

No Return



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No Return

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SHERIDAN SMITH OBE STARS IN COMPELLING EVENT DRAMA, *NO RETURN*, WRITTEN BY RTS AWARD WINNING SCREENWRITER DANNY BROCKLEHURST

BAFTA award winning actress Sheridan Smith OBE leads ITV's gripping and complex four part event drama, *No Return*, written by RTS award winning screenwriter, Danny Brocklehurst (*Brassic*, *Harlan Coben's The Stranger*, *Come Home*) and produced by Red Production Company (*It's A Sin*, *Stay Close*).

Sheridan, star of television dramas, *Cilla*, *Mrs Biggs*, *The C Word*, *The Moorside* and *Four Lives* is joined by Louis Ashbourne Serkis best known for his role in the 2019 fantasy adventure film *The Kid Who Would Be King* and the 2021 winner of the Outstanding Performance category at the 6th National Film Awards UK. Together they play mother and son, Kathy and 16 year old Noah.

Also joining the cast is Olivier award winning actor Michael Jibson (*Quiz*, *Isolation Stories*) who won Best Supporting Actor in a Musical for his performance as King George III in Lin Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*. Michael plays Martin, Kathy's husband and father to Noah.

With themes of parental love, guilt, grievances, and the issues around consent for teenagers, *No Return* is produced by Manchester based executive producer, Nicola Shindler (*It's A Sin*, *Ridley Road*), Richard Fee (*The Stranger*, *Safe*), series creator and writer Danny Brocklehurst and Executive Producer for RED Production Company Sarah Doole.

Directed by John Alexander (*Grace*, *Belgravia*) and produced by Farah Abushwesha (*The Singapore Grip*, *The ABC Murders*), the contemporary and emotional story depicts an unassuming family who are caught up in a living nightmare whilst on holiday in Turkey.

Looking forward to an idyllic all-inclusive luxury break in Turkey to enjoy the sun and sea with extended family members, Kathy (Sheridan Smith) and Martin (Michael Jibson), their son Noah (Louis Ashbourne Serkis) and younger daughter Jessica (Lily Sutcliffe) are blissfully unaware of the horrific ordeal about to unfold.

Their holiday is a chance to unwind and for Kathy and Martin to spend some much-needed time together. Until unsuspecting Noah accepts a seemingly innocent invitation to a beach party from a fellow holidaymaker, Rosie (Jodie Campbell), who is staying at the same hotel.

Suddenly Kathy and Martin's world spectacularly falls apart when they are left desperately fighting for their son's freedom against extremely challenging circumstances.

An arrest, an expensive and alien legal system, looming media coverage and resistance from fellow holidaymakers to come to their aid leaves the distraught parents fighting for Noah's freedom when ironically he should be at school sitting his latest exams.

Completing the cast are Siân Brooke (*Stephen*, *Good Omens*, *Sherlock*) who plays Kathy's sister Megan, David Mumeni (*Sliced*, *Dead Pixels*) who plays Megan's husband Steve, Philip Arditti (*House of Saddam*, *Black Earth Rising*) as Noah's legal representative Rico Karvalci, Murat Seven (*SOKO Stuttgart*) as hotel worker Ismail, and Rufus Hound (*Trollied*) who plays Private Investigator Al Milner.

No Return has been commissioned for ITV by Head of Drama Polly Hill and will be internationally distributed by STUDIOCANAL.

Following the first TX on ITV, all four episodes will be available immediately on ITV Hub and BritBox. Episodes on the main channel will continue to broadcast weekly.



Character biographies

Kathy Powell played by Sheridan Smith

Kathy is passionate, headstrong and fiercely protective when it comes to her family. She loves her two kids, and Kathy's still in love with her husband Martin, but sometimes she can't help feeling like she's got three children to take care of. All Kathy wants is for Martin to be more assertive and take the lead every once in a while. Kathy is excellent at making ends meet, but she's become increasingly resentful of her affluent sister's 'easy life', and even worse at trying to hide it. She's the first to admit that she can be unreasonable and often charges in without thinking, but Kathy will stop at nothing to protect her children, no matter the cost.

Martin Powell played by Michael Jibson

Martin's just an ordinary dad trying to do right by his family. He works as a driver at a delivery company and always puts Kathy and the kids first, yet he can't help feeling that it isn't enough for Kathy. Martin's one of the kids, the fun parent, while Kathy wears the trousers. He's laid back and has all the dad jokes guaranteed to leave his teenage kids rolling their eyes with embarrassment. But as Martin watches his only son head off to a beach party, little does he know it's the last moment they'll share before all their lives are turned completely upside down. To protect his family, Martin must take control of the situation and prove his worth to Kathy, but first he'll need to prove it to himself.

Noah Powell played by Louis Ashbourne Serkis

Noah is clever, sensitive and, like most teenagers, extremely self-conscious. He might be 16 years old, but Noah is very much a child, still trying to figure out who he is in an adult world. Recently Noah's been having a hard time at school and his bad temper has become even harder to control. He has a great relationship with his family, but there are parts of his life which he has no interest in discussing with his mum and dad. Noah should be getting ready for his exams and spending the summer having fun before college, but instead he faces up to fifteen years in a prison thousands of miles from home. One night changes Noah's life forever and he'll need to grow up fast in order to survive.

Character biographies

Megan McGee played by Siân Brooke

On the surface Megan has everything that her older sister Kathy doesn't... the big house, impressive bank account and all the designer gear. But in reality, Megan is trapped in a life that she no longer recognises as her own. She's playing a role, and the real Megan has been lost along the way. Kathy thinks she's got her sister pegged – beautiful Meg, always Dad's favourite, always lands on her feet – but Kathy is entirely unaware of just how complicated her sister's life is behind closed doors. So when an unexpected chance for happiness presents itself, the restart holiday that was supposed to save Megan's marriage will instead force her to confront the realities of her own unhappiness. But is Megan really capable of throwing it all away...

Steve McGee played by David Mumeni

Steve is married to Megan and he works all hours to afford their seemingly perfect life. But with the stress of work, Steve has found a secret way to help himself cope. Deep down, Steve is fighting an inner battle that continues to threaten his marriage. He doesn't mind going on holiday with Megan's family, he wants her to be happy, especially after everything he's already put her through. But although he feels for Kathy and Martin when their son is arrested, Steve needs to prioritise his own family. He can't stay in another country when he has a business to run. But when his marriage with Megan reaches breaking point, Steve must act fast to stop his whole world crashing down.

Jessica Powell played by Lily Sutcliffe

14-year-old Jessica is Noah's little sister, but she's mature for her age and a lot more sociable than her brother. To Jess, her school friends are everything and now she's forced to lie and pretend like everything's normal whilst her family fall apart around her. Despite feeling lost and lonely, Jess will prove just how strong she is by choosing to put her family before herself. But the more supportive she is, the more Kathy and Martin sense that their daughter desperately needs her normal life at home. Jess would do anything to help her brother, but without an end in sight how long can Jess keep her life on hold?

Character biographies

Fred McGee played by Jack Chorley

Fred is only 7 years old, but he's already been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. For Megan and Steve, looking after their son can be challenging, even overwhelming at times. But although he needs routine, medication and the teachers that know him, he's also a funny ball of energy who loves playing with his older cousins. There might be bad days when Megan and Steve wish their son was more conventionally 'normal', but they love him for who he is.

Production interview

Danny Brocklehurst

Series creator, writer and executive producer

Q: How did *No Return* originate?

“Everything should be a passion project because you’ve got a passion for what you’re doing. But inevitably in any creative work some things are a little bit closer to your heart than others. This originated from a friend of mine who had been tangentially involved in something of a similar nature where a relative of theirs had been caught up in a foreign legal system. He told me about the details of this event on a walk we were on one day. I just listened to it as a story that had happened to somebody.

“The story obviously stayed with me and percolated because quite a long time later I suddenly thought, ‘I’ve got two sons, we go on package holidays from time to time, this strikes me as a really good idea for a drama.’ That you could go on a holiday with your kids and an accusation could be levelled at your child and they could get caught up in a system you don’t understand and is incredibly difficult to get out of.

“I see those ordinary mums and dads every day when I do the school run and I often think to myself about how would something I’m writing resonate with these people who are ordinary, everyday people. I think more than a lot of my shows, *No Return* has that resonance.

“It will have that connection. Because it’s just such an ordinary situation. We all go on holiday, be it to Scotland, Spain or Turkey. And the idea of that holiday turning into a nightmare and being caught up in a system you don’t understand is very tangible in people’s minds.”

Q: What themes did you want to explore?

“*No Return* explores themes of parenthood, justice and consent, among other things. From the word go the conversation about consent was a big one. One of the things that Nicola Shindler, Polly Hill at ITV and I wanted to explore. How certainly from the time when we were in our teenage years how things have become more complicated in the modern world. Including that thorny issue of where the line is. It’s complicated and something we wanted to talk about in the drama. Albeit through this thriller that is about the court system and about family.

“But it’s not a drama about consent. It’s more about being caught up in a system and how it affects all those different members of the family. But it was certainly something we wanted to explore within what we hope is a gripping drama. I think the themes of *No Return* are ones that people will connect with.



Danny Brocklehurst continued:

“Duplicity is a big theme of my work and of drama in general. Secrets and lies are the bedrock of drama generally. I’ve written a lot about ordinary people getting caught up in extraordinary situations. I’ve also written about how during the good times everything seems OK and you feel like you know those people.

“But when you are pushed to extremes you realise you don’t know them as well as you thought and maybe there are secrets and things in their life you don’t know about. I find it a fascinating coat hanger to hang different stories on.

“Everything in *No Return* is to do with parenting and the problems, challenges and worry that come with being a parent. As I was writing this show it made me think a lot about parenthood and what it means to be a father. And the way that we eventually have to let our children go. You will always be their parent but they start to move away from you.

“While it’s brilliant being a parent, it gives you something to worry about for the rest of your life. I do remember feeling a lot more free when all I had to do was to worry about myself.

“What I wanted in this drama was for everybody’s life, as we go to Turkey, to be one way. And by the time they come back on the plane in the very last scene their lives are, to a person, changed. As the title suggests, they don’t return the same as when they first went.”

Q: What do Kathy (Sheridan Smith) and husband Martin (Michael Jibson) face when they go on holiday to Turkey with their two children?

“When you go on holiday you go into a holiday bubble. You usually go to a resort where there are a lot of things set up for tourists and you stay largely within that holiday, touristy bubble. But if you actually get taken out of that and into a foreign legal system, what you realise very quickly is you don’t understand the country you’re in.

“You don’t understand their rules, you probably don’t understand their culture or their attitude to things. You’ve just gone on holiday to enjoy the sun, the sea, the pool and the booze. But actually you’re stepping into another country.

Production interview

Danny Brocklehurst continued:

“What the family in *No Return* realise is they just don’t understand the country they are in. It’s a very different legal system to our own. The rules are different, the attitudes are different, there is a lot of background information and things to do with tourism and other things that are all different to home.

“And they have got to try and navigate that. It’s really difficult. Also you don’t speak the language. People have the fate of your son in their hands and they are all speaking to each other in a language you don’t understand. It’s a scary situation to find yourself in.”

Q: There are two families at the centre of this drama?

“Kathy (Sheridan Smith) and husband Martin (Michael Jibson) go on holiday to Turkey with their son Noah (Louis Ashbourne Serkis), who is just 16, and daughter Jess (Lily Sutcliffe), aged 14. They fly out with Kathy’s sister Megan (Siân Brooke), her husband Steve (David Mumeni) and their son Fred (Jack Chorley), aged seven.

“I used not people I know, necessarily, but templates of couples. To try and create realistic relationships. Kathy and Martin have been together for a long time.

“They probably met ridiculously young, had kids a bit too quick and over the years they have had problems and it’s left a few things festering that they have never dealt with.

“And it’s only when they are pushed into the extreme of this situation that they’re forced to face up to some of these problems. And ask whether they still love each other and do they want to be together after this? Is their marriage still important to them?”

Q: What about Megan and Steve?

“With Megan and Steve, first of all I wanted to create a sister dynamic with Kathy and Megan. There’s a sort of jealousy as they look at each others lives. Kathy thinks Megan has got it better because she’s got money and a nice house. And Megan thinks Kathy has got its better because her marriage seems tighter and she hasn’t got kids with as many problems.

Production interview

Danny Brocklehurst continued:

“Megan and Steve’s seven-year-old son Fred has ADHD. We don’t go into it in a massive way but it’s another theme that’s bubbling. We did some research into that to ensure we were representing it accurately. Again, it’s that theme of parenthood, the pressures on parents and the baggage they bring to the situation in Turkey.”

Q: What was it like working with Sheridan Smith again?

“I was totally thrilled to have Sheridan Smith playing Kathy. I’ve worked with Sheridan once before on one episode of *Accused* and genuinely wanted to work with her again. I didn’t have her in mind when I was writing *No Return* but I rarely think of anyone when I’m writing.

“I had imagined Kathy maybe seven or eight years older than Sheridan. But when I thought about it I suddenly thought, ‘Is she really too young?’ While the real Sheridan has a one-year-old, lots of people have kids quite young and Kathy and Martin’s son Noah is only just 16. The more we thought about it, the more we thought it was a great idea. So we sent the script to her and she loved it. It came about very quickly. So I was very happy.”

Q: You were involved with the casting?

“The good thing about casting Sheridan is you have your leading lady and that means you can concentrate on getting the best people for the other roles. The rest of the roles were cast by asking the question, ‘Who can we get who is the best person for the role?’

“Michael Jibson was a revelation as Martin. That was a very difficult part to cast because Martin is quite weak and actors don’t like to play weak. But Michael gave it a real truth.

“Noah is a hell of a role for Louis Ashbourne Serkis because the whole show hangs on his performance to some degree. We were very nervous about casting that role. Obviously, Louis has very well known acting parents. But that doesn’t necessarily mean he will be a brilliant actor himself.

“So he auditioned, just as a bunch of other kids also auditioned. But it’s safe to say, we were unanimous in wanting him to play Noah. We all watched the auditions separately and we all came back and said, ‘Louis. He’s the best.’ And he is brilliant on screen.”

Production interview

Danny Brocklehurst continued:

Q: Where was *No Return* filmed?

“It would have been too complicated to shoot in Turkey, including the problems of the pandemic. The area of Spain we have chosen looks like Turkey anyway. All you need to do is change the signage. Including an exterior prison location near Malaga. With hotel and prison sets built in Manchester. It looks amazing.”

Q: What was it like working with Nicola Shindler again?

“Nicola is my longest running working relationship of 21 years. We know each other so well. I trust her completely. We have a shorthand and have similar sensibilities. She is very, very good on script and keeping things rooted and truthful. I don’t work exclusively with Nicola but I do come back time and time again.”

Cast interview

Sheridan Smith | Kathy Powell



Q: How did you feel when you were approached about *No Return*?

"I was thrilled because I love Nicola Shindler and Red Production but had never done anything with them. They got in touch and said they had this script and they wanted me on board. I'm also a big fan of the writer Danny Brocklehurst. It was one of those scripts you read and can't put down. I immediately said, 'Yes, 100 per cent I want to be on board.'

"So I joined up quite early before they got the director John Alexander - who I worked with on 'The 7.39' - and started auditioning for other cast members. I was just delighted they asked me, that they wanted me. It's a brilliant script. Danny is such a good writer and Nicola is the best producer. She is just a powerhouse, a northern firecracker. I'm such a big fan. It was a match made in heaven for me.

"I hope people will relate to this family who go on holiday to Turkey. I love watching things that transport the audience to a different place. But this ends up as the holiday from hell. I think many parents will say, 'Thank God I'm not in their shoes.'"

Cast interview

Sheridan Smith continued:

Q: Who is Kathy?

“Kathy and her husband Martin (Michael Jibson) have been together for years and years. Kathy’s sister Megan (Siân Brooke) has done much better than her in terms of being well off. Kathy sees Megan as the sister who has landed on her feet with the younger man who has his own business and they have a nice house.

“Megan and Steve plus their seven-year-old son Fred appear to be the idyllic little family. It looks to Kathy that they have the big house, the money and a lovely life. But actually Megan has her own problems going on. Siân Brooke and I worked together on *The Moorside* so it was great to do some lovely sister scenes with her. There’s a real journey in the story of the two sisters. That was really nice to play.

“So there’s a little bit of envy on Kathy’s part because hers is very much a working class family. They’ve got two kids - Noah, 16, and Jessica, 14. It’s amazing for me to play a mum of two teenage children when my own son Billy isn’t even two yet. It was nice to have grown up kids in the scenes with me.

“Kathy and Martin have done what they can to drag ‘em up right, as my dad would have said. They have clearly been together forever and are just a proper, normal family. I think most people watching will be able to relate to that. They fly off on a typical family package holiday that they go on every year. But then it goes wrong.”

Q: How does Kathy view her husband Martin?

“It’s never spelled out but something has happened in the past where Kathy feels Martin didn’t stand up for her. That’s a constant thing with both of them. Kathy says she wears the trousers because someone’s got to. She has a lot of digs like that at him. She is quite gung-ho. Kathy is a real lioness when it comes to her kids. Whereas Martin always seems a bit weak. Played brilliantly by Michael Jibson. There’s just that constant domestic little bickering. And then, of course, their relationship is put to the test massively because of what happens. The past comes out through that.

“There’s something that Danny has written, a speech for Kathy, and I think every woman will go, ‘Yes!’ Because they will have said it to their man at some point. It’s so real and I’m sure I’ve said it before in a past relationship. And I know most women watching will recognise it.

Cast interview

Sheridan Smith continued:

“I asked Danny, ‘Do you have sisters? How do you know how to write like this for women?’ He does write really well for women, which is quite rare. And it’s not clichéd.”

Q: What happens to the family?

“What happens to this family is so unexpected. They go off on holiday to Turkey which they have been really looking forward to and it turns into a disaster when their son Noah is arrested. I’m sure people will think about what they would do if that was their child.

“Suddenly they are plunged into a completely different legal system. It’s just a nightmare. When I read the script and then when I was playing the role I was thinking, ‘My God, if this was my son Billy, I can’t imagine how I would feel.’ There was a lot of angst during filming. Lots of crying, lots of screaming, lots of constant tension. The scenes where we arrive and are actually enjoying the holiday were so rare.

“When we filmed the scene of police arresting Kathy and Martin’s son at their holiday hotel it was actually really horrible. We were in this little room and they had all of these supporting artists with guns playing the police officers. They barge in, push Kathy out of the way and get her son. It’s like, ‘What’s going on?’ Kathy doesn’t speak the language so doesn’t understand them.

“It was genuinely terrifying doing the scene. Let alone what it would be like in real life. It’s your worst nightmare as a parent.

“It’s then another world for them. They end up with a Turkish lawyer called Rico, played by Philip Arditti, who is a brilliant character who drives a flash car. The family are just lost, basically, and he makes suggestions about how to deal with the police. It’s such an ordeal for them all. Every time they go to court it feels like a dead end. It just feels desperate. While their son is stuck in prison.

“Towards the end I was mentally exhausted. Kathy and Martin have tried everything to save their son and get him out of prison but you really don’t know what’s going to happen. A lot of the scenes were quite harrowing to play. Especially because Louis Ashbourne Serkis, who plays Noah, is just gorgeous. I adored him.

Cast interview

Sheridan Smith continued:

“You start to really live it, especially being away from home. It becomes very real. Imagining being stuck somewhere and you can’t get your child out of prison. That they are going to make an example of him. You could feel the frustration. I would be watching it thinking, ‘Don’t let that ever happen to my family.’

“I went out for dinner with the director John Alexander on the last night and he said, ‘You haven’t seen the prison scenes yet.’ They are mostly the only scenes I’m not in, when Kathy’s son is in the prison. So I hadn’t seen them filmed. I’m sure that will be more heartbreaking when I see them.”

Q: How do Kathy and Martin react?

“They both try to help their son in different ways but don’t communicate. They are both trying in their own way to fix it and do something. Through very different routes. And that causes more arguments. All of the problems in their relationship come out. They also have a daughter, Jessica, who is 14 and stuck in the middle of it all, missing her friends back home. It’s a living nightmare for this family.

“It was harrowing to film. I’ve done lots of different roles but this is just like a hell ride. You don’t really come up for air until the end. With so much that happens along the way. I hope viewers will be gripped to see what happens next.”

Q: Did becoming a mother yourself make a difference in this role?

“Absolutely. It’s so surreal. I’ve played a lot of mums but this is the first time I’ve played a mum as an actual mother myself. It’s so different. You can act being a mum but there’s something very different when you are a parent yourself with a child of your own. All I kept thinking of was Billy. Every time that would just set me off. I didn’t have to act too much in the crying scenes because you just imagine this mother going through this hell and thinking if it was my little boy. So I could totally relate to this.

“It felt like the right role to play after having a child and being a mum and really understanding the lioness of a mother that I would be and every mum would be, I’m sure, and every parent would be to try and save their child.

Cast interview

Sheridan Smith continued:

“Becoming a mum was a great thing for me. I’m not selfish anymore. I don’t go home constantly thinking, ‘Was that scene all right?’ I just want to go home and see my son. It’s also those feelings you have as a parent. Those primal, protective feelings. It’s a love like no other. People had told me that and said, ‘You won’t know until you have your own.’ They were so right. It’s like a switch being flicked. Everything changes for the better. But you can never go back. You’ll never be carefree. You just worry about this little one so much.”

Q: Will your son Billy now come on every job with you?

“I hope so. Red Production were so lovely. They let him fly out to Spain with me. I think nowadays you can go away and take them with you. I was in Budapest for six weeks on another job and I didn’t see him because we were just coming out of the pandemic. I missed him so much. So I hope if I do jobs in the future I can always have him with me. Even if it’s just for a little bit of it.

“I had a nanny - Yvonne Forrest - out in Spain to help me. Nannies are amazing. I wouldn’t be able to be working if it wasn’t for her. So I gave her a shout out on Instagram. I thought, ‘Why not?’ I think people sometimes are embarrassed to say if they’ve got a nanny.

“But if I’m working full time there’s no way I could have him on set with me with him running around like he does at home. She was brilliant. I was very grateful to her because I wouldn’t be able to do the job otherwise.

“Eventually one day he’ll realise that mummy is doing it for him and he’ll understand. But at the moment he’s just so young and a bit clingy. I just miss him so much when I’m away. But it’s worth it because it is for him.”

Q: What was it like working with your screen son Noah, played by Louis Ashbourne Serkis?

“It’s a great role for a young actor. Louis was brilliant. His mum and dad are super talents and Louis is another natural talent. He’s also a lovely kid. He’s grown up on set so he knows how to handle himself and is so professional. Also so unaffected by it all. Just the loveliest guy and a credit to his mum and dad.”

Cast interview

Sheridan Smith continued:

Q: How do you reflect back on working on *No Return*?

“All of the characters who go on holiday to Turkey are changed in some way by the end. They all go through something and come back changed people. They are not going back to how it was before. Each person has gone on their own massive journey throughout those four episodes. Which is reflected in the title.

“It was totally surreal to step on a plane for work. Just to get away was nice. They have very strict protocols and we were regularly tested. I was in most of the scenes so I didn’t really get time off in Spain. But it was amazing to be abroad.

“It’s better when you get to lie on the sun lounger in the heat rather than filming. But it was still gorgeous to be in the sunshine. The sun was blazing hot. They would come over with a brolly to try and keep us the same shade. But on the last day of filming I was like, ‘Please, just let me enjoy these last rays! It’s going to be raining when I get home.’ A final bit of sunshine for me. And I got back to torrential rain. So it was a joy to be away and the fact that my little man got to come out as well was the icing on the cake.”

Cast interview

Michael Jibson | Martin Powell



Q: Why did you want to be involved in *No Return*?

“To play such a pivotal role in a major ITV drama and to get to work with the writer Danny Brocklehurst was very exciting. When you read a script, sometimes they are OK, sometimes they are quite good and sometimes they are just brilliant page turners. You want to know what happens next. That’s how I feel about Danny’s scripts. *No Return* is a gripping page turner. I’ll be fascinated to see what the response of the audience will be. I was thrilled to be asked to be a part of that world.”

Q: Who are Martin and Kathy?

“Martin and Kathy (Sheridan Smith) met and married very young and have been together for as long as they can remember. They are a normal working class family with two children - Noah, aged 16, (Louis Ashbourne Serkis) and Jessica, 14 (Lily Sutcliffe). They don’t have particularly well paid jobs. This trip to Turkey is their big holiday of the year which they look forward to.

“They take every day as it comes with no real problems in their lives. As the story unfolds you discover something has happened in the past which they have got through.

Cast interview

Michael Jibson continued:

“Like most families do. They get through stuff. So what happens in Turkey is the biggest challenge they, as a couple, will probably ever face. Everything about them is exposed to the world and to each other. They have to communicate with each other and they have to work through it.

“The drama that unfolds aside with the Turkish authorities, ultimately people are going to relate to this because it’s about a working class family who are on holiday. When we all go on holiday, we are nervous because we are going to a different country and culture. We over plan and over prepare. We take too many clothes and too many packets of tea just in case.

“And one of the worst possible things that could happen does happen to this family. Their son is arrested by the police for an alleged sexual assault. Ultimately, *No Return* is about a family that aren’t communicating. The idea that they go on holiday and by the end everybody is different.”

Q: Kathy accuses Martin of being weak. Is that justified?

“I think that’s fair. It’s not just Kathy feeling that about Martin. I think he has probably played that role all of his life. With his wife, his family, he’s always the jokey dad taking the mickey out of his kids. He just wants to get on the beach and have a holiday. He doesn’t really want to take responsibility for anything. It’s easier for him to just be that guy.

“What I found so interesting about playing Martin is he had to do some work on himself quite quickly. To try and become the man that maybe his wife wanted him to be. But ultimately who he didn’t have the confidence to be. That, again, is what is brilliant about Danny’s writing. It’s all there for you to play without it being plastered in the script.”

Q: Who else is on holiday with them?

“They are on holiday in Turkey with Kathy’s sister Megan (Siân Brooke) and her husband Steve (David Mumeni). Kathy and Martin resent them because they’ve got money. They have a working class chip on their shoulder. Kathy and Martin can still have a good time together. They wear their hearts on their sleeves. Whereas it seems the relationship between Megan and Steve is all but over but they are pretending everything is fine. Ultimately, they are all not communicating. And it all comes to a head when they are faced with a drama.

Cast interview

Michael Jibson continued:

“They are all in a holiday bubble not expecting anything to go wrong. It’s that thing of holiday insurance and health insurance. We all tick a box and pay a bit extra on these kinds of insurances. Assuming that nothing bad is ever going to happen.

“We filmed all the exterior Turkey scenes in Spain. It was art imitating life in a weird kind of way. Because we were all staying in a holiday resort having over packed. Some people brought loads of pairs of shoes with them that they never wore. One member of the cast brought four jumpers just in case it got cold. And it was glorious weather when we were there.

“We’re all just trying to be in control of our lives and the juxtaposition with going on holiday is we are trying to let go of that control for a week or two and just enjoy friends, family and a change of location. But in the build up to that it’s quite hard to let that control go. I feel like we all overdo it.

“I remember once going on holiday with my mum and she was obsessed with how heavy her suitcase was going to be. She had all of the gear to weigh it. And I’m saying, ‘Mum, at the end of the day, when we get to check in, they are just going to charge you an extra £30.’

“But it’s all the stress and the nervousness of flying, being crammed into an aeroplane. Especially in this day and age with Covid around. Being in this weird environment 30,000 feet up and landing in a completely different culture is quite a daunting thing for people. You just want it to go as well as possible.”

Q: How do they react to their son’s arrest?

“Everyone, including Kathy and Martin, are in shock. There is no warning that this is about to happen. It comes right out of the blue. They are plunged into an alien legal system and a completely different culture. It’s a scary world if you’re not educated in what is going on.

“Go on holiday to one of these relatively close Mediterranean destinations and it’s a different universe. Especially if you go to Turkey where some things are very different. When their son is arrested, Kathy and Martin find themselves in the middle of this system they have no control over. They are on their own, basically. That’s what’s scary about it. They don’t even speak the language.

Cast interview

Michael Jibson continued:

“They carry on as they normally do, not communicating with each other and not being transparent with each other about what’s going on. They are both just trying to do their best for their son but not asking for help. Again, Danny’s brilliant observation of the human condition is that we’re so worried about what other people think and trying to take control. He is so clever the way he observes that.

“Kathy and Martin are not communicating with each other and then making the situation potentially even worse. Martin decides to take one path but can’t tell his wife because he knows she’ll tell him off. And she does the same. It becomes this knot they have to unpick.

“Everything changes when you become a parent. Then when they are 16 you are dealing with a young adult who is desperately trying to work out who they are, what they want to be, how they view the world. Somebody once said to me. ‘The best a parent can be is just to be well balanced and make sure your child feels they are safe.’ That’s the best chance you can give them.

“But if, unbeknowing to you, your child doesn’t have the confidence to be able to talk to you then something is not right. In this case, Martin and Kathy’s 16-year-old son Noah hasn’t talked to them, for whatever reason, about what is going on and feels he cannot talk to his parents about what is going on personally with him.”

Q: What was it like working with Sheridan Smith?

“I’ve known Sheridan for years. We were both involved in the National Youth Music Theatre when we were kids. We met on that and did a few shows together. It’s fair to say that Sheridan is one of the best actresses we’ve got. She is so instinctively brilliant in her choices as an actress in the moment. When you are working opposite her she’s just incredibly brilliant to work with.

“And we’re both just cut from the same cloth. That’s what worked for this. When we were on set acting together, we were both pinging off each other. That’s what was so interesting about working with Sheridan.”

Cast interview

Michael Jibson continued:

Q: And working with young Louis Ashbourne Serkis?

“Louis’s parents are obviously very well established actors, directors...he’s grown up on TV and film sets so he’s very cool about it. But he’s also a very talented, instinctive actor. He was great to work with and it was fascinating to watch him work. He’s only 17. I can’t wait to see what he’s going to be like when he’s 27.”

Q: Can you tell us more about where you filmed?

“We filmed in Spain, doubling for Turkey, for almost four weeks. We flew into Malaga and moved around quite a bit, including to Almeria. A very beautiful Spanish port. Not very touristy at all but a beautiful beach. That’s where we filmed the exteriors for our prison. Filmed at a real working prison.

“Then we moved to a beautiful Spanish resort called Nerja. My family got to come out and join me for a few nights, which was lovely. And then we moved back to just outside Malaga, in and around Benalmadena, where we filmed scenes of swimming pools and holiday areas. It was all very strange that we were working with people around us actually having real holidays.

“It was quite reassuring. Everything was open in Spain but they were very strict in terms of Covid. Everybody was still wearing masks. You felt pretty secure out there. Everybody was round the pool and then when they got up to go to the bar they put a mask on, in their swimwear. It became quite normal.

“I thought Malaga was going to be this Benidorm type place with high rises. But it’s actually a very beautiful historic Spanish city on the coast with one of the most incredible cathedrals I’ve ever seen surrounded by some beautiful Spanish architecture. With great restaurants and shopping. A great place to be.

“We filmed all of the interior scenes predominantly in Bolton and in the centre of Manchester. Including a lot of the interior of the hotel, filmed at what was BHS in Bolton. We also filmed at Liverpool Airport and other locations.”

Cast interview

Michael Jibson continued:

Q: How do you look back on working on *No Return*?

“I feel like I’m part of a really exciting piece of ITV drama. We hope people will go on this journey with this family. But also look at their own families and think, ‘Am I doing everything possible to listen and communicate with my family? To be there for them.

“Do they feel they can come to me and tell me things they might not feel confident talking about? Whatever it is.’

“Those are the questions raised within the drama and, hopefully, within the audience. In terms of parents bringing up their children. Are they over-compensating or not doing enough? It’s that fine balance between being a good parent and a bad parent.”

Cast interview

Louis Ashbourne Serkis | Noah Powell



Q: What appealed to you about the role of Noah and *No Return*?

"I was blown away by the clever setting of the journey that Noah goes on with his family. It is highly complex, tension filled and explosive, heightened by the fact that they are away on holiday. What should have been an idyllic two weeks away together turns into a nightmare, which shatters all of their lives, challenges their relationships but finally allows each of them to come to terms with the lies and untruths they have lived with for so long."

Q: Can you recall your initial thoughts when you first read Danny's scripts?

"Danny writes every character with real truth, and isn't afraid to take you to places that dig deeply into the dark side of what on the surface appear to be a normal happy family. It felt very real and emotionally accurate. I loved the way that he chose to reveal Noah's personality."

Cast interview

Louis Ashbourne Serkis continued:

Q: Can you describe who Noah is as viewers first meet him and what sort of character he is?

“When you first meet Noah, you are led to believe he’s just an ordinary teenage lad. It is only as the story unfolds that you begin to realise he’s a young man who is just on the cusp of discovering himself, and that there are secrets about himself that he’s not yet ready to share.”

Q: How would you describe his relationship with parents Martin and Kathy? Is it a typical teenager - parent relationship?

“Noah loves his mum and dad, and tries to get on with them, but there are so many things that he can’t share or be open about. This is partly to do with his age, but there are other private reasons that keep them at a distance.”

Q: And Noah’s relationship with younger sister Jessica?

“Noah’s relationship with Jessica, is playful and innocent, and whenever we see them together, we see they bring out the younger version of themselves.”

Q: What happens to Noah after the family arrive in Turkey?

“The family have only been on holiday for a day or two, when they are knocked sideways by the arrival of the police at their hotel room in the early hours. Noah is dragged away for reasons they don’t yet understand, and immediately imprisoned, turning their lives upside down.”

Q: How does Noah react?

“Noah is terrified. He has no idea what is going on, he’s completely disorientated and in a state of shock. He simply cannot understand what he has done wrong.”

Q: What impact does this have on his family?

“The family are also totally shell shocked. They have no idea why this has happened, but as the days pass they slowly realise that this is not going to be resolved quickly.

“The pressure begins to reveal and open up the cracks in what we are led to believe is a normal happy family.”

Cast interview

Louis Ashbourne Serkis continued:

Q: Both Noah and his family are plunged into a foreign / alien justice system they don't understand.

"Noah and his family are hopelessly disempowered, as they try to negotiate their way through a justice system that they don't understand. They are totally disadvantaged because they can't even understand the language. Noah is imprisoned in a cell in which he is the only one that speaks English, he is isolated, alone and has no one to talk to."

Q: What was it like filming the prison and the court scenes? Were you able to get an inkling of what it must feel like for a young person in that situation?

"When filming the scenes in the court and the prison, it was nerve-racking and intense and it was made so real by the sets and the atmosphere. Once I was in the setting I was able to plug into the pressure that Noah was feeling in those situations, and imagine what it would be like to be plunged into such a painful and distressing situation."

Q: What was it like working with Sheridan and the rest of the cast?

"It was an absolute dream working with Sheridan and the entirety of the cast. Sheridan was perfect for the role of Kathy and from the offset we got on very well. She was very warm with all of the cast and crew and made everybody feel at ease on set. This was especially important for me given the highly emotional scenes we had together. I feel so incredibly lucky to have worked with such talented and lovely people."

Q: How did you fit your studies in with this?

"The majority of it was filmed during the summer holidays but there was around three weeks in September when we filmed during term time. I would try to do as much work around the filming as possible, working during and after the filming days."

Q: How do you reflect back now on being a part of *No Return*?

"I feel incredibly proud to have been part of *No Return*. It is a powerful and important topical piece of writing, and I feel honoured to have worked with such an amazing cast and crew and to have portrayed the challenging role of Noah."

Episode one



For Kathy, Martin and their two teenagers, Noah and Jess, the annual holiday is something that the Powell family look forward to all year round. They're joined by Kathy's more affluent sister, Megan, her workaholic husband, Steve, and their son, Fred. It's an opportunity for them all to switch off, relax and spend quality time together as a family, and an all-inclusive holiday in Turkey is just what the doctor ordered...

But when Martin watches Noah head off to a beach party, little does he know it's the last moment they'll share before all their lives are turned completely upside down. The next time Kathy and Martin see their son, he's being dragged away in handcuffs accused of a serious crime that he denies committing.

16-year-old Noah is supposed to be sitting exams and spending the summer having fun before college, but instead he faces years in a Turkish prison, thousands of miles from home.

Cast and Production Credits

Cast credits | Episode one (in order of appearance)

Kathy.....	SHERIDAN SMITH
Noah.....	LOUIS ASHBOURNE SERKIS
Martin.....	MICHAEL JIBSON
Jess.....	LILY SUTCLIFFE
Taxi Driver	EDWARD DOGLIANI
Megan.....	SIÂN BROOKE
Steve.....	DAVID MUMENI
Fred.....	JACK CHORLEY
Ismail.....	MURAT SEVEN
Rosie.....	JODIE CAMPBELL
Detective Demir.....	ATILLA AKINCI
Detective Özal.....	NATHAN ALTAI
Aksoy.....	KIRK NEWMANN
Tara Fisher.....	JADE JORDAN
Rico Karvalci.....	PHILIP ARDITTI
Xanthe	GRACE ALDRIDGE
Brendan.....	ALAN McKENNA
Hayley.....	FUNLOLA OLFUNWA
Milo	ADRIAN BAENA

Cast and Production Credits

Cast credits | Episode two (in order of appearance)

Kathy.....	SHERIDAN SMITH
Margarita.....	ESTHER CUSPINERA
Carlos.....	IBAN MALO
Jess.....	LILY SUTCLIFFE
Martin.....	MICHAEL JIBSON
Rico Karvalci.....	PHILIP ARDITTI
Fred.....	JACK CHORLEY
Megan.....	SIÂN BROOKE
Steve.....	DAVID MUMENI
Ismail.....	MURAT SEVEN
Noah.....	LOUIS ASHBOURNE SERKIS
Zeph.....	MAXIMILIAN HENHAPPEL
Batur.....	DOGA CELIK
Brendan.....	ALAN McKENNA
Ozgur Saylan.....	CEM YAMAN
Detective Demir.....	ATILLA AKINCI
Detective Özal.....	NATHAN ALTAI
Rosie.....	JODIE CAMPBELL
Hayley.....	FUNLOLA OLUFUNWA

Cast and Production Credits

Cast credits | Episode three (in order of appearance)

Jess.....	LILY SUTCLIFFE
Noah.....	LOUIS ASHBOURNE SERKIS
Martin.....	MICHAEL JIBSON
Kathy.....	SHERIDAN SMITH
Maria Pandolis.....	DILEK ROSE
Zeph.....	MAXIMILIAN HENHAPPEL
Batur.....	DOGA CELIK
Megan.....	SIÂN BROOKE
Reyhan Ekici.....	ROSIE HILAL
Burak Eskoy.....	COSH OMAR
Derya Soylu.....	ELIF KNIGHT
Fred.....	JACK CHORLEY
Steve.....	DAVID MUMENI
Sally Keane.....	GEM CARMELLA
Ismail.....	MURAT SEVEN
Al Milner	RUFUS HOUND

Cast and Production Credits

Cast credits | Episode four (in order of appearance)

Megan.....	SIÂN BROOKE
Kathy.....	SHERIDAN SMITH
Fred.....	JACK CHORLEY
Jess.....	LILY SUTCLIFFE
Batur.....	DOGA CELIK
Noah.....	LOUIS ASHBOURNE SERKIS
Zeph.....	MAXIMILIAN HENHAPPEL
Tara Fisher.....	JADE JORDAN
Maria Pandolis.....	DILEK ROSE
Martin.....	MICHAEL JIBSON
Steve.....	DAVID MUMENI
Turan Okur.....	HUSSEIN KUTSI
Rico Karvalci.....	PHILIP ARDITTI
Ismail.....	MURAT SEVEN
Reyhan Ekici.....	ROSIE HILAL
Derya Soylu.....	ELIF KNIGHT
Burak Eskoy.....	COSH OMAR
Rosie.....	JODIE CAMPBELL
Hayley.....	FUNLOLA OLUFUNWA
Birol.....	JEM KAI OLSEN
Barman.....	JOAQUÍN ORTEGA
Demir.....	ATILLA AKINCI
Milo	ADRIAN BAENA

Cast and Production Credits

Production credits

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.....	RICHARD FEE
.....	DANNY BROCKLEHURST
Executive Producer for RED Production Company.....	SARAH DOOLE
Writer.....	DANNY BROCKLEHURST
Executive Producer & Director.....	JOHN ALEXANDER
Producer.....	FARAH ABUSHWESHA
Line Producer.....	ANDY KITCHING
Script Editor.....	ELLA BROOKES
Director of Photography.....	DALE ELENA MCCREADY
Casting Directors.....	ANDY PRYOR
Costume Designer.....	ALEXANDRA CAULFIELD
Make Up Designer.....	LESLEY BRENNAN
Production Designer.....	...KATY TUXFORD
Art Director.....	DEAN MCLEOD
Sound Recordist.....	JOHNNY SEALE
Editor.....ANNE SOPEL
First Assistant Director.....	SIMON NOONE
Location Manager.....	LESLEY WESTHEAD
Head of Production.....	...ANGELA TAYLOR
Production Executive.....	HELEN STAMFORD
Post Producer.....	EMILY BRAUDERS



If you are to use any material from the *No Return* production notes, please include a full credit.

Following the first TX on ITV, all four episodes will be available immediately on ITV Hub and BritBox. Episodes on the main channel will continue to broadcast weekly.
