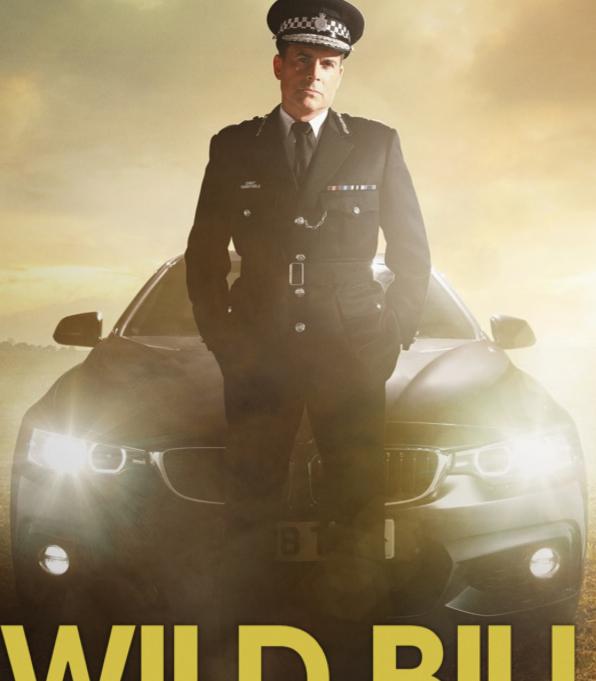


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ANONYMOUS



# WILD BILL

**ITV PRODUCTION NOTES** 



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#### **ROB LOWE STARS AS WILD BILL**

### Internationally renowned actor Rob Lowe acts as lead and executive producer for brand new ITV drama

Emmy and Golden Globe nominated actor, Rob Lowe, executive produces and stars in brand new ITV drama, Wild Bill.

Co-produced by 42 (Watership Down, Welcome To The Punch, Traitors), Shiver (Come Dine With Me, Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs) and Anonymous Content (13 Reasons Why, Maniac), six-part crime drama Wild Bill follows high-flying US cop, Bill Hixon, who is appointed Chief Constable of the East Lincolnshire Police Force. Landing in Boston, Lincolnshire with his teenage daughter Kelsey in tow, Bill is hoping they can flee their recent painful past. Ready to tackle the county's crime figures, he is armed with a range of statistics and algorithms with every intention of getting in and out as quickly as possible.

However, Bill soon discovers the people of Boston are just as smart-mouthed, cynical and difficult to impress as he is. They don't suffer fools, authority or algorithms gladly, and the man who's spent his life keeping the messiness of human intimacy at arm's length is reluctantly propelled into frontline policing and forced to reconsider his relationship with those closest to him. This unfamiliar, unimpressed community will force Bill to question everything about himself and leave him wondering if it's Boston that needs Bill, or Bill that needs Boston?

The six-part series has been created by David Griffiths (*The Hunted, Collateral Damage*), Kyle Killen (*Halo, Awake*) alongside Dudi Appleton and Jim Keeble (*Silent Witness, Thorne: Sleepyhead & Scaredycat, Trial & Retribution*). It has been penned by lead writers and show-runners Keeble and Appleton.

Rob Lowe is joined by stage and screen actress Rachael Stirling (*The Bletchley Circle, Detectorists*) who takes the role of Lady Mary Harborough, Tony Pitts (*Peaky Blinders, Line Of Duty*) who plays Crime Commissioner Keith Metcalfe and rising star Bronwyn James (*Harlots, The ABC Murders*) as DC Muriel Yeardsley. Angela Griffin (*Ordinary Lies, Brief Encounters*) plays local journalist, Lisa Cranston, whilst Anjli Mohindra (*Bodyguard, Dark Heart*) stars as Deputy Chief Constable Lydia Price, Steffan Rhodri (*A Very English Scandal, Apple Tree Yard*) as DS Alex Blair, Divian Ladwa (*Lion, Detectorists*) as PC Drakes, Anthony Flanagan (*Versailles, Humans*) as PC Sean Cobley and Vicki Pepperdine (*The Windsors, The Woman In White*) as pathologist, Broadbent.





Rob Lowe acts as Executive Producer alongside Eleanor Moran (*Watership Down, Traitors*) and Rory Aitken (*Watership Down, Traitors, Welcome To The Punch*) on behalf of 42, and Tim Carter (*Garrow's Law, Traitors*) of behalf of Shiver. Writers Dudi Appleton and Jim Keeble, creator David Griffiths, Kyle Killen, Scott Pennington and Keith Redmon from Anonymous Content also act as Executive Producers.

ITV Studios Global Entertainment will be responsible for the international distribution of the series.

#### **CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES**



#### **CHIEF CONSTABLE BILL HIXON - Played by Rob Lowe**

Bill is a high-flying American cop who has been headhunted and parachuted in as Chief Constable of the East Lincolnshire Police Force to tackle the county's crime figures and make cuts.

Whip-smart, acerbic and unstoppable, Bill Hixon is very good at what he does. With a First-Class degree in Criminology, a Masters in Psychopathology, and a Doctorate in Statistical Mapping, America's 'Top Metropolitan Police Chief' three years running is impressively qualified. From the outset, Bill isn't about making friends – he's here to get the job done and get the hell out as quick as his spin-class-toned legs will carry him.



#### **DC MURIEL YEARDSLEY - Played by Bronwyn James**

DC Yeardsley is a bright, eager and ambitious detective in her twenties who devours everything to do with policing. She has a flair for the scientific but is incredibly personable and well-liked within the team.

From a local farming family, she loves Americana and is an idealist who believes that police work can change the world, and especially Boston, for the better.





#### **KELSEY HIXON - Played by Aloreia Spencer**

Kelsey is Bill's 14-year-old daughter. She is full of attitude but it's a defence mechanism, used to hiding behind a sardonic sense of humour.

She's in the midst of her awkward teenage years and is emotionally raw, having been left reeling by her mother's sudden death in an accident. Now alone with her Dad, she's beginning to suspect he isn't capable of being the understanding and giving parent she needs – it's make or break time in their relationship.



#### **COMMISSIONER KEITH METCALFE - Played by Tony Pitts**

Ruddy-faced Crime Commissioner for East Lincolnshire, Keith Metcalfe is the first generation of a nouveau riche local industrial family. He's a man on the make and a shameless social climber, but he lacks the brains and drive of his father. He's ambitious and arrogant, pompous and slippery. Metcalfe has his own hidden reasons for bringing Bill from the States.



#### **DCC LYDIA PRICE - Played by Anjli Mohindra**

Bill's deputy at East Lincs, Lydia is pressed, polished, professional, but under-appreciated – Lydia's always had the answers but no one's asked.

A once keenly ambitious young policewoman, she kept her cards close to her chest and played the long game, but she's bumped her head against the glass ceiling so many times she's all but given up, and Bill's appointment as her boss came as a big blow. Married with kids, she's minded to start prioritising them over her career. She hates pretty much everything Bill stands for.





#### MARY HARBOROUGH QC - Played by Rachael Stirling

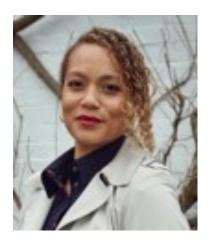
A successful Barrister and Judge, Mary is also the eldest daughter of Lincolnshire aristocracy, and is blessed with a wild anarchic streak. Beautiful, rebellious, and a fellow misfit, Bill will fall hard for Mary, and it will terrify him.

She's posh and flippant on the surface, but darker that you'd expect underneath. She's captivating and has the wit to reduce men with a line. Someone who would make an impact anywhere in the world, it's something of a mystery that she seems to have contented herself with Boston.



#### PC SEAN COBLEY - Played by Anthony Flanagan

A wiry, punchy, grizzled street cop, and a local of Boston, PC Cobley is an anti-authoritarian who speaks truth to power and doesn't suffer fools. A law unto himself and a rebel by nature, he'll do his own thing, even if it creates problems.



#### LISA CRANSTON - Played by Angela Griffin

Lisa Cranston is a bloodhound reporter for local newspaper 'The Boston Stump'. She is smart, worldly, and a force of nature. A resourceful journalist, she is devoted to the local Boston news and is a realist who has no compunction about playing to the lowest common denominator.

She knows everything about the area and can sniff out the headlines before they happen. Not afraid to doorstep Bill (literally), she's delighted by his arrival – he's the gift that'll keep on giving.





#### **OLEG KRASNOV - Played by Aleksander Jovanovic**

Oleg Krasnov is a Russian who has become the pre-eminent in the local community. Neither a thug nor a refined villain, he's intelligent and resourceful enough that he could start a criminal enterprise anywhere in the world. He has a talent for finding people's weak spots.

He's become part of the local high society but hasn't changed in order to fit in, and feels of this place. Oleg is an ambitious man and has made it his mission to destroy Bill.



#### **PC DRAKES - Played by Divian Ladwa**

PC Drakes is PC Cobley's sidekick and one of the junior police officers within the team. Though he's a self-styled joker and often seen as the office clown, he is professional and knows the job well.

He has a desire to be liked is very much a follower rather than a leader.



#### **BROADBENT - Played by Vicki Pepperdine**

Broadbent is a pathologist and very much one-of-a-kind who sees the world her own way, often to the bemusement and exasperation of others. She enjoys working with the dead and has a dry sense of humour.





#### **WRITERS JIM KEEBLE & DUDI APPLETON**

There are a different types of writing partnerships - some take a character or a scene each and send to the other, but we like to actually write in the same room, together. It's line by line, word by word and sometimes comma by comma.

It seems pretty weird to other people but we know each other well. We met on the first day of college and were friends before we started a working partnership which continues to this day. We had a shared passion for film and music back then and we weren't always able to find the things we wanted to see and hear. So it seemed logical to make them ourselves.

The original idea for Wild Bill came from David Griffiths, who read a piece in the LA Times about David Cameron posing the concept that British police chiefs could come from English-speaking countries outside of the UK. He was trying to pave the way for the NYPD's Bill Bratton to come and take over the Metropolitan Police. That never happened, but the one thing it did lead to was Wild Bill.

The series is about an improbably handsome and successful American cop who comes to run a police force in Boston, Lincolnshire. He's running away from something but we don't know what, and bringing with him his young teenage daughter. He finds himself in the last place he wanted to be and yet maybe this is actually the place he needs to be - and that needs him.

Rob Lowe was already set to play Bill Hixon, so we weren't just imagining an American cop in the UK, we were imagining Rob Lowe as a cop in the UK and that affected much of our thinking about the show. Particularly about where we should set it. We thought about one of the big, metropolitan areas of the country such as Manchester, Liverpool or Birmingham, but soon started questioning how different that really was from an American metropolitan area.

We liked the absurdity of putting Rob Lowe in Lincolnshire, and what that would bring out in him and what he would bring out in the place. In Manchester or Liverpool, he'd still be able to get the coffee he drinks, the sushi he eats and the exercise classes he could find in any major city in the States, so it needed to be somewhere removed. So the show becomes less about an American coming to England and more about a metropolitan guy going to a place where he can't get what he wants, can't live the life he's used to – a place that will push all his buttons.

In this respect, we wrote it from our own points of view. We live in and around London and that metropolitan life is pretty familiar. So going to Boston, Lincolnshire was about as foreign for us as it is for Bill Hixon. It's very easy to see people in more rural areas as the ones who can't be removed from their environment, but actually, we're the ones challenged by it when we're there. It challenged us and in turn, we wanted to



challenge Bill - to put him in a place that he doesn't understand and that has no interest in understanding him.

Boston was in the news a lot when we were developing the show. It was frequently cited as the Brexit capital of Britain, with the highest Leave vote in the country and also in a recent year had the highest level of homicidal crime. Boston is a beautiful town with an amazing cathedral built around a grand market square. It also provided many of America's founding fathers. It has been through some hard times of late and yet it retains a really strong and particular character all its own. It also very much has its own rules, and that opened the door to certain types of stories.

The Lincolnshire landscape also provided fascination. There's nowhere else quite like it in the country, and it seemed the closest thing we have in the UK to a mid-west American landscape, with vast fields, endless skies and those single tracks with a remote farmhouse at the end of them. At night, distant lights across vast fens take on a life all their own. It felt to us like a place that hadn't been seen on British screens.

Bill Hixon is this metropolitan guy who is sent to this rural area that is entirely different from what he wanted and is used to. But his deep, dark secret is that - like many of us - he ran away from a place like this. So what is it like to have to go back? He's worked so hard to develop this sophisticated persona and now he's being sent to a place very much like the one he wanted to escape. So the joke continually comes back to kick him in

the ass (or as his boss Keith would have it: "Arse Bill, with an 'r'.

If you're going to stay here, learn the bloody language.")

Here in the Lincolnshire Flatlands, Bill Hixon is forced to confront the messiness of humanity that he fled when he left for the big city.

Though Bill is a Chief Constable who shouldn't really be investigating cases, each episode forces him to emotionally engage with stories beyond his buttoned-up persona. It's conceived as a procedural crime show and we worked hard to create the twistiest and turniest of plots, but it's mainly concerned with Bill's emotional journey via the characters that he encounters. For a guy who likes to hide his emotional side behind a bank of screens, figures and data, the cases and characters Bill meets continually push him way beyond comfort. And that's without dealing with his teenage daughter.

We both felt that we had a sense of Rob Lowe from his previous work, and that's what the audience will bring to it too. This meant that we weren't just playing with the actor, but also our perspective of the actor. Luckily Rob has a great comedic sense as well as being able to let the veil drop when you least expect it, letting you glimpse behind a polished exterior. We needed something that was going to puncture the polished, perfect shell of the Hollywood actor and Lincolnshire provided that.



What we didn't want it to be is all about how different Americans and Brits are because that'd get tired pretty quick. What is funnier to us is the idea of a guy and a place that both use humour to get through the day. Neither Bill nor Boston suffer fools gladly.

All of these stories are somewhat heightened, which lends itself to a particular sense of humour and way of looking at things. Mainly at the absurdity of our disconnected modern lives. Our villains aren't master crooks, they're mainly ordinary people who have ended up doing something extraordinary - or extraordinarily stupid - as a result of their circumstances. We never set out to be particularly procedural or consciously comic, we set out to throw Bill against life and life against Bill and see how they deal with one another.

Wild Bill is a bit different. We don't feel we've seen anything similar in the approach to crime and character. It's lyrical, funny and thrilling. It has a lot of ingredients. It's also cinematic, which was another good reason to set it in Lincolnshire. Everything is widescreen there. The show has a lot of different elements, and we're hoping that all of that works together to provide something fresh and new.

It also has some very universal themes. We are very divided as societies both here and in the US, and this show seeks not only to demonstrate that divide but also bring the two sides together. It's not always harmonious, but it does stir the pot. And if that isn't a Lincolnshire saying, it really ought to be.





## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: ELEANOR MORAN, RORY AITKEN & TIM CARTER

### What are the ingredients that make this unique as a crime drama?

**Eleanor:** "I'd say it's got quite an American flavour to it. I'm thinking of shows like Fargo and Northern Exposure. Yet, it also feels very rooted and British. It mixes muscular crime stories with humour, warmth and wit."

**Tim**: "It's got a macabre tone to it at times. Obviously it has elements of police procedural but everyone – from Rob, to the writers, to us – worked very hard to make it not feel like just another police procedural. This is a show with real character development across the series."

**Rory:** "It's Happy Valley with a touch of Fargo. It has that weirdness of the latter."

### What do the flat lands of Lincolnshire bring to the storytelling?

**Eleanor:** "The landscape of Lincolnshire feels unique and it does have a slightly lawless feel. You do feel like you're a bit out in the wilds."

Tim: "It's physically difficult to get to. It is a remote part of

Britain, even though it's not that far away, and visually it's a very horizontal landscape. We didn't want to overegg this, but there is a sense of a new sheriff in town. It's a place that has a kind of otherness and goes against the grain of a lot of metropolitan Britain. However, we were always very adamant though that the joke should never be on the locals. That's really important."

**Eleanor:** "They give Bill a kick up the arse, not the other way round."

What did the good folk of Boston say when you announced you were going to be making Wild Bill in their back yard?

**Eleanor:** "Twitter was hilarious!"

**Tim:** "We went for dinner with Rob at the end of the first or second day of the shoot and within five minutes of sitting down, it was up on Twitter."

**Eleanor:** "The first day of filming in Boston town square which was with Rob and Angela Griffin, who plays journalist Lisa Cranston from the fictional local paper The Boston Stump, and we were mobbed."



**Rory:** "We were filming in the middle of a live market, which was actually operating. Rob did a Steadicam walk though it. There were people busy buying their fruit and veg and then they turn round to see Rob Lowe walk past.

"Even the Lincolnshire police force were tweeting funny GIFs. No one could quite believe it. In fact, so little has ever been filmed in Lincolnshire that our location manager called us before the press release had gone out asking us to get it out as soon as possible. He'd been visiting farms as potential locations to ask if we could film there. When he drove up, had a look round then knocked on the door, the people thought he was casing the joint to rob it. Then when he told them we were trying to make an ITV drama starring Rob Lowe, they were convinced we were trying to rob it!"

#### What makes Rob Lowe perfect for this role?

**Eleanor:** "It was always going to be Rob from quite early on. There was a point where we thought it might not work dates wise but it was really difficult to imagine the show without him in it. It's very much shaped for him. He is brilliant at delivering that unique tone and has a natural wit and intelligence, but he can also do vulnerability, like where Bill is outside the school and he asks Kelsey to call him. Rob can give you all that so easily."

**Tim:** "He's an actor for me that combines that All American good looking hero with someone who is intelligent and introspective. When you think of some of the other roles he's

played in shows like The West Wing, he's a man whose characters bring self-doubt as a virtue. As Eleanor says, once you'd pictured him with the UK police chief uniform on it was hard to think of anyone else."

### Is it important for you to tell stories that focus on different parts of the country and different communities?

**Tim:** "Definitely. Obviously the Brexit statistic was a point of inspiration, but we haven't set out to make a Brexit drama. It's a drama that hopefully reflects our time and modern Britain in an interesting and slightly offbeat way, which obviously includes certain divides that we've heard about ad nauseam. Hopefully it's not too much on the nose. It's there in the background but not in a way that is predictable."

### Looking at the six 'Stories of the Week' what makes them right for the world of Wild Bill?

**Tim:** "As we developed the scripts the big question that had to be answered in every episode was: what is it that pulls a Chief Inspector into a crime story? Bill Hixon is all about the 50,000 foot view. He's not interested in fighting crime himself. He's interested in what data can do to lower crime statistics. So it's the emotional hooks that pull him in. For instance, in the first episode he can't help but see echoes of his own family situation with his teenage daughter Kelsey in the complex mother/daughter relationship with Susan Lynch's character, Angie. While Bill's struggling to adjust to this new job he gets pulled into a crime in a way he never has before."





**Eleanor:** "Episode two is about a lost soul known only as Piano Man, played by Craig Parkinson, who is trying to figure out who he actually is, which is what Bill is also doing. Piano Man was inspired by a real story. It's an amalgamation of stories about people who have lost their memory and suddenly can speak Chinese or are able to play the violin."

**Tim:** "What we've tried to do with each episode is to find a story that holds up a mirror to Bill. Those stories make him realise things about himself and make him try to move forward as a human being."

### Episode 4 concerns a long running feud between two farming families...

**Eleanor:** "When that story was pitched to us by the writer Tom Moran, we immediately connected with it. It felt very Fargo-esque. This feud that has created all these twists and turns over the years. Blood in the soil. I would say it's about lost opportunities. A body is found between the two farms and either farmer could be responsible. Muriel becomes convinced that it's the male farmer, but Bill's completely convinced it's this very abrasive female farmer. They each go out to prove their theory."

#### Episode 5 involves local migrant worker communities...

**Eleanor:** "We really wanted to look at the way in which that community has become an under-class although we are so

reliant on them. We talked to people locally who told us if you pulled all the immigrant workers out there would be no vegetables on the shelves."

**Tim:** "That came from various research visits to the area. We came across these extraordinary camps where all these migrants were living and these estates with temporary caravans. There was a lot of rich, fascinating, seemingly unreported detail of this sub-culture. Are they exploited? How are they policed? All those questions about these people who are absolutely vital to the lifeblood of modern Britain. And of course the scapegoat for so many of our ills as well."

**Eleanor:** "You're not going to see that on another crime show. That feels like a story unique to Wild Bill."

### What does Aleksandar Jovanovic bring to the role of chief villain Oleg Krasnov?

**Eleanor:** "He's smartly villainous and has his finger in a lot of pies."

**Tim:** "We didn't want anyone who was too thuggish. Bill's very intelligent so his nemesis needed to be equally intelligent. It needed to be a level playing field and a matching of minds.

"It comes out in Aleksandar's performance that here is a man who has tried to work out his place in the world. He's made





Lincolnshire his home. He's just done it in a way that is corrupt. He's incredibly well networked, and there are a lot of people who look up to him because he's wealthy and does various things for the community. His public persona is someone who is rooted in the community but it's through criminal activity. His actions are eating away at the heart of that community."

## It's a brilliant ensemble cast. What were you looking for in casting Anjli Mohindra, Anthony Flanagan, Divian Ladwa and Bronwyn James?

**Eleanor:** "I work a lot with a casting director called Sarah Crowe who is fantastic. She casts comedy as well as drama and does a lot with Armando Iannucci. Sarah's very good at bringing together unusual ensembles and in this cast there is also a lot of warmth and heart which was really important for this series.

"We loved Divian's work in Lion and also Detectorists which in some ways feels a good comparable for us in its eccentricity and specificity. Anthony is just an amazing actor and we were so lucky to get him. Those two can deliver the humour without being broad.

"Bronwyn's going to be a massive star – there's no question about that. Rob loves Bronwyn and I think the dynamic between Muriel and Bill is just hilarious. She is so forthright. Anjli is wonderful. She grounds it and again she's a very good foil for Bill. Steffan Rhodri is an amazing stage actor too and he feels so genuine. You really believe he's been a copper for years."

**Tim:** "When you put together a big ensemble like that you want the characters to look distinct and you really believe they've been rooted in that police force for years. They've lived it and grown up with it."

**Eleanor:** "We've also got Vicki Pepperdine as the pathologist. She again gives you a different flavour. Those roles can be so dull. You dread going to the morgue with them. But Vicki gives it a real pop of colour."

Tony Pitts as crime commissioner Keith Metcalfe and Rachael Stirling as County Court judge Mary Harborough both get to spar with Rob Lowe, in different ways...

**Tim:** "Rob is an Executive Producer so in practical terms that meant that amongst other things he was involved in some of the key casting decisions with us. Rob found actors that he really admired and respected and that he knew he'd have great chemistry with."

**Eleanor:** "Mary can handle Bill and Rachael's a match for Rob. Tony's great as Keith. Him and Rob absolutely get on brilliantly."





**Tim:** "One of the first things I loved about Tony's character when I first read the pilot script was just the reminder that there are these people. You know about them from American shows but you forget that there are also these police commissioners in Britain. There is a real politics to policing with policy and reputational decisions about how you fight crime and the tension between the politics of that and the day to day policing and trying to do right by the local community. Keith is all about being re-elected."

#### What do you see as Wild Bill's audience?

**Tim:** "In terms of ITV audience, you've got to hope that it's a really broad audience. It's a story of the week crime show on one level, which is core ITV. But then there's the wit, the tone and having an actor like Rob Lowe makes you hope it's also appointment to view television for viewers that don't come to ITV automatically. When they see it in the schedules and see the posters, hopefully they'll think that's really intriguing."

### Do you have a favourite line that for you sums up the show?

**Eleanor:** "I like it in Episode 6 when Bill says to the therapist, 'I don't need to pay to be insulted. I live in England.' Rob delivers that really well."





#### **ROB LOWE PLAYS BILL HIXON**

#### How did you become involved in Wild Bill?

"One of the co-creators and executive producers is Kyle Killen and I'm a massive fan of his work. He and I were discussing finding something to do together and he said, 'I have this thing in my back pocket that may be being made in England. They are going to bring on some English writers to make it more authentic.'

"So he sent it to me and I really responded to the notion of playing this type of cynical, jaded, know-it-all, fish out of water character in a really different landscape."

#### What's Bill's background?

"Like everything today, whether it's sport or law enforcement, algorithms are changing the way businesses are run. Bill was a top cop and on the forefront of that in the United States. Now bringing it to Britain, it's really cutting edge.

"Bill is also known for slashing jobs, so people are very wary of him. They are not fans of his. He is combative by nature and is always going into situations in that way. There's a lot of intrinsic conflict in the show which I really liked. As an actor, any time you can play conflict it's good."

### Did wearing the Chief Constable's uniform help get into character?

"The uniform really does help. The first time you put that on it just makes such an amazing visual statement. It affects everything about how you carry yourself. As an actor, having done this for so long, it becomes increasingly rare to find a look on camera that you have never done before. Wearing a Chief Constable's uniform is definitely a first for me."

### Bill has a teenage daughter called Kelsey (Aloreia Spencer). What kind of father is he?

"Bill is trying to make up for lost time. Like a lot of people, he was focused on his work and not on his marriage. He just stuck his head in the sand and put one foot in front of the other hoping everything would be OK.

"Ultimately, things were very much not OK and now he's trying to learn. However, he is very much behind the curve."

### Both Bill and Kelsey have suffered loss after the death of his wife. How does that impact on them?

"That story frames their entire dynamic. They are both working through loss, grief, anger and abandonment around it. That's implicit in every single scene they have. Much like



real life, sometimes you're aware of it and at other times you're not. But it's always there."

### He tells his daughter, 'Change is healthy.' By the very nature of their job, do actors have to embrace change?

"When Bill says that, I think he is saying it to himself as much as her. He's trying to convince himself of it. But, yes, being in the moment, reactive and present is not only a great tool as an actor, and it's a great tool for life."

#### Bill thinks the English make it a point of national pride to be miserable at all times. How would you characterise the English?

"Bill is very much a curmudgeon and a misanthrope. And I am not. I'm by nature really optimistic and very embracing of new things. I love coming to England and almost everything about it. I get to be a proper Englishman for the time I'm here.

"Bill Hixon, on the other hand, is just counting the days until he can go back to the United States. When I'm playing Bill I have to do some acting, because I love it here!"

### Wild Bill is based in Boston, Lincolnshire. Was the choice of location important?

"Wild Bill is one of those shows that could only be located in the place where it is meant to be done. There have been very few, if any, TV shows centred in the Lincolnshire area. And to do it now when Boston is known as the home of Brexit, with over 75 per cent of people voting to leave, also gives it a timeliness and a reason for being.

"The characters that populate our show are not the people you think of when you think of London. They live in a very different world that does not get the spotlight shone on it very often.

"It also looks amazing. The show is almost a western allegory. I'm literally a new sheriff in town, and that flat landscape in Lincolnshire really gives it a look that you haven't seen before.

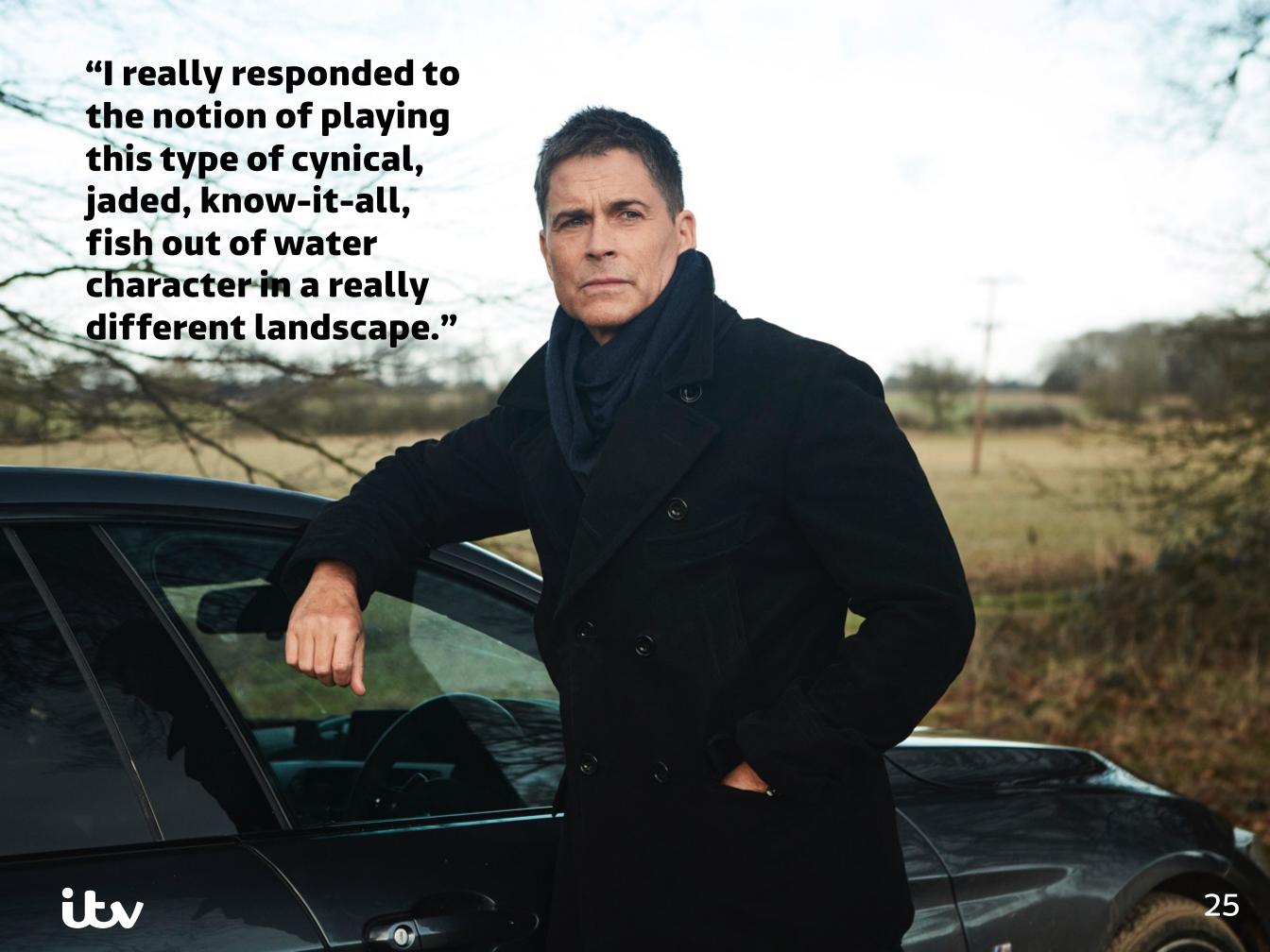
"It was very reminiscent of places in the mid-West where I'm from. I'm from Ohio and we have our landscapes that are like that - where you can literally see the horizon for miles and miles. I was surprised to find that in England, because when I think of England, I think of the gently rolling countryside. Lincolnshire is as flat as a pancake.

"I'm always trying to find something about a project that is original. So between the location and tone, Wild Bill is very unique."

### How did the local people react to you when you were filming there?

"Everybody was so welcoming there and so excited. When I walked through the town market, people were coming up to me and thinking I was the actual new Chief Constable, which





was great. My favourite comment came from a couple of people who said it was the biggest thing to happen in their town since the war.

"I went to a Mexican restaurant in Boston which was rated very highly. I've yet to find a Mexican restaurant in London, so I had to go all the way to Lincolnshire to get proper Mexican food. I'm a southern Californian and I know my Mexican food. It wasn't the Mexican food I know, but it was really good."

## The opening scenes of Wild Bill see Bill throwing cabbages instead of pulling a gun, as he would have done as a cop in America. How was that to film?

"The cabbage throwing was a moment where everybody collectively went, 'Oh, there's a show here.' The notion of me in a tuxedo in the middle of a muddy Lincolnshire field throwing cabbages is definitely an image you are not likely to come across very often.

"It was unbelievable when I realised there is one designated person who gets to carry the gun in the UK. It's very much a different way of going about things. In terms of the two nations and their policy on guns, it's apples and oranges and almost impossible to compare."

#### Bill is a huge Bruce Springsteen fan. Was that your doing?

"That actually wasn't. I'm a huge Springsteen fan. He's my number one guy. I've met him a few times and been a fan for a long time. Either somebody did their research on me or guessed very luckily. "

## Last New Year you tweeted, "We have more in common than we can ever know." Does that apply to America and Britain?

"People are pretty much the same wherever you go. One of the things I love is how embracing of being in the outdoors the British people are. Given half a chance, everyone is out taking a walk, out with their kids, walking their dogs.

"If I had the chance, I would spend my entire life outdoors.

That's one of the many things I really relate to about the English psyche. My hobbies are pretty much all outdoors stuff - surfing, golfing, skiing... If I have any free time and I can do one of those things, that's what I'm doing."

#### What are your memories of working in the UK before?

"The first time was Oxford Blues, which I shot in Oxford a hundred million years ago. I did a mini series here called You, Me and The Apocalypse. Then I did six months on the West End stage doing A Few Good Men with Aaron Sorkin."

#### Do you have any favourite British TV shows?

"I'm always amused at how Downton Abbey is perceived here versus the United States. I love that show. I think here in England it's a little bit of a guilty pleasure, but in the States we just eat it up.





"There is so much good drama coming out of Britain right now. Whether it's Luther with Idris Elba, Sherlock, Killing Eve or Bodyguard. There's a great group of shows which I hope Wild Bill will fit right into."

### Is this an exciting time to be involved in 'small screen' drama?

"Maggie Smith, Natasha Richardson and I did a version of Suddenly Last Summer that Richard Eyre directed for the BBC here in the early 1990s. But to get it seen in the United States back then was just a total ordeal. Finally I think it aired on PBS or something like that.

"Today that would be on Netflix or one of the other streaming platforms and everybody would see it. If you're doing good work, the good news is there are a billion ways for people to see it today."

## You performed your one-man theatre show 'Stories I Only Tell My Friends' while in England for Wild Bill. Why did you decide to do a stage version of your 2011 memoir?

"It's really an easy way for me to keep that muscle strong. There's nothing like being able to go out by yourself and command an audience for an evening. Instead of doing my third book, I figured why not write something that I can always have and be able to do that stage show.

"I played Brighton recently. It was sold out and so much fun. The longer you do it, the fewer and fewer things happen where you get to go, 'Wow, that was really cool. To sell out the Festival Hall in London with a one-man show felt pretty damn good."

### As a huge sports fan, did you have time to go to any sporting events in the UK?

"I did. I finally got to see Chelsea play. When I was living here doing A Few Good Men I was always on stage when the matches were being played. So I finally got to go to my first Premier League game and it was amazing. So cool. I also go to the tennis at Wimbledon when I can. I love tennis."

#### Are you OK with watching yourself on screen?

"It's something I've been seeing and dealing with since I was 15 years old. It's as natural to me as walking out in the rain. I know some actors don't like it. I'm agnostic. I have the ability to separate myself from it. I directed myself in a movie last year. One of the things you really have to do is be dispassionate about your own work."

### What has your choice of profession as an actor given you in life?

"It's given me a tremendous perspective on the world. Because I've met so many different people, I've worked in so many different countries, I've played so many different types of people and had to research them and their world.





"So I think more than anything, acting has given me an overview of different perspectives that very few people get to have.

"What I think actors do more than anything else is they understand the truth better than most people. Because the number one job an actor has is to be truthful. There are a lot of times if you don't have great writing then you've got to find truth in it."

#### How would you sum up Wild Bill?

"It's the journey of a very unique man in extraordinary circumstances. Dressed up as a procedural. The thing that is most interesting about Wild Bill is its tone. It's both 100 per cent authentic, real, gritty and yet it's also very funny and sweet. It's rare to come across material that ticks all of those boxes. That's this show's strength. It's a very specific, original world.

"The quality of acting from top to bottom in Wild Bill is really extraordinary. It's what I hoped for when I came over here. The talent pool of actors here is always so strong. We're just blessed to have such a great group on the show and for me to have such great acting partners on any given day I walk on the set. There's always somebody extraordinary to work with."



#### **BRONWYN JAMES PLAYS DC MURIEL YEARDSLEY**

### Does Muriel feel like a TV detective we've not seen on screen before?

"She does feel fresh to me. Not even just her age. It's her whole excited demeanour and her upbringing. She's really smart and she's good with computers but she also helps run her family's farm. I can't really liken her to anyone else. You can't pull the wool over her eyes. That's something I really like about her. "

### That's Muriel's general attitude, isn't it? She doesn't take any nonsense.

"Yeah, she's someone who is really lovely and kind. If you're on the wrong side of something and someone's coming after you, she'll be your best friend and help you. But the second that you're guilty of something, the tables turn. She comes down on them like a ton of bricks."

#### What does Muriel think of Bill?

"She's really excited that he's here. She's done her research about how well he's done back in America and has got a bit of an obsession with American culture. I think they've got quite similar personalities, although Muriel is a bit nicer. She's younger while Bill has probably had to put up with more over the years.

"It's a really lovely working relationship. Bill really believes in Muriel. The first time Bill introduces himself to the squad Muriel is the only one taking notes. Everyone else is muttering under their breath. She thinks he's riveting. She says, 'It's like Ronaldo has signed for the Imps.' I love how much of an Imps fan Muriel is."

## You've worked with John Malkovich on The ABC Murders and now Rob Lowe. How do the two experiences compare?

"I'm huge fans of both of them. John Malkovich is such a force of an actor. He's mesmerising to watch. I was so terrified of talking to him. One of the first scenes I had filming with him I was saying to myself I'm going to be really professional, I'm not going to laugh. I had to open this door and in rehearsal he would be there on the other side of it. I'm looking like I might be a suspect but when I opened it he gave me this funny little wave. I couldn't stop laughing.

"After that he'd be in the green room telling these really funny stories about his work. He was wonderful. Rob's the same. He's got this big American energy which in the best possible ways gets people really pumped up."



#### Did that mean you could ad-lib with Rob?

"Yeah definitely. I don't know whether it made the final cut, but Muriel and Bill have one scene in this underground bunker stuffed with weed and Rob ad-libbed at the beginning of the scene. Any time you see Muriel turn round so her back is facing the camera it's because Rob has made me laugh!"

Muriel runs a lot of the interviews. Interview protocol has become a big thing with shows like Scott & Bailey and Line of Duty. Did you do any specific research as to how she should conduct herself in those scenes or just watch 24 Hours in Police Custody?

"My dad's actually a police officer so I did ask him as much as he could legally tell me. One thing he mentioned is that you play Good Cop / Bad Cop by yourself in the room. You go in and bring them a cup of coffee and have a chat with them in the first instance. She plays the sweetness and the 'I'm your friend' card. Then she switches as soon as something doesn't make sense. Once that happens, she's not your friend, she's a police officer. She is definitely someone who knows how to be subjective and logical and get the truth out of people. It makes her a good detective."

#### What rank is your dad?

"For most of his life he was a beat cop, a PC. Now I don't know what his job title is but he's a professional hide and seeker.

He'll go into the location where someone has dropped a

murder weapon or a SIM card that has criminal activity on it and he finds it."

### Do you sit watching cop shows with him and he points out all the mistakes...

"He's very sarcastic and reminds me a lot of Anthony Flanagan's character, PC Cobley. Apparently I've been put on 'Bun Fine'. That's something that my dad and his work colleagues do. If you're involved in a case and it ends up on the TV news you have to buy everyone in the office buns. So now I'm a cop on TV he says I've got to buy buns for everyone. No chance. I'm a pretend cop, I'm not doing that!"

#### What did you think of Boston?

"Boston is gorgeous. In the first episode you see all these shots of the landscape and just how vast the countryside is. There was one scene filmed at a crossroads. It was these four massive vegetable fields and it was just flat for miles. There was a house that we used as a green room and one single tree. I don't know how or why it grew there. I have so many beautiful pictures at sunrise and sunset but it was freezing. There was nothing to protect you from the wind."

#### Are you doing a Lincolnshire accent?

"Obviously I did loads of research. Even though my hometown of Wakefield is only an hour away and the accents aren't that different, I really wanted to nail it. I looked online and one of





the few videos I could find was a man called Farmer Wick. I've got a very good ear for understanding people but I couldn't understand a word he was saying.

"So when I went to Boston I just had a walk round and talked to people to hear what they sounded like. I think Boston was a wonderful place to set Wild Bill."

### Would you agree that in some ways Muriel is the emotional heart of the show?

"Yeah, she's got a lot of heart. She's someone who just wants to do what's best to help people, even if it might be detrimental to her. You get to see her struggle with her own morality through the series. There's a huge part of the show that involves her relationship with Oleg Krasnov. We have some cracking scenes together."

### Which of the crimes in the series resonates most with Muriel?

"No matter what case Muriel works on I feel that she pours her heart into it. There is one story though where she talks to a character she went to school with, played by Nichola Burley. She was a girl at school who was held up as a cautionary tale. 'Don't do that or you'll end up like Charlene Bailey.' Charlene has kind of gone down the wrong path and she's a bit jealous of Muriel. She wants her life to be as good as she thinks

Muriel's is. But even though Muriel knows this girl, the second she thinks she might be involved in criminal activity she's interviewing her as a cop."

#### How would you describe Wild Bill as a series?

"It kind of falls in that lovely middle ground where you can't really call it a comedy, you can't really call it a drama. It forces you to laugh when there are also frightening and sad bits. You catch yourself and think, 'Why am I laughing at that that's awful!' I think an audience will find it really fresh and exciting to watch."

#### How impressive are the prosthetics?

"They are so messed up. One thing I really wanted to happen was that Muriel would be involved in a big punch up just so I could have some prosthetics on. There's one episode where we see a dead body and they cast a live person to play it.

Between shots the bloke said hi to me and I did a double take when I saw that his head was ballooned out and he had a prosthetic eye that was bulging out! I couldn't stop staring at him. The make-up was absolutely flawless even seeing it up close. He was sitting having his lunch but he couldn't open his mouth wide enough to eat a banana without ripping the prosthetics."





### How did you all keep each other entertained when you were hanging out in the police HQ?

"We'd play music and have little singalongs. I'm really eclectic with my music so I'd play DJ. The other thing that went on loads was that Divian (Ladwa) has a hobby of whittling. He made me an elephant's head made out of an avocado pit. Every day he'd go up to the breakfast truck on set and get their avocado pits and a couple of weeks later he came in with this huge tray of elephant heads, hairpins, little sculptures and rings. He literally went up to everyone on set and offered them something."

#### Which TV detectives do you admire?

"When I was younger I was madly obsessed with CSI, especially David Caruso who played Horatio Caine. Every time he whipped off his sunglasses and said, 'Call me.' I'm determined if this goes to a second series to have a CSI moment with Muriel is standing over a body and saying some cheesy line. That's the dream."

#### What was the least glamorous day's shooting?

"Any time you see me in a field. I was sure I was never going to get out of the mud again. One day in a cabbage field I took a step and my shoe didn't come with me. There was one scene where we were shooting in a farm and Muriel gets attacked with a shovel. I was in a little pinafore dress with tights on and a light coat. It was really cold and everyone was covered in mud!"







### RACHAEL STIRLING PLAYS LADY MARY HARBOROUGH

#### What can you tell us about Lady Mary Harborough?

"Mary has more to her than first meets the eye. As the series develops, you also see that she cares very much about her work both as a judge and a human being. That's really where her and Bill meet. She starts off thinking he's a piece of eye candy and probably good for a gallop. Their relationship then deepens to a kind of mutual trust and respect and is very genuine. He's a statistician with this algorithmic attitude to policing, but by necessity he is thrown into the more human aspects of policing in Lincolnshire. For all his number crunching he ends up needing Mary's humanity. She becomes a collaborator and kind of vital to him."

#### Bill addresses her as Lady Harborough but she's quick to point out that it's her mother who is Lady H.

"For all her To The Manor Born appearance, Mary has never quite felt like she belongs. That is something else that she and Bill have in common. She's done everything she can to make it appear like she fits in but she's a very fragmented character who carries with her the burden of law and the judiciary."

#### What research did you do?

"I spent two days court hopping at the Old Bailey, going

from one lady judge's court room to the next. It was fascinating to just observe the extraordinarily brilliant women and their behaviour towards defendants and their colleagues. They behaved generally with more empathy towards the defendants than they did their colleagues.

"A lot of the barristers came across as being truly arrogant. I think Mary feeling like she doesn't quite belong but being surrounded by all these riches she does feel a debt to society and an obligation to help human beings. She's a fully rounded person who I based on an amalgamation of all the women judges I observed in my time at the Old Bailey. After this, I wished I'd become a barrister and not an actress."

### Has she climbed the ladder rapidly? Is 41 notably young for a Crown Court judge?

"Incredibly quickly. I found one example of a judge in that position which make me think it was just about viable. Mary has a huge brain and would have been catapulted ahead of her time from quite a young age. There's a great joy in playing a woman who knows she's pretty much the cleverest person in any room she walks into. When I donned my garb, the hush of reverence that came on set when I walked on in full cloak and wig was something that I rather wished I had more of in everyday life."



#### Would you be seduced by the power if you were a judge?

"Very much so. I think I would dole out the worst kind of punishments and deliver the most inappropriate sort of justice according to how I was feeling on that day!"

### Like most of the women in the series, do you think Mary enjoys winding Bill up?

"Enormously. Their sensibilities are so different. He doesn't do irony particularly or that gently poking laughter at something that you're probably quite fond of. What we call joshing. The writers have brilliantly mined all the cultural caverns that exist between Bill and Mary and between Bill and everyone really. It's very rich pickings. I watched the first episode with my husband a couple of nights ago. We properly loved it. Rob's performance is absolutely brilliant. I loved his frustration as Bill and disbelief that he's wound up in this place, then his sudden realisation that he only probably got the job because everyone else had rejected it."

## Did you and Rob talk much about the way your scenes would play before hand? There's a great wise cracking chemistry between you.

"What was brilliant was that because I have a small baby, the team very kindly concertina'd all mine and Rob's scenes together. I would block shoot my scenes for each episode with him in a couple of days, usually sequentially. The first day I met Rob was the first day we were on set. We were doing the scene at Harborough Castle in Episode 1. It all felt quite free, fresh and honest. As Rob and I built our relationship, so it also deepened on screen. I enjoyed that. It was more like doing a play in the sense of telling the story in the right order, so it does feel more believable."

### There's a flavour of that quick witted back and forth that you also shared with Toby Jones in the drama Capital...

"I love a bit of banter. I am so lucky. In any long term relationship, as it is in life, you deeply love that person but there are times when you absolutely want to chop their balls off. There's that confluence of adoration and frustration. Mary and Bill don't know each other well enough to have that, but by the end of the series they've reached a place of comfort with one another. He feels like she is his port in a storm and I think she feels that he is the one good thing apart from her work that she's got going. They do become necessary to one another."

### Mary's a fast worker, isn't she? You sense that the gallop is very much on her terms...

"Yeah, I love that. That's partly why I wanted to do this role. She's aware that he's this kind of Hollywood heart throb. In the second episode she thinks she's arrived for a date. He thinks he's arrived for a meeting. When she realises it's not a





date she asks him to make an appointment with her clerk!"

#### Were you a Brat-Pack fan when you were a little girl?

"Of course I was. St Elmo's Fire was one of the few new movies we were allowed to watch in the hothouse of hormones that was my very privileged all-girls boarding school. That scene where Rob Lowe rescues Demi Moore from nigh on self-sabotage embroiled in depression. He's her sort of broken saviour. We watched that on one of the weekends when all there was to do was get high on sugar and watch Brat Pack movies. Everybody had Rob as a pin up. Of course I told him that he was the recipient of our hormonal adulation and he didn't look at all surprised."

#### What input did you have into Mary's wardrobe choices?

"I love Mary's wardrobe. Mary has earned her right and her place to have a fabulous wardrobe. This woman is a sexy judge. I have a friend who is a barrister who, believe it or not, I do ballet with. She always wore red shoes in court. It's a bit like Marie Colvin always wearing La Perla underwear. Who knows what Mary has got on underneath her gown. Only Wild Bill!

"We had a couple of really beautiful pieces flown over for Mary. Then when we worked out the budget wasn't going to stretch beyond that my amazing costume designer Charlie just brought in loads of her own really sexy clothes. We got the tightest leather trousers, leopard skin print coats and silkiest little blouses. Just because you're bright intellectually doesn't mean you can't enjoy fashion and dress sexy."

### How does Mary deal with local crime kingpin Oleg Krasnov? She knows him socially.

"Any judge in their local court circuit will probably have come across most of the Mafiosi style bigwigs in the hood. From the opera evening at Harborough Castle you get the feeling that Mary uses her links to people with pots of cash to do stuff for charity. So she will have come across Oleg in those sorts of circumstances. But unless he's been physically in her court room accused of a crime, then her knowledge of his underworld is limited."

### Do both Wild Bill and Detectorists shine a light on parts of Britain not always featured in TV shows?

"In Detectorists we liked to think of them as the great unsung heroes. These oddballs who live in hope that they might just dig up a piece of history that nobody has ever found before. I think the disenfranchised in Lincolnshire are similarly championed in this show. There are the extremes of Nationalism there but there's also the gentle existence of this huge farming section of the county that put all the vegetables on all our supermarket shelves. I think Tesco grows something like 70% of its homegrown produce in Lincolnshire. We don't get to see that aspect of society on screen. We get to see London based dramas and occasionally one set by a beach somewhere. Very rarely do





you get to see this, which is like a petri dish of all the things that are confused about Britain right now. The people who live in Lincolnshire have largely voted pro-Brexit but they depend on the farming population - 90% of whom are the immigrants doing the labouring. It is symbiotic. One depends upon the other. You wonder why this section of society has voted so vociferously to take us out of the European Union when they seem to depend on the free trade within it."

#### Are you a lover of TV crime dramas?

"I love a Poirot. I don't love all TV crime dramas, but my favourites are the Agatha Christies. When I got a part in Poirot I thought it is never going to get better than this. Then I did a Miss Marple. I loved them both. I read Sherlock Holmes from quite a young age. I like the more convoluted Cluedo-esque drama where you're led to believe it's one thing then suddenly it's something else.

"Having said that you couldn't tear me away from Happy Valley. The performances in that were outrageously good. Wild Bill feels a little more old fashioned for me in its stories. With a lot of modern TV crime drama there's a bit too much rape and pillage and murder of girls in basements. I'm just not that into that."

## There's a painting of the first Lord Harborough in Episode 4 going back to the time of Henry VIII. Have you ever explored your own ancestry?

"I have. It goes back quite a long way on my dad's side. My brother is the one with great knowledge on this. He can go back quite far. I think as far as the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. My eyes glaze over a little bit so I haven't ingested any of the information that he's painstakingly provided me with over the years but I will one day. On my mum's side I think we know back about three generations."

#### Could Mary and Bill be a Boston power couple?

"I don't know, but I do really hope that people tune in for this because I think it is original. It's a piece of absolutely brilliant performing by the Hollywood glam that is Rob Lowe as well as this quirky insight into Britain as well as this seductive plotwise cop drama.

"I don't know what you'd call it but I think that's a joy. I've seen variations of every other kind of drama and this just feels quite zeitgeisty and funny. It doesn't take itself too seriously and yet it has elements of humanity that are important. It's pleasurable to watch and Rob gives an ace turn as the central flawed hero."





### TONY PITTS PLAYS COMMISSIONER KEITH METCALFE

Is Crime Commissioner Metcalfe a man who enjoys the easy life? Riding around in his Bentley, dining at the Rotary club, shaking hands with royalty at the local agricultural show...

"Keith's constantly positioning himself to make sure he's on the right side of the argument. He's a politician. People don't understand that a crime commissioner is really a quasipolitical role rather than a policing role. He's the spin doctor at the middle of every story. There is literally nowhere else for Keith to go in the world that he inhabits. He's at the top of his particularly greasy pole and he's going to make sure he doesn't slide back down to the bottom."

#### Is he good at his job?

"There's a Carry On film, Carry On Cleo, where Kenneth Connor gets mistaken for a great fighter. That's Keith and DCC Lydia Price's working relationship. Any decent policing work, good decisions, vision or leadership comes from her but Keith takes the credit. He says at one point: 'I don't like women in power. That's not official policy. That's just how I feel.' He is unapologetically stupid. There's no learning with him. I think Keith's emotional development stopped when he was about 14."

#### Have you met many Keiths?

"I had somebody very clearly in mind for Keith. I was in Surrey recently with my son looking at cars and the guy we bought the car from had this sign: 'He who dies with the most toys wins.' If ever there was anybody who had more missed the point of life, I've yet to meet them. But that's Keith."

### It's Metcalfe who brings Bill Hixon over from the States. What does he make of Wild Bill?

"Keith likes to think of Bill as this pawn that he's manipulating but it soon becomes apparent that he can't. I don't think Keith's particularly bright - certainly not as bright as he thinks he is. He's used to being a big fish in a small pond. He's the heir to his dad's £85 million company, EasyWrap, so for Keith the job of crime commissioner is about ego and a little bit of power of his own. He's not even got that status of being a self-made man because his dad did it all."

### Which were your favourite scenes to get your teeth into with Rob Lowe?

My favourite scene was the two of us using the toilet which I don't think has made the final cut. That was my first day on set and Rob and my's first day together. The unspoken comedy





of the two of us standing next to each other in the toilet was not lost on either of us. It wasn't till the following day that we could laugh at the exaggerated motions we were both making at the urinal. In the end though it's whatever serves the story best that makes it on screen.

"I also enjoyed the scene of us game shooting at Hadfield House. We saw plenty of pheasants. Rob and I both shoot. I used to live in the Pennine hills. As to which of us was the better shot, I don't know because we were pretending but I'd have to back myself, wouldn't I?"

### Do you and Rob have similar or very different approaches to acting?

"It was interesting. We spoke about it because we're both of an age. He was brought up in LA, I was brought up in Sheffield, so when there are similarities it's quite striking. I think we both have been around the block. I've been doing it for about 38 years, and Rob at a slightly elevated level is about the same. We both like people to do their job. You know when to work and when to play, and it's all about the work. We like to inject a bit of pace into things."

### As both an actor and screenwriter what did you find engaging about Wild Bill's scripts?

"There were lots of good aspects. Places like Boston and Grantham never get featured on screen, in much the same way that I'm sure people living there feel like they've been forgotten in the wider spectrum of life. I remember doing a Play for Today in 1981 with Charles Dance called Rainy Day Women in Lincolnshire and that's the only time I've shot there in nearly 40 years. That whole part of the country is not represented. There are stories wherever there are people."

#### Ever fancied writing a police procedural yourself?

"No, it's not where my interest lies as a writer. I'm not being disparaging about them. They are hugely popular. People love them but I think they are ever more difficult to write. I think the discipline of writing those shows is admirable. TV is better now though than it has ever been. This year I've worked with Rob Lowe and Richard Gere. It's the quality of the writing across the board now with television. And everything looks beautiful."

### Is Wild Bill as much a snapshot of modern Britain as it is about catching criminals?

"Yeah I would say that's very much what the show's about. That's it's unique selling point. It's a Californian eye looking at Brexit Britain. It's nuanced as well. I don't actually see Wild Bill as a police procedural. I see it more as a slice of life drama. Every cop show has essentially been done so it's nice when it spreads out from that a little."

#### Which locations for you best sum up the show?

"I spent most of my time in the police station in Bill's office. Whenever I was there I made sure Keith put his feet up on the table. There's a beautiful country house in the first episode



which belongs to Mary Harborough (Rachael Stirling). History and architecture are my things so I was boring the arse off Rob for most of that day's filming. My place in the show is really to top and tail the episodes. At the start of the episode I tell Bill what's going on, then tell him he's a big idiot at the end."

#### Do you have a favourite line in the series?

"There is one line of Keith's that director Charles Martin liked so much he's got it recorded on his phone. It's me saying: 'I look like a dick – again.' The writers give Keith a little bit of gold every now and then. Some of the lines may be a little bit too clever for Keith but I don't mind that. Charles Martin was also full of ideas for what this story was about. His enthusiasm really rubbed off on me."

### What does the future hold for Crime Commissioner Metcalfe if he makes it to the end of the series?

"Oh, Keith will survive Bill alright. In the future he'd hope to be off abroad with a Thai bride sitting in a bar about four stone overweight. Grim."







### **ANJLI MOHINDRA PLAYS DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE LYDIA PRICE**

### What do you enjoy about playing DCs and DCCs? You've played a few now.

"I just can't stop! This does feel totally different though to the last job I did as a police officer, DC Josie Chancellor in Dark Heart. She was more about trying to prove herself rather than trying to crack the case. Chief Constables and Deputy Chief Constables are more about people and public relations. Handling press, handling people, handling staff and looking at jobs and job cuts. It's more like admin. Lydia is not trying to prove herself. She's just trying to run things efficiently. I've not played a role like that before. Someone who is so in control."

### East Lincolnshire has never had a woman Chief Constable. How accurate is that?

"It's very typical. Dudi Appleton and Jim Keeble, the writers, based Lydia on a real person who had been overlooked time and time again. I think she may have made it now to Chief Constable, but for ages she wasn't. It must be really tough to be in the police force as a woman. Lydia is totally capable of running the force. In fact she is doing it, as she points out to Bill when he arrives. She's doing the job for free I guess. She's also local born and bred so she knows the people."

## Wild Bill's police are a diverse bunch. Was that reflected in any local officers you met in Boston in the heart of Brexit Britain?

"We didn't actually get to meet any local police but local police officers did find us on Twitter. Rob and I put our hands in our pockets on day two of filming, in character. It helps to keep your gait straight with your shoulders back. Instantly on Twitter it was, 'Do these people not do their research? Police constables don't put their hands in their pockets.' The thing is you don't find a lot of videos of Chief Constables, but I had to just take their word for it, so I stopped doing that immediately. I was very happy to get involved and take on the feedback."

### What did people think about you filming there? You got a lot of attention...

"Tony Pitts is the only actor I've heard say that they'd ever filmed there before. I think most people were really excited about having Rob Lowe there. There were only a limited number of places to eat so everyone kept running into each other when we weren't filming. It's always brilliant to get to film



something which is actually set in the actual place itself. I'm really glad that we got to do that."

#### What was it liked filming in the market square with Rob?

"It wasn't a closed set. We'd kind of done that on purpose because we wanted as many people in it as possible so we'd get organic reactions, but it meant we had people coming up for selfies mid-take. Quite a few times. People always think TV sets are going to be much more exciting than they actually are. I guess this was exciting because of Rob being in it. But it's very hard for people to tell when people are acting and when they're not because we don't tend to be waving our arms around when we're in acting mode. So they didn't know we were mid-role. They kept coming in with random bits of food to sell to us. I think somebody actually asked what the hooha was, as if I was a real police officer. It was bonkers and lively. As it should be."

#### How did Rob deal with all of that?

"He was really sweet. Angela Griffin and I offered to be his bodyguards. He was being really nice but we had a lot to shoot and had to crack on. He's just a really gracious man and got stuck in."

### How does Boston compare with your home town Nottingham?

"Nottingham's more hilly, but the people felt the same. It's

the closest to home I've ever filmed. To drive to see my family was about 45 minutes or an hour on the train. It's just great to hear that accent. It always puts me at ease straight away."

## It doesn't feel like the show is being judgemental about Boston, heart of Brexit Britain. There's no metropolitan sneer...

"No definitely not, which I really respected about it. It's just trying to create an honest snapshot of that particular town. If anything, one can maybe come away from that starting to understand why they think the way they think.

"It's very easy to be judgemental in our London bubble. If you think those people over there have a different opinion to you, the only way you're going to be able to get through to them is by understanding them. And vice versa. So less metropolitan sneer and more honest snapshots, please."

### What does Lydia think of crime commissioner Metcalfe? How does she man-manage him?

"That is the most frustrating thing for her. You've got this American wannabe hot-shot with perfect teeth taking the job that she should be doing and then the guy that is actually orchestrating everything, Metcalfe, couldn't give two bananas about Boston and its people or the police force. He actually confides in Lydia about why he's doing what he's doing. Keith openly admits that the reason she hasn't got the gig is because she isn't a man. He says sorry that's just the way it is – 'personal preference.'





"She literally wants to shoot him at that point. That must be hard. What I love about this show is that it outs that frustration right from the get-go. It doesn't make any bones about it. She's told that she hasn't got the job because she's a woman. I think it's really enjoyable that Bill Hixon says to Lydia right at the beginning, 'I'm American. If you're going to stab me, stab me in the front.' You know that she hates him and he hates her, but they have to just get on with it.

### What do you think Wild Bill says about modern policing in this country and about Britain as a place to live right now?

"That the police force is under-funded and that are losing all the power that they have. I do have a lot of respect for what the police try to do but I think they're really up against it. There's a line where Rob asks why they haven't got this cool gizmo thing that would help with DNA profiling in 21st Century Britain. Lydia says, 'Yes, this is 21st Century Britain in the state that we're in with the police not having enough to go on.' That gizmo costs about as much as ten members of the police force."

### Did you find the type of crimes being investigated interesting?

"I liked all the storylines and what they brought to it. They have a real heart to them, especially the first episode where there's a missing person. This person has been missing for a long time. Bill tries to use his fancy algorithms to crack who has been nicking satellite dishes, but the force in Boston hasn't got the same resources that he's used to having in slick Miami. In the middle of that, a head is found in a fridge which is when this quite literally cold case gets brought back to life and we have to find out whodunnit."

"What I really liked as the series progresses is that Rob as Bill has his iciness thawed. He's trying hard to block out all emotions from his personal life but he has no choice but to roll up his sleeves and handle it all because Boston is not having it any other way. They melt his exterior. I liked that part of it a lot."

### What can you tell us about Lydia's dad, Barry Chana who we meet in episode two?

"In the back story I created, I think Barry has been a single parent and he's had to raise her and her brother. She's got a lot of respect for her dad but I think she's probably the one who has always worn the trousers in her family and always has been."

#### Doesn't your dad run a post office in real life?

"He does. He was in the army but he's run a post office for about 10 years. When I came to the read through, I knew that Barry got held up at gunpoint at his post office but I didn't know that he also has an army background. I had to tell them that my dad was also held up in his post office. I thought they must have read local East Midlands press. It was too weird that the writers had come up with that exact dynamic. That is my life. Maybe that's what got me the job."







### How do you think DCC Price rates those in the lower ranks like DC Yeardsley, PC Drakes and Cobley?

"I think she really respects them all. I think it's very easy to see her as this ice queen who's got her daggers out for anyone who threatens her job role but I don't think it's that at all. She really really cares about this force. She really cares about the people of Boston. I genuinely think she's a smart cookie.

"I had to ask myself why has this incredibly intelligent woman who is where she is at the age she's at not moved to London? Why doesn't she take her kid who is clearly having a crap time at school and move them somewhere else? I think the answer is because she loves the people there. She loves Boston. It's where she was born and raised and she wants to stay there. She wants to make it work for everyone. She's not just a career ladder climber."

### Bronwyn told us about Divian's whittling. How did you pass the time between shots?

"I was reading To Kill a Mockingbird. I've started reading all the old classics. I got very into that and kept trying to talk to people about it. I was waxing lyrical."

#### Do you have a favourite Lydia line?

"My favourite is 'Why don't you piss off back to America like we thought you had.' I loved saying it in the read through and people laughing. It's a brilliant line."

## ANTHONY FLANAGAN PLAYS PC SEAN COBLEY

Sean is described in the script as 'a grizzled career street cop' and more rudely by Bill as 'a human of limited bandwidth.' What's your take on PC Cobley?

"Well, Bill can say that but my take on it for this police drama was that in the force there is this big thing about status. It's about people having authority over other people of lesser rank. The interesting thing with Cobley in ranking is that he is a PC. Most people have aspirations to look further up the line and be a sergeant or an inspector. Sean doesn't.

"He has no desire to have any more power or be anything more than what he is. He's very comfortable and cool with that. Obviously at 45 years old having been a copper for 20 years, he's doing it at his pace. What I liked about playing him is that he has nothing to lose really. When this American guy comes in to basically sack everyone and revamp the police, Cobley isn't having any of it and does and says whatever he wants. He doesn't have to sugar coat anything. The gloves are off. That was quite liberating."





## What were your favourite scenes to play with Rob? Cobley gives him a speeding ticket in Episode 1 for cycling too fast in the middle of nowhere...

"That's very funny. When I first read it, I assumed that Sean was doing Bill for driving a fast car. Then the speed Bill was going in the script went down from 50mph to 34mph which is funnier. On the day of shooting it I got there and Rob was in his lycra on a pushbike. I don't even think that's illegal. So it's just Cobley taking the piss."

## Divian says you told him that as an actor once you put the uniform on, you'll always get cast as a policeman. What was the first time you played a copper?

"Probably in Foyle's War. The first main one was Tony in Shameless. With the success of a show like that everyone talks. Someone says they're doing a cop drama and they think of you again. After that I played a lot of police. Kenny Archer, the troubled cop in Cracker, was a good one. Jimmy McGovern is pretty good at telling things as they are."

#### Is this a good time for British TV cop shows?

"Conflict equals drama so the format and the formula for a cop show has so many opportunities for there to be conflict and drama. It's interesting the way it's moved on when you've also got fly-on-the-wall real cop shows like 24 Hours In Police Custody. Those shows must have shifted the axis of police dramas and what they have to say. You haven't quite got to reinvent it but you have to look at it from a different axis to somehow stand out and keep it fresh."

### It feels like Wild Bill is doing that. What appealed to you about the scripts?

"It's interesting because when I was first cast I thought it was a comedy. It was set in this place where nothing happens. The police station almost felt like The Office. We're in this dilapidated building and we're basically a bunch of coppers who haven't seen any crime. Suddenly this American guy turns up and people are getting killed in every episode. But as the episodes progress the story becomes darker."

# Cobley has a lot of different crimes to deal with over the course of this series. Satellite dish thieves, robbed dead pensioners, bodies with burned off fingerprints, land feuds, fly tipping. Do you have a favourite?

"What was nice was that the writers and showrunners Jim and Dudi wanted to explore a little bit of Sean Cobley's life away from the police. They incorporated his dad, Tony, played by Jim Whelan. There's a story in Episode 3 where old people's homes are being broken into so we see Sean helping his dad secure his house. It was fun seeing more of Sean's life. I was talking about where he might live and there was an idea







floated that he might live on a barge. I think he's single. Sean's got a bit of an eye for the ladies but I don't think he stays with one. He doesn't have any commitments."

What were the most physically demanding scenes for you to film? There's a suitcase that Sean lugs about in Episode 5 when he finds it down by the river.

"Sean and PC Drakes are scouting around and Cobley finds the suitcase then puts it back. He's too hungry. He wants to get some food. Then the guilt kicks in and he retrieves it. Sean's attitude to policing is that there's the PC way (no pun intended!) and then there's the right way to do it. Sean Cobley is ready to burn the instruction book and do it the way he wants to do it. I like coppers like that. If you keep doing it the way the bosses tell you, it's going to take forever. Sean is very rebellious when it comes to policing, but he cares about his work. That's why he's a copper."

#### Do you have a favourite Sean Cobley line?

"It's not Sean's but the one I remember the most is in a scene where the police are re-enacting someone being knocked over after a post office robbery. Sean is lying on the ground playing dead and Steffan Rhodri who is playing DS Blair gets out of his car and says in a very loud Northern accent, 'Right, let's get this carnival off the road!' After about ten takes of that, I just couldn't stop laughing. I was still lying on the ground and my shoulders were shaking. Every time I saw Steffan after that I'd shout it at him."

## DIVIAN LADWA PLAYS PC DRAKES

What sort of copper is PC Drakes? The first time we meet him he's taking the mickey out of Bill by wearing a Stetson.

"Yeah, that's pretty much sums up what Drakes is like. PC Drakes is quite funny and a bit cheeky. You've got all these amazing characters. There's Sean Cobley who is this grumpy, seen-it-all veteran police officer who has been on the beat a long time, young detective Muriel Yeardsley and PC Drakes who is the class clown."

#### Did you all bond in the police station?

"Definitely. Myself, Anthony and Bronwyn were pretty much always together. We were a nice little core group having a lot of fun on set. Anthony told me that as an actor once you put a police officer's uniform on that's it, you'll play a police officer for the rest of your career. I thought that sounded ridiculous but the very next job I got after this was another police officer so he might be onto something there."

#### Did you ever discover PC Drakes' first name?

"There was a name for him but I don't know if it made the final edit. In one take PC Drakes says his first name is Troy. Wild Bill is like, 'Troy?!' In another take Bill calls him Elvis. And then there was an ad lib where Rob Lowe called me Troy Elvis Drakes."





#### Do you have any friends or family who are in the force?

"I went to school with a girl who ended up in a long time relationship with a police officer. After they got married he used to tell me stuff about the job. I lost touch with them but I got lots of information. He actually stopped me once. I didn't recognise him. I thought I was being stopped and searched when he pulled me over but then it turned out to be him, which was quite funny. I've worked with police officers as well. As an actor I've also helped out with police interrogations, which was fun."

### What do you think makes Wild Bill unique as a British police drama?

"There's a lot of really good detective shows out there which often follow a similar mood and tone. Wild Bill feels different in the respect that the main character is an outsider moving to an area that in real life voted for Brexit. The show incorporates different avenues of real life and lots of different characters. You don't meet anyone like PC Drakes or PC Sean Cobley in other detective shows."

## Boston has been billed as 'the home of Brexit.' How was that reflected in what you saw and how you were received whilst you were filming there?

"Everyone I met was really nice. The funny thing was that every time I spoke to someone who I thought was local they turned out to be from Manchester. I was always trying to hear someone with the local dialect though."

## Bill Hixon talks at length about 21st Century policing all being done by numbers. Did you research any stats yourself?

"There are some interesting stats. Apparently Lincolnshire has the highest murder rate in England. I'd heard it mentioned on Question Time before, but that's a bit of a crazy one. You don't usually hear of the spotlight being shone on other areas like this."

### What does Wild Bill show us about modern policing in Britain?

"I think it highlights the struggle with cuts. You still need the officers to do the work. A computer will never arrest a man."

### Had you met Rob Lowe before when you both appeared in You, Me and the Apocalypse in 2015?

"No, I never met him on that job. I was involved in the set-up for one of the other characters whilst Rob's scenes as Father Jude were with the Vatican."

#### What's he like to work with?

"He's pretty cool. He'd come in and do his thing and have a laugh with us."





### Do you enjoy working with Hollywood stars like Rob and Nicole Kidman in Lion?

"Yeah, it can be quite nerve-wracking sometimes. Nicole Kidman has been a big deal for me ever since I first wanted to be an actor as a kid. I remember being really young and watching the mini-series Bangkok Hilton. She's a phenomenal actress so it was incredible to work with her on the film Lion."

#### Was Wild Bill not the most glamorous of shoots?

"It depends which characters you're looking at. I do not look glamorous myself in the police uniform, especially when they made me wear a bobble hat. There are some beautiful locations and houses but you also end up in this horrible police station with its old fashioned furniture and all these characters in this cramped space."

### Is there a scene that you think best reflects the look and feel of the show?

"I think the scene where Bill is chucking cabbages in the middle of a field. That was my first scene on the entire job and the first thing I noticed was how stunning it looked on the monitor. You have the silhouette of Bill and his car and these beautiful flatlands with crops in the background."

#### How would you describe the humour of Wild Bill?

"Some of PC Drakes scenes are leaning towards comedy but

then there's drama as well. There's the British banter of the core group but it's not slapstick. It's more naturalistic. Then you'll have a moment where a head turns up in someone's fridge. I remember reading that in the script and thinking, woah, this is dark. But that's another way in which it feels different to your usual police show."

## PC Drakes doesn't get to use a gun but he does have a handy ladder from LIDL. Is that typical of the tone of the show?

"It sums up the tone of PC Drakes. Sean Cobley gets a gun and I get handcuffs and a collapsible ladder from LIDL. There are quite a few quirky moments like that. A police officer walking around with a ladder. I've never seen that before."

#### Do you have a favourite line in the series?

"There's a quite a lot of funny lines for PC Drakes. It's hard to pick a favourite. I was laughing throughout the whole shoot. It was either me or Bronwyn who wasn't able to keep a straight face. Some of the directors on the show allowed you to put stuff in. I found out some local Lincolnshire slang. A Morgan Rattler is someone in the world of boxing who is very good with both his left hand and his right hand. So I chucked that into a scene with Bronwyn when Muriel is looking at photos of the Boston Bandit."



### **EPISODE SYNOPSES**

#### **EPISODE 1**

High-flying US police chief Bill Hixon arrives in Boston, Lincolnshire with his teenage daughter Kelsey in tow hoping for a fresh start after a painful recent past. He is confident that his hands-off, numbers-driven approach can both cut the crime-rate and the budget at the same time.

However, aware that he has been recruited to slash jobs, he isn't welcomed by his new team. His Deputy, Lydia Price, makes no secret of her disdain for him and frustration at being over-looked for the job, whilst PC Sean Cobley wastes no time in pulling Bill over for speeding on his push-bike and local journalist Lisa Cranston grills him on his approach. The only member of the team ready to embrace the new techniques that Bill brings to the force is bright and eager DC Muriel Yeardsley.

When a decapitated head turns up in a fridge – the coldest of cold cases – Bill starts to wonder what he's got himself into. The victim is revealed to be Mel, a young woman who disappeared 10 years earlier. Breaking the news to her heartbroken mother, Angie, it isn't long before Bill is dragged away from his desk and into the case.

#### **EPISODE 2**

Bill tries to reboot his authority by getting his team to focus on the difficult unsolved crimes, including that of the 'Boston Bandit' who was responsible for a series of post office robberies and a murder. However, Bill's team are more interested in a mysterious amnesiac who has shot to local fame for playing the piano in the station.

Bill's soon reaping the plaudits when he succeeds in linking the stranger to the notorious cold case, only to realise the truth is more complicated that it first appears.

Meanwhile, Bill's professional relationship with Mary gets personal, Oleg pressures Muriel into betraying Bill, and Kelsey succeeds in getting Bill to finally engage with his dead wife's memory.





### **CHARACTER CREDITS**

Bill Hixon ROB LOWE

Kelsey Hixon ALOREIA SPENCER
DC Muriel Yeardsley BRONWYN JAMES
ACC Lydia Price ANJLI MOHINDRA

Keith Metcalfe TONY PITTS

Lady Mary Harborough RACHAEL STIRLING
DS Blair STEFFAN RHODRI
PC Drakes DIVIAN LADWA

PC Sean Cobley ANTHONY FLANAGAN

Oleg Kraznov ALEKSANDER JOVANOVIC

Lisa Cranston ANGELA GRIFFIN
Angie SUSAN LYNCH

Broadbent VICKI PEPPERDINE

Marek Rudnicka JULIAN KOSTOV

Piano Man CRAIG PARKINSON

Max MATTHEW STEER

Barry Chana KRISS DOSANJH

Alma Smith EMMA D'ARCY

Bernie BETHANY ASHER

Henry

Nora JUDITH KATHLEEN BAILEY

**BARRY AIRD** 

Audrey LISA PALFREY
Ray Gilhrist CON O'NEILL
Freya ROSIE SHEEHY



### **CHARACTER CREDITS**

Albert DAVID HARGREAVES

Reverend Stone JAMES EELES

Scott Burrows FELIX BUTTERWICK

Tony Cobley JIM WHELAN

Charlene NICHOLA BURLEY
Lubica KATARINA CAS

Matthew Bailey JOE COOK

DJ JACK GORDON

Darren Bailey JOHN PAUL HURLEY

Tomas Kovac ADRIAN FEKETE

Dimitri ANDREI LENART

Dr. Marks PAMELA NOMVETE

Frank McGill PATRICK BERGIN

Young Terry MICHAEL JAMES







### **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

**Executive Producer RORY AITKEN** 

**Executive Producer ELEANOR MORAN** 

**Executive Producer** TIM CARTER **Executive Producer ROB LOWE** 

**Executive Producer** 

**Executive Producer Executive Producer KYLE KILLEN** 

**Executive Producer DAVID GRIFFITHS** 

**Executive Producer SCOTT PENNINGTON** 

Executive Producer / Show Runner / Writer

Executive Producer / Show Runner / Writer

Producer

Director (Episodes 1 & 2) **CHARLES MARTIN** Director (Episodes 3 & 4) JOHN HARDWICK Director (Episodes 5 & 6) ANNIE GRIFFIN

**Production Designer** STEPHEN CAMPBELL

**Costume Designer** 

Hair & Make-Up Designer **Location Manager (London)** Location Manager (Lincolnshire)

**Casting Director** Writer (Episode 3) Writer (Episode 5) **Script Executives Script Executives** 

Composer Editor (Episodes 1 & 2)

Editor (Episodes 3 & 4)

Editor (Episodes 5)

Editor (Episodes 6)



**BEN PUGH** 

**KEITH REDMON** 

JIM KEEBLE

**DUDI APPLETON** 

PETER MCALEESE

**CHARLIE JONES** 

TALLI PACHTER **DAVE HALSTEAD** 

MATTHEW LANE

**SARAH CROWE** 

TOM FARRELLY

**MELISSA BUBNIC** 

**OLIVER RANCE** 

KAT REYNOLDS **HARRY ESCOTT** 

**MIKE JONES** 

PETER OLIVER

**DAN GETHIC** 

CHARLIE FAWCETT





