THE MISSING
BBC One (8x60mins)
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*The Missing* is made by New Pictures and Company Pictures in association with Two Brothers Pictures and Playground. It is written by Harry and Jack Williams and directed by Tom Shankland.

Executive producers are Willow Grylls, Charlie Pattinson and Elaine Pyke for New Pictures, John Yorke for Company Pictures (part of the all3media group), Harry and Jack Williams for Two Brothers Pictures, Polly Hill for the BBC, Colin Callender for Playground and Eurydice Gysel for Czar TV. Producer is Chris Clough.

It was commissioned by Controller BBC One, Charlotte Moore and Ben Stephenson, Controller BBC Drama Commissioning.

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Cast & Crew Credits

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Tcheky Karyo
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Ken Stott
Eric Godan
Anastasia Hille

TONY HUGHES
EMILY HUGHES
JULIEN BAPTISTE
MARK WALSH
LAURENCE RELAUD
KHALID ZIANE
VINCENT BOURG
RINI DALCA
MALIK SURI
IAN GARRETT
GEORGES DELOIX
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Line Producer
Production Manager
Production Designer
1st Assistant Director
2nd Assistant Director
Director of Photography
Script Supervisor
BE Costume Designer
UK Costume Designer
Editor 1
Editor 2
Editor 3
Location Manager BE
Location Scout
Location Scout
Make Up & Hair Designer
Key Hair Stylist
Composer
Post Production Supervisor
Props Master
Script Editor
When five year-old Oliver disappears while on holiday in France, it sets off a manhunt that will last for years and years to come. *The Missing* takes you inside the mind of a father, Tony, desperate to find his lost son.

Told through a delicate and complex narrative that reflects the fractured and frantic battle for a lost child, *The Missing* is a thrilling and heart-breaking drama of a life consumed by hope, love, truth and obsession.

A gripping puzzle with twists and turns at every stage, Tony’s exhaustive search fractures his marriage to Emily and threatens to destroy his life. Julien, the French police detective who launched the initial search for the child, also finds himself drawn back into the hunt that he was never able to resolve when Oliver first disappeared.
Exploring the emotional cost of a child's abduction, this gripping relationship thriller is told over two time frames, simultaneously, in two countries.

**Character Descriptions**

**TONY HUGHES**
A devoted family man, Tony Hughes is looking after his son, Oliver, when he suddenly goes missing while on holiday in France. Tony holds himself responsible for Oliver’s disappearance and finds it impossible to move on with his life as he becomes completely consumed with locating his son.

**EMILY HUGHES**
Emily Hughes is Tony’s wife and a loving mother to their son, Oliver, whose disappearance leaves her on the verge of a mental breakdown. While she has attempted to move on with her life in the wake of the tragedy, the re-opening of the investigation into Oliver’s disappearance threatens to once again emotionally engulf her.

**JULIEN BAPTISTE**
Julien Baptiste is the lead French investigator in the case of Oliver Hughes’ unsolved disappearance and he cannot let the case go. He is haunted by a troubled relationship from his past and is unable to settle into an easy retirement.

**MARK WALSH**
Mark Walsh is the British liaison officer on the Oliver Hughes case, who eventually falls in love with Emily.

**IAN GARRETT**
Ian Garrett is a wealthy property developer who sets up a charity fund to help aid the search for Oliver.

**KHALID ZIANE**
Khalid Ziane is a fellow officer who harbours a dark and secretive past.

**LAURENCE RELAUD**
Laurence Relaud is a local police officer who offers support and kindness to Tony.
VINCENT BOURG
Vincent Bourg is a young loner who finds himself inextricably bound up in Oliver’s disappearance.

MALIK SURI
Malik Suri is a ruthless journalist who will put ethics aside in order to break a story first.
What is *The Missing* about?
A family, a happily married couple and their adored and adoring four year old son called Oliver, go to France for the summer holiday. Through a series of fateful incidents, they have to spend the night in a little village called Chalons du Bois while their car gets fixed. It’s during the football World Cup in 2006 and we spend the day having a lovely unplanned family day in the village. By the evening, the car has been fixed and we plan to leave the next day. But Oliver has spotted a leaflet in the hotel about a local swimming pool and wants to go for a swim. Tony, who I think like a lot of father’s feels a bit guilty about working so much, says he’ll do anything to please his boy and takes him for a swim while Emily goes back to the hotel. When Oliver wants a drink they go the bar where there’s a big crowd watching the exciting France vs Brazil match on TV. For one second, Tony gets caught up in it along with the rest of the crowd. He’s been holding Oliver’s hand and the next minute he knows he’s not anymore.
From that point on it becomes a nightmare. We follow Tony and Emily backwards and forwards between 2006 and 2014 as their marriage disintegrates and as Tony disintegrates. He becomes more determined, more obsessed and more driven by trying to find out what happened to his son.

How did you react to the scripts?
It’s all very well having emotional material on a story like this but it has to be well constructed and believable, you have to be able to invest in it. The writing in these scripts was exceptional. The first reading was utterly gripping and terribly painful yet I became invested in the story just from the first page and was desperate to know what happened. I was fascinated and intrigued by the awful reality of something like this happening. We know this is a story that the public are aware of but the different journeys these characters go through can only be described as hell. The scripts are so arresting and beautifully detailed, intricate yet truthful. I was blown away by them and knew it was something I had to do.

How would you describe Tony?
I’ve been very fortunate to have a director such as Tom Shankland who is an actor's director and an intelligent director. We worked a lot on what was not in the scripts because we wanted to paint a picture of a complicated man. We looked at what Tony was like in his childhood because he often refers to a difficult relationship with his father and that would have had a huge impact on the kind of parent he wants to be.
He is very driven and protective of his family but he also has a bit of a dark past and a temper. As a parent he is doting and as a husband he is loving. There are certain triggers that can be pulled which turn him into a character who acts very explosively, spontaneously and almost blindly at times. But, at his core, Tony is a good and decent man whose side we’re on.

What is Tony’s relationship with Emily like?
It’s been incredibly incumbent upon us to try and show the good marriage they had before Oliver’s disappearance. Because it happened so quickly at the beginning, it is hard to show just how stable, happy and content they were before. They were good for each other and, because of Tony’s childhood, Emily had been a very good stabilizing force for him.

We really looked for those moments so it makes their slow disintegration much more painful. This horrendous thing happens and it begins to illustrate the cracks instead of pulling them together. Those relationship cracks get bigger until they become crevices and, in a sense, they become different continents.

We do find it difficult to play those scenes. You’re always very wary as an actor of saying that it’s been a painful process but it actually has. We’ve invested a lot in the characters and their relationship, as well as Oliver. Although we are at a place where they are almost separated, hopefully you can still see that there was a love there.

One of the great tragedies about Oliver’s disappearance is what happens to Emily and Tony. Once he went, everything went - not only the family, but the marriage as well.

**What is Tony’s relationship with French Detective Julien Baptiste like?**

Julian, played by the marvelous Tcheky Karyo, starts off very differently. We don't spend much time together in 2006 and the time we do have is intense, aggressive and confrontational. Tony is brought in for interrogation, which is horrendous. Often the shadow of suspicion first falls on the parents and you have to cope with that whilst going through the pain. Their relationship seems to be a strong mutual antagonism at the beginning, particularly from Tony directed towards Julian.

In 2014, that relationship again starts off quite frostily when Tony comes back with a new clue and Julian becomes re-involved in the case. Their relationship then spills into what is hopefully a believable and beautiful admiration, but also a friendship.

It was interesting playing one relationship, with Emily, starting well and disintegrating and then another one, with Julien, starting terribly and blossoming.

**Has there been any one scene that has been particularly difficult to film?**

I have had to play the odd character with bits of emotion and usually have to prepare myself for those big scenes coming up. But on this it’s just every day! Some days it’s hard to be ‘on’ and to tap into that. Various things can get in the way but you have to be pretty disciplined. It's a mixture of technique and raw emotion. Because the writing is so good and we respect the scripts so much and are so invested in our characters, it makes it easier. A lot of the time I’m adlibbing and I’m not even aware of it so it’s almost like doing theatre.

**What is the significance of “Daddy Big Ears”?**

This is a drawing that Oliver often does of Tony. He does it in the car when we first arrive in France and Emily gives it to me when she goes to collect the car. It's then something that you see Tony has carried with him since 2006.

It's become his connection with Oliver; his Bible, his holy cross, his symbol of a lost love and it's what keeps him driving on and going forward. It is the only thing left for him because Emily, Oliver, his job and his life are all gone. But he takes strength from it.

**How is Tony’s history of violence significant?**

It is interesting dramatically but it also says a lot about his childhood and what he witnessed. Tony desperately wants to be a good parent since his father was such a bad one. Unfortunately he can’t help
but turn into the very thing that he doesn't want to be at times. Bits of his father come out of him and you see a man that is not perfect. He is not your stand out typical hero; he has flaws and is dark but is a driven family man which makes for a more interesting character.

**What has it been like working in Belgium and with French speaking actors?**
It's great to film in Europe and away from the UK because we’re surrounded by different countries and that really helps with the authenticity. We’ve had a lovely blend of French Belgian and Flemish Belgian in the crew and it’s a great setting. It's difficult to be away from home but sometimes when you want to submerge or immerse yourself in something like this, you have to be away from your family. The other thing I have loved about being in Brussels is that I used to speak a lot of French, I started a degree in French years ago, and so I’ve been able to use that again. Tcheky worked tirelessly on getting the English language right and he is brilliant. I can see it’s been a challenge for the French and Belgian actors but they've risen to it beautifully.

**What has it been like working with Frances O'Connor?**
Frances O'Connor, who plays Emily, is just wonderful. She is very detailed and a brilliantly truthful actress. She's magnificent and delivers a quite brilliant performance. For the 2006 scenes, in the immediate aftermath, she has to go into pretty dark places and does it with utter commitment, discipline and sacrifice. But, she doesn't carry it with her afterwards. It's been important for us to support each other off screen, even though we are disintegrating on camera. We’ve almost become closer off camera because we have to counter that.

**What has it been like working with one director for the full series (Tom Shankland)?**
Tom is incredibly talented and I could not have done this role without him. He is utterly trusting of his actors, very confident about his vision and who he believes the characters are. He is a hugely collaborative, intelligent, articulate and passionate director.

**What is different about Tony’s character in the past and present?**
In 2006 there are small technical differences like Tony is a little bit more upright. It helps that his look is different and the fact that the world around him is different. In the aftermath, he’s very driven and wants to get things moving. In 2014 it’s like he’s beaten it away. He’s still on the track, still obsessed and still looking for Oliver but he’s a wreck. So the shifts are at times very subtle and at times very obvious.

**How does Tony’s obsession affect his life?**
He feels guilty that his son went. He feels it was his fault that he took his eye off the ball for a minute. It doesn't matter how much he convinces himself because he feels that guilt and you never get over that. It’s like he knows that his destiny is to carry that forever, or for as long as it takes, and the only way of getting rid of it is to just try and find out more about his son. But the guilt is a terrible cross he has to bear and it has destroyed everything in his life. He sees his little boy in his head every time he blinks and so the obsession to try and redeem himself is tough.

**Why should viewers tune in to watch the show?**
The characters are believable and their flaws are believable. It's a story that people have come across before in reality that we still read about and hear about so it's accessible. It explores the human spirit,
which sounds like a terrible phrase, but it’s something that we’re interested in. It is a story about loss, hope and despair. It’s about the very worst we can be and the very worst that can happen to us but also about love - the need for love and the sadness when love is taken away.
Frances O’Connor  EMILY HUGHES

What is *The Missing* about?
The story takes place over a period of eight years. At the start, a husband and wife and their young child are on their way to a holiday in France. During this an event takes place and their son goes missing. The rest of the series is about the trajectory and implications of that.

How you would describe Emily?
Emily is somebody who evolves during the story. The person that she is at the end is somebody quite different from the beginning, which is fantastic for an actor. At the start she is someone who has led quite a protected life and she's a sensitive person. As the story progresses, and because of what's happened, she gains a lot of strength.

What was your reaction when you first read these scripts?
I just loved these scripts - I thought they were brilliant. I was sent two and wanted to read more because they're just such great page-turners. The other great thing about the scripts is that the dialogue is so real and psychologically so true. So when you're acting, you feel it's really rock solid in terms of character and it's very easy to believe in the story.

How did you prepare for this role?
Because I'm a mother, I instantly related to the story. I did a bit of research about what it's like for people whose children have gone missing but really I just had to use my imagination. It's every parent's worst nightmare so I found it pretty easy to access the emotions for it.

What has it been like working with James Nesbitt?
I love acting with Jimmy because he just brings it! Every time you do a scene, he steps up and really gives it a hundred percent for you. I love all the choices he makes, he’s great. We've had to do some really tricky scenes but he's been very supportive.

Is there any one scene that's been particularly tricky for you?
Every day you get those scenes. You finish a scene one day and the next day you've got another really tricky one. Some of the scenes we shot right at the end were really hard, for everybody, and those we shot when Oliver goes missing. A lot of those scenes are quite hard to do.

What has it been like to have the same director, Tom Shankland, all the way through?
It's so rare to have just one set of scripts all the way through from the word go and then one director as well. There is a fantastic sense of continuity and you don't ever have to get used to a new person who wants to tell the story their way. Tom's brilliant and has got such a handle on this story. He's a real actor's director too and is really fresh and interesting.

What has it been like to shoot this series?
It's been a hard shoot, in that there are so many difficult and emotional scenes with a really tricky subject matter. But the atmosphere on set has been great. You feel from the crew that they're telling a story that interests them and they believe in it. As we've started shooting, a momentum has built and people really enjoy watching on set. Shooting in Brussels is great as it’s really nice to be in a different
part of Europe. When we shoot out in Huy, in the town exteriors, you feel that what's happening is real because you're in a real location.

**What is unique about this show?**
The storytelling is really clever and really sharp which you can feel when you're playing it. There are multiple strands to the story which are very cleverly interwoven. It's quite sophisticated storytelling and I think the audience will really enjoy watching that.

**What are you hoping the audience gets from it?**
It's a great story with two timelines and people are so radically different in the two timelines. I think the audiences will enjoy slowly filling in the gaps in terms of why people have changed so much and what has happened. The characters are great too - Tony is very human and I think people will really relate to that and really root for him to find his child.

**For you personally, how has this story affected you?**
Having to go there in terms of imagining what it would be like to lose a child has been really hard to do. Because we're shooting for 20 weeks, you're in that subject matter for a long time. But the scripts are so good and I felt like I really wanted to go there because it's such great storytelling.

**What have been the challenges of working with two different time periods?**
I made specific choices about who Emily was in 2006 and 2014 and because of the event that happens she radically changes. It was great fun to play Emily in 2006 - she's a lot more open, free, vulnerable and more reactive. Then, in 2014, she's a lot more closed down, reserved and sometimes even a little controlled or distant especially in her relationship with Tony. Towards the end she does start to engage more. We’ve made her look different too, with different hairstyles and wardrobe, which really helped to express that. I think it is fun for the audience to see two really radical characters in that way.
How did you react to the scripts when you first read them?
I’m the father of a 19 month old little girl and I felt terrible when I read the story. I asked myself - how could you possibly face such a tragedy? It was hard for me to imagine being involved in the project because of that. These feelings and the length of shoot didn’t make my decision easy; I wanted to see my daughter growing up. But, when I met the director Tom Shankland, he was so convincing telling me how he wanted to narrate the story, focusing on the characters and the relationships everyone would go through during the shoot. I went home and spoke to my family and we decided to do it. Production made everything possible for me to be with my little Louise and my wife, so I could work freely, in peace.

Can you describe Julien?
He is a cop in Paris and is called for his skill in the matter. He’s really alive and very curious. He has a lot of humour and enjoys life. When the story begins for him, he is about to retire; it’s the last case he is going to work on. He has a daughter Sarah and a wife Celia, who is from England, and he loves them.

How did you prepare for the role of Julien?
I had to jump on it as soon as I started. The main work I did was to make sure I could act without thinking of the language. I just had a few days to focus on the first scenes and make sure I could improvise when necessary. I also asked to have a coach as a sparring partner to rehearse and prepare myself to understand the characters in front of me.

Why do you think Julien came out of retirement to help Tony?
The case was closed in 2006 and when he comes out of retirement we are in 2014. When he meets Tony after all those years, he sees a man totally broken, destroyed and that’s shaking for a soul like Julien. Tony doesn’t accept that he would never know the truth about the abduction and during eight years he kept trying to find evidence. In a way, Julien’s feelings for Tony are like that of a young brother and there is a lot of empathy for him. He is deeply touched by his obsession.

How does Julien’s role as a father affect his decisions?
I would rather ask how his decisions affect him as a father. He feels guilty about not giving enough time to his daughter Sarah. He goes through terrible moments with her and in a way he is about to lose her.
But he is on a mission; he cannot let Tony alone with his loss as he knows he can help him. It’s his last case and it’s not resolved which is unbearable for him.

**What is the meaning behind Julien’s beehive?**
Being a beekeeper is a good experience to understand life with and we use as a metaphor. If there are no bees then there is only death. They have been here for millions of years, and if they do not pollinate then there will be no food anymore. It’s incredible how much we need them. This choice is a strong metaphor. It shows someone who has a positive and constructive mind. He is obsessed with the beauty and perfection of the bees.

**What about Julien do you most relate to?**
He has a daughter Sarah who he has to deal with, as I do with my big daughter, and the little one. He is a good father in my opinion, not afraid to be humble. A child will remember the main phrases from their father and mother, the gestures, and how they behaved, as I do with my father’s attitudes, silences and my mother’s rage. I give a lot of my background to Julien.
He feels guilty about being so involved and passionate as an investigator. Sarah has learnt a lot from him but she is going through troubles which he must face as well. He apologises for not being there all the time to help her. He has a very understanding wife. She understands his need to go and help with the investigation but the truth is he has to make a decision to dedicate himself to the family.

**Do you see Julien as obsessed?**
He is obsessed by the desire to solve the case. It’s his vocation and his cross to carry. He was meant to be obsessed with finding the truth and perfection.

**What has it been like working with the other actors?**
Super, really fantastic. I love playing in other languages –I’ve done Spanish, German and Arabic as well!
We have English, Irish, Australian, Moroccan and French on the show. I love discovering other actors and it’s interesting to find out how we’re going to relate to each other. For instance, when Anastasia the actress who plays my wife arrived, I didn’t know her, and we have to be like we’ve known each other for 20 years. We found ourselves together quite quickly; I went to hold her in my arms and she accepted it, so the door was open for us to be free on set to act like we know each other. Acting is a universal language with the desire to share emotions and put you at stake.

What was interesting with Jimmy was that we played almost like a couple in 2014, and then we went to film 2006 like we didn’t know each other. So when we meet the first time as characters, after having shot for weeks together bonding and finding our rhythm, I have to look at him like I don’t know him. Investigators want to try every possibility in a case; they need to check if the parents are not involved in the abduction. I question him, poke him and try things to see if he will stay steady and watch how he is reacting to my questions. It’s interesting to forget all of the past we built over two months for 2014.

Tom, the director, is really the key as he is shooting all 8 episodes. He is a real guide for all of us.

**What’s the atmosphere like on set with such emotionally gripping content?**
The set isn’t somber at all. It is amazing. In real life, when my father was dying, we were still laughing together. It was incredible that we could still laugh and it was such a lesson. There is no tragedy for me, only tragi-comedy. It’s always both at the same time. It’s good to have distance and not too much pathos on set. You can’t go through 5 months without humor; we need to breathe.
Why should viewers tune in to the show?
The actors, the technique, the light are all good and the script itself is really compelling. Viewers will get the opportunity to observe how life may go on after such tragedy. Can I understand the desire of revenge? Could I forgive or forget?
I can understand Tony doesn’t want to give up; we need hope.
There is such a good story telling, it’s attractive, addictive.
The couple cannot mourn until they know what happen.
How does a couple go through such a tragedy?
Is Oliver dead, is he alive somewhere, we don’t know, they really need to know.
What do we choose until we know the truth in such a case?
Is the bottle half empty or half full?

Production Interviews

HARRY AND JACK WILLIAMS Executive Producers/ Writers

What is The Missing about?
Jack: The show is about a boy who gets abducted while on holiday with his family in France in 2006. Eight years later, his father returns to the same town looking for a new clue that he thinks may tell him where his son was taken. The whole story unfolds over two timelines; in 2006 and in the present day and we follow the investigation at the time and the current search for the boy. We see how both timelines play against each other as we get closer to finding out what happened and seeing how these eight years have changed our characters.

How did the story originate?
Jack: The story started with a character we wanted to write about; a French detective our father worked with who was a very cool guy. He had followed one of the biggest serial killer cases in France for about 5 years which stuck with us. The idea of doing something over a long period of time and so obsessively, led us to that character in France which then led us to the idea of a missing child.

What is the main theme running through the series?
Harry: The theme of obsession was something that we wanted to explore; everybody in the show has an obsession. Malik has an obsession with his career, Julien has an obsession with the case and his bees, Mark has an obsession with Emily and it goes on. Everyone’s got something they’re chasing and those things knock against each other. Hopefully that amounts to a good televisual experience.
Why was the World Cup chosen as a backdrop?
Harry: It served two purposes. One is that it puts you in a particular timeframe so you know where you are when jumping between them and then you have the backdrop of this country that’s hugely excited about a national event set against the tragedy that this one guy’s going through. There’s inherent drama in those two different kinds of emotion.

Is there any one character you find particularly compelling?
Harry: Vincent Bourg was interesting to write. He’s a character who is effectively struggling with a disease and trying to cure himself. We had to write him as a real person and get under his skin.

Jack: Finding a way to perfect that theme of change by taking someone who has these urges but doesn’t want them has so many parallels in a story that focuses on people wanting to change and their inability to do so. We’re not really asking for people to forgive or sympathise with him as it’s just a way of exploring a character. The key is they’ve all changed in some way and the butterfly effect of this event has such huge implications for everyone in different, far-reaching and sometimes quite subtle ways that they wouldn’t have anticipated. That’s really interesting to draw out. Our characters are all people trying to get out of the shadow of something terrible, which is exactly what Bourg is trying to do.

What was the most challenging thing to write?
Harry: Trying to find a way to switch between two timelines with a lot of characters and make it feel simple was important. We had to make sure each time we went back and forth, we were asking the right questions without confusing people. We wanted to make sure we were doing it for a reason and each time you leave one timeline, you leave it just when you don’t want to. But not so often that you fail to invest!

The storytelling structure is an interesting choice, what were your reasons for this type of structure?
Harry: The dual timeline is there to create intrigue and it’s a way of asking questions about what happened in the middle of this eight year gap. How did these people start off in this place and then end up splintered from each other and confused?
Jack: With the two timelines you get to tell the story from the start. It’s partly about the mystery of the boy and it has that compelling whodunit factor to it but, for us, it’s about how time can change people. We use that eight-year gap to see how each character has evolved and changed. The ramifications of just one event echoing over the years seemed like a really interesting way of telling the story.

Are any of the episode names particularly significant?
Jack: All of the episode titles took a long time because once they’re locked in they impact the whole episode. For example, in ‘Pray for Me’ there is an obvious connection to Emily’s faith but it’s echoed in everyone. Even Tony, while he’s not religious, has a huge amount of faith in the present day that he will find his son. So the title becomes quite an important theme in the episode.

Why does Tony keep returning to the same place, Hotel L’Eden?
Jack: He keeps coming back to that place because it’s the only way he feels alive - when he feels like he’s actually trying to find his kid. He’s reliving it but in some perverse way and he thrives on that. It’s like picking at a scab, punishing himself and he’s unable to let it lie.

Harry: He needs to be in control, in the same room and that’s the thing that makes him feel alive. He doesn’t feel like he’s treading water and not doing anything about it when he’s there.
Why is it important that Tony has a violent past?

Harry: We went down that road with the violent history because we wanted to establish that there were darker elements to his character. It seemed interesting for us that a lead a character who you sympathise with and is a victim, is also a violent guy.

Jack: He’s an impetuous guy who makes rash decisions. He doesn’t really think them through which works for the story, but also makes sense because it dimensionalised him in terms of his own back story with his father and the fact that he's slightly damaged himself. It’s just little things that make him specific and not just an every-man. We don't think he's an exceptionally violent guy but he's made some bad mistakes. But it’s no more than that of anyone else in the show. It’s something he struggles with and that gives him a bit more dimension and edge. He’s not the cookie cutter sort of every-man that suffers tragedy.

How was it writing about Emily’s grieving process?

Harry: The idea that they go through this tragedy and the public perception of her is such that she’s not allowed to be happy because she’s supposed to be grieving felt like an interesting thing to us.

Jack: The fact that they are public figures is also interesting. She is someone who is famous, or infamous, and is approached by people who have a perception of what she should be and what she should be feeling. People think you have to act a certain way or you should never leave your house or that you should dress in black. They think that if you're not doing those things then you're not grieving properly and you're a terrible person. That is Emily's dilemma really. She's attempting to move on with life but only to the extent and capacity that she can but the world won't let her any more than she'll let herself.

What moment or scene do you find most compelling?

Jack: I think the scene in episode 1, where Oliver has just gone missing, was one of the hardest to write. It's very hard to capture the aftermath of something like that. We eventually decided to cut around in time and just grab the moment rather than play out the whole thing. We wanted to make sure that the audience sees certain moments of the emotional journey but has to fill in the blanks. Following 20 minutes of someone in the immediate aftermath is too hard and painful to follow. Just grabbing those little fragments in the first episode, you get it all and can piece it together.

Are you trying to say anything about morality in the show?

Jack: It's not necessary to try and make it a statement about what we think is right or wasn't right or what you should or shouldn't do. It is just the place and the story that leads the characters into doing certain things. It has different shades of morality throughout all of it and the characters show that there are different sides to everything. However much a part of you may say that's wrong and know it's wrong, there’s at least a part of you somewhere that understands it even if you don’t approve of it.

What aspects do you think will resonate with viewers most?

Harry: That you are capable of change.

Jack: And all the dark places in the show are mostly a series of decisions that seemed excusable in the moment. So, it’s how little things can have huge consequences. We make everyone, even the villains, be fully rounded people that you believe and understand to a certain extent. Even if you don’t like what you see, they feel real and that’s a whole lot scarier.
TOM SHANKLAND  Director

What attracted you to this project?
I was sent four scripts by my agent that were described as a project about a family who lose their child in France and I thought it sounded so depressing. But then I started to read them and it was literally the best script reading experience I've ever had. The stories were so incredibly compelling and the thing that absolutely hooked me in was the structure. Jack and Harry Williams have structured the narrative between two timelines and manage to tantalize you with what they leave out. I really craved having all the pieces of the puzzle and was desperate to read the rest. The scripts obliterated all of my first impressions because I thought it was an incredible thriller.

What is The Missing about?
It's a story about the disappearance of a child in 2006 and all of the trauma that goes along with that. It's a parents' worst nightmare which is compounded by the fact that they have to go through the
experience in a country and legal system they're not familiar with. The emotional center of the story is this beleaguered couple dealing with all of these awful things. At the same time, intercutting within parallel time zones, we are in the present where the father, Tony, is a very different character. He's a complete outcast, desperate and drinking too much but is convinced he's found something that will unlock the mystery of what happened to his son Oliver that night. He is reunited with the original detective, Julien, who is equally obsessed by this one failure that he's been trying to live with for the last eight years. They become two outsiders in 2014 trying to put together and repair the damage and distress of what happened in 2006.

The two worlds we've constructed are grounded in character and an emotional truth about what they're going through but, because of the way the story is structured, it plays like a fascinating whodunit thriller. So many intriguing questions are raised by why certain characters are the way they are in the present. What happened? How did they get there?

It's not only a chilling whodunit and what happened but also a fascinating psychological thriller. It's full of fantastic puzzles and mysteries as well as the straightforward, direct emotional story about the horrors of losing a child and the kind of dogged obsession with finding that child.

**How did you differentiate the visual style of the show between the two time periods?**

From the outset, I was keen that it never felt like you were in filmmaking land. I didn’t want to resort to obvious visual devices - like the past would be in black and white, shot on super 8 film or the present would be really composed and the past handheld. I felt the starting point should be as naturalistic as possible and we wouldn't ever fall back on visual trickery to present the two time zones differently. Whatever language we established for both time zones would be fundamentally authentic and naturalistic so that the audience would see the world through the eyes of the characters, and the worlds of past and present would feel as familiar as possible to the audience. At the same time, it had to be very dear when we were in each era. The subtle, truthful differences in costume, hair make up, soundscapes and look and feel of summer vs winter would be the key to the visual distinctiveness of both eras.

When developing each look for the characters, the first thing I did was ask who these people were at each of these periods in their life. Did they want more or less attention? Did they care what they looked like anymore? What would they wear? Characters who are radically trying to leave the person they were behind might have a different haircut yet other people who are trying to be the same person they were might become a slightly more degraded, deconstructed version. I wanted it to be subtle and as realistic as possible. We were very fortunate that we could shoot in the appropriate seasons. So the past is all summer 2006 and the present is winter. Our great DP, Ole Birkeland, did employ a few very subtle tricks to enhance the differences with each time zone – softer light for the wintry present, harder light for the sunny past and we also shot 2006 on slightly older, warmer lenses to enhance what the warmer light would do to colours and skin tones. These are things that the audience should feel rather than not notice.

**How was this cast put together?**

I always felt that each time zone was built around two intriguing love stories – Tony and Emily in 2006 and the Tony and Julien ‘bromance’ in 2014. The show would be built around these three actors and we were blessed to have James Nesbitt, Frances O' Connor and Tcheky Karyo for these central roles. There are lots of extreme emotional experiences that Tony and Emily go through, and I really wanted them to take the audience with them on this journey. The actors needed to be familiar and warm with a real love story that we could invest in so we’re always rooting for them.

I've always been a fan of Jimmy's because he brings an immense likeability to whatever he does but he is also and extraordinary actor who can really dig deep and mine dark, disturbing emotions. Also, Jack and
Harry had thought of him when they were first writing so I think it became wonderfully inevitable that Jimmy would be Tony. I’ve never been alienated by what Tony’s done, never felt embarrassed, or guilty watching him suffering. That’s because of Jimmy’s performance.

With Frances, I couldn’t help thinking of Spielberg’s AI because that was also about a mother who has this intriguing relationship with her son. She brings intelligence and sensitivity to the role. While Tony has a direct front-footed role in both time zones, Emily has this intriguing role in 2014 where she is a mother who’s trying not to forget but who has to move on. It had to be such a subtle truthful performance with nowhere to hide and I knew Frances could get the sense of subtext and portray someone who would intrigue me and never lose my sympathies. They became this perfect couple in my head as the casting started to evolve around them. I’ve loved Tcheky for ages and he was our number one choice for Julien. We had a great meeting in Paris and I really couldn’t understand why Tcheky has played so many bad guys – he’s the nicest, warmest guy in the world. I knew he’d bring Julien’s warm, intelligence to the role in spades. We basically stalked Tcheky for months across Europe until he said yes! We have the most amazing cast around these three. If I ever get arrested in France, I hope it’s by our cops – they’re some of my favourite French actors.

**Is there anything that really roots the story and establishes the visual style?**

An interesting thing in the scripts is that the writers never tell you what to think or feel. I felt there was something about this objective approach to emotional story lines that we could follow through in the visual style. For the most part, the camera is very composed and static, not really judging people differently. We wanted to let the audience think for themselves and try to keep the intriguing feeling that I read in the scripts. Our style was not to spoon-feed meaning all the time with the way we shot and staged things. I think there can be an incredible tension about watching someone who doesn’t seem to be drawing the camera with them or predicting where they’re going to go. We also used a fair bit of real time in this – longer takes than usual to really put the audience in the same space and time as the characters.

Even though we weren’t doing a big conspiracy type thriller, the grammar of being very wide and static means you have to try and solve the mystery of that space. We juxtaposed these wide shots with being much more intimate and close but without decontextualizing people. Our close-ups tend to be a bit wider than usual and our wide shots are really, really wide.

Although *The Missing* is a thriller, I wanted a lot of the worst things to happen in daylight in very familiar spaces – it is about the horrors lurking in everyday life. You get more tension out of keeping a sense of the ordinary. The more the look and feel resembled a commonly experienced holiday, the more chilling the piece would feel.

**Is there anything that was particularly difficult to choreograph or block?**

We decided to try and shoot a real-time ‘no edits’ car chase which became an interesting technical challenge. A car chase by its nature involves going down more than one street but because we couldn’t lock off a whole town for it, we had to be a bit stealthier and do it street by street. The challenge was to disguise our edits so we could stitch the car chase together. We found a fantastic bit of kit, a pod, where the car is driven by a stunt driver positioned on top of it and the actor is in the car pretending to drive but with no control over it. It meant the stunt driver could race through these streets and we could keep the camera on the actor, Tcheky Karyo. Tcheky can act without paying any attention to what’s going on in front of him so we’re there the whole time with him, not cutting and never going outside of the car. I’m really pleased with the intensity and claustrophobia of that scene.

**What was it like shooting in the studio?**
In the quest to make the show feel as realistic as possible, we were always going to have to grapple with the practical and sensible scenario that we would be doing some things in a studio environment. This included the critical hotel room where Tony and Emily experience, digest and process so many of the key turning points in this awful experience. It’s where Emily gets the first call from Tony that Oliver’s gone missing. There is so much that they have to deal with in that room and it becomes like a bunker for them as the press is gathered outside and the pressure on them gets more intense. I’m not generally a fan of shooting in a studio because I think there’s something about going on location which just automatically brings its own innate reality. So we made some rules for ourselves about the studio like we would never float any of the walls. It is often done in a studio situation because you can be more versatile with where you put the camera. We also decided to have a ceiling and never move it so we feel as claustrophobically shut in there as Tony and Emily do. We’ve forgotten that we’re in a studio because we have to obey the same rules of space as Tony and Emily. It’s given it more reality and also helps the actors because if they see walls disappearing I think they subliminally feel the artifice more.

How have you coped with directing all 8 episodes?
I decided it was going to be critical that anything I could do to help my memory would be valuable. Doing two time zones and chasing a certain kind of truthful performance, you need to be so absolutely intimately obsessively aware of exactly what’s just happened to that character, what they may be trying to achieve in that scene, how they’re feeling or what they may be afraid of. So I have the scripts on a loop and keep going over them. I keep discovering more connections and secrets that I think I’ve unearthed about these characters who have now become as real to me as anyone in my life! Speaking French is the other thing that I’ve tried to master to work on my memory and it’s pretty good!