

A man in a dark tuxedo with a white shirt and a dark bow tie stands on the left, smiling slightly. A woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a black sleeveless dress, stands on the right, looking down and to the left. They are in a dimly lit setting with a dark background.

Anna has to get dangerously close to suspect Alan Daniels

# Above Suspicion

**Drama** 9.00pm, ITV1

**LAST ONE** Actor Alan Daniels (ex-*Heartbeat* star Jason Durr) is the number one suspect for a series of hideous murders. Needing to find evidence to prove he's the killer, rookie detective Anna Travis (Kelly Reilly) has

agreed to date him. Is he really the guilty man and, if so, what are his motives? The unravelling of the mystery in this second part of a gripping drama goes into very dark places, involving child abuse and revenge. ★★★★★ CP



# Thriller queen



**‘I believe that everybody likes a puzzle’**

How Lynda La Plante balances her life of crime-writing with being a mum

**NEW ABOVE SUSPICION / TRIAL & RETRIBUTION**

Sun & Mon / Fri ITV1

**F**or a woman with murder on her mind, Lynda La Plante is a scream. Considering corpses, prostitutes and hard-nosed policemen are never far from her thoughts, you might expect an intense, drab-looking and rather gloomy person. In fact, the reverse is true.

Lynda has warmth and passion of heatwave proportions. She can talk for England and has the fruitiest and dirtiest laugh you've ever heard. It might seem bizarre, then, that this vivacious wit makes her living by inventing stories of human depravity such as in this week's new ITV1 drama *Above Suspicion*. She was also the creator of *Trial & Retribution*, which is back for a 12th year.

So where does it all come from? 'I don't think it's a darkness in me. You don't look at me and say I'm dark. In fact, you'd think, 'She's a bit of a giggler', she says. 'And I am.'

It has to be said that laughs are not high on the agenda in *Above Suspicion*, a two-part drama based on Lynda's best-selling novel introducing rookie detective Anna Travis, played by Kelly Reilly. Assigned to her first murder case, Anna's struggle to prove herself isn't helped when she vomits after seeing a maggot-ridden corpse and then faints from the stench of the

body during the post-mortem. It's a scene that Lynda thought long and hard about portraying.

'I never, ever overdo it,' she says. 'If you don't see the maggots, you don't see why Anna's sick. She's looking at it as you are, for the first time. It's shocking for one second but it's there to serve a purpose.'

Lynda clearly doesn't believe in gratuitous horror and feels that people want to see a blend of crime and relationships. In fact, there's a definite spark between Anna and her volatile boss DCI Langton, played by Ciaran Hinds. It's a screen chemistry that works exceptionally well and Lynda is delighted with the casting of Kelly, who starred in ITV1's *He Kills Coppers* and this year's movie thriller *Eden Lake*.

It's tempting to think that Anna could be a young Jane Tennison, the *Prime Suspect* policewoman created by Lynda and acted so memorably by Helen Mirren. But that's not her intention. 'Anna isn't

a Jane Tennison. This is about youth,' says Lynda. 'I wanted to show an investigation through very innocent eyes.'

Lynda has an energy that makes it difficult to judge her age. Though in her 60s, she appears totally unfazed by the demands that surely must be made on her as the mother of Lorcan, the boy she adopted as a baby five years ago.

It strikes you how odd it must be to combine childish joys with thinking about serial killers. But it's not portraying crime that drives Lynda, it's the working out of mystery and motive.

'I believe that everybody likes a puzzle. I want to hook people in so they say, 'I'm enjoying this'. That doesn't make it dark. And because my own life is so light-hearted, I don't allow it to invade.'

CHRIS POINTER

*Above Suspicion and Trial & Retribution are previewed on pages 44, 52 and 85*



## WATCHING THE DETECTIVES

*Above Suspicion's* Anna and *Trial & Retribution's* Connor and Walker



# SUNDAY Highlights

DC Anna Travis and her boss, DCI Langton



## Above Suspicion *Drama 9.00pm, ITV1*

**NEW** A gruesome collection of bodies, tough coppers and a rookie policewoman, who also happens to be beautiful and highly intelligent... Lynda La Plante's latest two-part thriller ticks all the boxes for tension, mystery and motive. Kelly Reilly gives an appealing and intelligent performance as the

new young detective, DC Anna Travis, while Ciaran Hinds is simply outstanding as her boss, DCI James Langton. Hard-bitten, world-weary, volatile and with definite sex appeal, Langton forms a terrific partnership with Travis... Could they be the next Morse and Lewis? ★★★★★ *CP*  
*Thriller queen: see page 15*