

MASTERPIECE

MASTERPIECE

Outwit the opposition—or get run over.

Roadkill

Hugh Laurie stars in a political thriller

scripted by David Hare

on MASTERPIECE

Sundays, November 1-22, 2020 on PBS

Hugh Laurie (*House*, *Veep*) stars as a scheming politician in *Roadkill*, a taut drama scripted by two-time Academy Award® nominee David Hare (*The Hours*, *The Reader*), airing on MASTERPIECE in four action-packed episodes, Sundays, November 1-22, 2020 at 9/8c on PBS.

In 2011 and 2014, Hare had MASTERPIECE viewers on the edge of their seats with his *Worricker Trilogy* about a spy on the run. Now he's back with another plot that is just as complex, thought-provoking and enlivened with satirical touches.

Laurie plays Peter Laurence, a self-made former furniture salesman who has risen to the heights of the British government thanks to a natural gift for populism, and a forceful nature, all while excelling at walking the tightrope of Machiavellian party politics. As *Roadkill* opens, he has just won a libel suit against reporter Charmian Pepper (played by Sarah Greene, *Normal People*), who accused him of accepting payments to help privatize the National Health Service.

Saved from being “roadkill” by his legal team, Peter stays in the good graces of the devious prime minister Dawn Ellison (Helen McCrory, *Peaky Blinders*), who fears his popularity but is aware of the abundant skeletons, both public and private, in his closet.

Roadkill's storyline involves the rattling of some of those skeletons and Peter's desperate attempts to deal with the consequences and outrun his own secrets. In a chain of events where everyone seems to be conspiring against him, he faces a number of antagonists:

Helen (Saskia Reeves, *Wolf Hall*), his loyal wife for three decades, has lied in court on his behalf but is starting to have second thoughts about their marriage. She is dimly aware of Madeleine (Sidse Babbett Knudsen, *Borgen*), a manuscript librarian, who is Peter's longtime mistress. For her part, Madeleine has grown fed up with their secret life. While Peter preaches “freedom,” Madeleine sees only a refusal to commit.

As the personal revelations spiral, Peter's two grown daughters are no less angry with their father. Susan (Ophelia Lovibond, *Elementary*) has been out of touch for several years and only returns for a “family trial” arranged by her volatile younger sister, Lily (Millie Brady, *The Last Kingdom*).

Among Peter’s professional connections, Rochelle Madeley (Pippa Bennett-Warner, *Harlots*) is the barrister who got Peter off. She likes to brag that she loves the cases “you win when you suspect your client is guilty as hell.” Despite the win, she can’t escape the urge to dig deeper into Peter’s past.

Coming at Peter from the other direction is Joe Lapidus (Pip Torrens, *Poldark*), the newspaper editor who originally unleashed Charmian on him. He hasn’t let go of the case either—even if his paper’s proprietor, Lady Roche (Patricia Hodge, *A Very English Scandal*), hates “unpleasantness.”

No one knows Peter better than his special advisor, Duncan Knock (Iain de Caestecker, *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*), who wants to ride his boss’s coattails to the top. Unfortunately, he starts making decisions that may not be in Peter’s best interest. Another subordinate, Dame Vanessa Pollard (Sylvestra le Touzel, *The Crown*), begins undermining Peter as soon as he lands in his new ministerial job. Will Peter find out to his cost that “life gets hard when you lose the staff?”

Then there is the prime minister’s eyes and ears, Julia Blythe (Olivia Vinall, *The Woman in White*), a control freak who seems to know Peter’s secrets almost before he does—particularly about a female prisoner who could end his political career once and for all.

If nothing else, Peter is a survivor—at least so far. Untroubled by guilt or remorse, he seeks to further his own agenda even whilst others plot to bring him down. His motto: “You can get away with anything if you just brazen it out.”

Even a despairing prime minister has to concede, “High wire doesn’t do it. More like Houdini.”

Roadkill is a Forge Entertainment production for the BBC co-produced with MASTERPIECE. David Hare is the Executive Producer and Screenwriter. Mark Pybus and George Faber are the Executive Producers for The Forge. Michael Keillor is the Director and Executive Producer. The producer is Andrew Litvin. Lucy Richer is the Executive Producer for the BBC and Rebecca Eaton is the Executive Producer for MASTERPIECE.

pbs.org/masterpiece

MASTERPIECE Press Contacts

Ellen Dockser, 617-300-5338, ellen_dockser@wgbh.org

Laura Garvey, 617-300-5342, laura_garvey@wgbh.org

About MASTERPIECE

Winner of 83 Primetime Emmys® and 16 Peabody Awards, MASTERPIECE has been essential Sunday night viewing for millions of fans since 1971. Susanne Simpson is the executive producer and Rebecca Eaton is the executive-producer-at-large for the series. Funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by Viking and Raymond James with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. Presented on PBS by WGBH Boston, MASTERPIECE is known for recent hits such as *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey* and *Victoria*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*.