A MOTHER’S SON

PRODUCTION NOTES
A MOTHER’S SON

PRODUCTION NOTES

Press Release ........................................................................Pages 3 - 4

CAST INTERVIEWS
Hermione Norris is Rosie.........................................................Pages 5 - 6
Alexander Arnold is Jamie......................................................Pages 7 - 8
Martin Clunes is Ben .............................................................Pages 9 - 10
Paul McGann is David............................................................Pages 11 - 12

Synopsis .......................................................................................Page 13
Cast & Crew Credits .................................................................Pages 14 -15

Press contact:
Sarah Gaffney
Email: sarah.gaffney@itv.com

Picture contact:
Patrick Smith
Email: Patrick.Smith@itv.com
HERMIONE NORRIS and MARTIN CLUNES STAR IN ITV STUDIOS DRAMA A MOTHER’S SON

What would you do if you suspected your son had committed murder?

HERMIONE NORRIS (Spooks) and MARTIN CLUNES (Doc Martin) star in thrilling drama A Mother’s Son, produced by ITV Studios for ITV.

The 2 x 60 minute drama written by Chris Lang and filmed on location in London and Suffolk also stars acclaimed actor PAUL McGANN (Luther) and ALEXANDER ARNOLD (Skins).

When a teenage schoolgirl is found murdered in the woods near a local town in Suffolk the news rips through the heart of the whole community, and that of mother of two, Rosie Haleton (Hermione Norris), who discovers damning evidence that could be connected to the heinous crime.

Recently remarried, Rosie lives with her two children Jamie (Alexander Arnold) and Olivia, husband Ben Harley (Martin Clunes), and his children from a previous marriage, Jessica and Rob. As the newly formed family settle into daily life living together under one roof, Rosie begins to suspect she may be sharing her home with a killer when she finds a pair of blood-splattered trainers hidden under her son Jamie’s bed.

At first Rosie tries to dismiss her suspicions believing them too incomprehensible to be true. Could her teenage boy be involved in murder?

Rosie finds solace in an unlikely place, confiding in her ex-husband, David (Paul McGann), who like Rosie totally dismisses the idea Jamie could be responsible. Reluctantly, he agrees to follow his son in the hope to help clear his name and discovers Jamie has been spending time with 19 year old Sean Christie, a school drop out who was previously arrested for sexual assault against a minor. With a finger pointed in Sean’s direction Rosie and David hope their son is in the clear, but Jamie’s ever-crumbling alibi suggests a different story.

At home, Rosie’s suspicions lean to Ben’s son Rob. Since learning of the murder he has been acting out for no reason and won’t explain why. It’s clear he has something to hide - could he have been witness or also be involved somehow?

The burden of secrets creates a heated atmosphere in the house and tension between Rosie and Ben and the rest of the family. The upcoming family holiday is cancelled, arguments increase, and the only way forward is to confront Jamie. Who of course denies it. Ben feels Rosie’s resolve crumbling and contemplates taking matters into his own hands. But can he really go through with it? Is that his right or responsibility?
A Mother's Son is a drama that tests whether a family not bound by blood can sustain and survive when placed under enormous strain.

A Mother's Son is co-executive produced by Chris Lang and Myar Craig-Brown. The drama was produced by Colin Wratten and directed by Ed Bazalgette.
HERMIONE NORRIS IS ROSIE

Acclaimed actress Hermione Norris has starred in hit UK dramas such as Spooks, Bouquet of Barbed Wire, Kingdom, Wire in the Blood and Cold Feet.

In A Mother’s Son, Hermione plays the lead role of Rosie, a mother who suspects her son, Jamie may be involved in a heinous crime when she discovers damning evidence hidden under his bed.

Here Hermione explains more about her character, why she signed up for her newest role and her thoughts on Rosie’s compelling dilemma.

What attracted you to play Rosie in A Mother’s Son?

It was Chris Lang's script. I thought it was a really good. There is something very raw about Chris’ writing. The story is fascinating psychologically and emotionally. It’s an interesting dilemma Rosie faces.

How are we introduced to Rosie in the drama?

Rosie has recently been divorced and she works in a local deli. Essentially she’s a mother and a family woman. She’s found happiness again with Ben, played by Martin Clunes, and the relationship presents new hopes and new beginnings. It’s her second chance at marriage after her first to David (Paul McGann).

How does Rosie’s recent marriage to Ben affect her children, and in particular her son, Jamie?

The integrating of two families really interested Chris when he wrote the script. They have all recently moved into a house together, she and her two children, and Ben and his son and daughter. They suffer the usual stresses and strains of family life but right from the get-go there is unease with Rosie’s son Jamie.

Rosie and Jamie have an incredibly close bond, she’s a mother and he’s her son. Rosie absolutely adores him, he’s her baby. You see how close they are in the story.

What is Rosie’s reaction when she finds a pair of blood-stained trainers hidden under Jamie’s bed not long after a reported murder?

When Rosie finds the trainers I think instinctively, on some level, she knows in that very moment he might be involved, but she does everything possible to deny that to herself. She tries to find any scrap of evidence to prove it’s not what she thinks it is – evidence linking him to the murder of a schoolgirl.

At first she tries to put the situation to the back of her mind. She pulls the trainers out, but thinks ‘no’ and hides them again, denying it. But then when his behaviour is off the wall Rosie decides to try to test the trainers for blood, and starts to check where he’s been and when he arrived home. It’s her own exploration in an attempt to find anything suggesting this murder is nothing to do with him.
*Why does Rosie choose to confide in ex-husband David rather than Ben?*

David is Jamie’s father. It’s natural to go to him. Also Rosie and Ben’s relationship is quite new, whereas Rosie and David wouldn’t pull any punches, they are very open and honest with each other in every respect.

*Can you relate to Rosie?*

I am a mother so I understand that huge love you have for your children. It’s powerful. You would kill for your children. A mother’s love is universal.

After I’d accepted the role I talked about playing this part with a couple of people and it was surprising to realise how some mothers had thought her dilemma through. I hadn’t actually, but it’s really interesting.

*Did you enjoy filming in Suffolk?*

It was beautiful. It was a place we went on holiday when I was a child. I think it is absolutely gorgeous and has it’s own very particular identity.

*Hermione’s previous credits include: Outcasts, The Kindness of Strangers, Separate Lies and Lucky Jim.*
ALEXANDER ARNOLD IS JAMIE

Rising star Alexander Arnold’s acting debut was as Rich Hardbeck in E4’s teen drama Skins.

Alexander plays Jamie in A Mother’s Son. In the drama Jamie is suspected of being involved in the murder of a schoolgirl when his mother find a pair of seemingly blood-stained trainers hidden under his bed.

**Why did you want to star in A Mother’s Son?**

Immediately as I read the script for the first episode I wanted to know what would happen in the concluding episode. I thought the character of Jamie was really interesting.

ITV is quite an exciting place to work, they produce a lot of high calibre dramas, and this one fits nicely into that. That alone attracted me to really want to push myself and get the part.

**Did you enjoy working with Hermione Norris, Martin Clunes and Paul McGann?**

Working with Hermione, Martin and Paul I got to see the disciplines they carry and I have come to admire each of them even more than I did before. They are all very different. Martin is a warm and funny guy who is really professional but laidback, he doesn’t take himself too seriously. Hermione is an emotional actress, very in tune with what is going on around her. She is a really nice person to talk to and very caring. The scenes I had with Paul were lovely, he’s a great guy and a very experienced actor.

**Can you explain how we are introduced to your character Jamie?**

There are two families who have come together – Rosie and Ben are married and have two children each, and Jamie is the oldest child belonging to Rosie.

Jamie is very ambiguous at the beginning, and viewers won’t necessarily warm to him. He is full of contradictions; he’s very shy and can be quiet, but he’s also confrontational and angry.

Jamie has been thrown into a situation, belonging to a dysfunctional family. He hasn’t got a strong father figure. He has a lot of pent up anger for his parents simmering under the surface. A key part of his character is that he’s angry about where he is in the world and how people see him at school and at home.

**What is Jamie’s relationship like with his mother, Rosie?**

Rosie probably had quite a strong relationship with Jamie and daughter Livvy, but I think her new marriage to Ben has made her not take as much notice of her children as they would perhaps want. Although Rosie has been distanced from some of the issues Jamie has experienced, the root of their relationship is really strong and no matter what, she will always love him. That strength of her love runs throughout the drama.
Can you relate to Jamie?

Jamie is a representation of an age when everything can be a bit confusing, when it feels as though it is you against the world, and your family doesn’t understand what you’re trying to say. It’s a time when your feelings are brought to the centre of who you are. I think most people can relate to that.

Throughout the drama Jamie has a lot of things thrown at him that are hard to relate to and part of my job is to try to understand and get a perspective of what he is going through. I really enjoyed this challenge, as it is different from anything I have done before, and I had to get to the core of his character and ask the question, ‘why’? It is a great role for me as an actor.

Did you find it difficult dealing with all the emotional scenes?

I try and keep everything simple and relaxed. There are a lot of emotional scenes, but they were fun to do. If you have a day when you’re able to overcome something emotionally, then it’s a great day. I’m lucky to have had a lot of days like that on this drama.

How did you find filming in Suffolk?

We filmed in Southwold and Walberswick in Suffolk. Southwold was a really quaint little village. It was a good setting for the drama, the perfect village set against an unforgivable crime.

Why should viewers tune into A Mother’s Son?

Jamie is a fairly ‘normal’ teenager in the respect that he goes to school, likes music and is into typical things teenagers are into. Hopefully parents will recognise him. If people respond to this drama by asking questions, then we’ll know we’ve made something important.
Martin Clunes is best known for his roles as Gary Strang in Men Behaving Badly and as Dr Martin Ellingham in ITV’s hit drama Doc Martin, produced by Buffalo Pictures, the production company he owns with wife Philippa Braithwaite. Martin’s other credits include the title role in Reggie Perrin, William and Mary, and factual documentaries Horsepower, Islands of Britain and most recently, The Lemurs of Madagascar.

Martin stars in A Mother’s Son as widower Ben, who is recently remarried to Rosie, played by Hermione Norris. Ben has two children Jessica and Rob from his previous relationship, and is stepfather to Jamie and Livy.

Here Martin talks about his character Ben, what he would do if he discovered a loved one was linked to a heinous crime, and why he’s taken on this new role.

**Why did you want to star in A Mother’s Son?**

I was keen to star in A Mother’s Son because of writer Chris Lang who is an old friend. I have read some of his work before and it's terribly clever and usually quite dark. I thought A Mother’s Son was really gripping, very original, and a total thriller.

**How are we introduced to your character Ben?**

At the time we meet Ben, he and Rosie are a few weeks into the experiment of putting their two families together and learning how to live as one large family.

It’s an interesting dynamic because Ben and Rosie’s children go to different schools and they have no prior knowledge of each other. It is early days so the situation is quite sensitive. There are minor frictions, which get blown out of all proportion, and then a massive tension is added to the household as the drama unfolds.

I think it is interesting to see how suspicion and doubt reverberates through this family.

**How does Ben cope being a stepfather to Rosie’s children when there is tension running through the household?**

I think Ben is man who understands and seeks to give balance to his life. I think he’s quite an ordered man.

At the beginning Ben is sensitive and doesn’t want to cross the line where Rosie’s children are concerned. But as time goes on and Jamie’s behaviour in particular begins to escalate he decides he has to tackle him. He is a solicitor so he’s mindful of how to question him.

**How does the dynamic change between Ben and Rosie as the drama unfolds?**
They are not in full honeymoon period at the start, but you can see they are very much in love and there is vibrancy to it. There are pressures upon them, but Ben understands that there are things Rosie needs to work through. I think there is a glimmer of hope for them once a certain watershed is reached, and it’s at this point that they can start to rebuild.

**What would you do if you discovered a loved one was potentially involved in a heinous crime?**

I would like to think I’d be much like Ben and follow a similar route of action, just for simplicity. I do believe that honesty is a good system because at least you know what way up a thing is, for better or for worse. If you try and be honest you can at least have some simplicity in your life. It must be too hard to lie all the time.

**What was it like filming in Suffolk?**

I filmed in Suffolk for one day, but it was very nice. I used to spend a lot of time in Suffolk. I have some great friends who lived in Dunwich, which is nearby, and Caroline Quentin used to have a house in Walberswick. I’ve known the area for most of my adult life.

**Having started in the leading role in Doc Martin, did you enjoy playing a character role in A Mother’s Son?**

It was great. Playing the leading role in Doc Martin wasn’t necessarily something I ever strove for. I was always very happy being part of a cast. It was really nice having a new part to think about and, ultimately, it’s good for me.

*Martin’s previous credits include: The Man Who Lost His Head, Losing It, Goodbye Mr Chips and Shakespeare in Love.*
Actor of stage and screen, Paul McGann started his career in the early 1980s and was propelled to fame following his starring role in The Monocled Mutineer and his performance alongside Richard E Grant in independent film Withnail & I. He has since played The Doctor in Doctor Who, and has credits to his name including Waking the Dead, Collision and Luther.

Paul stars in A Mother’s Son as Rosie’s ex-husband and Jamie’s father, David. Here Paul explains why he wanted to star in A Mother’s Son, and how fascinated he was watching co-star Hermione Norris acting on set.

**Why did you want to star in A Mother’s Son?**

It’s always the script. When I read A Mother’s Son, there were a number of scenes I really wanted to play, so it was an easy decision.

**How are we introduced to your character, David?**

My character is the ex. He is set up in the story as the bloke that Rosie, played by Hermione Norris, has rightly got rid of. It’s important we think that he doesn’t do himself any favours, he just shoots his mouth off and he’s surly. As the story accelerates he is more involved. Hopefully we then see him at least show some understanding and intelligence, but even so I think we see him at the limits of his emotional intelligence. I enjoyed playing that, he wasn’t someone I immediately identified with or recognised but dynamically I think it worked, given that Rosie is at the axis of everything.

**How would you describe David and Rosie’s relationship?**

They have a long history, and you can sense that it was as messy as people’s real lives can be. We aim to suggest that when they were young they probably got on well. It was a phase that Rosie has let pass by, and David has lost his allure, but they are still parents.

David is bitter and difficult, he is slightly uncivilised and can’t be trusted, but that’s what he’s there for. It’s quite chilling.

What really attracted me to the drama were the scenes when David and Rosie came together as the boy’s parents.

Hermione is a great actor and it was wonderful working with her. Most of her scenes were fairly intense and Hermione was fascinating to watch. She’s a very subtle actor on screen. It can be exhausting, especially when its all day, but she manages to keep it alive.

**Why do you think Rosie goes to David to talk about her suspicions regarding their son?**
Rosie wants to find another way around. She has a huge dilemma and David enjoys the position she’s in because it brings her closer to him. As brief as it is, it gives him an advantage and a bit of control, more so than her new husband, Ben. That’s how low and small-minded he is.

**How would you describe David’s relationship with Jamie?**

I had some lovely scenes with Alex, who plays my son Jamie. In those scenes David is fairly non-committal and David’s instinct isn’t so honed that he can tell when Jamie isn’t being truthful.

**What would you do if you discovered evidence that made you doubt someone close to you?**

I would be really conflicted. Personally, I would be the kind of Dad who would be blinded by bias and it would take me ages to believe it. It would take some convincing to believe my little angel had ever done anything like that. I would be easily fooled, but then if I was confronted with serious evidence, and if there was a chance that I could lie for him, then I probably would, or I’d be more inclined that way. That conflict is at the heart of this script.

**Did you like being Suffolk?**

I’d never been to that part of England, but I really loved it. It’s quite a famous little place, and I know friends of friends who have colonised there. When we first got there I didn’t really understand it, and it wasn’t until the sun came out that I could see why. England is so diverse; it’s like many different countries on one island. I’d definitely go back, and it was a great place to film. It was very plausible for this script.

*Paul McGann’s previous credits include Ripper Street for the BBC, New Tricks, Tripping Over, True Dare Kiss, Fish, Poppies and Alien 3.*
A MOTHER’S SON

SYNOPSIS
The small coastal town of East Lee, in Suffolk, is thrown into turmoil when Lorraine, a teenager girl, goes missing and is found murdered. Shock and horror sweep the inhabitants of the town, including the newly merged family of Rosie and her two children Jamie and Livvy; and her new partner Ben and his two teenage children Rob and Jess. Their fast approaching family holiday is overshadowed by the threat that a killer might be present in the midst of their ‘safe’ town. When Rosie finds a stained pair of Jamie’s trainers hidden in his room, her instinct suspects it could be blood. A seed is planted - could her son be involved in Lorraine’s murder?

As the police investigation continues, led by DCI McCleish and DC Upton, the emotional turmoil and stress of the tragedy start to have an effect on the new family’s life and cracks start to form, causing tension between the two families. Jamie seeks solace with his dad David but Rosie finds she can’t suppress the feeling that her son is guilty of something terrible. With Rob also acting suspiciously, Rosie finds the need to do her own investigation but soon rules Rob out, leaving Jamie as the prime suspect. In a desperate move, Rosie tests the stain found on his trainers and is sickened to discover that it is indeed blood.

Feeling isolated in her suspicions, Rosie confides in her ex-husband David, who is appalled by what she is insinuating about their son. They realise, however, that they know little about Jamie’s life outside of home and in order to put their minds at rest, they decide to do some more digging and follow him. David learns that Jamie has been hanging out with a violent dropout called Sean. Could Jamie have fallen under his influence and been forced to cover Sean’s actions?

David and Rosie are conflicted about whether they should go to the police, but are convinced that Jamie wouldn’t hurt anybody. Ben is baffled by Rosie’s increasingly unusual behaviour and she finds she is unable to confide in him, but it’s clear she has concerns about whether their two families are bonding adequately. While David is forced to give an alibi for Jamie, Rosie works up the courage to confront their son who denies having anything to do with the murder. Rosie eventually confides in Ben who is hurt by her secrecy. They have no choice but to cancel the family holiday. Separately, the police arrest Sean and when Ben discovers the victim’s mobile in Jamie’s room, Jamie is forced to explain his and Sean’s connection to her. When Sean is released from custody with a solid alibi, Rosie, David and Ben have to face the possibility that Jamie may have killed Lorraine. The divide between Rosie and Ben’s family appear to split beyond repair, and David and Rosie prepare for an uncertain future with the fate of their son in their hands.
Cast Credits

Rosie .............................................................. HERMIONE NORRIS
Jamie .............................................................. ALEXANDER ARNOLD
Ben ................................................................. MARTIN CLUNES
David ............................................................. PAUL McGANN
Jess ................................................................. ANTONIA CLARKE
Rob ................................................................. JAKE DAVIES
Olivia ............................................................... ELLIE BAMBER
DC Sue Upton .................................................. NICOLA WALKER
Kay Mullary ....................................................... ANNABELLE APSION
Lorraine Mullary ............................................... JULIET YORK
DCI McLeish .................................................... CHARLES DAISH
News Reporter ................................................. HANNAH PETTIFER
Pathologist ....................................................... SHEERAN MARTIN
Sean Christie .................................................. JOSEF ALTIN
Murray ............................................................. PHILIP WRIGHT
Production Credits

Executive Producer .......................................................... MYAR CRAIG-BROWN
Writer & Executive Producer ............................................. CHRIS LANG
Producer ................................................................................. COLIN WRATTEN
Director .............................................................................. ED BAZALGETTE
Production Executive ......................................................... JULIE BURNELL
Line Producer ......................................................................... SIMON BIRD
Director of Photography ..................................................... TIM PALMER
Production Designer ............................................................ PAUL CRIPPS
Costume Designer ................................................................. SUE THOMSON
Make-Up Designer ................................................................. CAROL COOPER
Composer ............................................................................... PAUL ENGLISHBY
Editor ....................................................................................... MARK DAVIS
Art Director .............................................................................. SIOBHAN PEMBERTON
Location Managers ...................................................... HANS VAN DER WERF, STEVEN LISSNER
Sound Recordist ................................................................. ANDREW SISSONS
Casting Directors .............................................................. GILLY POOLE, SUZANNE CROWLEY