

# **Espionage thriller *Betrayal* is commissioned by ITV, written by David Eldridge and starring Shaun Evans as a troubled MI5 operative**

Published Thu 19 Sep 2024



## [Drama](#)

ITV has commissioned espionage thriller *Betrayal*, set in the clandestine world of MI5 and starring Shaun Evans as a spy trying to avert a serious and dark threat to national security while making sense of his own place in the world.

John Hughes, played by Shaun Evans (*Until I Kill You*, *Endeavour*, *Vigil*), joined MI5 during the war on terror and was at the forefront of averting the biggest terrorist plots on UK soil. Now in his mid 40s and married with two children he's struggling to adapt to the new MI5, where threats to national security have changed and he's forced to adapt to the values of a progressive work environment.

On a hunch John meets Ehsan, a British Iranian man with links to the Manchester gangland who claims he has intelligence about a plot on UK soil. Before he can

share intel, Ehsan is executed by a lone gunman, and John impulsively kills the assassin in retaliation. This triggers a chain of events which puts John in direct collision with his superiors who are furious that he appears to have got involved in a Manchester gang turf war. John thinks there's more to it than that and starts digging into Ehsan's past. He knows he'll have to redeem himself if he's to save his career and reputation, all the while struggling with his own mental health after having killed a man.

John's efforts to save his career and his marriage are also tested by Mehreen, an intelligence operative who is brought in to take over John's duties on the Iran desk. Their connection is electric, and John must wrestle with temptations his younger self would readily have surrendered to. Struggling with his own demons, his love for his family and his complicated loyalty to the institution he's been part of for over 20 years, John sets out to find the truth of the explosive security threat to the UK before it's too late.

Set in London and Manchester, *Betrayal* commences filming in early 2025. Written by award winning playwright and screenwriter David Eldridge, *Betrayal* is an emotionally intelligent, thrilling and darkly funny thriller.

Produced by production company Mammoth Screen in association with Navarino Pictures, the show is executive produced by Mammoth's founder and Chief Creative Officer Damien Timmer alongside Mammoth's Tom Leggett, David Eldridge and Shaun Evans. Mammoth's Creative Director Rebecca Keane has overseen the development of the series. Mammoth Screen is an ITV Studios company.

Commented Shaun Evans:

"I'm delighted to be returning to ITV with this exceptionally well written and timely project. It's a great privilege to reunite with David Eldridge and bring to life his insightful take on the world of espionage. And it is of course a joy to be collaborating once again with the first-rate team at Mammoth Screen. I look forward to sharing it with ITV audiences soon."

Commented David Eldridge:

"I'm thrilled be working with ITV and Mammoth Screen on *Betrayal*, an espionage drama rooted as much in the trials and betrayals of family life as in the bloody, dangerous business of spying. It's also a pleasure to be collaborating again with Shaun Evans for whom I have created the show's leading role - out of favour intelligence officer John Hughes."

Betrayal has been commissioned for ITV and ITVX by Head of Drama Polly Hill and Drama Commissioner Huw Kennair-Jones, who will oversee production on behalf of the broadcaster.

Commented Huw Kennair-Jones:

“David has created a fascinating character in John Hughes, a complex man trying to navigate his way through the evolving world of espionage as he also tries to save his marriage. We’re thrilled that Shaun Evans will be bringing John to life as he reunites with the brilliant team at Mammoth to make what is sure to be an exciting and compelling drama.”

Commented Damien Timmer:

“As a long-standing fan of David Eldridge’s work, and having collaborated with Shaun Evans on many hours of Endeavour, it’s a pleasure to be working with them on the story of John Hughes, a likable but flawed man struggling to find his place in the modern world and a character I hope ITV audiences will take to their heart. David's scripts examine the fragile psychology of a middle-aged man caught between family and work, but in John's case his work is protecting the security of our country, and the stakes could not be higher.”

Betrayal is produced in association with ITV Studios, which will handle international distribution of the series.

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