

# Scene Extra: Yet to catch up on cop comedy Code 404? It boasts an arresting all-star line-up



by Paul Simper

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DANIEL MAYS, Stephen Graham and Anna Maxwell Martin have all made their mark on the TV cop show genre thanks to riveting guest star performances in *Line Of Duty*. So hats off to Sky for the coup of signing up all three to new spoof police drama *Code 404*. It won't take you long to realise we're not in AC-12 any more.

'When it starts out it could basically be an episode of *Line Of Duty*,' says Mays (above, right, with Graham). 'It looks slick, it's classy. The production values are really high.'

Then Mays' high-achieving copper, DI John Major (yup), is killed and brought back to life as a malfunctioning 90-parts human to one-part humanoid and things with his police partner DI Roy Carver (Graham) and wife Kelly (Maxwell Martin) get very silly indeed.

For Mays and Maxwell Martin, who previously worked together on the award-winning BBC dramas *White Girl* and *Mother's Day*, the whole project has clearly been a hoot from start to finish.



Maxwell Martin (above, right) has a rule that she will only sign up for a show once she knows a Confirmed Fun Friend is on board and on this, having not worked with Graham before, that was definitely Mays.

The pair are very good value, ribbing each other and sharing anecdotes of jobs past.

'Whenever I work with Danny he always has some extreme physical ailment,' says Maxwell Martin. 'On *Mother's Day* we had to call a special foot person to his trailer because he had some terrible toenail problems. I could tell you about his other ailments but to be honest they all blend into one now.'

'I had cracked heels,' says Mays, taking a momentary breather from lockdown home schooling and home caring (Daniel's wife Lou is in a plaster cast after snapping her fibula in a fall on their one permitted daily walk). 'I wasn't looking after my heels properly. They got very dry and they cracked. Correct me if I'm wrong but are you insinuating that I'm some sort of neurotic actor?'

'What Danny doesn't say is that when we were together in Belfast I literally became his personal PA and photographer,' continues Maxwell Martin. 'We would be walking down the street going for dinner. Danny would be stopped and asked for a photo. He would pretend to be all bashful and I would literally spend my life taking photos of Danny for members of the public.'

Mays and Graham had worked together years before on a TV show called *Top Buzzer* but for Maxwell Martin this was her first job with *This Is England* and *The Irishman* actor Graham. 'I was a bit in awe,' she confesses. 'I'd just watched him in *The Virtues*. He's lovely, Danny, isn't he? I don't think Stephen has done a part like this before.'

Some of *Code 404*'s best scenes are the domestic ones between the three leads as John's wife and his best mate try to deal with DI John Major's inconvenient return from the dead — which has torpedoed their affair.



While Graham and Mays get to do all the chasing villains and gun play on this series, Maxwell Martin hopes she may get an opportunity elsewhere when *Line Of Duty* season six eventually resumes filming. The idea of caustic DCS Patricia Carmichael out in the field is a tantalising prospect.

'I want to see her with a gun and a holster,' she says. 'We've seen she can kick ass in the interrogation room — I made Ted cry — but I want to see her kick some physical ass.'

Mays is still pondering the events of *Line Of Duty* season five. 'Was that whole storyline of Ted being H a bit of a bum steer?' he wonders. Maxwell Martin gasps down the phone line. 'You don't know that, Danny. Are you questioning Jed Mercurio?!'

'No, I will never question Jed,' he laughs, 'just in case he ever wants my character to do a prequel!'

Stranger things have happened and *Line Of Duty*, as we know, is being held hostage for who knows how long by the lockdown. Until then, *Code 404* is a welcome diversion.

■ All *Code 404* episodes are available now on Sky One and Now TV

