

HUNT-ING DOWN



ON THE TRAIL: Philip in his new show, What The Killer Did Next

Philip turns 'tec



The MIKE WARD interview

PHILIP GLENISTER

NOW that we've finally met, would DCI Gene Hunt like to see my hernia scar? I've offered but he's just laughing. I'll take that as a no.

Disappointing, really. It's always made me think of him.

I explain how a box set of Life On Mars, the brilliant 70s-based cop drama where he first popped up, got me through days



ROLE: Phil as Mal in Living The Dream

of bedridden boredom a few years back, the post-op, drug-induced wooziness possibly even enhancing my appreciation of the show.

"God, that must have been really weird," he chuckles. "You must have felt like you were genuinely going back in time."

Of course, this isn't the real Gene Hunt I'm talking to. There's no such bloke. But it's the next best thing, the hugely likeable Philip Glenister, who played the dinosaur detective in both that show and Ashes To Ashes, its 80s-set sequel.

Philip and I have actually been chatting about a different programme altogether, one he's currently presenting on the Crime+Investigation channel.

What The Killer Did Next is serious stuff and darkly absorbing, an in-depth look at four different murder investigations. And there's no doubt it taps in to our increasing appetite for forensic true crime documentaries.

"I think what people find fascinating," he observes, "is seeing how each of these murderers has tried to normalise their life once they've committed the crime, trying to carry on."

"There's a fantasist element with some of them. Trying to understand what goes through their minds is intriguing.

"There's one case I find particularly shocking, involving two sisters. I have two daughters and the thought of something like that happening, you can't even begin to get your head around it."

Naturally, Philip is presenting this series very much as himself. Any Gene

Hunt-isms here would be horribly inappropriate.

But being identified with that fictional copper probably hasn't done him any harm when it comes to landing this kind of work.

I wonder, though, if playing Gene had its downside. The guy was, after all, the living embodiment of old-school political incorrectness.

Were real-life coppers OK with that? "They were more than OK with it, Mike!" he assures me. "There was one police force, I won't reveal which, who told me, 'Yeah, we've put your picture above the Queen's in the police station'."

Memories

"I wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry about that."

"But that was just how it was in the 70s. It was a very different time. A lot of the older police I spoke to said they'd had DCIs just like Gene, sometimes worse."

And from his own point of view, it seems that infamous decade wasn't all bad. "I was a kid in the 70s," says Philip, 58. "So I actually have fond memories."

"I remember the power cuts. Those were a bit of an adventure, a great excuse not to do my homework. The only snag was the telly would go off in the middle of 2.Cars or something."

Recently Philip has also been starring in Sky One's Living The Dream, a comedy drama about a British family who've

relocated to Florida. Lesley Sharp plays his wife.

"It's a nice hour of escapism really," he says. "It's not designed to be high art."

"It's just that there's so much negativity on television now, particularly in relationship-based programmes, that we thought it would be nice to show a couple of a certain age who still have a bit of life in them and who want to go on this adventure and who still love each other. You don't really see that much."

Sky One was also home to Mad Dogs, the fantastically crazed crime caper where he teamed up with Marc Warren, Max Beesley and his Life On Mars co-star John Simm.

Executive producers on that show included Philip's friend Suzanne Mackie, who's since gone on to work on Netflix's thumping hit The Crown, the epic drama tracing the Queen's reign on the throne.

"Suzanne hasn't given me a f---ing part in it yet. Maybe they're waiting till the 70s so they can bring me in as Gene."

"Or even the 80s, perhaps. Gene could be Tony Blair's bodyguard. Can you imagine?"

● **What The Killer Did Next continues tonight at 9pm on CRIME+INVESTIGATION (Sky 156, Virgin 275, BT and TalkTalk 202)**

WHAT MAKES KILLERS TICK

Philip's favourites

FILM – Bohemian Rhapsody
BOOK – Animal Farm by George Orwell
SCHOOL SUBJECT – Home time
SONG – Daydream Believer by The Monkees
TV SHOW – The Persuaders
ACTOR – Richard Burton
COMEDIAN – Billy Connolly
SPORTSPERSON – Roger Federer
FOOD – Rib of beef, Yorkshire pudding
DRINK – Wine
CITY – Rome
HOLIDAY – Majorca
ANIMAL – Penguins, for their humour



COP FOR THAT: Philip with co-star Keeley Hawes in 80s-set hit Ashes To Ashes

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