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THE VANISHING TRIANGLE

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LAST SEEN
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Newspaper reporter Lisa Wallace sets out to find the man who murdered her mother fifteen years earlier. Along with David Burkely, a Detective struggling with his sexuality, they begin to connect her mother's killing to other unsolved crimes, and suspect an undetected serial killer may be responsible.

As more women disappear, and the suspected murderer taunts them with cryptic messages, Lisa and David become obsessed with finding him. The disappearances of the women all share some common characteristics: they were all young, they disappeared inexplicably and suddenly. All disappearances occurred in an area which became known in the media as "The Vanishing Triangle".

The Vanishing Triangle is a tale of injustice towards women around Dublin, inspired by true events that shook Irish society in the 1990's.

LISA WALLACE

INDIA MULLEN

NORMAL PEOPLE, THE PERIPHERAL, BRASSIC

A tenacious, fearless young reporter at the Dublin Evening Mail, Lisa's life has been shaped by traumatic events. 15 years ago her mother was raped and killed in front of Lisa who was just 10 years old. The masked attacker was never found and the police quickly dropped the case. They chalked it up as a revenge killing by a rival drug gang to that which Lisa's father had been running around with – he himself is serving a life sentence for murder.

Working in a male-dominated environment, Lisa's only ally at the newspaper is her Deputy Editor Barbara Abrahams, who encourages her to write about the subjects that she is passionate about, and when Lisa finally opens up about her traumatic past to her bosses, she gets the go ahead to break open her mother's case again...

DAVID BURKELY

ALLEN LEECH

DOWNTOWN ABBEY, BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY

David is an excellent detective, well respected for his diligent and thorough work. He seems to have an ideal life, with a beautiful wife and teenage daughter that he loves very much. But he is living a double life, as a closeted gay man in an affair with Tommy, a male prostitute that he unexpectedly fell in love with. In 1990s Ireland, coming out would mean not only destroying his marriage, but also his career, with homosexual activity only legalised in 1993 and homophobia still rife within the police force and society more generally.

Lisa's mother's case, and that of the missing girls, gives David something to focus on aside from his personal troubles, but when his private life threatens to undermine his police work, he has to make some difficult decisions...

EPISODE ONE

Lisa Wallace is a journalist working at the Dublin Evening Mail. After several attempts pitching a story covering the threatened closure of a local women's shelter, her boss finally understands that Lisa has a personal link to these women – her own mother was raped and murdered 15 years ago – and encourages her to write the story with that angle instead.

Following the publication of the story, a card arrives at Lisa's desk, with two photographs – one of Lisa as a child on the night of her mother's murder, and a second, more recent photo of a pair of bound hands. A clear message from the killer who was never found that he is still active.

Detective David Burkely goes to speak to Lisa, but with a lack of evidence, is unlikely to be able to re-open Lisa's mother's case nor start a new investigation based on the photos.

But when Lisa sees another young woman, Amy Reynolds, is reported missing she is determined to start her own investigation, convinced there must be a link between the missing girl and the second photo. After meeting Amy's sister Susan, she finds the evidence to support her claim and get the police to take action.

EPISODE TWO

Having got the police to work on the case, Lisa is furious with her bosses for running her story on Amy, as it risks provoking the killer further – a second card duly arrives “Thanks Lisa. Great article about me.”

David joins the police in Castlemoy, where Amy disappeared, to find that the investigation is being conducted with total incompetence. Only one of the local detectives, DCI Brennan, seems to take the case seriously, and he takes David to question a potential witness. The witness points them to a notorious criminal, Mark Bulger. But with a fearsome reputation, no one is willing to go on the record with evidence against him.

Lisa spends the evening at the pub frequented by the Castlemoy police to try and get some inside information on Amy’s case. After several drinks, Lisa leaves but is followed by one of the cops who assaults her in the car park. Lisa escapes unharmed but understands that no one is safe, even from the police.

The following day, doing her own digging on Bulger, Lisa tracks him down to a cabin deep in the forest. Through the window Lisa can see a young woman tied up in the cabin. Lisa manages to knock Bulger unconscious with a blow to the head, and release the young woman – but it’s not Amy.

EPISODE THREE

The young woman from the cabin confides in Lisa that she was raped by Bulger, but she too refuses to give evidence against him. When a handwriting analysis confirms that Bulger is not the one sending the cards, Lisa realises they have the wrong man: Bulger is a criminal and a threat to women, but he's not a methodical psychopath or murderer.

In Rathkilly, another small town outside of Dublin, we meet Mandy – a school girl leading a double life, working as a prostitute. Her best friend is concerned that she's been spending too much time with older men, but Mandy refuses to listen. That evening she is attacked and abducted by a masked intruder in her home.

At the B&B in Castlemoy, Lisa overhears David talking to another man – she understands that David is gay, and having an affair.

Susan receives an anonymous phone call from a young woman claiming to have information on Amy's whereabouts. She goes to meet the woman – it is Mandy, and Susan too is ambushed and taken captive by the masked man.

That night Lisa receives a call from the killer. He tells her that he has Susan and another girl. Lisa has to choose who will die by 5 o'clock the following day, but if she tells anyone, he will kill them both.

EPISODE FOUR

Lisa discovers that Mandy was working at a brothel, and goes to investigate. The house is seemingly abandoned, but Lisa breaks in and finds evidence of yet further police corruption: a Polaroid of Mandy with one of the detectives from the Rathkilly force, Ger Gough. Suddenly the door of the room Lisa is in is locked, and smoke starts pouring in.

Moments later, David breaks down the door and rescues Lisa, but no one saw who tried to torch the house. When Lisa shows David the polaroid, the hunt is on to track down Gough.

As 5 o'clock approaches Lisa is preparing for the next phone call from the killer. Amid all the tension, Lisa reveals to David that she knows his secret – she doesn't care that he is gay, but is concerned for him.

The call comes in and the killer tells Lisa that he knows she has been talking to the police before abruptly hanging up.

Lisa returns home with a policeman posted to stand guard outside her flat. But in the middle of the night Lisa finds the guard lying in the kitchen, his throat cut. The masked man appears from behind Lisa and gives her one last chance to choose who dies – desperately, Lisa cries out that he should save Susan.

EPISODE FIVE

Gough is brought in for questioning but denies any wrongdoing. Reluctantly he provides an alibi for the night of Amy's abduction – he was with a prostitute in Dublin. But he maintains that he never had sex with Mandy.

David is digging into Gough's past and finds records – heavily redacted – of a suspension and disciplinary process carried out under Gill's watch in the 80s. David goes to another senior detective who was working on the unit at the time, JJ, who reveals that Gough had been pimping teenage girls in Dublin, and that Gill was involved in protecting him then and continues to cover up for him now.

Leaving JJ's house, David is met by Gill who makes it clear he too knows about Tommy, and he is prepared to use this secret against him.

David hurries to meet Tommy, giving him money and a ferry ticket out of Ireland. But upon leaving the B&B, Tommy is stopped by two police officers who beat him up.

Lisa confronts Gough, but when she realises that his eyes are not those of the masked man that she so clearly remembers from the night of her mother's murder, she understands that once more she has the wrong man.

EPISODE SIX

Lisa discovers that the police are scaling back their searches. David explains that they've arrested Tommy and Lisa understands that this is why the police are turning their backs on David's investigation. He is going to come clean and do what he can to free Tommy, but Lisa still needs help from within the police. David says she should go to Brennan.

David goes to another senior detective to report that Tommy's arrest is a blackmail attempt since he knows of Gill's involvement in Gough's prostitution ring. But the detective is only another part of the corrupt system and takes David to the cell where Tommy is being beaten by two cops – and Gill himself. They release Tommy but with threats that if he tries to expose them, things will only get worse for David.

Brennan receives a tip off of suspicious activity in an abandoned factory, and Lisa follows him. Brennan insists on going alone into the factory. He goes in, gun raised. Moments later, Lisa hears shots ring out and Brennan's screams. She enters the factory to look for him. The masked man appears and attacks her, but she manages to fight him off and knock him to the ground. Lisa finds Mandy and Susan and they escape, just as David arrives. Lisa tells him that Brennan is still inside, and has been shot. The masked man gets hold of David, and after a struggle where he attempts to unmask him but fails, David is shot.

Police back up finally arrives and finds a wounded Brennan, and David fighting for his life. Lisa has managed to save Susan and Mandy, but Amy is still missing. While the killer is still at large, the audience finally discovers their identity...

CREATIVE TEAM

The Vanishing Triangle is an international co-production from Park Films in Dublin, 87 Films in the UK, and Paper Plane Productions in LA.

CREATED BY

IVAN KAVANAUGH - SON, THE CANAL, NEVER GROW OLD

WRITTEN BY

SALLY TATCHELL - THE BAY, WATERLOO ROAD, SKINS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

ALON ARANYA, PAPER PLANE PRODUCTIONS - YOUR HONOR, TEHRAN

PATRICK IRWIN, 87 FILMS - THE FALL, MISS SCARLET & THE DUKE

ANNEMARIE NAUGHTON, PARK FILMS - THE CANAL, THE FADING LIGHT

ANA HABAJEC, PARK FILMS - SON, MIDSUMMER FIRE

THE VANISHING TRIANGLE

DURATION

6 x 45'

PRODUCED BY

PARK FILMS, 87 FILMS, PAPER PLANE PRODUCTIONS

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