



Contents

Press Release	3	Interview with Robert Lindsay	37
Foreword by Writer, Robert Murphy	7	Film Synopses	44
Interview with Jason Watkins	10	Character Credits	46
Interview with Tala Gouveia	20	Production Credits	48
Interview with James Murray	28		



JASON WATKINS AND TALA GOUVEIA STAR IN BRAND NEW DETECTIVE DRAMA, MCDONALD & DODDS

Brand new detective drama McDonald & Dodds starts on ITV this Spring. A series of feature length crime mysteries comprising of two intriguing stories in its first outing, it stars BAFTA winner Jason Watkins (*The Crown, The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies, W1A*) and Tala Gouveia (*Cold Feet*).

Commissioned by Polly Hill, ITV's Head of Drama, McDonald & Dodds is produced by Mammoth Screen, part of ITV Studios, and is created and written by screenwriter, Robert Murphy (lead writer on *DCI Banks*).

Set in Bath, the detective drama pairs the wildly ambitious DCI McDonald with the shy, modest DS Dodds. While McDonald has transferred from the mean streets of South London to leap up the career ladder, Dodds has happily languished on the shelf for most of his working life. McDonald is a tough, driven, battering ram of a cop who cracks cases through sheer force of will; Dodds – the tortoise to her hare – is quiet, unassuming and enigmatic. But thrust back into frontline action for the first time in a decade, he discovers a hidden talent for deciphering puzzles.

Two contemporary Britons, thrown together with seemingly with nothing in common, boss McDonald and loyal sidekick Dodds forge a rumbustious, entertaining and ultimately – give or take a few setbacks – effective partnership.



Each film takes us into a new story world - from a greed-fueled murder in the upper echelons of Bath society, to an unexplained death in a private hospital for recovering addicts. With a classic crime story at its heart, McDonald & Dodds combines intriguing plots and the journey of two mismatched detectives with warmth and humour.

Age Before Beauty and Primeval star James Murray also stars as Chief Superintendent John Houseman, alongside Pearl Chanda (Motherland, Endeavour) as DC Laura Simpson and Jack Riddiford (Poldark, Murder On The Orient Express) as DC Darren Craig.

Guest actors appearing in the first episode include BAFTA, Tony and Oliver Award winner Robert Lindsay (*Bounty Hunters*), Ellie Kendrick (*Game Of Thrones*), Susannah Fielding (*This Time With Alan Partridge*), Rosalie Craig (*Company*) and Navin Chowdhry (*Next Of Kin*), whilst the second episode features Joanna Scanlan (*No Offence*), Hugh Dennis (*Fleabag*), Caroline Catz (*Doc Martin*), Freddie Fox (*White House Farm*), Michele Dotrice (*Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em*) and Kiran Sonia Sawar (*Black Mirror*).

McDonald & Dodds is executive produced by Robert Murphy and by Preethi Mavahalli and Damien Timmer for Mammoth Screen, and filmed on location in the West Country, as well as at the Bottle Yard Studios. Amy Thurgood has produced the series, whilst Richard Senior directed the first episode and Laura Scrivano the second. ITV's Drama Commissioner, Huw Kennair Jones, has overseen production of the drama from the channel's perspective. ITV Studios Global Entertainment will distribute McDonald & Dodds internationally.





Mammoth Screen is one of the UK's leading production companies. Current and forthcoming shows include WORLD ON FIRE, THE PALE HORSE, NOUGHTS AND CROSSES and THE SERPENT for BBC One and Netflix, ENDEAVOUR series 7, VICTORIA and THE SINGAPORE GRIP for ITV.



FOREWORD BY WRITER, ROBERT MURPHY

McDonald & Dodds began with me and Damien Timmer, Managing Director at Mammoth Screen, lamenting the dearth of pre-watershed, entertaining detective dramas. It's probably generational, but I guess we were nostalgic for our youth in the '70s and '80s, growing up on shows like Columbo and Jonathan Creek. We liked puzzles and locked room mysteries in the Agatha Christie style, and were drawn to characters who could generate likeability and bring a smile to your face.

So it began with Dodds - the engaging, invisible underdog who gets drawn into a cat-and-mouse game with a powerful charismatic prime suspect. Again, we went retro, showcasing a familiar, big name guest star for each episode - Robert Lindsay in 'The Fall of the House of Crockett' and Joanna Scanlan in 'A Wilderness of Mirrors'.

I liked the idea of something set in Bath, a city used a lot in period drama, but seldom in contemporary shows. It seemed like a good fit - DS Dodds (who thinks slowly, deeply but not widely) pitting himself against the movers and shakers of what could be seen as a wealthy city state.

However, if you're going to set something in contemporary Britain, there needs to be a degree of reality, especially on procedure. Dodds needed a boss to put a firewall around him and facilitate his often abstruse and wayward M.O.

Enter, straight from the mean streets of South London, plunging into genteel Bath like a bull in a China shop, DCI Lauren McDonald (who thinks quickly and widely but not deeply); the opposite of Dodds in terms of personality, cultural background, generation and gender.

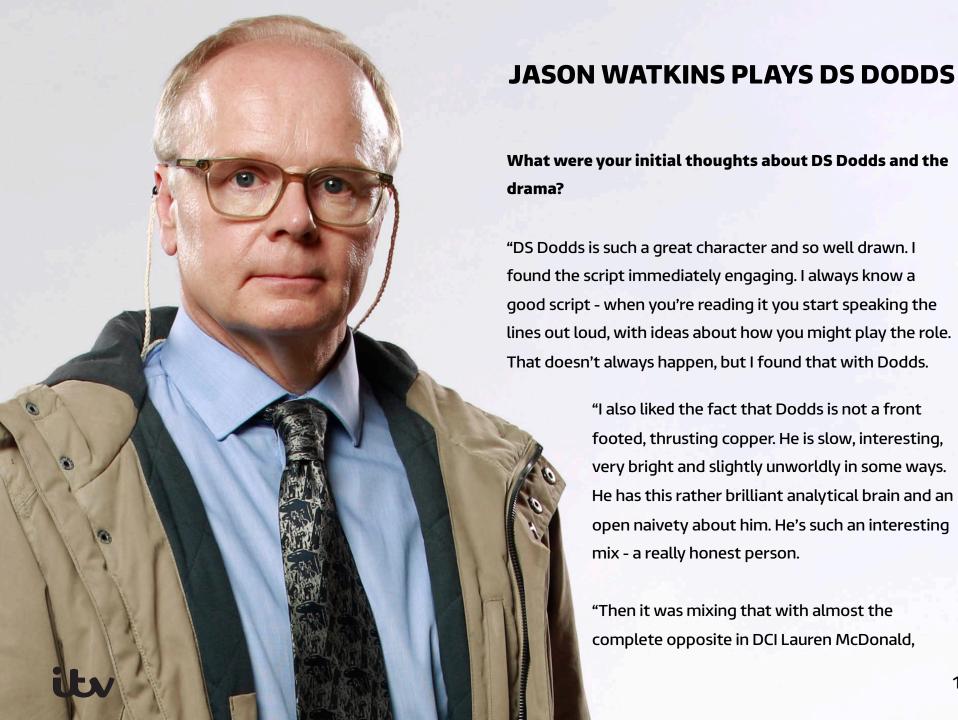


Meanwhile, there was a slightly heated kerfuffle going on in the world of politics (something about referendums, Malthouse compromises and backstops) which felt like a symptom of a fractured nation. We wanted to try to reflect this in a non-judgemental way.

So with McDonald and Dodds we have two Britons who, given their gender, age and background would never, in normal circumstances, have any contact with one another. It seemed to me this could give us an entertaining double-act as they negotiate the pitfalls, anxieties and quirks of modern Britain while solving puzzling crimes and drawing a few laughs along the way.







played by Tala Gouveia. It's a great clash of characters. I just thought, 'Now that's a really good premise for a series that could have legs to it' which was very exciting."

How do other people view Dodds?

"Dodds is invisible in the sense that people don't notice him. He's that person in the corner who doesn't put himself forward. The writer Robert Murphy is really interested in the theme of Dodds as this presence people don't see. Along with Dodds being middle aged and encouraged to take early retirement, I think he has explored that very well.

"I'm not criticising social media. I am a big social media person myself, but sometimes you think, 'The person who shouts loudest gets noticed.' Yet there are lots of very interesting, brilliant people who don't feel the need - or aren't able - to compete in that environment and are just as valid as everybody else.

"That's where Dodds sits. He's the guy at the back with his hand up going, 'Excuse me, I've just found this amazing thing out that solves your case.' I love that.

"He also plays that card. People aren't necessarily their stock, stereotype characters. They can be quite complex. Dodds learns the way he is viewed by people can be a weapon he can use against them.

Which is what he does.

"He is a bit like Harold Wilson who I just played in The Crown. Wilson's great gift was he could see a host of numbers and facts as a whole and know what the outcome would be. That was his great strength.

Dodds has a little bit of that about him too. He can understand numbers and where they are heading."



What is his background?

"Dodds is Bath born and bred and has lived in the same house for most of his life. He is not a career police officer. When he was heading towards potential promotion, he wasn't that sort of person. He didn't put himself forward. People didn't see him as someone who would mark his own territory out and he just drifted into examining cold cases which led to him being sat behind a desk at the police station for the last 11 years.

"His boss Chief Supt. John Houseman, played by James Murray, has now edged him into a dangerous area so he can mess up and they can get rid of him. But Dodds sees it as an opportunity, and to his own and everyone else's surprise, he is really good at it. That is quite touching.

"Everyone has iPads and Dodds still has his little

notebook. That's the way he has always worked. It's not unfunny. He will go to the library and cross reference to follow a literal paper trail to come up with the concrete things that are needed. He comes up with physical, tangible evidence."

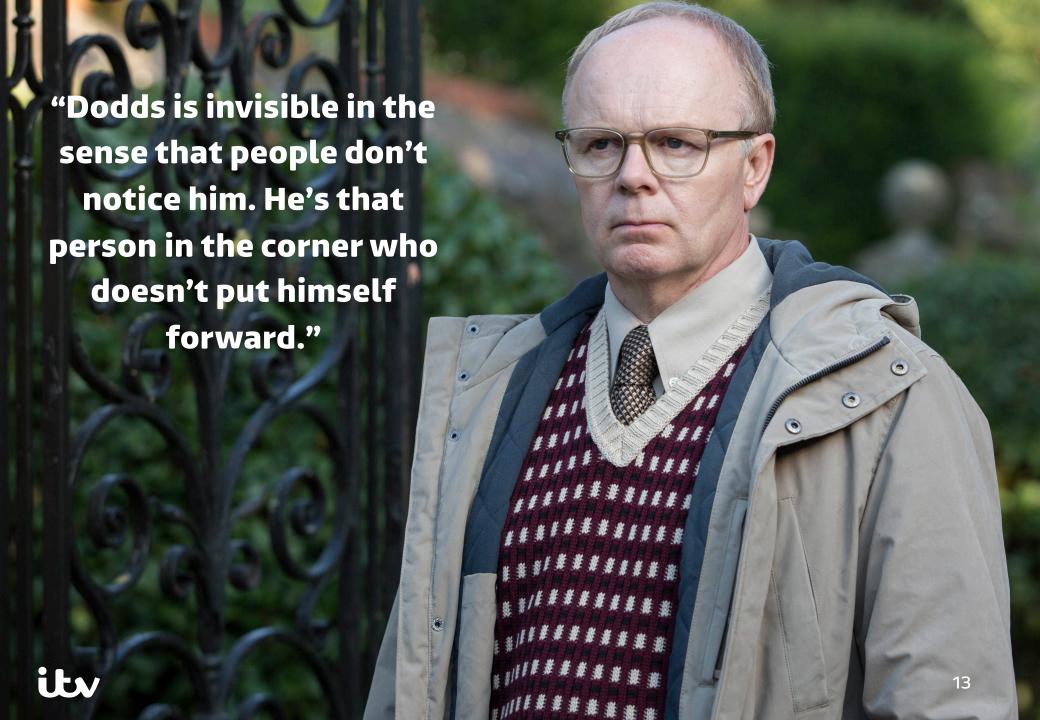
What accent did you use for Dodds?

"He has a local accent. That was quite important to get right because he's born and bred in Bath. A lot of the crew were all local to Bath and Bristol, so I had to really keep my eye on the accent in the first week or two. But then after a while, if there was a particular word I wanted to check I'd go to a couple of the crew and ask them to say it."

Does he have a favourite culinary delight?

"Dodds likes to dip his chips in butter. It's an old favourite of his. Now, if you have a couple of chips and





you dip them in butter it is delicious, but when you've had to do a scene over 15 times for various camera angles it becomes something entirely different and you wish you'd never even started. Chips in butter is funny, but I wouldn't recommend it as a dietary item!"

How would you describe the relationship between DCI Lauren McDonald, played by Tala Gouveia, and her deputy DS Dodds?

"This is a cop drama that is well drawn, well made and is in some ways groundbreaking in the relationship between McDonald and Dodds. It's great entertainment, hopefully, for the audience, but also it does touch on real issues today.

"What Tala does so brilliantly is that her character McDonald is a thruster. She is the one who will come in and try to sort a case out immediately. McDonald might be slightly impatient and she certainly runs up against the old prejudice against her as a young black woman from outside this area. That's what she is fighting against. Maybe that accounts a lot for her energy.

"Dodds and McDonald learn from each other. Dodds learns that trying to be assertive is not a bad thing, and maybe she has to take her foot off the gas and think, 'Is there another way around this?'

"McDonald gets things done. She galvanises people and has an emotional intelligence and worldliness that Dodds maybe doesn't have. But he does see the detail and he can add things up. He is forensic in his being, as much as the way he works."

How does that relationship develop?

"In time they both become aware of each other's vulnerabilities. There are some touching moments.



Dodds is not unaware of the occasional whiff of racism that McDonald meets. It's not explicit, but as we know, there are some people who still do have those views. So in this show we have touched on and, sadly, reflected on that underlying attitude.

"It's one of the great strengths of the drama, the script and the whole thinking behind it that we are able to touch on contemporary issues such as this, still within an entertaining format. I think we all have to do that in the business - to both cast people from different backgrounds and reflect the society in which we all live.

"We need to see a fair representation of women and people from all backgrounds both in front of and behind the camera. It's such a complex subject. Positive discrimination is not about discrimination. It's just about reflecting what we see around us and bringing what we see in society into every workspace.

"We have a great ability to do that in our industry. We hold the mirror up to nature and society. The great thing about this country is it has always been full of people from different backgrounds and countries with a history of immigration going way back. It's very much part of the fabric of our lives and it's very important we acknowledge that in popular television."

What was it like working with Tala Gouveia?

"You're never too old to learn, and I learned a lot from Tala. We recognised in each other that we are both hard workers. The tendency sometimes is to think that when you have been established in the business for a while and done lots of work, as I have been lucky enough to do, that it comes easily. But it doesn't. This is a new show and we want to make it the best it can be. We literally said that all of the way through.



"We both have those instincts for hard work. I have a certain amount of experience and Tala has great insight, intellect and intelligence. She is really good.

Tala attacks scenes and is fearless. We understood the dynamic of the characters and we evolved a dynamic between us as well which we really looked after.

"When we first met in the chemistry reading process there was a bit of magic between us when we were doing those audition scenes. As actors, we were very aware that we needed to keep that with us. Whatever the undefinable thing was, that's what audiences will enjoy and what viewers will want to come back and watch - the relationship between McDonald and Dodds."

Did you speak to anyone in the police before filming the role?

"I spoke to a police advisor about what Dodds could

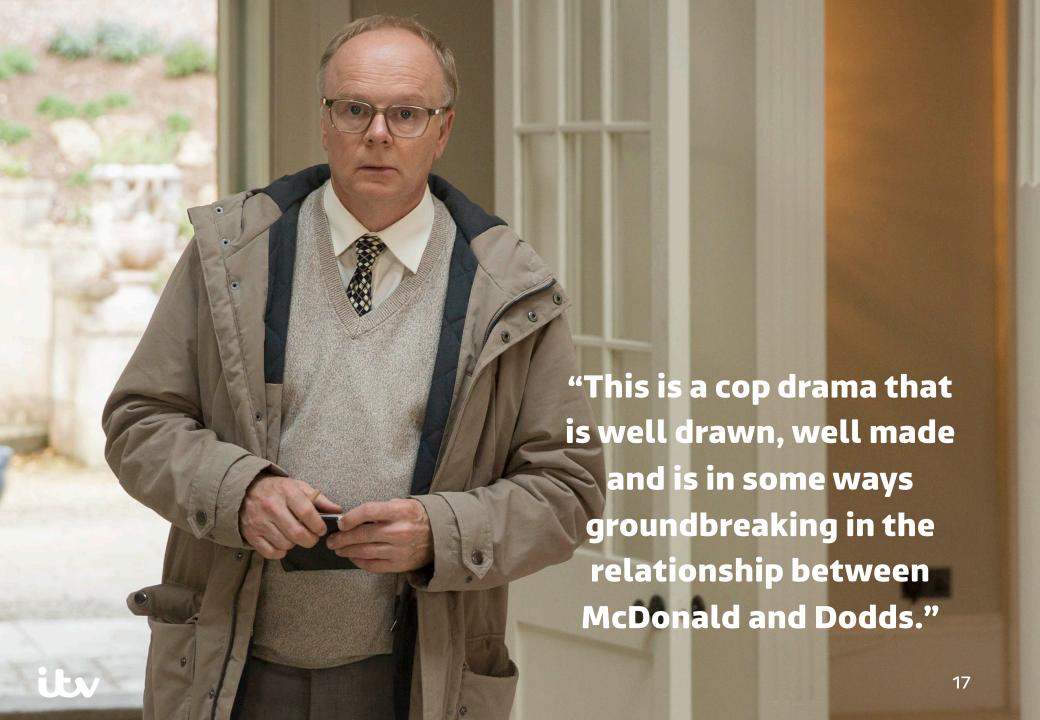
have been doing for the last 11 years. The nature of the work, as well as the structure of modern policing and how it has changed. I had already done a fair amount of research on other shows like Line of Duty and had met a few police officers, so I could draw on that.

"However, it was all very much in the writing. This is not a gritty police drama. It has a gentler feel to it and is more character led. So there was a certain amount of research, but the real gold dust was in developing the plot and the relationship between Dodds and McDonald."

The drama is set in Bath. Was it a city you knew before filming this?

"I have played the theatre there about three or four times and stayed there. It's an amazing place. Bath is another character in the show.





It's an interesting place. It obviously has a real architectural flavour and a lot of old money, many very successful people and a mix of types, but there is an underbelly as well. It's a wonderful backdrop and a world that is great to plunder and visit again and again."

Dodds is asked if he has ever met anyone evil. Have you?

"I always resist that term. I've met a couple of unsavoury people and I have met people in my past research who have committed crimes and were in prison."

Does Dodds have a hobby?

"Dodds' hobby is pitch and putt and I like to think he is quite good at it. McDonald has a rather humourous view of that. It should be golf, really. When I was touring in my 20s, I did get a hole in one on a pitch and putt in Norfolk. I'm also very competitive when it comes to crazy golf. I don't let the kids win. Ever. You can't. They've got to learn.

"Dodds is also a bird lover. He takes an interest in many things and retains a lot of his knowledge which can come in useful. Although he doesn't shout about it."

Dodds is under pressure to take early retirement. Do actors ever retire?

"No. I don't think actors ever retire. You just keep going. I'm lucky. I'm in a position where I can choose a bit now. It's a mixture of trying to earn a living and also trying to find really interesting projects like this drama. If you can do both, you are very lucky. I just hope that continues. It's a very nice position to be in. Hopefully I'll be acting for a long time."



How do you reflect back on making the drama?

"We attracted some superb guest actors. The likes of Robert Lindsay, Kiran Sonia Sawar, Caroline Catz and many others. We wanted all of the actors to feel they had an investment in the piece and for them to have a real input.

"People like Joanna Scanlan, who is one of this country's best actresses, in the second film. And brilliant young actors like Freddie Fox, along with Michelle Dotrice - someone with all of her experience. She was absolutely magnificent. A great example to all of us. We were very lucky.

"Audiences love this genre. You're thinking, 'Who has done it? How have they done it? How did they get away with it? Is that person lying?' We're constantly fascinated by human behaviour and crime.

"There is always going to be this human interest in the things people do and try to get away with. Trying to work out what people's motives are. Murder is the most critical of those things. Laced in this drama with a little bit of gentle humour. It's a lovely mix in the show.

"We never get to know the real first name of Dodds. I have an idea what it is but I can't share that. I really hope the audience enjoy these two films. We would love to do more."



TALA GOUVEIA PLAYS DCI MCDONALD

What were your initial thoughts about McDonald & Dodds?

"I thought Lauren McDonald was a fantastic part to play. The writer Robert Murphy did a great job of making her such a well rounded character who came off the page very quickly. These characters really come alive in the first few scenes.

"She is a great female lead and as a young woman of colour, is the boss of a middle aged white man. That's partly what drew me towards it. It's a little bit different and not necessarily the representation I have seen growing up or watching detective shows.

"There are a lot of great roles for women in the series, and pretty much all have their own storylines.





There have always been women on screen but often they have been there to support the storyline of the men. However, the women in McDonald & Dodds are very much part of it. They are there to support the story, not support another character's storyline."

Who is DCI Lauren McDonald?

"DCI Lauren McDonald previously worked for the Met Police in London and has arrived in Bath after being offered a promotion to leap up the ladder. She is fiercely ambitious and driven and wants to do the best job possible. She doesn't mind stepping on anyone's toes. McDonald does tend to rub people up the wrong way. She doesn't pander to anyone. She is there to do her job, which I love about her.

"She is very good at her job but she is also winging it. She's trying to act as confident as possible and makes quick decisions. She's very action driven to get something done, whether that is the right thing or not. She is always on the go and has to be moving. Lauren really goes for it."

Did you do any of your own research before filming?

"I spoke to a woman from London who was a murder squad detective. She was amazing. She told me to be feisty. In fact, she was quite similar to the character of McDonald. She said she got into a bit of trouble because she gets so emotionally involved. She was really passionate about solving these crimes and getting justice.

"It's a tough job to do for real. They see some horrific things and yet they have to talk about them normally. You must have to close bits off in your brain because you are constantly hearing about horrors and having to work out why anyone would do these things."



How would you describe McDonald's relationship with her deputy DS Dodds (Jason Watkins)?

"At first she sees him in a group with some younger police officers and doesn't even notice him. Lauren certainly hasn't spent much time with someone like him before. If people don't speak up for themselves in a room, I don't think she is interested in them. She likes people who are ambitious and driven. So she is not expecting a middle aged man who looks like a complete fish out of water to be her deputy.

"Dodds has been behind a police desk for 11 years and not out in the field. I don't think he realises how clever he is. He has got a very inquisitive brain, but no-one asks him what's going on in that brain.

"McDonald bowls over everything in a rush to get things done, but looking at the bigger picture she doesn't always take the time to notice small little details, whereas Dodds does notice those small things. McDonald finds him infuriating because he's slow and doesn't understand Google - he'll go to the library instead, while she is always on her computer or tablet.

"However, she can't help but eventually warm to him, despite probably not wishing to. She wants their professional partnership to work, but doesn't have time for friends or any warmth. Yet, as I think the audience will find, you can't help but fall in love with him.

"Dodds has a fondness for chips with butter. I can't imagine how sick Jason must have felt filming those scenes. I did try it and it was quite nice, but after a couple of hours filming it must have been a bit wearing. At school my friend and I discovered that celery and strawberry ice cream kind of worked.

That's another weird food combination."





What was it like working with Jason Watkins?

"He's brilliant. We got on and worked really well together. We both bounced off each other straight away at the initial chemistry read when we met. I suddenly went, 'OK. I know who my character is because I know who his character is now.' It just worked.

"After the later script read through we shared a taxi because we were both going the same way. Jason turned round to me and said, 'When we get on set, we're going to find a way that works for us, how we want to work together and we're just going to make it work.'

"Rather than him saying, 'I've been doing this for many years. Stick with me. I know what I'm doing and this is how I work.' It was, 'We're going to do this together.'
And that's how we did it. He was so generous."

Do people who shout the loudest get the most attention today? Even though those who are quieter may have something equally, if not more, valid to contribute?

"We see that in the first story with the character of Max Crockett, played by Robert Lindsay. He is very loud and believes his voice is always the most important in the room. And it has worked. He is now this multi-millionaire who people listen to. But a lot of it is just angry, misogynistic and oppressive.

"In terms of Max Crockett's relationship with McDonald, it's that thing where somebody is undermining you but not quite saying what the worst insult could be. And then if you do call them out, they go, 'Oh, I meant this.'

"It was fabulous working with Robert Lindsay. We just did a lot of shouting at each other!"



What does McDonald's boss Chief Supt John Houseman (James Murray) expect of her?

"Firstly, he wants McDonald to persuade Dodds to take early retirement. You also think McDonald might be ticking boxes for him, because he has brought McDonald in from London but doesn't want her to make any waves or upset anyone influential in Bath. He wants her to just do it his way while trying to persuade Dodds to retire early. Houseman is on McDonald's mind quite a lot.

"Houseman also gets her to appear on the cover of a new police recruitment brochure. That reflects what happens today. It's the same with actors and diversity.

"I think sometimes they say ticking boxes when they mean they are actually just letting actors of colour or women act and be part of the story. I think people are using this phrase 'ticking boxes' to undermine all these good things that are happening with diversity and inclusion."

Did you know Bath before filming there?

"I went to drama school in Bristol but I didn't know Bath that well. We filmed in and around Bath and Bristol but it is all set in Bath. We would have lots of people watching when we filmed outside in Bath.

"I bought myself a new raincoat the week before filming started because I know what it's like down there. It rained so much, especially when we were shooting the second film. Not that you will see that on screen - it will look like a beautiful sunny summer!"

Are you good at spotting the killer in TV detective dramas?

"It takes me ages to work out whodunit in crime





dramas. Everyone becomes a detective when you watch it. Usually I don't get it right because the writers are always trying to fool you.

"McDonald carries her tablet everywhere she goes and inputs information into it from crime scenes. It's weird how they have got us all glued to our screens. I'll watch TV and still be looking at my phone, even if I'm really interested in the show. My brain wants to do more than one thing now, somehow."

You played a guest role as barista Gemma in Cold Feet. Were you recognised out and about after that?

"In pubs people would go, 'I know you but don't know from where?' And then they would run back and say, 'We've just worked it out. You were in Cold Feet the other day!"

What was the main challenge for you in McDonald & Dodds?

"Learning the lines! There are a lot of lines. They come thick and fast. Also finding McDonald's real sense of authority. That complete command, plus the speed at which she moves and talks. My brain was trying to catch up with her brain.

"The scripts for McDonald & Dodds were superb and we had a lot of fun making it, while the combination of the two characters is really interesting. You can never tell until an audience watches something but it would be lovely to see these characters continue."





JAMES MURRAY PLAYS CHIEF SUPT. HOUSEMAN

What drew you to McDonald & Dodds?

"I thought it was different to other cop shows. They are stand alone films for a start. Also, I hadn't really played a character like Houseman before. He is this authoritarian career police officer who is so narcissistic and hell-bent on furthering his own career that he really doesn't care two hoots about anything or anyone else.

"I loosely based him on a politician. Ruthless, slippery and very determined in knowing what he wants to get. I love playing those kind of characters because you tend to be given more free rein by the directors. The heat is not on you to carry the show but you are there to portray a pompous idiot like Houseman."

What does he look like?

"Houseman is described as 'gym toned, wearing a police zip up top and channeling a dynamic 21st century LAPD vibe'. He wears one of these modern police fleeces as his main uniform.

"I'm not as young as I used to be, so I did have to go to the gym before filming this but I do keep myself in shape. I'm outside a lot. I live rurally so I chop logs and walk dogs so it wasn't too much of a stretch."

What plans does Houseman have for DS Dodds, played by Jason Watkins?

"Houseman wants him gone. He feels Dodds is dead wood and superfluous to requirements as far as the



police force goes. But he does his bidding through DCI Lauren McDonald (Tala Gouveia) because it's beneath

him, of course. He wants her to nudge Dodds towards early retirement because he doesn't fit in with what Houseman describes as 'the design concept of the new crime campus'. It's brilliant writing.

"In fact, Dodds unlocks aspects of these cases and is capable of quite a lot, but even after all of that, Houseman still sees him as an irrelevant speck of dust who should not be there. I think Houseman has decided that he, himself, has actually solved all of the cases. These guys are just doing the menial heavy lifting for him.

"He is one of those people who will throw anyone under the bus. He can turn everything to his own advantage. Seamlessly.

"We have come to a point today where he who yells loudest is heard the most. Houseman, while he doesn't yell, is certainly very opinionated and sees things in black and white terms. What he says goes, and he is the boss. You can see that's how he's made his way up to that position by being immovable and ruthless. Those kind of people do, sadly, get in positions they don't deserve to be in. We misconstrue people like that as being leaders and that is wrong."

How does Houseman view DCI Lauren McDonald?

"She is cocky as a character. Certainly as far as
Houseman is concerned. But you need someone
with that kind of energy if you are pairing them up
with another character like Dodds who is always on
the back foot and a little quiet. Hopefully McDonald
will learn from Dodds as much as he will from her.



"Houseman is an important part of her career and he makes things difficult for her. He has a big bearing - whether negative or positive - on her life.

"He also puts her on the front cover of his police recruitment brochure. There is a lot of tokenism about today. All of it is necessary but sometimes it is executed in a crass way. The communication and execution of this more progressive, more equal world especially in a corporate environment - is wanting in a lot of places. Some people still don't understand why things need to change. They just are told that they do. So therefore they execute it in a very blunt, crass and unauthentic way."

Are women fairly represented on screen in TV dramas?

"There are some fantastic roles for women in McDonald & Dodds. That's down to the writer and

producers as much as anything else. But in my experience as an actor, I think women generally have been fairly represented in my 20 years of working.

Maybe women over the age of 40 were marginalised a bit, but it's encouraging that they are now getting bigger roles. Certainly ethnic minorities were marginalised and the roles were cliched, two dimensional and token. So it's good that is changing. Absolutely."

What was it like working with Tala and Jason?

"It was great. They are fantastic. Obviously I knew of Jason's work. My wife, Sarah Parish, had worked with Jason before in W1A and Trollied so I had met him and knew him a little bit. He was one of the main reasons I did it. He is such an actor's actor. I thought, 'Well, if he's doing this we're in good hands.' Tala is a lovely actress too. I have nothing but admiration for her. Going to work was a breeze."



"He is one of those
people who will throw
anyone under the bus.
He can turn everything
to his own advantage.
Seamlessly."



McDonald & Dodds is set in Bath. Did you know the city before this?

"I knew Bristol a little bit but not Bath, so that was a happy location to film at. Although most of my scenes were filmed in Houseman's office which is in a studio in Bristol so I didn't really get to see the beautiful Bath vistas that everyone else got to see quite as much. But that was fine because it kept me miserable like my character."

DCI McDonald uses a tablet at crime scenes. Do you think we are becoming too fixated with our computer and mobile phones?

"I think we're addicted to our screens more than ever. It's an epidemic. I am just as guilty as the next man and spend far too much time on my mobile phone. The more opportunities these phones give you to swallow up your day, the more you are hooked in. It's awful.

"Like a lot of people I try and control that. I charge my phone in a different room to the bedroom. I paint a lot so when I'm painting, if I can help it, I don't have the phone in my studio because there's a really unhealthy relationship there. You look at your mobile phone and go, 'I hate you because you steal my time. But you're my guilty pleasure.'

"Being a father, you are hyper-aware of these things. We are really conscious of that if we spend a lot of time on our mobile phones in front of our daughter. She is 10 and doesn't have a phone and doesn't want one at the moment. She is reprimanding us, saying, 'Get off the phone.' You think, 'Wow, you've got a 10-year-old child telling you that you are doing something that normally teenagers do.' Then you know there is an ingrained cultural issue at play.



"I don't know what the answer is. The app developers and software gurus are all very clever about saying they know there is a problem and giving us the ability to monitor our screen time with apps to try and keep you off the phone, but you've got to look at an app in the first place to do that. Something has to shift. It has to be a much more holistic approach. We have to educate kids and ourselves about what other things we can be doing rather than being on our mobile phone.

But it's like trying to turn a tanker around. It's not easy."

Are you good at spotting the killer in a TV detective drama?

"I think actors are pretty good at seeing how it all works. I've done my Miss Marple, my Poirot and so on. Sarah and I watch Murder She Wrote precisely for that reason. Because it's always fun to go, 'Well, it's either one of two people.' Especially in those older ones which have real kitsch value.

"But it's less about whodunit now in a lot of cop shows and more about, 'Let's try and get in as much darkness as possible.' I'm not often in the mood for that, wheras McDonald & Dodds has strong stories but also real laugh out loud moments.

"That's what makes the series so interesting.

Ostensibly, it's a whodunit where everyone can join in with the guessing game, but there are funnier moments of levity, plus more sophisticated moments than just the whodunit. It has a lot of idiosyncrasies in it by virtue of performance and writing that, hopefully, will transcend it being just another whodunit.

"McDonald & Dodds has the potential to run and run if the public embrace it, which I hope they do. These are all stand alone films and it would be great to make more."



Off screen, you and wife Sarah Parish are involved in The Murray Parish Trust. What is your latest challenge?

"We're aiming to raise £5.5 million for an iMRI Suite - an intra-operative MRI suite - at Southampton Children's Hospital. There are lots of details about that on our website at themurrayparishtrust.com

"We're not stopping. It has snowballed. It started off as a kitchen table charity but the public have been fantastic and really supported it. We are dedicated to the advancement of pediatric emergency medicine across the South of England. The charity ensures that children affected by major trauma can receive the best emergency care as close to home as possible.

"We raised £5 million for a CETD - a Children's Emergency Trauma Department. And we had so much momentum and success that everybody said we just had to keep going. So we are."





ROBERT LINDSAY PLAYS MAX CROCKETT

What attracted you to McDonald & Dodds?

"I've always been a fan of Columbo. I loved that series when I was growing up. Peter Falk was one of the best detectives on TV and DS Dodds, played by Jason Watkins, has a similar beady eye. He comes across as naïve but there are a few close up shots of his beady eye as he is interrogating various suspects. People love murder mysteries and the writer Robert Murphy has done a great job.

"Ironically, I was working in Bath just before I was offered McDonald & Dodds. I was doing a play with Tara Fitzgerald called In Praise of Love, so I had been staying in Bath for three months. I have always been very attached to the place but like all of these wonderful cities with a rather beautiful glossy

exterior, you always feel there is an undercurrent of something strange about the place."

Who is Max Crockett?

"Max Crockett is a major figure in Bath. He's an extremely wealthy entrepreneur and a very powerful guy with an extraordinary hold over his family and plans to hand on his legacy when he retires. Crockett has a massive ego, but that's the case with a lot of these extremely powerful businessmen. He is incredibly superficial.

"That's the beauty of playing a character like that. He is constantly wanting to be liked, adored and revered. It's great stuff to play. He doesn't have feelings. He is a cold man. That is why it was a real departure for me.



A lot of people I play tend to have a heart. He is probably the coldest character I have ever played."

How does Max Crockett view DS Dodds (Jason Watkins) and DCI Lauren McDonald (Tala Gouveia)?

"Max Crockett's status is higher than Dodds and that immediately gives Crockett power over him. But Dodds wrong-foots everyone all of the time. It's such a great character for Jason to play. He had a blast playing that role and it was great to play opposite him. Also, a bit spooky. You could see the subtext going through his eyes when you were doing close up scenes which is quite disarming. Dodds is a lot wiser than the rest of them."

"Max's relationship with McDonald is very interesting. It reveals how racist and class-ridden Crockett is. He constantly has a go at her and knows how to wrongfoot people by upsetting them. If you make someone

angry then they've lost the argument. He has a hold over her. But with Dodds he doesn't.

"Tala and Jason together is a magical combination.

I've got a feeling the public will take to these two characters. They are a really odd couple. You wouldn't normally put them together in a drama like this, but it works very well. They also get on very well together."

Are actors good at spotting whodunit in crime dramas?

"I think actors are good at seeing how murder mysteries work. We spend our life watching body language, nervous tics and so on.

"I'm always fascinated by how people behave in front of the camera when they are being interviewed. I couldn't take my eyes off it at the recent general election and I just knew what was going on in their





heads. Politicians disguise their emotions and feelings. That also applies to Max Crockett."

McDonald & Dodds has some great roles, not least for women. Has that changed in the industry?

"A woman's voice is also being heard now in the theatre. It's something I totally agree with, especially as I have a daughter who is an actress. She gets really upset when a man plays a role that should have been written for a woman and she has a point. And, of course, people of various ethnic backgrounds are getting a voice now which is great. There is a whole shift in film, TV and theatre.

"You also have to give the younger generation their chance. Especially in this day and age when kids' lives are being changed by older people and the kids are getting very disgruntled. It's happening the world over.

You've only got to look at the issue of climate change and the fact the powerful men with money are just carrying on regardless. Max Crockett is one of them."

What advice do you give to young actors just starting out?

"When I do masterclasses at drama school I always tell them, 'It's not a ladder that you go up and get to the top. It's a rollercoaster. Or snakes and ladders.'

Some jobs give you a pinnacle of success and then in the next job, the critics can take you apart. You lose your confidence.

"I'm celebrating 50 years in the profession. It's 50 years since I left RADA in 1970. And it is a rollercoaster ride. Because of all of the celebrity things that go on TV, there are an awful lot of young actors now who feel they are going to make themselves famous, make themselves rich, make themselves film stars. I'm



afraid the business isn't quite like that.

"I always say to actors when I go to drama schools, 'Don't let your mind just concentrate on trying to get another job. You've got to keep yourself creative. Keep the creative juices going.' But it is a very tough business. No question about it. And we're looking at a bunch of actors in McDonald & Dodds, all of whom are doing very well. However, equally they can easily be unemployed for a few years. People don't realise that. Both Jason Watkins and I have won BAFTAs. We've done very well as very successful actors, but I think both Jason and I would be the first to admit, there but for the grace of God."

You must be very proud of 50 years in the business - that is quite a career achievement?

"It is when I'm still working. I come from a small mining town in the East Midlands where unemployment is incredibly high and has been for many years. I remember my careers master at my secondary modern school asking me what I wanted to be and I said, 'An actor.' He was completely baffled and said, 'You will always be out of bloody work.' Strangely enough, I haven't stopped.

"It has given me an amazing family, all of whom are creative and fascinated by the arts. They are all involved in the arts in some way or another. It has given me my education. I didn't really have an education. I didn't go to university. I went to drama school from a secondary modern school. I wasn't very well read. We didn't have books in the house when I was growing up. I think if I ever did Mastermind now I'd probably be able to do Shakespeare. Which is something I love.

"My real passion is theatre. I love the theatre and I miss it. If I'm being totally honest, as much as I've



enjoyed doing a lot of the TV I've done, it has kept me ticking over to do the theatre I want to do. I think a lot of actors feel that way."

Do actors ever retire?

"No, actors never retire. I recently completed a theatre tour of Prism which finished in Malvern. I was doing a Q&A with some businessmen who were sponsors of the Malvern Theatre and they were saying how they were all looking forward to retirement. I thought, 'Oh my God, I don't think I can do that.' I don't think I could. I don't think I'd want to.

"The great thing about the acting profession is you can play older characters. You can play your age. Fortunately older writers are writing older roles. It's really difficult sometimes - when you are sent scripts you immediately look for the character you think you should be playing, then you realise it's 20 years too young for you to play. In my head I'm still 45, but it's how you look on film and television."

What's next?

"Prism is being developed as a movie, which is really exciting, and I'm producing it. It was all about the cinematographer Jack Cardiff and it has been a massive hit on tour. Now there is a lot of interest in turning it into a movie which we are working on. We have commissioned a writer to write a film script.

"I'm also president of The Royal Theatrical Fund, which I'm very proud of. We support a lot of people in the business. And it's tough. Particularly when you've reached an age and you've been very well known. Then not to have the light shining on you any more when the spotlight is turned off. It's a tough old game. But we were all warned at the outset."





EPISODE SYNOPSES

EPISODE 1 – THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF CROCKETT

When a homeless man is shot in the deserted mansion of one of Bath's most prominent industrialists, the inventor Max Crockett, newly arrived Londoner DCI McDonald and long-serving DS Dodds rally together to try and discover the killer.

In the Crockett family, they find an outwardly perfect, close-knit group with three successful daughters in loving relationships, devoid of any obvious motive to murder, but it soon becomes apparent that each have their own secrets to hide. Faced with evasive suspects and a seemingly inexplicable crime, they quickly learn that not all is as it seems in the House of Crockett.

EPISODE 2 – THE WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

Adjusting to life in Bath, DCI McDonald and partner, DS Dodds, are called to the Mara Retreat, a private rehabilitation clinic, to investigate the mysterious death of a wealthy patient.

However, they are immediately thrown into a world of smoke and mirrors as they navigate the complex and sensitive issues of her remaining tight-knit therapy group, forcing McDonald to use clandestine methods to get closer to the truth. As they dig deeper, they discover a plethora of lies, murder, betrayal and a hidden ruse to secure fortune and freedom, but at what price?





CHARACTER CREDITS

EPISODE 1 EPISODE 2

DS Dodds **JASON WATKINS** DCI McDonald TALA GOUVEIA CS Houseman JAMES MURRAY DC Laura Simpson **PEARL CHANDA** DC Darren Craig JACK RIDDIFORD Max Crockett **ROBERT LINDSAY** Mathilde Crockett **NATALIE MENDOZA** Megan Wattal **ROSALIE CRAIG** Pete Wattal **NAVIN CHOWDHRY** Tamara Valentine SUSANNAH FIELDING **Jack Valentine JACK ASHTON Elenora Crockett ELLIE KENDRICK**

CASSIE BRADLEY

ROGER EVANS

SEBASTIAN KNAPP

DS Dodds **JASON WATKINS** DCI McDonald **TALA GOUVEIA** CS Houseman **JAMES MURRAY** DC Laura Simpson **PEARL CHANDA** DC Darren Craiq JACK RIDDIFORD **Kelly Mulcreevy JOANNA SCANLAN** George Holden **HUGH DENNIS** Jane Crawford **SUZANNE PACKER** Miles Stevens FREDDIE FOX **Mary Costair** MICHELE DOTRICE Maheeda Abaasi **KIRAN SONIA SAWAR DS Irene Ross** CHARLOTTE RITCHIE



Kasha Perry

Seth Murdoch

Mikey Wallace



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Writer / Executive Producer ROBERT MURPHY

Executive Producer DAMIEN TIMMER

Executive Producer PREETHI MAVAHALLI

Creative Director REBECCA KEANE

Producer AMY THURGOOD

Co-Producer SARAH LEWIS

Director (Episode 1) RICHARD SENIOR

Director (Episode 2) LAURA SCRIVANO

Director of Photography (Episode 1) GUILIO BICCARI

Director of Photography (Episode 2) TIM PALMER

Production Designer ANTHONY AINSWORTH

Art Director JANE BROOMFIELD

Costume Designer HAYLEY NEBAUER

Make-up & Hair Designer CAROL COOPER

Location Manager DAVID JOHNSON

Casting Director SUSIE PARRISS

Script Editor IMOGEN WENNER

Sound Recordist CHRIS DURFY

Editor (Episode 1) MEREDITH LEECE

Editor (Episode 2) ANDY MORRISON





If you use any material from this press pack, please include a full credit for the show.

