



LINE OF DUTY – SERIES THREE

PRESS PACK



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Episode One Synopsis



The series opens with the fatal shooting of a criminal suspect by an armed response unit led by Sergeant Danny Waldron (Daniel Mays).

Danny and his team claim they acted in self-defence, but AC-12, led by Superintendent Ted Hastings (Adrian Dunbar), gather evidence that suggests that this was a deliberate killing. Under interview, Danny confidently rebuts all of AC-12's accusations that he acted unlawfully, so DC Kate Fleming (Vicky McClure) is sent undercover into Danny's team to find out more.

Ingratiating herself to her new colleagues, Kate is quick to identify tensions and conflict between Danny and his team. But when Kate's own conduct comes under scrutiny, she finds herself sidelined from an armed drugs raid that goes very badly wrong.

Interview with Jed Mercurio



Does series three continue in the tradition of series one and two?

Series three continues with the Line Of Duty tradition of having a new serial storyline in each series. We introduce a brand new police officer that is under investigation for corruption, Sergeant Daniel Waldron, who is played by Danny Mays. He is a firearms officer that is involved in the shooting of a suspect in suspicious circumstances. That brings in the investigating unit from AC-12, our recurring characters, Steve Arnott (Martin Compston), Kate Fleming (Vicky McClure) and Ted Hastings (Adrian Dunbar).

Where do we find the main characters at the start of series three?

A year and a half has gone by since the end of series two. In that time they've investigated a number of other cases, they're more experienced and much more settled in their roles.

In terms of their personal lives, things aren't so rosy for Superintendent Hastings, who has separated from his wife, and the same goes for Kate Fleming. In contrast to that, Steve Arnott, who has had the most chequered personal life, has settled down into a relationship with another police officer.

Did getting two seasons commissioned back to back have an impact on writing series three?

It was incredibly exciting to be commissioned to do two further series and we're very grateful to the fans for supporting the show and the BBC for giving us the opportunity to do more, but in terms of writing I wanted series three to stand alone in the same way the other series have.

What excites you about series three?

We've got a reputation for twists and turns and surprises and there are certainly a lot of those in store for viewers.

How is Line of Duty different to other police shows?

There are a lot of police dramas on television and I think what makes Line Of Duty distinctive is that its cops versus cops. Most police shows are about hunting and chasing criminals, whereas we have police officers in a quest to bring other police officers to justice.

Also we're a serial so can do six hours of one story. That means we can get deeper into the story and have time to establish the direction of it, which allows us to do the big surprises.

Are the stakes higher in series three?

The level of jeopardy is much higher. Danny Waldron is a firearms officer and carries a weapon. We see in Episode One that he is someone who will take very violent steps if he feels that's the right thing for him to do.

Why do you think Line Of Duty has been so successful?

I'm excited and flattered by the success of it. It's always hard to diagnose what makes something successful but all you can hope is that if you stay true to the characters and stay true to the style of the show, people will keep coming back.

Interview with Daniel Mays



Tell us about Sergeant Danny Waldron as a character?

He's a member of an armed response unit and is the new protagonist of the show. He is a very complex character. On the surface of things he's incredibly driven and ambitious, great at his job and rules his team with an iron fist. Then you see him in the pub trying to chat up a girl and he's really vulnerable, so the polar opposite to how he is in job mode. There are many different layers to him and he's got a lot of issues that he's dealing with. An incident happens in the first episode where he's put under investigation, and as the story unfolds we realise the inner workings of his character and what is motivating him to do these dangerous and unpredictable things. It's exciting to bring to life a character that is a great contradiction.

What is his relationship with his colleagues?

It's strained to say the least. Before the first episode begins it's hinted at that he's quite unpredictable on call-outs. He's a loose cannon and being the leader, his team have to follow suit. They're caught between a rock and a hard place. It's also hinted at that Danny might have had a relationship with Jackie (Leanne Best) which has caused friction with Rod (Will Mellor) and within the team, but being in an armed response unit they have to completely and utterly depend on each other in very dangerous scenarios.

How does he feel about the AC-12 investigation?

The incident that happens throws his whole life into turmoil and his inner demons come out that he thought he had buried. But he is so brilliantly professional at work that he can handle whatever is thrown at him, for example in the interrogation room, and takes it all in his stride. He is so astute about the inner workings of the police force that he can bat any question away.

What attracted you to the role?

I was a massive fan of the first two series and watching Keeley Hawes and Lenny James' performances, and the show in general, made me quickly realise that Jed Mercurio's writing demands a huge amount from its lead actor and that's what appealed to me. Then when they showed me the actual scripts I was blown away. The quality of Jed's writing is so brilliantly detailed and has its grounding in absolute social reality, which is a great combination. I recognised it was a great opportunity to be part of the long running success of Line Of Duty and its certainly one the most complex and exciting characters I've taken on in a long time.

What challenges did you face?

Without question the interrogation scene in episode one is the hardest passage of dialogue I've ever had to learn, bar none, but it was one of the most thrilling days filming I've ever been a part of.

Running and chasing suspects wearing all that gear was also a challenge. We went on weapons training for a couple of days which was really beneficial and also allowed the new group of actors to bond. It's a great credit to the opening episode that we all look comfortable in the gear and believable as an armed response unit.

Another challenge was trying to get into the mind-set of a character so damaged, twisted and unpredictable.

What was it like filming with the rest of the cast?

I'd never worked with any of the new actors before so it was great to forge new relationships with them. I'm an ex-flatmate of Craig Parkinson's so he's a very close friend of mine and we've always been desperate to work together. We had some fun in between takes as you can't always be as serious as you are being on camera. I was also a huge fan of Martin Compston, Vicky McClure and Adrian Dunbar and they welcomed us all with open arms.

What can viewers expect from this series of Line Of Duty?

Having spoken to the existing cast they were all unanimous that this series has raised the bar even further in terms of the quality of the writing and the suspense of the story. It's another thrilling story with loads of twists and turns that will keep you on the edge of your seat.

Interview with Vicky McClure



Where do we pick up with Kate Fleming this series?

She's not living in a car this series, she's living in a flat, which is good!

The big difference this series is in the relationships she has with Steve and Dot. Things are quite conflicted with Steve and they are not getting on so well, whereas her and Dot are getting on really well.

At the start of the series she's back undercover with a brand new team. Filming that was really different as it felt like a completely different show to begin with, with a brand new cast and firearms!

Do we learn more about Kate's personal life this series?

We see that she's not got her son living with her, which is realistic; sometimes the Dad's do get the kids. So this series she's all about the job, that's her priority and helps her support her son, who she loves to bits.

What makes Line Of Duty different to other police shows?

It feels very real, for examples in the relationships and the way we dress. Also the police terms used in the scenes are completely by the book and factual, we don't brush over anything. It is a drama and is dramatised but ultimately it is played as real as possible, which is why it's quite so gripping.

How do you prepare for the role?

As its series three we're quite settled now in terms of preparing, I know Kate well enough now to just jump on set and switch it on. My main preparation is just learning the lines, making sure the script is in my head and putting 110% in to that!

What's it like working with the rest of the regular cast?

Me, Martin, Craig and Adrian are really good mates. We've been doing this for nearly six years, which is a long time and we've built really good friendships. We live in the same building when we're filming so we'll go round to somebody's flat each night and run through our lines and try and get ourselves up to speed. Then when we're actually filming we know which bits we might struggle with and support each other, which is really important.

What excites you about Line Of Duty?

The scripts! We were chomping at the bit to get the scripts for this series and as soon as I read Episode One I had to read Episode Two! In my opinion, it's the best series yet. Its action packed and has a lot of amazing new characters with great storylines.

Also the cast and crew, we have such a good relationship that it's nice to come to work every day and we have such a laugh too, which is important when a lot of the show is so intense.

Interview with Martin Compston



Where do we pick up with Steve Arnott this series?

Steve's still the same guy, he's arrogant and annoying. He's a lot of fun to play as I try and make him as dislikeable as possible. I think that's what is great about Jed's writing and makes it more real, just because Steve's got a moral centre and is good at his job, it doesn't actually make him a likeable person. He thinks he's better than most other people and he wears waistcoats! One of the reasons I wear them and make him talk like a bit of a smart ass is that I knew a guy back home that was like that. He also used to pull these beautiful girls even though no one else could see the redeeming features in him, which is Steve to a tee.

I love playing this character anyway but this series I've got to stretch my acting legs even further and that's been really enjoyable.

How do you learn your lines for the interrogation scenes?

We've become known for these long interview scenes which are a fantastic bit of the show but they are definitely a challenge! It's very brave for television, for some much to take place around one table, but Jed's writing makes it so exciting. But they are tough!

How do you prepare for the role?

The accent is a big thing for me as it needs to be good and not at all noticeable. I try and stay in it all day because my normal accent is strongly Scottish and going from that to Steve's is a big jump, but it's quite tiring! We're so dialogue heavy that there's no room for error but people forget that your mind is working when you're constantly doing an accent.

Why do you think Line Of Duty has been so successful?

The main thing is the scripts. I don't know how Jed does it but they keep getting better and better. We've also found a niche by flipping the 'police show' genre. A lot of shows feature maverick cops breaking the rules, but our show is all about the rules. Everything is done by the book. For example I love the tape sound at the start of the interviews. Every other show would cut that out, but we use it

and it's a great tension builder. It's like the bell before a boxing match. Jed has made sure to include all that minute detail, for example the police always have to have their IDs on them, which is why in the show you never see anyone in the office without a lanyard on.

Interview with Adrian Dunbar



What can we expect from Ted Hastings in series 3?

You can expect quite a lot to happen with Ted Hastings in series three! He has a storyline to do with his personal life that runs alongside the main plot but he is mainly keeping his head down and trying to figure out who the baddies are.

Do you do any preparation for the role?

In terms of preparation it's really just getting the scripts as early as possible and reminding yourself of who your character is. After a few scenes it comes back to you pretty quickly!

Just after the read-through we get the chance to speak to a police advisor, but otherwise we rely on the prep that Jed does himself.

What did you think of the scripts for series three?

When I read the scripts for series three, I was very excited. Jed has already set the standard very high and he's certainly managed to keep to that standard, in fact you could say these scripts are the best we've had. That's saying something as series one and two have been so good! But the storylines are excellent, the structure is great and it moves so quickly. Plus the reveals are fabulous, you don't see any of it coming.

Why do you think Line Of Duty has been so successful?

The storylines are believable and you can identify with the main characters. Things happen in a very real, but still dramatic, way. The procedural quality of the show is also likeable as you see what the police have to do to catch criminals and what they have to do to investigate themselves.

Is there an uncertainty that your character will make it to the end of each episode?

Yes, you are at the whim of the writer. I think everyone thinks 'I could get wiped out this year!', so we all do our best to buy Jed drinks and tell him he's great!