



Black Work

Written by Matt Charman

Directed by Michael Samuels

Produced by Tom Mullens

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PRESS RELEASE

THREE PART DRAMA SERIES BLACK WORK FROM MAMMOTH SCREEN

Sheridan Smith, Matthew McNulty, Douglas Henshall, Geraldine James and Phil Davis star in ITV's new riveting three-part thriller Black Work.

Black Work is written by Matt Charman (Our Zoo, Suite Francaise), produced by Mammoth Screen, makers of Endeavour for ITV and is backed by Screen Yorkshire through the Yorkshire Content Fund.

Following her critically acclaimed roles in Cilla and Mrs Biggs, Sheridan plays police woman Jo Gillespie whose world is thrown into turmoil when husband Ryan (Kenny Doughty), an undercover policeman, is shot dead in mysterious circumstances. She resolutely sets out to discover who murdered him and has to confront difficult truths about her family life and her marriage to Ryan.

Police officer Jo is mother to 7-years-old Melly (Honor Kneafsey) and stepson Hal (Oliver Woolford). Understandably Jo is emotionally distraught and heavily conflicted as she unravels the last six months of her husband's life. She's grieving and wracked with guilt following an attachment to Ryan's colleague and fellow police officer DC Jack Clark (Matthew McNulty), which puts further strain on her grieving family.

Writer Matt Charman shed light on his inspiration for the drama:

"Sheridan Smith is a dream to write for because as an actress there's really nothing she can't do. And Black Work is a story that pushes her to the limit – it makes her character, Jo Gillespie, doubt herself, her family, her friends, everything she's always taken for granted in her search for her husband's killer."

Black Work has been commissioned for ITV by Director of Drama Commissioning Steve November and Controller of Drama Victoria Fea.

Directed by Michael Samuels (Bafta winning Any Human Heart and The Fear) and produced by Tom Mullens (New Tricks), the Black Work cast also includes: Kenny Doughty (Vera) Sharon Duce (Coronation Street), Andrew Knott (Spooks: Code 9), Ace Bhatti (EastEnders), Carla Henry (Homefront), Lisa Dillon (Cranford), Vinette Robinson (Sherlock), and Ben-Ryan Davies (Waterloo Road).

Rebecca Keane and Damien Timmer executive produce the drama for Mammoth Screen. Hugo Heppell is also an Executive Producer on behalf of Screen Yorkshire and the drama is produced in association with Lip Sync Productions. Peter Hampden of Lip Sync Productions is an Executive Producer.

Mammoth Screen's shows include Endeavour for ITV, Poldark and Blandings for BBC One and Parade's End for BBC Two.

Note to Editors: Screen Yorkshire: Screen Yorkshire offers production financing for content in the TV, film, video games and the digital sectors in Yorkshire and Humber, through the Yorkshire Content Fund, the biggest regional investment fund for production in the UK. Backed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the fund is open to content producers working in film, TV, games and digital based in Yorkshire or from outside but looking to establish a base in the region. It has attracted £15m from ERDF as part of Europe's support for the region's economic development through the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme 2007–13. Recent investments include: Dad's Army, Hunter's Prayer, Girls' Night Out, Peaky Blinders, Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell, Testament Of Youth, The Great Train Robbery, Get Santa, X + Y, Death Comes to Pemberley, Catch me Daddy, '71, Black Work and Bill.

Note to Editors: Matt Charman: After a year serving as Writer in Residence at the National Theatre, where three of his plays received world premieres, Matt Charman has quickly emerged as one of the UK's most sought-after screenwriters.

His BBC One six-part series, Our Zoo, was followed by the worldwide release of Suite Francaise, which he co-wrote with director Saul Dibb, and which stars Michelle Williams and Kristin Scott Thomas.

Filming has also just wrapped on Matt's upcoming Cold War thriller, Bridge of Spies, which stars Tom Hanks and Mark Rylance. Directed by Academy Award winner Steven Spielberg, the film is scheduled for release this October.

Matt will also be adding to his writing credits with a new 10-part thriller for Channel 4, titled Opposite Number, which begins filming later this year.

FOREWORD BY WRITER MATT CHARMAN

We all ask ourselves from time to time whether we truly know the people closest to us: our partners, our family, our friends. There's an unspoken part of everyone we love that we can never really know. But what if we were confronted with the realisation that the person to whom we were married had a whole other life that we never suspected?

When the news first broke in 2011 of police officers having lived in close proximity, often for decades, with the people they were charged with watching, I became fascinated. It was headline-grabbing stuff after all, but I felt that the human drama of these men and the people whose lives they affected demanded further exploration.

The more research I did, the more moved I became by the trail of broken lives some undercover officers left behind and how their 'real' families coped, never really knowing what they were up to and when they might return. How would that affect a marriage and a family? Could you ever really trust the man you'd married?

I wanted my lead character in *Black Work* to be confronted with this dilemma when the murder of her police officer husband makes her realise how much she didn't know about him. But for Jo Gillespie to be more than just a victim, I made her a cop too, with the means to investigate her husband's death and hunt for answers to the many questions that it has thrown up. Even as she is reeling from her loss and her confusion about the very fabric of her life, Jo becomes certain that the reason for Ryan's death lies in his undercover work.

I was also intrigued by seeing Jo as part of the police family, which is mourning a fallen colleague and friend just as she and her children are grieving for their husband and father. Jo's fellow officers gather round to support and comfort her, insisting that she trust them to find the killer, but as she starts to question their motives and hidden agendas, she is unable to leave the investigation in their hands.

Jo's competing desires, to find out why her husband died and to be a mother to her children, threaten to bring her two families into conflict and wrench her life apart. As Jo uncovers ever more shocking secrets about the man she was married to, she becomes torn between her loyalty to her police family and her need to protect her children.

The difficulty in writing a character like Jo, someone who is tough but fragile at the same time, is finding the right person to embody those characteristics. The first person I thought of was Sheridan Smith. I've always found her to be an extraordinary actress, utterly transformed in every role but never without a beating, truthful heart. We follow Sheridan wherever she goes because she makes us believe in her.

It's been a huge thrill watching what Sheridan does with a story like this – how she finds her way into the truth of every moment, be it as a grieving mother unsure how much to tell her kids, or as a side-lined police officer desperate for the truth.

I truly believe *Black Work* is unlike anything Sheridan has ever done before and I'm so delighted to have been able to work with one of this country's finest actors to realise a feisty, restless female character whose predicament I found so compelling.

Matt Charman – May 2015

CHARACTER PROFILES

PC Jo Gillespie played by Sheridan Smith

A young PC married to fellow police officer, Ryan Gillespie. The extreme demands of police work has placed a considerable strain on their marriage and for the past few months, right up until Ryan's death, Jo has been growing very close to another police officer, Jack Clark.

DS Ryan Gillespie played by Kenny Doughty

An undercover police officer who is killed while working deep undercover. Before his death, the demands of his job had put a huge strain on his marriage to Jo.

DC Jack Clark played by Matthew McNulty

A married police officer with a son around the same age as Jo and Ryan's daughter. He and Jo have been growing closer and closer before Ryan's death. Jack is later assigned as one of the investigating officers into Ryan's death, something that causes him considerable conflict.

Chief Constable Carolyn Jarecki played by Geraldine James

The Chief Constable of the local police force. Jarecki has set about trying to improve the public image of the police and restoring the public's faith in them after several corruption allegations. She's put in a difficult position when Ryan dies as she wants to come out and support him in public but she also doesn't want his undercover operation to be jeopardised.

Detective Chief Superintendent Will Hepburn played by Douglas Henshall

Ryan Gillespie's superior officer. Hepburn was leading the case in which Ryan was working deep undercover. He is upset by Ryan's death and anguished by the fact that he must continue to keep the details of it a secret while the investigation is ongoing.

DS Lee Mikel played by Andrew Knott

A detective investigating Ryan's death. He was close to Ryan and is deeply upset by the murder investigation. He is frustrated that the secrecy around Ryan's undercover operation means that he cannot access details crucial to finding out who killed Ryan.

PC Vicki Stanton played by Carla Henry

A friend and colleague of Jo's. She is close to the whole Gillespie family but is principally a friend to Jo. When Ryan is killed Vicki is assigned as Family Liaison Officer to Jo, Hal and Melly.

DCI Jahan Kapoor played by Ace Bhatti

The lead detective in the investigation into Ryan Gillespie's death. Kapoor has only recently moved to this police force and was not as close as many of his colleagues were to Ryan, a fact that alienates him from many of the other officers.

Barbara Gillespie played by Sharon Duce

Ryan's mother. She arrives shortly after Ryan's death to help Jo look after the children. A woman with a good heart, she is nonetheless a force of nature. Barbara and Jo don't always see eye to eye but Barbara stands by Jo and helps her look after the kids, freeing Jo up to pursue Ryan's killer.

Carla played by Lisa Dillon

Ryan's first wife and the mother of his son Hal. Although Hal lives with Ryan and Jo he spends a lot of time with his mother. Carla is furious when she discovers that Jo initially kept Ryan's death a secret from her and threatens to retake custody of Hal.

Melly played by Honor Kneafsey

Ryan and Jo's young daughter. She's a keen swimmer who enters competitions and goes to swimming classes once a week. She and Ryan have a very close relationship but she does not fully comprehend his death.

Hal played by Oliver Woolford

Ryan and Carla's teenage son. He is an awkward teenager but his relationship with Jo had been good while Ryan was alive. In many ways she has been a stronger, better mum for him than Carla, Ryan's first wife.



SHERIDAN SMITH IS JO GILLESPIE

Q: What appealed to you about Black Work?

“The writer Matt Charman got in touch with me, explained the premise of Black Work and why he wanted me to play Jo Gillespie. She has two worlds: Her family life and then her police family. Jo is strong and tough but goes through so much turmoil and mental torment. It was different to anything I’ve done before. I like trying different things and challenging myself and Matt is a really clever writer, so I said yes.”

Q: Who is Jo Gillespie?

“Jo is a police constable married to Ryan, played by Kenny Doughty, who is a police detective. They have a young daughter Melly (Honor Kneafsey) and Ryan has a 16-year-old son called Hal (Oliver Woollford) from a previous marriage who also lives with them. It’s a modern family.”

Q: Ryan has regularly spent time away from home?

“There’s a strain on their relationship evident right from the start. Ryan has been working away three days a week training CID officers. At least that’s what Jo thinks. In fact he has been working undercover on a secret special investigation. Jo and Ryan haven’t been spending a lot of time together and hardly talk anymore. He’s a closed book and she’s become guarded and conflicted. But they both adore the children.”

Q: Jo’s relationship with Jack Clark, played by Matthew McNulty?

“Jack is also in the force and is best friends with Ryan. Jo and Jack have become close. His son and her daughter Melly both go to swimming together. So Jo and Jack would see each other there every week and would sit and talk. And it was just talking. It never developed into anything more. But because Jo’s relationship was so strained, and so was his with his wife, they felt they had no-one to talk to and they’ve just become close. It was something they needed.”

Q: Sharon Duce plays your mother-in-law Barbara?

“Sharon was also my mother in The Royle Family. It was lovely to see her again all these years later. I was 19 when I was in The Royle Family as Emma and Sharon played my mum Valerie who came around to the Royle’s house and they all admired her lovely coat. It was great to work with her again. She’s so much fun.”

Q: Jo's world is turned upside down when her husband Ryan is shot dead in mysterious circumstances and she discovers he had a separate life working undercover?

"It must be a horrible feeling to trust someone and then find out they weren't who they said they were. Jo thinks she knows Ryan and then her world falls apart. She trusted the police force to look after its own family and now she's not sure of anything. Jo is finding out all this information about somebody she thought she knew everything about. And it turns out she doesn't know him. I can't imagine the state of mind you would then be in. To have to take all that in. She doesn't know who to trust or turn to and fears for her family.

"Jo is figuring it all out as she goes along in the same way as the audience are. It's a psychological thriller and a whodunit. There are so many twists and turns and you really don't know what's going to happen."

Q: Working with young Honor and Oliver?

"We had so much fun. All three of us would always be giggling, dancing around and doing daft things off set. It felt surreal then having to pretend to be the stepmother of a 16-year-old young man. I became so close with both of them and there are some emotional moments. I put myself in those scenes. You get so involved in it all. The scene where she has to tell them their father is dead broke my heart and I couldn't imagine what it would be like for a real family."

Q: The funeral scenes are very moving?

"We were in a beautiful cathedral and holding Honor's hand as Melly and having to walk behind the officers carrying the coffin was really powerful to film. There's a speech at the funeral about the risks police officers take every day. I have so much respect for people who do these jobs. I'm simply playing a role and acting it out. They have to do it for real.

"I remember being asked once by some paramedics if they could have a photo taken with me. And I said, 'I'm embarrassed. You save lives. I just say lines.' Police, firefighters, the emergency services, they go out every day and do a dangerous job. It must be scary if you're the wife, husband or partner of someone who does that. It's really commendable. I am in awe of people who do that."

Q: You filmed Black Work close to your family roots in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire?

"Yes. We filmed in Leeds, Lincolnshire and all around my home area. I was able to use my own accent. Black Work started just after I had played Lisa Lynch in The C Word and my hair hadn't really grown back that much at all at that stage. We spoke about maybe wearing wigs but then we thought, 'Why not just go with how I am at the minute?' So Jo has short black hair, which also fits in with her being a police officer. It made me feel very different to other roles.

"I feel so close to me when I'm doing my own accent so it's quite tricky to turn off my own emotions. When you're playing someone like Cilla and you've got a different accent you still bring a lot of yourself to it but it just removes you slightly.

“It was lovely to be back home and hear my accent all around me. Although no-one really recognised me with my hair like that. I had to stay in Leeds during filming and even when we filmed in Goole, just down the road from my mum and dad’s, you’re on tight 12-hour days and 6am pick-ups or whatever. But I did manage to get home on my day off.”

Q: Have you played a police officer before?

“No, I’ve never played a police officer. I played a character called Janey Giles in The Bill but she was on the wrong side of the law. Black Work is not like your usual police drama. A lot of the time Jo is in her normal clothes, although I did get to wear the uniform sometimes. I found the police uniform very empowering.

“Jo is a PC in the force, only just starting out, and she doesn’t realise how clever she is. And that’s the journey she goes on as she tries to figure things out. That’s why it’s nice that you sometimes see her in uniform but mostly in her own clothes.

“Filming out on location was interesting. Usually when people see a film crew they might come over and ask what’s going on. But seeing all the police cars and me in uniform, that’s probably why no-one came over to me. They probably thought they’d get into trouble.

“When you’re playing someone like Cilla or Mrs Biggs you get all these research packs. I watched all the interviews of Cilla from the 1960s and so on. Of course with this you can’t just go into a police station and say, ‘Can I watch what you’re doing?’ But I got enough information to know where to pitch my performance as far as what it’s like being in the force.

“I have a cousin in the police force. I’m hoping she thinks I’ve done a good enough job. Or she’ll be on the phone straight away!”

Q: Filming in and around a cottage in the countryside?

“We were really out in the moors. It was very muddy and wet. All the camera trucks were getting stuck in the mud. Not glamorous at all. In one scene Jo has to run through some woods and that was exhausting. I was slip-sliding about trying to run. How I didn’t slip up in the air and land in a big muddy puddle, I don’t know. We were jumping over logs and tree stumps. I’ve never done that type of thing before so it was nice to do something different and a real challenge.”

Q: You did your own driving for a sequence where off duty Jo is chasing a suspect?

“I love driving. Every time they had a double there I was like, ‘No, please, I want to do all the driving myself.’ I full throttled it and loved it. The back end of the car would spin out as I drove away so the crew would all stand back. I was thrilled to play a police officer speeding off and chasing people.”

Q: A scene where Jo immerses herself under the water in a bath?

“I’m not a great swimmer although I’ve had to do loads of water scenes in the past. In Jonathan Creek I was dropped into a 20-foot tank of water. But there were divers down there to grab me. They bought me a T-shirt which said, ‘I do all my own stunts,’ because they knew how terrifying it was for me.

“On every take for the Black Work scene, the water would go up my nose and come down the back of my throat. So I’d shoot up out of the water coughing and choking. Then I’d sort myself out and we’d go for the take. But I made sure each time I managed to get all the way under before I panicked. I love how they shot it. The director Michael Samuels has a really good eye for interesting shots. It’s done in slow motion and looks like a mask over Jo’s face.

“Jo’s daughter Melly is a swimmer and takes part in competitions. Honor, who plays her, was amazing. She just jumped in the swimming pool. I was thinking, ‘Wow, I wish I could do that.’ I’m not a swimmer.”

Q: Melly pushes her mum Jo around and around on a children’s playground roundabout?

“That was the very last scene we shot for Black Work on the final day in a little play park. I wasn’t too dizzy. It must have been worse for the guys sat on the roundabout with us - the cameras and the sound. They had someone helping Honor to push because there were so many people on the roundabout trying to film it. They were much dizzier than I was. But it does discombobulate you a bit. And because it’s a 360 degree shot the rest of the crew had to hide so they weren’t in vision.”

Q: Black Work also features a scene shot across an indoor shopping centre?

“We filmed in a shopping mall when it was open to the public. It’s hit and miss when you do those scenes. We did one massive long shot where we go down some escalators, across the shopping centre and then down another set of escalators.

“I felt guilty because it’s a scene where Jo is paranoid and she’s looking at people in a strange way. So some of the shoppers would recognise me and smile while I’d have to stay in character because I was being filmed. I wanted to find them afterwards and say, ‘Sorry, sorry, I couldn’t smile back because I was in the middle of a scene.’

“After we’d filmed the close-ups of that scene they hid the camera up high and we’d do the scene again for a wider angle. It looks great on screen but people then don’t see the camera at all as we mingle with the crowds.

“On one take this lovely girl wearing headphones stepped on the final escalator just before us. It was really intense and we’re thinking, ‘Yes, we’re nearly through it.’ Then she turned around, pulled her headphones out and said, ‘Were you just filming up there?’ Of course she didn’t realise we were still filming and we had to carry on talking. She looked a bit freaked out, wondering why we were ignoring her and put her headphones back in. Then as we got to the bottom of the escalator and they said, ‘cut,’ we chased after her and went, ‘We’re so sorry. We were still filming and weren’t ignoring you.’ It must be strange for the public walking around thinking, ‘What’s going on here?’”

Q: You went to Buckingham Palace in May to receive your OBE from Prince William?

“I was very surprised and honoured to be awarded the OBE. I still can’t believe it. I went with my mum and dad and my brother and it was a wonderful day. It’s just surreal when you’re there. Another world for me and so exciting.

“I had been at the Palace before and met the Queen. That was for the National Youth Music Theatre. Prince Edward is their President and that’s where I started. So I was asked to go along with the NYMT as one of their patrons and got to meet the Queen then.

“Prince William was lovely. He said he had seen some of my roles and that he likes Gavin and Stacey. He asked what I was doing at the moment and I explained I was filming The Huntsman movie, which is a sequel from Snow White and The Huntsman and that I was playing a dwarf. He asked how it was done and I explained some things. It was just a short chat. I said what an honour it was and thank you.

“There were the most incredible people there getting honours and I met so many of them that day. Lovely people from all different walks of life who had done so much work for charity and other things. That was, to me, really inspiring. To be sat among people like that and be the actor among them.

“Afterwards we has lots of photos taken in the Buckingham Palace courtyard and you also get to keep a video of the day. It was all really special and I felt so honoured.

“Then we stayed at the Mondrian Hotel in London where the staff were wonderful. When we arrived they had spelled out ‘OBE’ on a table in red, white and blue Smarties along with a marzipan depiction of the actual medal. My relatives from Wales also came over and so we were all celebrating together.

“An unforgettable day. Absolutely magical, like a dream. I will never, ever, forget it.”



MATTHEW MCNULTY IS DC JACK CLARK

Q: What appealed to you about Black Work?

“The writer was the main pull for me. I had heard of Matt Charman from his play *The Machine*, which was at the Manchester International Festival. I knew there was a buzz about him. And then obviously you search online and it showed his next project was with Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. So I knew that whatever I was about to read in the scripts it was going to be engaging and unique. And I have to say *Black Work* didn’t disappoint. The script was complex and multi-faceted. The story had real drive and it was pushed forward with great, strong female leads. Which, in itself, is pretty unusual, unfortunately. But it was like nothing I’d ever read before. Then after having read the script I met with Matt and found him to be incredibly intelligent, sharp and charming and he won me over. I felt like we had the whole package with this script and writer. I have the biggest respect for writers within this industry. I think they are the real creators of the magic we see on TV. Everybody else just fuels the machine they create.”

Q: Did you feel the need to do any personal research?

“I do have friends and family in the police force and I could have got some background from them. But I’ve always found the truth generally tends to get in the way of a good story. From knowing people in the force I know it’s an incredibly committed profession and very often it needs to be in order for them to succeed, carry on, survive even. This idea of the police family is very much prevalent in the people I know within the police. So I could take that into Jack and into the story. But otherwise I’m reluctant to do research like that. I have full faith in the script.”

Q: Chief Constable Carolyn Jarecki (Geraldine James) talks about the police holding a line between the world we all want and the world as it is. Do you think the world has got more dangerous in recent years? Or just our perception of the danger?

“It certainly seems like a more dangerous place these days. But that’s probably down to the fact there’s constant news reporting and Twitter and all kinds of stuff on the internet that gets pushed in your face.”

“There’s no running away from the dangers of the world today. Twenty years ago you could be ignorant about it. But now you can’t be. Who knows if it is more dangerous? Not me. I certainly know the perception of danger has changed because of the constant access to the evils of the world.

Maybe that’s de-sensitising us a little more? It’s a hard one to judge. It’s only really the people on the front line, the police, ambulance, fire brigade, the Army who could give a balanced opinion on that.”

Q: How was filming the scene where Jack explodes and lunges at DS Lee Miekkel (Andrew Knott)?

“It was quite a heavy scene. It comes at the height of Jo Gillespie’s (Sheridan Smith) paranoia and the height of tensions between Miekkel and Jack and Jo. Those kind of scenes, when there’s such a lot at stake, they tend to be the most susceptible to corpsing. And that’s what happened. Andy Knott, who plays Miekkel, had to enter from a forensics tent at a certain point and they kept getting the cues wrong. Because of that and the importance of the scene and how charged it was, it just made it hilarious.

“Add to that the fact that at some point Sheridan was batting away flies but without realising it. Then we became aware of it, it was funny again. So it took some real force of will to get through it, to be honest.”

Q: Filming in Leeds?

“I’ve worked in Leeds quite a few times now. On Room At The Top and The Syndicate. But on this job I saw a different side to the city. Every location we went to certainly enhanced the story. We saw the best and worst of the area. But I love Leeds. It’s a great place to film and the people are amazingly accommodating. We were filming in the middle of the main shopping centre there, doing a long Steadicam shot down escalators and throughout the whole of the centre. And we didn’t get any grief at all. People just carried on about their business. Which is unusual in a city centre. So it’s definitely a good place to work in. People were always coming up to us, to Sheridan particularly, with encouraging words. They were happy for us to be there and we felt comfortable filming there. It’s a great place. I do love it. And it certainly served us well.”

Q: Jack supports his swimmer son Liam. Do you swim or take part in any other sport? Are you competitive?

“I’m a terrible swimmer. I can swim but not very well. I do a lot of sports. I like football and I watch any sport. I guess I am quite competitive. I suppose you’ve got to be in this industry. I don’t think there are many non-competitive actors out there. And if they’re not competitive, I kind of question how they’ve got to where they are. How they attain success, really, because you’ve got to be driven in this industry. I guess that’s what I’m competitive with. That’s the nature of our job. Every audition you’re competing and every job you’re competing with whatever you’re scheduled against.

“My competitive edge is certainly fulfilled in this industry, doing this job. Be it at an audition or viewing figures or how successful a show has been received. So, yes, I am competitive and it manifests itself in my work. But, hopefully, not too much.”

Q: Sheridan Smith leads a talented cast in Black Work?

“There are some great actors in Black Work. It’s been a real pleasure to work with them. I think that’s testament to the script. People like Sheridan Smith, Geraldine James and Douglas Henshall and Phil Davis are consistently successful and consistently work in fantastic dramas. The reason for that is down to hard work and commitment.

If you work hard, then the great stories come to you. And if the great stories come to you, then you work hard. It’s a positive cycle. If you find yourself falling out of this then there’s always a reason for it. It’s generally because you’re not working as hard or you’re not as committed. But these guys are grafters and they deserve all the success they’ve got.”

Q: There are many secrets in this story. Off screen, do you find it easy to keep secrets?

“I’m great at keeping secrets because I’m not a great talker. So I don’t think there’s any danger of me letting any cats out of the bag because the bag never opens. The secrets of Black Work are safe with me. So wait...and watch it.”



GERALDINE JAMES IS CHIEF CONSTABLE CAROLYN JARECKI

Q: Black Work is an intriguing story, written by Matt Charman:

“I’d never worked with Matt before but I think he’s one of the great writers for telly. He’s exceptional. To me that’s the most important thing, the writing. There are a lot of cop shows on TV but this is an unusual take on it. I was really intrigued when I read his scripts.”

Q: Who is Carolyn Jarecki?

“Carolyn is a Yorkshire girl whose father was Polish. She has worked her way up through the police force. It wasn’t easy for her to reach the position of Chief Constable. It’s a fairly unusual position for a woman but getting less so. She’s quite a complex character, which I liked. The way she runs her police force is interesting, as is her professional relationship with her second in command William Hepburn (Douglas Henshall) and young WPC Jo Gillespie (Sheridan Smith). She’s not just a bossy policewoman. She has to be politically astute. It’s like being a Mayor. She has to balance what she can and cannot pursue. It’s very topical.”

Q: Playing a powerful police chief?

“This is the first time I’ve played a Chief Constable and the first time I’ve worn a police uniform, which I found rather scary. But it’s a huge help to get into the character. When I first put it on I thought, ‘This is idiotic. I look like a complete fool in this. It doesn’t work at all.’ And then I got rather keen on it and quite enjoyed wearing it. The uniform does do a lot of the work for you, particularly when the medals are on. It is empowering. I really got to like strutting about. It’s good fun. The fact it’s the first police officer I’ve ever played is surprising. It was good to play an upright person in the community. I usually play dodgy low life.”

Q: There's a scene in episode one where Carolyn is on an early morning run, half way through her usual 5K routine?

"That was a bit of a shock. But I absolutely loved it and started running again as a direct result. At first I was terrified. I kept doing practice runs at home and going to my family, 'Does this look all right?' And they just said, 'You look completely idiotic. You can't run like that.' So I thought, 'I'll just do it for two seconds and then we can stop.' In fact, I spent a whole morning running around Kirkstall Abbey, outrunning the camera. I used to run quite a lot and then I stopped. I'm very faddy. I go through fads of doing things and I hadn't done any running for a long time. But as a result of Black Work I have started running again. Life imitating art in this instance."

Q: Carolyn talks about police officers putting their lives on the line every day?

"You look at the people in Nepal who were half way up Everest. They didn't think they were not going to return. It's the continual surprises that life springs at us and you never know where the surprise is going to come from. You cannot plan for it. It's that thing about living life as fully and as honestly as we can. She feels she has to make this speech. The truth about what police officers do, what they put themselves on the line to do. Not for themselves but for the public."

Q: She also talks about holding the line between the world we all want and the world as it is. Has the world got more dangerous? Or just our perception of it?

"I think the danger has become less specific. We used to know where the threat was. It was in war zones. Now it seems to be much more generalised. You don't know where it's coming from or when it's coming. So it's more in our general lives than it used to be."

Q: There are secrets and surprises in Black Work?

"Jarecki keeps secrets and she discovers things that have been kept secret from her. You discover people you think you know, you perhaps really don't know. That's always good fun to play. There's a lot of discovery and revelation."

Q: How good are you at keeping secrets?

"I'm very good. I talk to my husband about everything. And if people say, 'Please don't tell anybody,' I say, 'I can't involve my husband in that. He has to know.' He's party to everything but he doesn't talk about things. So my discretion levels are fairly high."

Q: Jarecki is incandescent with rage at one point. What makes you angry?

“Injustice in the world. I also get very cross with people who are blatantly, obviously, lying. It must be really hard to be a politician but I just wish they would be better actors. They are obviously saying what they have to say, what they’ve been told to say. That annoys me. We all want somebody to tell it like it is. I was in a drama called *The Amazing Mrs Pritchard*, with Jane Horrocks. Her character worked in a supermarket and she told it like it was and eventually became prime minister of this fictional party. And that’s what we want. We just want somebody to tell the truth in politics. Of course they say they can’t, because then they’ll be held to it. But you simply want people to say what they mean and then do what they say. And so I get fairly incensed.”

Q: Working with Sheridan Smith?

“It was fabulous. Sheridan is an incredible actress. She’s absolutely astonishing. I can’t believe how good she is. She’s just one of those people that has the ability and can just do it. Sheridan is completely truthful. I believe her entirely and she is incredibly talented. She’s always there for you, even when her character is not on camera. All the cast are very talented.”

Q: Filming in Leeds?

“I’m very keen on Leeds. I like working there. I’d worked there on *Utopia* as well the year before. It’s a great city with such wonderful architecture. You can still feel the civic pride seeping into the bricks. It’s very buzzy and vibrant with excellent bars and restaurants. So it’s a great place to work. I like working away because it means I can focus on what I’m doing and I’m not too anxious about when I’m going to get home.”

Q: Jarecki feels she has been patronised as a woman in a live TV interview?

“Yes – they wouldn’t say that to a man, would they? But I don’t think I experience that. There is a thing about being a woman over a certain age where you just get ignored. Having been somebody who people might have glanced at occasionally, suddenly you couldn’t be less interesting because you’re past it, or whatever. Becoming invisible is weird. But I haven’t been aware of discrimination. I was aware of it in the Seventies, definitely. But not now. And I think the parts for women are quite good at the moment. There’s a lot of good material around for women, thank God. That has changed.”

Q: Is there a positive side about becoming ‘invisible’ off screen as you get older?

“Yes, definitely. I don’t get recognised any more. You can go about your business and not worry about people going, ‘Oh I saw her down the market this morning. She looked terrible.’ You don’t have to worry about that. I go running in south London now and that’s very empowering.”

Q: You must have met people in high office, like Jarecki. Does it change them?

“I think power is a very dangerous thing. You see it even in something as lowly as acting. Very occasionally, but it does exist. You see people who because they are leading actors think they are of a higher echelon than mere mortals. And that really annoys me because that’s not true. A little power, as they say, is a very dangerous thing.

“It nearly happened to me a long time ago. I was doing so much work and people can treat you differently. It’s quite difficult not to let that go to your head. You can’t believe in those myths. And they are complete myths. I am no different than anybody else. But if I get treated differently – you see American movie stars, in particular, I’m afraid, because the English tend to be of a slightly humbler nature than some Americans.

And you do see some of them behave as if they think they are God almighty and they are above everybody else. That’s a terrible tract for an actor because they’re not. So you have to be wary of that.

“You get the entourage, don’t you? I think an entourage is a very dodgy thing to have because they are people who are sychopants hanging around you, wanting you to be happy with everything and thinking you can demand whatever you like. And I just think that’s daft.”

CAST LIST

Jo Gillespie	Sheridan Smith
Chief Constable Carolyn Jarecki.....	Geraldine James
DC Jack Clark	Matthew McNulty
DS William Hepburn	Douglas Henshall
DCI Jahan Kapoor	Ace Bhatti
Tom Piper	Phil Davis
Ryan Gillespie	Kenny Doughty
DS Lee Miekell	Andrew Knott
PC Vicki Stanton.....	Carla Henry
DC Jared Ansell.....	Andrew Gower
Barbara Gillespie	Sharon Duce
Carla	Lisa Dillon
Michael Parry	Ben Ryan Davies
Melly Gillespie	Honor Kneafsey
Hal.....	Oliver Woollford
Moirra	Ruth Evans
Zoe Nash	Vinette Robinson
Steve Glover	James Foster
Jocelyn Hepburn.....	Tara Moran

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Executive ProducerDamien Timmer
Executive Producer.....Rebecca Keane
Executive Producer.....Hugo Heppell
Executive Producer and writerMatt Charman
ProducerTom Mullens
DirectorMichael Samuels
Line ProducerAmanda Black
Head of Production.....Veronica Castillo
Production ExecutiveGary Connelly
Script Executive.....Valery Ryan
Script Editor.....Paul Testar
MusicStuart Earl
DOPG a v i n
Finney.....
Production Designer.....Mike Gunn
Art Director.....Kat Hale
Editor Ben Lester
Casting DirectorDavid Martin
Costume Designer.....Darren Finch
Make-Up DesignerMelanie Lenihan
Locations ManagerAlastair Don
Sound Recordist.....Giancarlo Dellapina
First ADPaul Elkins
Second ADSeth Elkins
Post Production Supervisor.....Bejhan Kalantar