a tough one to find. That was really tricky because we didn't want it to be a kind of character- you know, we didn't want it to be like a James Bond lair. We don't want it to be too intimidating but at the same time, have a slight edge to it.

### **What about Maddie and Pete's house?**

For Pete and Maddie's house, we were looking for a property that sort of represented them as a couple, was within their means, but also was large enough to have a film crew in it for ten days because it's a long time and there's a lot of kit. That was quite challenging. We looked at a lot of different properties, trying to work out their style and make sure it was different to Miles and Lucy's and also have an essence of Cornwall about it.

### **Where do you even begin in terms of looking for houses? Where do you look for that?**

A lot of it is still logistics. You've got to be able to get there and you sort of, you know, in a lot of the villages and the smaller towns and you walk around and you say, 'Oh yeah, that one looks interesting'. Then you literally put a letter through their door, to say, 'Please can we come film in your house? Can we have a look around'? If they are interested, the owners get back in contact with you, you go photograph it and present it to Kate and Daryl and see if they're interested in it and then we can begin the process.

### **Why do you think Cornwall is the perfect location for this series?**

It's got great drama, doesn't it? I mean, it looks fantastic. This time of year [Autumn/Winter], the colours, and the light is just absolutely amazing. Absolutely great. It just adds a little bit of darkness and, just more drama to what's already a great script.

**You've been working with a lot of local crews as well. Does that help with the process?**

Yeah, definitely in my department, being local and having a local crew really, really helps. You know, we understand the way the Cornish people work and think and what not to do, what crosses the line. Filming at this time of year has been because trying to do what we're doing in July and August is impossible due to the footfall of holiday makers.

**And of course, Cornwall is famous for its beaches. Can you talk us through the logistics of actually finding the perfect beach to film on?**

Yeah, there's many things. You want a big beach and one that always has a little bit of beach that doesn't quickly disappear when the tide comes in. It's nice if you don't have to completely leave the beach. Access is obviously really important. And you know, beauty, I mean, most of them have a lot of beauty.

**Are there any sort of surprising factors in terms of shooting outside that people wouldn't expect? I guess Tide Times is a big one, isn't it?**

The tide is one but they're predictable, so you get used to it. The tide comes in every 6 hours and then it goes out so, you can figure that out. It's weather which is the most challenging and on the beach, it can change really quickly. The beach shifts if it rains a lot, and rivers appear. The wind causes issues as sand goes in the eyes and can blow things away so they are some of the challenges.

**The series is all shot on location. What's that experience like? Do you think that adds something in terms of, like, the realism and the authenticity?**

Yeah. I mean, not filming in a studio offers realism. It's tough but you know it's real, it's Cornwall. They're getting 100% Cornwall, and real locations.

**In terms of the locations that you shot at, which would you say your favourite?**

Oh, I knew you were going to ask me that. There's many debates about this. I particularly like- for exterior locations, Park Head, which is where the end scene plays out. This is my favourite in terms of drama, beauty, and just raw Cornwall. If we're talking about a property, then I'm definitely on the Miles and Lucy side.

**Could you describe the series in three words, what would that be?**

Dramatic, beautiful and dark.