



VERA

THE RISING TIDE

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VERA

THE RISING TIDE PRESS PACK CONTENTS

*****All information is embargoed until, Wednesday 6 December 2023*****

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INTRODUCTION

The critically acclaimed detective series, *VERA* returns with a thrilling feature-length episode titled *The Rising Tide*, based on the tenth novel by bestselling author Ann Cleeves.

This new episode takes DCI Vera Stanhope on a chilling investigation as she finds herself drawn to the enchanting tidal island of Lindisfarne, where a group of lifelong friends reunites every five years to commemorate their enduring bond.

What began as a joyous tradition turns sad when one of the friends is discovered dead. The tragic death takes a disturbing turn when Vera uncovers that the victim had recently been fired amidst allegations of misconduct. Determined to unearth the truth, Vera delves into the past, questioning the events that transpired during their first reunion on Holy Island.

As the tide rises, long-concealed secrets begin to surface, threatening to engulf everyone involved. Vera, aided by her trusted and resourceful team, including Detective Sergeant Aiden Healy (Kenny Doughty), navigates treacherous waters, facing danger and deception at every turn. Together, they must unravel the twisted web of lies before another tragedy unfolds.

The Rising Tide promises to be an unforgettable episode, blending Ann Cleeves' masterful novel with the atmospheric charm of Lindisfarne. Viewers can expect an intense and gripping story that delves into the complexities of friendship, loyalty, and the lasting consequences of past actions.

Actors featured alongside Brenda and Kenny include Jon Morrison, who plays DC Kenny Lockhart, Riley Jones, who plays DC Mark Edwards, Ibinabo Jack as DC Jac Williams and Sarah Kameela Impey as Pathologist Dr. Paula Bennett. Furthermore, this special feature-length episode will mark the final appearances of Kenny Doughty and Ibinabo Jack.

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Guest actors appearing in *The Rising Tide* include; Clare Holman, Jake Ashton-Nelson, Adrian Mills, Suzette Llewellyn, Brian Bovell, Orlessa Altass, Phil Cornwell, Adrian Rawlins, Kate Isitt, Felicity Dean, Natasha Patel, Sara Powell, Cora Kirk, Martin Turner, Eric Richard, Phillippa Wilson, Liz Crowther, Sam Halpenny and Peter Peverley.

The Rising Tide is written by Sally Abbott, directed by Paul Gay and produced by Debbie Shewell.

VERA is made by Silverprint Pictures, part of ITV Studios, with executive producers Will Nicholson and Kate Bartlett overseeing the production. Overseeing production on behalf of ITV is Drama Commissioner Huw Kennair-Jones.

ITV Studios distributes *VERA* internationally.

Series 1-12 is available on ITVX.



CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

DCI Vera Stanhope played by Brenda Blethyn

Heading up a team at Northumberland and City Police, Vera is obsessive about her work and dogged in her desire to uncover the truth at the heart of each case she leads. Unconventional and unglamorous maybe, but Vera has a wry sense of humour and faces the world with caustic wit, guile and courage.

For Vera, work is her life and her team is her family. Having been brought up by a neglectful father, she's constantly trying to find a sense of self-worth, feeling she has to prove herself in everything she does - although she would never admit this to her colleagues. Vera demands fierce loyalty and respect from her team, which she returns with the smallest glimmer of affection. Vera really cares for her team and for the victims of the crimes she investigates.

DS Aiden Healy played by Kenny Doughty

Detective Sergeant Aiden Healy has proved himself a strong and reliable partner to DCI Stanhope, who relishes his insight, commitment and diligence. Aiden, in turn, feels protective of his boss, knowing her obsessive nature and commitment to the job can sometimes be at the cost of her own wellbeing. Aiden has settled into family life and has a renewed focus on the demands of the job, as well as his dedication to ensuring that the perpetrators of crimes are sought out and held responsible.

DC Kenny Lockhart played by Jon Morrison

Kenny is a very loyal and trusted member of the team. Though Kenny works at his own pace, Vera knows that he brings with him years of experience and instinct, and she can rely on him when it counts. Plain-spoken if occasionally tactless, Kenny possesses a keen memory for cases long past and is often surprisingly savvy with contemporary technology and social media.

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

DC Jacqueline 'Jac' Williams played by Ibinabo Jack

Jac is a valued member of DCI Vera Stanhope's team. With her dry wit and no-nonsense attitude, she often uses her sharp abilities of detection and unique perspective to bring new evidence to the case at hand. Jac first joined Vera's team from the fraud squad after her former boss was found guilty of corruption. Jac looks up to Vera and greatly admires her commitment to the truth. Jac is tough, courageous and determined.

DC Mark Edwards played by Riley Jones

Since joining Vera's team from uniform, Mark has become a skilled and reliable detective. As one of the younger members of the squad, Mark is less outspoken and more introspective, preferring to channel his energy into meticulous analysis and research. His enthusiasm, keen eye for detail and self-drive means that Vera now counts on the invaluable information he uncovers to push an investigation forward.

Pathologist Dr. Paula Bennett played by Sarah Kameela Impey

Paula's acerbic sense of fun intertwines with her brilliant forensic brain and detail driven approach. She's sometimes mistaken for indulging in dark humour but actually it's enthusiasm for the science of the investigation. She still feels the death of her father which gives her empathy when working a crime scene but she never lets her emotions get in the way of gathering the facts. Especially when there's an unusual death with some intriguing science to investigate. Vera isn't quite sure what to make of Paula at first as she's a bit of a whirlwind. Paula is brilliant at what she does but occasionally needs reminding that not everyone's brain works at the same rate that her's does.



INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA BLETHYN

Q: What are your thoughts about this first ever Vera Christmas film?

“I’ve always wanted to have a Vera Christmas special. This adaptation of Ann Cleeves’ book *The Rising Tide* is set against the backdrop to the run up to Christmas. There are quite a lot of Christmas trees in this film and it was nice to film scenes with all of the festive decorations in the background. There’s always a jolly feeling at Christmas with people in good spirits. But sometimes they had to take a tree out of the background because there was too much going on!

“I think *The Rising Tide* is one of Ann Cleeves’ best books, and that’s saying something because they’re all fabulous. She just gets better and better. But as is often the case when adapting a novel for tv, there are differences between the book and Sally Abbot’s terrific adaptation.”

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA BLETHYN CONTINUED

Q: Is Vera a fan of Christmas?

“Vera’s childhood Christmases would have been pretty sparse. When her mum was there, she would have made the best of things. But ,after she died Vera would have had to do most of the cooking and cleaning after a fashion. Her dad wasn’t always nurturing. She sort of brought herself up. Christmas is a time for family which Vera hasn’t got. Her team at work are her family now. Her colleagues.

“When we meet her again Vera is in the police CID office in the approach to Christmas and she has to organise a Secret Santa. She can’t stand any of that. But she knows her team like it so she tolerates the festivities. In the end she ropes DC Kenny Lockhart (Jon Morrison) into organising the Secret Santa and her contribution is restricted to bringing along a Father Christmas hat. That’s about her limit when it comes to Christmas.

“Vera and her team are gearing up to having a couple days off over Christmas when a call comes in about a television celebrity who has been found dead on Holy Island in Northumberland of all places, where Vera lives, in what is an unexplained death. So her boss has decided that as Vera knows the area, she can go and deal with it.

“It turns out the dead man is with a group of friends who first visited Holy Island together in 1977 and have been returning for a reunion every five years since 1982. Vera is intrigued by them and finally concludes that the death is a case of murder.

“Viewers who know the area have long since recognised that we use a property on Holy Island for the exterior shots of Vera’s cottage with the interior filmed back at the studios. But I’m not sure if the fact she lives on the island has ever been directly mentioned on screen before. I mean, how could she live on an island where the tide comes in twice a day and cuts the residents off? I guess you could call it dramatic license!

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA BLETHYN CONTINUED

“The group of friends are staying in a cottage called Pilgrim House in the story. The art department did an incredible job converting the old lifeboat house on Holy Island into Pilgrim House. They made it look like there was an upper floor with dormer windows and transformed the building into a place where the friends stayed.

“The people in the art department are so talented. Second to none. And have been throughout. Ever since we started making Vera. For one episode they built a jetty and the local residents wanted to keep it after we had finished filming. Obviously, ITV couldn't leave it there for all of the usual health and safety reasons. But it was so authentic.”

Q: This is Kenny Doughty's final film as DS Aiden Healy. What was your reaction when he told you he was leaving?

“I was sad when he said he was leaving. He's my mate. We had filmed eight series together. I've never laughed so hard as I did with Kenny Doughty.

“Vera and Aiden became very close over the years. It's not surprising because she spent most of her time with him at work. And it was a good working relationship between the two characters as well as liking each other.

“Kenny and I kept each other company between scenes during long days, weeks and months of filming. As well as at weekends because we were both working away from home. It's total commitment. Kenny was also my neighbour in the apartments where I stay during filming. I'll miss him and wish him well.

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA BLETHYN CONTINUED

“Each episode takes five weeks to film and then we have a week off. But two of those days off are taken up in going home and coming back again. My husband used to say my body comes home a month before my head. It’s quite hard to switch off. Also, in that time off I’m working on the script for the next episode. So I’m really still working but just at home.”

Q: There is a special moment for Kenny Doughty in his farewell episode?

“Aiden gets to drive Vera’s Land Rover on his own across the causeway to Holy Island. Not many people get to drive her car. That was a special treat for Kenny. Mind you, Vera is very keen that he doesn’t scratch her motor. Although I’m not sure you would notice if he did!”

Q: We also meet a new member of Vera’s team. Can you tell us about him?

“PC Billy Billington, played by Jake Ashton-Nelson. Jake is terrific in this. He played an officer on the police station front desk in a previous episode. Somebody had come in to report something but he thought they were time wasting and sent them away. Vera really tore him off a strip for that. She told him to listen to what people had to say as it threw a spanner in the works for solving that particular case.

“So we come to this episode and Billy has put in for secondment to CID. Vera is going to give him a chance but he exasperates her. He’s very funny. Vera is his boss but there’s also an element of mothering in her relationship with Billy. She tries to guide **him** in the right direction but gives him a hard time. Mind you, Vera gives all of her team a hard time!”

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA BLETHYN CONTINUED

Q: What was it like filming on Holy Island, also known as Lindisfarne?

“It was lovely filming on Holy Island. It’s such a special place and everyone is so friendly. But we filmed this in November and December of 2022 and it was very cold. The tide is still in when Vera gets the call about the death so she has to travel on a pilot boat to the island. I was actually out on the boat but I’m not sure you see that in the final edit. There will have been some priceless footage on the boat but they’ve had to cut it for time reasons.

“But you do see Vera walking up the Holy Island harbour steps from the boat with her mac flapping around in a strong wind. We couldn’t risk losing Vera’s hat at sea so it was kept firmly in place at all times. The hat was pulled down securely on my head with some elastic pushed inside the hat and then under my chin. A very good practical solution which you can’t see because the elastic is flesh coloured and it fits into the shape of my jaw.

“So I just pulled the hat down and made sure it didn’t blow off into the North Sea. We couldn’t use hat pins because if the wind is really strong and the hat takes off it is pulling on your hair. Like being scalped! So we used a crafty bit of elastic under the chin.”

Q: Can you tell us about the scene where Vera watches as the four remaining friends at the reunion take a dip in the sea?

“It was freezing. It was so, so, cold. Those actors who went in the sea were heroic. They weren’t stunt doubles. They were the real actors. I live by the south coast and there are people who go in the sea every day. It doesn’t matter what the weather is like or how high the tide is.

“Does it appeal to me? It does rather. I’ve taken to cold showers as my nod in that direction. But it’s not the whole shower that’s cold. It just ends cold. It’s supposed to be quite good for you.”

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA BLETHYN CONTINUED

Q: Does Vera find herself in danger in this story?

“Vera does find herself at risk in The Rising Tide but isn’t afraid to put herself in danger. She gets afraid for herself. But she knows the value of the fear and how far to go in terms of the risk to her. Vera also knows that if she confronts someone on her own they are more likely to say something they shouldn’t. So she is more likely to get a confession.”

Q: Vera is told by her Superintendent to be discreet in this investigation. Can she be?

“Vera can be discreet. When she feels like it. If it’s important to the case. But Vera isn’t afraid of standing up to authority. I mean, what can they do to her? She’s towards the end of her career. What can they do? Sack her?”

Q: There is yet another first class guest cast in this film. Do you enjoy meeting new faces?

“The casting is always excellent in Vera. We always have great guest casts and I love it when people come in who I don’t necessarily know. Along with a lot of the young people who come in, like Jake. There’s one scene in this featuring Eric Richard, who I remember as desk sergeant Bob Cryer in The Bill. I thought he was terrific in that and he’s great in this. And I’ve always been a huge fan of Clare Colman. She’s brill.

“It’s also lovely to return to work with the regular cast, including Riley Jones and also Jon Morrison as DC Kenny Lockhart. Vera is always getting at Kenny and that continues in the three new films for 2024. Jon Morrison is a wonderful actor. I recommend viewers also check him out as a young man in a 1975 Play For Today film called Just Another Saturday, which is still available to watch.

INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA BLETHYN CONTINUED

“This Christmas Special was the last Vera film we made at our unit base in Wallsend where all the studio interiors are filmed, including the police office and Vera’s cottage. I was so sad to move from Wallsend but the new premises we found have given us more space and improved facilities.”

Q: *The Rising Tide* is about a group of friends who return to the same place again and again. Aside from the North East, is there a place you keep going back to?

“I keep returning to my home town of Ramsgate in Kent where I have family. It’s lovely to come back. I’ve nice memories of growing up there. It’s just a lovely place to be. My dog Jack *is partial* to digging a hole on the beach. When I’m filming somebody looks after Jack in Northumberland. But he comes home with me at night after filming. You won’t see a Vera cameo appearance for Jack on screen. He’d steal the show.”

Q: What does Christmas mean to you?

“Christmas is a time to reflect on how lucky we are compared to others in the world, especially at the moment. You also never know how people in the same street as you are coping. Christmas can also be a sad time for some people. For those who have lost loved ones and are alone. Some people have no-one to buy Christmas presents for. And no-one to buy for them. It’s a time for thinking about others, if nothing else. At Christmas we give all of the money we would have spent on presents to charity. Including the homelessness charity Crisis for people who have nowhere to go.

“On Christmas Day we will go out walking first thing with the dog, as we do most days no matter the weather. Christmas Day is just about relaxing, watching some television and then wishing it was over! And I will certainly be watching *The Rising Tide* when it goes out. I like to see it as it is broadcast on TV and my husband also likes to watch it with me. He gets annoyed if I tell him anything about it beforehand. So I’ll not say a word!”



INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY

Q: *The Rising Tide* marks your Vera farewell?

“I made the decision before we started filming series 12. That was initially going to be the four films screened at the start of 2023. But then halfway through filming they said, ‘Can we do a Christmas special as well?’ So it was a long goodbye. With *The Rising Tide* being my last episode filmed in November and December 2022.

“There were lots of personal and professional reasons why I wanted to move on. I have loved doing Vera 100 per cent. It has been a life-changing job for so many reasons. Including working with Brenda Blethyn and in the North East. I feel like an honorary Geordie. There is also a real family connection to the crew who I’m still in touch with.

“It has been nine years since I filmed my first episode in 2014, which was screened in 2015. I just wanted to leave while I was still happy with everything. It was a really difficult decision to leave. Because I loved doing that job and I loved working with everybody on the Vera team. But a little part of me, for whatever reason, the little inner self, said to me, ‘You should probably call it a day while you’re still enjoying it.’ To step away and seek new acting challenges.

“Brenda loves playing Vera and she never lets the standards drop. She has got a ridiculously high work ethic. And to do that day in, day out is phenomenal. I’m 48 and I thought the filming schedule was tough, including being away from home. But Brenda just gets on with it. I take away nothing but good memories.

“My first Vera film was series five, episode one called ‘Changing Tides’. While this story is called *The Rising Tide*. So it feels appropriate to come in on one tide and go out on another. Having made 35 episodes with Brenda, that first film is probably, for me, the most memorable one. There was such an overlap between Aiden and me. I was coming in to a show that was successful. While Aiden was joining Vera’s police team and trying to find his feet. You had to find the rhythm and the look of the character. We were still playing with things in terms of Aiden at the start. I think that’s why most new characters need at least two series just to find where they are. And eventually we settled in to what we now know as Aiden. But in that first series it’s almost like Aiden’s younger brother!”

INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY CONTINUED

Q: How did your screen relationship with Brenda develop over the years?

“Trust became a big thing for both Vera and Aiden. And also off screen as well. Once that first series with Aiden was screened everybody at ITV was happy the Vera ship was still sailing. There’s always going to be a pressure when you go into an established show after someone has left. But as soon as it airs and they get the numbers and the reviews then people relax. That gave me confidence to go in as an actor to make some more decisions about Aiden.

“The journey for Aiden was to understand that it could be a partnership with his boss. But she was still in charge. Aiden is protective of Vera. And as the series went on their decision making became much more instinctive. They were on the same page a lot more rather than clashing. We developed a natural rhythm. Almost like when you’ve got a piece of music with the front person and lead guitar. It felt a bit like that.

“There’s never any disrespect from Aiden to who Vera is. Things like putting on her blue overshoes is the respectful thing to do. Out of respect, Aiden would always lift the police tape for his boss so she could go under it. Or he’d open a door and let her go through first. They are acts of respect. But out of that respect there is a genuine love for Vera. And the way she conducts herself and carries out each investigation. Aiden loves her.

“There’s also the fact that Vera lives alone and is obsessive about cases. Whereas Aiden is dedicated to the work but also has a wife and family to go home to. It’s Vera’s genius but also her downfall, the sacrifices she’s made for the job.”

INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY CONTINUED

Q: You also became great friends with Brenda off screen?

“We spend up to 16 hours a day in each other’s company during filming. Also sharing neighbouring apartments in Newcastle for several months each year. Not only would we share and talk together but we were also at ease when we didn’t want to talk. We could sit down, have a cup of tea, watch Coronation Street together and not speak. We could just be ourselves. Sometimes as an actor it’s easy to feel like you always have to be ‘on’. So it was nice for us just to decompress on our own.

“There are long periods between scenes where you have to wait for things to be set up. Brenda and I have probably spent half of our shooting life sat next to each other in the Land Rover while waiting to film. We’ve both got the same silly sense of humour. I think we would both agree that Brenda is my best audience and I’m her best audience when it comes to our silly voices, our jokes and humour. And that does get you through. You need that. If I’m being really honest, I’m not sure I would have done nine years of Vera if it wasn’t for that side of our relationship.

“The other friendships you make are also really special. I’ve become particularly close to Riley Jones, who plays DC Mark Edwards, over the years. He’s one of my closest friends. One of the kindest, most talented actors and human beings you could want to work with.

“I could also name all 75 of the crew. There’s a combination on the Vera team of humility, a work ethic and no ego. A real, ‘let’s get this made’ attitude. Even when the pressure is on, when the light is going, when the end of the day is running away. Yes, we get stressed, yes, it gets difficult, but there’s an understanding that we’re still all in it together. People always say we’re like a family in a job. But it’s true of Vera. There is a reason why this show has been going on for so long and why the same people go back to work on it again and again. Because it’s that understanding that when you pull together as a close-knit community it’s a really special time. We’re all away on location all over the North East and each series is the best part of six months of people’s lives. So you need to be able to enjoy each other’s company as much as possible.”

INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY CONTINUED

Q: *The Rising Tide*, based on the book by Ann Cleeves, sees Vera, Aiden and the team head north just before Christmas. Why?

“We get a call about an unexplained death on Holy Island in Northumberland at a reunion of five friends. The victim is a well known television celebrity and there is a lot of pressure on Vera and Aiden to wrap this case up quickly. The story then delves into who these people are, their past lives and the secrets that are hidden. We have fantastic screenwriters but there’s always something extra when a film is based on one of Ann’s books. Although there are differences in this screen adaptation.

“Aiden gets to drive Vera’s Land Rover on his own across the causeway to Holy Island. I think we’ve seen him being given the keys on screen before but I’m not sure I’ve ever been seen actually driving it. It was amazing to drive Vera’s Land Rover across the Holy Island causeway. Vera tells Aiden not to scratch her motor. And she would probably notice if he did! The Land Rover is very noisy to drive - it’s hard for the sound man when we’re talking in the car as it is moving. But it’s a beautiful vehicle.

“The dashboard of that Land Rover is full of old sandwich and crisp packets and so on. Some people who come in to work just for the day think that mess was made by Brenda and I and they try and clean it away. It’s like, ‘Wait, wait, wait!’ All of it is placed there very deliberately. And I swear Brenda would know every single bit and where it should go.

“I love that part of the world. It’s so beautiful. With amazing skies. It’s like a Ridley Scott sci-fi movie up there with the sand blowing across the causeway, it almost feels like you’re in *The Martian* or *Blade Runner*. It’s absolutely breathtaking. I think that’s the second time we have filmed there in nine years but this time we were based there. And we were cut off a few times due to the tide. I’m also a bit of a twitcher and I enjoyed all of that. Once that tide comes in you cannot leave. You just have to enjoy this place. Not in a claustrophobic imprisoned sense. It’s a liberating feeling. I loved it when we missed the tide and we had to stay on Holy Island. You’ve got no choice but to appreciate and explore the place.

INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY CONTINUED

“Our art department did a great job on this film, as they always do. I stand back in awe at what they create both on location and back at the studio. They recreate a shop, a house, an apartment in the studio and it is identical. Some of these spaces we feature are small so you have to rebuild the rooms back at the studio because you have to get the camera and the lights in. They always deliver every single time.”

Q: This Christmas special marks the 51st episode of Vera. That’s quite an achievement?

“That’s 51 feature length films. I can’t speak highly enough about Ann Cleeves. She embraced and welcomed me into the world of Vera, even though Aiden is not in her books. She’s always been there and available. So knowledgeable. Ann also created what became a lead role on television featuring an older woman. We need screen content led by older people, including older women. My family love the fact that Vera is an older woman leading the show. It’s brilliant. There’s a generational difference in how Vera deals with things.

“Maybe that’s why Vera is slightly more direct and more impatient. You’ve got a literary legend and a legend of the screen working together. It doesn’t get much better than that, does it? Vera also gives the screenwriters the opportunity to stretch themselves. To write something like a three act structured film. So you have a beginning, a middle and an end over all of that screen time. I know a lot of writers really enjoy that.

“For the most part, Vera crimes are generally a crime of passion. We’re not really mainly dealing with evil people or serial killers. And because of that it’s always circumstantial and contextual about someone’s life. So even though we have the intrigue of who had done it, for me, I’m always more interested in why did they do that? What happened and what led them to this point to commit this crime?

“The writers always manage to find a different world to delve into. So in an episode of Vera you have the stability of it being a crime drama with Vera and Aiden. And Vera and Joe Ashworth (David Leon) going forward in series 13. And you know where you are with that. But then it gives you the opportunity to open up and explore another world within that world.

INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY CONTINUED

“That’s what’s interesting to our writers and why we get really fantastic writers, guest actors and directors. And cinematographers because the landscape is so beautiful to shoot.”

Q: You had a reunion of your own in this episode?

“There was a lovely reunion for me with Clare Holman, who plays Annie - one of the friends at the Holy Island reunion - in this story. I went to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and in your final year pairs of students are assigned a professional actor from the business to guide them through the final year. To mentor you towards the evening where you perform in front of casting directors and agents. And my mentor was Clare Holman.

“To meet up with Clare again and work with her on my final Vera film, having not seen her since 1997, was delightful. To share screen time with someone who basically helped put some of the building blocks in place for where I am today. We went out and had dinner together and talked about where we had been and what we had done. The frightening thing was how quickly all of that time has gone!”

Q: Viewers love those little moments of humour between Vera and Aiden. Has she ever paid for anything?

“Aiden is always out of pocket. Vera orders her chips, coffee or whatever then leaves him at the counter to pay. If Aiden has got chips in a scene, I like to actually eat them to make it look more authentic. Which can be tricky if we have to film several takes. There was one time when the crew had to keep re-supplying me with chips and they were giggling their socks off. I literally couldn’t move. And then they say, ‘Right, we’ll break for lunch now.’ I said, ‘Are you kidding me? I’ve just eaten my own body weight in chips and now we’re breaking for lunch?’”

Q: What are your thoughts about the many Vera fans who gather to watch filming?

“The fans who come to watch us film have always been extraordinarily kind and patient. Over the years the numbers have grown. They love it. Just wonderful, incredibly loyal fans. A loyal fan base like that is gold dust. They watch Vera, understand it and support us. They champion Vera and the show.

INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY CONTINUED

“And you’ve got to bear in mind there are 75 of us in trucks and so on and we take over a street and people’s communities. It is an imposition but not once has there been any issue or anyone complaining about it.

“And viewers love watching old episodes of Vera again. I don’t really like to watch anything I’ve been in but if there is a Vera on I will probably watch it. Quite often I’ve forgotten the details. It’s a combination for me of remembering the story but also bringing back the memories of where we shot it, who we worked with and so on. With each story being self contained, each film has its own resonance and curiosity about it. And you can revisit it and eventually remember what happened!”

Q: What have you learned from your time working on Vera?

“I’ve learned that you never let your work standards drop and never become complacent. The challenge is to always come into every single film and day as if it’s a new job but also as if it’s your last job. To retain and maintain that love and work ethic. And moving forward that’s what I want to do in whatever happens next in my career.

“I have so much respect for the actors who come in to Vera as guest artists. They present their best work and embrace that. That is absolutely imperative. Even though it’s somebody else’s show. Brenda and I have always maintained there isn’t a story without the story of the guest characters who come in. They are the heartbeat of the story.

“I’ve grown as a man and as an actor over nine years on Vera. You gain a lot of confidence filming 35 episodes. You understand more about yourself as an actor. The imposter syndrome doesn’t often leave you. But being on Vera I felt for the first time that I belong in this business. Also through Brenda giving me the confidence and working alongside her. So you take that and move forward with it. Also sharing your own experience and knowledge with younger actors coming through. Giving them confidence.

“It was lovely this year for Vera to be nominated at the National Television Awards and have that recognition. It meant a lot to all of us. We don’t make Vera for awards or celebrations. But because the viewers vote for the NTAs it was special for Brenda and I and some of the rest of the team to be there. And personally a little bit of icing on the cake for my final series.

INTERVIEW WITH KENNY DOUGHTY CONTINUED

“I’ve got one of Aiden’s jackets as a memento from the set. It’s handmade by the costume department to fit me so there was no point in the production keeping it. But, best of all, I’ve taken some phenomenal friends with me from Vera.”

Q: Are you able to sum up why Vera has endured for so long and been so successful?

“I think it’s a combination. Each Vera film is a self contained experience. So you don’t have to watch eight episodes to get to the end of the story. I think that is really appealing. The fans love the dynamic between Vera and Aiden and Vera and Joe before. With Joe back at her side in series 13. That’s a nice continuity, that David is back. I’ll be watching series 13 from the sidelines and applauding them. So there’s a comfort watching Vera and her team. And the whole thing is beautiful to look at. While Vera is a national treasure.

“Vera has been a massive part of my life and I feel very honoured and privileged that I could carry the candle for those 35 episodes to now pass it back to David Leon, with the return of Joe Ashworth. It’s fantastic that David has returned.

“I’ll be at home for Christmas and will definitely be watching *The Rising Tide* when it is screened. Eating a turkey sandwich. I hope viewers watch Vera at Christmas and make a toast to her, Aiden’s farewell and to the return of Joe in the New Year. It’s a very special episode.”



SYNOPSIS

It may be the run up to Christmas but this doesn't mean that DCI Vera Stanhope (Brenda Blethyn) can slow down and enjoy a bit of Secret Santa and some mince pies - far from it as the apparent suicide of Rick Kelsall sees Vera's boss insist that she personally take a look into the case as it's a high profile death on Holy Island and that's her home stomping ground. Vera soon works out that there is more to Rick's death than initially suspected, he was murdered.

Rick had been attending a reunion with old friends, a ritual they have all stayed true to for over forty years. Had one of those at the reunion been holding a grudge for all these years and finally snapped? Is his death related to the scandal that has knocked his career sideways? Could the motivation be greed? Is someone out for revenge? Or is it something much more obscure? And how far will the killer...or killers go to cover their tracks? Could Vera, or her team also be in danger and will they all see Christmas?



AUTHOR ANN CLEEVES



Ann Cleeves is the author of more than thirty-five critically acclaimed novels, and in 2017 was awarded the highest accolade in crime writing, the CWA Diamond Dagger. She is the creator of popular detectives Vera Stanhope, Jimmy Perez and Matthew Venn, who can be found on television in ITV's Vera, BBC One's Shetland and ITV's The Long Call respectively. The TV series and the books they are based on have become international sensations, capturing the minds of millions worldwide. 2022 marks 30 years of publishing with Pan Macmillan.

Ann worked as a probation officer, bird observatory cook and auxiliary coastguard before she started writing. She is a member of 'Murder Squad', working with other British northern writers to promote crime fiction. Ann also spends her time advocating for reading to improve health and wellbeing and supporting access to books. In 2021 her Reading for Wellbeing project launched with local authorities across the North East. She lives in Northumberland where the Vera books are set. You can find Ann on Twitter and Facebook [@AnnCleeves](#)

The Rising Tide, Ann's tenth novel in her acclaimed Vera Stanhope series, was published in 2023. For press enquires: emma@emmaharrow.com

CAST CREDITS

DCI Vera Stanhope.....BRENDA BLETHYN
DS Aiden Healy.....KENNY DOUGHTY
DC Kenny Lockhart.....JON MORRISON
DC Jacqueline Williams.....IBINABO JACK
DC Mark Edwards.....RILEY JONES
Pathologist Dr. Paula Bennett.....SARAH KAMEELA IMPEY
PC Billington.....JAKE ASHTON-NELSON
Annie Laidlore.....CLARE HOLMAN
Rick Kelsall.....ADRIAN MILLS
Louisa Hampton.....SUZETTE LLEWELLYN
Sam Hampton.....BRIAN BOVELL
Yaz Kaur.....ORLESSA ALTASS
Philip Robson.....PHIL CORNWELL

CAST CREDITS

Daniel Rede.....ADRIAN RAWLINS
Charlotte Thomas.....KATE ISITT
Cecilia.....FELICITY DEAN
Pamela.....NATASHA PATEL
Katherine Willmore.....SARA POWELL
Eliza Willmore.....CORR KIRK
Gordon Stanwick.....MARTIN TURNER
Isaiah Thomas.....ERIC RICHARD
Ellie Thomas.....PHILLIPPA WILSON
Judith Sinclair.....LIZ CROWTHER
Superintendent Watkins.....SAM HALPENNY
Jacob.....PETER PEVERLEY

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Executive Producers..... KATE BARTLETT
.....WILL NICHOLSON
Producer.....DEBBIE SHEWELL
Writer.....SALLY ABBOTT
Director.....PAUL GAY
Director of Photography.....SIMON RICHARDS
Production ExecutiveROSLYN HILL
Line Producer..... FAHIMA CHOWDHURY
Script Editor.....LIAM J STRATTON
Casting Director.....MAUREEN DUFF CDG
Costume Designer.....IAIN MACAULAY
Make up Designer.....BEKI GOULDING

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Editor.....SIMON STARLING
Composer.....BEN BARTLETT
Location Manager.....ANDREW EDWARDS
Production Designer.....PAUL BOOTH
Art Director.....JONATHAN TOLSON
Props Master.....NIGEL PLACE
Production Coordinator.....QASIM BAIG

