



# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction  | 3  |
| Character profiles                                    | 5  |
| Production interview: Q&A with Writer Tony Marchant   | 7  |
| Production interview: Q&A with Producer Louise Sutton | 12 |
| Production interview: Q&A with Director Anthony Byrne | 17 |
| Production interview: Q&A with Consultant Susie Green | 24 |
| Cast interview: Q&A with Anna Friel                   | 32 |
| Cast interview: Q&A with Emmett J. Scanlan            | 38 |
| Episode one synopsis                                  | 44 |
| Cast and Production credits                           | 46 |



Production Company  
A STUDIOCANAL COMPANY  
Co-Production with Aenon Ltd





## Introduction



### ***“I’ve always been a Butterfly.”***

International Emmy award winning actress Anna Friel (*Marcella*, *Broken*), is joined by Emmett J. Scanlan (*Harlan Coben’s Safe*, *The Fall*), Alison Steadman (*Orphan Black*, *Gavin and Stacey*), Sean McGinley (*Paula*, *On a Clear Day*) and child actor Callum Booth-Ford in the new ITV mini-series *Butterfly*, produced by RED Production Company.

Created and penned by BAFTA award-winning screenwriter Tony Marchant, *Butterfly* is a heartfelt and sensitive drama about the complex relationship between separated parents, Vicky (Anna Friel) and Stephen (Emmett J. Scanlan), and their division in opinion over how to support their youngest child, Max (Callum Booth-Ford).

From a young age, Max has identified as a girl but has tried to suppress these feelings in an attempt to earn Stephen’s approval. When Max’s feelings become increasingly distressing, Stephen seizes the opportunity to return to live at the family home, hoping to encourage male bonding and prove himself to Vicky.

What unfolds is the greatest challenge and test of love and understanding imaginable. The social transitioning of Max to Maxine is initially thwarted because of the clear division of opinion between Vicky and Stephen.

## Introduction continued

Despite puberty looming over her, as Maxine grows in confidence she becomes increasingly certain that she's in the right skin – will this be enough to get everyone else on board? Both parents want to protect Maxine but are completely split on the best way to do that.

Stephen is still clinging to the idea that it's still a passing 'phase' and doesn't want to take such a leap with the ensuing emotional upheaval, if it isn't ultimately going to be followed through. Whilst for Vicky, it's about making sure that Maxine's mental health is kept intact at all costs.

*Butterfly* embraces the story of a three-generational family and exposes the truly extraordinary demands made by everyone in the family. Across three episodes viewers will see how they all prosper or fall as the string of challenges unfold over time.

Nicola Shindler established the multi award winning RED Production Company in Manchester in 1998 to work with the best writers producing modern and innovative programming, and has executive produced *Butterfly* with Tony Marchant. Caroline Hollick, Creative Director at RED, is also an executive producer.

Adam Kemp is executive producer and his boutique indie company AENON (Our Zoo) a co-producer.

ITV's Senior Commissioner, Victoria Fea, has overseen the drama from the broadcaster's perspective.

RED Production Company is part of STUDIOCANAL'S international production network of companies.

## Character biographies

### MAX/MAXINE DUFFY | CALLUM BOOTH-FORD

Max is Vicky and Stephen's youngest child. From a young age, Max has identified as a girl, but has tried to suppress these feelings in an attempt to earn Stephen's approval. But as the onset of puberty intensifies, Max's emotions around gender become increasingly distressing. With both parents divided, will Max find the courage to identify as a girl and express herself as Maxine? And will her family be able to accept her for who she really is?

### VICKY DUFFY | ANNA FRIEL

Vicky loves Max, and she never stopped loving Stephen. But to Vicky, it feels like a contradiction. How can you love the father of your child when the father cannot accept that child? Vicky is also conflicted about how Max is 'turning out' and whether she is at fault. So Vicky has allowed Max to dress and behave as a girl within the confines of the family home. She's a part-time teaching assistant, but she's also aspirational, keen to kick-start her new business with best friend, Paula. Vicky's visceral need to protect her child at any cost could end up tearing her family apart.

### STEPHEN DUFFY | EMMETT J. SCANLAN

Stephen is an ordinary dad trying to get to grips with the understanding and insight that Max's gender nonconformity demands. He has become an attentive 'weekend' dad, in a new relationship with a younger woman, Gemma. But he still loves Vicky, and desperately wants to get back together with her and move home. Stephen hopes that Max is 'acting out' because of the separation and he can see that Max is desperate for his approval. Stephen works in health and safety - the observance of rules is critical - and sometimes a matter of life and death. But how well will Stephen cope when he doesn't understand the rules?

### LILY DUFFY | MILLIE GIBSON

Lily is the first person to encourage Maxine to be her true self. She's Maxine's best ally and big sister. Lily's never had as much attention as her sibling, never been a 'problem' - she's intelligent, mature and has a great sense of humour. In many ways, Lily is everything that Maxine aspires to be, a confident, articulate, teenage girl with a social life. However at home, once Maxine's issues come to the forefront, Lily starts to feel neglected. So when a boy from school starts paying her some attention, Lily finds herself in a situation she isn't ready for.

## Character biographies

### BARBARA PANNELL 'NANA' | ALISON STEADMAN

Barbara is Vicky's mum. She's a deeply complex, formidable woman who loves her family, but she's set in her ways and struggles to show that love. She can be sharp-tongued, but she's also intelligent, strong and quick-witted - a force to be reckoned with. For Barbara, the root cause of 'Max's funny ways' is Vicky indulging his every whim by allowing him to 'play' at being a girl. She's critical of Vicky's parenting for encouraging a silly phase. On the surface, Barbara appears to characterise a generational ignorance, but her troubled relationship with Vicky plays a key part in her refusal to accept Maxine as her true self.

### GEMMA HULTON | AMY HUBERMAN

Gemma is Stephen's new girlfriend – the only woman he's ever introduced to the kids. When Gemma started seeing Stephen their relationship was uncomplicated and straightforward, that's why it comes as such a shock when Stephen decides to move back in with his wife. Gemma understands that Stephen has to be there for Max but feels like there's more to it, that Stephen's still in love with his wife. Gemma may be the 'other women' in Stephen's life but she's intelligent, supportive and truly cares for him, enough to let him go?

### PETER DUFFY 'GRANDAD' | SEAN MCGINLEY

Peter is Stephen's dad. A happy-go-lucky ladies man who works as a dance host on cruises for unaccompanied ladies. Peter's got a great sense of humour but is somewhat prone to saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. From the beginning, Peter is supportive of Max being different and he's there to give Stephen some home truths when his relationship with Vicky hits rock bottom.

### PAULA GLAZEBROOK | LORRAINE BURROUGHS

Paula is Vicky's best friend and new business partner. She's straight-talking, and a supportive friend to Vicky. Whilst maintaining her job as a waitress at a restaurant, Paula ensures their business stays on track, giving Vicky all the support she can. But as Max's problems escalate, Vicky's hot-headed response will cause a rift between the two best friends.

## Production interview

### Tony Marchant | Writer

#### Q: How did *Butterfly* originate?

“Nicola Shindler of RED Production Company, who I had worked with before on various things, asked me if I was interested in the idea of doing something about transgender children. My take was to look at it within the context of a mother and father who didn’t see eye to eye about it and were also separated. With more than one revelation about the child’s gender variance. It was as much a family drama and a love story as it was a story about a child’s gender dysphoria.”

#### Q: How much did you know about this area?

“Years ago I wrote a film called *Different For Girls* which was about an older character, played by Steven Mackintosh, who undergoes a transition. It was really about two schoolfriends who go their separate ways and when they meet up years later one had transitioned as a woman.

“In more general terms I’ve always been interested in the idea of identity and have explored that in other things I’ve written, such as *The Mark of Cain* about the Iraq War.”

#### Q: What research did you carry out?

“We approached the charity Mermaids and went to one of their ‘meet-ups’ where I spoke to various children and their parents. Asked a lot of questions. That access was priceless for me.

“You can’t just make this up. This isn’t something that could just be a work of the imagination. You really had to research it and get it right. Because there’s a lot of responsibility resting on your shoulders. Beyond that, Susie Green of Mermaids was a constant source of information and inspiration along the way.

“I also spent a day at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and spoke to their senior clinical psychologists. They are the sole resource in England for gender identification services. So, I got an insight from their point of view as well. We have used a fictional clinic in the drama, but they were still an important source of information for us.

“They talked about how the families come to them and what they are looking at. I took a lot from that. It was also important that their emphasis, as far as I understood it, was on allowing children to explore their identity in quite a fluid way.

## Production interview

### Tony Marchant continued:

“That they shouldn’t be one box or the other. They didn’t need to be ‘male’ or ‘female’. They could be a girly boy or gay or something in between. There was a non-binary approach that they felt would allow the children more freedom to express themselves.”

#### Q: As co-executive producer were you involved in casting for the role of Max/Maxine?

“Like everybody else I saw a lot of the young actors who came up for the part. In the end it was unanimous that Callum Booth-Ford was the right young actor for it. He has been fantastic. It’s a really difficult part and he has handled it so well. Giving a really credible performance.

“Our director Anthony Byrne also has to take a lot of credit because he needed to create the right climate. Callum didn’t have a lot of acting experience. You wouldn’t expect him to because he’s only young.

“So Anthony needed to create the right environment for Callum to feel comfortable. As well as for Millie Gibson, who plays his older sister Lily so well. They needed to feel embraced and comfortable. Anthony and our producer Louise Sutton created that environment.”

#### Q: At its heart, what is *Butterfly* about?

“It’s about the incredible complexity of grasping and recognising your child’s needs. And it may be despite your own instincts. Ultimately the drama is about how to be a good parent. That is something that everybody can tap into. It isn’t just a marginal issue because it’s about a trans child.

“Vicky (Anna Friel) has probably always known this was more than just a phase involving Max/Maxine (Callum Booth-Ford). But Stephen (Emmett J. Scanlan) thinks if it’s not a phase then his child is gay. And then if his child is not gay then it’s still too soon to be entertaining something like this, with or without the looming inevitability of puberty.

“Stephen is not comfortable with his child’s gender variance. He’s also not comfortable with what that might say about him as a father. He has a struggle. As far as he is concerned, Max was always his son. He never expected Max would realise herself as Maxine. That’s an enormous pressure and a provocation to a dad like Stephen.



## Production interview

### Tony Marchant continued:

“The father in our drama may not agree with the journey his child is taking. Or finds it extremely uncomfortable. But that’s not to say he lacks sympathy or humanity himself. He clings to the idea that it may be a reaction to the separation of the parents. And if Stephen comes home and makes everything all right, she or he will still be wanting to express themselves as a boy.

“In the end parents have to make a choice because the child isn’t old enough to make that choice for themselves. We had to give as much time, emphasis and nuance to Stephen’s point of view as we did to Vicky and Maxine’s. What he felt, he felt in good faith. Even if it doesn’t go with the prevailing orthodoxy about how to deal with it.

“I needed to make it as real and relatable as I could. That’s why it’s so important to put Maxine’s story in the context of an ordinary family. So it had a universality and it begged questions of other parents. Which is about parenting full stop.”

#### Q: Is there an element of grief for parents in this process?

“There certainly is an element of grief for parents. In our story when Max goes to school as Maxine in a girl’s uniform, Vicky has to put the former child Max’s clothes and toys into a suitcase. That’s a kind of grieving process for her. Saying goodbye to what she thought was her son.”

#### Q: Do you reflect the abuse faced by transgender children and their parents?

“Within the drama most of the abuse Maxine receives is from her own contemporaries. Other children at school. But it can involve adults as well. People don’t grow out of prejudice. They don’t get to a certain age and then are mature enough to dispense with it. People’s attitudes are ingrained and some have a very dogmatic sense of what’s right and wrong in terms of gender.”

#### Q: Is language important?

“Language is very important in this whole area. Misgendering people is offensive to them and hurtful and upsetting to them. Especially if it’s being done deliberately. We were constantly being educated by Mermaids and Susie Green about how their experiences could be described and characterised.”

## Production interview

### Tony Marchant continued:

#### Q: What do you hope viewers will recognise in *Butterfly*?

“Ultimately they will recognise the dilemmas and conflicts in this drama. Even if they haven’t had direct experience of a child with gender dysphoria then they will understand the desire to make an unhappy child happy. And the protectiveness of parents towards their children. Including just how far someone will go to get what they want for their child.

“These things are all relatable and universal. It’s not a marginal issue. It’s about how we describe ourselves. And whether we are too stuck on the binary thing of if you’re a man you have to behave in a certain way. That can be particularly confining.

“Overall it’s really about how a family can stay together despite the most difficult of circumstances.”

#### Q: Was this a particularly important story for you to tell?

“I certainly had no ‘right’ to tell this story and was very mindful of the issue of representation. I could obviously recognise the importance of the subject but without the access I gained through *Mermaids* to the stories of the children and their parents I could never have dreamt of realising it properly. Those stories were painful but also inspiring and I hope helped me tackle the subject with empathy, insight and accuracy”

“I grew up in the East end of London and I was an amateur boxer for 12 years. I remember saying to my dad when I was aged 18 that I didn’t want to box anymore. I wanted to write poetry instead.

“So I understood there were certain expectations of me as a certain type of young man that I was expected to fulfil. Or that I was expected to go down the road of. Obviously, I chose a very different route. I didn’t turn out to be the man I was expected to be. I turned out to be the one I wanted to be.

“That wasn’t easy. To say, ‘I don’t want to be an amateur boxer anymore. I want to be a poet.’ Obviously, that’s only a very partial reflection of what these children go through. They’re going through something far more fundamental and distressing than that. But at the same time, I’ve always written about identity. It’s been one of my preoccupations over the years.”

## Production interview

### Tony Marchant continued:

#### Q: What was it like working with this cast?

“They have been fantastic. I have worked with Anna Friel before and she really delivers on this. And Emmett J. Scanlan is superb as well. I love the subtlety and nuances of their performances as well as the sheer power and passion of them as well. The cast across the board are so good. With great performances by Callum Booth-Ford and Millie Gibson.”

#### Q: What approach did director Anthony Byrne take?

“It was important this didn’t seem like a grey issue drama. *Butterfly* is vibrant and colourful and animated. And full of energy. Of course, this is an important issue. But it doesn’t feel like an issue drama. That was really important. And it’s not pious, preachy or worthy. It’s about transformation and realisation. Anthony’s direction has characterised that.”

## Production interview

### Louise Sutton | Producer

#### Q: How did you get involved with *Butterfly*?

"I was sent the script by my agent when I was finishing up on my last job. I was told it was RED Production Company. Which was a big tick. And then written by Tony Marchant. Another big tick. It was called *Butterfly* and I thought, 'I wonder what that's about?' Then I read it and it really intrigued me.

"From the start we had three scripts ready up front. Which is unusual. So we knew what the journey was and we could make sure we were telling all of the stories in all the right ways."

#### Q: How would you describe *Butterfly*?

"*Butterfly* is a family drama through the prism of a child with increasingly distressing feelings around gender. The scripts are so good, they're so beautifully written, that it's one of those projects where if there are any queries you just go back to the script and it's all there on the page.

"It's been a joy to be a part of. Across the board there is a real passion for this project. Everybody cares so deeply about the subject matter and has connected with it in a really emotional way.

"*Butterfly* is perfectly pitched at a mainstream audience but it is challenging. There have been some really beautiful touching moments on set during filming."

#### Q: Does the drama contain echoes of the real-life story of Mermaids CEO Susie Green and her daughter Jackie?

"There are parallels. Laurie Kirkham, our fantastic script editor and our writer Tony Marchant went deep into the research. You have to at least know the process inside out in order to tell the story. Then we've had to make certain choices for drama because that's what you do.

"Laurie and Tony went to a Mermaids meeting and we reflect one of those Mermaids' meet ups in the drama. They came away full of ideas and enthusiasm.

"When Anna Friel and Emmett J. Scanlan came on board as Vicky and Stephen we asked Susie Green of Mermaids, to have another meeting and bring along some parents and children so we could meet people and see what it was like to be part of a meeting, as we were going to depict that on screen.



## Production interview

### Louise Sutton continued:

“When you meet the children and the parents it really takes your breath away. Until you meet real people and understand what they’ve been through, what their stories are, how strong all of the children and parents are, you can’t really appreciate it.

“To have faced something that nobody can ever have had an idea about until it comes into their lives.

“We hope the impact that had on us will be reflected in this drama. That those stories are going to come through. The story of a ‘normal’ family going through something completely extraordinary and really challenging.”

#### Q: Is this a choice for a child or young person?

“When you speak to people they say, ‘It’s not a question of whether you will or won’t. It’s how you do it.’ As a parent, what would you do for your child and their happiness? That’s a universal question. And why this is such a powerful drama.

“The other question is, ‘What does it feel like when you don’t fit in?’ Whether you don’t fit in your own skin or you don’t fit in with your friends or society. That’s a question everybody can relate to.

“We’re telling a very specific story about a very specific situation. But I think anybody will be able to watch it and relate to those themes.”

#### Q: How do the parents - Vicky and Stephen - react in this story?

“They have differing views. But both genuinely believe they are doing the right thing for their child. It’s a family in turmoil. People behave in a way they wouldn’t normally behave because they are under so much pressure.”

#### Q: Why not cast a transgender young person as Max / Maxine?

“We met a range of actors. In the end we chose the actor who we thought was strongest for this role. But alongside that we have taken a lot of advice from various people, including Susie from Mermaids, a safeguarding children officer plus child psychologists.

## Production interview

### Louise Sutton continued:

“The feeling was it would not be appropriate for somebody who was going through these kinds of issues to be put on screen at such a young age. If the character was 20 years older it might have been a different story. But the prevailing advice was it would be inappropriate and irresponsible of us to put a child with those issues on screen.

“As it was, we had to make sure the child actors were mentally robust. Because we understand there are going to be people who take issue with this, from all sides. So we made sure the children cast in those roles have the strength of character and support around them to deal with any potential backlash.

“One of the Mermaids’ volunteers is in the cast and we’ve had a couple of supporting artistes who are trans. We’ve also worked with a lot of children and their families ahead of depicting our Mermaids day on screen.”

### Q: Are people afraid of using the wrong language when it comes to transgender?

“I have done it myself. You call Maxine ‘he’ by mistake and then you try to correct yourself. But it’s not that complicated if you just think about it. Or refer to people as ‘they’ rather than the male pronoun or the female pronoun.

“Also a lot of the people we have spoken to who are in the trans community or associated with it, they understand as well. Nobody wants to take offence and nobody wants to offend. But naturally you have to check yourself.

“Hopefully through things like *Butterfly* and more exposure it will soon just become second nature. Also starting those conversations about, ‘Why is a pronoun important?’ People who aren’t in that situation may say, ‘Well, what does it matter?’ If you feel like you’re misgendered all the time then it matters a huge amount.

“In the case of Susie’s daughter Jackie, one of her teachers deliberately misgendered her all of the time. And actually, that’s harassment. That’s when it becomes an issue. Slips of tongues of people not knowing quite how to express themselves is different. There is a huge difference between people doing it deliberately for offence and people who make a slip of the tongue.”

## Production interview

### Louise Sutton continued:

#### Q: What was it like working with Anna Friel and Emmett J. Scanlan?

“Anna is a wonderful actress. Audiences love to watch her because she is so engaging and versatile. She can be vulnerable and strong. Everything you want in a mother figure. Anna is a really hard-working actor who totally involves herself in the role. It helps with the subject matter to have somebody like Anna.

“Emmett came in for a casting and just blew everybody away. On first sight he’s an alpha male. But with a soft core. He is not afraid to be emotional and vulnerable. That’s what we need from his character.

“Then what’s even more special, when you put them together - it’s a rare thing that you get chemistry like that between two actors. Sparks flew. And when you put the kids into it they are a real family. Off camera they have this amazing relationship.

“The way our director Anthony Byrne has shot it, he keeps it moving and flowing. And that energy flows through off camera on to camera. It feels really refreshing.”

#### Q: What do you hope viewers will take away from watching *Butterfly*?

“I hope we’re bringing a family drama to the screen with a different issue at the heart of it. Some people will be coming to it for the first time and will really understand what it means to be transgender.

“Also people in the transgender community are going to see themselves represented on television. That’s so important. If it’s one child, if it’s one family who are seeing their own issues reflected back at them, if we’re changing the opinions of one person then we will have achieved something. We also want to draw people in to a really beautiful world.

“As well as that, it’s a current take on men and the male role in the family. You have this family who all have different opinions and go on a slightly different journey together. In a way Vicky’s mother Barbara (Alison Steadman) goes on one of the biggest emotional journeys of all. Because she is completely anti.

“Tony is such a clever writer. Anthony is a brilliant director. And the actors have interpreted it so well. It feels like one of those moments where the stars have all aligned. *Butterfly* feels really special. It’s the spaces between the lines that really tell the story.

## Production interview

### **Louise Sutton continued:**

“Everybody who reveals their true self in this way is incredibly brave. Human beings are all the same. We all have the same hopes, dreams and wishes for ourselves and our children.”



## Production interview

### Anthony Byrne | Director

#### Q: What were your thoughts when you were first approached about directing *Butterfly*?

“I wanted to tell that story immediately. I get sent lots of different types of material. Within the landscape of television in the UK, most of it is procedural or returning drama. It’s rare to come across a three or four part stand alone drama. Even rarer to come across something like *Butterfly*. It is utterly unique.

“It hasn’t been done before. Telling that story largely from a child’s point of view and seeing the effects of that journey on a family. It’s also something very current. Something I was becoming increasingly aware of just from reading newspapers, magazines and seeing documentaries.

“So I already had a passing interest or curiosity to know more. But when I read the script I became very passionate about it very quickly and wanted to do it. I met up with the writer Tony Marchant and Nicola Shindler of RED Production Company and got on really well with them straight away. It clicked very quickly. And off we went from that point.

“The magic trick of the whole thing was the casting of Max / Maxine. That was my big find. I knew it would live or die on that decision.

“Tony Marchant was the most collaborative writer I have worked with to date. We did many sessions together. Tony was very open to new ideas and very good at going through stuff with Anna Friel and what she wanted to do. Without ever changing fundamentally what we were doing. “Nicola Shindler as an executive producer was a great support. Nicola is very direct and I like that, she always said, ‘You should do what you want to do to tell the story.’ and supported my vision for it. Tony also supported that. They are really great scripts. A great story with fantastic characters. You really just want to serve that.”

## Production interview

### Anthony Byrne continued:

#### Q: What is *Butterfly* about?

“*Butterfly* is about an ordinary family trying to cope. The key thing for me was trying to create something that is accessible. In a way that you’re not preaching to an audience. I didn’t once want to tell people what to think.

“When I distilled it down before we started shooting, in terms of what I wanted to achieve with that material, you want to present a series of questions and scenarios to an audience and then allow them to project their own point of view on to that scenario.

“What would you do? How would you handle that? There are certain moments where I would agree with the father, Stephen (Emmett J. Scanlan). And then lots of moments where I wouldn’t agree with the father. The same with the mother, Vicky (Anna Friel) and her behaviour and attitude. That’s what the drama is really there to achieve.

“From my point of view, the key to this was not the issue itself. It was a human issue and it’s a human drama. The most important thing for me was to key into Max’s journey and feelings on a human level. If I can do that, then I’ve succeeded. The issue remains completely relevant, but you’re engaged in his journey, in the families journey. And if you are engaged in what Max/Maxine is going through on a human level, you will empathise with him, and through that empathy, you will have a deeper understanding of the issue.

“Whereas if you take your prejudice and you project it on the issue alone, if your point of view is negative, it’ll be a harder ‘get’ for a broader audience. If you engage empathetically on a human level you connect with people and that unlocks the issue in people’s minds.”

#### Q: What was it like working with young Callum Booth-Ford who plays Max / Maxine?

“Callum gives an extraordinary performance. It was quite an intensive casting process. We met an awful lot of kids. Did a lot of sessions. We had come across Callum and were still working our way through the rest of the auditions. But we kept coming back to him. There was something about Callum that we were all drawn to.

## Production interview

### Anthony Byrne continued:

“We spent some time just trying to get to know him. Because it’s such a huge responsibility. There is a lot to that part. It’s not the same process you would go through to cast any other role. Obviously Callum is a child. He was ten when we cast him and had just turned 11 before we started shooting. There was a lot for him to understand and deal with. We were very mindful with him and his parents. That they knew what they were getting into. It’s not only a journey for the character but for Callum as a little boy portraying and understanding those emotions and there’s a huge responsibility on my part to help him through that.

“We were concerned about how he would adapt to it and how he would then be perceived in school by his own friends. We did make up and costume tests. But nothing seemed to be an issue for him. He just took to it.

“I kept saying, ‘He’s like a young Christian Bale.’ Callum has that intelligence. He’s very sharp. Always looking and paying attention to what’s going on around him. And I liked that as a director, that he was always there and he wanted to learn.

“I spoke to him as a grown up. I didn’t treat him differently. I’d explain things to him slightly differently so he could understand what was going on. But generally on the set I basically treated him like a grown-up, a peer, and involved him in conversations that we were having. Because I realised early on that he was able for it.

“Then the two of us just became really tight. The same thing you would have any other actor. You become quite close because it’s quite intense over a short period of time. Towards the end of the shoot I became more concerned about him again because I thought, ‘Well in two days this is all going to be over. I’m going back to London, the crew are all going home and it’s over.’ So I was trying to get him ready for that. But he had an amazing chaperone. She was with him all of the time and the support around Callum from the crew also was huge. We just had a really good atmosphere on the set.

“Callum can turn it on when you need him. You can speak to him like a grown up and he understands it straight away.

“Anna Friel (Vicky) and Emmett J. Scanlan (Stephen) were amazing. I really believed them as a family with Millie Gibson as older daughter Lily who was just phenomenal and a real natural talent. They all really bonded. With very different processes of acting.

## Production interview

### Anthony Byrne continued:

“Anna is very instinctive. She’s a maverick, a true creative force and exactly the kind of actor I love to work with because she is always searching for the truth of any moment and is relentless in the pursuit of it. She’s a one off, but her body of work speaks for itself.”

“Millie Gibson who plays Lily is very off the cuff and reacts to things. She brings a naturalism to everything that grounds and centres whoever else she is acting opposite. Callum was extremely prepared because of the nature of the role. As well as Emmett. They all complemented each other in a perfect way. That was great for me as a director because I didn’t have to worry at all about their dynamic. I completely believed them as a family.”

#### Q: What was your thinking behind the colourful, vibrant opening titles of *Butterfly*?

“I had an opportunity to author a three-part drama, which is rare. The focus of the drama is about a family. With an issue exploding in their family. But I wanted the access to the narrative at that very beginning to be from a child’s point of view. To be seen through a child’s eyes.

“So I wanted the opening titles to be colourful and bright and feel like they were from him. That basically Max / Maxine is crafting everything we are seeing. It’s his imagination of his world and how he sees things. That’s why I wanted to have all of that colour.

“We also have a mermaid sequence at a sea life centre. The research material included mermaid and unicorn motifs that were huge totems for these kids. I was aware of this huge aquarium in Manchester and we filmed a scene there. So early on in the drama that anchors this magic realism. I just wanted to have a few beats of that.”



## Production interview

### Anthony Byrne continued:

“It was Anna who came to me with the kaleidoscope which was very personal to her, so I got the camera department to set it up and shoot it. All of these things then become symbolic.

“That’s where the look of it came from. I wanted it to feel fresh vibrant and different. But it all had to come from the story. So it will look and feel different to the audience but with good reason.”

### Q: Do you think viewers will relate to what Vicky (Anna Friel) and Stephen (Emmett J. Scanlan) are going through?

“I’m not a parent but I understand what Vicky and Stephen are facing on a human level. You can empathise with this. Anna is great at doing those propulsive, explosive moments but we decided to keep it all with-held, keep it inside. Until you get that moment when she erupts. When you need to let that power out, I don’t think Anna Friel can be beaten. Everything that comes from her is completely real.

“Emmett is then so great at doing that typical male moody thing. They just spark off each other. Emmett is a very sensitive guy. He is not the obvious choice for that character. Emmett is this broody looking Irishman with lots of hair.

“When I met him he had this sense of frustration bubbling under the surface. What he does extremely well is communicate that with the simplest gestures. The way he turns his head or the way he uses his eyes. I always think that’s where the real power is. Between the lines. He does that so well. With such an expressive face.

## Production interview

### Anthony Byrne continued:

“He’s also as an actor - and as a man - not afraid to look vulnerable and play vulnerability. To be talked down to by his screen wife Vicky. He did it in a way I hadn’t seen anybody else do. Maybe it’s an Irish thing. But when he came in and he did it I was like, ‘Oh yeah, that would probably be me.’

“From my point of view it was about connection. How you draw an audience in and make it accessible for them. You can’t force people to watch. But all I can say is if you watch the first five minutes you won’t be able to turn it off. You will connect with Max and the family at the beginning. And you will go on that journey with them.

“I’m sure it’s going to be incredibly divisive and it will probably be the subject of many newspaper articles, radio shows and all of that kind of stuff. But I think the people who are coming at it with a very prejudiced point of view - if you can watch the story from a human level and project yourself into this scenario and that family you might come away with a different point of view.

“At the same time you might learn something about an issue that is very traumatic for a lot of families and for the boys and girls who are going through it. It’s an incredibly timely story to tell and I’m really looking forward to - and open to - that response.

“It will be very divisive. But I think it has to be divisive in order for a broader discussion to take place. That can only be a positive thing. It keeps that subject matter in the public discourse. That’s what any great drama is there to do.”

### Q: Were you shocked at the transphobic abuse many children and families face?

“Sadly I wasn’t really shocked. You just look at the world we’re living in. It’s not a very great place. I don’t think as a race we’re doing that well. So I wasn’t shocked. I have great faith in what we are all capable of as a people and I hope a story like this will allow people to empathise on a human level.”

## Production interview

### Anthony Byrne continued:

“I’m sure it’s going to be incredibly divisive and it will probably be the subject of many newspaper articles, radio shows and all of that kind of stuff. But I think the people who are coming at it with a very prejudiced point of view - if you can watch the story from a human level and project yourself into this scenario and that family you might come away with a different point of view.

“At the same time you might learn something about an issue that is very traumatic for a lot of families and for the boys and girls who are going through it. It’s an incredibly timely story to tell and I’m really looking forward to - and open to - that response.

“It will be very divisive. But I think it has to be divisive in order for a broader discussion to take place. That can only be a positive thing. It keeps that subject matter in the public discourse. That’s what any great drama is there to do.”

#### Q: Were you shocked at the transphobic abuse many children and families face?

“Sadly I wasn’t really shocked. You just look at the world we’re living in. It’s not a very great place. I don’t think as a race we’re doing that well. So I wasn’t shocked. I have great faith in what we are all capable of as a people and I hope a story like this will allow people to empathise on a human level.”

### Susie Green | Consultant

**About Mermaids:** “Mermaids is passionate about supporting children, young people, and their families to achieve a happier life in the face of great adversity. We work to raise awareness about gender nonconformity in children and young people amongst professionals and the general public. We campaign for the recognition of gender dysphoria in young people and lobby for improvements in professional services.”

#### Q: What is the history of Mermaids?

“Mermaids started in 1995 with very low levels of calls and emails, as you would expect because of the amount of ignorance and prejudice there is out there. I got involved in the parents’ group. Then I was a trustee for about 10 years and I moved up to be chair. It was completely voluntary. A helpline service for people who wanted support along with an email service for people who wanted information and support. And then we had a parents’ forum and a teens’ forum. We also ran about two or three groups nationwide with one residential weekend a year that started about 10 years ago.

“So it was quite low levels at first. The numbers were in the hundreds a year. And then in 2014 we saw the numbers starting to rise. We were seeing more positive representation out there, more people were coming forward, we were seeing celebrities start to talk about being trans.

“That’s when as a registered charity we started to look at trying to professionalise. So from the start of 2016 I was made CEO and we got a helpline operator manager to expand the volunteers that answer the phone. Now we get over 5000 calls and emails a year. With over 1200 parents on our parents’ forum and over 500 young people on our youth forum.

“We hold four residential weekends a year for families to come together. We’ve got eight local groups and we want to expand those. And we do a lot of campaigning. Our young people and their families often don’t have a voice because they don’t want to out themselves. So they don’t want to talk about their children being trans. And they don’t want to put themselves out on national press or television because it’s too dangerous.



## Production interview

### Susie Green continued:

“So we represent their voice. And I take that very seriously. We talk about the real life experiences of what it’s like to parent a trans child or to be trans yourself as a young person. We use that insight and knowledge to go forward and say, ‘This is the ignorance our children and young people are still getting when they go to their GP, when they go into schools. This is what is happening to them on a daily basis in terms of hate crime. We need to continue to strive to do more to make these young people safe.’

“We’ve still got a long way to go. There’s nothing compulsory in terms of GP training regarding transgender youth. There’s nothing for teachers or social workers. So how are people meant to understand or know - other than past their own prejudices - what it actually means?

“We now deliver training in schools and other organisations, including CAMHS, trainee GP’s, the police, and have done a significant amount of work with fostering agencies, around providing support for young people who go into care. Unfortunately, many trans youth end up being kicked out of home.”

#### Q: What is your background?

“I had no idea trans people existed beyond the ridicule that you saw depicted in the media. Twenty years ago what I then thought was my little boy called Jack said, ‘God’s made a mistake and I should have been a girl.’ I already knew something was going on. I thought I had a very effeminate little boy who was likely to be gay. But then she told me that and I was terrified.

“I spent the next two years denying that was it and telling her over and over again that it was OK to be a boy who liked girl things. But that didn’t make her a girl. And she just kept telling me. ‘No, that’s not it. That’s not who I am.’

“What I saw during that period of time was a very lonely, miserable, very down child, quite isolated with no self-confidence. When she went to school she didn’t seem to make friendships and we were worried about her.

“After she asked me when she could have the operation - which her cousin told her about - I decided I couldn’t ignore it any longer. Then I found Mermaids online. I think I just typed in, ‘My son wants to be a girl.’ And about the tenth result down was this support group.

## Production interview

### Susie Green continued:

“I phoned up, spoke to one of the people who formed Mermaids. A lovely lady called Lin. She was the first person I had spoken to who understood what I was going through and who didn’t tell me I should make her be a boy. Which is what I was surrounded by. All of these people that said allowing Barbies and dressing up clothes was going to ruin her life.

“I can’t remember half of the telephone conversation as I cried almost all of the way through. If you think about how I felt as an adult, completely and utterly isolated and alone and bombarded from all sides, then think about how my kid felt, aged six.

“Mermaids told us about the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust’s services for children and young people. We got a referral from our GP to a mental health services person who, luckily, had been at the Tavistock and referred us to them straight away. She then got a gender dysphoria diagnosis at about seven years old.

“I’d had three more children by this time - a boy and identical twin boys. And then me and her dad separated. Her dad didn’t get it at all. My split with my husband wasn’t about Jackie. But when we split, I did have more freedom to allow her to express herself at home. Up until then she’d had some toys, but not really much other than that.

“So my daughter Jackie started living as a girl at home and transitioned in school when she was around eight, nine years old. In the last year of primary school, she went as a girl. Grew her hair and wore a girl’s school uniform. And she went from this miserable kid who ran away from school regularly, who refused to engage in class, to a different child.

“They said to me, ‘It’s an amazing difference. We can’t actually fathom how different she is since she’s just been allowed to be herself.’ I was thinking, ‘Yay, that’s it.’ And then she went into secondary school and she was annihilated.”

### Q: So your child faced abuse?

“One parent would regularly shout abuse at my daughter. I don’t think it was a coincidence that her daughter was one of the ones pulled several times for calling Jackie a tranny and a freak. So you had a parent leaning out of her car window and shouting abuse at my nine-year-old walking past her. With foul language as well. At a kid.

## Production interview

### Susie Green continued:

“Jackie was beaten up. When she was 13-years-old she was walking home from a friend’s house and got beaten up by two 40-year-old guys. She had an egg cracked on her head by a girl in the middle of the street.

“It was daily abuse. One boy spat full in her face. She was walking down a corridor with a teacher and another kid called her a tranny. In front of a teacher. And the teacher did nothing.”

#### Q: You spent three years on suicide watch. What happened?

“I would go through her room and pull out all of the paracetamol. And then she would go and get some more from the supermarket and stash them again. Just after the boy spat in her face, they called me in because she was holding some scissors and she said she was going to knife herself in the stomach.

“Her seven overdoses were always preceded by abuse of some sort. When she was able to move schools, so she could go to school as herself out of district, I had to write a letter as to why. I sat with her and said, ‘What happens to you on a day to day basis?’ And she said, ‘I would carry on forever if I told you, mum.’”

#### Q: Do trans children and young people have a choice?

“It’s not a choice. It’s just who they are. What is really good about this drama is it shows this child clearly struggling with who they are. They present to their dad in the way their dad wants them to be and it’s just not right. We see this all the time. Families falling out. But the child or young person has no choice.”

#### Q: Do mothers and fathers react in different ways?

“We do have some amazing dads. But that doesn’t happen as often as dads really struggle. That anti-trans narrative is very much pushed out in the press. Parents are up against all of this and they also have it from within their own families.

“Grandparents continue to send birthday cards and Christmas cards to a grandson or granddaughter for years after they’ve transitioned when they’ve been asked not to. So parents are waiting for the post to come to take the card out of the way. Because the child gets really upset at this graphic representation of the fact their grandparents don’t understand, don’t accept and will not respect their wishes.

### Susie Green continued:

“We have seen families split about this. We’ve also seen from our weekend residentials mums dragging dads along. With the dads going, ‘I don’t want to be there, I don’t want to listen.’

“And then they’ve met some of our young people - we have role models of trans teens whose parents have been through our system. They talk about who they are now, where they have got to. They’ve got partners, they’ve got jobs. They’re doing really well. And the dads suddenly see that it’s not doom and gloom.

“A lot of the hostility is based on fear of what their kids are going to suffer. What it’s going to be like for them. They fear their child will always be alone, they’ll never have a partner, they’ll never have a job, they’re always going to be prejudiced against. Then they come along to this weekend and meet these wonderful, sorted young people. And it gives them hope.”

**Q: Parents may wonder if this is simply a phase in their child’s life and they will change their mind. How often is that the case?**

“The statistics quoted again and again including the 1995 study by discredited clinicians Zucker and Bradley are based on studies from 30 years ago. Now you have to think about what the landscape was like then for any young person. They also did a diagnosis for gender dysphoria that counted ‘girly boys’ who wanted to wear pink who were perfectly happy with their birth gender but just wanted to wear princess dresses. So those stats are absolutely meaningless.

“We’re now getting stats out from around the world where gender dysphoria is properly diagnosed as being somebody who is going, ‘No, I am a boy,’ or ‘I am a girl.’ And we’re seeing that it’s something like 80 per cent continue on to transition.

“And the latest figures coming out of Australia - which haven’t been written up yet so they’re not a proper recorded statistical research study - is 96 per cent of young people, if they’re properly diagnosed, go on to transition.

“But it’s a hard path to get there. A lot of questions and a lot of talking before you are able to access any medical treatment. Which is also shown in the drama. I like that because people say kids are being forced into being trans and being pushed through a medical pathway. Which is simply not the case. The drama shows how difficult it is. That it’s not a quick process by any means.”

## Production interview

### Susie Green continued:

**Q: You are a consultant on this TV drama. How did you get involved with *Butterfly*?**

“The TV production got in touch with us as they were looking to access support with the mechanics of the story and to try and get access to families and young people. We get a lot of media interest that’s based around actually putting young people in front of the camera or children and their families. And I’m always really cautious about that.

“But when you’ve got somebody who is doing a drama then you can inform them to ensure the drama is accurate. That’s a massive opportunity for us.

“We have that parents’ forum with over 1,200 parents on it and a youth forum with over 500 young people on it. So I went back and explained there was an opportunity to make something good. You don’t have to put yourself or your kids in the firing line to do it. But would families - parents and young people - be willing to talk to the script writer, producers etc of this production company who are looking to make an ITV drama?

“That was the first step. In July 2017, with *Pride in London*, we did a joint event. A day in central London where we invited *Mermaids*’ families and also families from outside to meet the writer Tony Marchant and script editor Laurie Kirkham. They met some of our patrons and volunteers and also had a long session talking to parents and then to young people.

“For parents, telling their story to somebody who is not judging them is really cathartic. Because they meet so much resistance day in, day out. The young people also talked about the way it feels from their perspective. How they had to tell their parents. How their parents reacted. What the process had been like for them.

“Then the scripts started to come in. Laurie and Tony have sense-checked everything every step of the way and gone, ‘Would that happen?’ So I was able to guide them in the right direction. Obviously, we know there has to be drama in there. The conflict in *Butterfly* between the parents is the drama. So this is more about a love story. And the trans child in the middle of this is a part of that but not where the real focus is.”

## Production interview

### Susie Green continued:

#### Q: Was there any question of casting a trans child as Max/Maxine?

“We had lots of conversations with the production company about casting trans actors and whether you should. It’s really hard to get the balance right. There’s a big movement within the trans community which is ‘not about us but with us’. That you shouldn’t be telling stories unless you’re telling them authentically and involving trans people in that process.

“I agree with that. But actually, casting a young actor to do that role who is trans - we don’t know what the outcome is going to be in their particular case. They may decide they are non-binary. They might eventually decide they want to live in stealth and don’t want everybody to know who they are.

“At the same time, a lot of the supporting artists in the Mermaids’ scenes are trans gender children and young people along with families from within Mermaids. So the production company has tried to be as ethical as they possibly can be about trans involvement in this.”

#### Q: *Butterfly* is a story about a family, which includes a trans child. What would you say to those who might be wary of watching?

“I would say that knowledge is power. And pretending something isn’t going to happen because it’s too difficult isn’t going to make it go away. Wouldn’t it be better to be better informed? I think the people who may be frightened of this are the people who are dealing with some level of gender incongruousness within their children or themselves.”

#### Q: What do you hope will come out of people watching this TV drama?

“I’m hoping it will bust some of those myths. That it’s so easily accessible. That it’s parents forcing their child. That it’s a phase. That it’s a choice. All of those things are shown as being the nonsense they are. And how supporting a young person can achieve great things for them. That a better outcome can result from this if you come together as a family.

“I also like the love story. It gives an extra balance to the drama. It’s not just about focusing on the trans child. And the family dynamics with the older sister Lily (Millie Gibson) and how important that was to Maxine (Callum Booth-Ford) in this story. I just hope people recognise the fact that trying to pretend it’s not real doesn’t help.



## Susie Green continued:

“Most people have never had to deal with this. The thing that makes me angry are those people who speak out, who have never dealt with it, who will never deal with it, who won’t ever have to deal with the outcome of any actions or any words they say about it, are the ones who have never met a trans person. Have never met a transgender child. Have never had to deal with that in their own life.

“Yet they think their opinion is more valuable than a parent’s or a young person who is dealing with it. I think, ‘It’s never going to affect you. So why do you think you have a right to tell parents they are child abusers because they are supporting their children?’

“If you watch this drama you will understand more. You think, ‘Where’s the big controversy?’ That’s part of what I would really like to see from *Butterfly*. That it normalises life for trans kids and for their parents. That it makes it less of a huge, exclamation mark, ‘Oh my God what’s going to happen here?’

“Why don’t we just let them get on with their lives? Hopefully then we’ll see a knock-on effect of, ‘Everybody is unique. So why is it OK to bully somebody?’ Difference is the thing people react to. So if we can make Maxine and Maxine’s family and the outcome be like a big, ‘So what?’ it would be great.

“People say, ‘You’re going to ruin these kids’ lives.’ That’s not what is coming out of both my own experience and the families’ experience of other young people that I’ve seen come through *Mermaids*. Or from the international research studies that are coming out. It’s better to look after your children than to ignore the way they feel.

“The main thing to say is, my daughter is really happy. She’s having a great life. She is enjoying herself enormously. She phones me and tells me all about her boy dilemmas. She’s just like any other 24-year-old should be. Getting on with her life.”

## Cast interview

### Anna Friel | Vicky Duffy



#### Q: How did you become involved in *Butterfly*?

"I read the script and was interested enough to go and meet Nicola Shindler of the RED Production Company. As well as the writer Tony Marchant, who I had worked with before on *Public Enemies*.

"The first thing Nicola and I discovered is we grew up in the same street in Rochdale and went to the same school. Which was extraordinary. We just went, 'Oh my God, wow.'

"I said, 'This story is going to teach me something. Because if this was my daughter Gracie I don't know how I would deal with it. And I don't know what my views are because I'm so ill-informed.' They said, 'Well surely that's the reason to do this? That's what we want. We want people to question, open their eyes and not be ignorant.'

"They also asked me to be a co-producer because they wanted me to get really behind it and help with the casting, script amendments and bringing a crew together. They said, 'We will be shooting this in Manchester. We would like to hire a northern crew because we work in the north.' So I said, 'Yeah, going home, that'll be awesome.'

## Cast interview

### Anna Friel continued:

“Then we talked about different directors. Nicola suggested Anthony Byrne. We had a meeting and that was just a no-brainer. I loved his storyboard and his take on it all. Tony was open as well to any ideas we wanted to throw in.

“Then we went to Mermaids, a charity for children and families who are dealing with transgender. That just opened my eyes completely. We met a boy who was formerly living life as a girl. And you would never have known.

“We also heard shocking stories of bullying, abuse, death threats. Just awful things. That made me even more passionate about getting it right. And saying to people, you never ever judge something you don’t have a clue about.”

#### Q: So this is an area many people have never encountered?

“That’s right. But neither was the lesbian kiss I filmed in Brookside in 1994 at the age of 17. At that point I knew about lesbians but I didn’t realise there were people who were so unhappy and felt so lonely with no-one to talk to that they were threatening to kill themselves. Look how much things have changed in those 24 years because people have opened their eyes. We’re moving forward, hopefully.”

#### Q: At its heart, what story is *Butterfly* telling?

“It’s essentially about a family that has been broken up because they can’t agree. They are totally torn and don’t know what to do. Instead of finding answers together as a family, they break up and go off on their own journeys. Which makes the whole thing much harder.

“Vicky still loves Stephen (Emmett J. Scanlan) but he just can’t bear the situation they find themselves in. While Vicky is having a silent battle with herself as she faces the prospect of saying goodbye to her son. She wants Max to live. So she’s having to say goodbye to her son with the prospect of Max becoming Maxine. That’s something I had never thought about.

“You’re not losing a child because Max would become Maxine. But some of the children I met are so adamant, saying, ‘No that person is dead. They don’t exist.’ They will rip up every single photograph of them and sometimes burn their old clothes.

## Cast interview

### Anna Friel continued:

“You’re changing ‘he’ to ‘she’ or ‘she’ to ‘he’. You have to become familiar with different terminologies. At first when someone asked what I was doing, I said, ‘I’m doing a story about a family that’s torn apart because they have a little boy that wants to become a girl.’ That’s the terminology the majority of people would understand.

“They don’t have a choice. That’s what I’ve learned. At birth they are assigned a gender. So they might be assigned a boy. A male. But they identified as a female. And they really have no choice about how they feel about that.

“For the child or young person involved, it is a compulsion. It would be like having the shell of what we would call a boy. But inside, the way your brain works, the way the chemicals function, you’re a female.

“There will be a lot of people who will think, ‘Oh no, I’m not watching that. I don’t want to know about transgender. But there will also be people thinking, ‘Well, let’s have a look.’ I’d say watch it because you might change your mind and you might actually find empathy and compassion. Don’t judge something you know absolutely nothing about.”

### Q: What about the wider story?

“You’re not just watching three hours of a boy becoming a girl. You’re watching a story about a family in crisis. Our screen family works so well together. Millie Gibson, who plays Vicky and Stephen’s other child Lily, still attends the Oldham Theatre Workshop, where I went, three nights a week and all-day Sunday. She’s just got this amazing naturalism.

“The story shows how other members of the family are affected. Lily feels left out because her parents are concentrating on their youngest child. All of the elements of the story are based on fact, from massive amounts of research and talking to families.

“Then you’ve got Callum Booth-Ford as Max / Maxine who is going to be a little star. He has such deep concentration. There’s something very special about him. The bravery for that little boy to take this on. When he will have to go to school and children could be mean. At that age, he’s got a lot to teach other people. If at his young age he can say, ‘It’s an important story and I want to tell that story.’

## Cast interview

### Anna Friel continued:

“We saw five extraordinary boys for the role. It was really hard to make a decision. Having been a child actress myself I wanted to make them as comfortable as possible. But with Callum, I knew in the room he was the one.

“We also looked at the idea of getting a real transgender child actor. But that wasn’t possible because you would be asking them to go back from now being a girl to being a boy. Which could be psychologically damaging.

“I’ve never worked with RED before but they are a wonderful company. There was so much attention to detail all the way through filming. With a great deal of care and sensitivity. So I’m really happy as my first time as co-producer to be associated with such a great company.”

#### Q: Do parents find themselves out of their depth?

“There are no answers. Aside from organisations like Mermaids. So many parents out there just ignore it. And say to a son, ‘Don’t be silly. Just go and kick a football.’ They think they will grow out of it. Or it’s often confused as being homosexual. Parents do find themselves totally out of their depth and don’t know what to do.”

#### Q: Were you shocked about the abuse and worse these children and families face?

“What harm are they doing to anybody? Everyone is entitled to an opinion. But to put death threats through letterboxes. Really? Some of the parents had at least been spat at. Other parents at the school would completely alienate them.

“What would you do if you were in my shoes? Come on, be a little bit open-minded. We’re not in 1890 now. We’re in a day and age where things are changing rapidly.

“I was bullied at school and I understand how mean children can be. But for adults to do that? They should know better. I have no time and no forgiveness for anybody who would be so vile.”

#### Q: Is it true that parents can be on suicide watch for years, fearing for the lives of their child?

“It is that serious. It’s a cry for help. They have got nowhere else to go. At 17-years-old I’d walk down the street and would never, ever, be called Anna. Yes, I was playing a famous character of Beth in Brookside. But I was always called ‘dyke’ and ‘lezzer’. They were that affronted and that offended.

## Cast interview

### Anna Friel continued:

“You think, if times have changed that much in 24 years around that subject, how is time going to change attitudes around this subject? No-one has to want it, agree with it, like it. It’s just the same with any topic. Learn about it. Educate yourself. Because knowledge is power.”

#### Q: This is not just an issue that applies to children and young people.

“There are adults today who have been denied support and understanding. They grew up at a time with no internet, no information and no real way of finding out. So they would be hit and beaten if they said they wanted to play with a doll. Then much later in life they say, ‘I’ve never felt right in my body.’ But the transition at that point is so difficult to make.

“They may be in a body that presents itself as a male but inside they are female. It happens. It’s life. They didn’t ask for that. I understand. I’m not someone who is going to start lecturing people and say we’re some big, worthy drama. Because each and every person has a right to have an opinion. Whatever they feel. But just, please, find understanding.”

#### Q: What was it like working with Alison Steadman, who plays Vicky’s mum Barbara?

“Can you imagine? Since Abigail’s Party and Shirley Valentine I’ve always loved her. I said, ‘Really? Can we get Alison Steadman?’ We waited for a few days and eventually she said yes. I know I want to work with her again. She just draws you in. I mean, she’s Alison Steadman. And I don’t say that about lots of people. But I have a huge amount of admiration and respect and was so thrilled we secured her.

“Along with Sean McGinley who plays Stephen’s dad Peter. He played my father in Watermelon in Ireland. He’s a lovely actor. While our fantastic director Anthony Byrne is also Irish. I want to form an alliance and work with him again.

“Anthony has a very filmic take. It’s quite difficult because the camera is almost as close to you as a pair of glasses. You’ve got to try and be naturalistic with this big piece of black machinery in your face. But he wants to be inside the character’s heads. *Butterfly* has a very particular and unique look to it.”



## Cast interview

### Anna Friel continued:

#### Q: Was part of the appeal working back home in and around Manchester?

"I keep coming back to Manchester. I'm always welcomed home. People are really nice. And it's good to set an example, saying you have not got to come from a wealthy family, have a silver spoon, you've not got to speak with a posh accent. If you've got determination and self-belief and you're willing to work very hard you can do anything. It's nice to be able to fly that flag."

#### Q: In a wider sense, why do we put people in boxes?

"We put people in boxes all the time. You're a cleaner, you're a baker, you're a candlestick maker. You work in a bank. It doesn't identify who that person is. Who are we to put anybody or anything in boxes?"

#### Q: Why should people watch *Butterfly*?

"Because it's not just about transgender. Everyone is questioning themselves. With people looking at things from very different angles. It's looking at those decisions and if that happened to you, how would it affect you?"

"None of us know what's going to happen tomorrow. Your child could be born with blue eyes or green eyes or transgender. No-one knows what our future holds. So take a look at a family dealing with this. It could be your child or your grandchild."

## Cast Interview

### Emmett J. Scanlan | Stephen Duffy



#### Q. How did the role come about?

"I was doing *Girlfriends* for ITV and *Harlan Coben's Safe* for RED Production company and Netflix when *Butterfly* came up. Timing is everything. So, I was probably in their eyeline as a potential to do *Butterfly*. The audition came in, I'm guessing, because of that.

"My agent sent me the three scripts by Tony Marchant and five scenes to learn. I sat down and read the scripts in one sitting. I think I broke down in a couple of parts such as the vulnerability and realism of the family dynamics.

"I thought this is so brave. It's something I want to get my teeth into.' This is why I do acting. To tell original stories that haven't been told before.

"The scenes were easy to learn because they were so well written. The words just sank into me. That's not always the case. But this one was immediate.

"I went down to London. I sat in the audition waiting room. I saw other actors going in. Actors I knew, actors that I was a fan of. I remember thinking to myself, 'If I can just go in there, I have a shot.' I love being in the room with a director because I get to play.

## Cast Interview

### Emmett J. Scanlan continued:

“So I went in and played. And the first scene was atrocious. I absolutely flatlined. The director Anthony Byrne looked at me and went, ‘Let’s go back to that.’ Second scene? Home run. Smashed it. Third and fourth scene? Flatlined. Fifth scene, I stopped myself half way through and said, ‘I think I know what you want now.’ I did it again and Anthony put his hands in the air and said “that’s it, that’s him”.

“He then said, ‘Thank you for your time.’ And didn’t go back to that first scene. I walked out and thought to myself, ‘Well, you got two out of five scenes there.’ So, you’re giving them a glimpse of your idea of who Stephen is. But I didn’t think it was enough to book the job, if I’m being completely honest.

“I did the usual thing of trying to forget about the job. But I kept seeing butterflies everywhere. Then my agent rang and said, ‘The job is yours.’ I was floored by that. The trust, the loyalty that RED, ITV and Anthony showed me in giving me this responsibility, will be something I will never forget. Loyalty demands it.

“With something that really hooked and engaged me, it took maybe less than a second for me to say, ‘Done. I’m in. Let’s do it.’

“After I got the job Anthony told me that when I walked out of the audition he turned to the producer Louise Sutton and said, ‘That’s our guy.’ I wish he’d told me straight away so I didn’t have to wait!”

#### Q. Did you do any of your own research before filming started?

“Because my character Stephen is very ignorant about this situation with his son, I didn’t want to have an opinion one way or the other because I was afraid on some level, no matter how subtle, that it could influence my performance.

“That said, myself and Anna Friel, who plays Vicky, had the opportunity to go to the charity Mermaids, to meet CEO Susie Green, her daughter, Jackie, and these brave, remarkable parents and children.

“It was absolutely incredible. Just listening to their stories and talking to these wonderful rock star children, and their parents (all bar one of which, were mothers) It made me even more determined to tell this story and tell it right. To find the truth of this story. It’s probably one of the most important jobs I’ve ever had the good fortune of being involved in.”

## Cast Interview

### Emmett J. Scanlan continued:

#### Q. Is there a difference in the way Stephen and Vicky react?

“Vicky is a lot more supportive of Max and understands what may be going on compared to Stephen. At the end of the day both parents face losing their son. Even though their child is not lost, Max becoming Maxine means they have lost a son.

“There was a wonderful woman I spoke to at Mermaids. We were talking about her child who was transitioning from girl to boy. She had tears in her eyes because she never got to say goodbye let alone have time to mourn the loss of her daughter who now identifies as a boy. You could see the pain in her eyes. No one would choose this for themselves, or their child which makes me believe it isn't a choice.

“Max is Stephen's only son. He's not prepared to give up on that. To lose his only son. He has plans for him. I can understand where that comes from. It's a very difficult situation for him to try and navigate through.

“I cannot and do not judge him in any capacity. Because ultimately, despite making some rash decisions and doing some things that are debatable in their delivery, he unconditionally loves his children and only wants the best for them.”

#### Q. Did you identify with Stephen's confusion and vulnerability as a father?

“Short answer. Yes. Quite easily in fact. *Butterfly* is about a somewhat acrimonious, heated, splintered relationship between Stephen and Vicky. Even though they still have a deep love for each other, its damaged. It's a family drama centred around Max, who is trapped in the wrong body.

“The story starts after Stephen has left the family home because he was unable to cope with and unable to understand his only son's desire to dress up as a girl. To want to be a girl. So, Stephen has removed himself from that family, almost in some kind of primal survival mode. Not just for him but for the family unit itself.

“He makes decisions. They're not necessarily right or wrong decisions. They're just his decisions which he tries to make for the betterment of his family. He hopes that what his son Max is going through is just a phase. Something he will grow out of.

“He believes that what Max needs is a proper role model. So, he tries to spend time with him doing stereotypical “manly” things to get rid of this feeling. Video gaming, martial arts, football, all that sort of stuff.

## Cast Interview

### Emmett J. Scanlan continued:

“It isn’t until he finds out just how seriously unhappy his son really is that he realises this isn’t a phase, quickly trying to adapt to a new environment. I think Vicky says, and I’m paraphrasing here, “I’d rather have a happy daughter than a dead son.’ Most parents - unless you’re a terrible parent - would want their children to be happy.

“Ultimately, they have to protect their child. because the world Max wants to go to is a dangerous one. Especially in the society we live in. A society that compartmentalises things. If you challenge a society’s idea of what normal is - and ‘normal’ is just a word made up by people who fear change - then it can lead to alienation, bullying and other things.

“That’s not something you want for your child. You want the easiest path possible. So, you try to make the decisions based on that. I haven’t gone through this as a parent but even based on just normal life decisions with my daughter, I always hope the advice I’m giving her is the right advice. Not ever knowing if it’s the right stuff until it’s too late.

“When I was expecting my daughter into this world 15 years ago, I asked my dad what it was like to be a father. He looked at me and said one word “vulnerable” .... he was right.”

#### Q. Does Max have a choice in the way ‘he’ feels?

“I think a child like Max has no choice. It is a compulsion. Can you imagine being trapped in the wrong body? I’m lucky. I know who I am. I’ve got a strong centre. I was born a boy. I was born male. I’m now a man. I’m heterosexual. i know these things about me. What was assigned to me at birth I associate with and identify with in real life.

“Can you imagine living in a society where somebody turns around and says, ‘You are not those things. We do not recognise you as being those things.’ I would find life very difficult. I don’t let anyone tell me what to drink, who to like, what to wear. If you’re going to tell me what to believe and who to identify with, you and I are going to have problems.

“So, I can imagine what that’s like. But even that pales in comparison to the reality these kids go through. I had an embarrassing ignorance when it came to this. My knowledge was just highlights, soundbites.

## Cast Interview

### Emmett J. Scanlan continued:

“I thought it was adults who wanted to be a different gender. But what really shocked me when I came into this was I didn’t realise how young these kids were. And the stuff they had to go through.

“There was one girl at Mermaids. Very young. Very beautiful. And she got bullied in school because she was born a boy and identified as a girl. When she came home there was a size eight footprint on her back. That’s the type of world you try to protect your children from. It made me so angry and sad listening to her story. She was amazing. I’m paraphrasing here but she turned around to her mother one day and said, ‘Why did God have to rest on Sunday? He should have had a half day and finished me off instead.’ You’re sitting there thinking, that’s too good for the scripts. It would look written. People wouldn’t believe that a kid could say that.”

#### Q. How would you describe the experience of working with Callum Booth-Ford and Millie Gibson, who play your screen children Max/Maxine and Lily?

“Callum and Millie are extraordinary actors. Very open and available. I love Millie. she was effortless on set. Callum is a wonderful kid. He’s confident, he has no fear, no judgement. He likes to have fun. They both do, because it’s such sensitive material, it’s important that outside of the scenes there is a light atmosphere around the place. Our job is to make sure the kids are comfortable. of course, the irony is they made us feel comfortable. There was a lot of laughing on set.”

#### Q. What would you say to those who might think this is not a drama for them?

“I wouldn’t tell anyone to do anything, let alone to watch something they didn’t want too. but I would ask for people who do choose to watch that they do so with an open mind.

“*Butterfly* is truly an extraordinary piece of writing, I promise you. sure, it will educate and raise awareness, as it has with me, about a subject most of us don’t really know too much about. A subject that maybe we’re afraid to delve into. But this isn’t a new phenomenon. This has been going on since people began.

“But also, ITV and RED have done something very brave in telling this story. We can’t ignore it. We have to study it. We have to understand it. And accept it as part of this wonderful, magnificent, infinite energy that makes us all unique. That makes us all human.



## Cast Interview

### Emmett J. Scanlan continued:

“You are doing a drama series about a transgender child but it’s also about this patchwork family. It’s a slice of life you hope people can relate to. There are no answers here.

“The great thing about this as a tv drama is it is primetime. Hopefully a lot of people will watch it. It’s certainly in the best position for that to happen. And I hope that it will answer some questions, beg some more questions, make people want to know more.

“It will show people out there - adults as well as children - that you are not alone. That there is help out there for you. That this is a scary journey. But maybe it can be less so.”

#### Q. How do you reflect on your *Butterfly* experience?

“The director Anthony Byrne has taken a shot on me. He has trusted me with this material and my first leading role in an ITV series. I find that very humbling. It’s a responsibility I don’t take lightly, and a gift I will never be able to fully repay him for... but will always endeavour to repay him.

“As a director he is a man who knows his stuff, never second guesses. Somebody who is utterly confident in what his vision is going to be. And as a result, makes those around him totally confident in what he is shooting.

“There is a huge sense of responsibility no matter what story you are taking on, no matter what character you want to inhabit. But there is a special sense of responsibility with this particular project because it’s so relevant, so sensitive and needs to be told. Because it can’t not be told.

“So, to be part of something so important, to tell a story like this, is why I got into acting in the first place. I’m hopeful *Butterfly* will be successful. But more than that I hope it raises awareness, sparks debate, if it can do that to but a few people it’s been worth it.”



### Episode one



Vicky (Anna Friel) and Stephen (Emmett J. Scanlan) are separated parents, they're uncomfortable around each other but there's clearly still a spark between them. Stephen is an attentive 'weekend' dad, but Vicky is unnerved to see that he's in a new relationship with younger woman, Gemma (Amy Huberman). Stephen plays football with his 11-year-old son, Max (Callum Booth-Ford), who seems to love it. But it's soon clear that Max is suppressing his true identity as a girl, in order to earn his father's approval. Stephen is unaware that within the confines of the family home, Vicky allows Max to dress and behave as a girl.

Once Max begins secondary school, he soon becomes a target for bullies. As the onset of puberty intensifies, his feelings around gender become distressing and he deliberately cuts himself. Vicky and Stephen meet with a child psychologist and are referred on to a gender clinic. Determined to be a role model for Max, Stephen tells Vicky he never stopped loving her. Vicky isn't sure if she can forgive Stephen for leaving. We see in a flashback Stephen recalling the night he left. Stephen moves back in, hoping to encourage male bonding, and to win Vicky back. They begin to fall in love again.

## Synopsis

### Episode one continued:

Encouraged by his sister, a nervous Max presents himself to his parents dressed in a girls' uniform. Lily (Millie Gibson) explains that Max wants, from now on, to be known as Maxine. Vicky is conflicted, Stephen however, is angry. Stephen admits he didn't leave Vicky, he left Max because he couldn't cope with his feminine behaviour. But will Stephen be able to face up to the reality of Max's true self?

## Cast and Production Credits

### Cast Credits

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Vicky Duffy.....        | ANNA FRIEL         |
| Stephen Duffy .....     | EMMETT J. SCANLAN  |
| Max/Maxine Duffy.....   | CALLUM BOOTH-FORD  |
| Lily Duffy.....         | MILLIE GIBSON      |
| Barbara Pannell.....    | ALISON STEADMAN    |
| Gemma Hulton.....       | AMY HUBERMAN       |
| Paula Glazebrook.....   | LORRAINE BURROUGHS |
| Peter Duffy.....        | SEAN MCGINLEY      |
| Georgina.....           | ABBY GREENHALGH    |
| Aaron.....              | ZAK SUTCLIFFE      |
| Molly.....              | LOLA OGUNYEMI      |
| Headteacher.....        | KERRY PEERS        |
| Alice.....              | FELICITY MONTAGU   |
| Mermaids Volunteer..... | JAKE GRAF          |
| Bridget Robbins.....    | NIMMY MARCH        |
| Sally Jameson.....      | GEMMA PAIGE NORTH  |
| Rebecca Parry.....      | LEAH HACKETT       |
| Stella Casey.....       | JACKIE KNOWLES     |

## Cast and Production Credits

### Production Credits

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Executive Producers .....      | NICOLA SHINDLER   |
| .....                          | CAROLINE HOLLICK  |
| .....                          | ADAM KEMP         |
| .....                          | TONY MARCHANT     |
| Writer.....                    | TONY MARCHANT     |
| Director.....                  | ANTHONY BYRNE     |
| Producer.....                  | LOUISE SUTTON     |
| Co-Producer.....               | ANNA FRIEL        |
| Line Producer.....             | SARAH LEWIS       |
| Script Editor.....             | LAURIE KIRKHAM    |
| Director of Photography.....   | SI BELL           |
| Casting Director.....          | DAVID MARTIN      |
| Costume Designer.....          | LANCE MILLIGAN    |
| Make Up Designer.....          | MELANIE LENIHAN   |
| Production Designer.....       | ANNA HIGGINSON    |
| Art Director.....              | STEPHANIE NICOLLE |
| Sound Recordist.....           | STU WRIGHT        |
| Editor... ..                   | JOSH CUNLIFFE     |
| First Assistant Director.....  | JON MIDLANE       |
| Second Assistant Director..... | ARIZONA EASTWOOD  |
| Location Manager.....          | JAMES MUIRHEAD    |
| Production Co-ordinator.....   | CARA MCVEAN       |

### Production Credits



#### **Nicola Shindler (Executive Producer/ Chief Executive)**

Nicola Shindler set up RED Production Company in 1998 to work with the best writers on original, modern, innovative and entertaining television drama.

The Manchester-based indie, with Nicola at its helm, has since produced some of the UK's most popular and award-winning series, working with esteemed writers including Russell T Davies, Harlan Coben, Bill Gallagher, Danny Brocklehurst, Dan Sefton and Sally Wainwright.

Nicola's credits include multi BAFTA award-winning and critically acclaimed *Happy Valley* and *Last Tango In Halifax*, Lenny Henry's first screenplay *Danny and the Human Zoo*, Dan Sefton's *Trust Me*, Danny Brocklehurst's ratings-winning dramas *Come Home*, *Ordinary Lies* and *The Driver*, Bill Gallagher's *Paranoid* and Russell T Davies' *Queer As Folk* and his ambitious and acclaimed trilogy *Cucumber*, *Banana* and *Tofu*.

Their latest series, *Harlan Coben's Safe* starring Michael C Hall and Amanda Abbington, and written by Danny Brocklehurst, received rave reviews and is available on Netflix.

Projects currently in production and pre-production include Russell T Davies dramas *Years and Years* for BBC One and *The Boys* for Channel 4, and *Trust Me* series 2 (BBC One) written by Dan Sefton.

RED Production Company is part of STUDIOCANAL's international production network.



