

# UNFORGOTTEN



SERIES 5

itv1

## **SINÉAD KEENAN JOINS THE CAST OF CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED CRIME DRAMA, UNFORGOTTEN, AS DCI JESSICA JAMES ALONGSIDE SANJEEV BHASKAR AS DI SUNNY KHAN**

RTS award-winning actress Sinéad Keenan joins ITV's critically acclaimed and RTS- nominated crime drama, Unforgotten, created and written by renowned screenwriter Chris Lang and produced by Mainstreet Pictures.

Dublin born Sinéad plays the role of DCI Jessica alongside BAFTA nominated Sanjeev Bhaskar, who has played DI Sunil 'Sunny' Khan in four previous series of the hugely successful cold case murder drama.

The series opens with the clock ticking down to DCI James's first day in her new job with an unforeseen and devastating introduction to her family life. Determined to make a good first impression with her new colleagues, will Jess be in the right frame of mind to deliver and inspire the team?

And inevitably how will the ghost of much-loved former colleague Cassie Stuart haunt her? After all, Cassie will be big shoes for her to fill. Does she have the resolve, professionalism and spirit to live up to her much-admired and respected predecessor?

Jess's first case is the discovery of human remains in a newly renovated period property in Hammersmith, London. But how long have they been there and is this a murder dating back to the 1930's or has the body been disposed of in more recent times?

As the murder mystery unfolds, we'll explore the lives of several central characters Jay, played by Rhys Yates (The Outlaws, Silent Witness), Bele with Martina Laird (Summerland, The Bay) in the role, Tony played by Ian McElhinney (Game of Thrones, Derry Girls), and Max Rinehart (Jekyll and Hyde, Miss You Already) as Karol, who on the face of it appear seemingly unconnected to the victim. Hayley Mills will also play Tony's wife, Emma.

DI Khan's loyal and hard-working cold case investigations team are also back together for the series with Jordan Long as DS Murray Boulting and Carolina Main as DC Fran Lingley reprising their roles. Returning to the series are Georgia Mackenzie as pathologist Dr Leanne Balcombe, Michelle Bonnard as Sunny's partner, Sal and Pippa Nixon as DC Kaz Willets.

Directed by Andy Wilson (*Unforgotten*, *Endeavour*, *Ripper Street*), who has directed all 24 episodes of the ITV drama since its debut on the channel in 2015, *Unforgotten* is produced by Guy de Glanville (*Unforgotten*, *Gold Digger*, *Age Before Beauty*) and executive produced by Sally Haynes, Chris Lang and Laura Mackie for Mainstreet Pictures. Andy Wilson and Guy de Glanville also executive produce the series.

Each of the six episodes in this fifth series is written by Chris Lang who is also known for his work on *Innocent*, *The Hookup Plan*, *Dark Heart*, *A Mother's Son* and *The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe*.

*Unforgotten* producers, Mainstreet Pictures, are an ITV Studios label, founded in 2013 by Joint Managing Directors and Executive Producers, Laura Mackie and Sally Haynes.

A Mainstreet production for ITV1, *Unforgotten* is co-produced with MASTERPIECE in association with BBC Studios, who will distribute series five and the previous four series internationally.

## FOREWORD BY SERIES CREATOR, WRITER & EXECUTIVE PRODUCER CHRIS LANG

So how do I follow that?

Was the question that exercised me as I absorbed the extraordinary audience reaction to the end of series 4. Perhaps it shouldn't have been a surprise (the reaction) - I've been left heartbroken enough times myself when a favourite TV character has died. We take these people into our homes and into our hearts, and when they leave us, it is genuinely sad.

And so then it struck me, that that's what I start with. Allowing our characters (Sunny and the team) to go on exactly the same journey as the audience, as they deal with the loss of a person they adored, whilst also trying to process the brutal inevitability of someone else stepping into those much-loved shoes.

Now it helps of course that that 'someone else' is Sinéad Keenan. 'If we'd searched every day for a year we wouldn't have found a better actress, nor one who fitted in to the 'Unforgotten' world more effortlessly'. But we didn't have to search for a year, we didn't have to search for a day, because as soon as I knew the team needed a new DCI, I also knew it had to be Sinéad, having watched her TV work in slack jawed *wonder*, over the years. That was my hunch anyway. Having now completed production, I can confidently say it was the soundest hunch I ever had.

And so alongside all of the above, Unforgotten 5 will continue to deliver what our audience has come to expect. A tantalising murder mystery of course, but also one which holds up a mirror to the state of our nation - and this series perhaps more so than any other.

When I first started conceiving series 5 (towards the end of 2020) I knew I wanted to write about austerity and what effect it had had on our society over the previous 10 years or so. I could never have predicted (as we head towards TX early in 2023) that our country would now be leaning into austerity 2.0, and that all of the ideas and themes that the series lays out, primarily about the failure of modern economic theory to create a fairer society, would be even more painfully relevant today than they were two and a half years ago.

Welcome to Unforgotten 5.

**INTERVIEW WITH SANJEEV BHASKAR**



## INTERVIEW WITH SANJEEV BHASKAR – DI SUNIL ‘SUNNY’ KHAN

**Sunny, this character who usually is so together, seems so lost at the start of this series...**

“It was weird, because not having Nicola there felt really odd. In a way, she is such a good and close friend, I felt slightly lost in the way that Sunny does. But the fact that it was about Cassie/Nicola made it easier to get to those places. I hope that comes across.

“ Grief does affect people in deep and profound ways. And I think one of the ways that it does affect people is you do feel lost, because it’s such a mixture of different emotions. There’s loss, there’s regret, there’s having to recalibrate what your life is. And for Sunny, all of those things, all those existential things, are sitting behind everything he does.

“It struck me that, outside of his daughters, Cassie was the most consistent and positive relationship he’d had. And suddenly to not have that...I’ve lost friends, and certainly with a couple of them, even though they passed away a long time ago now, there’s still that slight dissonance that you feel.

“There are things that you think about, or a phrase crosses your mind, or you see something that you know they would get, they would understand, and you could share with them in a way that you couldn’t share with anybody else. And it’s exactly the same for Sunny. Cassie was so much more than a colleague. She was a friend, she was a confidante. And Sunny is finding it difficult to recalibrate his life.

**The team struggle with moving on when Jess joins the team, do they look to Sunny for support and guidance?**

“It was slightly strange, I think for all of us. We filmed the police station scenes towards the end of the schedule, so I didn’t meet them all as a group until late on. We are a little composite family so it’s like a school reunion every time we see each other – in a good way. But it was the same this time, and we didn’t have Lewis Reeves as part of the team this time, which felt strange as well, because he wasn’t there. But luckily, Jordan, Carolina and Pippa were. And it was this collective thing of, “This is a bit weird, isn’t it?”

## INTERVIEW WITH SANJEEV BHASKAR CONTINUED

“In the story, we’ve had a couple of interim DCIs who had been temporary, who had come in and gone. But this group, because of their connection with Cassie and each other, emotionally huddled together a little more. Certainly when Jess comes in and is quite disruptive to that dynamic, they do all tend to look to each other for some sort of emotional support or guidance. So they’re all lost and slightly thrown by this new person coming in, and the new rhythms.”

### **What was it like filming with Sinéad Keenan?**

“I contacted Sinéad after she’d been announced, and I said to her, “If you want to meet up or if you want to talk, or anything like that, then I’m here.” And in the end, we managed a Zoom and then met up once before we started filming.

“I thought Sinéad was in a very similar position to Jess, in that she was coming into an existing team where you assume that everyone has a shorthand, and everyone gets on, and you don’t want to be the person who comes in and messes it up. I didn’t want her to arrive on day one of filming carrying that kind of baggage as Sinéad. She’s brilliant at what she does anyway, she’s a really lovely person. She’s very, very, very good. So she dropped into the scene immediately. It was almost seamless, to be honest. She’s got a very different energy to Nicola, as Jess has to Cassie, and that’s part of the story. So all of that kind of helps. I’ve worked with Sinéad once. We’d done 30 seconds of a scene in a sitcom a few years ago. So the relationship with Sinéad felt new, and certainly the relationship between Sunny and Jess felt new as well.”

### **We see Sunny and Leanne having some heartfelt conversations too.**

“Leanne is part of the team. But also, importantly for Sunny, was the last person to see Cassie alive. In fact, the two of them were the last two people to see Cassie alive. That gives them a connection of sorts. And Georgia (Mackenzie) is great. And those are really lovely scenes to film, because prior to this it’s really been Leanne giving Sunny and Cassie information, so we see a slightly different side. And again, when you’re feeling lost, you look for connections wherever you can find them. And fortunately for him, there was somebody there who gets it, who understands.”

## INTERVIEW WITH SANJEEV BHASKAR CONTINUED

**We see Sunny quite angry in some scenes, is it good to get out there and display that real emotion?**

“It’s certainly a challenge. Because ultimately you want to do it truthfully, you want to do it so it’s consistent with their character. And I was very happy in all of those emotional scenes, whether he was angry or upset, to be guided really, because it can very easily become indulgent as an actor. You can certainly go, “Right this is my chance to be Robert De Niro!” Which may not be the most appropriate approach. Again, the challenges are always the fun bit for me. If it’s not challenging, then there is a danger that you can coast a little bit. And, again, Chris Lang’s scripts, and certainly director Andy Wilson, do not let you do that. And particularly, with Andy, over every series (and he has directed every single one), he’s very clear to the actors, and certainly to me, when he doesn’t believe it.”

**How is Sunny’s relationship with Sal?**

“I go back to the grief thing, that it impacts everything, it impacts all of your relationships. And in time, some of those relationships will fall away, and some of them will strengthen. You don’t feel like you’re quite the same person. Because I think people do define you. You can define yourself to a certain extent, but it’s your relationships that define who you are. And that’s the thing with Sunny. He was dealing with shock, and he was dealing with grief. And months later, that hasn’t changed. That’s impacted everything. It’s impacted how he is at work, and it’s certainly impacted his relationship with Sal. it’s very difficult to explain to people what you’re going through when you don’t know exactly what it is you’re going through. I think that’s where he finds himself.

“In this series I had far more emotional, deeper emotional interactions with characters than I maybe had in the past. I don’t think I had any really profound emotional exchanges with Nicola, whereas I do with Sinéad. There are a couple of scenes where they’re both emotionally raw, which are a challenge to film – but that is very different to certainly what Sunny has been seen to do before.”

## INTERVIEW WITH SANJEEV BHASKAR CONTINUED

**This is a case that Sunny has to fight to even begin investigating. Can you tell me a little bit about this case?**

“A body that is found bricked into a chimney breast, stuffed up a chimney, when some renovations taking place, but they have no idea how old this body is, or who it is. Initially, Jess comes in and says, “Look, we’re not going to do these old cases unless there’s some sort of present impact, because it takes up resources.” So he has to convince her otherwise. And once again, in a similar structural way to the previous series, it is about these disparate antagonists, possible suspects.

“The interesting thing about this series for me was that this was the widest range of ages of suspects that we’ve seen in any series. That felt very, very different. Before, it’s been a very specific, the age group of people that we’ve had - whereas this one, it really is from someone young to someone quite old. And that was very interesting. As I read the script and that unfolded, that was fascinating to watch. And again, fascinating, too, because people bring different energies. There’s a kind of youthful energy, both good and bad, that comes into play.”

**And what about the guest stars in series five?**

“The interesting thing was that I’d not worked with any of them before, which was not the same in the past. They were all fantastic. One of the joys for me about each new series is that we get to the point where you interact with them over a table. There’s no histrionics, it’s just eye to eye across the table, which can be very exposing, I think, as an actor, because there are no props to play with, you can’t march up and down a room, you can’t leave the room and come back. You’re sat there, stuck with someone effectively trying to trap you. It’s been a joy of every single series.

“I remember Nicola and I used to say that watching these actors in those interview situations was like having the front seat of theatre, being right up close and watching really terrific actors do their stuff. And it’s a privilege. It was exactly the same this time. I thought that all of them, again, were incredible in those moments because there’s nowhere to hide. And that kind of exposure can be frightening and challenging. You have to do homework, you can’t wing it.”

## INTERVIEW WITH SANJEEV BHASKAR CONTINUED

### **Was there a standout location for this series?**

“Going to Paris suddenly felt *incredibly* glamorous. Although filming on the Eurostar was a bit of a challenge. But it was great and fits the story. And it’s lovely to be able to do those scenes, the interior scenes here, knowing that you have actually been there, and not having to imagine all of it. So that was very exciting for me. It’s the second time I’ve ever filmed in Paris. But the real challenge was that Andy Wilson, our director, couldn’t come over, so he was having to direct remotely. So that was interesting.”

### **And to end on a slightly frivolous note, does Sunny’s backpack return?**

“It absolutely does. It’s reached that weird status as Colombo’s raincoat. And once again, the costume department fill it with all manner of bric-a-brac and ridiculous items, which I duly photographed, and will absolutely put out there after the episodes. It’s a really strange thing, because the backpack, got so much attention after the first series, I just didn’t expect them. It’s a minor prop, really. It wasn’t focused on or featured particularly, but people noticed it for some reason. And I wondered whether it would be distracting on a serious programme to be sticking photos on social media of the contents, but I think it was a visual representation of how much fun there is a set, and also how comfortable the relationships are between cast and crew. Because they really did fill it with stuff that would make me look stupid. And that’s fun.”

INTERVIEW WITH SINÉAD KEENAN



## INTERVIEW WITH SINÉAD KEENAN – DCI JESSICA JAMES

**Tell us a little bit about Jess.**

“Jess is the new DCI. She was a fast-tracked cop, one of these ones who have a degree and can skip a few levels. She is very good at her job, very ambitious, and has a promotion. She’s got a husband, two children, perfect life. And then she starts this new job, and on the first day she gets some news on the way to work that completely blindsides her that has implications in terms of how she is at her job. So that’s simmering in the background.”

**How does she get through that day?**

“I mean, the timing is appalling, let alone anything else. It’s dogged determination to get through the day. And it’s a big day! It’s an awful lot to contend with, to take in, and what should have been a nice couple of easy days launching into a new job, are ruined.”

**How do you see her reception from Sunny and the team?**

“Naturally, they’re all grieving and they don’t want a new DCI. They want Cassie. They want Cassie to be there. And that’s as it should be. And so, whoever comes into that role of course, they’re going to be reticent about them, and she will be compared to, you know, the incomparable. The bar is so high with Cassie. I wouldn’t say it’s a cold reception by any means, but it is an adjustment for them, and they’re finding their way as well. But also, added to that, she’s doing a bit of a rubbish job, because her whole life...the tectonic plates have shifted for her. She’s not where she should be head wise, because she is good at her job, but she is not showing them that. So to add insult to injury, they’ve lost the brilliant Cassie, and they’ve got this eejit coming in who doesn’t seem to be on the ball.”

## INTERVIEW WITH SINÉAD KEENAN CONTINUED

### How did you feel when you were joining the team?

“If you’re at the start of something, you’re all in together and you’re all running blind a bit. You’re doing your best work, you’re hoping people will like it, but you’re all in the same boat. When you come into an established show, it’s very, very different. And obviously I’d seen the show, and Nicola is brilliant, so I was initially reticent about even reading the scripts. But then I read the scripts, and they were brilliant.

“When I spoke to my agent she said, “Apparently it’s really lovely job,” and I was like, “Okay, you’re just trying to sell this now.” My fear was, that I didn’t want to be filling a Cassie-shaped hole. But obviously, Chris Lang has created a completely different character with their own storyline, and it’s great. So I was very glad to have been wrong, essentially. And the whole team behind *Unforgotten* is really lovely, I have not had an experience like that on any set. It was so smooth. And I could not have been made to feel more welcome. Which was really lovely. So I’m very lucky.”

### And how’s it been working with Sanjeev Bhaskar?

“He is one of the nicest, if not *the* nicest man in showbiz. We started filming in March, and I had a message from him in the October through Twitter, a lovely message – because we have worked very, very briefly before in a show called *Porters*, we had one tiny scene together. So anyway, Sanjeev sent me a lovely message, because we were due to have lunch with the producers, and he said, “Do you want to have a Zoom beforehand? I know it might be a bit weird for you.” Which was very kind in and of itself. And then we eventually got around to doing it, and had a lovely chat for over an hour and he was incredibly kind, probably because he was thinking that it could feel a bit weird for whoever is coming into this. And he could not have been nicer, kinder, or more entertaining. Honest to God, in between scenes, you sit down and fold your arms and just wait for him to entertain you with his anecdotes. He’s a dream. He’s so lovely.”

## INTERVIEW WITH SINÉAD KEENAN CONTINUED

**And when you're at the helm of a show like this, every series you have different guest actors coming in as the suspects or whatever. These people often look to regular cast members to welcome them and to help them out. How did you enjoy that? Did you feel the pressure from that or were you cool with that?**

“To be honest, every single one of those characters, or suspects, they're all so brilliant, and so experienced. Well, certainly the older ones. The younger ones maybe less experienced, but equally brilliant. And nobody needed any handholding or anything like that. It was just a joy to do those interview scenes. Martina used to be in Casualty, I think. You know how some people stand out, I thought, “God, you're very good.” So I got to work with her. I'd actually worked with Ian six months previously on *Derry Girls*, so it was lovely to see him again. Then to meet Hayley Mills, my goodness. She is just tiny, and just so beautiful. And she just looks like Pollyanna. Nothing has changed, really. She was so lovely. It was fantastic.”

**Sunny, and Jess go on a journey this series. How was that to film?**

“It was really lovely to film actually, because established shows like that, which could be seen as a type of procedural, a lot of the time, focus can be on the suspects and so you don't necessarily get a huge amount of backstory with the regular cast. So to be able to eke that one out... because they start when they first meet, she's had her news, he's grieving. And they're like, “Who are you? Why are you being rude?” They each have stuff going on. And when they meet, it is loggerheads. It's passive aggressive, jibes, in a way it's jostling for position. It's not until episode four, once the shock of her news dissipates a bit, that she really tries to get herself together. And we hope they can start working together as opposed to beside each other.”

**What can you tell me about the case? More is revealed about it as time goes on.**

“There's the case, the murder, and then we find out more as we go along because nobody is without sin here; they've all got significant skeletons in the closet. But that's the joy of *Unforgotten*. There is always something, not even episode to episode, but ad break to ad break. Like, “Just in case you were thinking of leaving...” which of course you wouldn't be. It's very clever.

## INTERVIEW WITH SINÉAD KEENAN CONTINUED

**Jess isn't really keen on investigating this murder, because she has her own ideas about directions for the team to go in.**

“When she initially comes in, like every public body at the moment and over the past however many years, it's complex; use your money better, use it more effectively, hit these targets, or you don't get your budget. So, as far as she's concerned, if this if this is a body from 20, 30, 40 years ago, she would rather not go down that road and use the money that would inevitably be used on cases that are happening now. We need to get through the present backlog before we consider going that far back. So that's where she's coming from. She will be answering to her boss, then they'll be answering to another higher power. As Chris Lang said about this series, it's politics with a small p. All those things, policies, trickle down have implications for everyone.”

**Is Jess one of those people who puts a lot of pressure on herself?**

“I think she is. She would be alpha in that sense, like a high achiever. If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well – not that you would necessarily know that. But in normal times, without dealing with what she's dealing with in her personal life, yes, that's what she would be. If it's not an A plus, it's not worth it.”

INTERVIEW WITH IAN MCELHINNEY



# INTERVIEW WITH IAN MCELHINNEY – LORD TONY HUME

## **Tell us a little bit about your character, Lord Tony Hume?**

“He’s successful politician – formerly a member of government, now a member of the Lords. Obviously been successful. He also changed stance politically, in that he would have been very much a Thatcherite politician at one point, but now he would tend to be critical of a lot of that. Of course, one wonders exactly how and why he seems to have changed his views so much. It becomes revealed in the course of the story, but he’s definitely a politician who does not talk in the same way.

“Ostensibly, he’s well-heeled, he’s very well married, so he has the comfortable life of a Tory gent. He has money, he has influence, a lot of influence still in government, he has people who he can lean on and probably get favours from. He has a flat in London, and he has a big country house where he goes for weekends or whatever. Essentially, it’s a very comfortable, very privileged life; he’s very much old stock in that sense.”

## **But...**

“There is something in his history that is brought to light during the investigation, and whenever they start to look into it, it becomes apparent that he’s obviously implicated in some way, or he certainly knew certain people who were at the heart of this thing, and therefore he needs to be investigated further. So they do investigate him further, and he becomes one of the four suspects. And then we’re left to wonder which one of the four is the guilty party.”

## **So he’s morally ambiguous?**

“I was excited by that because they’re the most interesting characters to play. Somebody who, somewhere in their history, somewhere in their past, there is a dilemma of some kind, they’re grappling with their self-image of how they wish to be perceived. And the same goes for any of the people who become suspects – when are they telling the truth and when are they not? Obviously, from the police point of view, they’re grasping at straws, they’re not sure which way the wind is blowing.

## INTERVIEW WITH IAN MCELHINNEY CONTINUED

“And of course, the other thing that we haven’t mentioned is that we learn in the first episode that his cancer has returned. We also learn in the course of the story that it’s probably a lost cause. So he’s a man dealing with the fact that he is approaching death, and is also even more conscious of trying to do something good by people because his life is coming to an end.

“Outwardly, he probably wants to be remembered in a certain way. Inwardly, he’s probably desperately trying to compensate for some of the things he feels he has done wrong in the past.”

### **What drew you to Chris Lang’s scripts?**

“They’re great scripts. I very much rely on the scripts. At the end of the day, what you’re trying to do is be in the moment that the script requires of you. So knowing your script, knowing it well, and not having to look for the lines because you’ve become the character. It was a little bit of a leap for me in the sense that I’m Northern Irish, I’m not English, I’m probably thought of as a Northern Irish actor, but at the same time I didn’t feel it was untoward for me to be playing a Tory toff. I just thought, “Well, that’s an interesting opportunity. Why not go for it?”

“I really enjoyed doing this job. *Unforgotten* is an extremely well-run ship. And a very, very good team. And from the day-to-day side of things, it was a very, very good experience with people who know what they’re doing.

“Andy (Wilson, the director) is a great director. I wish there were more directors like him for screen because he really gives you the right messages as an actor. Andy’s instincts are great. I also think he knows what he’s looking for, and he knows when he’s got it. Those are great things. He’s a pleasure to work with.”

## INTERVIEW WITH IAN MCELHINNEY CONTINUED

**And the lovely Hayley Mills is playing your wife. Have you ever worked with her before?**

“No, never before. She’s lovely. Of course, I remember when she was a young girl in the various things that she did, so it’s like you’re working with a bit of a screen icon, really. She’s lovely, and we had a really nice time. We shot all our stuff together actually, in one week, because it all took place in the one location, which was the house, the family home. It was compact. It was concentrated. It was not exclusively, but primarily the two of us, and it was a good vibe. That was my first working week on the show, and I really enjoyed it.”

**The suspects this year are very wide ranging...**

“Yes, there’s a whole spread. And that’s fascinating because they’re such different types from such different worlds. How do they all tie up? it is intriguing, but they’re great plots and they’re well layered, and there’s a question mark over everybody. At one point you might be leaning one way as a viewer, or you might be leaning another way, and ultimately you don’t know until the end. And that’s how it should be.”

**How do you think you’ll manage when this is on and everyone’s wanting you to divulge some of these secrets?**

“They’ll not learn anything from me! And my wife is looking forward to watching because we enjoy the series. We’ve always enjoyed the series. So I don’t always watch everything that I’m involved in. But I will watch this because I liked the series and I enjoyed doing it. I’m looking forward to seeing how it all comes together.”

INTERVIEW WITH MARTINA LAIRD



## INTERVIEW WITH MARTINA LAIRD – EBELE FALADE

### **Can you talk about your character, Ebele (Bele)?**

“When we meet Bele, she has all these aspirations of developing a catering empire. She’s running a successful vegan restaurant with her partner, which she’s hoping to grow into something bigger and better for herself. She’s got these desires and ambitions. As we find out more about her, we understand why she’s so driven to make something of herself. There’s a lot of secrets, but she finds herself suspected of being part of the central crime story.”

### **It’s a very emotionally charged role. What’s that like to portray?**

“Yes, absolutely. And because of the nature of how things build throughout the series for her, it was really important to me to play the light moments when her life is functional, and to play the love at the centre of her life, and where the positivity is, because we need to see the contrast of the descent that occurs from being embroiled in what she is suspected of. So that is the hard bit.”

### **How did you feel when you read the scripts?**

“What attracted me to the script is how Chris Lang has tackled the important themes of justice versus morality that are very pertinent to today’s conversations and very close to my heart. That says a lot about Bele’s emotional place that I understand from my own experience. And I was attracted to the ambition of this, in digging beneath the surface and revealing the interlinks of morality and culpability at all levels of society. He questions, “What is justice? Who exactly delivers justice?” That thing about justice versus morality.”

## INTERVIEW WITH MARTINA LAIRD CONTINUED

### **How did you prepare for the role?**

“Like any character, it’s important to look at their truth. Facts and events that happened can be seen from many different angles, so there’s always the truth of what happened, but there’s also each person’s truth. And from there, once we start to compare the two, from the facts versus that person’s truth, we can start to begin to understand the choices of the character and the traps that lie in front of them. That weighed in really, studying those different levels of the conflict between them, the differences between them. And like I said, I was able to find a lot of resonance for my own emotional truth, even if my experiences are not the same as hers, thank goodness.”

### **So it is important to understand your character without judging?**

“I think if you really understand the character, then you move beyond judgement. Because you understand that everything that person does, how they cope with their circumstance in that moment, even if we think their choices might not have been the best choices, it’s what was available to them within that moment.”

### **Is the character easy to shed when you leave set?**

“This question is something that has been fascinating me recently in my own career, as I’ve had to play a lot of dark roles, and roles that are traumatic. And it is a thing about how to get it out of your body when you’re finished with it. How do you leave it behind? And I think, with Bele, what I can look at is that actually, she has a strong survival instinct. The events and choices in her life may seem nihilistic at first, but then we understand that whether they were healthy or not, her actions were based on the choices that got her through the darkness. So even the traumatic choices were still ways of surviving. She never gave up. She never surrendered to the darkness. And if you focus on that, then it’s one way of being a potential catharsis when you have to go to these really problematic places.”

## INTERVIEW WITH MARTINA LAIRD CONTINUED

**Your on-screen husband is played by Mark Frost. How did you get that chemistry?**

“I’m glad you call it chemistry. It’s always good to know it works well. It was really important to me. Her relationship with her husband is the light and the hope for her in her life. It is very much linked to their dynamic and their relationship, and the work that they do together. And his support of her knowing what he knows of her and knowing bits of her history, though, of course, he does not know it all – is a source of strength. But also, Mark is amazing to act with. From day one he was so present and really supportive. We clicked because we got thrown straight in the deep end on the very first day with a really, really difficult scene, and the filming location made things even more difficult, and we had to really hold together for the focus. He was very supportive and was very responsive. He could see that I was struggling. And from that, we built from there that sense of being in it together.”

**And what were your scenes like with Sanjeev and Sinéad?**

“Oh! They were great obviously, but they are already so great together. The balance between their on-screen characters, it works really well – as does the balance between Sanjeev and Sinéad themselves. Sanjeev is very at home in this space, he was able to say, “Look, I’m here, however you want to work, I can do that.” And he made you feel very seen and held. And similarly, Sinéad was very generous in her response and her focus. She gives you all this focus that you can really latch on to when you’re in scenes with her.”

**Is there a scene or location that stood out for you?**

“I got to do a scene in a very beautiful location with someone I have admired since I was a child. I grew up in Trinidad idolising Hayley Mills. And I have been boasting to my family, and people I know. I adored Hayley Mills when I was growing up. I wanted to be her. I thought she was so good. Everything about her. And then there I am, acting opposite her. And what was wonderful was that she had been to Tobago as a child, because of course, her father filmed there with Swiss Family Robinson. And she was able to remember details about people and music and beaches she’d been on. And it was wonderful to know that the person I’d watched as a child in Trinidad also still remembered my own country so well. And she is still stunning. She is still stunning as a woman.”

INTERVIEW WITH MAX RINEHART



## INTERVIEW WITH MAX RINEHART – KAROL WOJSKI

### **How good are you at keeping secrets?**

“I just play dumb and say, “I can’t actually remember,” and they just kind of buy it. My mum loves the show so much and she does keep asking me. She was super happy when I got the role, and that felt really nice.”

### **What is your character Karol like?**

“Karol is Polish, but he came to London when he was eight, so he considers himself British. He grew up in North London, went to university, and became a social worker. And then, a few years ago, he moved to Paris, got a girlfriend who was in the middle of trying to get custody of her children and is working a couple of jobs while they figured that out.

“He is definitely resilient, hardworking, determined. I think he’s quite a brave person. And at the heart of it, he’s a family man, and he very much wants to start his own. I would say he is loyal as well.”

### **Would you say he wants to do the right thing?**

“Yes, that’s definitely what he wants. He does want to do the right thing, but he also has trouble understanding the world around him because he’s been through a lot. I think he feels like he’s a good person, but he finds the world around him quite hard. He’s a really good person, but when his expectations of the world aren’t met, that can be confusing for him.”

## INTERVIEW WITH MAX RINEHART CONTINUED

### **What happened when you first got the role?**

“I remember it was January (2022), it was a really bleak. I got sent the script, and I know it sounds like a cliché, but I read it and couldn’t put it down. It was amazing. I read it front to back in about 40 minutes – I couldn’t believe how good it was. And reading about my character, it definitely made me think. Chris (Lang, writer) has such a way of phrasing things that I would find very hard to articulate. It was a dream even to do the audition, but it was such a dream to play. It’s rare you get that kind of script.”

### **And you have to speak Polish in this role. Is that something you had to learn?**

“I don’t know Polish, but luckily, I had a dialect coach, Mark, and he was so brilliant and so kind. And that was quite difficult, but I had some spare time so I went to Katowice for a few days and spoke to people there. It was very hard to master some of the sounds as an English speaker. There will definitely be some Polish words that will be painted on my mind forever. But I loved learning it. And it’s such a lovely country and such good people.”

### **What was the most challenging aspect of filming this story?**

“Just building a three-dimensional character without judging him. Working from that place was probably the most challenging. But I was surrounded by such exceptional people, they made it very enjoyable.

“With a character like this, if I was to describe him, I would immediately judge him, and then you’re in all sorts of trouble. So I just read it over and over again and let the emotions and thoughts come to the surface as and when they do, until you’re not thinking about the words any more. When you have secrets, you’re always fighting for the way out. And so you focus on what you want, which for Karol is to settle in Paris with his girlfriend, he wants that more than anything. And that’s the thought that drives him forward. So you try to think about the secrets as little as possible...”

## INTERVIEW WITH MAX RINEHART CONTINUED

### **What was it like filming the scenes with Sanjeev and Sinéad?**

“Sanjeev was such a gentleman. He made a real effort to make me feel part of the *Unforgotten* family, and was very interested in me, and was asking lots of questions to make me really feel at ease. So he was amazing. And Sinéad was so kind, and lovely too. But the scenes with Sinéad are very highly charged scenes, so I was very much in my own world, not talking to anyone, on set. They’re both incredible actors. Just watching them work was a privilege, and I can’t wait to see what they’ve done in the show. But they’re both so lovely and very welcoming.”

### **Chris Lang’s scripts brings up a lot of issues without lecturing or pointing at them.**

“There’s a lot of ideas about the government or social work, and it’s doing the homework around that so on the day you’re not commenting on it. I have a friend who worked as a social worker, and it was really useful talking to them. Because you carry a lot of weight as a social worker, and it’s really difficult. You’re the enemy of the media. You’re the enemy of people you’re working with sometimes. It’s really hard. So it does take a toll. I don’t think it is the best job for Karol in some ways.”

### **On a different note, you got to film in Paris. What was that like?**

“I was driving around Paris. They asked, “Can you drive?” I was like, “No.” I hadn’t really driven for years but here I was driving around in a taxi, because he is a taxi driver, and I hadn’t really seen Paris before. We were in Montmartre for a bit, which was beautiful and pristine, and everyone was dressed immaculately. I remember finishing at midnight one night, and we went for a meal, and to have these restaurants still open at midnight where you can sit outside with a glass of wine, it was amazing. I couldn’t quite believe it. It was such a privilege to film in Paris, definitely.”

**INTERVIEW WITH RHYS YATES**



## INTERVIEW WITH RHYS YATES – JAY

**Tell us about Jay, and how you see him.**

“Jay is one of the main suspects in season five of *Unforgotten*. He’s had a very dysfunctional upbringing and he lives in a rundown council estate with his girlfriend. They both have had a lot of trauma in their lives, and they use drugs to numb the pain and emptiness that they both have. Jay has found himself in the role of his girlfriend’s carer, providing the drugs for his girlfriend by any means necessary – even if that means committing crimes. He’s very lost and he’s looking for a way to get out of this destructive cycle.”

**He’s obviously really troubled, but is he a bad person?**

“No. Real human beings aren’t like that. I feel sometimes that shows can fall in the trap of writing characters that are two dimensional, but I don’t think that’s happened in this case at all. There are certain scripts you read and a character jumps out to you like, “This is definitely one for me.” And this wasn’t a good or bad, right or wrong character – the role went a lot deeper than most. Sometimes, people can only see what’s on the surface, but in this case, we get to see the character’s whole journey to understand why he is the way he is.”

**What made you want to play him when you when you read the script?**

“I’d already seen the show, so I was a big fan anyway. I liked just how complex the character is. I can tend to get thrown into stereotypical characters like, ‘Oh, you’re the bad guy,’ or, ‘You’re the drug dealer,’ kind of like the archetype. And I just feel like... no matter if they’re making bad choices or not, that people aren’t just that. They’re not just one thing. People aren’t just good or bad. You know that Shrek said there’s layers to people, I feel like with this story you really get to see that. That’s down to Chris’s (Chris Lang, writer) fantastic writing. It was a great opportunity, so I was like, ‘If I get the chance to play this character, it will be amazing’. I felt I could delve pretty deep. Because people do bad things for crazy reasons.”

## INTERVIEW WITH RHYS YATES CONTINUED

**It's a very emotionally charged role, he's very up and down. What's that like to play?**

"It's great. Emotionally charged roles are probably the best roles to play. It was nice to have something to sink your teeth into, but it does make you aware of the injustices people face, and that's quite sad to see. It reinforces that you can't really judge people. We're very quick to judge people sometimes, and you don't know what people are going through in their lives. You don't know why they are the way they are."

**As an actor, are you the sort of person who would take that home with you if something's disturbing you, or are you good at leaving it on set?**

"I try to leave it on set, but sometimes it can be hard, depending on how deep you got into it. But you do try to disengage. So I do leave it on set, but sometimes you can't help it. When you're tapping into your own emotion, you can't help but to carry that with you. Especially if you're tapping into past memories or using emotional recall, or into problems you've had in your own life."

**And how do you prepare for a role like this?**

"A lot of problems that I see on TV I've kind of been around in my life anyway, so I really understand what people are going through. For this one specifically, I went and tried to research the kind of world and people that Jay would be around. I spoke to a few people, and I found talking to people with similar drug misuse problems really helpful. I kind of delved into how they ended up where they are, and that can be very surprising. It's exactly what I feel about you can't judge people. People with problems aren't always the people you expect to have the problems. Seeing the disparity and the juxtaposition of the person they were and the person they've become. It's like two different people. You'd never see the two people in the same circles. But because you both have a problem with drugs, they fall into that world. It's interesting, but it's also really sad."

## INTERVIEW WITH RHYS YATES CONTINUED

### **Are these people that you sought out yourself?**

“Yes, I grew up in areas where drug misuse and crime and everything was rampant, so I knew where to go. I hadn’t been there for a long time as it’s more where I grew up, rather than where I am now. But I knew I had to go to speak to people. I think it helped – I don’t know, we’ll see in the performance. But I tried to basically take the information that people were giving me. And they were they were lovely, very honest, and very open. And yes. But I tried to do my homework because of how great the show is.”

### **How has it been, playing this character?**

“It’s been a dream to play. It’s been nice to show the vulnerability of characters that maybe won’t necessarily get seen in the nicest light because they do bad things. Yes, they should accept the consequences, but there’s a lot of hurt in people. It’s something I’m passionate about. And I’m passionate about it in real life as well because people get dealt some bad hands, and sometimes it’s a miracle when people get out of it. So I feel very grateful to be a part of this show. I feel very humbled and blessed and want to do it justice.”

### **Do you have any favourite locations or scenes?**

“We filmed in a place called Lincoln’s Inn. I used to walk past there all the time, and I’d always see trailers, and I used to always make a joke about filming there like, “Maybe one day I’ll be able to film here.” It’s crazy because I actually got the chance. So that was really cool.”



## SYNOPSIS | EPISODE ONE

When a severed leg is discovered in a bricked-up chimney flue the team get to work identifying the victim and cause of death.

Cassie's replacement on the force, DCI Jess James, has a rocky start as she clashes with a grieving Sunny.

# CAST CREDITS

DI Sunny Khan.....Sanjeev Bhaskar  
DCI Jess James.....Sinéad Keenan  
DS Murray Boulting.....Jordan Long  
DC Kaz Willets ..... Pippa Nixon  
DC Fran Lingley .....Carolina Main  
Leanne Balcombe .....Georgia Mackenzie  
Sal ..... Michelle Bonnard  
Lord Tony Hume .....Ian McElhinney  
Lady Emma Hume .....Hayley Mills  
Ebele Falade .....Martina Laird  
Dave Adams .....Mark Frost  
Jay ..... Rhys Yates  
Cheryl .....Hebe Beardsall



# CAST CREDITS

Steve James.....Andrew Lancel  
D. Spt Andrews.....Colin R. Campbell  
Kate .....Kate Robbins  
Debbie.....Gráinne Keenan  
Karol Wojski .....Max Rinehart  
Elise .....Claire Ganaye  
Sal ..... Michelle Bonnard

# PRODUCTION CREDITS

Creator/Writer/Executive Producer .....Chris Lang  
Executive Producers .....Laura Mackie, Sally Haynes, Guy de Glanville  
Director/ Executive Producer.....Andy Wilson  
Producer.....Guy de Glanville  
Line Producer..... Deborah Morgan  
Director of Photography.....James Aspinall  
Casting Director.....Victor Jenkins  
Costume Designer.....Eleanor Baker  
Hair & Make Up Designer.....Natalie Pateman  
Production Designer.....Jan Walker  
Editor.....Mark Davis  
Composer .....Michael Price  
Series Location Manager.....David Colenutt



mainstreet

itv1