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ANGELA BLACK

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Series Overview

Angela's life appears idyllic: a lovely house in suburban London, days working volunteer shifts at a dogs home, two beautiful sons and a charming, hard-working husband – Olivier. However, beneath this façade of charmed domesticity, Angela is a victim of domestic violence. Olivier is controlling and brutal; but Angela loves him and he's the father of her children. She can't leave him, even though she has threatened to countless times. So, she covers her bruises with make-up and fabricates lies to explain away her missing teeth.

Until, one day, Angela is approached by Ed – a Private Investigator - and he smashes her already strained domestic life to pieces. Ed reveals Olivier's deepest secrets to Angela, and she is faced with horrifying truths about her husband and his betrayals. But can Angela trust Ed? And what truths will be revealed in the ferocious fight between Angela and her husband? With one encounter, Angela's life switches from school runs and the dogs home to private detectives and buried secrets. This is a Hitchcockian thriller that follows one woman as she risks everything she holds dear to fight back against the man who has suppressed and tormented her for most of her adult life.

Character Biographies

Angela Black played by Joanne Frogatt

Angela is a devoted wife and mother of two children, Sam and Max. Once, she was a professional pianist, playing at bars and restaurants and bringing people joy with her music. But since her first son, Max, was born, she has moved away from work or much of an independent life. Her days are monotonous but full of love as she takes the kids to school and volunteers at the local dogs home. Angela loves spending her time training the dogs, and the home is a refuge for her... Because Angela's own home is fraught with danger. Unbeknownst to her colleagues or family friends, Angela's husband, Olivier, is violent and controlling. The violence started after Max was born, and now the insidious control is part of Angela's routine – just as normal as making the kids' packed lunches. Angela covers her bruises with make-up and believes Olivier when he tells her she's not looking after the kids properly, or she needs to watch her weight.

Olivier Meyer played by Michiel Huisman

Olivier is a proud and charming father of two and owner of a successful property development company. He has manufactured a perfect life: a beautiful wife, a stunning home and two perfect sons; however, Olivier is hiding his true self from everyone. Everyone except Angela, who has seen that Olivier is controlling, insecure and jealous, and these traits manifest themselves in violence. But how far will Olivier go to ensure his perfect life remains intact, even if his wife wants to fight back?

Ed Harrison played by Samuel Adewunmi

When we first meet Ed, he appears to be a broken-hearted father who Angela meets during a quiet drink at the pub. However, after Angela sees Ed a few too many times to be coincidence, it is revealed that Ed has been following her for months. Surprisingly, when Angela confronts Ed, he tells her the truth. This mysterious man and his revelations will send shockwaves through Angela's life, and she will have to decide whether he is an ally or a foe.

Harry and Jack Williams – Writers and Executive Producers

What is *Angela Black* about?

J: *Angela Black* is about a woman trapped in an abusive relationship, and the story begins when someone comes into her life who derails and upends her existence and sets in motion a train of consequences that she cannot avoid.

What was the inspiration for the story?

H: The inspiration for *Angela Black*, like all of the ideas we tend to come up with, came from a lot of conversations about various areas we wanted to do. We'd been watching a lot of Hitchcock films and initially we thought we'd like to do something that felt like one of those, those amazing thriller moments that find tension in domestic moments.

How did you research the subject matter?

J: It is very important to do a lot of research when you're writing a show like this, about domestic abuse. You need to speak to people who work in shelters, hire consultants and read as much as you can. All of which we did, as we do for all our shows. I think the key thing is that this is something that happens a lot, but people do not always understand or read about it. I think it is very easy to watch shows about abuse and go "well... I'd just leave". It is not that simple. It is a lot more insidious and subtle, and that's one of the things that we wanted to reflect with this show.

H: It was important that we do it justice and that we were accurate about the psychology of the abused and the abuser, both sides of the story. It was important to try and be truthful with it.

Tell us more about the character of *Angela Black*?

J: *Angela Black* is someone who has made the best of her life, and someone who loves her children, and who has a job that she seems to like. As the story unfolds, we start to see the compromises she has made in her life and the things she has sacrificed for the sake of her children, for the sake of what appears to be a happy life. She is someone who actually has an inner strength that she hasn't yet discovered. This story will be the awakening of that.

H: One of the interesting things about *Angela* is, on the surface, she looks like she kind of has it all. She's very wealthy in a lovely house with a very attractive husband and two kids. It all kind of looks perfect and then the more you chip away, the more time you spend with her, the more you see that that is not the case anymore. The more you see that she has been isolated, she has been cut off by this guy and that she has not got all the things you think she does.

Where do we find *Angela* at the start of the series?

J: At the beginning of episode one, we meet *Angela* on a very typical day. She's taking the kids to school and doing her volunteer job at a dogs home and very much appearing to have a life

that appears to be perfect. At about 10 minutes in, we start to realise that everything is not as it seems when she meets a man called Ed.

Tell us about the character of Olivier?

J: Olivier as a character seems the charming husband. He is charismatic and has a good job and he has got this big house. But within a few minutes, we see he does something awful to his wife and then, for the rest of the episode, he seems to be incredibly contrite and penitent, spending his time trying to make up for it. So, I think the thing with Olivier is that we are constantly going “who is he really?” Is he the person that abuses his wife? Or was that some unacceptable moment of weakness and anger, which is what he wants us to believe. I think with Olivier and the series generally, we are constantly wondering what is on the surface and what lies behind it. In that respect, he is very much an enigma.

What can you tell us about Ed?

J: The arrival of Ed is the thing that makes Angela really start to question the life that she’s come to accept with her husband and the status quo of a marriage where saying the wrong thing to your husband will get you hurt. Ed shakes all that up when she starts to think maybe Olivier isn’t the man she thought he was, and she didn’t always have the highest opinion of him.

How does meeting Ed change Angela’s life?

J: Once Angela meets Ed, this new person in her life in episode one, things take off pretty quickly for her. She finds out her husband has been lying to her and she quickly finds herself in a sort of battle of wills between her husband and Ed, her new shadowy ally. She doesn’t even know this person and suddenly, by the middle of the series, she’s having to trust him and put her life in his hands and make decisions with this person she barely knows. And we move from a place where at one point she’s just thinking that Olivier wants to leave her, into something far murkier and darker.

Tell us about casting Joanne Froggatt?

H: When casting Angela, it was a really tricky one because it’s a very tough role. It requires digging deep and it’s a very raw, emotional kind of piece. We’d worked with Joanne Froggatt on a show called *Liar* and she’s just a brilliant actress. We saw how great her range was and just how brilliant and versatile she was, so she sort of just sprung to mind for that really, we knew she could really handle it. We knew she’d do an amazing job, which she did.

J: Having worked with Joanne before, we know how committed she is to everything she does and how hard she works. We know that we can talk anytime about the character, about her lines and what she’s doing next, and I think we just knew when we wrote it how hard it would be. It is very rare to have anyone, even number one on the call sheet, who is in that much - she’s in 80% of the show, maybe more, which is pretty much unheard of to be in every scene day after day doing very emotionally draining stuff. One of the things we really wanted to do was have as little dialogue as possible, which is not always our preference as writers, but sometimes it’s really interesting. If you’ve got great actors, to let them do what they do without explaining things. We wanted to write something very Hitchcockian, that’s all about subtext and Jo is very, very good at that.

Tell us about casting Michiel Huisman?

H: Michiel Huisman was at the top of our list and we were delighted that he was interested. He's just a brilliantly charming, lovely, lovely man, which for that role is obviously an interesting choice. You sort of don't feel there is a side to him, but there probably is, there's a side to everyone, but it's just that he felt like absolutely the right fit.

J: When you watch Michiel in his scenes, he brings exactly what we wanted him to bring. He brings incredible charm and warmth but also a certain sort of unknowability which is really important for the part. He is very good at being enigmatic.

Tell us about director Craig Viveiros?

J: Choosing a director for this was very difficult because we were pretty unabashed about the inspiration being Hitchcock movies and almost a seventies suspense thriller and that aesthetic. You can write that in the script as much as you want but someone then has to do it! We've always liked Craig Viveiros's work. He's done some brilliant things and when we met him, everything he said about it and all the references he brought visually, but also in terms of his understanding of the script were what we had in mind too.

What journey will the audience go on?

H: Hopefully we are sending people on a sort of redemptive journey, on a journey where they root for this character, and they want her to be free. Not just from this person, but for herself, psychologically, from this thing.

J: It's a very emotional story. There are thriller moments, there are surprises, there are twists, there are a lot of those things. But fundamentally, this is a story in which you invest hugely in this character Angela, I think more so than anything we've written. You really relate to and understand this character and want her to discover herself. We, as an audience, feel so profoundly about her rediscovering what it is about her that makes her want to live her life and seek happiness for herself. Hopefully people will enjoy it, although it is not always an enjoyable journey in that sense, sometimes it is pretty difficult to watch. But we hope it's got a cathartic emotional impact.

Joanne Froggatt – Angela Black

Tell us about how you became involved with this project?

I really wanted to play this character and be involved in this project because I've worked with Jack and Harry Williams before, who are our brilliant writers. I just absolutely loved their script and I think they have an amazing skill at not only writing incredibly gripping material that is incredibly entertaining, but also doing that based around a subject matter that can be extremely sensitive, as is the case with *Angela Black*. I always feel they get the balance just right between those two things, obviously being a piece of entertainment first and foremost, but a piece of entertainment that has something intelligent and interesting to say. I'm always gripped by their characters, and I desperately want to play them whenever I get sent a script from them.

What were your first thoughts when you first read the script?

When I first read the script for *Angela Black*, it was such a page turner, and I was incredibly gripped by this woman's life and the situation we find her in when we first meet Angela in the story. She's very much on the brink of leaving this abusive relationship that she's been in with her husband for many years now. They have two sons together and she's about to walk away but trying to work out how she navigates that in a safe way for her and her children. Then she meets a character called Ed, who is a private detective, who tells her things about her husband that she didn't know, and she comes to realise that there's even more at stake than she originally thought. There's already so much intrigue, even just reading the first episode of Jack and Harry's script, I desperately wanted to know what happens to this woman and who her husband really is and what their relationship is based on, the lies that it's based on, the truth that it's based on, and I was just rooting for her from the start. I wanted to know how she was going to extricate herself from the situation and what the end result was going to be.

Tell us a bit more about the character of Angela.

Angela is a mum and wife, and she is living, from the outside, what looks like the perfect life. She has her handsome husband and her two beautiful children, lives in a beautiful house in London, a very middle-class area, living a very nice lifestyle. Early on within the first few scenes of the first episode, you see how we scratch the surface of that and what's really going on underneath that veneer. What's going on is nowhere near the happy life that's put forward to the outside world. We find Angela at a crucial point in her life, really, where she is trying to navigate how to leave this relationship which has become extremely abusive and how to do so in a way that is safe for her and her children.

How did you go about tackling the sensitive subject matter?

I think it's incredibly important for television drama to tackle sensitive subject matters. I've tackled a few in my career and I feel passionate about that because I feel that drama and entertainment can be a window into a subject matter for an audience that they may never have thought about or may never have been on their radar. Maybe even just one person thinking "oh, that person's behaviour is odd," or "I'm going to just check in with my friend and check he or she is okay," or "maybe it's okay if I speak to somebody about my situation." If any of that happens it can only be a positive. This is first and foremost a piece of

entertainment. We're not saving lives, it's a television drama, but just to open up a subject matter to a wider audience is helpful when it's done in the right way.

How does your character develop?

Angela goes on an extreme journey through the series, and it shapes her in a way that she builds strength as the episodes move forward. She has always had that strength and she has got that strength, but she has sort of become detached from it and, as I said before, she's reconnecting with herself. We find her re-finding that strength of character and she just builds that, and she becomes stronger and stronger, and more savvy about how to handle this extremely manipulative person that is in her life.

How will the show appeal to audiences?

I think people will tune into *Angela Black* because it is a real edge-of-your-seat thriller. It's a psychological thriller in the home, which makes it, to me, even more disturbing in a way, because it's not something that happens outside in a world far away from the one we're all living in. It is one that could be happening in the house next door, or possibly, in your own house and that is what is so unnerving about it, and what really stuck with me. So, it is a very intriguing and twisting plot, but it's unnerving because it feels so close to home.

What will audiences take away from the story?

I hope audiences will firstly take away from the show that it is a gripping, edge-of-your-seat thriller that they're completely obsessed with! But also, obviously I would like them to take away a little bit more than that, which is thinking about Angela's situation and how people are affected by these issues. And maybe, possibly, not being as dismissive about them as they were before, or possibly just being a bit more open to checking in on a friend or making sure they are treating people the way they should be treated.

Michiel Huisman – Olivier Meyer

Why did you want to be involved with this project?

I thought this character would be challenging but great to play. I was also dying to work with Joanne and Samuel. I had watched some of the director's work and I loved the writing of the Williams brothers. There were a lot of reasons for me wanting to be a part of this.

What were your thoughts when you first read the script?

I loved reading the scripts, I thought they were very suspenseful, I loved all the plot twists. Once I got to episode three and read this long sequence that was going to be shot in a single take, I knew I wanted to be a part of this because, as an actor, I love shooting those kinds of sequences. This one in particular ends in such a major plot twist that I knew would be fun to shoot, and it sealed the deal for me.

What were your thoughts on the writing?

What I really like about the Williams brothers' writing is that their characters are real people, they are layered characters. Even someone like Angela who is the victim in this relationship, she also has her own flaws.

What can you tell us about Olivier?

Olivier is a very successful real estate developer and it's important to him how people perceive him. He wants to come across as the perfect husband, the doting father, but the reality is that there is a very dark side to his character which he desperately tries to hide.

What are some of Olivier's behaviours?

I would describe his behaviour as extremely manipulative. As an actor you must always try and find a way into your character, and the biggest challenge for me was to try and understand where all his anger stems from and how I could possibly relate to that.

How did you prepare for the role?

There is a lot of stuff I do when I prepare for a role, ranging from watching documentaries to reading books or drawing from the experience of people around me and memories. At the end of the day, you have to pull it towards yourself and find something that gives you a way into the character's anger.

What were the challenges?

There were a lot of challenging moments, many emotional and violent scenes, but I think the biggest challenge for me as an actor was that nobody in this show is ever speaking the truth. There is always something else going on, and for me it was very important to always be on top of that. There was always a second agenda and that was important to always keep track of.

How does the series tackle important issues?

The show tackles many important issues, and while first and foremost this is meant as entertainment, maybe it can also teach us something about how these relationships can work. From the outside this family looks picture perfect, but there is so much more going on and it

makes us relate to a woman like Angela who cannot just pack up and leave. She is trapped in this relationship and even though her husband is abusing her and is violent, she cannot just leave her kids behind. Maybe we can learn from that.

How do you hope the audience will respond to the series?

I think audiences will want to unravel the truth and I hope that they will root for Angela and want to see her succeed in breaking free from her husband.

What do you think people will take away from this series?

I think that is very easy, don't mess with Angela Black!

Samuel Adewunmi – Ed Harrison

Tell us about the story of *Angela Black*?

Angela Black is a show that centres around a character with the same name, who is married to a man played by Michiel Huisman, who has a lot of secrets. It is essentially a show about what goes on behind closed doors and looking behind those closed doors to see a whole world revealed that isn't what it seems on the outside.

Tell us why you wanted to be involved?

I've worked with Craig Viveiros before, and we had a really great relationship and so any project that he's doing I always feel that it's something that is worth being onboard with. When I got the email about the audition and I saw his name there I was like cool, great, I'm already kind of onboard, I'm 70% there! Then of course, Harry and Jack, I've seen some of their work before and I always found it really compelling. It's really funny, having met them afterwards or during the shooting process, they're such funny and charming guys, but they tend to write pretty dark, compelling stuff. But mainly the thing that drew me to the project was the character of Ed and the part that he played in the overall story. The mystery of the character, the ambiguity of the character, the character's values and moral compass. These were things that I couldn't necessarily identify with, and so that was a character I felt would be quite challenging to play.

What were your thoughts on first reading the scripts?

My first reaction when I read the script was actually "this is bonkers"! It's a world that I haven't actually known, with some of those topics. The opening of the first episode was quite abrupt for me. It was something that made me deeply uncomfortable, and I think that anything that you can read that moves you in any kind of way, whether that's pure joy or laughter or elation or discomfort, is a sign of a well written script. So yeah, that discomfort, as weird as it sounds, was attractive to me. It made me intrigued and interested in where the story was going and the kind of story that we were trying to tell.

What can you tell us about your character?

Ed is a guy who we are introduced to through Angela's character. You meet him when he's at a pub and Angela happens to be there too, but there is more to him than meets the eye. He knows things that Angela isn't privy to, and as the story continues to unfold, we learn a bit more about what he knows, how much he knows and why he actually knows it. Ed is a very multifaceted, interesting character. I don't want to say too much because we'll learn so much about him during the show, but I'd say he's a deeply troubled character who struggles with his sense of morality and his sense of right and wrong.

Can you tell us more about the sensitive subject matter?

It led me to asking the bigger question of why do we actually create content, why do we create TV shows, why do people write things like this, why do we create poetry or stories or TV or film? What is the purpose behind it? For me, and I can't speak for everyone else involved, as much as we want to entertain people and take them out of the reality they live in into this whole new world, on a visceral experiential journey, it's also really important to shine a light

on issues that exist within our reality. Domestic violence is very real, and I think it's brave of Harry and Jack to go ahead and write a story like this, something that could be very triggering for people. But at the same time, it may also be something that people find educational, in a way, or again something that shines a light on something that happens behind closed doors and in the shadows.

What do you think audiences will take away from the show?

I hope that it teaches people to just question things a little bit more and try and be there for people. I guess in that sense, what I find most compelling about the show is that again, it just feels so real. It feels like it could be a neighbour that's going through that, or a friend. And of course, the drama of it is crazy intense! So, I think people are going to watch it thinking the same thing, like "woah", and "what happened?" and "wow".

Craig Viveiros – Director

Tell us about the story?

Angela Black is a psychological thriller that also answers important issues of the day. Angela is a victim of domestic abuse; she is stuck in a cycle of abuse that she's unsure how to escape from.

How did you get involved?

As soon as I read the scripts for *Angela Black*, I knew that I wanted to get involved in the project. It is quite rare to read a piece of material that is constantly evolving and defying your expectations of what it means to be a TV drama.

It is one of those stories that kept me completely hooked and it is a real page turner. Every single page has a different level of intrigue. Every character's journey develops in a way that you do not expect. There was real scope for strong visuals and equally strong performances, if not more so. For me, it was a no-brainer.

Tell us about the sensitive subject matter, and how did you tackle it?

Angela's journey throughout the story is quite a traumatic one. Joanne Froggatt, who plays Angela, spoke to advisors, councilors, psychotherapists and victims of abuse to understand how Angela would navigate this world that we were telling the story within.

With all these subjects, abuse and violence, you have to find a way to be sensitive, not only to the artists that are working, but the victims and people who have suffered at the hands of these crimes outside of the filming world. For the team and I, it was very important that we honoured the true struggle and heroism of people who can go through this and come out the other side.

What were the challenges?

The journey Angela goes on is quite a turbulent one, and created many challenges for us as filmmakers, in trying to execute each of the scenes and her story as a whole. Joanne, as an actor is 110% committed, without her, I don't know if this show would have been possible. For me, the hardest thing was making sure that each of those traumatic scenes could feel as arresting and compelling as the last one, which seemed to be just a couple of scenes ago.

Having someone like Joanne, who can go to that place continuously, was amazing and is the reason, like I said, that the show got made. I do not think there are many people out there that could go through the trauma of acting Angela's journey, it was quite an exhausting premise to be able to live in that world continually. I was fearing it would be the biggest challenge, but it wasn't because of Joanne's ability.

What was your experience like on set?

Joanne, Michiel and Samuel were amazing to work with. The freedom that we had on the set allowed for these performances to blossom. The scripting by Jack and Harry was amazing, it is great to be able to work on set and have a great scene already crafted. Then we can bring

small touches. The writing, combined with the performing and visual articulation of the story find a way to merge and become this unique thing.

What can audiences expect?

Angela Black has a number of factors that will make it compelling to audiences. It is full of unique twists and turns, suspense, mystery, fantastic performances, a really engaging emotional through line and extremely well-developed characters. Angela's journey, her struggle, her defiance, her victory; I think that is what will keep people watching.

Christopher Aird – Executive Producer

Tell us about the story.

Angela Black is a thriller, but it is also the story of a very dysfunctional marriage. Angela lives with her husband Olivier, and it looks like they have a lovely life with their two children. But we quickly understand that Olivier is a violent man, and that Angela has been living a difficult life for a long time.

Angela Black is a psychological thriller where you don't know where you are at any moment. There are two or three moments through the series where the writers pull the rug completely.

What were your first thoughts when reading the scripts?

It is always a joy to read new scripts from Jack and Harry because they're always surprising. What makes their writing stand out, is that you key into the characters and empathise with them. But then the story is always going to wrong foot you.

Tell us about the contemporary nature of the story?

Angela Black is a contemporary story. Jack and Harry are very good at tapping into important cultural moments. In the wake of #MeToo, a lot was being written and spoken about, about male violence towards women, and that's at the heart of this story.

What is it like working with Jack and Harry Williams?

Jack and Harry are great to work with. They are two of the most collaborative guys I've ever worked with. The way they tell a story is genuinely a mystery. They have each other and they scurry away and create these stories together.

Tell us more about Angela Black's character.

For all intents and purposes, Angela has the perfect life. She has two beautiful children, a beautiful husband and lives in a beautiful house. But you quickly understand that not all of it is real and some dark things are happening to her. You realise that psychologically, she has had a very difficult time over the past few years.

Tell us about Olivier's character.

Olivier is a charming, handsome, successful and intelligent man. But he's not normal psychologically and is a misanthrope. He's violent and borderline psychotic and will go to great lengths to get what he wants and not care about the consequences.

How did the team research the subject matter?

When we were developing *Angela Black*, we were conscious of the sensitivities around a story about domestic violence. We spoke to many stakeholders, charities and psychologists to research what it's like for a woman to be in this kind of relationship.

The drama does reflect that and what you see is that, even though Angela is treated poorly, she has many reasons not to change her life, principally her children. It is important to show how manipulative Olivier is of every single situation, and that he can manipulate her

psychologically. There is also a remnant of what their loving relationship might have been at some point, and he plays on it.

What are some of the key themes?

Angela Black is the story of a woman trying to cope with the fact that her husband is psychologically and physically abusive towards her. Everything stems from that. It's also about motherhood and trying to live in a world where the truth is no longer certain, and you can't be sure what is true and what is a lie. If someone tells you forcefully enough that you're wrong, perhaps you start to believe that.

What is the importance of telling the story?

Stories like *Angela's* are so important today because women suffer at the hands of men. Whilst there are a lot of men involved in making the show, we have two incredibly talented female producers, a strong female executive and female star. I think that having a good female-led unit making the show, it reflects that. The way the show is made, reflects what the show is about.

Tell us how you came to casting Joanne Froggatt?

We had Joanne Froggatt in mind from quite early on. We had worked with her on *Liar* and I think that Jo has a wonderful everywoman quality. She is also able to access a depth of emotion that few can. And she is not a pushover, there's a steely side to Joanne that I think really suits the character, so we were thrilled when Joanne agreed to be *Angela*.

Tell us about casting Michiel Huisman?

Casting Olivier was slightly more challenging, he's not a sympathetic character at all and we were really keen that he would have a sense of otherness about him. Jack and Harry were very keen that he wasn't British, if he was a recognisable character, he would perhaps come with baggage. We all looked at Michiel Huisman in *Game of Thrones* and other things, but here was a guy that was so incredibly charming, a very handsome guy and very warm in the room. So, it was quite interesting to give him this very different part that requires him to use all those positive things about him to hide his true nature.

How was the experience working with director Craig Viveiros?

Craig is passionate about his work; he is a perfectionist. He used to be a photographer, so the first thing you notice about his work is how stunning it looks. He spends a lot of time finding locations and working with a cinematographer to create this beautiful filmic look. His work is a cut above most telly. He is very interested in the interior life of the characters. Often directors major more on the character work or on the visual, Craig does both.

What is *Angela Black's* journey?

Angela's journey through her story is challenging and very dark at times. People that tune in are going to be rewarded with the kinds of twists and turns that Jack and Harry always put into their work. There is one turn in the middle of *Angela Black* that I think, if we can pull it off, no one will see it coming.

Sarah Hammond – Executive Producer

Tell us about the story of *Angela Black*.

We start with a woman who is not called Angela Black, she is called Angela Meyer and she is living a seemingly charmed, domestic life. She has two children and a loving husband, a beautiful house, but under this veneer there is a dark heart to her reality. Her husband is abusive, and he controls her violently and through coercive control. Angela has been slightly desperate to plot her escape for some time when we meet her and there is an incident early on at the top of episode one where she sort of feels like it's the final straw. But it's not until Ed comes into her life that she starts to see where she can escape.

Tell us about the inspiration for the story.

It feels contemporary and I think that's because we're starting to gain more awareness in the public about coercive controlling relationships and about what women go through when they're in these relationships. This story felt unique in combining a domestic setting with a thriller narrative and looking at it more from Angela's point of view.

What was your reaction when you first read the scripts?

Harry and Jack's writing is always surprising, they never come to you with the same story twice and it is always very different in the way that they structure their narratives. This one felt completely unique from anything they've written before. I think it was the Hitchcockian psychological thriller element that really jumped off the page when we first read it.

What do you like about Jack and Harry Williams' writing?

I think they are master storytellers. They always surprise you, there is always a big twist halfway through and a big twist right at the end. Sometimes peppered throughout! They always do the unexpected. The narratives are structurally quite complicated but always very thrilling and enjoyable.

Can you tell us more about the character of Angela?

Angela is a woman of hidden depths. When we first meet her, she's been in this marriage with Olivier for a long time. As we gradually get to know her across the series, as well as following her psychological journey and all the challenges that Ed presents her with in her marriage and trying to escape from it, we also realise that actually she is a woman who had great creative passion and drive. She had a life before Olivier that was taken from her as he began his gradual isolation of her from her family and friends.

Can you tell us more about the character of Olivier?

He is a conundrum. He's a man of many layers. He's certainly something to his colleagues and to his business partners and to the outside world, and even to his children that he isn't to his partner. Olivier is certainly not who he presents to be to the outside world. In private and with Angela he's a deeply dark and disturbing influence on her life.

Can you tell us about Angela's journey through the series?

We learn very quickly from episode one that she's had enough and it's the final straw for her and her relationship with Olivier. She's not only fearful of her own safety but she wants to make sure that her children are safe. But in order to get the confidence to do that she has the help of Ed, who enters her life just at that crucial moment when she's at a tipping point. But whether he tips her in the right direction or not is yet to be seen!

Can you tell us more about the character of Ed?

He presents to Angela as a way out of her situation, he comes to her with more detail about her husband and his nefarious activities than even she suspected Olivier of. Ed, yes, he's a catalyst for change in Angela's life, but whether that's a good thing or a bad thing, you'll have to wait and see.

What is the importance of telling this story?

It's really important that we tell stories like Angela's because not many people watching at home will be completely familiar with the detail of what it is like to be in a relationship like Angela and Olivier's. A lot of people don't know that coercive control is a criminal offence in the UK, there's a lot of the detail of what it's like for a woman who has children with a man that she loves but goes through this day in and day out and how difficult it is for her to leave. It's important that people feel that there is a truthful story and something to learn from Angela's experience.

Can you tell us about the casting process?

Harry and Jack had worked with Joanne Froggatt before on *Liar*, and they have such a great relationship that they really had her in mind when they wrote the show. Similarly, with Michiel, they'd never worked with him before, but they loved his work and so he felt like just the natural choice for Olivier. Sam read for the part of Ed which is really interesting because we'd been aware of Sam, having won the BIFA, and it was actually Craig (Viveiros) who introduced us. He'd worked with him on *The Watch* and just saw what a brilliant talent he was.

What is it like working with director Craig Viveiros?

When we were choosing a director for this kind of material, Craig really was someone that we'd had our eye on for a while. His body of work is brilliant, he really is a master of suspense when you look at the other shows that he's done, *Rillington Place* for example, and Harry and Jack were big fans of his work. Because the scripts are written with a very particular style in mind, it has that Hitchcockian psychological suspense thriller element baked in, we really needed a director who could come and deliver that aesthetic, and also capture that with the characters and actors. Craig absolutely brought that from the moment we first met him. What Craig brings to the technical side is that he always delivers a unique perspective, the way that he frames a shot is never how you would expect it to be framed. It always really delivers on either a suspenseful moment or a moment that feels clandestine, that you shouldn't be watching or seeing. And so, his aesthetic really is essential to the show.

What journey will the audience go on?

We want the audience to buy into the suspense of the show, to never know what is coming next, but to also really buy into the character of Angela, to understand that the struggles she

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goes through at the beginning are real struggles that other people are going through. Just to watch her journey and appreciate it for what is, which is a beautifully constructed psychological thriller, but also, take away just a little bit from the reality of what she is going through as a character.

CONTACTS & LINKS

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