

PROTECTION

SERIES SYNOPSIS

Police officer DI LIZ NYLES (Siobhan Finneran, Happy Valley, Downton Abbey, Time) works in the secretive and high-stakes world of Witness Protection. When we meet her, she's juggling a challenging front-line job (with life and death consequences for her witnesses) alongside a demanding family life – attending to the needs of a teenage daughter, a difficult ex, and a dad recovering from a stroke.

Liz is principled, in control, and scrupulous about the security of her witnesses, particularly the high-risk criminal turned informant JIMMY MCLENNAN (Kris Hitchen, The Long Shadow, Four Lives, Trigger Point) and his family. Jimmy is about to testify against his old boss EDDIE CROWTHER (Alec Newman, Karen Pirie, The Last Kingdom), the head of a major organised crime group which has so far evaded prosecution. As with all those under her protection, Liz goes above and beyond to keep Jimmy's family safe, working with colleague DS RAJ KOHLI (Chaneil Kular, Sex Education, Bodies) to keep their whereabouts strictly hidden.

Both at work and at home, Liz has always put others first, and being from a policing family she is driven by a great sense of duty as a police officer, mother, and as a daughter. But recently she has decided to take something for herself and has launched thrillingly – and unwisely – into a secret affair with a married, more junior colleague, DS PAUL BRANDICE (Barry Ward, Bad Sisters, The Capture).

One morning, a murder at one of her safe houses raises grave questions about the integrity of Liz's unit, which is rocked with accusations of corruption: it is believed that someone has been leaking information to organised crime. Liz begins to wonder with horror if she has unwittingly compromised herself, if indeed her secret lover Brandice has sinister motives and has been using her. Whilst the police team, led by the formidable DCI HANNAH WHEATLEY (Katherine Kelly, Mr Bates vs The Post Office, Criminal, The Long Shadow) investigates the incident, Liz secretly launches her own unofficial investigation to find the leak. In this, she must avoid the watchful eye of both Wheatley and of the inscrutable DCI AMANDA KELMAN (Nadine Marshall, Champion, Sherwood, Trigger Point), from Professional Standards, who has been tasked with weeding out corruption in Liz's unit. It's a tense and febrile atmosphere within the force as Liz pursues her secretive off-the-books investigation, bringing her into further conflict with the very police officers investigating her.

As Liz investigates, she is confronted with disturbing and dark possibilities, raising questions not only about Brandice but also her team and her colleagues in the wider police force. Chasing clues to which she shouldn't strictly have access, Liz finds herself transgressing in ways she wouldn't previously have dreamt of, bringing danger ever closer to her door.

As the series progresses, single mum Liz becomes increasingly torn between her dedication to her family, her loyalty to her lover, and her duty towards her witnesses. In struggling to unravel the mystery, she is drawn into a complex and clandestine world, coming up against various opaque, secret organisations operating at cross-purposes, and in rivalry to one

another. And as the threat gets closer to home, she becomes more and more uncertain about whom she can trust.

As much conspiracy thriller as police drama, this is the story of a compromised but ultimately honest police officer, out of her depth yet acutely driven to understand the truth of her secret lover and how far this corruption goes.

The series is produced by multi award winning production company, New Pictures (Des, The Missing, The Long Shadow, Dalglish), part of All3Media. Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Willow Grylls (Des, The Missing, The Long Shadow) and Charlie Hampton (The Spanish Princess, The Deceived) will executive produce Protection alongside Elaine Pyke and Kris Mrksa. The series will be produced by Rebecca Davies (Cobra) and line produced by Tracy Chapman (Cobra). ITV's Head of Drama Polly Hill will oversee production on behalf of the broadcaster.

Protection will be directed by Simen Alsvik (Fenris, The Nest, Neste sommer) and Sasha Ransome (Cobra, McDonald & Dodds). Writers are Kris Mrksa (Episodes 1, 3 and 6), Polly Buckle (Episodes 2 and 4) and Giulia Sandler (Episode 5).

INTRODUCTION

By screenwriter Kris Mrksa

When the team at New Pictures first introduced me to a former witness protection officer with some incredible stories to tell, it was immediately obvious that his experiences would provide the basis of an exciting police drama. But as I learned more about the day-to-day realities of witness protection, it became evident that this is an area of policing that has more in common with the world of espionage and spying, than the operations of a traditional police unit.

Witness protection police inhabit a clandestine world of false identities and hidden safe houses, where secrecy and subterfuge are part of the daily routine, and security breaches can lead to life-threatening disaster. In other words, the perfect setting for a le Carrè-esque conspiracy thriller, rather than a straight-forward crime drama; one in which the protagonist's murder investigation peels away layer after layer of mystery, leading them not just to a perpetrator, but down an ominous rabbit hole of paranoia.

In a sense, this would be a murder mystery, but one in which the final answer transcends the neatness of a simple who-done-it.

But the witness protection setting also provided an ideal context in which to explore another, more character-based question.

So many of my friends and associates are members of the so-called sandwich generation – caring for children who are still young enough to need support, while also managing parents who require care; a problem that's particularly acute for professional women, who are still so often expected to shoulder the caring roles in our society.

Given how common this experience has become, I was interested in depicting a character who finds themselves forced to balance such double-barrelled domestic responsibilities with a high-pressure, high-stakes job. And so, DI Liz Nyles, witness protection officer, was born. A woman who juggles a complex domestic life with her incredibly demanding professional responsibilities; doing a job that requires the very highest levels of professionalism, discipline and discretion.

Liz has always been a paragon of propriety and excellence, knowing that she must work 50% harder than her male colleagues, just to get the same level of recognition. But what if, after years of exemplary conduct, following every protocol, Liz allowed herself a moment of self-indulgence? A steamy but ill-advised workplace affair. And what if that affair may have led to a disastrous breach of security, causing the deaths of the very people she was supposed to be protecting, while also jeopardising her career, and putting her own family in terrible danger?

PROTECTION grew out of this combination of dramatic elements. A police drama, supercharged by a le Carrè-esque conspiracy, centring on a character who has always followed the protocols and done her duty, discovering that her only chance of survival lies in breaking every rule she's ever known.

EPISODE 1: "PROTECTION"

Police officer DI LIZ NYLES (Siobhan Finneran, *Happy Valley*, *Downton Abbey*, *Time*) works in the secretive and high-stakes world of Witness Protection. When we meet her, she's juggling a high-stakes job (with life and death consequences for her witnesses) alongside a demanding family life – attending to the needs of a teenage daughter, a difficult ex, and a dad recovering from a stroke.

Liz is principled, in control, and scrupulous about the security of her witnesses, particularly the high-risk criminal turned informant JIMMY MCLENNAN (Kris Hitchen, *The Long Shadow*, *Four Lives*, *Trigger Point*) and his family. Jimmy is about to testify against his old boss EDDIE CROWTHER (Alec Newman, *Karen Pirie*, *The Last Kingdom*), the head of a major organised crime group which has so far evaded prosecution. Liz goes above and beyond to keep Jimmy's family safe. It's protocol that only Liz and her colleague DS RAJ KOHLI (Chaneil Kular, *Sex Education*, *Bodies*) are privy to their location. Both at work and at home, Liz always puts others first, but recently she has decided to take something for herself and has launched into a secret affair with a married, more junior colleague DS PAUL BRANDICE (Barry Ward, *Bad Sisters*, *The Capture*).

One morning, an attack on one of her safe houses raises grave questions about the integrity of Liz's unit, which is rocked with accusations of corruption: it is believed that someone has been leaking information to Crowther's OCG. Liz begins to wonder with horror if she has unwittingly compromised herself, if indeed her secret lover Brandice is in league with Eddie Crowther and has been using her. Whilst the police team led by the formidable DCI HANNAH WHEATLEY (Katherine Kelly, *Mr Bates vs The Post Office*, *Criminal*, *The Long Shadow*) investigates the incident, Liz secretly launches her own unofficial investigation to find the leak. In this, she must avoid the watchful eye of both Wheatley and of the inscrutable DCI

AMANDA KELMAN (Nadine Marshall, *Champion, Sherwood, Trigger Point*), from Professional Standards, who has been tasked with weeding out corruption in Liz's unit.

Alongside her scramble to try and understand what happened on the morning of the terrible incident, Liz is also charged with caring for a highly endangered witness. The question of whom she can trust becomes more uncertain as a conspiracy emerges, and Liz realises her only chance for professional survival and the survival of her witnesses lies in breaking every rule she's ever known.

EPISODE 2: "DON'T TRUST ANYONE"

Liz offers crucial information to DCI Wheatley but doesn't reveal certain facts, worried she will compromise both herself and her secret investigation into the leak. This takes her further down a path of secret transgression, a decision which may come back to haunt her.

Meanwhile, everyone in the team is hauled before Wheatley and Kelman for questioning. They are all under suspicion as the unit is investigated from the inside. Liz is on the back foot as she is challenged about corruption in her unit, but will she come clean when confronted with uncomfortable questions about her own recent movements? Meanwhile, formidable gangster EDDIE CROWTHER is giving nothing away.

As Liz tries desperately to protect the integrity of her unit and to limit further damage, she is forced to take drastic steps to protect her highly vulnerable witness, who is a target for organised crime.

Meanwhile, Liz secretly pursues the one major clue at her disposal, which might help her understand her lover's connection to the deepening conspiracy. Something in Liz's gut tells her he is hiding something. But in pursuing the truth, will she only compromise herself further? A sudden intervention from Wheatley makes things even more dangerous for Liz, as the unit is sent into a tailspin.

EPISODE 3: "PRESSURE"

With the help of her colleague DI RICK BEWLEY (Andrew Knott, *Tin Star, Maryland*) in the Organised Crime team, Liz digs into a mysterious contact of her secret lover Brandice's. As pressure mounts at work, Liz compromises herself even further by using her position to access confidential files in secret. She is determined to link Crowther with recent shocking events, but her fear that Brandice is also connected to the head of the organised crime group is never far away.

When Liz's worst fears are realised in a shocking incident, she begins to wonder if someone – or several people – in the police are colluding to cover up this dark conspiracy. Distracted by the stresses of work, Liz finds herself increasingly at odds with her daughter Jasmine. Meanwhile, she comes under pressure from a friend in trouble as her earlier transgressions threaten to jeopardise her secret investigation, leaving her increasingly vulnerable and exposed.

EPISODE 4: “SABOTAGE”

As Liz fights to prove foul play, she finds herself sabotaged and the danger gets frighteningly close to home. A sinister event only fuels Liz’s suspicions of her fellow police officers and their possible connection with organised crime. But how long can she go on with her secret investigation before she is shut down? And how much will she risk for the sake of uncovering the truth, whilst still trying to keep her secret affair under wraps?

Meanwhile, a problematic new witness (played by Adam Long, *Happy Valley*, *The Long Shadow*) brings Liz into the orbit of the assistant chief constable, just as things between her and Wheatley come to a head. Wheatley proves herself a formidable adversary as Liz finds herself increasingly isolated.

EPISODE 5: “IN TOO DEEP”

The police teams grapple to resolve an escalating crisis as the stakes of the conspiracy get higher. A life hangs in the balance, and Liz feels the blame directed firmly at her. Whilst still not trusting other members of the police, she decides to take matters into her own hands, with surprising consequences. Meanwhile, she’s also forced to manage the fallout of having taken on a problematic new witness.

Juggling pressure from home and work, Liz discovers a clue which brings her closer to the criminal Crowther and deeper into danger. She fears that corrupt individuals in the police are conspiring to silence her. And as she makes headway in her investigation, it becomes increasingly apparent that her enemies will do anything to cover their tracks, and Liz is brought into life-threatening danger.

EPISODE 6: “CONSPIRACY”

Isolated and with nothing to lose, Liz goes even further on her path of transgression in her desperate pursuit of the truth. But can she uncover the conspiracy before corrupt forces stop her? And with her professional and personal worlds colliding, will she ever get to understand the truth of her illicit relationship with DS Brandice?

CHARACTER BIOS

DI LIZ NYLES works in the secretive and high-stakes world of witness protection. Caring by nature, she’s also principled, in control, and scrupulous about the security of her witnesses, always going above and beyond to keep them safe. However, she is sandwiched between two generations of dependants, and her life is a constant juggle of personal and professional obligations. Ever since she was a young child, Liz has taken on a protective role, being left to care for her younger sister Clara after the death of their mum (a trauma which caused her dad to become quite emotionally distant). Driven by a strong sense of duty, Liz has always put others first, both at work and at home. But recently she has decided to take something for

herself and has launched into an unwise affair with her married, more junior colleague DS PAUL BRANDICE – a thrilling and illicit romance that she must keep secret, or risk destroying her reputation and career.

DCI AMANDA KELMAN is a senior officer in the Professional Standards Department, which investigates corruption in the police. She has risen rapidly through the ranks of the force and established herself as an exacting and forbidding operator – exactly the person you *don't* want investigating you for corruption. She believes in fairness and is careful not to let personal instincts get in the way of her judgement. Or so she claims. A closed book, you don't want to be on the wrong side of her.

DCI HANNAH WHEATLEY: head of the Major Investigations Team. An ambitious and keen-eyed detective with sharp instincts, Wheatley does not suffer fools and is not afraid of confrontation, despite being a woman of relatively few words. She's happy to operate outside the usual means, if it brings her a result. Wheatley is suspicious of Liz and tenacious in pursuing her. But what exactly is her agenda? And how far will she go to protect herself?

DS PAUL BRANDICE: When we meet DS Paul Brandice, he is the quiet, charming and enigmatic man in Liz's office. The newest recruit to the witness protection unit, Brandice is something of an unknown quantity, but appears to his colleagues as a reliable and principled detective. He is also secretly locked in an illicit and passionate affair with Liz, which began shortly after he joined the unit. Brandice met his wife Gemma in the Armed Forces, where he was known for being an elite serviceman and a brilliant team player. However, he then suffered an injury and came out of active service to join the police. There is a duality to Brandice. He has the grit and steeliness required of those in high-pressure jobs, but with a wit and charm which come so easily to him, he makes it hard for Liz to be sure she trusted the right man...

DS RAJ KOHLI is Liz's partner in the protection unit. A loyal and diligent detective, Raj admires the dedication of those around him. A people person by nature, Raj is brilliant at bringing recalcitrant witnesses onside and in making them feel safe in his care. He's particularly good with kids (being a family man himself) and always knows when to bring levity to a situation. It's this sense of humour combined with his apparent integrity which enables Raj to allay any frightened witness' fears, and he is adept at getting people to trust him – a skill he can wield to his advantage.

SID NYLES: Liz's dad and a former DCI in both Lancashire and Liverpool, indeed something of a legend in the police. He always prided himself on his integrity as a police officer and was known for his old-school no-nonsense manner. However, there's quite a tricky history between him and his daughter. After his wife died, Sid dedicated himself to his work and became a rather absent father in the process. Teenage Liz had to step up and parent her younger sister, a sacrifice which Sid has never quite recognised. With his health deteriorating, there's a sense that time is running out for Sid to repair things with his daughter.

GEMMA BRANDICE: Brandice's wife. A pragmatic woman, Gemma has long accepted that she will never be privy to every side of her husband – the cross that all Special Forces spouses must bear. She is self-deprecating about her own army career but was a diligent and hard-working soldier, and loved travelling the world with her work. When she and Paul started a

family, she decided it was time to leave behind the military life so she could dedicate herself to her children. When push comes to shove, will her loyalty to her husband blind her to his faults and indiscretions?

DS SUE BEARDSLEY: Liz's colleague in the witness protection unit. A conscientious police officer with tact and sensitivity, Sue brings exactly the calm, kind demeanour that is needed when dealing with frightened witnesses. She's also highly trustworthy and discreet, with a sharp intuition and an inquisitiveness which will see her go far in the realm of covert policing.

CLARA PENHURST: Liz's younger sister. The pair of them were very close growing up, especially after their mum died and Liz became a mother figure to Clara. Married with small children, Clara tends to leave Liz with the burden of caring for their dad (who has recently suffered a stroke). She wants to be part of the decision-making for their dad but she's not willing to make the same sacrifices as her sister, something which really grates on Liz.

JASMINE HOWARD: Liz's daughter. At sixteen years old, Jasmine is very much caught between childhood and adulthood, eager to break free from her parents but also very much attached to home. A child of a fairly acrimonious divorce, Jasmine grew up pretty quickly and still finds it tricky to navigate between her parents. She's ultimately much closer to her mum than her dad, who, though he gives her lots of freedom, doesn't step up and support her in the way she needs. This is why, despite her sometimes frictional relationship with her mum, Jasmine ultimately feels much more at home in Liz's house.

AMY McLENNAN: Jimmy McLennan's 12-year-old daughter. Having lived quite a sheltered and pampered life – in which she knew basically nothing about the reality of her dad's criminal involvement – Amy finds the experience of witness protection particularly destabilising. Cast adrift from her friends, family and home comforts, she is a lonely child who longs to return to her old life.

DI RICK BEWLEY: the man in charge of the investigation seeking to put Crowther behind bars. An experienced and energetic detective who has spent years in a losing battle against organised crime, Bewley is determined not to give up now. He's known Liz for many years, and they have a solid working relationship founded on mutual trust, becoming something of a sounding board to each other. But when Bewley's loyalties are tested, he may find that his personal relationships don't ultimately count for as much as his professional ones.

DCI ARUN KAPOOR: head of the witness protection unit. Arun is an occasionally grouchy but outwardly fair-minded paternal figure who champions Liz and is a staunch defender of all those in his team. He's a highly experienced and confident detective who understands the politics of the police – although he is not immune to pressures from above and may be more self-serving than he first appears.

DI TOMMY JARDINE: Wheatley's second in command in the Major Investigation Team. Jardine is a loyal officer who seems to follow his boss to the letter. He's rigorous in his investigations and has no qualms about applying pressure on people during questioning; but can also be quite ham-fisted sometimes, and his motives are often opaque.

EDDIE CROWTHER: With staff at his beck and call and a son at an elite private school, Eddie bears all the hallmarks of a prosperous businessman, a working-class boy done good, a flashy philanthropist. Having made his money in the booming drugs trade, Crowther enjoys his untold wealth but is always looking over his shoulder: after all, he knows that his respectability is ultimately façade, that it could all come crashing down in a second. Beneath it all, Eddie Crowther is Manchester's most ruthless and formidable criminal.

JIMMY McLENNAN: a white-collar career criminal who worked as Eddie Crowther's accountant. He never intended on a life of crime, but fell into it in his twenties, when Eddie purchased the bookies he was running and offered him a job. Jimmy fell in love with his newfound wealth but as the business expanded, so did the paranoia. Sitting at the financial helm of an illicit empire, Jimmy was privy to secrets which have now put a price on his head. In a desperate attempt to save his life and that of his family, he agreed to testify against his old boss and so entered the witness protection programme.

HELEN McLENNAN: Jimmy's wife. Helen always wanted to be a mum and Amy is the true light of her life: Helen wants nothing but the best for her, meaning she is inclined to be a little over-indulgent at times. Having enjoyed the trappings of Jimmy's ill-begotten wealth, Helen has been forced to tolerate a much more modest lifestyle in witness protection, isolated from her friends and family (including her sick mum). This sacrifice is not lost on Helen and sometimes she balks at the rules imposed on her in the protection programme, and wonders if marrying Jimmy was really worth it.

SORAN AHMADI: a former associate of Eddie Crowther, now living in witness protection. Having agreed to testify at Crowther's trial, Ahmadi knows there is a price on his head, and his nerves are constantly shattered.

FREDDIE HOWARD: Jasmine's dad. He and Liz divorced five years ago after he had an affair. A former police officer himself, Freddie understands the world in which Liz moves. Nonetheless, he doesn't look too kindly on her juggling act as a working mother, and doesn't really take seriously his own responsibilities as a parent. He certainly gives his daughter freedom when she stays at his house, but sometimes it can be a bit lonely for her, being left to her own devices. He's totally oblivious to the way Jasmine can feel sidelined in favour of his shiny new girlfriend.

ACC RORY DAVENPORT: as Assistant Chief Constable of Liverpool Metropolitan Police, Davenport is a serious and somewhat imperious man, commanding his organisation with a sense of gravitas. He has a strong working relationship with DCI Kelman and takes very seriously the force's mission to weed out corruption. He's also a canny operator and is adept at managing the sometimes tricky relationships between the different departments of his force.

REZAN CROWTHER: Eddie Crowther's wife. Rezan is completely devoted to their son Arlo, keeping a close eye on his progress at school, and driving him to every sports practice. She's also an incredibly gracious host and enjoys throwing generous parties for their friends and family. Rezan is fiercely proud of her Kurdish heritage and applauds any action which fights for the cause of her compatriots. Her talent is for fundraising and she loves nothing more than

to work a room full of wealthy people in the mood for donating lavish sums. A very small part of Rezan is aware that Eddie takes liberties with the law (just like many successful businessmen of his calibre); but Eddie works hard to ensure she is ultimately ignorant of the uglier sides of his endeavours.

ARLO CROWTHER: Eddie and Rezan Crowther's fourteen-year-old son. Arlo does relatively well at school and has a close circle of friends he plays sports with. In many ways he is quite young for his age and is very much his mother's son. He has been carefully shielded from the darker aspects of his dad's business, though Eddie's recent incarceration has certainly tested this ignorance. Nonetheless, Arlo still prefers to believe his dad is an upstanding man, not a notorious criminal.

CAST INTERVIEWS

Siobhan Finneran (DI Liz Nyles) Interview

What drew you to Protection?

When I read the first episode, within minutes, there's a big event, a major disaster that draws you in immediately. From early on you're ready to go on a journey with Liz to find out what's going on. It's a great hook and the story is so complex. It's fascinating to me that a writer can fit all that together and it still makes sense at the end.

Who is Liz Nyles?

Liz is a witness protection officer in a unit called Protected Persons, a woman in her fifties with a 16-year-old daughter, and she's just become a full-time carer to her dad. Like hundreds of thousands of women, Liz is trying to keep a balance between personal and professional, so hopefully her character will resonate with loads of people – until that all gets blown up of course!

She appears to be really good at her job.

She went from being a regular detective to Protected Persons so she could spend more time at home – it's a different ballgame to normal policing. When the murders happen, the situation is blown out of control because she's embarked on an affair – her lover is taken out on a stretcher, everything's up in the air. Sometimes people do something totally out of character and hope it works out for the best, but she ends up completely compromised. It's a great premise.

What's the attraction between Liz and DS Paul Brandice (Barry Ward)?

DS Paul is a new officer in the protection unit, he's fun and makes a play for her and she falls for it. It's a bit of fun for both sides even though she knows it's morally wrong, then feelings come into play. Like a lot of people, she's probably quite lonely, going home to a teenager and an elderly parent, so she did something just for her as a bit of an escape.

How influential is Liz's dad Sid (David Hayman) on her life?

When her mum died when she was young Liz stepped into the role of housekeeper, mother to her older sister, and now carer for her dad. Driven by a desire to earn her father's approval—having grown up hearing about his brilliance as a policeman—life on the force has

always had an appeal. To this day Liz is still seeking his approval, but now he has dementia, she's not going to get that.

Liz's line of work must require quite a level of emotional detachment, but how does she react to Amy, who is just 12 when her parents are killed?

Liz feels maternal towards her, but also a huge amount of guilt because of those questions she can never answer: if I'd not had that affair, the killers might not have known where this family were. Shame is a horrible emotion to carry around, but she got involved with somebody she shouldn't have. As a result that little girl has been orphaned in horrific circumstances, so she'd have to be a robot to not feel anything. Liz does really look after her – but then, Amy is one of her witnesses and that's her job.

What was your understanding of witness protection before working on the series?

Probably just the basics: people get moved to safe houses and then they're looked after. I didn't realise it became such a relationship between those people. Looking back, I suppose this was naive because the witnesses have to feel comfortable enough to tell the officer everything. That said, I don't think anybody really knows about it, because it's all hidden away as it should be. I know that, within the police force, it's a very separate unit: all their cars are leased to different private companies so you can't trace people, and so on. It's not a job I'd ever even think about doing. What do you talk to your neighbours about over the garden fence?

What sort of research did you do?

I read a really great article and the gentleman whose experiences inspired the series, he even came on set one day. However, even if you do talk to someone from the world you're portraying, you're never going to be fully immersed in it – ultimately, we're dependent on the scripts. Understanding you have to switch off emotion is something I understand, in that I can be having a really awful day then go to work and be doing scenes where I'm having to be having fun. But not to the extent these people have to, where it has to be a complete shutdown. To go home and take that back with you must be incredibly difficult.

What does Liz make of Wheatley (Katherine Kelly) and Kelman (Nadine Marshall)?

Wheatley may have taken a job that Liz had applied for before she decided to go into Protected Persons. I wouldn't say there's a rivalry, but there is a history there. From Wheatley's point of view, Liz has always been a great police officer. From Liz's point of view, she knows Wheatley is a good police officer, but once the murders happen, everybody comes under suspicion. Liz can never be sure if there's a mole within the unit, what information they've got about her and what they might be passing on. With Kelman, Liz initially thinks this is somebody she can trust because they're trying to find out the same things, but then of course things shift around.

How did you enjoy working with Amy McLennan (Tilly Kaye)

I loved her. We've worked together before, but I had no clue that we had. She's really good at what she's doing and she's only 12. It's almost a bit annoying how good she is! We had fun together, even in the scenes that weren't fun.

How did you manage that, given how harrowing some of those early scenes are?

We just chat. I've got kids so I know how to talk to children. You can't mess about, but it's just keeping the chat light: who you like, what groups they're into, all of that stuff.

What were the highlights of the shoot?

I loved filming in Liverpool, it's a great place to potter about and look at buildings. It was great to work with Katherine again, and working with Nadine was great as well – I'd not done so before, but we've got some great scenes together. I just enjoy being on set with good actors and being able to play with the scenes. Although I've never done a job this intense. I was in every day and pretty much every scene, so it was exhausting. Your day starts at five and doesn't finish till ten. But I loved it.

Katherine Kelly (DCI Hannah Wheatley) Interview

What attracted you to Protection?

Kris Mrska has such fantastic credentials. He writes hit shows. Reading his script felt more akin to reading a novel, because he's so descriptive. It was a real page turner, which was definitely exciting to me, having not done something like that for a while. But the plot is very much the star of the show, along with Siobhan (Finneran, playing DI Liz Nyles). You see everything through her lens, you don't journey off into any other characters' thoughts. It's a pleasure to be just a cog in the wheel of a thriller, a real ride like this, because recently I've done quite a lot of character-based stuff and a few state-of-the-nation pieces. I enjoy getting on the speeding train!

How would you describe Hannah Wheatley?

Well, technically this should be Hannah's case, but because Liz is looking after the witnesses, the two parameters bleed into each other somewhat. In fact, Liz should be Hannah's subordinate, but Liz is an old-school maverick copper whereas Hannah is very by the book. A modern-day police officer who knows your paperwork has to match what you're doing. Within that, she's highly skilled, very efficient and honourable, all the things that you would want a police officer to be, especially when the stakes are as high as this. Hannah is very aware of the ticking clock.

How does she come to be involved in the case?

When they first meet at the safe house after things have gone wrong, Hannah's delighted that Liz is around because Liz is somewhat of a star. Hannah is very welcoming and allows her into the safe house because she thinks that collaboration is going to get the best outcome. As the story unfolds, you see that no one can be trusted. Hannah quickly thinks that Liz is holding stuff back and preventing the crucial flow of information, so they're a bit scratchy with each other. Even without that, with the stakes so high and heavy interest from the press, it's not as if they'd have time to go and have a drink and a catch up. Hannah is where the audience is throughout the story: on the backfoot, which is not where she should be. It's not until much later where there's a classic interrogation scene and Hannah finally joins a few dots.

Is it a lonely job for Hannah?

It is – that's a part of the reason why there used to be a bar within police stations. When I did some research at Halifax police station you could see the bar was there, even though they

didn't use it anymore. This was before we'd heard of terms like mindfulness and therapy, and it was obviously the way they decompressed after seeing the worst of human nature.

What is her working relationship with DCI Amanda Kelman (Nadine Marshall)?

It's hard to define. You're never quite sure who outranks who, it's complicated. They play for the same team, but on different football pitches.

Would Hannah prefer to be left alone to get on with it?

No, Hannah is new to the force, thinking two heads are better than one and Liz comes from a policing family. Hannah's probably fast tracked from another profession. Hannah is aware of her limitations, and initially thinks that Liz could be really helpful, maybe a bit of a mentor, but those hopes are quickly dashed!

You spent a day with Merseyside Police as research – how was that?

I had played a similar role in Happy Valley a decade ago, I felt that policing had changed so much in this time, so wanted a refresher course. I was welcomed with open arms. As much as they could, they gave me a crash course: what weapons you'd use when you arrived at a major incident, the importance of that golden hour after arriving at a crime scene, how careful you have to be with the flow of information, how much being a detective these days is about phones and CCTV. They were absolutely brilliant. One of the perks of the job is getting these exclusive passes into worlds that you really shouldn't be let in to, but the police obviously want to be represented in the right way.

Was it nice to be back working with Siobhan?

I've worked with Siobhan on quite a few things, she's a friend and it's really nice to spend time with her on and off screen. This is the most we've actually appeared on screen together, so we picked up where we left off.

What was the most challenging aspect of the shoot?

The script editor had the hardest task, keeping on top of the twists and turns of the plot. The more complicated it is, the more satisfying it is to an audience, but the execution of that is quite tricky. Given we shot out of sequence, I was constantly checking what Hannah did and didn't know for each scene.

It feels like you're in a professional purple patch.

I'm really privileged to be in a position where I can pick and choose a bit. We all have to make a living and that often comes into play, but there's so much telly, so many channels, a lot more choice for the audience and the actors. I always look at the script and the team around it. There are certain people I'd come and just make tea for, because it's about making work that you think has got a chance of rising to the top – there is so much good stuff to choose from right now.

Now you are a producer as well, is it nice to just step back and do some acting?

I like both – I'm always driven by a challenge and a change. Tony Pitts, the writer and actor I have the production company with, is so versatile in what he writes. When we started our production company, the first thing we made was a podcast, a real abstract comedy called Curl up and DI, starring Jim Moir and Morgana Robinson. We also have a feature film in the

works, a TV comedy in development, and another podcast. It's thrilling and what a great time to be doing it when there's all the different platforms.

Nadine Marshall (DCI AMANDA KELMAN) Interview

Can you give us a brief overview of the story?

When Kelman arrives in the story, a major event has happened in the Protective Persons Unit which raises suspicions that there might be a mole. Kelman is here to investigate the leak and of course she's not welcomed with open arms. The team are very wary, even if they do want to cooperate. Kelman is very thorough to say the least and she's determined not to leave a single stone unturned. Everybody keeps information to themselves and doesn't really speak about things that are 'top secret'. But she's determined to do her job to the best of her ability, causing some friction within the team and ruffling a few feathers. But Kelman's not bothered with that, the deeper she digs the messier it gets.

What do you find appealing about your character?

I love Kelman's character. I love the fact that she was a rising star in the police force, and quickly established herself as an exacting and forbidding operator. She's shrewd and can be manipulative when she wants to be, but super smart. Kelman knows how to turn on the charm when she needs to appear non-threatening. That skill proves invaluable when she's trying to gather information from Liz, allowing her to subtly win her trust. Kelman's a brilliant character to play because she's not cut and dry, she doesn't wear her emotions on her sleeve. You're never quite sure what she's thinking or where her allegiances lie. I like that she's powerful, especially in this situation where it's hard for women to show themselves as powerful in the police force.

What have been your favourite scenes to act?

The scenes in the Witness Protection Unit, and I think perhaps that's mainly for shallow reasons. On a shallow level, it's because most of the cast were there and we really get on and had a laugh. On a story level and character level, it was really interesting to play those scenes because every character present had their own agenda, they are on their guard and they're not letting a lot out. Everybody's wondering if they can trust the person sitting next to them. So those were really rewarding. Also, my scenes with Kelman and Liz, those scenes were fascinating to play because it's so dynamic to have those two powerful women in one scene together. It's like a game of chess with them, everybody wants to be one up on the other and we're always trying to suss each other out. Doing those scenes is basically like speaking in code with the other person, it's nuanced and layered.

Barry Ward (DC PAUL BRANDICE) Interview

Can you give us a brief overview of the story?

Protection is about the Witness Protection Programme where typically state witnesses, used in the prosecution against high profile criminals are given anonymous identities and relocated in anonymous areas. During this process they are protected by a special department of the police force, it's all very clandestine operations. Everything's top secret.

How do we first meet DC Paul Brandice?

DC Paul Brandice has recently transferred to this department of Witness Protection from the Met. When we first see him in the series he's just a detective, but there's an immediate tension between him and Liz that hints at something deeper—soon revealed to be an ongoing affair. He offers up some back story and you do learn about why he's here and where he's come from. All of which is questionable as we see Paul through Liz's eyes, so there's a real ambiguity as to his motives and intentions.

What kind of show is Protection and what makes it unique?

Protection is unique in the sense that it is not simply another procedural cop show, because it also cleverly blends in the personal too. That goes for the police institute itself as well as the protagonists within that.

What was your first impression when reading the scripts? How did they make you feel?

I read the scripts voraciously, honestly. I was really hooked from the get-go, I think it's a great premise and an interesting world that we are not often privy to, given the secrecy of it. Within it there's so much intrigue and mystery, secrecy and questionable motives that just really made me want to find out what happens next. Not least because my character is at the centre of it and he's also one of the characters about whom we know very little. Just when you think you have a grasp on something or guess what's going on, you're blindsided again with a new piece of information, it becomes very labyrinthine.

Protection is a series full of intrigue and tension, what are the key themes of this story?

Two of the major themes that run throughout the series are trust and secrecy. What we see in this series is how secrecy spills into the personal lives of all these police officers and I guess if they are being forced to compromise as an occupational requirement, its kind of inevitable that some of that might seep into their real lives away from their job. When you're mixing business with pleasure a lot of that bubbles up and I guess you know Liz is forced into this position where she is constantly questioning her own decisions. Questioning the relationship that she was in and replaying all these things to try and decipher whether they were authentic or inauthentic, I guess or whether they were trustworthy.

How does character DC Paul Brandice develop throughout the series?

I think it's a case of Liz trying really hard to unravel and replay all of her encounters with Paul Brandice and trying to disentangle everything that went on between them. Her world has been rocked and she is questioning everything. It's an interesting development that runs in tandem with the professional side of things and the case itself. If there was a leak and some witnesses' identities were compromised, then who is behind that? Liz has got in some sense two investigations in which she needs to get to the bottom of, while her own domestic life is up in the air as well.

What makes witness protection different from other police units?

It is so shrouded in secrecy, not transparent at all. Even within the force let alone to the public, there's a really interesting subterfuge and mystery surrounding everything. They look like average joes, blend in very well, but by necessity in order to do their job they have to be able to. They work in these very normal bland buildings that could be anything. It's unbelievably interesting doing all that knowing the things you know. And then of course Paul Brandice may or may not be who or what he says he is, there's a lot to play with there. Paul has a firearm,

which not many people do, even in that department. What Protection offers as a tv show is a peek behind the curtain into that world.

Did you enjoy playing with the sense of secrecy and paranoia in the show?

Totally, when I was reading it initially it unfolds like a clever thriller and a whodunnit, you're constantly sifting for answers. I can only hope that viewers find it similarly intriguing and want to find out what the truth of it all is and get through the ambiguity that's presented. There's been quite a spate of recent tv and movies that are playing out political thrillers and conspiracies, which is very reflective of the times we live in. Those 70s movies you watch came off the back of Nixon and all this backhanded political net.

Could you describe Paul's relationship with Liz?

When we first see Paul and Liz together, I think it's clear there's undeniable and mutual attraction there, this grows especially when we see that in scenes of great intimacy. There's certainly mutual attraction, professional mutual admiration at play as well. They clearly like each other, but we are left questioning as Liz does throughout, how true and real Brandice's feelings are for her, was he at all times operating with an ulterior motive. It's forever ambiguous as we make our way through the series. The most innocuous pillow talk conversation or general questions people ask each other are loaded with the fear that there might be various reasons behind asking those questions. It's loaded and layered.

Did you enjoy the challenge of keeping Paul's real feelings a secret from the audience?

His motives are ambiguous, his morals might be questionable. There's a lot of intrigue and depth there, and truth be told I don't think it's an enormous challenge, you do the same with any new role. The writing makes you look smart, it's good fun.

What do you find appealing about your character?

I think the most appealing thing about Paul Brandice for me was the duplicity. You question is it a case of what you see is what you get or is there a much darker thing at play here. I just think that gives so much depth to a character.

What did you enjoy most about playing this role?

Besides good scripts and good stories and interesting roles, the people are what makes any project. I got on well with Simen, the director, we developed a really good relationship. With a role like this, in a complex web of plot you get to really mine it with the director. I have been a fan of Siobhan for years, so it was great to finally get to work with her.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SIOBHAN FINNERAN

Siobhan Finneran is a BAFTA nominated actress born in Manchester.

Siobhan is well known for her performance as Clare Cartwright in the BAFTA winning series 'Happy Valley' for which she was nominated for Best Supporting Actress at the 2024 BAFTA TV Awards. She made her acting debut in 1987 as the eponymous Rita in Alan Clarke's 'Rita, Sue and Bob Too.' Since then, she worked consistently in television drama including roles in Paul Abbott's 'Clocking Off', 'The Amazing Mrs Pritchard' and 'Bob & Rose'. Finneran's subsequent television roles included; Sarah O'Brien in the critically acclaimed 'Downton

Abbey', Janice Garvey in hugely successful ITV sitcom 'Benidorm', Christine Freeman in 'The Moorside' and Elaine Pickford in 'A Confession'. Notable film credits include The Selfish Giant, Apostasy, and Pond Life. Her most recent credits include 'The Stranger', 'Time', 'The Reckoning', 'Alma's Not Normal', and feature film 'The Damned.'

NADINE MARSHALL

Nadine is a BAFTA-nominated actress, and her credits include some of the best drama and comedy projects on British TV including Hugo Blick's THE SHADOW LINE, and Marc Munden's NATIONAL TREASURE. She received a BAFTA nomination for her starring role opposite Daniel Kaluuya in the multi-award-winning TV adaptation of Debbie Tucker Green's RANDOM, and then went on to receive critical acclaim for the solo performance at the Royal Court Theatre. On television, Nadine can most recently be seen starring in the hugely successful CHAMPION for BBC and has just wrapped a leading role in PROTECTION for ITV. Nadine also played a leading role in the Netflix series THE INNOCENTS and starred in the second series of Channel 4's THE END OF THE F**KING WORLD, Sky Atlantic's SAVE ME, and BBC's SITTING IN LIMBO, SILENT WITNESS, SHERWOOD and A SMALL AXE directed by Steve McQueen. For film, most recently she could be seen in the Bob Marley biopic ONE LOVE, she has also starred in the critically acclaimed SECOND COMING with Idris Elba and THE SILENT TWINS.

KATHERINE KELLY

British actress, Katherine Kelly was born and raised in Barnsley, South Yorkshire. Kelly rose to prominence with her portrayal of Becky McDonald on the ITV soap opera 'Coronation Street', for which she received multiple awards, including the British Soap Award for Best Actress in 2009 and the NTA for Best Serial Drama Performance in 2012. Kelly's subsequent television roles include Lady Mae in 'Mr Selfridge', DI Jodie Shackleton in 'Happy Valley', Miss Andrea Quill in 'Class', Jane Lowry in 'Strike Back', DCI Natalie Hobbs in 'Criminal: UK', Elizabeth Sutherland in 'Gentleman Jack', DI Karen Renton in 'Liar' and Sally Wright in 'Innocent'. Most recently Katherine played Emily Jackson in drama series 'The Long Shadow' and Angela van Den Bogerd in the critically acclaimed 'Mr Bates vs The Post Office'

BARRY WARD

Barry Ward is an Irish actor who has worked extensively in theatre, film, and television. Feature films include "Restless," "Prospect House," "That They May Face the Rising Sun," "Sunlight," "Burial," "The Ulysses Project," "Dating Amber," "Extra Ordinary," "Maze," "The Journey," "Realive," "Sunburn," "The Claim," "Bypass," "Pursuit," "The Truth Commissioner," the multi-award-nominated "Blood Cells" and the Ken Loach film "Jimmy's Hall" in which he played the historical figure of the title, 'Jimmy Gralton.' In 2024, Ward is appearing in Red Union Films' "On The Sea." Ward's television credits include "Clean Sweep," "Pistol," "Feel Good," "Anne Boleyn," "Des," "White Lines," "Save Me," "Britannia," "The Capture," "Gomorrhah," "Twice Upon a Time," "Taken Down," "The End Of The F***ing World," "The Fall", "Rebellion" and "Bad Sisters". Ward also appears in the series "Protection." Ward was nominated for a Best Lead Actor Award by IFTA in 2024 for "That They May Face the Rising Sun."

ABOUT NEW PICTURES

New Pictures produces bold, original and entertaining television drama for the UK and international market. Our productions have been recognised by many of the major awards bodies around the world including Golden Globes, Emmys, Bafta and RTS amongst many others.

Our credits encompass a broad slate of adaptations and originals – from acclaimed drama *The Long Shadow* (ITV/Sundance) to escapist treat *No Escape* (Paramount+), from Candice Carty Williams' *Champion* (BBC/Netflix) to Sky One juggernaut *COBRA*, from David Tennant starrer *Des* (ITV/Sundance) to Helen Mirren as Catherine the Great (Sky/HBO), and from Golden Globe nominated *The Missing* (BBC, Starz) to much loved *Dalgleish* (C5, Acorn).

We have a passion for extraordinary stories. The support and nurture of ambitious and authentic storytellers is at the heart of everything we do. It's our mission to ensure that every New Pictures production is true to the guiding vision of the writer, director or actor who conceived it. We believe that stories – whether dark or light, serious or funny – have the power to entertain, provoke and to bring communities together.

New Pictures was established by Charlie Pattinson, Elaine Pyke, Willow Grylls and Richard Nelson.

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