

British Broadcasting Corporation BBC Television Publicity  
Television Centre Wood Lane London W12 7RJ



## SPOOKS

### MI5 not 9 to 5

Matthew Macfadyen, Keeley Hawes, David Oyelowo, Jenny Agutter, Peter Firth and Lisa Faulkner lead the cast of *Spooks*, a major new drama series for BBC ONE starting in mid-May, which gives a unique insight into the secret world of MI5.

*Spooks* is created and written by David Wolstencroft, award-winning writer and creator of *Psychos*. The other members of the writing team are Simon Mirren and distinguished playwright Howard Brenton, who was prompted by the idea of *Spooks* to return to television after 15 years. The writers and cast were advised by ex-MI5 officers, helping to create a drama which gives an exciting glimpse of how spies operate and the way their job affects personal relationships.

*Spooks* is a Kudos production for BBC ONE. The directors are Bharat Nalluri (*Downtime*, *The Crow Salvation*), Rob Bailey (*Glasgow Kiss*) and Andy Wilson (*Gormenghast*, *Cracker*), the producer is Simon Crawford Collins and the series producer is Jane Featherstone, head of drama at Kudos, whose credits include *Touching Evil* and *Glasgow Kiss*. The executive producers are Stephen Garrett, Kudos' CEO, and Gareth Neame.

Series producer Jane Featherstone says: "*Spooks* is a topical and edgy drama about passion, jeopardy and the intrigue of people who have to lie for a living - and who can never tell the truth to their loved ones about what it is that they do. Our 'spooks' are heroic in the way that only ordinary people doing ordinary things can be. They are people like you and me, but they are dealing with a pro-life activist one week, a racist terrorist conspiracy the next, and an embassy siege the week after that."

Gareth Neame, Head of Independent Drama Commissioning for the BBC, says: "In a world where the role of the intelligence services and secret agents is being thrown into greater relief, *Spooks* is a timely new drama from a first-class creative team and a superb cast. MI5 are in the news every day - they're in the front line in the war against terrorism. But, until now, how they go about it has been hidden."

*Spooks* also features Hugh Laurie, Anthony Head, Lorcan Cranitch, Esther Hall, Lisa Eichhorn and Debra Stephenson. It filmed on location in and around London and the South East until March 2002.

Since its inception in 1992, Kudos has prided itself on its investment in new talent and its ability to make distinctive, original and high quality film, drama and factual programming. Their previous drama productions include the multi-award-winning *Psychos* for C4 and the International Emmy award-winning *The Magicians House* for BBC ONE.

---

---

---

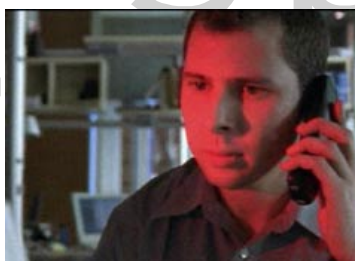
## Introduction



The attacks on America last September signalled the beginning of terrorism on a new terrifying scale. In March this year, MI6 announced it was doubling recruitment of front-line officers for the new 'war against terrorists'. Back at home, we officially face the biggest threat to national security since the Second World

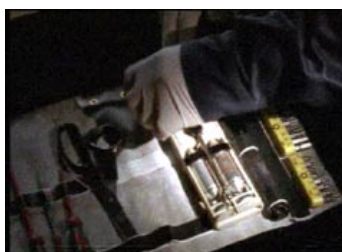
War. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, a spotlight is shining on our national Security Service, MI5. And for the first time since the early 80s, spies are back on our TV screens in *Spooks* - a drama about the highly-charged modern world of 'five'.

Bizarrely, the team behind *Spooks* were way ahead of world events. The scripts were written, and the project green-lit, well before September 11 last year. Perversely, the events of that day gave an extra dimension to the show. 'It really pushed the boundaries of what was credible,' explains Series Producer Jane Featherstone from Kudos Productions. 'We had to up the ante in some of the storylines in response to the audacity of the al-Qa'ida attacks.' As Executive Producer and Kudos Chief Executive Stephen Garrett puts it: 'A year ago no one have believed that a bunch of bearded men in caves could wreak havoc on the western world. Now anything is possible.'



Through the adventures of 'Section B' - a crack team of spies in MI5's counter-terrorism department led by Matthew Macfadyen as Senior Case Officer Tom Quinn - *Spooks* unlocks the secret world of the 21st century Security Service. As Featherstone points out, popular notions of what makes a spy - from James Bond to

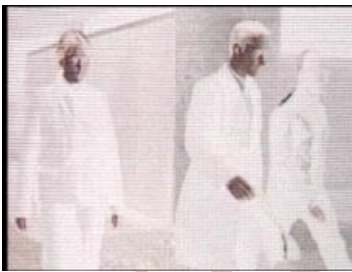
Austin Powers via George Smiley - have long been due an update. Under MI5's modern remit, its officers deal with anything from terrorist plots and immigration rings to arms smuggling and the drugs trade. Their job is to outwit the world's smartest criminal minds using their powers of perception and deception.



The tricks of their trade are fascinating - from the national network of 'backstops' (people to back up the details of their aliases) to the less sophisticated 'dead letter sites' - such as hollow tree trunks - where moles can leave messages for officers. These are serious games, and the stakes are as high as they come.

But the super-charged world of a spy comes with a price. In today's society, which defines a person primarily by their job, spies can never reveal what they actually do. In searching for the truth, their lives are a lie. It was a fascinating premise that the *Spooks* team explored by giving Tom Quinn a girlfriend who knows him only as Matthew Archer - one of his alias identities. 'You can't tell new boyfriends or girlfriends what you do until they have been thoroughly vetted,' explains Featherstone. 'None of the normal rules of identity apply.'

To get to grips with the detail of MI5 life, Kudos consulted 'Diligence', a corporate intelligence company run by ex-MI5, KGB and CIA officers. Their advice was gold dust, particularly when it came to the essential detail about MI5 methods and motivations. The *Spooks* team concluded that it took a very specific mindset to make someone want to be a spy. 'It's a morally ambiguous, duplicitous world,' explains Garrett. 'A spy thinks the same way as a criminal.' Diligence boss Nick Day puts it more simply: 'Spying is professional blagging.'



The consultation with Day and his team was part of a wider collaborative approach for the whole production. Before any dialogue was written, the three writers, Featherstone and a script editor held an American-style story conference to map out characters and plots. 'It's unusual in British drama,' explains Featherstone. 'But it really works. It gets ideas flowing and enthusiasm going. Plus, we had a fantastic time.'

With scripts completed and a cracking cast on board, including Keeley Hawes, Peter Firth, Jenny Agutter and David Oyelowo as the other key MI5 operatives, the production team needed to find their 'grid' - the open-plan offices in their Thames House headquarters which are their operational nerve-centre. They found the perfect location hidden within the Georgian grandeur of residential Kensington: a dilapidated, labyrinthine old University of London building due to be replaced with multi-million pound apartments. It was freezing, but it was huge, empty and available for the five-month shoot.

As filming progressed, the action-packed scripts threw up other difficulties, such as getting clearance to film gun chases around Trafalgar Square and finding a location to safely - and inoffensively - explode a bomb soon after the Twin Towers attack. After a long search, Chiswick Council came to the rescue.

The strangest behind-the-scenes event, however, occurred soon after Garrett had first dreamt up the *Spooks* concept in the John Le Carre section of a bookshop. A researcher doing some

initial groundwork discovered that, unknown to him, both his aunt *and* his father had been employed by MI5. 'It changes the way you look at the world,' says Garrett. 'Anyone you know or come across in daily life could be an agent or a spy. If you think about it, do any of us know what all our friends and family actually do for a living?'

- ends -

[ spooks ]

## Life in Five

Nick Day, ex-MI5 officer and *Spooks* research consultant on working for the Security Service.

MI5 officers operate at the coal-face of the information age. Despite recent moves towards openness - including the creation of a website - MI5 remains an impenetrable world and the *Spooks* team faced a real challenge to portray it realistically. Step up Nick Day, an ex-Spook who now runs a corporate intelligence agency called *Diligence*. Thanks to Nick's advice, says Exec Producer Stephen Garrett, *Spooks* is soaked in atmosphere: 'We're not giving away the big political stuff of MI5,' he says. 'Instead we're like one of those mischievous programmes that tell you how magic tricks are done.'

Nick Day joined MI5 from the Special Boat Service (SBS) in 1996 and spent two years in the counter Middle East terrorism department. This is his account of life in 'five':

'I joined for the challenge and the excitement. 'Intelligence' is defined as 'Assessed Information'. Whether information is gathered covertly or from public sources, everything an MI5 officer does is geared to assessment - judging the relevance, the truth and risks contained in intelligence.

'Naturally, *Spooks* employs artistic license, and the characters' operations are extremely varied. In real life, an officer works for one specific department for two or three years like a counter terrorism or counter intelligence department. But there are also departments which provide resources across all target areas like the 'Watchers' - surveillance experts - and the 'Buggers and Burglars' who break into buildings and place bugs.

'A General Intelligence Officer could work on up to four or five operations at any one time. They will all be at different stages: for example you could be dealing with the drafting of a warrant to tap a phone line in the morning and then heading out to work on recruiting an agent undercover.

'To work undercover, you need an alias. Long-standing officers could be running up to 30 aliases. Building an alias is a very long process. As well as documentation, you need a history or legend to make it credible (where you went to school, what jobs you had, where you have lived) and 'backstops' - people who can vouch for your story if a target gets suspicious.

'There are in-house resources to help you create a legend including a costume department and a props department, which produces the essential minutiae known as 'wallet litter' - ticket stubs, travelcards etc. It's important to 'sanitise' your kit and clothes, meaning you keep each alias separate. You lock one identity away before taking up another.

'Initial training takes two months, but officers continue to attend courses throughout their careers in anything from lock-picking to the use of codes. Instructors like to test their pupils. One classic training trick is to put a cat inside the door of a building so that it escapes when you break in and you have to spend hours retrieving it. Wet concrete behind a door so that you leave footprints in is another favourite.

'There is a lot of paper work as well. MI5 is a supremely careful and thorough organisation. Every operation, no matter how small, must be approved through the right channels and there are a number of legal controls. For example, you have to be very careful when recruiting a potential informant, or agent. You can't encourage someone to break the law.

'MI5 agents have a wide variety of motivations. Some are in it for money, but the majority have a sense of moral responsibility. The aim is to recruit long term agents. For deep penetration of an organisation, MI5 might recruit 'clean skins' - people who haven't yet joined the target group. Other agents are already within an organisation, and others still are simply people with regular contact with targets, like pub landlords.

'Recruiting an agent, known as 'turning' is a long process. You need to research their background and find a way to gain their trust. Approaching a potential agent under an alias with common interests is often more successful than throwing money at them. In one famous case though, an Army Intelligence officer boarded a bus and dropped an envelope into the lap of an IRA guy. He said 'there's £10,000 pounds. I'm with British intelligence. Give me a call'. The Irish man just threw the money back at him. A republican newspaper ran the story and the security services were then inundated with calls from other republicans saying the other guy might not have wanted the money but they'd be more than happy to help!

'Some of the work is incredibly exciting, but civil service wages are not so great. A lot of people leave in their thirties to do something more lucrative. A friend from the CIA and I are now running a corporate intelligence agency called Diligence. Companies employ us for all kinds of information gathering: to establish the background and assets of clients and suppliers, to check out what rival companies are up to, or to assess various corporate risks.

'After September 11<sup>th</sup>, the corporate intelligence industry is booming. Bin Laden laundered money through institutions, and people are now much more wary about who their clients and suppliers are. They want transparency in their deals which is not always forthcoming. 'We also advise businessmen travelling to countries like Chechnya and Columbia who may run the risk of being kidnapped. My top tip for paranoid potential kidnappees is to develop awareness. Kidnappers and terrorists almost always watch their targets before they strike. Watch out for people following you and avoid washing your car. That way you can see if it's been tampered with!'

## **Spy Speak**

A glossary of MI5 terms

### **Five**

MI5, officially known as the Security Service, was founded in 1909 to protect national security from internal threats. In 1996, its remit was broadened to include supporting the police in preventing 'serious crime'. There are currently around 1900 staff based at MI5's headquarters Thames House in London. Over half are under 40 and just under 50 per cent are women. MI5 officers often work closely with MI6, the police, the government and foreign agencies.

### **The sister service**

MI6, or Secret Intelligence Service, which deals with security risks which originate abroad.

### **Spook**

MI5 slang for an operational officer.

### **Agent**

Someone who sits within, or has contact with, a targeted organisation. Not MI5 staff - each agent is *run* by an officer. Some agents are paid, others are motivated by moral duty or simply the thrill of covert operations. MI5 aims to recruit agents for as long as possible. Some may be actively involved in an operation, others may be watching and waiting to be of use. Agents can contact an officer at any time via secret codes.

### **Safe house**

A building - usually run-of-the-mill domestic accommodation - used by officers to meet agents. Each safe house will have a system of signals to indicate whether it is clear to enter. For example: an ornament in the window facing right indicates it is unsafe; facing left gives the all clear.

### **Dead letter-box**

Sometimes it may be too dangerous for an agent to meet an officer, and a dead letter box is used to pass messages. This could be under a stone in a park or in hollow in a tree. An agent might drop off the message on his morning jog and an officer pick it up while walking her dog. A system of signals will be used, like chalk marks on lamp posts or bus stops, to indicate there is a message waiting for retrieval. Messages are literally pieces of paper written in code or, sometimes, invisible ink.

### **Brush contact**

Another means of passing information. An agent and officer arrange to 'meet' at a busy location (often a rush hour tube or train, or a pub). The agent will exit, leaving the message behind for the agent to pick up or vice versa.

### **Legend**

The detailed history and background of an alias identity: where he/she was born and educated; employment and relationship history etc. It is useful your legend is difficult to verify - aliases are often 'born' in countries with no official birth records system or have 'worked' in companies that have gone into liquidation.

### **Backstop**

A person who can vouch for your legend if a target starts asking questions. For example, someone living in a house your alias purports to have lived in or someone who pretends to be an old college friend.

### **Watcher**

An MI5 officer who specialises in surveillance.

### **Buggers and Burglars**

MI5 slang for CMOs - officers who are experts in Covert Methods of Entry, i.e. breaking into buildings and planting bugs.



### **Going native**

MI5 slang for an officer going so far underground on an operation, they start genuinely living their alias's life. For example, an officer working on a drugs sting who picks up a habit of his/her own.

### **Jammer**

A special piece of equipment used to jam electromagnetic signals in a public area - especially useful for cutting out mobile phone signals during a bomb alert.

## **THE CAST**

### **PRINCIPAL ARTISTS**

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| TOM QUINN          | MATTHEW MACFADYEN |
| ZOE REYNOLDS       | KEELEY HAWES      |
| DANNY HUNTER       | DAVID OYELOWO     |
| HARRY PEARCE       | PETER FIRTH       |
| TESSA PHILLIPS     | JENNY AGUTTER     |
| HELEN FLYNN        | LISA FAULKNER     |
| ELLIE SIMM         | ESTHER HALL       |
| MAISIE SIMM        | HEATHER CAVE      |
| MALCOLM WYNN-JONES | HUGH SIMON        |
| JED KELLEY         | GRAEME MEARNES    |

### **EPISODE ONE**

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| MARY KANE      | LISA EICHHORN |
| CHRISTINE DALE | MEGAN DODDS   |

### **EPISODE TWO**

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| OSBORNE        | KEVIN MCNALLY    |
| CLAIRE OSBORNE | DEBRA STEPHENSON |
| BILL WATSON    | JASPER JACOB     |

### **EPISODE THREE**

|              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| JOHNNY MARKS | CHRISTOPHER FULFORD |
| LEYLA        | KATIE JONES         |
| SERKA        | KARZAN KREKAR       |
| CHALAK       | RAY PANTHAKI        |
| SONAY        | OLIVER HADEN        |
| SAM WALKER   | RALPH INESON        |

### **EPISODE FOUR**

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| PETER SALTER  | ANTHONY HEAD |
| JOOLS SIVITER | HUGH LAURIE  |

ANDREA CHAMBERS

BRONWEN DAVIES

**EPISODE FIVE**

JOOLS SIVITER

HUGH LAURIE

HAMPTON WILDER

TIM PIGOTT-SMITH

RICHARD MAYNARD

NICHOLAS FARRELL

SERGAI LERMOV

DAVID CALDER

**EPISODE SIX**

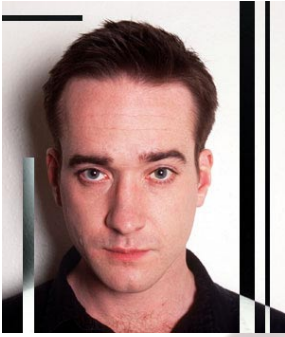
PATRICK MCCANN

LORCAN CRANITCH

[ spooks ]

## THE CREW

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| SERIES CREATOR                     | DAVID WOLSTENCROFT   |
| WRITERS                            | DAVID WOLSTENCROFT (EPISODES 1, 2 & 6)<br>SIMON MIRREN (EPISODE 3)<br>HOWARD BRENTON (EPISODES 4, 5 & 6) |
| SERIES PRODUCER                    | JANE FEATHERSTONE  |
| PRODUCER                           | SIMON CRAWFORD COLLINS   |
| DIRECTORS                          | BHARAT NALLURI (EPISODES 1 & 2)<br>ROB BAILEY (EPISODES 3 & 4)<br>ANDY WILSON (EPISODES 5 & 6)           |
| EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS                | STEPHEN GARRETT & GARETH NEAME   |
| LINE PRODUCER                      | LEILA KIRKPATRICK  |
| DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY            | SUE GIBSON, BSC (EPISODES 1, 2, 5 & 6)<br>SEAN BOBBITT (EPISODES 3 & 4)                                  |
| EDITORS                            | COLIN GREEN (EPISODES 1, 2, 5 & 6)<br>SOREN B. EBBE (EPISODES 3 & 4)                                     |
| PRODUCTION DESIGNER                | LINDA STEFANSDOTTIR  |
| COSTUME DESIGNER                   | ANDREA GALER   |
| MAKE-UP DESIGNER                   | ALISON DAVIES  |
| CASTING DIRECTOR                   | GAIL STEVENS   |
| SCRIPT EDITOR                      | KAREN WILSON   |
| SOUND RECORDIST                    | DAVID CROZIER (EPISODES 1 & 2)<br>ANDREW SISSONS (EPISODES 3, 4, 5 & 6)                                  |
| LOCATION MANAGER                   | RALPH CAMERON (EPISODES 1, 2, 3 & 4)<br>MALCOLM TREEN (EPISODES 5 & 6)                                   |
| 1 <sup>ST</sup> ASSISTANT DIRECTOR | MARK GODDARD (EPISODES 1, 2, 5 & 6)<br>FRANCESCO REIDY (EPISODES 3 & 4)                                  |



## Matthew Macfadyen

Name: Tom Quinn

Age: 32

Position: Senior Case Officer, Section B, Counter-Terrorism, MI5

Dependents: Girlfriend Ellie Simm - Vetting in Process.

Aliases include: Matthew Archer, Steve Wilkes, Davy Crockett

*Tom Quinn is one of MI5's brightest officers. He is a gifted leader and razor-sharp thinker. As a senior case officer, his team includes the brilliant junior spooks Zoe Reynolds and Danny Hunter. Tom's great passion is his job and he has little time for a personal life - until he falls in love with restaurant owner Ellie Simm while on surveillance. But there's a problem - Ellie knows him only as his alias Matthew Archer. As Ellie's suspicion grows, Tom is more terrified of revealing the truth. Is there any future for a relationship built on lies?*

---

Matthew Macfadyen found the role of senior spook Tom Quinn extremely disorientating. One moment particularly sticks in his mind. He was shooting a dinner party scene in which Tom is introduced to his new girlfriend's friends. Ellie, his girlfriend, still thinks Tom is Matthew Archer - the alias he was using when they met. 'During the scene one guy turns to me and asks 'so Matthew what do you do?'' remembers Macfadyen. 'That's my real name of course, and it completely threw me. I was Matthew playing Tom playing Matthew. I couldn't get my head round it at all. I was all over the place!'

On less confusing days, Macfadyen says the role was 'plain fascinating'. A self-confessed 'John Le Carre-style spy buff', he hadn't reckoned with the unglamorous minutiae of real life MI5 work. 'On TV, every episode is full of action,' he explains. 'But real-life Spooks are playing the long game. It can take six months or more to recruit an agent you think is ripe for turning. It must take incredible patience.'

Macfadyen's character Tom Quinn has the perfect mix of spy characteristics: clinical intelligence combined with healthy doses of arrogance and ruthlessness. As the actor puts it: 'You have to set a thief to catch a thief.' He starts to question his commitment to his job when he can't tell his girlfriend who he really is. Macfadyen discovered just how plausible this scenario was. Mike Baker, an ex-CIA man who acted as a consultant on the show, revealed that for the first six months that he dated his wife, she thought he was someone else entirely. 'There's the added complication that your job could put your loved ones at risk,' says Macfadyen. 'It must be a complete nightmare for real spies.'

This 'nightmare' often leads to real MI5 officers having relationships with one another. It's something Macfadyen can relate to. His last girlfriend was an actress (they split up last year and he is now living the single life in a loft-style apartment near Old Street) and he admits that 'sadly' he doesn't know many people outside of the business. 'Most of my friends are actors, directors and writers,' he explains. 'My best friend is an actor and it's great because we can console each other when we don't get parts.'

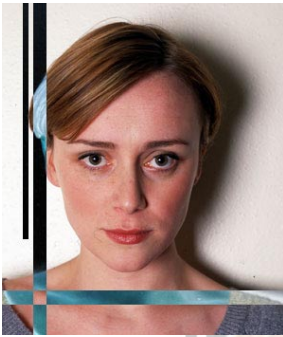
It's doubtful that his best mate has much comforting to do at present. Since leaving RADA in 1995, Macfadyen's career has gone from strength to strength. He spent three solid years wowing theatre critics before his screen-break came in 1999 in Peter Kosminsky's *Warriors*. Well-chosen roles in Stephen Poliakoff's *Perfect Strangers* and the recent Anthony Trollope adaptation *The Way We Live Now* followed and he is soon to work with Kosminsky again on a much-anticipated drama about New Labour's 1997 election campaign. As he says, 'there's a lot of dross out there in TV land'. Macfadyen's done well to avoid it.

Macfadyen thinks that a childhood spent moving around (his Dad's oil company job took the family as far afield as the Far East and Brazil) gave him a certain 'nous before my years'. Having said that, he points out, not *all* his career decisions have been successful. He was horrified by his performance in Ben Elton's *Maybe Baby*: 'I was rubbish. I saw myself up on screen and nearly died.'

But every great actor is allowed a few mistakes and Macfadyen is certainly being hailed as one of Britain's finest hopes. But when he takes stock of his many achievements so far, what counts as a highlight? Bizarrely, it's a hairstyle: 'I have very straight hair, but on *The Way We Live Now* it was bouffed and curled to within an inch of its life,' he grins. 'That made me very happy indeed.'

- ends -

[ spooks ]



### Keeley Hawes

Name: Zoe Reynolds

Age: 26

Position: Junior Case Officer, Section B

Dependents: None

Aliases include: Sarah Logan, Emily Arlington (PR consultant)

*Zoe is one of MI5's fastest-rising young officers. She is intelligent and self-possessed beyond her 26 years, and a firm favourite with her team leader -Tom Quinn. Whether it's winning the trust of a potential informant or going undercover as a terrorist target, Tom knows Zoe is up to any task. If she had to admit it, she sometimes finds her assignments terrifying - but she'd never let it show. Working for MI5 is all that Zoe has ever wanted and she means to make it to the top.*

---

Keeley Hawes is getting her head shaved. As soon as *Spooks* is over, all her hair is coming off for her role as a nineteenth century lesbian who works as a music hall male impersonator in BBC Two's *Tipping the Velvet*. As the actress's career progresses, her hair gets shorter. Gone are the days of long flowing locks wound into intricate styles for *Wives and Daughters* and *Our Mutual Friend*. And for her role in *Spooks* her style is somewhere in-between. Appropriately for an MI5 hotshot with zero time for a beauty regime, she's wearing a boyish bob tucked behind her ears.

'It's been great getting my teeth into an action role,' says the softly spoken 26-year-old. 'I just love all the gadgets. We had great fun with the binoculars - they are so powerful you can look into houses across the street and see people's framed photographs. But I wasn't quite as taken with the guns as Matthew and David (Macfadyen and Oyelowo, who play her MI5 team-mates Tom and Danny). They were charging down corridors and rolling around on the floor like little boys!'

It was the parallels between acting and spying that really gripped Hawes when she first read the *Spooks* scripts. An officer has to be ready to slip into an alias at any time, with up each spy having up to ten 'live' cases on the go. 'A spy has to be brilliant at improvising and picking up on other people's behaviour', she explains. 'But unlike acting, your life depends on it and I'm sure some MI5 officers become compulsive liars!'

Observing how others behave is one of Zoe's great strengths and she is often given the job of approaching and befriending a potential informant in the more tricky undercover stings. 'Zoe has that fantastic ability to tune in to another human being,' explains producer Jane Featherstone. 'The ex-spies we spoke to said that women officers are generally better than men at reading people because they can do that chameleon-like thing of imitating and mimicking others.'

While mimicking would be no problem for an established actress like Keeley Hawes, she thinks she'd have trouble with other aspects of being a spy. 'I couldn't bear not telling anyone what I did,' she explains. 'One drink with mates and I'd blurt the whole thing out! Zoe puts up with it because MI5 is all she's ever wanted to do, but until she moves in with Danny (later in the series), she has had a very lonely home life.'

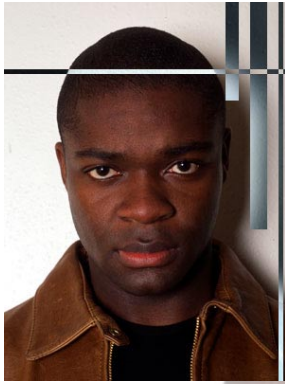
Loneliness is a pretty alien concept to the actress. The North London cabby's daughter is currently enjoying domestic bliss in deepest Surrey with her husband Spencer and Myles, their 19 month-old son. She always knew she wanted to have children at a relatively young age. 'All my family had kids young and you tend to follow those patterns don't you?' she muses. 'We weren't desperate for it to happen immediately but within about 30 seconds of deciding to give it a go I was pregnant. Now there I am, living in a house in Esher with a husband who works from home!' She roars with laughter at the novelty of calling Spencer her 'husband': they married during the filming of *Spooks*.

Today, Hawes' life is all about balancing motherhood with work. Since Myles was born, she has clocked up TV roles in *A is for Acid* with Martin Clunes, *Lucky Jim* with Stephen Tomkinson and ITV's modern-day *Othello* with Christopher Ecclestone. She admits that going out isn't much of an option these days, but then she never had any time for luvvy-esque socialising. The only showbiz friend she remains in contact with from their training days at Sylvia Young's Theatre School is Kellie Bright, who has just scored her first big-screen success as 'Me Julie' in *Ali G in Da House*. 'Kellie's just finished playing a lesbian in *'Bad Girls'* for ITV,' says Hawes. 'What with my part in *Tipping the Velvet* it's turning into quite a lesbian year for the pair of us!' Is she nervous about her first same-sex on-screen kiss? 'I think it's probably worse when it's a boy...' she says thoughtfully. 'I'm actually quite excited about it!'

- ends -

[ spooks ]





### David Oyelowo

Name: Danny Hunter

Age: 25

Position: Junior Case Officer, Section B

Dependents: None

Aliases include: Chris Patterson, Estate Agent

Active agents include: Osprey

*Danny is young, sharp and on the make. He's a talented 'watcher' - surveillance expert - and Section B's newest recruit. If there's a computer to be hacked or a code to be cracked, technical genius Danny is your man. He's blown away by the powers of his new job - and can't resist experimenting with them. Danny's finally living his MI5 dream and is very impatient to prove himself. He finds Zoe's 'golden girl' status hard to handle, but deep down he's in awe of her, and it's thrown him. Danny 'supercool' Hunter at a loss over a woman? He never thought he'd see the day...*

---

David Oyelowo still can't believe his luck. 'I actually got to run around Trafalgar Square with a gun,' muses the 25-year-old actor who plays hot new recruit Danny Hunter. 'It's classic playground stuff - muttering into your imaginary lapel microphone or wearing a headset pretending you're on surveillance. I'm amazed I'm getting paid for it!' He smiles and snuggles back into a funky brown leather sofa on the set of his *Spooks* 'flat'.

Once he'd got used to the guns and gadgets, it was the low-wage, less glamorous side of being a spy that made a big impression on Oyelowo. 'What you see in *Spooks* is the highlights of an entire MI5 career,' he explains. 'There's actually a lot of pen pushing and hanging around. Danny's the surveillance whizzkid, but monitoring people in vans amounts to ten hours eating doughnuts and ten seconds of action when it all goes off. Plus, the actual action can be incredibly dangerous. One of the ex-spies we met had to carry a friend who'd been shot 40 km across the Afghan mountains. Where's the glamour when you're on your tod out in the snow?'

The research sessions with ex-spies helped Oyelowo understand Danny's kid-in-a-sweetshop excitement about his new job. 'You can't believe the access level MI5 has into peoples' lives,' he explains. 'Once someone's suspected of a security breach - even if they just type certain words into the internet - MI5 officers have carte blanche to check you out. They can tap your phone remotely, send someone round to bug the place, look at your emails, whatever.'

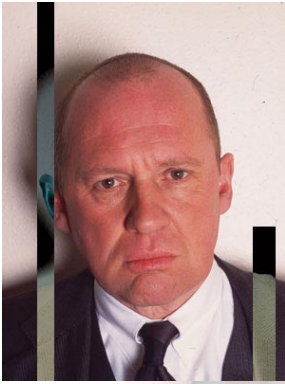
Danny revels in his new authority, but finds it difficult to settle within office dynamics. His working-class roots set him apart from the middle-class office majority - including Zoe and Tom - and he has a feeling that his skin-colour played a big part in his landing the job. 'Over the past few years, MI5 have been trying to recruit more officers from ethnic minorities,' explains Oyelowo, who was born in Oxford to Nigerian parents. 'And, in *Spooks*, that's a real chip on Danny's shoulder. He is attracted to Zoe and his doubts about why he got his job add to his confusion. Zoe's very middle class and better than him at her job - two things he's never come across before and a woman he fancies. Plus she becomes his flat-mate - talk about taking work issues home with you!'

Oyelowo runs the risk of doing the same - he has been married to Jessica, an actress he met when he was 16, for three years. But thanks to Asha, their beautiful four-month-old son, and unusually deep religious beliefs, he says home life in Brighton is blissfully happy. 'You can't build your life on a foundation as shaky as acting,' he explains. 'There aren't many committed Christians in our profession, but I think many actors end up worshipping their careers and transfer responsibility for their self-esteem onto their audience.'

But even without God, Oyelowo's self-esteem would surely be riding high. Since graduating from LAMDA three and a half years ago, he has seduced London's theatre critics as one of the RSC's bright young hopes. Last year he won the Ian Charleson Award for best newcomer in a classical play for his lead role in Michael Boyd's production of *Henry VI*. Like Danny, he wants to avoid a career shaped by his ethnic background. His biggest ambition is to play a lead role on mainstream TV in which skin-colour is totally irrelevant - something, he points out, that has yet to happen to any black actor in Britain. 'But I'm doing OK so far at avoiding pigeon-holes,' he smiles. 'Breaking the mould doesn't come better than playing a black king of England!'

- ends -

[ spooks ]



## **Peter Firth**

Name: Harry Pearce

Age: 52

Position: Head of counter-terrorism department, MI5

Career: Army officer

Dependents: Wife and child

*Harry is the head of the counter-terrorism department, and old-school MI5. After an impressive early career in the army, he was headhunted by the Security Service and worked his way up through the ranks. Harry's been there, done that and is highly-respected by the teams of case officers he oversees. As one of MI5's most senior officers, he must be a consummate diplomat and manage the regular interferences of MI6, the police, the foreign office and even the FBI and CIA. Despite his bluff manner, Harry is extremely wise and is not afraid to take advice from his favourite senior officer - Tom Quinn - on the rare occasion that he's stuck for ideas.*

---

'If I told you I'd have to kill you,' booms actor Peter Firth when asked what sort of research he did for his role in *Spooks*. Kitted out in his *Spooks* costume he looks like a man powerful enough to do just that. He is, of course, only kidding, but his answer is pure Harry Pearce. 'As a senior MI5 officer, he has to act as judge and jury,' Firth explains. 'The buck stops with him when difficult decisions have to be made. There are no rules or higher authorities. And the line between good and bad get blurred because you are dealing in such a shadowy world.'

Such morally ambiguous responsibilities clearly need a special kind of person. 'My day-to-day job is to bring weight and experience to the daily pressing situations,' explains Firth. 'I'm the dad figure. The team has to be answerable to someone.' And being 'Dad' is a pretty time-consuming job? 'Definitely,' says Firth. 'Somebody's got to be running things. Harry's often at the office beyond midnight. He's got a wife and child somewhere, but really he's married to his job.'

It was, says Firth, fascinating to unravel the mysterious world of real-life modern *Spooks*: 'I was intrigued by how crap the money is and how archaic some of the little tricks are. Despite all the IT we have today, they still pass round messages written in invisible ink. That's pure Smiley's People!'

The actor enjoyed getting his teeth into such a wholly British story. He and his family recently moved back to Oxfordshire after a three-year stint living in L.A. Firth dipped his toe in the Hollywood waters with roles in *Amistad*, *Mighty Joe Young*, *Chill Factor* and *Pearl Harbour*. The last one was, he says, less impressive than it sounds: 'It was a tiny part, but my agent said I'd be a fool not to have it on my 'resumé'. That's what gets attention in Hollywood, the recognisable names. Being associated with them gets you commercial credibility. It's a sad fact, but true.'

It's understandable if Firth sounds slightly jaded - he and Hollywood go back a long way. His first visit was to attend the 1977 Oscars where he was up for Best Supporting Actor for his legendary performance as psychotic Alan Strang in *Equus*. 'Everyone was there,' he remembers. 'Even the 1940s and 1950s greats like Katherine Hepburn, Gregory Peck, James Stewart,

Bette Davis and Anthony Perkins.’ He says his strongest memory was discovering that the crowds outside were film extras bussed in to provide photogenic ‘atmosphere’. And his abiding memory from his recent spell as a California resident? ‘The atrocious education system. When your children [he has four] come home and tell you they spent their whole day doing a mock movie-budget you know it’s time to go home!’

So it was back to England, back to a British project and back working with a favourite co-star - Jenny Agutter who plays senior MI5 case officer Tessa Phillips. The Firth and Agutter double act first made waves in *Equus* playing lovers partial to naked romps in the hay. Years later, they played a less exuberant couple in Channel 4’s 1996 series *And the Beat Goes On*. This time, things aren’t so sweet. ‘In *Spooks*, we are more like adversaries,’ Firth says. ‘Tessa annoys Harry intensely - and he doesn’t trust her. But we’re having great fun with it. I feel I know Jenny as a best friend even though over 30 years we’ve barely seen each other. That’s what happens when you spend a long time naked together.’ He pauses before adding hastily: ‘I’m talking about *Equus*, of course!’

- ends -

[ spooks ]



## Jenny Agutter

Name: Tessa Phillips

Age: 48

Position: Senior Case Officer, Section K, Counter-Terrorism MI5

Dependents: None

Active agents include: Billy Turner, anti-globalisation  
campaigner

*Tessa is astute, acerbic and ambitious. Like Tom Quinn, she heads up a section in MI5's counter-terrorism department under Harry Pearce. But while 32-year-old Tom seems to be forging a path up the MI5 ranks, Tessa is content to maintain her current position. In MI5, the only way to make decent money is to hit a top position but after more than 20 years in the service, Tessa is more than happy to stay in a 'hands-on' but less scrutinised role. To Zoe Reynolds, Tessa's slick, no-nonsense manner is something to emulate. But Harry is not so sure. He suspects there is more to Tessa's cynicism than meets the eye. As the series unfolds, it becomes clear his hunch was right.*

---

Jenny Agutter is dressed to kill in a chic suit and a sharp bob for her role as *Spooks*' scheming senior officer. It's a far cry from bloomer-brandishing Bobbie Waterbury in 1970's *The Railway Children*, the role that made Agutter something of a British institution - and the actress says she has relished the chance to play 'a self-obsessed control-freak.'

'It's great to play someone very different from you,' she explains. 'Morally, I'm a bit prudish, but Tessa is very cynical. She's very solitary too. She has all the trappings of a successful bachelorette - a modern apartment with loads of gadgets, gourmet takeaway meals every night and champagne permanently in the fridge - but she never lets anyone get too close to her. She's just looking after numero uno.'

According to Agutter, Tessa is a classic example of someone who is a spy for the wrong reasons: 'Some of the *Spooks* episodes focus on MI5 in action out in the field - the adrenaline-fuelled moments and the thrill of the chase. But Tessa's story is about the intellectual subtleties, the dangers of corruption from within. When you have so many bright, excitement-driven people in one place, someone's bound to get bored and wander of the beaten track.'

The inherent security service paradox is that if someone wants to bite the hand that feeds, they are fully trained to do so. 'Lying and manipulation are part of the job,' explains Agutter. 'And you are your own moral guardian, so the lines can get very blurred. Tessa just dabbling on the side and I expect she doesn't even think she's doing anything wrong. It reminded me of the US drama *The Sopranos* - Tony Soprano hates being late for dinner, but he is fine with shooting someone! You just make up your morality as you go along.'

Twelve years ago, Agutter gave up the life of an L.A. singleton to marry Johan Tham, a Swiss hotelier, and have a baby (Jonathan, now 11). For a woman who spent 17 years living in 'image-conscious, money-driven' California, she seems remarkably unscathed. She says she was saved from L.A.'s 'seamier side' by regular work and a good circle of friends. Not that it wasn't difficult at times - she remembers her publicist being aghast at her wanting to do a play ('people

will think you're out of work!') and being overwhelmed by all the commercialism. But she has no regrets: 'I was hot and cold and in and out, but it was sunny and I loved making movies. I couldn't see myself ending up at the Golden Crest retirement centre though. It was good to come home.'

It was the draw of 'the movies' that first took Agutter to L.A. at the tender age of 21. After early roles in *The Railway Children*, Australian outback film *Walkabout* and *Snow Goose*, for which she won an Emmy, Agutter did a stint under Peter Hall at the National Theatre. She quickly realised that her heart lay in cinema and packed her bags and headed Stateside. She landed a role in *Logan's Run* with Peter Ustinov within a matter of weeks.

Last year, Agutter ignited a blaze of publicity when she took the role of Bobbie's mother in ITV's remake of *The Railway Children*. Was it an attempt to lay the original film to rest? 'It's funny,' she smiles. 'People always ask if I went to America to escape *Railway Children*. But I only became aware of the huge affection for it when I came back. People treasure it because it's so innocent and Bobby reminds them of their lost youth.' She is lost in thought for just a second, before adding, 'Which is pretty perverse when you consider I'm going to be 50 this year!'

- ends -

[ spooks ]



## Lisa Faulkner

Name: Helen Flynn

Age: 26

Position: Admin Support, Counter-Terrorism Department, MI5

Dependents: None

Aliases include: Susan Wilkes

*Helen Flynn is possibly the most efficient office clerk MI5 has ever seen. But she is frustrated with her job. More than anything, she wants to be is a fully-fledged Spook. All she can do is keep her ears to the ground and learn as much as she can from watching her heroes, Zoe and Tom, at work. Her hard work doesn't go unnoticed, and when Tom needs a 'wife' at short notice for an undercover sting, he gives Helen her break. Helen's job is to befriend a woman whose abusive husband is suspected of running a National Front cell. She's ecstatic, but has she bitten off more than she can chew?*

---

After five years as a soap star, in *Holby City* and *Brookside*, Lisa Faulkner says that her first TV action role was a dream come true. 'I was so over-excited at my audition for *Spooks*,' she laughs. 'I spent the whole meeting asking if spies still did things like leave newspapers on tubes with messages in the crossword.' Her fanaticism did the trick and she landed the role of Helen, the office clerk with big ambitions. Faulkner reckons she wouldn't make a bad spy herself, as long as she could concentrate on the action side: 'I'd love to just do the 'out in the field' work. When we filmed that side of things, I was running on adrenaline all day. It was such a buzz.'

The MI5 office politics, however, she says she could do without. 'I had a bit of a love-hate relationship with Helen,' she explains. 'She's a bit of a hero-worshipper. She's desperate to be good mates with Zoe and she even makes a really cringey move on her boss Tom. Plus she has to deal with another senior officer, Tessa, being a total cow talking down to her like a bog-standard secretary. I couldn't deal with that every day.'

The actress says she's met her fair share of detractors in her own field of work. 'I didn't go to drama school and along the way I've met people who assume that means you can't act,' she says. 'But you just have to be determined. I always wanted to be an actress but it wasn't until my Mum died [of cancer when Faulkner was 16] that I realised I had to just go and do it. You just have to take the negative stuff in your stride.'

Did Faulkner, like many of the other actors in *Spooks*, think that spying was like a more life-or-death version of being an actor? She laughs. 'It's actually the polar opposite. When you're a spy no-one knows what you do, when you're an actress your life is everybody's business.' It's a career hazard that took Faulkner a long time to come to terms with. During her early time on *Holby City*, she and co-stars Angela Griffin and Nicola Stephenson got a press reputation for being boozy party animals. 'We didn't go out that often, but if we did we got photographed every time,' she remembers. 'It was a nightmare waking up and seeing pictures of yourself pissed in the back of a cab.'

As her career has progressed, Faulkner's boyfriends have become more high profile. During her *Brookside* days, she dated fellow



soap-actor Sean Maguire and as her time in *Holby City* came to an end, she went out with *South Park* creator Trey Parker. The relationship ended painfully - 'It was real heartbreak' she says. 'Never go out with a genius.' - and it was all closely monitored by the press. Her wariness of media gossip meant that she and actor Jonny Lee Miller waited to 'go public' after getting together last summer. 'Eventually, we held hands at one of Sadie [Frost]'s parties, and, bang, it was all over the press the next day!' she explains. She won't talk more about Jonny ('I don't want to jinx it'), but is clearly very happily ensconced among the 'Primrose Hill' acting set which includes Jude Law, Sean Pertwee and Jonny and Sadie.

Faulkner has a sensible, down-to-earth head on her 30-year-old shoulders. She lives in unglamorous Finchley, North London and despite having a film role under her belt in *Baby Juice Express* - a 'sperm donor heist movie' with Nick Moran and Phil Davies - she admits she's 'terrified' about her becoming a jobbing actor after the nine-to-five security of soaps. And she's refreshingly unpretentious in her ambitions: 'I just want to do nice drama that stretches me,' she says. 'I'd *love* to play Scarlett O'Hara.' And with that she puts on her Jane Norman coat, smothers her lips in Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream and heads off to Primrose Hill.

- ends -

[ spooks ]





## Esther Hall

Name: Ellie Simm

Age: 31

Position: MI5 dependent (girlfriend, Tom Quinn)

Background: Chef, restaurant owner, ex-boyfriend Mark Hodd, lives in Brixton

Dependents: Maisie, 8

Security status: Approval pending, vetting in progress

*When Matthew Archer walks into her restaurant, Ellie Simm can't quite believe her luck. Handsome, kind and successful, even her daughter Maisie falls in love with him. But then alarm bells start ringing. Why is Matthew never home when he says he'll be? Why does he leave the room when his mobile rings? And what sort of IT technician goes to work at 2 am - emergency or no emergency? Despite her suspicions of his double life, nothing can prepare her for the discovery that Matthew isn't Matthew at all: he's Tom Quinn, Senior Case Officer, MI5. And after all the betrayal and lies, can their relationship survive?*

---

'Imagine moving in with the man you love and then discover you don't even know his real name?' muses actress Esther Hall, who plays Ellie, Tom Quinn's girlfriend who knows him only as his alias Matthew Archer. 'It's the ultimate betrayal. Suddenly you're in a relationship with a complete stranger. You discover your partner has always been *acting* in some way, that he's always been at an emotional distance. If someone's lied that much, how can there ever be any trust in your relationship again?'

In *Spooks*' whirlwind world of subterfuge and deception, Ellie Simm is just a normal single mother getting on with her normal daily life. 'In *Spooks*, Ellie is the person the audience can identify with,' explains Esther. 'You can't help thinking: 'What if that was me? What if I got involved with an MI5 officer?' It makes you realise that your life would change forever.'

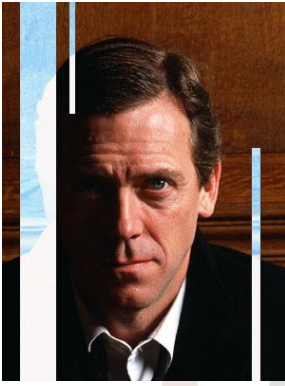
Bizarre as the situation seems, it is the norm for real-life *Spooks*. No MI5 officer is allowed to tell new partners what they do until they have been vetted by Thames House for past security breaches. Every significant other of an officer has a file opened on them. Producer Jane Featherstone explains that after they had come up with the Tom/Ellie storyline they met an ex-CIA agent with a similar relationship history. 'It confirmed to us how often this must happen. This particular former spy lived with his girlfriend for months before he told her he was someone else. She left him when he confessed, but came back when she had got used to the idea. They're married now.'

Once the initial shock of betrayal has died down, Ellie has to decide whether to continue her relationship with Tom. After being left in the lurch by Maisie's father, her priority is to provide a safe loving home for her daughter. But a life with Tom would be a life of uncertainty and risk: 'She would never know what kind of danger Tom was facing every day,' says Esther. 'But even worse, there would always be a risk that she and Maisie might get caught up in case.' As producer Jane Featherstone puts it: 'It all sounds very sexy and glamorous. But you don't necessarily want to go out with James Bond.'

Strangely, playing the girlfriend of a spy will be relatively staid entry on Esther Hall's CV. The 31-year-old actress's first taste of major critical acclaim came when she played a nymphomaniac 'northern oddball' in an episode of *The Cops*. Her work since includes brilliant performances as lesbian Romey in *Queer as Folk*, and Katie, in *Men Only*, both for Channel 4. Next up is *Blue Dove*, in which she stars alongside Paul Nicholls about a family of potters from Stoke - 'all very Demi Moore in *Ghost*', she jokes. After finishing *Spooks*, she is spending quality time in her new flat, 'a beautiful loft conversion in Hoxton that I can't afford'. And her favourite thing about filming *Spooks*? 'Being part of the best TV cliff-hanger ever,' she says mysteriously. 'It'll have everyone on the edge of their seats.'

- ends -

[ spooks ]



## Hugh Laurie

Name: Jools Siviter

Age: 45

Position: Head of department, MI6

Dependents: None

*MI6 officer Jools Siviter represents everything Tom Quinn hates about 'over the river at Vauxhall Cross'. With his booming Oxbridge accent and superior manner, he really gets under Tom's skin. As far as Jools is concerned, MI5's domestic remit makes it a poor relation to the global concern that is MI6. But inevitably, he accepts, the twain will occasionally meet. Besides, apart from drinking fine malt whisky, Jools enjoys nothing better than getting a rise out of people like Tom...*

---

'I suffer from arrested development,' says Hugh Laurie wryly. 'And part of that is I still love all those old Len Deighton and John Le Carre books.' In fact, he loves them so much that in 1996 he wrote one of his own. *The Gun Seller* told the story of Thomas Lang, an ex-army spy who unwittingly gets involved with an international arms-smuggling ring. The novel was a huge success, with critics raving about Laurie's 'James Bond meets Bertie Wooster' central character.

Laurie, 42, is modestly dismissive about the success of his book, putting it down to 'Britain's weird fascination with espionage'. He reckons that the glamour of on-screen spies also plays a big role in intelligence service recruitment: 'It wouldn't surprise me if our spies were in it for the excitement they'd seen on TV shows and films,' he says.

In Laurie's case, the biggest TV spy legend is the head of MI6 as played by Barry Foster in the *Sweeney*. 'I thought it was one of the greatest performances I'd ever seen on TV,' he says. 'And it was a great thrill for me to play a similar character in *Spooks*. I based everything about Jools' manner and tone on him. I just nicked his whole thing shamelessly.'

So it seems Hugh Laurie was made for the role of the smug MI6 officer who occasionally crosses operational paths with Harry's department. According to actor Matthew Macfadyen, who plays MI5's Tom Quinn and Jools' nemesis: 'MI6 is more establishment than MI5, which really rankles Tom. As far as he's concerned, plummy accents might be alright in an embassy in Moscow, but you can't have someone like Jools running agents in England. He really resents Jools' air of superiority.'

*Spooks* marks Laurie's return to TV after a number of high profile film roles. The Eton and Cambridge educated actor, best loved for his roles in TV comedies *Jeeves and Wooster*, *The Young Ones* and *Blackadder*, has more recently moved to the big-screen, starring in films such as *Maybe Baby*, *Stuart Little* and *101 Dalmations*. He has also completed a screenplay of *The Gun Seller*.

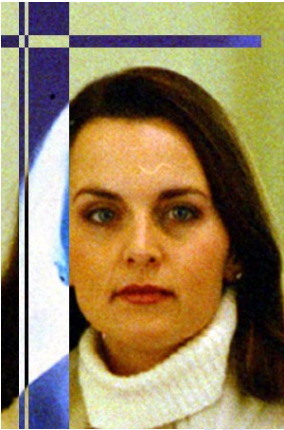
The lure of Hollywood - and writing - is strong for Laurie. As soon as he finished on the *Spooks* set, he was off to America to film a pilot of a TV detective series he has written. If the pilot is successful, Laurie's contract will keep him away from British screens - and legions of disappointed fans - for six and a half years. He won't give any more detail about the show:

'I get so superstitious about these things. You talk about them and then they just disappear.'

But if the TV writing doesn't work out, there's always the movies. Laurie 'wouldn't mind' working with Julia Roberts ('obviously I admire her work profoundly') and harbours a secret ambition to play a Bond villain, preferably Blowfeld. Back to that 'weird fascination with espionage' again. 'Yes,' he murmurs. ' That would be cracking good stuff.'

- ends -

[ spooks ]



## Debra Stephenson

Name: Claire Osborne

Age: 33

Position: Wife of Robert Osborne, currently under MI5 surveillance

Dependents: Sammy, 5

*All Claire Osborne wants is an easy life. That's why she married an older man - Robert Osborne - in the first place. Sure, he has a nasty temper, but he has plenty of cash and their son Sammy never wants for anything. She is willing to put up with the occasional beating from Osborne in return for the lifestyle she wants. But then Osborne starts getting violent with little Sammy. Enough, she decides, is enough. When their nice new neighbours turn out to be government spies investigating her husband's racist activities, she agrees to 'turn'. In return for a new life, Claire Osborne is going to be an MI5 agent.*

---

'She's not a bad woman,' explains actress Debra Stephenson of her character Claire. 'But she *is* quite selfish. She wants what is best for her and her son and for while that means turning a blind eye to her horrible husband's dodgy dealings. She only agrees to help Tom and Helen for her own sake, not for moral reasons. Until then, she just goes along with whatever gets her the nice house and glamorous clothes. She's a classic Yummy Mummy.'

The world of 'Yummy Mummies' is a long way from HM Larkhall prison, where Stephenson spent an extremely successful stretch as wicked inmate Shell Dockley in ITV's *Bad Girls*. The 28-year-old actress says it was a relief to play someone with a softer touch in *Spooks*: 'I find it harder to play the toughies,' she explains. 'I always found the hitting people and being a complete bitch quite difficult. I'm naturally quite girly and have a shy side even though I love performing.'

After first gaining attention as ditzy Diane in *Playing the Field* for the BBC, Shell Dockley proved to be Stephenson's big breakthrough role. She still gets fan mail - 'anything up to 7 or 8 letters a day, and more from women than men!' and says the massive popularity of *Bad Girls* made it a hard act to follow. So instead of inviting comparisons by doing another drama, she opted for a comedy sketch show BBC's *TV To Go* with Pauline McLynn - and is about to make a pilot for a sitcom.

Variety is definitely the spice of Stephenson's life. As a young teenager she toured working men's clubs near her hometown of Hull doing impressions of anyone from Shirley Bassey to Cilla Black. ('It was fairly unusual', she says with understatement.) At the age of 17 she veered off into the music industry as a rave vocalist, peaking when: 'one of my tunes got to number 45 and was featured on the *Chart Show*! That was amazing because back then rave music was really underground.'

Despite then heading to drama school and a successful acting career, Stephenson's interest in music remains strong. She is currently writing songs with an old school-friend (Joe Youle, ex-member of 90s band *Scarlet*): 'It's light Dido-type stuff. A bit Madonna, a bit Kate Bush, a bit Kylie, but quite grown-up. We are deciding what to do with the songs now, but I really

want to avoid the cheesy 'ex-*Bad Girl* releases a single' thing.'

Comedy, drama, music - is there nothing this girl won't do? 'I don't see why I should just settle for one thing if I enjoy more,' she smiles. 'Look at Billy Connolly. He managed to be a comedian and a serious actor. Yeah. I'd like to be just like Billy Connolly!'

- ends -

[ spooks ]



## Anthony Head

Name: Peter Salter

Age: 47

Position: MI5 Case Officer turned agent in-the-field

Background: Bravery Commendation: Operation Burnt Field, Belfast 1978; MI6 secondment 1985-89

*Peter Salter is an MI5 legend. During the peak of the Irish 'troubles', he was the best operative the Security Service had. Ten years ago, Peter recruited Tom Quinn to the MI5 fold and - although Tom is now his boss - no one respects Peter more. But Peter is bored. He likes to know who 'the enemy' is, and it's just not clear anymore. Then he is seconded by MI6 to go undercover in anti-globalisation group 'Global Anarchy'. He meets Andrea, a young woman with strong ideals, and falls in love. Here is someone with the kind of purpose that is missing from his own life. Peter is 'going native', and Tom's team must act fast to limit the damage.*

---

Since leaving the cast of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and coming home to England, Anthony Head is cornering the market for actors playing blokes struggling with mid-life crises. First he was James in the BBC's *Manchild* - an impotent middle-aged man desperate to find a younger woman. And in *Spooks* he plays Peter Salter, an disillusioned agent who 'goes native' - MI5-speak to describe an agent abandoning his or her duties to live their undercover life for real.

'Peter's good at what he does, but he's thoroughly bored with doing it ad infinitum for no apparent reason,' explains Head. 'When Russia was a foe he had something to focus on, but now nothing is that clear-cut. Andrea has dedicated her life to anti-globalisation and the direct action group 'Global Anarchy'. It's her passion for her cause that attracts Peter, not her youth. It's in the nature of the job MI5 officers have to be dispassionate - you can't get involved or show any emotions. But Peter is looking for something more.'

Head, too, recently took stock of his life. His career has rocketed over the past six years thanks to his role as Rupert Giles, *Buffy's* school librarian in the cult US vampire series and he admits he feels extremely lucky. After some modest successes during his twenties, Head landed his part in *those* coffee adverts in the early 80s. While it was great to spend six years as part of 'an extraordinary phenomenon', he says, being one half of the Gold Blend couple led to him being labeled 'a lightweight frothy leading man.' So in 1995 he cut his losses, headed to the States and took acting lessons to learn to act the American way and landed him the role *Buffy* role in 1997.

Five happy work years ensued, but the transatlantic commuting took its toll. In the end, Head had enough of being an intermittent visitor to his Bath-based family - long-term girlfriend Sarah and their daughters Emily and Daisy. His departure from *Buffy* last year turned out to be a bit of a lucky escape. 'I'd always thought my contract was five years,' he explains. 'But when I checked it turned out it was seven. Luckily Joss (Whelan, *Buffy's* producer) was gorgeous about it.'

So gorgeous, in fact, that the British-educated American producer now wants to launch a UK *Buffy* spin-off with Head leading the cast. Negotiations between the BBC and the US Fox Network are proving slow, but the actor thinks it will eventually come together. In the meantime, he points out, he has recently added another string to his professional bow: 'I shot my first full-on naked bed scene for *Spooks*,' he laughs. 'Not that I minded - I used to parade around on stage in a basque and fishnet stockings as Frank 'n' Furter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. But Nigel Havers, my co-star in *Manchild*, couldn't believe it. I think his exact response was: 'Oh my god, I'm always doing it!'

- ends -

[ spooks ]





## Lorcan Cranitch

Name: Patrick McCann

Age: 44

Position: Section Commander, ASU (IRA splinter group)

History: Directly responsible for deaths of over 20 RUC soldiers and two MI5 operatives.

Status: High threat

*At the age of 16, Patrick McCann joined the IRA. His fierce loyalty and cruel spirit ensured he rose quickly through the ranks and today he continues to serve as a splinter group section commander. But for the first time, Patrick is facing something that poses a bigger threat to Ireland than the British government. Middle Eastern terrorists are planning to bomb a nuclear power plant on the west coast of England - directly upwind of the Irish coastline. Patrick never thought he'd see the day, but it's time to do a deal with his old enemy, MI5...*

---

'You can take the man out of the bog but you can't take the bog out of the man,' says actor Lorcan Cranitch mysteriously. He is talking about how difficult it is for IRA man Patrick McCann - his character in *Spooks*' action-packed final episode - to swallow his hatred of the British government to prevent the potential deaths of millions of Irish people. And Cranitch should know all about bogs- he's played enough IRA men in his time. 'As an Irish actor you end up doing priests or IRA men,' he says. 'After a few years they all seem to blend in to one.'

Consequently, Cranitch says, most of his research for *Spooks* was geared towards marking McCann apart from the 'five or so' other republican terrorists he has played during his career. He concentrated on the 'little technical things' like gait and accent, giving him Border county inflections rather than those from Belfast or Derry.

Such attention to detail was important, he says, to match the sophistication of the script for episode six, which he likens - like many of the *Spooks* cast - to the kind of nail-biting thriller you usually see on the big screen. He was, however, slightly disappointed by the lack of action sequences for McCann. Apart from a few car chases, the nearest he came to an action stand-off was standing naked in a field in Buckinghamshire opposite an equally naked Matthew Macfadyen. 'I'm told this is a normal procedure for MI5 when they meet certain targets,' laughs Cranitch. 'It's to prove that no one is wired to recording equipment. We got dressed to film the rest of the scene, but we were lucky to do that. In real-life they would hold their entire conversation naked!'

After years of playing a good guy, Cranitch enjoyed the chance to play a baddie. As businessman Sean Dillon in *Ballykissangel* and family detective Michael McCready in *McCready and Daughter*, audiences are used to seeing him in more sensitive mode. But the bad guy image, explains Cranitch, is really only a return to his most famous form: when he gets recognised in the street, it's still mostly as evil cop Jimmy Beck in *Cracker*.

Cranitch's other career highlights include the film *Titanic Town* and a leading role in Channel 4's polar expedition biopic *Shackleton* alongside Kenneth Branagh. His CV also includes a television first: in 1997 he took part in a three-in-a-bed

scene with Amanda Redman and Dutch actress Manouk van der Meulen for *Close Relations*. He's not sure what the future holds, but hopes it might be something 'heavy' like convicted murderer Bernard in *My Fragile Heart* - his favourite ever part. For now, he's off to Dublin and RTE newsreader Susan Jackson, because home, he jokes in his soft Irish burr, 'is where the mortgage is.'

- ends -

[ spooks ]