

= Andy Harries =

Andrew D. M. Harries (born 7 April 1954) is a British television and film producer . After graduating from Hull University in the 1970s , Harries began his television career on the Granada Television current affairs series World in Action , before moving on to freelance work . He directed and produced programmes for Jonathan Ross 's Channel X production company in the 1980s , before being appointed controller of the newly created comedy department at Granada in 1992 . Over the next decade he produced and executive produced several critically acclaimed series , including The Royle Family , Cold Feet and The Grimleys .

In 2000 his portfolio was expanded to include Granada 's drama productions . He worked on the revivals of Prime Suspect and Cracker , as well as the BAFTA @-@ winning television play The Deal . In 2004 he began work producing The Queen , which was released to critical acclaim in 2006 . Though he had spent 14 years with Granada , part of the ITV network , he became increasingly dissatisfied with the management of ITV after its corporate merger in 2003 , and publicly criticized the network in 2006 . He announced he would not be renewing his contract and departed in 2007 to form Left Bank Pictures . Since 2007 , Left Bank has produced the television series Wallander , Strike Back , Married Single Other , the feature film The Damned United , and has several more television series in development .

In addition to the awards won by programmes he has worked on , Harries was given a Special Achievement award by BAFTA in 2007 for his contributions to British television . The same year , he was ranked in The Guardian 's Media Top 100 , and Broadcast 's Top 100 Producers . He is married to novelist and director Rebecca Frayn .

= = Family = =

Rebecca Frayn (Spouse) , Emmy Harries (Daughter) , Jackson (Jack) Harries , Finnegan (Finn) Harries , Eliza Frayn (Niece) , Shayne Finn Zigich (Nephew)

= = Early life and education = =

Andy Harries was born in Inverness , Scotland on 7 April 1954 and grew up in Peterborough , England , receiving primary education at West Town Primary School until 1961 , and secondary education at the public Oakham School . He grew up aspiring to be a war correspondent in Vietnam , or an investigative journalist ; his idols were Harold Evans , Jon Swain and John Pilger . He left college at the age of 17 with poor A Level results and became a trainee reporter on the Peterborough Evening Telegraph newspaper . His time on the newspaper raised his awareness of politics , and he sought to further his understanding of it by studying at university . He applied to various northern universities to break away from his southern middle @-@ class lifestyle , and was accepted at Hull University .

Harries stayed at Hull until he was 21 , though continued to work at the Evening Telegraph during holidays . At university he developed an interest in music journalism and found an outlet for this by writing reviews for Melody Maker .

= = Early career (1976 ? 1981) = =

After leaving Hull , Harries moved to London to work for the Southern News Service news agency , writing diary pieces for the Daily Mail and News of the World from 1975 to 1976 . On the advice of a friend , he applied for a position as a researcher for Granada Television in Manchester . He did not understand the appeal of television production , and as a result he was turned away at two interviews before being hired in 1976 .

Shortly after being hired he was taken aside by the news producer and asked to read the on @-@ air bulletin for the nightly broadcast . He read the news for three months until one night when he condensed a six @-@ minute bulletin into three minutes . He attributed this to stage fright , which

caused him to speak too fast . The rest of the production crew were not ready to move on to the next news items , leaving Harries standing in silence for several minutes . Harries recalled in a 2007 interview that Steve Morrison , the producer of the bulletin , called him into his office and berated him , telling him he did not deserve to be on television and that he would no longer be reading the news . Morrison 's remarks angered Harries to such a point that he assaulted the man . Aware that he was going to lose his job , he contacted a Granada colleague who got him a new job at Granada 's London centre , which he took up at the age of 23 .

Pursuing his interest in investigative journalism , Harries worked as a researcher on the current affairs programme World in Action , where he met Paul Greengrass . While Greengrass achieved success in exposing alleged corruption involving Manchester United F.C. chairman Louis Edwards , Harries investigated irregularities in the British Singles Chart . Greengrass 's investigation was a success , though Harries admits his own programme " didn 't make a blind bit of difference " .

= = Freelance and Channel X (1981 ? 1992) = =

In 1981 , Harries left Granada and moved into freelance producing and directing . He directed the documentary series Africa in 1984 before beginning a collaboration with Paul Yule , with whom he made four films in Peru between 1985 and 1989 ? Martin Chambi and the Heirs of the Incas , Our God the Condor , Iquitos , and Mario Vargas Llosa : The Novelist Who Would Be President ? and working on editions of The South Bank Show and Arena . While directing a corporate video for BT he met Jonathan Ross , who was his assistant for the day . Ross invited Harries to direct a pilot for a chat show he and Alan Marke had developed that was based on Late Night with David Letterman . The pilot was a success and Ross found a television audience with The Last Resort with Jonathan Ross , which first aired in 1988 .

Harries formed a production company called Sleeping Partners with Greengrass in the latter part of the decade , which produced Ross 's The Incredibly Strange Film Show and comedian Lenny Henry 's Lenny Live and Unleashed film . The latter was directed by Harries and was edited together from a number of performances by Henry at the Hackney Empire in 1989 . The Guardian 's film critic called the direction " unobtrusive " .

The 1990s began with more direction and production for Ross and Marke 's Channel X production company ; in 1991 he made the documentary Viva Elvis ! and executive produced Middlemarch Films ' The Ghosts of Oxford Street , a musical about Oxford Street 's history . The script for Ghosts was written by Harries ' wife , Rebecca Frayn . The same year , he developed a script with Peter Morgan called Bhundu Beat , a film described by Variety as " a bizarre remake of A Hard Day 's Night featuring the briefly fashionable Zimbabwean band the Bhundu Boys and Brit comic Lenny Henry " . With a development budget of £ 2 @, @ 000 , Harries sent Morgan on a research trip to Zimbabwe , taking a circuitous route that lasted for three days . Bhundu Beat was never made .

= = Second Granada career (1992 ? 2007) = =

= = = Controller of Comedy = = =

At the 1991 Edinburgh Festival Fringe , Harries personally bought the television rights to An Evening with Gary Lineker , a comedy play written by Arthur Smith and Chris England based around a group of England fans at the 1990 FIFA World Cup . Smith bet Harries £ 100 that he would not be able to get the adaptation on television before the next World Cup . Harries tried selling Smith and England 's screenplay to the BBC , Channel 4 , LWT , Yorkshire Television and Central Independent Television to no avail . The BBC offered to produce it as a studio play but Harries wanted a full @-@ length film to distinguish it from the original play , which was by then playing at London 's West End . He was reluctant to offer the script to Granada because of his previous experience with the company . However , in 1992 he was accepted the position of controller of comedy at Granada and An Evening with Gary Lineker was made . Harries was disappointed that pressure from Granada 's

management had forced him to replace so many of the original stage cast ; England was replaced by Paul Merton , leaving Caroline Quentin as the only original actor . The Edinburgh Fringe played an important role in Harries ' early commissions at Granada ; he was not fond of traditional styles of comedy and was always looking for alternative comedians . These included Caroline Aherne , Steve Coogan and John Thomson (though Coogan " got away " from him after the BBC offered to produce his Alan Partridge shows) . After the failure of Bhundu Beat , Harries commissioned Peter Morgan to write " Mickey Love " in 1993 , one of a series of short comedy films for the Rik Mayall series Rik Mayall Presents .

In 1994 , after turning down an offer for " the number three position " at Channel 4 and extending his contract with Granada to become controller of entertainment and comedy , he commissioned The Mrs Merton Show from Aherne . In negotiating a second series with the BBC a few years later , another series from Aherne was included ; The Royle Family , a sitcom featuring a working @-@ class northern family , aired on BBC One from 1998 to 2000 . The first two episodes were filmed with a studio audience , something Harries did not approve of . He scrapped these episodes and had them refilmed without a laugh track . The Royle Family returned for a one @-@ off special in 2006 , an achievement Harries described as giving him no greater pleasure . A spin @-@ off of The Mrs Merton Show was commissioned by Harries from Aherne in 1999 ; Mrs Merton and Malcolm was based around Mrs Merton and her son Malcolm , played by Craig Cash . The programme was Aherne 's first critical failure , which Harries blamed on the BBC One schedulers .

In 1995 he commissioned a comedy drama on spec from Mike Bullen , a BBC radio producer and first @-@ time writer . Like An Evening with Gary Lineker , The Perfect Match was based around football and received respectable reviews . Harries was interested in producing more comedy dramas , based on the success of American programmes like Thirtysomething , and assigned Granada producer Christine Langan to work with Bullen . Langan and Bullen developed Cold Feet , which was broadcast in 1997 and was commissioned for a full series in 1998 . It won the British Academy Television Award for Best Drama Series in 2002 , which Harries collected with Bullen and Spencer Campbell . Harries executive produced two more series of Bullen 's ; Life Begins (2004 ? 2006) and All About George (2005) .

His first panel show produced came in 1999 with Mel and Sue 's Casting Couch . The show was Mel and Sue 's first programme made for ITV following the success of Light Lunch for Channel 4 . Casting Couch had low viewing figures and was not recommissioned . It was one of several comedies commissioned by Harries in 1999 that were produced by Justin Judd . Others included Dark Ages and My Wonderful Life . Judd and Harries began developing Dark Ages ? a sitcom set at the turn of the 2nd millennium ? in 1997 but could not make it work with the writer at the time . They proposed it to Red Dwarf writer Rob Grant , who liked the idea , and wrote all six episodes . Dark Ages aired nightly during the Christmas 1999 period . A second series was proposed ? Harries said it would " hit its stride " then ? but ITV did not recommission it . My Wonderful Life was another ratings disaster . Harries blamed ITV Network Centre and publicly criticised the network , courting the ire of its director of channels David Liddiment .

= = = Drama and film brief = = =

In September 2000 , Harries ' portfolio was significantly expanded when he was appointed Granada 's controller of drama , following the resignations of Sue Hogg and Simon Lewis . 2002 commissions included Doctor Zhivago and Henry VIII . ITV would provide only £ 750 @,@ 000 for each hour of the serials , so Harries approached US broadcaster WGBH to make up the remaining funds . Following the merging of Granada Films with Granada Productions in 2002 , Harries ' brief was expanded to include films .

2003 was a significant year for Harries ' drama output ; Peter Morgan approached Granada with an idea for a drama documenting the conjectured pact between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown before the Labour Party leadership election , 1994 . Granada 's chief executive Charles Allen was not keen on producing The Deal but Harries and John Whiston persuaded him otherwise . ITV initially agreed to show it but pulled out before filming began . Harries offered it to Channel 4 , who took it within 24

hours . The Deal was a critical success and won the British Academy Television Award for Best Single Drama . That same year Harries brought back the drama serial Prime Suspect , which had not been produced since the star Helen Mirren quit in 1995 . Mirren agreed to return for Prime Suspect : The Last Witness only if it was " about something " . Two years later it returned for the seventh and final serial , entitled The Final Act , in which Jane Tennison , Mirren 's character , confronts her alcoholism in a sub @-@ plot . Lynda La Plante , who created Prime Suspect in 1989 , was critical of the decision to " make [Tennison] a drunk " , though Harries rebutted , saying , " Lynda was the one who started Jane Tennison drinking heavily ? it 's not out of character " . In 2004 , Harries was ranked number eleven on a list of the most powerful figures in British TV drama , compiled by industry experts for the Radio Times .

During the read @-@ thoughts for The Last Witness Harries watched other actors and production staff react to Mirren as if she was " like the Queen " . Already in pre @-@ production was a follow @-@ up to The Deal that would focus on the royal family in the week following the death of Diana , Princess of Wales . Peter Morgan was due to return as the writer , Stephen Frears was signed on as director and Harries suggested to Mirren that she play the Queen . Mirren agreed and the film , co @-@ produced by Granada and Pathé , was released in September 2006 . Among the numerous awards for which it was nominated were the BAFTA Award for Best Film and the Academy Award for Best Picture (the former it won) . Despite the success of the film , Harries once again expressed disappointment with ITV for not giving enough backing . In an interview the month before The Queen was released he criticised the management of ITV for being deeply complacent and arrogant , and expressed disappointment that drama on the channel was not as good as it once was . At the end of the year he announced that he would not be renewing his contract with the company . Entertainment industry commentators suggested that he would set up his own independent production company .

= = Left Bank Pictures (2007 ? present) = =

Rumours that he would start his own company , possibly with Caroline Aherne , had circulated since the 1990s . The predictions came to fruition in May 2007 when Harries announced the formation of Left Bank Pictures , which BBC Worldwide immediately took a 25 % share in . Left Bank was the first British production house to receive investment from BBC Worldwide , and there was some concern that there was a conflict of interest for the publicly funded BBC ; in The Guardian , Steve Hewlett wrote that the deal was a " back @-@ door way of getting around the rules preventing the BBC producing programmes for its British rivals " . Hewlett also commented that the investment might limit Left Bank 's future prospects , as it was " tied to " the BBC . At Left Bank , Harries proposed to produce two features films per year , as well as several television series . The company 's first television commission is Wallander , a three @-@ part series based on Henning Mankell 's Kurt Wallander novels . The series was made in association with Swedish company Yellow Bird for the BBC . It was broadcast in November and December 2008 , and a second series followed in 2010 .

In 2009 , Left Bank 's first feature film , The Damned United (adapted by Peter Morgan from the David Peace novel) was released . Also broadcast in 2009 was the comedy series School of Comedy and the crime drama Father & Son . Comedy drama series Married Single Other was filmed for ITV and was broadcast in 2010 . Harries executive produced the third part of Peter Morgan 's " Blair trilogy " , The Special Relationship , for HBO Films and BBC Films . It was first broadcast on the HBO networks in the United States in May 2010 .

On 23 August 2012 , Sony Pictures Television acquired a majority stake in Left Bank .

= = Acclaim = =

Left Bank 's inception lead to Harries being listed in The Guardian 's Media Top 100 , making his entry at number 66 . At the end of the year he was listed in Broadcast 's Top 100 Producers , being described as " one of the UK 's most outstanding drama producers " . In May 2007 , the British

Academy of Film and Television Arts awarded him the Special Award in Honour of Alan Clarke . In December 2009 , the Radio Times ranked him at number six in their " Faces of 2010 " feature , a compilation of " the biggest names and the coming stars in the year ahead " . In Broadcast 's Top 100 for 2010 , Harries was ranked at number two in the executive producers category . He received an Academy Award nomination as producer of The Queen which saw a run of six Academy Award nominations with Helen Mirren memorably winning Best Actress .

The Royal Television Society conferred a Fellowship on Harries on 23 May 2011 for outstanding contributions to the broadcasting industry .

= = Personal life = =

Harries has been married to writer and director Rebecca Frayn since July 1992 . The couple have three children ; Jack and Finn (identical twins) born in 1993 , and Emmy Lou . Emmy Lou was conceived through in vitro fertilisation (IVF) , an experience Harries worked into the storyline of Cold Feet and Frayn used as the basis for her novel One Life . Emmy Lou also had a cameo in The Queen as the little girl who hands flowers to the Queen outside Buckingham Palace . In 2008 , Jack appeared in the Channel 4 Comedy Lab pilot School of Comedy , and the subsequent E4 series , which was produced by Left Bank . Finn appears in a School of Comedy sketch entitled " Continuity Errors " , as a clone of Jack 's character . Jack and Finn also run a successful YouTube channel , JacksGap , which has attracted over 4 million subscribers . (3 @.@ 8 million subscribers , November 2014)

After producing a South Bank Show profile and The Ghosts of Oxford Street , Harries remained good friends with Malcolm McLaren , and spoke at his funeral in April 2010 .

= = Filmography = =