

= A Quiet Night In =

" A Quiet Night In " is the second episode of the British dark comedy television anthology series Inside No. 9 . It first aired on 12 February 2014 on BBC Two . Written by Reece Shearsmith and Steve Pemberton , it stars the writers as a pair of hapless burglars attempting to break into the large , modernist house of a couple ? played by Denis Lawson and Oona Chaplin ? to steal a painting . Once the burglars make it into the house , they encounter obstacle after obstacle , while the lovers , unaware of the burglars ' presence , argue . The episode progresses almost entirely without dialogue , relying instead on physical comedy and slapstick , though more sinister elements are present in the plot . In addition to Pemberton , Shearsmith , Lawson and Chaplin , " A Quiet Night In " stars Joyce Veheary and Kayvan Novak .

Shearsmith and Pemberton had originally considered including a dialogue @-@ free segment in their television series Psychoville , but ultimately did not ; they found the format of Inside No. 9 appropriate for revisiting the idea . Both journalists and those involved with the episode 's production commented on the casting of Chaplin , a grandchild of the silent film star Charlie Chaplin , in an almost entirely dialogue @-@ free episode , though her casting was not a deliberate homage . Critics generally responded positively to the episode , and a particularly laudatory review by David Chater was published in The Times , prompting a complaint from a reader who found the episode more traumatic than comedic . On its first airing , " A Quiet Night In " was watched by 940 @,@ 000 viewers (4 @.@ 8 % of the market) .

" A Quiet Night In " was submitted to the British Academy of Film and Television Arts for the 2015 awards , but it was not nominated . Pemberton and Shearsmith have said that they have no plans to do further silent episodes , but have compared " A Quiet Night In " to the highly @-@ experimental " Cold Comfort " from Inside No. 9 's second series , a sentiment echoed by some television critics .

= = Production = =

Writers Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith , who had previously co @-@ written and starred in The League of Gentlemen and Psychoville , took inspiration for Inside No. 9 from " David and Maureen " , episode 4 of the first series of Psychoville , which was in turn inspired by Alfred Hitchcock 's Rope . " David and Maureen " took place entirely in a single room , and was filmed in only two shots . At the same time , the concept of Inside No. 9 was a " reaction " to Psychoville , with Shearsmith saying that " we 'd been so involved with labyrinthine over @-@ arcing , we thought it would be nice to do six different stories with a complete new house of people each week . That 's appealing , because as a viewer you might not like this story , but you 've got a different one next week . " As an anthology series with horror themes , Inside No. 9 also pays homage to Tales of the Unexpected , The Twilight Zone and Alfred Hitchcock Presents .

The format of Inside No. 9 allowed Pemberton and Shearsmith to explore ideas which are less practical for other approaches to storytelling , such as the possibility of a script with little dialogue . Prior to writing " A Quiet Night In " , Shearsmith had spoken with directors , including Ben Wheatley , about the possibility of producing television without speech . The directors had expressed doubts , Shearsmith explained , because the success of dialogue @-@ free television comes down entirely to the visuals and filming . " A Quiet Night In " was inspired by an idea Shearsmith and Pemberton had discussed for Psychoville . The writers had considered omitting dialogue from a ten @-@ minute section in an episode , or even from the whole episode . Pemberton explained that this was not possible as there were " too many good jokes " which they wanted to fit into the sequence . This episode , like " A Quiet Night In " , dealt with a break @-@ in .

Inside No. 9 , for Pemberton , offered the " perfect vehicle " for revisiting the possibility of dialogue @-@ free television . Shearsmith said that , at the start of the writing process , the pair did not have the intention of scripting the entire episode without dialogue , and that it would be " great " to have ten minutes without it . However , Pemberton said it was easier to write once they had entered the correct " mindset " . Once half an episode had been written , Pemberton said , the pair thought " we 've just got to keep going " . The only dialogue in the episode is right at the end ; " what a great thing

to get to the end and just have one line of dialogue " , Pemberton suggested , comparing the concept to that of the Mel Brooks film Silent Movie .

The story of " A Quiet Night In " revolves around a break @-@ in , which , combined with an argument between the people living in the house , means that the characters all have a reason to be silent . At 18 pages of stage directions , the script contained every joke in the episode , an exercise in planning atypical for Shearsmith and Pemberton . The story contains multiple " reveals " ; Pemberton explained that the he and Shearsmith " hope there 's an ' oh my God ' moment . There is always a desire to wrong @-@ foot the viewer . That 's what you strive to do " . Pemberton said that writing for a silent episode " makes you inventive in a completely different way " .

The episode was filmed at the White Lodge , in Oxted , Surrey . The episode 's burglars are played by the writers ; the pair were quoted as saying " we didn 't want to dominate [the series] , so we sometimes play fairly minor characters . But we know that , say , if we were writing something about two burglars , we 'd be the burglars . " Pemberton suggested that a partial influence for the episode may have been the children 's television series Brum . He said that he and Shearsmith had " always wanted to be a couple of robbers in that , so that might be where the idea came from " . Both writers agreed that their roles were " great to perform " , and Pemberton described the resulting episode by saying that it " worked out better than [they] could have dreamed " .

As the format of Inside No. 9 requires new characters each week , the writers were able to attract actors who may have been unwilling to commit to an entire series . In addition to Pemberton and Shearsmith , " A Quiet Night In " starred Denis Lawson , Joyce Veheary , Oona Chaplin and Kayvan Novak . Pemberton commented on the appropriateness of casting Chaplin , a grandchild of the silent film star Charlie Chaplin , in an episode with little dialogue . Shearsmith stressed that the episode should not be considered a silent film in the same way as Charlie Chaplin 's , elsewhere saying that the casting was " almost an accident but maybe a little nod " . Bruce Dessau , writing in The Independent , described the casting choice as " a satisfying nod to silent cinema " . Both Oona Chaplin and the Inside No. 9 executive producer Jon Plowman stressed , however , that there was no significance in the casting . Chaplin also said that her character was very unlike herself , explaining that the " big boobs , the heels , the blonde wig ... freed [her] up amazingly " .

= = Plot = =

Inside a large , modernist house , Gerald (Lawson) turns on Rachmaninoff 's Piano Concerto No. 2 and sits down to soup brought by his housekeeper , Kim (Veheary) . Through the windows behind him , burglars Eddie (Pemberton) and Ray (Shearsmith) are seen . Ray enters the house , then lets in Eddie while Gerald is using the toilet . Eddie is shocked to see that the pair have come to steal an almost completely white painting . Ray starts to dismantle the painting while Eddie keeps watch ; he tries to guide a Yorkshire Terrier out of the patio window , but inadvertently lets in an Irish Wolfhound . As Ray releases the wolfhound , Eddie accidentally throws the terrier into the window , so Ray stuffs the dog into an umbrella stand .

Sabrina (Chaplin) walks down the stairs , and Ray puts the painting back and hides . Sabrina turns down Gerald 's music to watch EastEnders . Gerald returns , sitting away from Sabrina . He turns up his music and the pair fight over the television remote , before leaving through the patio door and arguing , though their voices are muffled . Ray cuts away the canvas and replaces it with kitchen roll . When Sabrina reenters , she unknowingly stands on the canvas . Kim picks it up , mistaking it for laundry , and heads into a laundry room as Sabrina walks upstairs . Eddie follows Kim and she sprays something into his eyes . Ray knocks out Kim and sees the canvas in a laundry basket , which is sent up a laundry chute . He runs upstairs , while Gerald remains outside .

Sabrina packs a holdall , including the contents of the laundry basket . She locks the case and heads into an en suite . Downstairs , Gerald retrieves a pistol and heads back outside . Ray attempts to steal the key from Sabrina 's discarded trousers and he sees that Sabrina is a trans woman . On the patio , Gerald points the gun into his mouth , as Eddie stumbles around in the lounge area , having accidentally pushed chilli peppers into his eyes . Ray hides under Sabrina 's bed as she reenters the room ; lying on a sex doll with both breasts and a penis , he is almost

discovered . Eddie washes his face , and Gerald starts to play " Without You " . Sabrina makes her way downstairs , taking the holdall 's key . Sabrina and Gerald dance .

Ray drags the case to the top of the stairs and meets Eddie . Gerald lays Sabrina down on the sofa , places a cushion over her face and shoots her . Gerald turns off the music as the doorbell is heard . Answering the door , Gerald sees a man (Novak) who holds up a sign reading " Hello , my name is Paul . I am deaf & dumb . " The reverse of the sign reads " Do you need any cleaning products today ? " Gerald heads inside and hides Sabrina 's body as Paul waits . Gerald splashes his soup onto the blood and invites Paul to clean it . Ray runs down the stairs and meets Paul ; he proceeds to buy rope before returning upstairs . Paul continues to clean , but sees the bullethole in the cushion , and then the suitcase being lowered outside the window . Gerald heads outside to investigate , but Eddie and Ray drop the case on his head . The burglars run past Paul and look out to see the canvas in the pool , before both being shot by Paul . Paul rings someone and says " Hello , it 's me . Yeah , it 's done . " He looks to the fake painting , and says " I 've got it right here . Yeah , it 's fine . Not a peep out of anyone . " He takes down the painting and walks out , as the real canvas is seen sinking in the pool .

= = Analysis = =

The style of " A Quiet Night In " is experimental and represents a creative risk . While Pemberton and Shearsmith 's characters provide comedy , the relationship of Lawson and Chaplin 's characters adds an element of darkness . The two storylines are brought together with the violence towards the end of the episode , resulting in the juxtaposition of elements reminiscent of both the Chuckle Brothers (slapstick) and Quentin Tarantino (bloody violence) .

Though the comedy remains black , the comedic style of the episode differs considerably from that of " Sardines " , the previous installment of Inside No. 9 . " A Quiet Night In " offers a kind of " sadistic slapstick " humour ; physical comedy , toilet humour and buffoonery are utilised , with the episode effectively becoming a farce . " A Quiet Night In " builds upon silent comedy tropes and norms , but , for the comedy critic Bruce Dessau , the tone is closer to that of Kill List or Sightseers than to the work of Buster Keaton . The episode features various twists , and these are generally in keeping with Pemberton and Shearsmith 's typical approach , though one is reminiscent of the Farrelly brothers .

= = Reception = =

Critics generally responded positively to " A Quiet Night In " . David Chater , writing for The Times , gave a highly laudatory review , saying the episode was " the funniest , cleverest , most imaginative and original television I have seen for as long as I can remember ? one of those fabulous programmes where time stands still and the world around you disappears " . He chose not to reveal too much about the plot for fear of " spoiling the fun " . Chater later described the episode as " mindboggling in its originality " , and " one of the funniest , most imaginative programmes shown on television in the past 15 years " . Jane Simon , writing for the Daily Mirror , called the episode a " triumph " , while writers for Metro described the episode as " quality comedy " , and journalists writing for The Sunday Times characterised it as a " brilliantly conceived and choreographed mime " . Jack Seale , writing for the Radio Times , also stressed how the episode was " beautifully choreographed " , praising Pemberton and Shearsmith 's " willingness to attempt difficult concepts " .

Dessau considered the episode " genius " , and described the twist ending as " genuinely unexpected " . In The Observer , Mike Bradley called " A Quiet Night In " a " priceless silent farce " , but , in the newspaper 's sister publication The Guardian , Luke Holland was more critical . He said the episode was " an almost wordless half @-@ hour of physical comedy " , and that " it plays out like a French farce , its comedic strokes far broader " than those of " Sardines " . " If you find two men silently mime @-@ arguing about how long it takes to have a poo funny " , he continued , " you 're on sturdy ground here " . Later , a review by Phelim O 'Neill of the Inside No. 9 series 1 boxset

published on theguardian.com described " A Quiet Night In " as " engaging , tense , funny , frightening ? and accessibly experimental " . The episode was compared negatively to the later instalment " Tom & Gerri " in an Irish Daily Mail review ? " A Quiet Night In " was called " patchy " ? but was compared positively to " Last Gasp " by Rebecca McQuillan of The Herald , who said that " A Quiet Night In " was " something close to comedy genius " . An anonymous review in the South African newspaper The Saturday Star picked out " A Quiet Night In " as the strongest episode of the first series .

After the episode had aired , The Times received an email complaint about Chater 's positive review of the episode , which was discussed by the journalist Rose Wild . Part of the complaint read :

I told my husband how it was supposed to be the funniest thing ever , but we were horrified ! I 'll never be able to forget the little dog being thrown against the window and then stabbed to death by an umbrella ? nor the gay man killed by his lover , nor what they had under the bed ? nor the deaf man killing the thieves . Having thieves tiptoe comically around the house before having their heads blown off did not make up for my trauma .

In response , Wild said : " I am sorry if we left any permanent damage . In our defence , we did say ' black ' comedy . " Wild agreed with the reader 's comment that she and her husband " must be very different kinds of people " from Chater .

= = = Viewing figures = = =

On its first airing , the episode received 940 @, @ 000 viewers (4 @. @ 8 % of the market) . This was lower than the 1 million (5 @. @ 6 % of viewers) of the series 's debut , " Sardines " , and lower than the 1 @. @ 8 million (7 @. @ 4 %) of Line of Duty which immediately preceded " A Quiet Night In " in most UK listings . A repeat , shown on 26 May on BBC2 , attracted 900 @, @ 000 viewers , which was 4 % of the audience . On this occasion , the episode followed The Fast Show Special . The series average , based upon the viewing figures of the first broadcast of each episode , was 904 @, @ 000 viewers , or 4 @. @ 9 % of the audience , lower than the slot average of 970 @, @ 000 (5 @. @ 1 % of the audience) .

= = Legacy = =

" A Quiet Night In " was submitted to the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) , but was not nominated for a 2015 BAFTA award . In an interview with Digital Spy , Shearsmith said that this surprised him , saying " I was upset , I did think it was a shame that it 's not been recognised . You want people to have seen it and to have recognised the work , and innovation , but I think people are doing that . I get told that every day on Twitter , or in meetings . " A number of journalists expressed surprise that Inside No. 9 had received no BAFTA nominations , with Julia Raside , of The Guardian , describing " A Quiet Night In " as " one of the most inspired pieces of mute theatre I 've seen on television " .

In 2015 , Shearsmith said that he and Pemberton had no intention to write any further silent episodes , as they would not want viewers to think they had run out of ideas , while Pemberton separately said that the pair had no desire to do what would be an inferior version of " A Quiet Night In " . " Cold Comfort " , the fourth episode of the second series of Inside No. 9 , was compared to " A Quiet Night In " by Pemberton , Shearsmith and some critics . " Cold Comfort " was also filmed an experimental style , with most of the episode shot from fixed cameras and displayed on a split screen . Despite this ? with its focus on listening and the fact that it was mostly static ? " Cold Comfort " could , for Pemberton , be seen as the " polar opposite " of " A Quiet Night In " .

In June 2016 , there was a screening of " A Quiet Night In " at Colston Hall as part of Bristol 's Slapstick Festival . The one @-@ off event , entitled " A Quiet Night In with Reece & Steve " , also featured Pemberton and Shearsmith discussing the episode on @-@ stage with Robin Ince , followed by a question and answer session with the writers . In an interview with Craig Jones of the Bristol Post , Shearsmith said that he was " very excited to come to Bristol " , and that he and Pemberton had been wanting to be involved with Slapstick Festival for some time . He said that " It

is a lovely thing to be part of and it is great to see how respected slapstick still remains . "