

= Looking After Our Own =

" Looking After Our Own " is the second episode of the British espionage television series Spooks . It first aired on BBC One in the United Kingdom on 20 May 2002 . The episode was written by series creator David Wolstencroft , and directed by Bharat Nalluri . The episode focuses on MI5 's efforts in bringing down right @-@ wing leader Robert Osbourne (Kevin McNally) , who is believed to be planning a series of race riots across the UK .

The storyline was originally slated for the finale of the first series , but was pushed forward when the producers were pressured to deliver the story to the BBC . Filming took two weeks , around December 2001 . After its original broadcast , the episode was viewed by over eight million Britons , a decline of one million from the first episode , but was still the strongest performer in its time slot . The episode marked the death of a main character , Helen Flynn (Lisa Faulkner) , which was met with considerable controversy due to its perceived violence ; at 250 complaints , it marked the highest number of complaints for a television programme in 2002 .

= = Plot = =

MI5 suspect that right @-@ wing leader Robert Osbourne is planning a series of race riots in the UK . A team led by Danny Hunter (David Oyelowo) attempts to bug his home , only to find it impossible because of the home 's high @-@ tech countersurveillance equipment . What MI5 does find is that Osbourne abuses his wife Claire (Debra Stephenson) ; believing Claire is vulnerable for recruitment , Section D start " Operation Greensleeves " and tasks a " runner " to befriend her before recruiting . However , vetting did not pick up on the runner 's alcoholism after she becomes involved in a road traffic accident while inebriated . Harry Pearce (Peter Firth) appoints Tom Quinn (Matthew Macfadyen) and junior administrative officer Helen Flynn (Lisa Faulkner) to step in and pose as a married couple who are substitute tutors at the same Romford community college Claire is attending .

The two initially succeed , and are invited to dinner with Osbourne at his home . However , during their visit , Osbourne catches Helen out by addressing Tom as her boyfriend rather than husband ; Helen 's improvising makes Osbourne more suspicious of the two . Later , one of Osbourne 's contacts , Nick Thomas (Tom Goodman @-@ Hill) , is revealed to be freelance journalist Kieran Harvey . When Osbourne discovers this , he has Harvey murdered . Tom and Helen gain Claire 's trust and recruit her ; she agrees to help the two in exchange for a £ 600 @-@ a @-@ week account and transport to anywhere in the world .

In the meantime , a cargo of illegal immigrants from Chechnya is intercepted by HM Customs and Excise ; the traffickers throw their cargo overboard , drowning them . Believing the traffickers will change their routes , Tessa Phillips (Jenny Agutter) and Zoe Reynolds (Keeley Hawes) investigate and discover a link between the shipment and Osbourne . With the information gathered from " Greensleeves " , they discover that Osbourne intends to choke the asylum system by overcrowding the holding centres , and after his followers stir up the race riots , Osbourne would encourage independent Member of Parliament (MP) Bill Watson (Jasper Jacob) to raise the issue of asylum seekers in the House of Commons .

Tom and Helen prepare to move out , but are kidnapped by Osbourne 's gang and taken to the kitchen of his waste management plant for interrogation . Knowing they are MI5 officers , Osbourne demands everything Tom knows about their operation ; when Tom fails to cooperate , Osbourne forces Helen 's hand , followed by her head into a deep fryer , before shooting her . Before Tom can suffer the same fate , Claire throws a cigarette into the vat , which ignites , buying Tom time to escape and return to Thames House . However , Tom and Harry are disgusted to hear that the powers @-@ that @-@ be will take no action against Osbourne , in order to track the movements of all far @-@ right groups . At the end of the episode . Harry has Osbourne assassinated . Bill Watson receives photographs of the dead refugees washed up on a beach , presumably sent by MI5 , along with a note reading " are you happy with your wash ? "

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and pre @-@ production = = =

The episode 's storyline , including Helen 's death , was meant to be in the first series finale . However , by then , the second episode was not yet written , and series producer Kudos were due to deliver the story to the BBC in one month . As a result , the episode was brought forward to the second slot . Since the first episode began " Spooks " with a bang " , series creator and writer David Wolstencroft , was under pressure to top the efforts of the first episode with the second , but not by much . During the writing stage , he introduced a story arc involving Danny Hunter and his obsession with money and spending , apparently mirroring the writer ; the arc was created for the temptations that the officers may have . In the original screenplay , Danny was to spend on his mother .

Wolstencroft included some suggestions from his friends and girlfriend . An early scene was to take place in a shower room , but was rewritten when the producers thought it would be " too racy " for a 9 : 00 p.m. audience . In another instance , a long sequence would take place at sea concerning the smugglers dropping off illegal immigrants into the water ; the scenes were cut before filming due to time constraints . Also , before deciding on waste disposal , Osbourne was originally going to head a security company . The funeral scene towards the end of the episode was inspired by The Godfather II . In the end , the script was rewritten four times before the BBC took the final version of the episode .

Kevin McNally was cast as the antagonist Robert Osbourne ; McNally was chosen because the producers thought he would be perfect to play the part , as is the case with Debra Stephenson , who portrayed his wife . Child actor Daniel Chenery , who played the part of their son , Sammy , was chosen due to his likeness of a younger version of McNally . Also , Simon Crawford Collins 's wife made a cameo appearance as a BT operator .

= = = Filming = = =

Filming took place over a 13 to 14 days period in December 2001 . It was not filmed on order of the script ; the scenes set around the Osbourne residence for instance , were all filmed at once , during two to three days , though during the episodes , the scenes took place in separate parts of the episode . Parts of the introduction scenes , where Danny 's team break into Osbourne 's house , was actually filmed on the Grid set . Parts of the sequence were originally filmed without sound ; the sound would later be added during post production . The footage of the drowned immigrants found at the shore were shot by the second unit headed by producer Simon Crawford Collins on a pebbled courtyard in Kensington to double as a beach .

Some of the exterior scenes at night were filmed with the street wet down so that the lights could kick off the ground . Also in the episode , the editing suite , where the series was edited , was used as a set . The West12 shopping centre in Shepherd 's Bush , London was used in one scene as an airport , as well as the shopping centre itself in another . The Chadford Community College was filmed at a rugby club . The safe house Tom and Helen were appointed to was filmed in two separate locations . One of those locations was used before in the Mary Kane interrogation scene in the pilot episode " Thou Shalt Not Kill " . In one scene where Tom was driving to the operation the car was in fact towed ; an error was made in the episode where the car looked taller than the other cars on the road during the shoot .

= = = Helen Flynn death scene = = =

Wolstencroft wrote the death scene with the intention of giving the audience the impression that no one in the series is safe . According to producer Jane Featherstone , the idea to kill off a main character involved a female getting " her head set on fire " later in the series , but she decided " let 's

move the most dramatic thing you 've got to episode two and kill off the only actress the audience recognise [Faulkner was considered the only recognisable cast member when the series was introduced] and then you 've got them hooked . " Matthew Macfadyen stated that the shooting of the death scene , although not emotionally draining , was rather tough , and gruelling to perform . The part where Osbourne forces Flynn 's arm into the fryer was done with a rubber arm made to double Faulkner 's arm . Furthermore , the " oil " was in fact cold tea with food colour .

Director Bharat Nalluri wanted as little of the torture to be seen as possible , because he wanted the sequence to be more psychological to make it easier to frighten the audience , since they know the physicality of being burnt , whereas if Helen was shot , not as many would . Producer Stephen Garrett wanted to show a more realistic sense of violence , rather than a fantastical " cartoon violence " " in which blows to the head with iron bars leave small bruises rather than crushed skulls , gunshot wounds leave neat abrasions in conveniently fleshy parts of the anatomy rather than eviscerating their victims ; and fights that would hospitalise Mike Tyson are walked away from with barely a mark . "

= = Broadcast , reception and controversy = =

The episode was first broadcast on 20 May 2002 , during the 9 to 10 pm time slot . It achieved overnight viewing figures of 7 @. @ 8 million , with a 35 per cent audience share . Ratings were down over one million from the pilot episode the previous week . Regardless " Looking After Our Own " won its time slot ; the finale episode of ITV1 drama Helen West came second , with 4 @. @ 9 million viewers and a 21 per cent share . The final numbers posted on the Broadcasters ' Audience Research Board website went up slightly to 8 @. @ 1 million viewers , making the episode the ninth most viewed BBC One broadcast , and the nineteenth most viewed broadcast in total the week it aired .

The episode attracted controversy following the demise of Helen Flynn after her hand and head were forced into a deep fryer . The death scenes attracted over 250 complaints , 154 of them to the television watchdog , the Broadcasting Standards Commission , the highest number of complaints for a television programme in 2002 . In the wake of the complaints , BBC insiders had admitted that the scenes " clearly disturbed " some of the viewers , but also defended their decision to show the scene as it would show the audience " the kind of threat which might be faced by agents engaged in the fight against terrorism . " The Broadcasting Standards Commission stated that despite the shocking content ; " in the context was acceptable and important for the later narrative , " however the watchdog still criticised the BBC for failing to warn viewers of the violence to come . Garrett refuted this , stating : " Not only was there a clear warning before the programme began , but for anyone who missed that , the subject matter of the episode (a conspiracy to stir up inter @-@ racial violence perpetrated by a man who clearly beat his wife) was hardly the stuff of which chirpy little bucolic fantasies are made . "

Wolstencroft stated that after watching the episode with his friends , they both commended and criticised his work : " I got some angry phone calls from my friends the next day saying ' how could you , but well done , but how could you , but she was so nice , but how could you , but well done ' . " Oyelowo also responded to the controversy , believing that it came from a result of Faulkner 's male fans . Comedian Charlie Brooker however , commended the scene , as well as the series in general , stating in his Guardian column : " The moment her head was forced into the deep @-@ fat @-@ fryer , viewers reared on the formulaic , it 'll @-@ be @-@ alright @-@ in @-@ the @-@ end blandness of cookie @-@ cutter populist dramas like Casualty and Merseybeat sat up and blinked in disbelief : here was a major BBC drama series that actually had the nerve to confound expectation . " In a January 2010 poll , fans of the show voted Helen 's death as the " most shocking death scene " in the series , drawing 49 % of the votes .