

# Russell Tovey

**Russell George Tovey** (born 14 November 1981)<sup>[1]</sup> is an English actor.<sup>[2]</sup> He is known for playing the role of werewolf George Sands in the BBC's supernatural drama *Being Human*,<sup>[3]</sup> Rudge in both the stage and film versions of *The History Boys*, Steve in the BBC Three sitcom *Him & Her*, Kevin Matheson in the HBO original series *Looking* and its subsequent series finale television film *Looking: The Movie*, Titanic midshipman Alonso Frame in the *Doctor Who* episode "Voyage of the Damned" (a role he reprised in a cameo in "The End of Time: Part Two") and as Henry Knight in BBC TV series *Sherlock*. He has also starred as Harry Doyle in the drama-thriller series *Quantico* on the ABC network.<sup>[4]</sup>

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**Born** 14 November 1981  
Billericay, Essex,  
England

**Occupation** Actor

**Years active** 1994–present

**Partner(s)** Steve Brockman  
(2016–2018, 2019–  
present)

## Early life

Tovey was born and raised in Billericay, Essex.<sup>[5][6]</sup> He is the younger of two children of Carole Haynes (formerly Webb) and George Tovey, who run a Romford-based coach service taking passengers from Essex to Gatwick Airport. Tovey has an older brother, Daniel.<sup>[7]</sup> He attended Harold Court School in Harold Wood and Shenfield High School. As a boy Tovey said, he "was an avid collector of various things and prone to participating in fads."<sup>[6]</sup>

His parents supported his efforts, taking him to archaeological digs and museums, buying him a metal detector and going to conventions for mineralogists.<sup>[6]</sup> For a time he wanted to be a history teacher,<sup>[6]</sup> but after seeing *Dead Poets Society*, *The Goonies*, and *Stand By Me* he decided to be an actor.<sup>[6]</sup> For a time during his teens he worked as a kitchen assistant in Billericay's King's Head pub.

# Career

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## Acting

Tovey began his career as a child actor. He joined a local drama club and garnered the attention of a talent agent.<sup>[5]</sup> He worked from the age of 11 and missed so much school that his father suggested he should cut back, but his mother persuaded his father to let their son continue.<sup>[6]</sup> His TV career started in 1994, when he was cast in *Mud*, a children's series broadcast on CBBC.<sup>[5]</sup>

He left secondary school at the age of 16 and started a BTEC in performing arts at Barking College. He was expelled after a year for refusing a role in the school play in favour of a paying acting job. He acted in plays in Chichester under the direction of Debra Gillett, wife of Patrick Marber.<sup>[5]</sup> He met Marber through Gillett, and Marber cast him in the play *Howard Katz* at the National Theatre.<sup>[5]</sup> He also performed in *His Girl Friday* and *His Dark Materials* there.<sup>[5]</sup>

In 2004 he took the role of Rudge in Alan Bennett's play *The History Boys* at the Royal National Theatre as well as touring to Broadway, Sydney, Wellington and Hong Kong and playing the role in the radio and film adaptations.<sup>[8][9][10][11]</sup> He originally auditioned for the role of Crowther but agreed to act the part of Rudge after Bennett promised to beef up the role.<sup>[6]</sup> Insecure because he had not attended drama school as many of his peers had, he enrolled in numerous workshops and readings offered by the National Theatre.<sup>[6]</sup>

In spring 2007 Tovey had a recurring role in BBC Three comedy *Rob Brydon's Annually Retentive*, playing Rob's producer, Ben.<sup>[6]</sup> He played Midshipman Alonso Frame, in 2007 *Doctor Who* Christmas Special "Voyage of the Damned".<sup>[6]</sup> Russell T. Davies, the show's executive producer and lead writer, had suggested Tovey as a future replacement for David Tennant,<sup>[12]</sup> before it was announced that the Eleventh Doctor would be played by Matt Smith. Tovey reprised his role as Midshipman Alonso Frame in the 2009-10 *Doctor Who* Christmas special, "The End of Time".

Tovey played werewolf George Sands, one of three supernatural housemates in the drama *Being Human*.<sup>[13]</sup> The pilot premiered on BBC Three on 18 February 2008.<sup>[14]</sup> A six-part series was commissioned with the first episode broadcast on 25 January 2009.<sup>[15]</sup> Tovey left the regular cast of the show at the start of the fourth season on 5 February 2012.<sup>[16]</sup> In November 2012 AudioGO Ltd released an audiobook version of Mark Michalowski's *Being Human* tie-in novel *Chasers*, which is narrated by Tovey.<sup>[17]</sup>

In a 2008 interview in *Attitude* Tovey expressed his desire to play darker roles: "really dark, fucked-up characters... like drag queens, rent boys, someone who has been abused, a rapist", though noting that he does not consider himself "fucked-up".<sup>[18]</sup>

In March 2009 the actor played a leading role in *A Miracle* at the Royal Court Theatre as Gary Trudgill, a British soldier returning to Norfolk from abroad.<sup>[19][20]</sup> On 8 March 2009 he presented the Award for Best Actress to Margaret Tyzack for her performance in *The Chalk Garden* at the Laurence Olivier Awards in Grosvenor House.<sup>[21][22]</sup>

In 2009 Tovey worked on the film *Huge*<sup>[23]</sup> and starred in two television pilots: *Young, Unemployed and Lazy* (a BBC Three sitcom),<sup>[24]</sup> renamed to *Him & Her*<sup>[25]</sup> in 2010, and *The Increasingly Poor Decisions of Todd Margaret* (part of *Comedy Showcase*), a Channel 4 comedy with Spike Jonze and Will Arnett, written by David Cross and Shaun Pye.<sup>[26][27]</sup>

He also appeared in three shorts: *Drop*<sup>[28]</sup> (which premièred at the 2009 Rushes Soho Shorts Film Festival), *Roar*, *Roar* premiered at the Palm Springs Film Festival on 24 June 2009.<sup>[29]</sup>

In 2011, he became the voice over/narrator for the BBC Three show *Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents* and its spinoffs, which ran for five series up to July 2015. Tovey has narrated every episode aired.

Tovey played Budgie, one of Gavin's friends, in the BBC comedy-drama *Gavin & Stacey*. In January 2012, he appeared in the British crime drama *Sherlock*, playing Henry Knight in the episode "The Hounds of Baskerville". He had a lead role in the ITV sitcom *The Job Lot* which aired in 2013 and is set in a busy unemployment bureau in the West Midlands.<sup>[30]</sup>

In 2013, Tovey signed on to appear in the American television series *Looking*, about a group of gay friends living in San Francisco.<sup>[31]</sup> Its 8-episode first season broadcast on HBO in 2014. Tovey was promoted to series regular for the second season.<sup>[32]</sup>

In 2015, Tovey starred in *Banished*, a historical drama series written by Jimmy McGovern about a group of British convicts in Australia in the 18th century.<sup>[33]</sup>

In 2015 Tovey made his first of many live appearances for arts and entertainment company *Pin Drop Studio*, reading a short story to an audience followed by an interview by Simon Oldfield.

In 2016 Tovey was cast in the ABC network thriller drama *Quantico* for the series regular role of Harry Doyle.<sup>[4]</sup>

In September 2017 it was revealed that Tovey would be voicing Ray Terrill / The Ray, a reporter who gains light-based powers after being exposed to a genetic light bomb, in the animated web series *Freedom Fighters: The Ray* on CW Seed. Tovey appeared in "Crisis on Earth-X", the Arrowverse crossover event between *Supergirl*, *Arrow*, *The Flash* and *Legends of Tomorrow*.<sup>[34][35]</sup>

In April 2017 Tovey returned to the Royal National Theatre to appear in Marianne Elliot's revival of the Tony Kushner play *Angels in America*, opposite Andrew Garfield and Nathan Lane.

In 2019 Tovey co-starred in an ensemble cast on the show *Years and Years*, and appeared with Helen Mirren and Ian McKellen in the drama film *The Good Liar*.<sup>[36]</sup>

## Writing

Tovey is also an author, playwright and screenwriter. He has written three plays (all unperformed as of August 2010), and one of his short stories was published in women's magazine *Company*.<sup>[7]</sup> He also wrote a short film, *Victor* and as of August 2010 was seeking funding to produce the picture.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Personal life

Tovey is openly gay. During his adolescent years, Tovey's sexual orientation caused friction within his family.<sup>[18]</sup> Although he says he came out to himself when he was 15 or 16, he came out to his parents when he was 18. Tovey and his father subsequently had a serious disagreement, with his father suggesting that, had he known earlier, he would have asked Tovey to take hormones or undergo some other medical treatment to "fix the problem". Tovey says his parents were deeply concerned about the possibility he might contract HIV, which might have contributed to the disagreement. The birth of Tovey's nephew Nathan in October 2004 helped them mend their relationship.<sup>[6]</sup>

In 2015, Tovey was the subject of public criticism from the LGBT+ press regarding comments he made about effeminate gay men.<sup>[37]</sup> In his interview with Tom Lamont of *The Observer*, the actor stated that his schooling made him feel as though he "had to toughen up", going on to say "If I'd have been able to relax, prance around and sing in the street, I might be a different person now."<sup>[38]</sup> Much

of the criticism centred on what was perceived to be a passive criticism of effeminate gay men, with Tovey saying that "I thank my dad for that, for not allowing me to go down the path."<sup>[38]</sup> Tovey later apologised for the remarks and suggested they did not reflect his views.<sup>[37]</sup>

Tovey was reported to be dating rugby coach Steve Brockman from early 2016. They became engaged in February 2018 but separated in June of the same year. They reconciled in 2019.<sup>[39]</sup>

# Filmography

## Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2001	<i><u>The Emperor's New Clothes</u></i>	Recruit	
2006	<i><u>The History Boys</u></i>	Peter Rudge	
2009	<i><u>In Passing</u></i>	Henry Travers	Short film
2012	<i><u>Grabbers</u></i>	Dr. Adam Smith	
2012	<i><u>The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists</u></i>	The Albino Pirate	Voice
2012	<i><u>Tower Block</u></i>	Paul	
2014	<i><u>Effie Gray</u></i>	George	
2014	<i><u>Muppets Most Wanted</u></i>	Delivery Man	
2014	<i><u>Pride</u></i>	Tim	
2014	<i><u>Moomins on the Riviera</u></i>	<u>Moomintroll</u>	Voice
2015	<i><u>Stick Man</u></i>	Dog	Voice
2015	<i><u>The Lady in the Van</u></i>	Young Man with Earring	
2016	<i><u>The Pass</u></i>	Jason	
2016	<i><u>Mindhorn</u></i>	Paul Melly	
2017	<i><u>The Hippopotamus</u></i>	Rupert Keynes	
2019	<i><u>The Good Liar</u></i>	Steven	
TBA	<i><u>Night of the Lotus</u></i>	Charlie	In post-production

## Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1994	<i><u>Mud</u></i>	Bill Bailey	All episodes
1996	<i><u>Spywatch</u></i>	Dennis Sealey	All episodes
1998	<i><u>The Mrs Bradley Mysteries</u></i>	Stable Boy	Episode: " <u>Speedy Death</u> "
2000	<i><u>Hope and Glory</u></i>	Gary Bailey	Episode <u>2.2</u>
2001	<i><u>Agatha Christie's Poirot</u></i>	Lionel Marshall	Episode: " <u>Evil Under the Sun</u> "
	<i><u>The Bill</u></i>	Tyro Shaw	2 episodes
	<i><u>Holby City</u></i>	Jerome Hibbert	Episode: " <u>Borrowed Time</u> "
2002	<i><u>Ultimate Force</u></i>	Weasel	Episode: " <u>The Killing House</u> "
	<i><u>Silent Witness</u></i>	Josh Palmer	Episode: " <u>Kith and Kill</u> " (2 parts)
	<i><u>The Bill</u></i>	Kieran Elcott	Episode: "068"
2003	<i><u>William and Mary</u></i>	Aaron Patterson	Episode 4
	<i><u>Servants</u></i>	John Walters	Episode 4
2005	<i><u>Holby City</u></i>	Adam Spengler	Episode: " <u>Soft Centred</u> "
	<i><u>Messiah IV: The Harrowing</u></i>	Robbie McManus	3 episodes
	<i><u>My Family and Other Animals</u></i>	Leslie Durrell	Television film
2007–2009	<i><u>Gavin &amp; Stacey</u></i>	Budgie	4 episodes
2007	<i><u>Rob Brydon's Annually Retentive</u></i>	Ben	5 episodes
	<i><u>Doctor Who</u></i>	<u>Midshipman</u> Alonso Frame	Episode: " <u>Voyage of the Damned</u> "
2008–2012	<i><u>Being Human</u></i>	<u>George Sands</u>	24 episodes
2008	<i><u>Ashes to Ashes</u></i>	Marcus Johnstone	Episode: " <u>Episode 5</u> "
	<i><u>Mutual Friends</u></i>	Estate Agent	Episode 5
	<i><u>Little Dorrit</u></i>	John Chivery	10 episodes
2009	<i><u>Agatha Christie's Marple</u></i>	<u>PC Terence Reed</u>	Episode: " <u>Murder is Easy</u> "
	<i><u>The Increasingly Poor Decisions of Todd Margaret</u></i>	Dave Mountford	Pilot
2010	<i><u>Doctor Who</u></i>	<u>Midshipman</u> Alonso Frame	Episode: " <u>The End of Time</u> "
2010–2013	<i><u>Him &amp; Her</u></i>	Steve Marshall	25 episodes
2010–2011	<i><u>Doctor Who Confidential</u></i>	Narrator	14 episodes
2011–2015	<i><u>Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents</u></i>	Narrator	
2012	<i><u>Sherlock</u></i>	Henry Knight	Episode: " <u>The Hounds of Baskerville</u> "
2013	<i><u>Talking to the Dead</u></i>	DS Huw Brydon	2 episodes
	<i><u>The Dog Rescuers</u></i>	Narrator	10 episodes

Year	Title	Role	Notes
	<i><u>What Remains</u></i>	Michael Jenson	4 episodes
2013–2015	<i><u>The Job Lot</u></i>	Karl Lyndhurst	18 episodes
2014–2015	<i><u>Looking</u></i>	Kevin Matheson	15 episodes
2015	<i><u>Drunk History</u></i>	<u>King Charles II</u>	Episode 6
	<i><u>Banished</u></i>	James Freeman	7 episodes
2016	<i><u>Looking: The Movie</u></i>	Kevin Matheson	Television film
	<i><u>The Comic Strip Presents... Red Top</u></i>	Andy Coulson	Television film
	<i><u>The Night Manager</u></i>	Simon Ogilvey	Episode 1
2016–2018	<i><u>Quantico</u></i>	Harry Doyle	Series regular
2018	<i><u>Shane the Chef</u></i>	Shane	All episodes
2017	<i><u>Queers: More Anger</u></i>	Phil	BBC4 TV monologue
	<i><u>The Flash</u></i>	<u>Ray Terrill / The Ray</u>	Episode: " <u>Crisis on Earth-X, Part 3</u> "
	<i><u>Legends of Tomorrow</u></i>		Episode: " <u>Crisis on Earth-X, Part 4</u> "
2019	<i><u>The Great Celebrity Bake Off for SU2C</u></i>	Himself	Channel 4's Great British Bake Off Special for Stand Up To Cancer – Series 2, Episode 2
2019	<i><u>Years and Years</u></i>	Daniel Lyons	Main role (4 episodes) Nominated — <u>Critics' Choice Television Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Movie/Miniseries</u>
2019	<i><u>Supergirl</u></i>	<u>Ray Terrill / The Ray</u>	Uncredited; Episode: " <u>Crisis on Infinite Earths, Part 1</u> "
2020	<i><u>Flesh and Blood</u></i>	Jake	4 episodes

Web

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2017–2018	<i><u>Freedom Fighters: The Ray</u></i>	<u>Ray Terrill / The Ray</u>	Animated series

Other credits

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Theatre

Year	Title	Role	Theatre	Location
2000	<i>The Recruiting Officer</i>		<u>Chichester Festival Theatre</u>	<u>Chichester</u>
2001	<i>Howard Katz</i>		Cottesloe Theatre, <u>Royal National Theatre</u>	London <sup>[40]</sup>
2002	<i>Plasticine</i>	Spira / Boy Having Sex	<u>Royal Court Theatre</u>	London <sup>[41]</sup>
2003	<i>Henry V</i>	Boy	Olivier Theatre, Royal National Theatre	London <sup>[42]</sup>
2003	<i>His Girl Friday</i>	Ralph Sweeney	Olivier Theatre, Royal National Theatre	London <sup>[43]</sup>
2003–2004	<i>His Dark Materials</i>	Roger Parslow	Olivier Theatre, Royal National Theatre	London <sup>[44]</sup>
2004–2006	<i>The History Boys</i>	Peter Rudge	Lyttleton Theatre, Royal National Theatre	London
2005	<i>The Laramie Project</i>	Gil Engen	Sound Theatre	London
2005–2006	<i>Hergé's Adventures of Tintin</i>	<u>Tintin</u>	<u>Barbican Arts Centre</u>	London <sup>[45]</sup>
2006	<i>The History Boys</i>	Peter Rudge	Lyric Theatre, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts	Hong Kong
			St James	<u>Wellington</u>
			Sydney Theatre	Sydney
			<u>Broadhurst Theatre</u> , Broadway	New York
2007	<i>A Respectable Wedding</i>	The Bridegroom	<u>Young Vic</u>	London <sup>[46]</sup>
2008	<i>The Sea</i>	Billy Hallercut	<u>Theatre Royal Haymarket</u>	London <sup>[47]</sup>
2009	<i>A Miracle</i>	Gary Trudgill	<u>Royal Court Theatre</u>	London <sup>[20]</sup>
2012	<i>Sex With a Stranger</i>	Adam	<u>Trafalgar Studios</u>	London
2014	<i>The Pass</i>	Jason	<u>Royal Court Theatre</u>	London
2015	<i>A View from the Bridge</i>	Rodolpho	<u>Lyceum Theatre</u>	New York <sup>[48]</sup>
2017	<i>Angels in America</i>	Joe Pitt	Lyttelton Theatre, <u>Royal National Theatre</u>	London
2018	<i>The Collection</i>	Bill	<u>Harold Pinter Theatre</u>	London
2020	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf</i>	Nick	<u>Booth Theatre</u> , Broadway	New York

Radio and readings

Year	Title	Role
2006	<i>The History Boys</i>	Peter Rudge
2007	<i>Rubbish</i>	Dan
2009	<i>The Government Inspector</i>	Gendarme
2009	<i>The Admirable Crichton</i> <sup>[49]</sup>	Crichton
2009	<i>Newfangle</i> <sup>[50]</sup>	Newfangle
2009	<i>Last Night, Another Soldier</i> <sup>[51]</sup>	Briggsy
2009	<i>The Richest Man In Britain</i> <sup>[52]</sup>	Dom
2011	<i>Countrysides</i>	Simon

Tovey has read several books for audio, notably a 2017 performance of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. He is the narrator for the 20th anniversary edition audiobook of Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*, released in 2015. Also, since 2016, he is the reader for audiobooks of Liz Pichon's *Tom Gates* book series, starting from book 10, *Super Good Skills (Almost...)*, taking over from Rupert Grint.

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## External links

- [Russell Tovey \(https://www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/4ce2bb1a54330\)](https://www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/4ce2bb1a54330) at the [British Film Institute](#)
- [Russell Tovey \(https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0869871/\)](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0869871/) on [IMDb](#)
- [Russell Tovey \(https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/412506\)](https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/412506) at the [Internet Broadway Database](#)
- [Russell Tovey \(https://twitter.com/russelltovey\)](https://twitter.com/russelltovey) on [Twitter](#)
- [Interview \(https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/arts/television/freedom-fighters-the-ray-russell-tovey-cw-seed.html\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/arts/television/freedom-fighters-the-ray-russell-tovey-cw-seed.html) with *The New York Times*

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