

= On the Brink (Spooks) =

" On the Brink " is the fifth episode of series seven of the British espionage television series Spooks , and the 60th episode overall . It was originally broadcast on digital channel BBC Three on 10 November 2008 , and repeated on frontline channel BBC One on 17 November . The episode was written by Christian Spurrier , his first writing credit for the series , and directed by Edward Hall . Set during the credit crunch , in this episode , Section D chief Ros Myers (Hermione Norris) works undercover to stop Alexis Meynell (Paul Rhys) , a banker who is attempting to bankrupt the country . Later , Ros discovers Meynell 's motive .

The idea behind the episode came from the financial crisis of Northern Rock in late 2007 ; the producers wanted to set up a story about a bank collapse so severe it could result in an economic collapse . The episode was filmed in May 2008 , with a lot taking place in London 's Blue Fin building . About six million viewers saw the episode from both BBC One and Three broadcasts ; the BBC One ratings were steady despite heavy competition from I 'm a Celebrity , Get Me Out of Here ! on ITV1 . Critical reactions towards the episode were positive for including a change in plot .

= = Plot = =

Section D believes banker Alexis Meynell is trying to bankrupt the country . Sir Harry Pearce (Peter Firth) asks the Chancellor of the Exchequer Gillian Calderwood (Selina Cadell) to freeze Meynell 's assets , but is turned down due to lack of evidence . To get the evidence they need , Ros is sent undercover to the London Stock Exchange , where Meynell is targeting the bank Highland Life . After starting a rumour about the bank , he starts betting against it . When the chairman of Highland Life , Francis Debham (Simon Williams) , attempts to keep the bank afloat , Meynell doubles his position , bankrupting Highland Life . Ros uses the opportunity to swipe a memory card from Meynell 's mobile phone , containing his secure email account that could prove his guilt . However , they find nothing relevant . Lucas North (Richard Armitage) relays this to Ros and tells her to get closer to Meynell .

Ben Kaplan (Alex Lanipekun) breaks into Meynell 's office to learn of deals between Highland Life and Salma , a Russian bank that according to Elizabeta Starkova (Paloma Baeza) , has connections with the Russian mafia . It is also revealed Highland Life owes Salma £ 65 billion . It was this reason that earlier in the episode , Denham committed suicide . In order to get Meynell to trust her to become part of his plan , Ros sleeps with him . Later , Calderwood receives a call from Asa Darlek (Stephen Noonan) , Meynell 's associate from Salma , and threatens to either have the £ 65 billion paid back , or he will go public to inform the country the true extent of its debts . Ros presents a third option ; have Calderwood announce she will back Highland Life , while at the same time she will convince Meynell to bet against it . Such a plan would financially ruin Meynell . The next morning however , Darlek realises she is MI5 and threatens to kill her if Calderwood does not back down . Ros fights the gun off and Calderwood goes ahead with her statement . Later , Lucas releases Elizabeta as an asset . Meanwhile , Jo Portman (Miranda Raison) believes Boscard (Gus Gallagher) , her captor from the end of series six , is still alive after seeing several hallucinations of him . Later , Ros puts her mind at rest when she shows Jo photographic evidence Boscard is indeed dead , and it was Jo who killed him .

Running on a tip that Connie James (Gemma Jones) may have leaked the top secret Sugarhorse to the Russians due to her affair with Hugo Prince , one of only five people to know about the operation , Harry has officers search her home . Harry later finds a tape left by Prince in a Big Ben souvenir . Prince left a message that there is a leak in Sugarhorse , but Connie is not responsible . Later , Harry admits to Lucas that in " The Tip @-@ Off " he was lying about not knowing what Sugarhorse and asks him to recall anything during his interrogations . Lucas eventually recalls the word " Pilgrim " uttered several times . He did a background check and informs Harry that " Pilgrim " is the codename for Bernard Qualtrough , the same man apparently helping Harry find the mole .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Christian Spurrier , his first writing credit for the series . He joined the Spooks writing staff in January 2008 . Producer Katie Swinden wanted to base an episode on the economy , which at the time was facing a recession following the financial crisis of the British bank Northern Rock just months before . After trying a few different stories , the producers settled on a story about a bank collapse that is so severe it could result in an economic collapse . Spurrier did research on banking climate in the City of London in March 2008 , and realised the economy was going down , but also wanted to exaggerate the numbers for the episode . Ros was chosen to lead because the character had a background in business . In some of the original drafts of the episode , John Castle would return as Jocelyn Myers , Ros ' father , but later on the producers realised they did not need him . The producers also wanted to include some jeopardy in the climax , namely adding a gun to a head or a bomb , which created the scenes where Darlek threatened to kill Ros . Spurrier felt he had a " lot of juggling " in writing three separate storylines ; the main plot , the Sugarhorse subplot and Jo ; but did a lot of learning how to write a Spooks script as he wrote it .

The character of Alexis Meynell was inspired by Howard Brenton 's writing for " The Russian " in the fourth series . Spurrier wanted him to always suspect Ros , but at the same time be intrigued by her . The producers enjoyed casting Paul Rhys for the role as his performance was " fantastically scary . " In playing Asa Darlek , Stephen Noonan had to abandon his Liverpoolian accent and sport a Russian one , which Noonan worked hard on . Director Edward Hall provided the voice for Hugo Prince .

The episode was filmed throughout May 2008 . The helicopter shots of the city were filmed before principal photography of the seventh series started . Almost all scenes were shot during the day , including the scenes set during the night . The second day of the shoot for the episode took place at a house not belonging to the crew , used as the home of Connie James . The Blue Fin building in London provided several locations for the episode , mostly the stock exchange room . Real life traders were used to film scenes set in the floor . Swinden noted that the traders were " interesting guys " to work with , and told the producers the story was " very close to home . " The producers borrowed two expensive cars , more prominently an Aston Martin DB9 convertible , which were driven by Armitage and Norris . Armitage was asked to drive the car for only 10 yards , but the actor ended up getting carried away by wheel @-@ spinning and driving the car around a city block . Another car was a Bentley used for Denham 's suicide . Because it was on loan , Firth 's options on acting as if he was trying to save Denham was very limited without having to damage the car .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

The episode was originally broadcast on the digital channel BBC Three from 10 : 30 pm on Monday , 10 November 2008 , after the broadcast of the fourth episode on BBC One . The episode would later be repeated on BBC One the next week on 17 November 2008 during the 9 pm to 10 pm time slot , except in Northern Ireland , where it was withheld until 10 : 35 pm . According to overnight figures , the first look on BBC Three was seen by 691 @, @ 500 , a 6 @. @ 1 per cent share on its timeslot . The BBC One repeat was viewed by 4 @. @ 95 million , with a 20 @. @ 3 % audience share . Though it went against I 'm a Celebrity , Get Me Out of Here ! on ITV1 , which attracted over eight million viewers , Spooks ratings remained steady from the previous week . According to the final numbers from the Broadcasters ' Audience Research Board , the episode was viewed by 0 @. @ 79 million from BBC Three , and later 5 @. @ 21 million from BBC One , together adding up to 6 million .

The episode received positive reactions from television critics . Gerard O 'Donovan of The Daily Telegraph called it " another pertinent , brilliantly written episode " and reacted positively towards the episode 's " new kind of threat : the economic terrorist . " O 'Donovan also praised Paul Rhys ' acting for " giving his villainous all . " Mof Gimmers of TV Scoop praised the episode for having " a refreshing change from the usual theme of this series " , with Rhys ' performance and the sub plot of the Sugarhorse story arc adding " definitely one of the best stories so far in what has been an impressive series , if a little heavy on the Islamic terrorist side at times . With three episodes to go

the Sugarhorse story is building nicely to a crescendo . "