

= Series 8 , Episode 1 (Spooks) =

The series eight premiere is the first episode in the eighth series of the British espionage television series *Spooks* , and the 65th episode in total . It was originally broadcast on BBC One on 4 November 2009 . The episode was written by Ben Richards and directed by Alrick Riley . It continues from the seventh series finale , where Sir Harry Pearce (Peter Firth) is willingly captured by Viktor Sarkisian (Peter Sullivan) . In this episode , Harry is taken by Amish Mani (Ace Bhatti) , a former Indian intelligence officer , who wants Harry to reveal the location of a secret uranium shipment he knows the location of , in order to build nuclear weapons .

The episode marks the return of Nicola Walker as Ruth Evershed , who departed in the fifth series . Although there was media coverage on her return months before the broadcast of the episode , the producers were confident that only the " die hard " fans would be aware of this . It also marked the last appearance of Hugh Simon as Malcolm Wynn @-@ Jones . The episode was filmed in April 2009 and was partially shot on location in Deià , Majorca . The episode was seen by over six million viewers in the United Kingdom , a quarter of the television audience during its time slot . Critics praised Ruth 's return , though reactions towards the overall episode were mixed .

= = Plot = =

Following his abduction , Viktor Sarkisian sells Harry to Amish Mani in order to start a new life outside the FSB . However , Mani does not hold his end of the deal and kills Sarkisian and his team . His men then pose as members of extremist group , the Sacred Army for Righteous Vengeance , and supposedly execute him . When MI5 later intercepts the footage of his execution from the Internet , the team are divided between those who believe it is genuine , and those who believe it is faked . Malcolm later discovers that one of the " terrorists " said a curse word in Malayalam , the language of the Indian state of Kerala . Because there is no history with SARV from that particular region , the team question whether or not the terrorists are from SARV . Furthermore , when they find the house where the execution was filmed , forensics find several traces of blood , none of which match Harry 's DNA , indicating he is still alive .

Meanwhile in Polis , Cyprus , Ruth is living at peace with husband George (Daniel Rabib) and stepson Nico (Luke Tzortzis) . When she notices men are out to capture her , she and her family flee to London . Upon returning to the Grid , Ruth believes Harry was kidnapped because of a secret operation in which he , MI6 officer Stephen Hillier (Andrew Scarborough) , former CIA liaison Libby McCall (Paul Birchard) and Mani intend to vindicate the Iraq War by planting weapons @-@ grade uranium in Baghdad and later " discover " it , though Harry would later pull the operation and safeguard the shipment at a secret location only he and Ruth know ; those who kidnapped Harry wish to acquire the uranium to create nuclear weapons . Soon , while being transferred to a safe house , Ruth is captured and brought to Harry , while George and Nico are taken to the safe house unaware of what is happening . To save them , Ruth reveals the uranium is at a base in Norfolk , however Mani reveals he searched the base and it is no longer there , and hence orders George 's execution .

Ros Myers (Hermione Norris) confronts Hillier , but the latter is assassinated by McCall before he can divulge the location of the safe house . Malcolm finds the safe house and arrives there , offering himself in exchange for Nico . Meanwhile , Lucas North (Richard Armitage) persuaded McCall 's replacement , Sarah Caufield (Genevieve O 'Reilly) , to have a tracker implanted on McCall . The team follow him to the warehouse and arrest him . Witnessing this , Mani tells his man to kill Nico , though Malcolm is able to talk him out of it . As Mani prepares to kill Ruth , Lucas arrives in time to kill him . In the end , Malcolm wishes to retire , telling Harry he is " dog tired " ; Harry allows it .

= = Production = =

= = Writing and casting = = =

The episode marks the return of Ruth Evershed since her departure halfway through series five . Actress Nicola Walker left the series to raise her baby . When Walker was asked to return , she took " about half a second to say yes . " Upon returning , she noticed that the Grid set changed since her initial departure . Because there was media coverage reporting Walker 's return , the producers believed that the shock of her return would be hindered somewhat , but also believed only the " die hard " fans of the series would be aware of it . Ace Bhatti , who portrayed the episode 's primary antagonist Amish Mani , was cast because the producers were impressed by his highly convincing and relaxed acting style , which they felt would establish his role in the episode .

Paul Birchard was cast as Libby McCall because the producers believed he acted like a " dinosaur " from the former Bush administration . Child actor Luke Tzortzis was cast as Nico since they were impressed with his intelligence and the fact he is a " strong " actor ; children are often hard to work with in the series , but in Tzortzis ' case , he would ask the production crew several questions between takes in order to do understand what he is to do in the episode . It was also Tzortzis ' first performance as an actor , having no past experiences .

Ben Richards wrote the episode . The main focus for the first ten minutes of the episode was the debate of whether Harry would be dead or alive . The producers decided to tease the audience by showing Harry alive , but then show him apparently executed before the main title sequence , which would make them question whether or not he survived . The producers also wanted to reflect this to the characters , and divide them between if the execution was real or fake . This development was not originally included in the script , and filming was already completed at the time . However , according to director Alrick Riley , Richards was quickly able to write those new scenes " seamlessly " into the rest of the episode , which is usually a difficult task to perform . Richards also added hints in the script that Malcolm would be leaving by the end . The primary plot of the episode were hard to do , but producer Chris Fry noted that Richards was able to execute the plot very well . Elsewhere , the episode would show Ruth living happily in Cyprus and then be quickly drawn back into the world of MI5 back at a " dark " and " grim " London . The conversations between Malcolm and Ruth were all automated dialogue replacement . Following the writing , Walker and Peter Firth were highly looking forward to play their scenes together again .

= = = Filming and post @-@ production = = =

Filming took place throughout April 2009 . Before it began , production designer Anthony Ainsworth partly reconstructed the Grid set to give it more of a concrete , underground bunker , feel . Though more television series in the UK are adopting high @-@ definition cameras , the Spooks producers decided to continue using hand held standard @-@ definition ones , which were more compact and flexible ; the producers felt that using high @-@ definition cameras would sacrifice the filming style of the series . For instance , a hand held camera would allow the crew to film one long take following cast members through tight spaces , like an average London flat . High @-@ definition cameras would lose that ability .

Two days were dedicated towards shooting the pre @-@ title sequence . It was filmed on location at Hedsor House in Buckinghamshire . The helicopter scenes took place inside an actual helicopter taking flight with some cast members on board , which would make the sequence more genuine as opposed to having the cast members sitting inside next to a green screen . The fight sequences between Sarkisian 's and Mani 's men were orchestrated and performed by stunt coordinator Chrispin Leyfield and his stunt team , as there was very little time to train conventional actors . Director Alrick Riley wanted the fight sequences to be performed in the same style as in the Jason Bourne films . The abandoned warehouse used to hold Harry and Ruth were filmed in an abandoned leather factory near London Bridge . One of the meetings between Lucas and Sarah Caufield were originally intended to be shot on the London Eye , a location the producers had never used before . However , due to restrictions the filming crew felt they could not follow , it was shot in South Bank , opposite the Houses of Parliament , instead .

The scenes set in Cyprus were filmed on location in Deià , a coastal village in the island of Majorca

. Previously working on a film using the same location , producer Chris Fry chose the village because he felt it was the closest to the UK the crew can get to mimic the hot , Mediterranean feel of Cyprus . Because filming abroad tend to be costly for a BBC budget , the producers kept costs down as much as possible by using a limited crew with some local help . Much of the original script was to take place inside a house , but because there were no gaffers responsible for lighting , and that the weather was decent , filming took place primarily outside because of the natural sunlight . The filming crew spent four days at the end of April shooting in Majorca .

Jamie Pearson was responsible for editing the episode . The sequence where Lucas rescues Harry and Ruth near the end were made in slow motion , because the producers felt it would add to the tension . The incidental music was composed by Paul Leonard @-@ Morgan . The computer graphics on the episode were designed by Mark Doman . The producers ended up being receptive of both Morgan and Doman 's work , because of their ability to help interpret the story via the music , and computers , respectively .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

= = = Broadcast and ratings = = =

The episode was originally broadcast on BBC One , during the 9 pm to 10 pm time slot on Wednesday , 4 November 2009 , and later repeated on BBC Three at 12 : 15 am on 5 November . Upon its original broadcast , the episode received unofficial overnight viewing figures of 6 million and an audience share of 25 per cent . Spooks won its time slot against ITV1 's UEFA Champions League game , which attracted 5 @.@ 1 million viewers . According to the Broadcasters ' Audience Research Board , the episode received final figures of 6 @.@ 549 million viewers , placing Spooks the sixth most seen programme on BBC One the week it aired . The repeat on BBC Three attracted 602 @, @ 000 viewers . In addition , 446 @, @ 900 viewed the episode from BBC iPlayer , an Internet television service ; as a result the episode became the seventeenth best performed iPlayer broadcast of 2009 .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Gerard O 'Donovan of The Daily Telegraph lamented the eleven months that passed since the series seven cliffhanger , and stated that " for all its square @-@ jawed silliness and bonkers conspiracies , Spooks still delivers high @-@ class escapism at its slickest , most glamorous and entertaining . " Adam Sweeting of The Arts Desk felt that the episode 's plot was " mere background noise , " and that the series " is about hilariously artificial encounters between the characters , clumsily manufactured dramatic tension , and a denouement involving someone being prevented in the nick of time from detonating something / killing somebody / triggering a global economic collapse . " Andrea Mullaney of The Scotsman said that the plot was " all gibberish , " but cited the episode was really about the return of Ruth , a development Mullaney praised , stating Ruth " has been much missed since she was framed and sent into faked @-@ death exile . " Mullaney also praised the performance of the cast , including " Walker 's gulping hysteria when Ruth 's husband was executed , " which was " perfectly done , " and Malcolm 's " doughty attempts to comfort a small boy in danger were touching . "

Robert McLaughlin of Den of Geek believed that it is " equivalent to 24 , " " far more engaging than the last James Bond movie , " and that it is " good to see [Ruth Evershed] again , " seeing how " the re @-@ introduction of an old character will work with the new additions . " While also reviewing Channel 4 's The Family , Tom Sutcliffe of The Independent stated that family values were " relevant in Spooks too , " citing Ruth being " on the rack , " after having her see her husband killed and adoptive son threatened . Though Sutcliffe did not see the series with " great diligence recently , " he though the intelligence " is not the quality you would attribute to some of the strategies employed " in the episode . Vicky Frost of The Guardian was overly critical of the episode , criticising it for the

reunion between Ruth and Harry , which she stated " wasn 't quite the romantic occasion [I would have] liked , " and Malcolm 's method to convince a " trained killer not to shoot Nico . " Overall , Frost thought the episode was " medium " and rated it five out of ten on the " ridiculous @-@ o @-@ meter " .