



STIFFS

TV SERIES BIBLE

LOGLINE

Set in a Funeral Parlour in present-day London, Stiffs explores parallel worlds - the business of death, the business of violence, and the business of sex.

SYNOPSIS

'Stiffs' is based around the central theme of a family funeral parlour in London, owned and run by Victor 'Vic' Buckley.

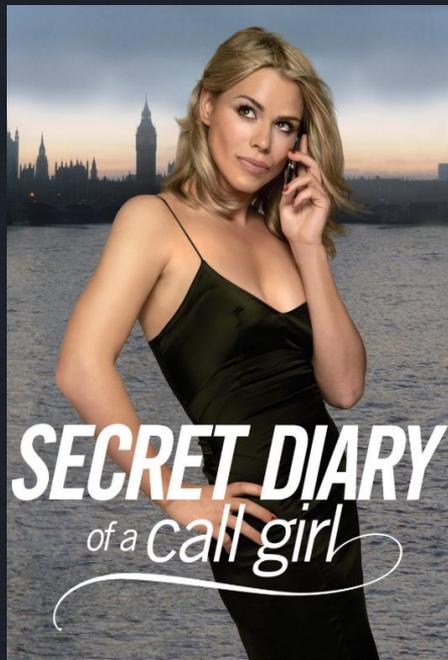
The flat above his premises is let out to a mysterious lady, who entertains a string of callers.

The events that occur risk the smooth running of both the massage parlour upstairs and the funeral parlour downstairs.

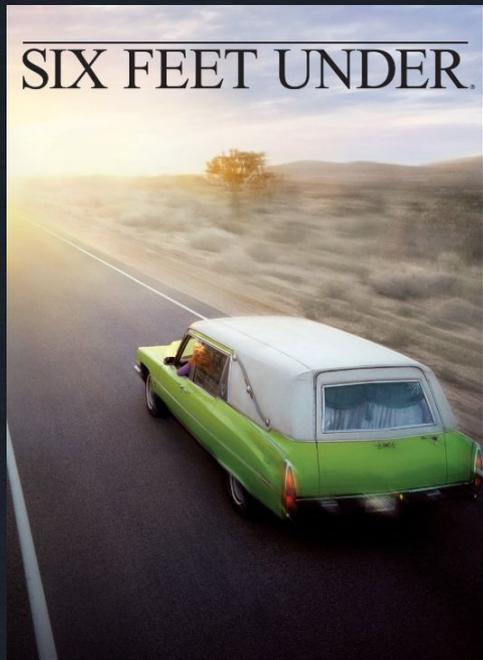
There is also a safety risk to the tenants... both permanent and temporary, upstairs and down.



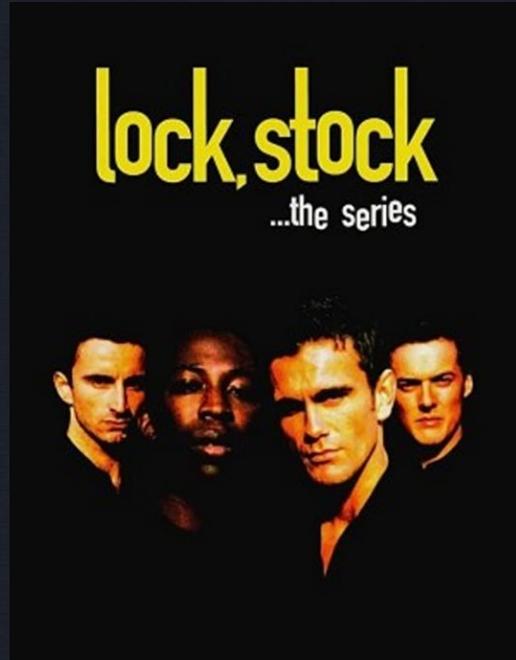
SHOW CROSS



MEETS



MEETS



VICTOR 'VIC' BUCKLEY

MAIN CHARACTER

Vic Buckley is a fourth-generation undertaker with a successful funeral parlour in Islington.

Vic has worked there, in various capacities, since he was fourteen. The nature of the business led to a great deal of bullying and harassment at school, which has never left him.

He has little confidence with women, but has had the odd relationship here and there. He has a group of good friends, who he regularly meets with at their favourite pub, the Carpenter's Arms. Vic's not a loser - he's popular and funny - but he is lonely.

He feels like he is treading water and going nowhere fast.

Something needs to happen for him to feel his life has a purpose. He just doesn't know what.



Casting suggestion: Robert James-Collier



Casting suggestion: Lily James

GEORGINA WEBBER

MAIN CHARACTER

Georgina is an attractive woman in her late 20's. She's from a working class background, and gained prestigious scholarships to private schools. Georgina is sharp and clever, with a pragmatic view on life.

Although initially guarded, she takes to Vic quickly as she sees him as no threat; an innocent friendship develops.

Georgina was raped by a teacher on an A-Level trip, and although she never reported the attack, she vowed never to have sex with another person for free.

She has escaped from a vicious pimp who has been taking advantage of her talent.

She likes Vic but takes time to trust him with her true life.

MICKY HAGUE

MAIN CHARACTER

Micky Hague is a procurer of young women for the high-end prostitution game. His method is to sweet-talk them into giving it a try, then set them up in high-end flats in London, where the majority of the money the girls earn is given back to him in "rent".

He is essentially a pimp but covers this as being a legitimate landlord. His flats are in The Cadogan Building, Knightsbridge, which he owns outright. How he came to own this exclusive property is a mystery.

He is an imposing man but likes to retain an air of legitimacy, so saves his dirty work for others. He works closely with foreign associates in his business.

He doesn't use the phone, and has a standover man, John, to do his dirty work for him.

Micky has an air of violence around him, even when he's being polite. He makes money through many means, but does not entertain the notion of drugs - drugs are bad for business.



Casting suggestion: Frank Harper

JOHN KINGSTON

MAIN CHARACTER

John is a standover man for Micky, although he is not the traditional 'heavy'. He's young and intimidating, but his violent nature is ruled by his cunning, and he evades trouble. He has no criminal record. He likes to carry knives, and is an illegal cage fighter in his spare time - he enjoys hurting people when he gets the chance.

He acts as concierge at the apartment building owned by Micky, but in reality he is there to keep tally of the punters going in, keep the 'staff' in check, and to collect the cash.

John is set on the trail of Georgina when she disappears. He takes the loss of Georgina as a personal slight. He would possibly kill her if he had the chance, regardless of Micky's orders.



Casting suggestion: Joshua Herdman



Casting suggestion: Archie Panjabi

LUCINDA BOLTON

MAIN CHARACTER

Lucinda is the Office Manager at The Cadogan Building, although this title is a cover for her job of coordinating the 'staff' diaries, employing cleaning staff, and taking care of any troubleshooting the building requires.

She is quick witted and thinks on her feet; these traits make her perfect for the job.

Lucinda's loyalties appear conflicted. The fact that she is also John's lover complicates things. She is excited by John; his unpredictable and violent nature seems to give her a thrill.

DESMOND 'DES' BURFORD

SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Des is Vic's best friend. Along with Animal and Doormat, he was at school with Vic.

Des is a bricklayer, brawny and strong. He's an honest and straightforward character.

As with all three of Vic's closest friends, he loves West Ham United, the Carpenter's Arms and, most of all - his friends.

He's also the most likely of the crew to win a fight; he's a natural peacemaker but will look after himself and his pals if necessary.



Casting suggestion: John Boyega

ALAN 'ANIMAL' ROBINSON

SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Animal is a London Cab driver, and always has a story to tell about who's been in his cab. He also tells off-colour and sometimes offensive jokes, which seem to irritate the others but which they secretly like - he's been the same since they were at school.

He's very interested in Vic's profession, but has never had the opportunity to really get to know much about it or to get past the office at the Funeral Parlour, as Victor's father, Victor Sr., doesn't like any of the lads and sees them as a bad influence.

We find out later in the season how Animal got his nickname.



Casting suggestion: Daniel Mays

ANDREW 'DOORMAT' DRAPER

SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Doormat is a PC with the Metropolitan Police. He hasn't taken his job very seriously, and is seen by colleagues and criminals alike as a bit of a soft touch.

The fact that he's in the force doesn't stop him from behaving the same as the others; he loves the pub, loves football, and generally gets up to the same as his friends.

Later in the series he gets very lucky and makes a significant arrest. He gets promoted to the Human Trafficking and Vice Unit, and decides to take his job more seriously.



Casting suggestion: James Buckley

VICTOR BUCKLEY SR. (SENIOR)

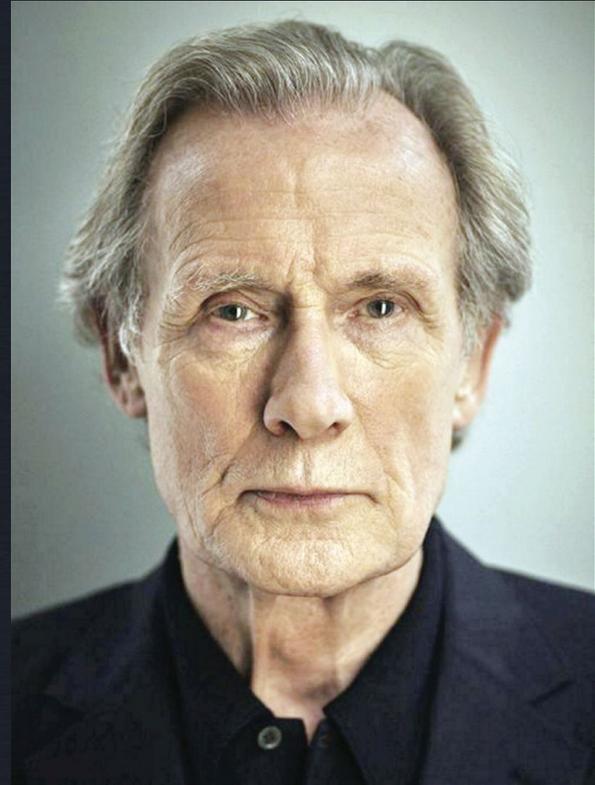
SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Known to all, including his own son, as 'Senior', the elder Victor Buckley is an imposing figure. He is the archetypal old-school undertaker - sombre and stoic.

He showed little love for Victor Jr. and for his wife, who was twenty years younger than him. The marriage only lasted long enough for Junior to reach 5 years old, before Senior was left alone.

He is cantankerous, uncaring, and despises Vic's friends.

He forced Vic to take out a loan to buy his share in the funeral parlour, even though the family tradition had been that it would be simply passed down on retirement or death.



Casting suggestion: Bill Nighy

PILOT

During the opening credits of the episode we see Vic working in the mortuary. He imagines his own face on the body in front of him.

He goes to the pub and meets his close friends, who have noticed that he is not himself lately.

He is clearly waiting for some kind of divine intervention to give his life some meaning - which is made more difficult by being around corpses all day.

In Knightsbridge, late at night, Georgina escapes from a high-end apartment building through the laundry elevator. Even though it's a tense situation, in which she must evade the henchman of her pimp, she remains cool and calm.

An estate agent shows Georgina around the clean and modern flat above the Funeral Parlour.

Georgina accepts the flat and arranges furniture throughout - it's clear she has plenty of money.

She goes to introduce herself to Vic, who she notices through her window entering the shop. They strike up an unlikely friendship. She asks if he'd object to her putting in a video entry system. Vic is intrigued by her.

Micky ponders the situation, and needs to come to a decision about Georgina.

Lucinda and John work together to figure out where Georgina has gone - and their working relationship spills over.

Micky finally tells John that Georgina must be found - at all costs.

EPISODE CONCEPTS

EPISODE 1: SLIP AWAY

Georgina escapes from her luxurious apartment with a bag of money and some incriminating paperwork, evading her pimp and his standover man in the process. She moves into the apartment above Vic's Funeral Parlour. Vic and his friends are intrigued by her, but her fate may soon be sealed.

EPISODE 2: LEARNING TO RIDE

Georgina continues to hide her profession from Vic, who is becoming more beguiled by her. He learns more about her on an impromptu night out with Georgina and the boys. Georgina's parents come to visit. While they're away, their house is visited. Micky, John and Lucinda talk to the staff at The Cadogan, and Micky has to deal with some European business associates.

EPISODE 3: ON THE JOB

A regular client called 'Skitch' dies suddenly in Georgina's flat. He's a known underworld figure and an associate of Micky's. Georgina goes downstairs to finally come clean to Vic, and to beg for his expert help. Micky's professional and personal ethics are called into question. The disappearance raises eyebrows, and suspicions. The presence of Senior is a constant thorn in Vic's side.

EPISODE 4: SCD9

John scouts the location of Georgina's flat. Vic's friends are becoming suspicious of Georgina. Lucinda's secret is out. Vic meets some new customers in the pub, but doesn't realise their connection with Georgina. Doormat is promoted to the Vice Unit. Vic loses his cool with his friends, and John finally goes too far.

EPISODE 5: CLOSED DUE TO BEREAVEMENT

John is dead, Vic is hurt, Senior is unrepentant. Georgina just wants to keep her parents safe. Can Vic remain complicit in the events that are happening under his nose? Vic has confessions (and apologies) to make to his friends - and needs their help more than ever. Micky takes matters into his own hands, and enlists services that he has been reluctant to use in the past.

EPISODE 6: SLIGHT RETURN

Georgina returns to The Cadogan, with Micky's money and the missing papers. Vic tries to track her down before she can get herself into trouble, but first gets a surprise visit from Islington CID - including Doormat. It seems there is more to Micky's operation than first thought. Can Vic come up with a plan to save their skins?

FUTURE SEASONS

SEASON 1

A darkly funny tale of the collision of three industries - violence, sex and death.



SEASON 2

The first season saw attempts to maintain a solo business against old adversaries. The second series will focus on building the business and struggling with a new type of adversary, and the emotional and ethical issues that the characters encounter. Friends become enemies, loyalties are divided.



SEASON 3

Now that the business has consolidated its position, the threats to it are from interpersonal relationships within the 'firm'. The main characters will have to deal with skeletons from their pasts which refuse to stay buried. Long-held secrets are revealed.



STONE

The series is a dark, funny, quirky and occasionally shocking introduction to the transactional businesses of death and sex, and how ordinary people can change their long-held views.

Stiffs is set in present-day London, and initially stays within three insular environments, all of which make up a funny, sexy and sometimes dark and violent world.

It will have visual styles of "Lock Stock" and "Minder". It is stylish with a gritty edge, given the collision of different worlds. Most of the characters are typical Londoners, with the humour and vernacular common to them.

Stiffs is not judgmental, nor does it conform to stereotypes. These are mostly ordinary people from ordinary backgrounds, finding (and placing) themselves in extraordinary situations.



THE WORLD



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