

INNOCENT

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Lee Ingleby and Hermione Norris lead the cast of new ITV drama serial **Innocent**

Innocent is a new four-part contemporary drama series written by acclaimed writers Chris Lang and Matt Arlidge starring Hermione Norris and Lee Ingleby and produced by TXTV.

They are joined by an exciting ensemble cast including Daniel Ryan (*Home Fires*, *Mount Pleasant*), Angel Coulby (*Merlin*, *The Tunnel*), Nigel Lindsay (*Victoria*, *Foyle's War*), Elliot Cowan (*Da Vinci's Demons*, *Frankenstein Chronicles*) and Adrian Rowlins (*Harry Potter*, *Dickensian*).

The drama series tells the compelling story of David Collins (Lee Ingleby) who is living a nightmare.

Convicted of murdering his wife Tara, David has served seven years in prison. He's lost everything he held dear: his wife, his two children and even the house he owned. He's always protested his innocence and faces the rest of his life behind bars. His situation couldn't be more desperate.

Despised by his wife's family and friends, his only support has been his faithful brother Phil (Daniel Ryan) who has stood by him, sacrificing his own career and livelihood to mount a tireless campaign to prove his brother's innocence.

Convinced of his guilt, Tara's childless sister Alice (Hermione Norris) and her husband Rob (Adrian Rowlins) are now parents to David's children. They've become a successful family unit and thanks to the proceeds of David's estate enjoy a comfortable lifestyle, which is very different to when Tara was alive. For Alice there's no doubt of his guilt and she's utterly devastated by the prospect of David's Appeal and Re-trial.

DI William Beech (Nigel Lindsay) who led the original investigation into Tara's murder has a lot to lose if David's conviction is rendered unsafe. Charges of slanting the inquiry and potential misconduct would see him professionally humiliated and even suspended. Waiting in the wings should David be acquitted is his junior DI Cathy Hudson (Angel Coulby). However, unknown to anyone but themselves is the fact that they are deep in a relationship.

To David's total and utter astonishment he is acquitted on a technicality and although suspicion still hangs heavy over him, he is free to walk from court and to begin the long road to rebuilding his life and to restore his reputation. But at what cost to him personally and those around him? Will David win a custody battle to reclaim his children as he seeks to establish his absolute innocence?

With relationships permanently fractured and David emotionally at rock bottom he finds himself in a very dark place. Will Alice accept the court's decision and can she and David be reconciled? And what of David's best friend Tom Wilson (Elliott Cowan) who reneged on his alibi on the night of Tara's murder? Is tenacious Cathy Hudson's review of the case an investigation David should fear? What will this mean for their relationship? What will this mean for her relationship with Will?

And will she uncover the truth of exactly what happened on the night Tara was murdered?

Innocent is produced and co-executive produced by Jeremy Gwilt (*Maigret In Montmartre*, *Maigret Sets a Trap*, *Maigret's Dead Man*, *Foyle's War*, *Torn*), Chris Lang (*Unforgotten*, *Undeniable*, *A Mother's Son*) and Matt Arlidge (*Undeniable*, *The Little House*, *Mistresses*).

Foreword

Chris Lang, co-writer and creator

A few months after it was greenlit to production, one of the commissioners at ITV told me it was the easiest greenlight she had ever given. Now, leaving aside the fact that she'd almost certainly said this to many writers with egos as fragile as mine, there might have been just a *grain* of truth in her words, because when Matt Arlidge and I first 'found' the idea in one of our regular creative hook ups, we both had that little buzz of excitement that comes when you know you've snagged a good un'.

And where does that excitement come from? Well it comes from finding an idea that draws you in, that provokes you, and that makes you think 'wow, what would I do in a situation like that?' Because you know that if it does that to *you*, chances are it could do the same to an audience. To paraphrase James Earl Jones - 'If you write it, they will come.'

So 'Innocent' (the question mark is silent) is the story of a man tried and convicted of the murder of his wife, as he makes a bid to prove the conviction was wrong, and regain obviously his freedom, but perhaps more importantly, the love of his two children. Two kids (now adopted by their mum's sister) who were effectively orphaned by the death of their mother, at the hands of a father who has spent the last seven years in jail.

And the reason we believe that story will speak to an audience is because it taps in to some of our darkest fears, and some of our greatest hopes. Our fear that the world is random and cruel, that it can take away those we love, without rhyme or reason, that there is no great plan, that bad things can happen to good people.

But then set against that, the idea of family as an almost sacred thing. Family, with its unrivalled ability to nurture, to hold, to heal, and ultimately to offer its unconditional love as a shield against all of life's vicissitudes. And it is the tension between these two contradictory truths that propels the narrative, as, by turns, each idea gains ascendancy, and then loses it. Or to sum up, 'Bloke killed his wife. Or did he'. And so after the green light, we had the best part of the job, which is making the show.

For the lead role of David Collins, we wanted an actor that felt like he was one of us, an everyman, an ordinary guy - but also a star. Step forward Lee Ingleby, who radiates star quality, but is also the sort of bloke you know you could have pint with down the local. Then we found his brother, Dan Ryan, who we believe turns in the performance of his life, and then to drive the investigation through, Angel Coulby, who I first worked with on *The Tunnel*, and just thought was brilliant.

And then playing kind of opposite Lee, we had Hermione Norris. I had worked with Hermione on a previous show I wrote called 'A Mother's Son', and she has that unique ability to exude warmth and empathy, and at the same time let you know she is not someone to be messed with, that when cornered, she will make a formidable enemy. And then completing the line up, two actors I have worked with before and would love to work with again, Adrian Rawlins and Nigel Lindsay.

So this was the troupe we took to Dublin for two months, to shoot in the stunning Irish countryside, and then brought back to the south coast of England for a week, to film in beautiful Bosham harbour. We could not be more pleased with what we have made. We hope it will move you, we hope it will surprise you, we hope it will provoke you (in a good way!) and who knows, if it does, and the audience agree, there could be an 'Innocent II'.

Cast interviews



Lee Ingleby plays David

Can you tell us what drew you to Innocent?

"The writing was very good. I was really intrigued and wanted to know who these people were. And whether David Collins was innocent or not. I thought it would be quite a challenge to play somebody in that position. Also setting himself up for a fall at times with his anger and outbursts.

"I'd worked with the director Richard Clark before and I like his style. So to get the opportunity to work with him again was a bonus."

Can you expand on who David Collins is?

"David is a man full of rage who has spent years in prison for the murder of his wife Tara. Then he is released on a technicality, which is a surprise to him, and he finds it difficult.

"David is angry and upset that people who were close to him have been against him and weren't prepared to listen to his point of view. So when he comes out of prison he wants to confront those people.

Lee Ingleby interview continued:

"He is also determined to re-introduce himself to his children, who were very young when he was sentenced. That seems to be the driving force. But unfortunately nobody wants to know him. It's a big story in a small town. People look at him everywhere he goes. It's hard. So sometimes that anger bubbles up.

"David lost both his wife and, after being convicted, his children. He has had a lot of time to reflect on that. He then thought he was probably going to spend the rest of his life inside. And suddenly he is freed. So with that comes a whole different thought process for him.

"I found it interesting both psychologically and physically to see how somebody deals with that. It will take a lot for people to change their mind about him. Even if hard evidence comes forward.

"Even if you are innocent, sometimes the damage has been done already. There is always that suspicion hanging over David. It's hard to regain people's trust."

How does David cope with being released?

"David struggles to cope after being freed. He can't quite wrap his head around being released. He thought he would be going back inside and nothing would change. Then all of a sudden he's in the outside world again."

Did you do any research of your own before filming Innocent?

"I read a couple of books. One involved someone who had spent some 12 years in prison for murder and then they found evidence to prove he wasn't anywhere near the place at all. Which, of course, to him it was like, 'Well that's what I've been trying to say for the past 12 years.'

"He talked about how he was shunned from society and no-one would employ him. He had to find a new life elsewhere. Almost become anonymous again. Like David, going back home and realising he's not welcome. No longer belonging there.

"Innocent shows you the views from both sides and leaves it open for the viewer. It's obviously a nightmare situation for anyone to be in if they have, indeed, been convicted and imprisoned for a murder they did not commit."

We first meet David at court before his release. Have you ever visited a court for a real trial?

"I haven't, no. But I've had to turn down jury service a couple of times for filming reasons. There was one time where they refused my request to not do it. And I thought, 'I'm going to lose the acting job.' So we had to get letters from the producers and so on to try and change their mind. Which they did.

"I think it would be quite interesting to be on a jury. Of course you never know what you're going to get. But just to see how it all works would be interesting. How the barristers and solicitors work and all the rest of it. I guess every case is different."

Lee Ingleby interview continued:

How would you describe Tara's sister Alice's (Hermione Norris) attitude to David?

"As far as Alice is concerned, the original verdict was read out and that was it. It was proven in court that David murdered her sister. And that's what it is. David is released on a technicality rather than through some irrefutable evidence. It must be very hard to come to terms with that from her point of view.

"As far as his children are concerned, they only know he was convicted of killing their mother. She is no longer around and that's because of their father. That's the story and the life they have been leading.

"David's children have been getting used to normality in their lives with new guardians after the trauma of losing their mother. Having been young when he was jailed, their father now appears as this stranger with a story they can't process."

What was it like working with Hermione Norris and Daniel Ryan?

"We didn't have many scenes together but the ones we did have were lovely to play. I've always been a fan of Hermione's work. I did Jimmy McGovern's *The Street* with Daniel Ryan, who plays David's brother Phil. So it was a joy to work with him again because he's such a bloody nice fella."

How do you summon up David's rage in scenes where you may have to do several takes?

"That's the technicality of doing scenes. When you have to change a camera angle you've got to do the whole thing again. But it's fine because sometimes some of the scenes you're playing are so well written that you think, 'Oh, I'd love to have another go at that. I've got a better idea now.'"

David is recognised everywhere he goes in his small town. Do you get recognised a lot?

"It all depends. Sometimes I get recognised because of the most obscure things I've done. Some of those little jobs I did years ago. And then other times not at all. It always surprises me."

David is given some boxes of 'stuff' from his old house. Are you a hoarder or good at de-cluttering?

"I'm clutter free. I've got endless shelves of books, which I find quite difficult to chuck. I also keep photos. But things like clothes and papers I don't. If they take up too much room, I'll get rid of them.

"David's old things include some vinyl records. I'm a vinyl collector so I can understand that. I still buy vinyl and I've got two record players. They're out on display. I've got hundreds of records.

"But I'm not a hoarder at all. Memories, yes. But nothing that is meaningless."

Cast interviews



Hermione Norris plays Alice

What can you tell us about Alice and the Innocent storyline?

“The story is about David (Lee Ingleby), a man who was convicted of murdering his wife Tara. He has spent seven years in prison and is released on a technicality, having protested his innocence all of that time. Alice is his murdered wife’s sister and has custody of his children Rose and Jack. She has also been the beneficiary of the money he and his murdered wife left to raise the children.

“Basically it’s about the fallout and the emotional impact of him being released and the threat of Alice losing the children who she loves and has raised as her own. And how something like that would impact on a family. Alice had always wanted children. She has been through rounds of IVF and tried really hard to have a family. So if she loses them she loses everything. The stakes are very high for her.”

Had you worked with some of the Innocent team before?

“I worked with co-writer Chris Lang on A Mother’s Son. So I was familiar with his writing and excited to read another script of his. It’s a really good thriller. The director Richard Clark was amazing. I’ve worked with him before as well on The Crimson Field. He’s a really clever director.”

Hermione Norris interview continued:

How does Alice view David?

"She absolutely believes he is guilty of killing her sister. Alice has no doubt David is responsible for the murder. She knows there was trouble between them and he had violent tendencies. Alice is doing everything she can to protect the children.

"Alice is totally shocked and very angry in the court when David is released. She fears she will lose her life. Because the children are her life. And with him acquitted, what does that mean? She still believes he killed her sister. So Alice is devastated when he walks free. That he could be released on a technicality."

Is it difficult to summon up the rage and anger?

"That's what being an actor is. You just do it. It's tiring. You go to bed that night very tired. A day long shoot can be quite exhausting. When you're filming a scene you're not doing it once. You're doing it loads of times. It's very draining."

Have you ever visited a real court and trial?

"I have been to a real court a couple of times. Years ago. It's incredibly intimidating being in a court room. Not something I would like to experience in real life. It can be really dramatic and frightening. You wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of that or know somebody in the dock."

We don't know if David is guilty or innocent. But can you imagine being accused of something you did not do?

"It's horrendous. It's an awful thing. You see children when they are wrongly accused of something. Their outrage. I can't imagine anything worse than being accused of something that violent and that serious if you were innocent. It would ruin your life even if you were found not guilty. The prosecution and trial process can take a long time.

"I don't think I would cope in prison. It would just be really horrendous. Especially to be wrongly convicted or if you made a mistake."

How does Alice's husband Rob (Adrian Rawlins) react?

"Rob is quieter about it all. Alice does all the emotion for him. He is much more measured. Probably because she isn't. It's that thing in a relationship. If somebody is doing all of that anger the other person has to remain balanced."

What was it like working with Lee Ingleby, who plays David?

"Lee and I don't actually have that many scenes together. We did have one moment when we were asked to pose for a stills photographer. We had just played a really intense and emotional scene and neither of us could stop laughing. It was terrible. We literally lost it, laughing. I like Lee enormously. I think he's great."

Hermione Norris interview continued:

Alice 'sings' an Adele song to young Rose at bedtime? How was that for you?

"I'm a terrible singer. To be fair, it's not proper singing. If I had to do proper singing I think ITV would probably lose a lot of viewers. It was about the intimacy between those two characters and not the singing itself at that moment. Which is certainly how I played it. I would not attempt to sing that Adele song. Singing is not my strength."

Where was Innocent filmed?

"We were in a place called Malahide near Dublin. I loved the crew and working in Ireland. I met some fantastic people there. I loved Malahide and Dublin, which is a really beautiful city."

"There's a difference between doing a one-off drama and a series. It was a very contained piece. It felt like we created a very real world. And I know Daniel Ryan, who plays Phil. We were at drama school together. It was quite an intense world we created."

Alice makes it her business to know son Jack's Facebook password. You don't use social media in real life?

"No, I'm not on social media. It frightens me slightly. So I tend to stay away from it. But it is something I'll have to get up to speed with because of my children. But they're not there yet."

Some old possessions feature in this story. Are you a hoarder or a de-clutterer?

"I've just got too much stuff. I'm constantly trying to get rid of stuff. But when you have children it's difficult. I find it hard throwing things of theirs away. I had a massive clear out just before Christmas because I'd been away working for virtually a year, to and from home. I just washed and ironed all of Hero's baby clothes and tried to hide them all in storage. I couldn't get rid of them. They're for my grandchildren."

"In the story the 'stuff' includes some old vinyl records. You can't throw those away. Vinyl is really back in now. There is nothing like a proper vinyl record. The first record I bought with my pocket money was Wuthering Heights by Kate Bush. I listened to it over and over again."

TV drama shows the world from other people's points of view. Do you think that is important?

"I do think that is more important today than ever. We all live in quite small communities and naively believe everyone shares the same view. When they don't. I think that's what we've learned from recent events. It's rocked everybody."

Episode synopses



Episode one

David Collins is unexpectedly acquitted on a technicality having served seven years of a life sentence for the murder of his wife Tara. On the steps of the court he vows to bring to book those who lied at his original trial, to see the real killer jailed and more importantly, to regain custody of his two young children Jack and Rosie.

The verdict is a terrible shock to Tara's sister, Alice and her husband Rob. Unable to conceive, together they have raised the kids as their own and they are precious beyond belief to both of them. The verdict is also a blow to DI Will Beech. Will was the original investigating officer and he is angered by the inference that his investigation was flawed ...he absolutely believes that David killed his wife. Finally, the verdict seems extremely troublesome to Dr. Tom Wilson . However, for David's brother Phil it is a triumphal moment. For seven years he has campaigned tirelessly and selflessly to free his brother. Now penniless and struggling for money, David is forced to accept the charity and hospitality of his brother.

DI Beech is immediately suspended from the new investigation and is replaced by DI Cathy Hudson who, unknown to her commanding officer, is in a relationship with Beech. As he enquiry gains pace and inconsistencies are unearthed, it things become increasingly awkward for them both.

Tom's ex-wife Louise coolly orders Tom to give her more money to pay for the upkeep of their children but we sense that an implicit threat lies behind her demand.

Episode synopses continued:

David, Alice and Rob independently seek legal advice regarding David's custody claim. He wants his children back and is incensed to discover that the courts will take months to reach a judgement. Equally, Rob and Alice are determined to resist any attempt to grant access and the battle lines are drawn and both children are deeply upset at the prospect of their father regaining custody.

When David went to jail he lost everything. His house was forfeit to his in-laws who used the proceeds from the estate to buy a new house for themselves, something large enough to accommodate Jack and Alice.

As DI Cathy Hudson opens her new investigation she recruits a small dedicated team and asks to meet David. David reluctantly agrees and although Cathy tells David she still believes he is guilty, asks him to consider who else might have had a motive to murder Tara.



Episode synopses continued:



Episode two

Determined to see his father, Jack goes to David's house, but is picked up by the police who have been called by Alice and Rob before he can see him. Enraged that he missed seeing his son, David shares a whisky with Phil who questions where David has been. Realising that sleep is not on the cards, Phil takes David outside to burn the posters from his campaign, encouraging his brother to look forward, not back.

Meeting with their lawyer, Alice and Rob want to deny any Jack and Rosie any contact with their father. However, the lawyer advises against this, saying it would harm their case in the long-run. Meanwhile, David also seeks legal advice and is told that the process will take time but it will be possible. He's told that if and when access is granted, it will only be for short, supervised visits but in the meantime, there's nothing stopping him having non-physical contact the children. David finds Jack on Facebook and the pair arrange to meet.

DI Hudson visits Alice and Rob to discuss the new witness reports that Alice was seen fighting with her sister on the night of her death. Alice vehemently denies this, saying that her conversation with Tara was very emotional, with Tara wanting to call time on her marriage with David. Alice calls their marriage toxic and claims that David hit Tara. However, David tells a different story, telling DI Hudson that he thought she had been seeing someone else before her death. He reveals that he believed they met at a book group that she suddenly stopped attending. He maintains that all roads lead back to Tom Wilson.

Episode synopses continued:

Concerned about her relationship following the accusations about Tom and Tara, Melissa asks Tom's ex-wife Louise to the house to ask her advice on whether to trust Tom. She reveals that she is pregnant and Louise tells her to abort the baby and leave Tom.

As the investigation continues, DI Hudson asks the team to focus on the mugging that Tara suffered three months before her murder. She believes finding who attacked her is key to the case, as well as finding the truth behind the alleged affair between Tara and Tom. Bank statements reveal that Tara transferred a large amount of money to Alice over the years, which Rob claims was for IVF. However, upon finding new texts between Alice and Tara, DI Hudson starts to question their relationship.



Cast Credits

David Collins

Alice

DI Cathy Hudson

Phil

Rob

William Beech

Tom Wilson

Jack

Rosie

Melissa

DC Mari-Luz Garcia

DS Steve Beckton

Pete

Meg

Supt. Hillman

Hussein

Louise Wilson

LEE INGLEBY

HERMIONE NORRIS

ANGEL COULBY

DANIEL RYAN

ADRIAN RAWLINS

NIGEL LINDSAY

ELLIOT COWAN

FIONN O'SHEA

ELOISE WEBB

HANNAH BRITLAND

ZAHRA AHMADI

SAMUEL EDWARD COOK

ROBERT EAST

LYNNE VERRALL

TONY GARDNER

SARGON YELDA

CHRISTINA COLE

Production Credits

Executive Producer	JEREMY GWILT
Executive Producer	CHRIS LANG
Executive Producer	MATT ARLIDGE
Writer episodes 1 and 3	CHRIS LANG
Writer episodes 2 and 4	MATT ARLIDGE
Producer	JEREMY GWILT
Director	RICHARD CLARK
Director of Photography	DIRK NELL
Production Designer	JASON CARLIN
Costume Designer	LEONIE PRENDERGAST
Make Up Designer	JENNIFER HEGARTY
Hair Designer	BERNIE DOOLEY
Location Manager	PAT NANGLE
Casting Director	JULIA DUFF
Editor	MICHAEL HARROWES

