

First look image as filming begins on ITV's **The Long Call**

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[Drama](#)

First look image of Ben Aldridge and Pearl Mackie as filming begins for ITV's new evocative four-part series, *The Long Call*

Ben Aldridge (*Our Girl*, *Fleabag*) stars in *The Long Call*, ITV's gripping four-part event drama adapted by Kelly Jones (*Des*, *Baptise*) from the best-selling novel of the same title from award-winning writer Ann Cleeves.

Directed by Lee Haven Jones (*Dr Who*, *Shetland*, *The Bay*) *The Long Call* follows Detective Inspector Matthew Venn (Ben Aldridge), who has returned to live in a small community in North Devon with his husband, Jonathan (Declan Bennett).

Matthew was brought up in the Barum Brethren before leaving to go to University. At 19 he knew he couldn't continue amongst the community, hiding his sexuality,

and to his mother's shock and dismay, he declared publicly he no longer believed. Now he's back, in the place where it all began, not just to grieve for his father, but to lead a shocking murder investigation.

Matthew is forced to re-engage with the community he left, including the most painful and challenging relationship with his mother Dorothy, played by award-winning actress Juliet Stevenson (Riviera, Truly Madly, Deeply).

After the body of a man is found on the beach close to Matthew's home, the investigation casts a shadow of doubt over the whole community. In order to expose the killer, Matthew and his team have to get to the bottom of a case which brings with it old wounds and a deadly secret.

This powerful and thought-provoking series also stars Pearl Mackie who plays DS Jen Rafferty, a tough and fiercely determined woman who has recently relocated to Devon with her two teenage kids, Ella and Ben. As a diligent worker and a single parent, Jen muddles her way through domestic life whilst trying to put some distance between her own traumatic scars from her former life in London.

Pearl Mackie is notable for her work in television, theatre and film and is best known for her work in the long-running BBC series, Doctor Who, where she played the role of the Doctor's companion, Bill Potts, opposite Peter Capaldi. Pearl's work in theatre includes the award winning and critically acclaimed stage adaptation of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time and Harold Pinter's The Birthday Party. Her film credits include Greed starring Steve Coogan and Isla Fisher.

Ben, Juliet and Pearl are joined by Martin Shaw as the Brethren leader Dennis Stephenson and Anita Dobson who plays his wife, Grace Stephenson. Adding to the illustrious cast are Neil Morrissey as Christopher Reasley, Sarah Gordy as Lucy Craddle, Alan Williams as Maurice Craddle, Amit Shah as Ed Raveley, Aoife Hinds as Gaby Chadwell, Siobhán Cullen as Caroline Reasley and Dylan Edwards as DC Ross Pritchard.

Commented novelist Ann Cleeves: "Ben was the actor who read the audio book even before the TV show was commissioned. I love his pared-back, restrained narration. He's worked on the novel as well as the script, and so he understands the character in depth. No author could wish for more."

Commented Ben Aldridge: "I'm delighted to be playing Matthew Venn, a brilliantly

unorthodox detective who audiences will see solving a gripping and intricate case, whilst simultaneously surmounting a deeper, more personal mystery within himself. It's a poignant and complex journey of self-discovery and sexual and religious identity, which navigates the tension between pride and shame, and I feel privileged to be bringing it to ITV viewers in The Long Call."

Angie Daniell (Vigil, Alex Rider, Clique) has produced the series which has been filmed on location in Bristol and the beautiful North Devon coast whilst Silverprint Pictures' Creative Director Kate Bartlett (Flesh and Blood, Shetland, Dark Heart) is the Executive Producer alongside writer, Kelly Jones.

The Long Call is produced by ITV Studios label, Silverprint Pictures and co-produced with BritBox North America. The Long Call has been commissioned by ITV's Head of Drama, Polly Hill. The drama is produced in association with ITV Studios, who are handling international distribution.

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