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**AFTER THE FLOOD S2**

**PRESS PACK**



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**SERIES OVERVIEW**

The second series of AFTER THE FLOOD finds newly promoted detective Jo Marshall (Sophie Rundle) on the trail of a baffling new murder investigation. As tensions simmer in Waterside amid the rising threat of moorland fires and the subsequent risk of further flooding, a body is discovered in bizarre circumstances.

Jo's race to stop the killer brings her into direct conflict with powerful and influential forces within the town, ultimately drawing her into an investigation that becomes deeply personal. One that will require her to operate in secret if she is to have any hope of rooting out the corruption that has blighted the town's police force - and her own family - for decades.

## **CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Jo Marshall (Sophie Rundle)**

Jo discovers what juggling childcare with her new detective responsibilities is all about as she returns from maternity leave. Jo has separated from Pat, and she understands he was manipulated by Mackie, but struggles to forgive him for the lies that go all the way back to when they very first met. The pair are co-parenting their daughter, from separate houses, and it's relatively amicable - in fact, they are finding a new level of connection, and Jo's started to realise they can maybe still be a great team. Jo's relationship with her mum is as close as ever as she's living with her, and Molly's always ready to step in and help with Eve, which happens regularly. But there's a huge unspoken secret between her and Molly, because as well as protecting Pat from the consequences of his actions, Jo's shielding her mum from the revelations about Mackie and her dead father, Bren. We watch how all this affects Jo as she is thrown into the thick of a beguiling murder, while, at the same time, being compelled to pursue justice against Mackie - on her own terms.

### **Phil Mackie (Nicholas Gleaves)**

The end of the last series revealed a darkness at the heart of Mackie's character; he was found to be a murderer and a corrupt manipulator with a need for control. One year on, he's managed to establish and maintain a tentative truce with Jo and Pat - while maintaining his position at the heart of Waterside police station. Mackie's aware there's some tension between Jo and Pat, and he'll exploit his position at work and his relationship with Molly to keep close tabs on Jo. Also, with Sarah having all but officially separated from him, Phil is on his own, a more desperate man now who deeply fears being exposed and losing his position of power.

### **Molly Marshall (Lorraine Ashbourne)**

Molly has found a new lease of life in the last year - she's got a fabulous group of wild-swimming pals, she was successful in her bid to be a Councillor for Waterside, and, most importantly, she's now a grandma. She loves Jo and Eve living with her and relishes the time she gets with her granddaughter, but she worries about Jo and Pat's separation, as she doesn't understand why they broke up, and every attempt to talk about it gets shut down. While her new responsibilities at work keep her busy, when Jack Radcliffe returns from his lengthy holiday the two of them fall into an easy rapport. Although the revelations of his affair with Sarah hurt Molly, they have an undeniable spark.

### **Xav Palmer (Matthew McNulty)**

On first appearances, Xav is a happy-go-lucky charmer with an eye for the ladies. He's immediately drawn to Jo and can't help but chance his hand even though he knows he shouldn't, given the circumstances of their meeting. Charismatic and hard to resist, Xav's a driven man, who cares about certain things deeply, with a strangely moral, if occasionally warped, sense of justice.

### **Pat Holman (Matt Stokoe)**

After Jo moved out of their family home, Pat's sister Kelly, and his niece Sophie moved in, which has been less than ideal for him. Pat's worried that he's lost Jo for good, he still loves her as deeply as he ever did, possibly more now since she's given birth to their daughter, Eve. Deeply regretting his cowardice and how he was willingly manipulated by Mackie, Pat loathes his weakness and would fall on his sword to protect Jo and ensure Mackie sees justice, even if that meant going to prison. He has a very small spark of hope that Jo might find her way back to him if he proves himself to her.

### **Deepa Das (Tripti Tripuraneni)**

Deepa is flourishing in the uniform team. A committed, dynamic officer who doesn't shy away from the more physical side of the job, Deepa is capable and growing in confidence. She's maintained her relationship with Jo out of work and through Jo's maternity leave. However, with Jo's return to the office, Deepa is struck by the newfound distance between them as Jo seeks to keep out of Mackie's reach.

**Jack Radcliffe (Philip Glenister)**

Since the end of the last series, Jack has struggled financially and emotionally. Having lost Uplands due to his investors pulling out at the last minute, Jack went bust and took himself off to a friend's place in Lanzarote for a few months. The repercussions from series one and his role in covering up Daniel's death have had a profound impact on him; he knows that he's been forced to act against his better instincts, and it's led him to reassess what really matters to him. After a lifetime of prioritising business and casual flings, Jack's gone through a period of self-reflection, wondering whether he's made the right decisions – and there's only one person he's been thinking about since he's been away, Molly.

**Sarah Mackie (Jacqueline Boatswain)**

Sarah won her seat in Parliament and has been thriving in her new career away from Waterside. With her future looking bright and her confidence at an all-time high, she's got too much to lose to look backwards. She's determined not to let the sins of her past catch up to her – and although she's only in Waterside infrequently, she needs to make serious decisions about the future of her relationship with Phil.

**DS Sam Bradley (Jill Halfpenny)**

Sam is the new DS who's recently transferred to Waterside from Newcastle – she's looking for a fresh challenge and a new focus after finding herself single and home alone now that both of her kids are at university. A highly-qualified and experienced murder detective, Sam's excellent at her job and immediately takes a liking to Jo – she sees something of herself in her. Perceptive and good with people, Sam also has a firm streak and believes the rules are there for a reason; it's a trait that might just see her butting heads with Jo and her instincts for breaking the rules.

**Tony Rower (Ian Puleston-Davies)**

Tony is a councillor - he works closely with Molly and the two of them have a great rapport. They share a committed work ethic, and he likes her energy, it spurs him on, which he needs because he has a lot on his plate. A caring and committed family man, he lives with his daughter Donna and grandson Declan. The three of them were flooded out a year ago, and the damage was so bad that they are only now about to return home. The whole experience was so dreadful for Donna that she might not be able to move back into the house for fear that it would flood again - an acute trauma. So, Tony's under a lot of stress but must keep going - and wants to keep going.

**Alan Benson (Alun Armstrong)**

A hugely successful businessman and the town's most generous benefactor, it was Alan who swiftly responded to last year's flooding and paid £10 million to have a flood wall built to protect Waterside. Financially savvy with many business interests and investments, Alan has made his own good fortune and now lives in a sprawling estate surrounded by his privately-owned moorland, which, of course, he's monetised for high-end grouse shoots for the rich and connected. Alan is deeply protective of his daughter, Harriet, and granddaughter, Libi, but he's not the warmest patriarch, and although Harriet is starting to look after his interests, he struggles to relinquish control.

## CAST INTERVIEWS

### **SOPHIE RUNDLE – Jo Marshall**

#### **How pleased are you that the show is back?**

When the call came saying they wanted to make a second series, it was such a nice surprise, and it felt right. A second series can often feel like a bit of an add-on, whereas this feels like we just pick up where we left off and we're running with it. Mick Ford has deftly created this small-town community, and that's what people have responded to. Every character comes with a full life, a full trajectory and a full narrative, and the second series is unfolding that with each character. There are lots of interesting people who've found themselves in interesting positions in the series, and at the end of series one, there was a lot of room to explore more.

#### **What is it that really draws the audience in?**

After the Flood has got this environmental message, but we're dealing with real people's problems. The climate conversation is enormous, and sometimes that can be quite isolating as a lot of people worry enormously about it, but don't know where to begin. But by manoeuvring that into the story of this small, relatable community, which could be anywhere, it has enabled people to explore these ideas and have these conversations, and I think that's smart. When you have these huge themes, you must distil them down into something more manageable.

#### **Where do we find Jo at the beginning of series two?**

Some time has passed since the end of series one, Jo and Pat have separated, and they're co-parenting their daughter, Eve, who is now turning one, but there's a lot of unresolved conflict there, and a lot that they haven't figured out. Jo is living with her mum, Molly, and she's a detective now. At the start of the series, we see Jo trying to work out where she is in relation to Mackie and Pat, and we see how she is coming to terms with everything she's uncovered. On the surface, it seems like everything is fine, but we soon realise that she's playing the long game and is working to bring Mackie down and build a case against him. She's still a dog with a bone, she's not forgotten, and she's just gearing up for the next attack.

#### **Tell us about the investigation in series two.**

This series starts with a body that is found on the moors. Jo, rather than trying to get into the investigation, is now leading it. What unfolds is this spider web of conspiracy and lies, we bring new characters in, and it all has that climate activist undertone. Something is going on within the community that she needs to unpick, and all is not as it seems.

#### **What's changed for Jo since the first series?**

In series one, Jo had that slightly naive frame of mind, she was greener. Now, she's more grounded, more assured, more confident. She's less scrappy, slightly stiller, but has that dogged, tenacious, slightly on-the-edge attitude. She still can't help herself but pull at the tiger's tail. There's a maturity there, considering all she's been through but she's still impulsive, which is what we love about her. You cringe and think, "don't do it," and then she does it, that's why she's a good conduit for drama because she'll go places you know she shouldn't – but she does. She attracts trouble, which is fun to watch.

#### **What do you love about playing Jo?**

When you play a character, there's so much of yourself in it, but Jo's fearlessness is not in me. There's a scene when she's on the moors, there are wildfires, and of course she can't help but get involved. When everyone else tells her to run the other way, she runs toward the trouble, toward danger. That's why we love her – fearless, reckless, a hero.

#### **Tell us about a favourite moment from this series?**

We had lots of stunts, smoke, and me pretending I'm good at running in this series, which was fun. It was rough and ready, gutsy, and those are the bits I love about playing Jo. There's a lot of mystery, cerebral figuring-out, but Jo is also physical, propulsive, energetic. It's fun to see women like that on screen.

**Tell us more about Jo and Molly's relationship. How does it develop in this series?**

I love Jo and Molly's scenes. Lorraine is brilliant, and Mick writes their dynamic so well. They're mother and daughter, but sometimes like sisters. They bicker, get irritated, but completely love each other, those scenes really sing for me. In the second series, Jo and her daughter Eve are living with Molly, so we see more of their relationship, it feels realistic and relatable. For me, that's the real heart of the show – their amazing, spiky, playful mother-daughter dynamic.

**Thematically, how does the second series build on the first?**

This series is more of that procedural mystery drama audiences love. It invites the guessing game, intertwined with climate conversations, familial and romantic dynamics and how a community thrives or doesn't. We dig deeper into the other character stories and how they hurt and love each other, and the damage done to themselves and the environment. We have new characters too, like Alun Armstrong and Jill Halfpenny. Jill plays Jo's new boss, Sam, a brilliant detective, slightly rebellious, and aspirational, so there's a lot more to explore in the next series.

**NICHOLAS GLEAVES – Sergeant Phil Mackie**

**How excited were you when you heard the show was returning for a second series?**

I thought it was great news, I thought we were onto something really dramatic and very revealing in series one – it simmered away and then exploded. To be able to come back now and deal with the aftermath of that is pretty exciting. We've also got a lot of new cast members, there's a deepening conspiracy and exploration of the organised crime element revealed at the end of series one. We've moved into the reveal of the murder and how that was covered up, and now it starts to expand throughout Waterside.

**Where do we find Phil Mackie in series two?**

We find Phil Mackie in a great spot, to be honest. At the end of series one, his life was quite devastating and very difficult, but we cut to almost a year later, and he has protected himself, and is back in a place of real confidence. He has taken command, weathered the storm and managed to cover up what he did. He's an interesting character, because on one hand, he's quite on edge and anxious, but he covers it incredibly well. He has this ability to be all things to all men, and there's still something authentic about him. Mackie's got a lot going on. There's a sensitivity to him that comes out in his interactions with Sarah Mackie [his wife], but also a Machiavellian side. He's no stranger to being devious and strategizing but there's a decency too. He has a lot to pull on, which makes him interesting to play – you're generally never sure what he will do next.

**What is Mackie's relationship with Jo like in series 2?**

Mackie thinks his and Jo's relationship is good. He feels she has come into his way of thinking and can normalise the difficulties she felt because of her dad and Mackie's corruption. He thinks she's come into a place where they have an understanding and can live with it.

**Tell us about his relationship with Sarah.**

He's finding their relationship quite a challenge. Their relationship has changed a lot since series one. There was a kind of severance, some difficulties, real concerns about her loyalty, and he was feeling insecure within the marriage. She goes away at the beginning of series two, and when she comes back, it really lifts him because he's in a place where he can feel some potential security. Mackie has an interesting relationship with love – he really believes in it and craves it, and Sarah holds that potential in this series.

**Tell us about the storylines to look forward to in series two.**

There's ongoing difficulty for Mackie in covering up what happened in series one, and a whole different kind of crime starts to emerge. Very deep and dark corruption begins to surface, and we'll see the extent of Mackie's involvement. We've got new characters, including Ian Puleston-Davies as Tony. That brings us back into the ecological themes of the show. Molly (Lorraine Ashbourne) and Tony are involved in what's wrong with Waterside's ecology and environment, which is becoming very dangerous.

**How are the themes from series one built upon in series two?**

Series one focused heavily on rain and what happens to these northern towns in extreme weather. Mick

Ford, the writer, has expanded that, exploring water purity – something we often take for granted. Rivers, streams, tap water – now we know it's not guaranteed. Mick has made this a strong narrative about potential illness, what's wrong with Waterside's rivers and streams, and why it's happening. There's also a metaphor here – how a beautiful northern town can have poison, reflecting the corruption of the police and other hidden dangers.

**Tell us about the scripts for this series.**

Mick Ford is our lead writer. Maxine Alderton and Joe Forrest have also contributed fantastically, bringing their own identity while keeping the story on track. Mick has continued to add new layers, more intrigue, and breadth to the story and characters. The new characters are dynamic but also ordinary, giving a real relatability that's difficult to pull off.

**What can people look forward to in series two?**

A whole lot of new characters, strong storylines that bring series one's events up close and dynamic. There's a real cat-and-mouse story between Sergeant Mackie and Jo Marshall [Sophie Rundle] that will hopefully drive us to a great finale.

**LORRAINE ASHBOURNE – Molly Marshall**

**What can audiences expect from series two?**

There are some quite big scenes, very dramatic. Some big reveals – quite confessional this time around – that were all set up in series one. It's high drama. It's very exciting. The themes are continuing quite nicely as well, with the aftermath and after-effects of the flood from series one on the people of Waterside. Then you've got other environmental concerns as well, all handled brilliantly – not lecturing, but interesting, showing how it affects people and how different people deal with it.

**Where do we find Molly in this series?**

Molly is now a counsellor. In many ways, she's grown in confidence, she's made for it. Her sense of community and responsibility is so strong, and she doesn't question it. She's not scared because she knows what she's doing is right. She can tell a few white lies, but she's not bent, she's coming from a good place, much like Jo. Jo wants to be a great copper, and Molly wants to be a good counsellor. We both try to do the right thing, serve the community, then obviously, along the way, because the scripts are so clever, they can take you down unexpected roads. This year I'm also a cold-water swimmer, so there's a whole new side there, and Molly's got this gorgeous relationship with Jack [Phil Glenister], who's a bit twinkly. We have great fun on set! In this series, Jack has become a slightly different character, he keeps you guessing, but his character certainly grows and is a surprise.

**Tell us about Mick Ford's writing.**

The writing is brilliant and really layered. I read scenes and think, oh, 'that's satisfying. When you read a script and it's clear as day, you think, I know exactly how to do it, that's rewarding. Mick nails the characters, he's an actor, so I respond to his writing as an actor because he knows exactly what an actor does, and he writes great dialogue. He's got Molly down to a T, but he's like that with all the characters.

**Why do you think the show performed so well?**

I think the success of the show is that it deals with real-world issues, really important issues. But it's never preachy. It's interesting, dynamic, and a thriller. It deals with real people's lives.

**Tell us about working with the cast and in particular Sophie Rundle?**

Sophie Rundle is a brilliant artiste; I love working with her. Mick's written a brilliantly gorgeous relationship, so we've got great characters to play. Molly and Jo adore each other; Jo is Molly's world. They get on each other's nerves, Jo bosses Molly about, and Molly sometimes bosses her about, it's a gorgeous relationship. It feels authentic and real. Ian Puleston-Davies is new this year, an old friend and a brilliant character, and a new confidante for Molly on the council. Nicholas Gleaves is returning, I worked with him 27 years ago, so it's great to be back working together again. It's a brilliant, accomplished cast, and I'm proud to be part of it.

**PHIL GLENISTER – Jack Radcliffe**

**What was it about the first series that caught people’s imagination?**

It was very much a great ensemble drama. It had messages about environmental issues, and obviously, we had a murder – you have to have a murder. So, it had a bit of everything, and the writing was good. It’s nice to come back for a second gig, see everybody again, all the cast and crew are a really lovely group of people, we do a lot of laughing, which is good.

**Tell us about Jack. Where do we find him at the beginning of this series?**

Jack’s been away; he’s gone off because things didn’t really work out in series 1. He’s lost all his money – been done over in business, Molly’s not reciprocating his advances, and he decides he needs a break. He goes off to Lanzarote for three months, and then he turns up on Molly’s doorstep, deciding to come back because he has some inner demons he needs to get out from the first series.

**Tell us about his relationship with Molly?**

They’ve got quite a tempestuous relationship, Jack and Molly. She’s not the most forgiving of people, and Jack’s on the back foot trying to convince her about what he knows, why he left and what went on at the end of the last series. It’s hard for him because he knows Mackie is incredibly close to Molly’s family, and Jack knows all this stuff about Mackie that Molly has no idea about.

**What’s Lorraine Ashbourne like to work with?**

I love Lorraine’s energy; it changes my energy. She talks quite fast, quite frantic, which is her character, and it makes me do that too. On camera, it really works and it’s great fun. The whole cast is a really nice ensemble, everybody gets on, and there are no egos.

**And what about Jo and Jack? What is their relationship like in the series?**

Jack is trying to turn a new leaf; he’s now on a bit of a redemption path. He’s trying to get Jo on side because obviously, they had a frosty relationship, and he is now trying to make amends with Molly. Jo knows a lot about what happened, and his goal is essentially to convince both Jo and Molly that he has turned a corner.

**And how are the scripts in this series?**

The good thing about a second series is that the writers have seen what works and what doesn’t. They can start writing for the actor a bit more, bringing in some of their personality or the way the character’s played. They’ve been set up in the first series, now we see them branch out, get taken down different avenues and new relationships. I’ve got quite a fun, comical relationship with Ian Puleston-Davies’ character Tony. The scenes with the three of us were great fun.

**JILL HALFPENNY – DS Sam Bradley**

**How have you found joining the cast for the second series?**

Great! I watched series one and really enjoyed it, so when they asked me to join series two, I was thrilled – especially because of this particular group of actors. I admire every one of them, but especially Lorraine Ashbourne. I’ve always really admired her, I’ve loved her work since I was a kid, since *Playing the Field*. For me, it was like, “Lorraine Ashbourne, finally!” Even though we barely have a scene together, it was still such a thrill. Most of us in the cast have been around a while, and even if we hadn’t worked together before, we knew of each other. So, it’s lovely to be in a room together, doing the work, and just enjoying it. There’s also a real sense of gratitude at this stage – gratitude to still be doing the thing we love.

**Tell us about DS Sam Bradley. Who is she, and where do we meet her?**

Sam Bradley comes in from a different station to work on the murder investigation. She’s a divorced woman with two grown-up boys. That’s as much as we know about her. What we do see is that she’s very good at her job, steady, and pretty unflappable.

**What’s Sophie Rundle like to work with?**

She’s just so lovely, but at the same time, she’s very focused and specific about what she wants to do, which I really admire, and she has it all going on. It makes such a difference when you enjoy the time

between takes as much as you enjoy the takes themselves. That's exactly how it feels working with Sophie. There's a nice dynamic between Sam and Jo. Jo can be a bit like a dog with a bone, and Sam loves that about her because she recognises some of herself in Jo when she was younger. But she also knows Jo can get herself into trouble, so she reins her in sometimes. There's also this generational difference between them. Sam is at the later stage of her journey, with her children grown up, while Jo is right at the beginning with her baby. You don't see it all spelled out on screen, but it creates this undercurrent – Sam wanting to say, "I've been where you are, and it's all going to be all right".

**There's a murder mystery at the heart of series two – what can you tell us about that?**

There are so many different elements to it. A lot of people give Sam and Jo fragments of truth, but not the whole truth, which makes things confusing and complex. It's like putting together pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. What's interesting is that many of the characters act from a well-intentioned place, they do things because they believe in a cause or feel it's the right thing, but that doesn't mean their actions are right.

**And the scripts – what do you love about them?**

I've always secretly had a fantasy of being a detective, so I love that procedural aspect of piecing things together. That's what's exciting about a show like this – watching characters suddenly realise something, unlock a clue, and knowing exactly where they need to go next. The writing makes that process satisfying. The surprises feel earned and then, just when you think you know where it's all heading, another layer gets added. I think people will be really surprised by how it unfolds.

**What do you think people can look forward to this series?**

It's this potent mix of people who believe what they're doing is right – even when it's not. You've got characters acting from conviction, others behaving badly with full intent, and the law cutting through it all. When those forces collide, there's an explosion. Sam and Jo are right in the middle, trying to work out who's telling the truth, who's hiding something, and why. And along the way, there are these juicy bits of information revealed that keep you hooked. Then at the very end? There's a very unexpected occurrence that I think will really take people by surprise.

**MATT STOKOE – Pat Holman**

**What was it about the first series that caught people's attention?**

I think audiences responded because it felt so timely. There aren't many TV shows about the climate crisis that don't feel preachy, but this one just focused on the human stories. It's impossible to ignore how present the issue is in the news cycle, and making a drama that felt relatable, realistic, and down-to-earth really resonated with people. It's great that it attracted enough of an audience that people wanted more.

**Where do we find Pat at the beginning of series two?**

Pat and Jo have separated after the events of series one, so he's feeling very sorry for himself. He's co-parenting with Jo, living in their house, still picking up the pieces of the fallout. He's still holding a candle for her, doing everything he can to try and win her back, to rekindle their romance. At the same time, he's doggedly pursuing some kind of comeuppance for Mackie. He wants closure. He wants Mackie to be punished for what he's done, but that pursuit sometimes comes at the expense of Pat's personal life and even his professional responsibilities.

**How does the second series continue the themes we saw in the first?**

In series one, the climate element was huge – something dramatic and recognisable, almost an act of God: a flood. That's attention-grabbing, but this series it shifts to something subtler. It's about the fallout, the things people don't immediately think about: wildfires, and the recovery process after the flood. It's a more nuanced look at the complexities of the climate crisis. The aim should never be to educate people outright; that's just a by-product of telling a good story. The "big stuff" like a flood, is almost too easy to go into with another catastrophic event, but then, how many times can we do that? The wildfire element is something we usually associate with the States, but every year we're breaking heat records. So, if the series is even slightly ahead of the curve in introducing audiences to that reality, then that feels like responsible work.

**What do you think makes the show and its writing so strong?**

What I love is that the scripts capture believable humanity, especially in the family scenes. The procedural parts work brilliantly to move the plot forward. It feels like a real police station. But the strength of the show is in the human relationships. We also get to collaborate with the writers, tweaking lines so they feel true to how we'd naturally say them. That flexibility helps make the world feel real, and everyone feels like part of a genuine community. In series one, you're still setting up characters. In series two, you're letting them run, the interactions get more nuanced and that sense of community deepens.

**The show clearly has a powerful message. What do you want people to take away from it?**

I think, like last time, it's about empathy. There's so much political noise around climate change, and people can take very hard positions without really engaging in the debate. But if you allow yourself to care about the characters, you'll be carried along by their story, and through that, you start to care about the issues affecting them. If you're already active and aware of climate change, the value of the show is obvious. But if you're someone who doesn't want to be preached to, who just wants to relax in the evening without heavy messaging, then I'd say be open-minded, because this isn't that kind of show. It's a human, down-to-earth, earnest way of tackling big, scary themes and beyond that, it's also a big, exciting drama.

**TRIPTI TRIPURANENI - PC Deepa Das**

**Why do you think the show was so successful first time around?**

We have the best of British cast - Sophie Rundle, Nick Gleaves, Lorraine Ashbourne, Philip Glenister, and me! Throwing in a wonderful script from Mick Ford that's just the right mixture of a really great mystery and the real human impact of climate change.

**Has anything changed for Deepa since the first series?**

Jo's moved into the murder team, and Deepa is still a uniformed officer on the front line, who is working under Mackie's command now. Over the last year, they've gotten a lot closer, Mackie sees something in Deepa, and she feels valued under his command. She doesn't know what happened at the end of season one, so there's real tension between what the audience knows and what Deepa knows. She really wants to prove herself, and she's got a lot to give, but there's a tense divide between her and Jo, and her and Mackie, which is really interesting to watch play out over the season.

**There are some new faces in this series, tell us what it was like with Ian Puleston-Davies, Jill Halfpenny, Anil Desai and Alun Armstrong joining the cast?**

Each one of them has brought a different, amazing energy to the cast. Jill is this lovely, grounded, elegant, gorgeous energy, Ian is a firecracker who brings the jokes, Anil is full of stories, he's very grounded but very connected, and Alun Armstrong is just a pro. They all bring something different and wonderful to the set and to our existing cast.

**What do you love about the scripts this time around?**

The scripts are wonderfully layered, the mystery is woven in with the lingering strands from series one like corruption and environmental devastation, plus the human element coming in from characters like Molly and Jack. The writers all do such a wonderful job of weaving them all together in a way that never feels too heavy, too dense, and is always extremely intriguing and moving.

**This is a powerful show with an important message around climate change, police corruption, murder and small-town secrets. What do you want people to take away from it?**

The series has such a powerful message about these themes, without preaching. It highlights the real impact climate change has on communities, and it's a really good mystery with fantastic actors, a wonderful, rich story.

**IAN PULSETON-DAVIES - Tony Rower**

**Tell us about Tony Rower. Who is he?**

Tony has come in right in the middle of things. He's a town councillor, so most of his storyline is with Lorraine Ashbourne's character, Molly. Being a town councillor, he's right in the thick of things, involved

with all the flood risks and aware of the murders that have happened in the town. He's got his finger on the pulse, not in a detective sense, but from the other side of things.

**What was it about series one that you thought was so good?**

I like the fusion of drama and comedic Zmoments in the series. I think it's important to have that 'dramedy' balance, we see even straight thrillers will invest in humour now, and that's evident in *After the Flood*. There is a lovely seam of comedy running through it, and you don't see the joins. I love the fact that these characters are allowed to breathe comedy, breathe humour and breathe fun. I think you can't have one without the other, and they've explored this really well.

**You mentioned the rich characters in the series, tell us a little more about the characters in *After the Flood*.**

I love how colourful some of the characters are, and they're all incredibly clearly defined. Today's audience is so educated and forensic, you can't get away with anything, they're not just forensic about 'who done it' or 'why done it', but also the characters and whether they're believable. No stone can be left unturned, and that's one of the successes of *After the Flood*. The characters are so defined but still embedded in truth, so they are really believable as real people.

**What's it been like to join this cast in series 2?**

I've done it a few times when I've joined a cast in the second series, and it is like joining a new school; it is daunting. There's a lot of catching up to do when you join a second series. But it does help enormously when you have support, and as cliched as it sounds, this cast are terrific. I know a few of them [from previous projects], so I've cheated in that respect, as some of them are old friends of mine. The whole cast and crew are incredibly supportive, and with the brilliant writing, I've managed to slot the character in incredibly well. Tony feels like he's been a fixture for longer than the second series, so that's helped me enormously.

**Can you tell us about Tony and Molly's relationship in the series and Tony's rivalry with Jack?**

A big part of Tony's storyline is his relationship with Molly, played by Lorraine Ashbourne. There's a certain flirtation between Tony and Molly, and I love that, we're older, but are allowed to have this flirty relationship as characters, because why not! It's deliberate that something is going on because we're feeding Phil Glenister's character, Jack, the jealousy card and creating a funny love triangle between the three of them.

**Tell us what Sophie's like to work with and what she brings to the part**

Sophie has that wonderful, calm, quiet, thoughtful approach to her character, and it just adds an extra essence of reality to the performance. I love being with an actor like Sophie because she just helps you calm down, not deliberately, but you just catch that essence, that calmness. She's a delight to work with and so grounded.

**What are the other big storylines for your character in the show?**

Tony hits the ground running with his abject fear for Donna [his daughter], who is suffering from PTSD after the series one floods, he's a worrier, which I can certainly relate to, so no method needed. Tony's main concern and storyline at the beginning is very much looking after Donna and trying to get her back to being stable. He's very much being a dad in the beginning, and then of course, something happens, and his storyline develops from there.

**How does *After the Flood* show the impact of climate change on the characters in this small town?**

We all love David Attenborough, and he is our hero when it comes to exploring climate change, but when you watch it through a documentary, it's hard to relate in the same way. There's a distance, and it becomes a lesson, so even though the message is absolutely crystal clear, for some reason, something is missing, and that's the relatability. What's clever about a drama using climate change as a dramatic device is that it is in your home, in a way you can identify with it. It's very cleverly done because the message is coming from people that you can relate to, who are experiencing climate change the same way you are.

**What can people expect from series 2, and what can they look forward to?**

Obvious dangers and dark clouds are forming around this community that has survived the worst situation imaginable already, and is living with the expectation that there is more disaster to come. There

is a sense of foreboding that sooner or later, something is going to give. I love the way that the team have married intertwined relationships and the climate conversation, which gives the series two senses of danger so that at any one time, something can go disastrously wrong. It makes for high stakes and great drama.

#### **ALUN ARMSTRONG - Alan Benson**

##### **Tell us about Alan Benson and where we find him at the beginning of the series.**

Alan is a very determined and ruthless businessman. He has several companies and a very shady past. We find out some of his history in this series, but he's rather secretive, and he's got a lot to hide.

##### **Tell us about the relationships that Alan has in this series, particularly with his daughter Harriet.**

Alan doesn't have many friends. He's trying to mentor his daughter to become the CEO of many companies, but he is finding it tricky as he believes she's not really cut out for it. He's very traditional and wants her to do things his way, so there's a bit of tension between the old and new there.

##### **What do you love about the scripts?**

I was drawn to Alan in the scripts as I read him, and I was immediately hooked. He's feisty, comes with conflict and never-ending trouble with the people around him. I thought, oh, this has got legs. It turned out to be a real page-turner and kept me guessing the whole time.

##### **Tell us about what it has been like working with the other cast?**

I was really looking forward to working with Sophie, especially after my son, Joe Armstrong, had worked with her on *Gentleman Jack* and spoke so highly of her, and she didn't disappoint. I'd previously worked with Lorraine Ashbourne on *Sherwood*, and she's a fantastic actress, so I was thrilled to reunite with her. I'd also worked with Jill Halfpenny before, we're both from the northeast, so there was an instant camaraderie as us Geordies tend to stick together! Philip was someone I hadn't worked with before, but I've long admired his work, so it was great to finally share the screen with him. The cast is full of strong characters, and the chemistry between us really shines through. It feels like a true ensemble piece, with the narrative and screen time shared more evenly than usual, which makes it all-the-more rewarding.

##### **This is a powerful show with an important message. What do you want people to take away from it?**

We threaten biodiversity every day with our actions, constantly pouring toxins and chemicals into our environment. It's in the soil, it's in the food we eat, it's in the air, it's everywhere. I have noticed how fewer insects there are in my own garden. What the series does so cleverly is it brings light to all these environmental issues and their impact on the human race without being preachy at all. Telling the whole story through a community.

##### **What can audiences look forward to from *After the Flood* series 2?**

I think they can expect to be entertained, to be thrilled and to maybe want to consider some aspects of our environmental problems that aren't usually seen on TV.

### **OFF-SCREEN CREATIVE INTERVIEWS**

#### **NICOLA SHINDLER - Executive Producer**

##### **How excited were you to start working on *After The Flood*, series 2?**

I was so thrilled we got a second series for *After the Flood* because it's one of my favourite shows, in that it combines brilliant storytelling with fantastic characters. I feel there was so much more to tell from series 1. We ended it in such an exciting place, and we didn't know what Jo and Pat were going to do, so to be able to come back and tell the rest of their story, and tell more stories, is such a privilege.

##### **Can you tell us where the storyline is at the beginning of series 2?**

Series 2 starts a year after the end of series 1. We are with Jo and Pat, who are now separated, and they are looking at investigating Mackie, who when we left series 1 threatened them that if they said anything about what he's done, their lives and careers would be over. We watch them navigate that, work out how to bring Mackie down at the same time as saving themselves. We also find a body on the Moors, which

comes after a big fire, and that body has been killed in a mysterious way. This is Jo's first big job as a detective, and she needs to take control and find out who's killed not one but two people by the end of episode 1.

**Can you talk about the themes in the series and how they're built from the first series?**

For me, *After the Flood* is about a community reacting when severe weather is happening to them, which is happening to more people in the UK and around the world. It's about coming together, it's about people who've suffered because of those floods, and the after effect. That's what's underneath it all. On top of it is a really great story with a thrilling element, but what stands out for me is the characters, you just want to spend time with them.

**Can you tell us about working with Mick Ford?**

The writing is exceptional because Mick has a beautiful touch in being able to deliver incredibly realistic dialogue, but he also gets the story to move along. It's a joy for a producer because people sound real, feel real and even in the darkest times, they are still funny, but at the same time, it's constantly giving new information. It's just really clever writing. There are big issues at the core, which are about climate change, and how we deal with climate change and survivors, and how the government and community come together to help them. What Mick doesn't do is write something didactic where you feel you're being given a point of view, he just puts people in front of you in a situation, and then you explore it as a drama.

**Talk to us about the crime elements and the character-driven storylines.**

*After the Flood* combines a really strong, hooky crime thriller story with these great characters you want to spend time with. The joy of the series is that you're never more with one than the other. As Jo is investigating a murder, she's also sorting out childcare, and she's having conversations with her mum about her new boyfriend. None of that stops just because there's a crime investigation, so it just feels like normal life.

**On the cast..**

I think one of the main joys of *After the Flood* is the cast. We just have such a richness of British acting talent. Sophie Rundle is a fantastic lead, she's great with the rest of the crew, the team, always perfecting her lines and leading the show. To have Nick Gleaves opposite her as Mackie, who has so much darkness in him, I really love working with him, he's just so subtle and careful. The whole of the ensemble is extraordinary. Philip Glenister, whom I've also worked with for a long time, is just brilliant as Jack, who's now a real person in my head! We were so lucky with the new cast this year as well, Jill Halfpenny is coming into the police force with Jo, and Alun Armstrong, who I'd watch in anything. He's brilliant as Alan Benson, the land owner, we're not sure if he is someone we can trust or not. We've also got Ian Puleston Davies, who comes in as Molly's friend as counsellor – they work together in a really special way, both as actors and as themselves.

**Azhur Saleem directed series 1, and he returned as director for series 2. Can you talk to us about working with Azhur?**

Working with Az as our director again has been fantastic, as he knew the cast, they absolutely trust him, and he knew what we wanted to do with the scale of *After the Flood*. It needs to feel like it's got huge scale, which he did in series 1 so fantastically. I think he's made that even better in the second series. You feel this community now, and the problems they're facing, and where they live and how they live. He directed the whole first series, but unfortunately, he couldn't do the whole of this series. But that has meant we've bought Tom McKay on who is a fantastic director. He took on board what Az had done, ran with it, and he got to tell the big epic endings.

**Can you tell us about writers what Joe Forrest and Maxine Alderton brought to the scripts?**

We're really lucky in season 2, having two fantastic writers working with Mick. Maxine Alderton and Joe Forrest, both of whom have understood Mick's voice and been able to put that on screen with a touch of their own magic as well.

**What does the North West of England location bring to the storyline?**

The location is a beautiful character to the story because it looks so good, it's pretty, but at the same

time, this is a place where a lot of flooding is happening and where other communities are suffering. Locating it in places where real-life events are happening makes it feel more authentic. I always like filming in the North West, and we've got a brilliant cast and crew. That's what *After the Flood* is taking advantage of - that we have people who work really hard, understand the local problems and how we work together to make a really good team.

***After the Flood* has an important message around police corruption, murder, relationships and small town secrets. How important is this type of storytelling to Quay Street Productions?**

Quay Street always wants to tell stories that matter and have some kind of relevance and meaning in the world we live in today. Underneath it all, we want to entertain and grab an audience. It's important to me, and the company as a whole, to do things that matter. So, if we can tell a great story and bring attention to climate change, then that's fantastic for us. That's what we aim to do but always do it through great storytelling.

**MICK FORD - Writer, Executive Producer**

**How pleased were you that *After the Flood* is returning for a second series?**

I was thrilled to be back! It's been wonderful seeing the characters continue their stories, how their relationships have evolved and how they interact with the new arrivals. There's such pleasure in returning to this world and deepening what we began.

**Does it feel different this time around?**

Yes, because we already know Waterside, our community, and our main characters. By the end of series one, we knew Sergeant Mackie was a corrupt policeman who manipulated Jo and Pat into silence. Now, a year later, they have a baby, and Mackie still controls them. The big question is: what are they going to do about it?

**What storylines can viewers look forward to?**

There's murder, mystery and moral dilemmas. Waterside, the moorland town devastated by the flood, is now protected by a new flood wall, but appearances are deceiving. The community must live with the long-term consequences of climate change. So, this season examines how people carry on after disaster, when the waters have gone but the damage remains.

**How does the series explore its themes?**

The scripts deal with the climate crisis subtly; it's not about lecturing but showing how people are caught in its consequences. Molly, Jo's mum, has become a councillor and is learning that holding office doesn't always mean you can make changes. We're also exploring new environmental threats, from wildfires to pollution and "forever chemicals", all these hidden dangers we've stored up for ourselves. It's rooted in the real world but always seen through the human stories.

**How does the show balance crime, drama and character?**

The crime plots are always tied to character. The mysteries unfold naturally from the people we've come to know. The show remains thrilling but grounded — exploring corruption, moral compromise and survival in a community under pressure. What makes it resonate globally is that these issues — climate, corruption, how we treat the planet — are universal. Everyone recognises the feeling of being caught between right and wrong, between wanting to act and feeling powerless.

**Tell us about the returning cast.**

The characters are the heart of the show. It's been such a joy seeing everyone back and growing into new territory. Jo and Pat are now separated — his lies about his past as a bent cop have driven them apart, though there's still love there. Mackie, as ever, believes in his own righteousness, which makes him all the more dangerous. Molly has new storylines too, her connection with Jack brings warmth and tension. Jack lost everything and now must decide whether to rebuild his life honestly or fall back into old habits. We also meet new faces like Jill Halfpenny and Alun Armstrong, who bring fresh energy and complexity to Waterside.

Seeing Sophie return as Jo is just lovely, she draws you in instantly. The chemistry between the cast, new and old, creates such authenticity. Every time I watch it, I'm reminded how special this ensemble is.

**How was it working with the directors this time?**

We were lucky that Az, who directed the first series, returned for the opening block, he knows this world inside out. Then Tom came in for the second block, bringing a great burst of energy as the story intensifies. It's a perfect balance, as it provides continuity, and Tom injects fresh pace as the series reaches its climax.

**What do you want audiences to take away from series two?**

*After the Flood* isn't about tricks or shock twists; everything connects and makes sense. It's about truth, choices, and consequences, both personal and environmental. Above all, I want viewers to care deeply about these characters and the world they live in.

**AZHUR SALEEM – Director Block 1**

**What do you think people loved about the show?**

The characters – the warmth and spirit of the community we created in Waterside. And at the same time, it's a great crime thriller. Jo is a fascinating character, once she gets a sniff of a case she never let's go, and watching the mystery unfold with the realisation that Mackie was behind it all, was brilliant. I think that's what drew people in, alongside the environmental aspect, which feels increasingly relevant year by year, that really resonated with audiences.

**How do those themes develop in series two?**

We're moving into wildfires, and the issues around unlicensed burns. Those burns harden the ground, which then feeds back into flooding when the rain comes. While we're branching out, it still connects to the flooding and climate change in the UK.

It's visually powerful, but also more complex. It's not just about the big catastrophic events, it's about the smaller, less obvious things, and how they all combine to create the situation we're in now. What fascinates me are the people involved, the politics of it, what's legal, what people get away with, it's slightly terrifying, but it shines a light on how laws affect real communities. The murder mystery comes through the ecological disaster, which ties everything together really well.

**What do you love about the scripts?**

As with the first series, the script balances the thriller and procedural elements with character stories. The heart of Waterside, Molly is back. Jo is an extension of that, but she also drives us into the crime side of the story. They move at a lovely pace, what I especially like this series is the broken relationship between Jo and Pat. It feels authentic, they're co-parenting, and you see the logistics of that, who's picking up Eve, who's doing what, all those little details feel real. Jo and Mackie's relationship is another great dynamic. It's messy, but he's still around, and when I read that in the script, I thought, brilliant, that's going to be fascinating.

**Who are the new faces in series two?**

We've got DS Sam Bradley, played by Jill Halfpenny. She brings her own energy to the show, and Jo really looks up to her, there's a nice teacher-student quality to their relationship. We also have Tony, played by Ian Puleston-Davies, a lovely character who becomes a bit of a love interest for Molly and creates a triangle with her and Jack.

**The show has a strong environmental message, but it's also entertainment. How do you see that balance?**

We wrap the climate message in the package of a thriller. It keeps people entertained while saying something about the world and about a community like Waterside, because even though it's fictional, it feels rooted in the north of England.

**What can audiences look forward to this time?**

Another engaging, thrilling crime story that Jo dives into straight away. We've got some fantastic set pieces, building on the scale of the flood in series one. Bigger, more ambitious, and more of it.