

Set and filmed in Bristol: Channel 4 crime thriller *Before We Die* starring Lesley Sharp begins tonight

BRISTOL, 26 May 2021: *Before We Die*, the new Channel 4 drama starring Lesley Sharp, adapted from the hit Swedish series of the same name, begins tonight after filming in Bristol last year with support from the city's Film Office.



Lesley Sharp stars as DI Hannah Laing in Before We Die (image courtesy Channel 4)

Described as “a breathless crime thriller, full of heart-stopping jeopardy and unpredictable twists,” the six-part series is set in Bristol and produced for Channel 4 by Eagle Eye Drama. With support from Bristol Film Office, the production team filmed in September 2020 and the first three months of 2021, shooting at numerous locations around the city including Stokes Croft, Victoria Square and The Paragon in Clifton, Brandon Hill Park, York Road, Clarence Road and The Horsefair. The production team carried out aerial filming above a number of Bristol’s green spaces, including Sparke Evans, Netham and Castle Parks. Filming also took place in Belgium.

Describing the choice to film in Bristol, **Exec Producer Jo McGrath** says: “We wanted to set it in a port city, as that is important to the drug trafficking storyline. We were looking for something a little less familiar and Bristol is one of those cities that actually has been used as a backdrop for filming a lot, but you wouldn’t know it because a lot of series are filmed there but not set there. Bristol is such a visually interesting city and editorially it fitted with our storyline. Belgium also features in our drug trafficking storyline. Jan (the Director) is Belgian too and we did shoot many of the interiors in Belgium.”

Director **Jan Matthys adds**: “For me, part of the challenge was making Belgium match with the other scenes in Bristol – which was interesting. We became specialists in ‘Anglifying’ Belgium.”

Describing the process of filming during the pandemic, **Exec Producer Walter Iuzzolino** says: “Putting in place incredibly strong and sophisticated protocols to make sure that everybody was safe and adhering to the rules gave us some unexpected advantages through the ability to bubble. This meant that the bubbles of creatives, actors and heads of departments were able to take themselves out of reality for a few months, living together to keep safe and keep working. They made the sacrifice, but it paid off because the performances were enhanced from all being together and living in

this bubble whilst bonding on and off screen. I think this has truly resulted in great performances.”

When Detective Inspector Hannah Laing (**Lesley Sharp**) kisses her married lover Sean Hardacre (**Bill Ward**) goodbye one morning, she never imagines it will be the last time she will see her fellow detective alive. But Sean goes missing and his brutalised corpse is recovered the following day.

Determined to find whoever is responsible for killing him, Hannah accesses one of Sean’s confidential contacts and persuades ‘Issy’ to help her unpick the tangled threads of Sean’s investigation into the Mimicas, a tight-knit family who left Croatia for Bristol and now run a successful restaurant, where Christian (**Patrick Gibson**), Hannah’s son now works. But under the guidance of the ruthless eldest son, Davor (**Toni Gojanović**), the family are ambitious to expand their criminal activities, which risks stretching family bonds to breaking point. The Mimicas closeness as a family provides a painful contrast to Hannah’s fractured, dysfunctional relationship with her own son.

Forced to operate undercover for fear of a criminal informer at Police HQ, Hannah and her sceptical new partner, Billy Murdoch (**Vincent Regan**), uncover a daring plot by the Mimicas to smuggle an enormous quantity of cocaine into the country. When Hannah also discovers Issy’s identity, however, she quickly realises there is far more at stake than bringing Sean’s killers to justice.

The cast also stars **Issy Knopfler** as Bianca Mimica, **Rebecca Scroggs** as Tina Carter, **Steve Toussaint** as Leonard Kane, **Kazia Pelka** as Dubravka Mimica, **Petar Cvirn** as Stefan Vargic and **Ryszard Turbiasz** as Zvonimir Mimica.

Before We Die is produced by Eagle Eye Drama in association with Caviar and is supported by Screen Flanders, DPG Media and the Belgian tax shelter via Caviar Film Financing.

Before We Die starts Wednesday 26 May at 9pm on Channel 4. All episodes will be available on All 4 after transmission of episode 1.

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For information about Bristol Film Office, contact Tara Milne taracmilne@gmail.com.

For information about Before We Die, visit <https://www.channel4.com/press/press-pack/we-die-press-pack>

NOTES TO EDITORS

Bristol Film Office

Bristol Film Office, a division of Bristol City Council, is dedicated to making film, TV or commercial photography shoots run as smoothly as possible when on location in Bristol. It is the one-stop-shop for all filming enquiries, providing assistance at all stages of production, from initial location and crewing advice to recces and logistical support. Bristol Film Office recorded more than £17 million inward investment generated by TV and film productions using The Bottle Yard Studios, the largest film and TV production facility in the West of England, and/or Bristol locations 2019/20.

www.filmbristol.co.uk

Working with partners across the city, Bristol Film Office is leading the **UNESCO City of Film** programme of activity delivered under the internationally respected status awarded to Bristol in 2017.

www.bristolcityoffilm.co.uk

