Above Suspicion

Monday, 3 January 2011, 9:00PM - 10:00PM

Deadly Intent: Part one.

DI Anna Travis (Kelly Reilly) is back after her promotion, reunited with DCS James Langton (Ciarán Hinds) and DCI Mike Lewis (Shaun Dingwall), who is also promoted to head up his first murder case, a fatal shooting in a notorious drug dealer’s squat. The victim is Frank Brandon (Callum Sutherland), disgraced ex-police officer and friend of Langton's. The team discover that Frank has recently married Julia Larson (Stine Stengade), a glamorous, wealthy woman, after working as her driver. It’s an incongruous set-up, and Travis digs deeper into the not-so-grieving widow’s story.

Travis pays a visit to an eyewitness from a neighbouring flat, Mrs Webster (Marjorie Yates). She’s clear she heard three shots, but it is her autistic son, Jeremy (Geoffrey Streatfeild) who holds the key information. Under gentle but tenacious questioning, he reveals that he has written down every car parked on the estate on the night of the shooting.

The murder team are under the spotlight on this case, the press love a story about a bent copper and are all over it. DCI Lewis is feeling the pressure and in his eagerness to be seen to wrap the case up quickly, cracks are beginning to show. When Travis raises the possibility of a third shot being fired, Lewis dismisses it out of hand. Meanwhile, forensic evidence indicates that a second person was with Frank when he was killed. Another junkie? Someone who went there with him? Either way, they're a witness.

Travis questions Frank’s widow, Julia. Though she is evasive and truculent, under pressure Julia hands over information on Frank’s boss at the chauffeuring company, Danny Petrozzo (Enzo Squillino). While Julia is out of the room, Travis noses around, finding a photograph of her son with an older man, his hand attempting to block the camera. Clearly rattled by Travis’s discovery, Julia eventually admits that this man is her ex-husband, Anthony Collingwood.

The list of cars from Jeremy provides a breakthrough including a 4x4 registered to Danny Petrozzo and a van belonging to a small-time thief and drug-user, Eddie Court (Ashley George). Forensics come through with two leads; a print match at the squat for a notorious drug dealer – Silas Roach (Robbie Gee) – and traces of a rare and dangerous narcotic, Fentanyl. Striking out on her own, Travis returns to the squat and finds the third bullet,
something the forensic officers had missed.

Under questioning, a scared Eddie Court admits he went to the squat to score his usual supply. Only this time Silas Roach was there as well as Danny Petrozzo, Silas’s brutal reputation making Eddie nervous. On his way out, he met Frank Brandon approaching, accompanied by someone very tall — “a proper lurch”. After hearing the shots, Eddie saw Silas fleeing, and then Danny helping this mystery tall man to his car. Julia visits her financial advisor and friend David Rushton (Andrew Woodall). She’s convinced she’s being followed and is terrified, with every passer-by seeming like a threat to her. Though he is warned to be careful too, Rushton dismisses her fears as mere paranoia.

Silas Roach is arrested and brought in by a furious DCI Sam Power (Ray Fearon) from the drug squad. He’s livid because his whole operation has been trailing Silas and his network of squats, yet at no time did anyone from the murder team stop to pick up the phone. Silas had the gun still on him when he was picked up, however, he is terse and intimidating under questioning, refusing to co-operate – it’s going to be a long process getting anything out of him.

Travis researches Fentanyl, and is horrified at her findings. With the street name of Drop Dead, it’s been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of users across inner city America. If someone is now planning to deal it in the UK, the consequences will be deadly.

During a tense briefing, when Travis’s findings are interpreted by Lewis as undermining his authority, an anonymous tip-off comes through – Danny Petrozzo’s 4x4 has been found. Dispatched to work it together by Langton, Lewis and Travis open it up – to discover Petrozzo’s dead body inside.

Responsible for some of television’s most famous characters, Lynda La Plante explains why her latest protagonists in Above Suspicion work so well.

“...I think it’s really down to the, will they won’t they, question?”

“A lot of women absolutely love Langton (Ciarán Hinds) and some find him really awful to Travis (Kelly Reilly). In that respect it’s a bit like Gone With The Wind, he’s so nasty to her at times but in this one, we do have the emotional impact when he tells her the truth about his life. We see that this vulnerability allows Travis to reveal her feelings for him, if only to herself, it continues to build the tension between them. I think this is what makes their interaction compelling.”

The juxtaposition of these tender moments with the fast paced drama of an investigation is also what makes the drama so intense and it may be hard to imagine that anyone would be able to have a relationship like Langton and Travis’ in this kind of high adrenalin, pressurised environment but as Lynda explains;

“It happens a lot, which is why it used to be very frowned upon for any fraternising of police officers working on the same case but also, a higher ranking officer with a young female officer would be even more controversial, though it does happen. In fact two of my most valued researchers are two very high-ranking police officers and are married to each other. Just like any workplace romance, if there’s a relationship between staff there are always raised eyebrows, murmurings and nudges, it’s office gossip.”

In a similar way to the world in which they operate there is a polarisation between Langton and Travis that seems to pull them together, however as Lynda explains, beyond the surface tension there are some fundamental similarities between the two.

“Langton is a dedicated police officer and an exceedingly good one who has very strong gut instincts, but he is not an intellectual man. He’s hardly ever read a book, if it wasn’t connected to a crime. However, Travis is university educated and different... she also stands up to him, which none of the other women or men do. But like Langton, Travis is actually very intuitively intelligent and in many ways has a similar trait to Langton in that, she won’t let something go. This makes her a very good detective, she could very easily dismiss the fact that one of the witnesses said she heard three bullets, her persistence in uncovering the detail proves to be the key in this case. A fact that Langton admires.”

Above Suspicion: Deadly Intent is a La Plante Production for ITV1. The executive producers are Lynda La Plante and Liz Thorburn. The producer is Hugh Warren and the director is Gillies MacKinnon.
Above Suspicion

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• 2 of 3

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Deadly Intent: Part two

Pathology report on Petrozzo shows he died from a massive Fentanyl overdose, forcibly injected at the back of his neck. Attempting to piece the trail together, Travis (Kelly Reilly) discovers a stash of fentanyl worth £30M was stolen from a lab in Miami 18 months ago. Langton (Ciarán Hinds) isn’t so sure there’s a connection. Joan (Amanda Lawrence) shows Travis the last entry in Petrozzo’s diary, the word ‘Godot’. With its meaning ambiguous, Travis follows her hunch investigating Julia’s ex-husband, Anthony Collingwood. In her searching, that name throws up a link to the FBI’s Most Wanted website, and a Alexander Fitzpatrick in particular, wanted for narcotic distribution, considered extremely dangerous and using Anthony Collingwood as an alias. Could it be the same man? Is he back in the country and involved somehow?

Silas Roach (Robbie Gee) is confronted with the death of his friend Danny Petrozzo, and it is just the trigger the police needed. Finally he reveals his side of the story of the night of the shooting, how Danny had set up a big deal involving ‘Drop Dead’, and was bringing in a third party as supplier. When ex-copper Frank Brandon knocked at the door, Silas thought it was a set-up and panicked, shooting him before fleeing.

Forensics on Petrozzo’s car find blood on the backseat and a print on the tailgate, the print matched to a Julius D’Anton (James Clyde). DCI Sam Power (Ray Fearon) knows the name, but dismisses his ability to be involved in killing Petrozzo, he’s small time, bit of possession that’s all. Power fills Travis in with more details about druglord Alexander Fitzpatrick, one of the most wanted men in the world. Powerful and virtually untouchable, operating under numerous aliases, he has eluded arrest for 20 years and there haven’t even been any sightings of him. As a favour to Travis, Power says he’ll call a friend of his at the FBI. Travis tentatively shares her findings with Langton, who has heard of Fitzpatrick, his reputation precedes him, and despite his initial reservations, he admits he has some time for it, and they both pay another visit to Julia (Stine Stengade). When they arrive, two thugs brush past them on the way out. Inside, they discover Julia has clearly been assaulted, but she insists she fell down the stairs. Travis is convinced the mugshot of Fitzpatrick is the same man she saw in the photo at Julia’s flat, a photo Julia now claims to no longer have and she denies that her ex-husband had anything to do with the drug trade, they have the wrong man.

An address registered to Julius D’Anton is found and Travis and Barolli visit his wife, Sadie (Tilly Blackwood).
She wearily explains that she hasn't seen 'Jules' for weeks. Nothing unusual in that though, he's always gadding after some money raising scheme or other, dabbling in antiques usually. Travis picks up a flyer for an antiques fair that Julius went to, at Bourne End in Buckinghamshire. After they've gone, Sadie slides back the door to the toilet, to reveal Julius has been hiding there the whole time.

Travis tells Langton that Julia has a sister near Bourne End, where D'Anton visited recently. Coincidence? Langton doesn’t think so and they drive out there. They find Helga (Benedikte Hansen) is the complete opposite of her younger sister, a jolly woman living the bumptious Good Life on the farm, baking scones and feeding chickens. She freely talks of how she and Julia are sisters by name only, that they see life very differently. She knew nothing of Frank Brandon, but remembers how Anthony Collingwood lavished the life of luxury on her, laughing off any connection to Alexander Fitzpatrick. Travis makes an excuse to leave the room and noses her way into a study. While she is looking at a photograph of a small single-engine plane bearing the registration mark G-ODOT, she is startled by a man’s voice behind her and drops the frame, smashing it. The man is Professor Damian Nolan (Julian Sands), Helga’s husband. For a moment, Travis is speechless, wondering if this could possibly be Fitzpatrick, but putting it down to her current obsession with the man. Despite the ‘perfect couple’ act, Travis’s detective nose sniffs something suspicious in this rural idyll.

Back at the station, Power has come good through his FBI contact. A year ago, Fitzpatrick was breathalysed in Miami, the local uniform unaware who he really was. Though he fled the scene, his saliva was kept and a DNA profile drawn up. Not only does it prove he’s still alive, but if it matches the blood in Petrozzo’s car then it would mean he’s involved, just as Travis’s hunch suggests. Energised by the findings, a drunk Langton makes a subtle pass at Travis, but the awkward moment is interrupted by another development – David Rushton (Andrew Woodall), Julia’s advisor, has been found murdered in his office.

Ciarán Hinds admits he’s relieved the team are faced with a less gruesome case in the new Above Suspicion: Deadly Intent.

“In the first two series of Above Suspicion we saw some horribly dismembered female corpses and weird misogyny. I’m pleased we’re not dealing with that in this series. I didn’t have to look at the imagery, but I had to listen to the reports and that in itself was quite horrible because of the inhumanity of it all.

“Deadly Intent is very different because it’s linked to drugs. There is murder as well but it’s not so gruesome.”

In Deadly Intent the team are sent to investigate the shooting of ex-detective Frank Brandon at a drugs squat in an East London estate. Following further investigation, they discover a plot to sell a lethal drug called Fentanyl in the UK.

“The interesting thing about this case is that the team don’t even know what they’re after to begin with. They’re in the dark; not quite knowing what they’re dealing with and how it will escalate, and meanwhile the person behind it all is always one step ahead.”

Ciarán explains that although Langton is now Detective Chief Superintendent, it doesn’t stop him from taking command and leading the team on their most challenging case yet.

“Langton has been promoted to Chief Superintendent. Theoretically, he should be overseeing five or six cases at once. I think whatever happens he seems to see himself at the forefront. He’s like the paterfamilias, the father of the family.

“Langton steams onto this case because it involves an ex-copper, Frank Brandon, and it’s personal for him. He knew Frank and although Frank wasn’t the straightest of coppers, he gave 25 years to the service. Langton feels a bind of loyalty towards him, and there is also the added pressure that an ex-detective has been shot in a drugs squat.

“Also, Mike Lewis, who is steady and loyal to the cause, is meant to head up the investigation but he is suffering a personal tragedy that affects him running the case as he’s meant to. As a result Langton can’t help but take over.”

Langton jumps straight into the investigation and finds himself working once again with the newly promoted Detective Inspector Anna Travis. Having been previously rebuffed by Travis, Ciarán admits that despite Langton’s best efforts he still holds affection for her and feels pangs of jealousy towards any male admirers.

“He has a passion for her that really he shouldn’t have and this unsettles him. It doesn’t feel right because he knew her father and wouldn’t want anything to affect their work. He puts anything he can in between them to try to push his feelings away, whether it’s his rage, being the boss, or acting like a father to her.

“Travis is very comfortable around Langton but I think it’s because she sees him more as a father figure, which is upsetting for him as well. Meanwhile, all these young men come in flashing their credentials trying to get her attention. Travis has always had admirers and whilst Langton feels twinges of jealousy he doesn’t act on it.
“In another breath he finds her infuriating, particularly because she has a habit of going off on her own and not sharing the information she finds with the team. She has been with the team for a few years now and should know better. Travis is a smart cookie and a great detective and Langton knows this; he admires her ingenuity and her instinct but still gets frustrated by her actions.

“It’s hard to say where the relationship between Langton and Travis is going; we’re dependent on Lynda’s scripts for the answers!”

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Forensics comb David Rushton’s office – he was found as Danny Petrozzo was, with a fentanyl patch stuck over his mouth and a massive overdose injected. Travis notices that a CCTV camera in his office has been deliberately turned to face the wall, and the footage is sent for Barolli (Celyn Jones) to analyse. With Rushton dead, Julia (Stine Stengade) is formally questioned. When asked about her life with Anthony Collingwood, she confirms Helga’s story of having led a first class life at every turn. Even since the divorce, she has everything she could wish for. However, when Langton (Ciarán Hinds) tells her the news of Rushton’s death, it breaks her. Langton points out that with now three dead, and her obvious involvement in all of it somehow, she might be next.

Lewis (Shaun Dingwall) is forced to tell Langton that his private situation is affecting his work. His wife’s cancer has aggressively returned, and he’s not coping well. A compassionate Langton sends him home, that’s his priority. The CCTV from Rushton’s office has captured a glimpse of the intruder’s face. But no more than that. Tech support are tasked with enhancing the image – could it be Fitzpatrick?

Julia confesses, she did see Anthony a year ago, the marriage to Brandon was all a front to obtain new identities. However Anthony was very controlling, Helga (Benedikte Hansen) her sister too, always issuing orders, and she became sick of being told what to do. So she resolved with Rushton to steal Anthony’s money and put it all in her name. Though disgusted by her attitude, Langton lets her go, to Travis’s surprise. With suitcase packed and driving to collect her son from school, Julia is run off the road by the thugs who assaulted her earlier. Losing control of the car, Julia is killed.

With Fitzpatrick’s DNA profile through from the FBI, forensics match it to the blood in the car, and the traces on the third bullet. So Travis has been right all along, not only is Fitzpatrick alive and in the UK, but he was the man with Frank Brandon the night of the shooting – and was evidently wounded. The still from Rushton’s CCTV has been enhanced to show a passable image of the man they believe to be Fitzpatrick, and he orders it to be circulated nationally, front page. However, no sooner has he given the order then he is confronted with the man from the photo in his office. Langton and Travis are completely wrong footed when he claims to be DCI Joseph Marshall (Richard Brake), fraud squad, who visited Rushton’s office as part of an undercover sting operation, but left him very much alive. Though his story and performance is convincing, something about it nags at Langton after Marshall has gone. A phone call reveals there is no DCI Marshall at the fraud squad, they’ve been
fooled by the very man they were trying to catch, Alexander Fitzpatrick. Forensic biometrics explain that he has had extensive facial plastic surgery, explaining his dramatically different appearance from his mugshot picture. It's a low moment for the team – they had him, and they let him walk away. But why did he risk it? To get Julius D'Anton's address – he has the Fentanyl. Langton and Travis race to D'Anton's lock-up, but they're too late. Fitzpatrick has been and gone, taken the Fentanyl and left Sadie dead. Julius (James Clyde) arrives too, and after roughing him up in frustration, Langton arrests him. Julius explains his story, of stealing the car with the boxes of drugs in it, each worth £4M, stashing them at his lock up and then freaking out when he found the body in the boot, and dumping it where it was found.

Helga is arrested, after evidence emerges that Fitzpatrick was hidden at the farm. She's proud to admit she helped him, arrogantly predicting they will never catch him. Travis asserts that Fitzpatrick just used Helga, it was Julia he wanted to spend the rest of his life with. Helga appears to break, telling them she was planning to meet Fitzpatrick at St Pancras International. A full armed response team descend on St Pancras, where a suspect matching Fitzpatrick's description has been spotted. As Travis moves in to make the arrest, and the man is apprehended, it's clear that Helga has lied for Fitzpatrick one last time – when the suspect is turned over, it's Damian Nolan (Julian Sands). A decoy.

Fitzpatrick collected his son from school and was dropped off at a nearby airfield. A frantic, desperate chase ensues, but Fitzpatrick flies away, free, taking the drugs with him. Distraught, Travis realises too late that she missed the clue of the plane and its G-ODOT registration. But Langton tells her to bury it, as well as the fact that they had him, but let him go. Overwhelmed by the events, Travis is left in shock, seeing the darker side of Langton – and herself.

Speaking about the continuing challenges his character faces in Deadly Intent, Shaun Dingwall says: "Mike Lewis has been promoted to the head of the investigation so this is an exciting time for him. Gone is the brown suit, he's now smartened himself up as he steps into the rank of Detective Chief Inspector. It's a big case to take on with a lot of responsibility but I think he's absolutely ready for it. He is a good detective and knows the job well."

"The promotion hasn't necessarily come at the best time for Lewis; his wife is critically ill with cancer. It's a hard time for him and his work suffers. Understandably, his wife's illness is always on his mind and as a result he finds it hard to concentrate.

"It's the first time in the series we've learnt about Lewis' life outside of the office as we see his two worlds clash. It's really interesting and adds more depth to his character. I think he is someone people can identify with. In previous series he's always had a good sense of detachment when it comes to his work, and that's helped him with difficult cases. However, he is human and we see his emotions come through in this series."

Having been married for almost two years, Shaun can relate to his character more now then ever before.

"I'm married; in fact I celebrate my two year anniversary with my wife on New Year’s Eve. It's interesting because I feel I can relate to Lewis more now in these episodes because I can see a man who holds a great love for his family."

"For Lewis, what's going on at home outweighs what is going on at work. Personally I think I'd forgive anybody in the same situation for not being able to put something like this at the back of their mind."

"It's hard his work is suffering because the situation is completely out of his control. I think his behaviour is unacceptable, yet it's also forgivable. His circumstance is something a lot of people watching will be able to relate to."

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