

Synopsis

Contemporary London. In voice-over, policemen are called to the Coliseum Bingo Hall on Harrow Road, where an officer has been shot trying to intercept two armed men. Speeding to the scene, they are told that the victim is PC George Dixon. One replies, "Christ, Dixon. Isn't anything sacred?"

Black-and-white. The opening sequence of the Ealing film **The Blue Lamp** (1950) is a car chase which ends with a crash and the fatal shooting of an innocent bystander. There follows a compilation of the film's key events. In the midst of the post-war crime wave, an Old Bailey judge argues that "one of the best preventives of crime is the regular uniformed police officer on the beat". These include veterans like PC 693 George Dixon, 25 years on the beat and now attached to Paddington Green, and rookies like PC Andy Mitchell, who falls for young Monty Green's trick of pretending to be lost in order to get taken to the station for a jam bun. "That's one thing they couldn't teach you at Peel House", Dixon counsels, "and it won't be the only thing". Unarmed, Dixon confronts the armed delinquent Tom Riley robbing a cinema; the youth panics and shoots him. Crashing after a car chase, Riley escapes into White City Stadium during a race meeting. The management closes the gates and officers are called in to flush him out of the crowds. Riley is trapped by a crowd of police and the public, and is taken away.

The play begins, still in black-and-white and set in the 1940s. Riley sits smugly in a van with other officers, including PC "Taff" Hughes, who is nursing a head wound. Given a cigarette, Riley suggests the coppers show their kids the matches "touched by Tom Riley, cop killer". Hughes restrains himself from hitting him, and Riley sneers: "You can't lay so much as a finger on me... I know my rights, see". Hughes eulogises his great friend Dixon, who would have "run to the ends of the earth to uphold any man's rights. Even his own murderer". As the van bumps, Hughes gets a bit vague and touches his bandages. At the station, young PC Sneed has his uniform checked by Sgt Brooks, who hopes he'll be like Dixon: "Good coppering is more than just keeping your uniform straight... I can laugh, cry, get angry, be just as vulnerable as any on the outside. The difference between them and me is that I can't let my emotions run away with me". Without "the power of example", the police "might just as well go back to carrying clubs instead of truncheons". In the interview room, Superintendent Hammond asks for "chummy" Riley to be brought a cup of tea and a jam bun. Hughes and Riley are left alone; Hughes closes the door...

...at which point the play switches to colour. Something has changed. There is graffiti on the walls, a radiator and strip lighting. We hear modern-sounding police sirens and ringing telephones, as well as screams. Outside, we track with four pairs of legs as they stride down the corridor and burst into the room. Superintendent Cherry, dressed in a mac and suit, tells Riley that "you're gonna put your hands up to this one, son, or I'll take your bollocks off with a Stanley knife". Cut to new title sequence: a modern cop show with lots of striding down corridors. One cop takes bribe money from a toilet cistern, and others claim their cut. Flashing graphics identify this new programme: **The Filth**.

Riley is dragged out into the corridor with his arm twisted behind his back. In an interview room, he maintains his cocky defiance: "What you charging me with anyway, Second World War? Well, I weren't on that job neither". He is charged with Dixon's murder. Riley and Hughes experience culture shock - Riley is freaked by computers, while Hughes asks the police surgeon if a knock on the head could be responsible for hearing policemen swearing, at which point his medication is increased.

"Good PR, Dixon getting shot like that", observes Hammond, as it would increase recruitment of school leavers: "the training schools'll be having them in and out quicker than a pork sword in a knocking shop". Hammond clarifies the case: Riley and Murphy robbed a bingo hall (formerly a cinema) using "shooters" paid for by proceeds from an off-licence robbery three days earlier. Tracked down to a flat, Riley and Murphy escaped in a stolen Fiesta; it crashed at White City as in the original version. The police discovered that the flat belonged to Victor Lewis, Riley's boyfriend. Riley got dressed up as a cosh boy for an Edgar Lustgarten Night at Stringfellow's, and was arrested by Hughes, dressed as a 1940s policeman. Cherry ruminates on what makes "an old-fashioned PC": "A man of experience, unswerving in his desire to serve the public, polite yet chirpy, conciliatory but always ethical, a bastion of moral fibre and a power of example. And then we join the Filth". Sufficient evidence was found at Riley's flat, including a sawn-off shotgun barrel. Asked if there are any prints on it, Cherry replies that "there will be".

Getting Cherry alone, Hammond tells him that Dixon was under an internal investigation, having "got bunged a monkey for turning a blind eye" to a child-swapping party. "If word ever crept out that Dixon, our brave bobby on the beat, took an unswerving desire to serve the welfare of minors, bang goes our PR". "Blimey, a case of PC Paedophile", mutters Cherry, "I don't remember this one on



Cherry makes Riley an offer he can't refuse (© BBC)



PC Hughes and Riley on the journey back from White City stadium (© BBC)

Scotland Yard Mysteries

Hearing Dixon's voice in his head, Hughes is shocked in the changing rooms to see naked men dashing around flicking each other with towels, and to find in his own locker pin-ups of naked women. He is told that Mrs Hughes has rung, saying she'll "wait up" for him - Hughes thinks this is his mother, but it's his wife ("But I'm a confirmed bachelor!"), and he finds a photo of himself with his family. Later, he catches other PCs beating a confession out of a fat boy in a tracksuit. "Want a go?" they ask, "It's all been cleared". Hallucinating Riley's face, Hughes loses it and kicks the boy to death.

Riley's version of events receives short shrift: "you weren't arrested at Stringfellow's discotheque, you were swamped by five divisions of the Met in collusion with the underworld at White City dog stadium... yeah, and my daughter's grown a dick". Cherry is worried he's trying for a "diminished responsibility" claim. The police contact Riley's solicitor - they are having trouble as the number Riley gave was disconnected in 1949 - but he is kept waiting while Cherry and Drury try to beat a confession out of Riley and trick him into putting his fingerprints onto the gun barrel, money, drugs and, for good measure, a pirate video of **Rambo**. When his solicitor arrives, he is now ancient and struggling to breathe ("But he was 45 last week!"). Working on the theory that Riley is a "schizoid manic depressive" who believes he's a cosh boy, Cherry tries to make him believe he's "part of that reality" by pretending to be a copper from that era. Using the "chump" and "mallarky" language of the 1940s, Cherry gets him to confess. Sadly, Riley's solicitor, who has been tied to his chair by his scarf to prevent him sliding off it and hurting himself, falls and inadvertently hangs himself. Looking out of the window at modern London, Riley has a breakdown and collapses. Hearing that Riley has had a mild stroke, Hammond asks: "Genuine or one of ours?" Meanwhile, Hughes breaks into the armoury, takes a gun and goes after Riley (Hammond: "I'm tempted to use the 'f' word...").

Cherry has the bodies of the youth and Bromley senior taken to the cells. Finally the young Bromley, Riley's modern-day solicitor, arrives, and threatens to expose the truth about Dixon, observing that a jury might see his killing as "a favour". He is slightly distracted by finding the body of his father and the fat boy, who turns out to be his son ("Not really your night, sir, is it?")

Hughes tracks down Riley, resulting in a stand-off with armed police. Riley tries to talk Hughes into putting the gun down since, being a copper, he must know "the difference between them and us". Hughes panics and shoots him. The corridor begins to clear, at which point Bromley arrives and threatens to tell the world about the day's events. When tear gas accidentally goes off, Cherry and Drury take advantage of the confusion to shoot Bromley and pass the gun onto Hughes. With the press provided with a body, "justice will have been seen to be done". As a shoot-out rages in the corridor outside, Cherry predicts commendations; Drury remarks, "You don't half pull some strokes, guv nor".

Over the end credits, Cherry ponders hypothetically where the modern-day Riley might have ended up. We now see a colour Riley and Hughes in a black-and-white nick. A friendly PC brings tea and a jam bun and tells Riley that "The DCI will want to grill you". Riley throws the jam bun away, replying: "What's he think I am, a fucking sausage?"

Background and Production Details

Screenplay (BBC-2, 1986-1993) was one of the last strands within British television dedicated to the single play. Though single dramas still appear, they now stand alone, due to schedulers' loss of faith in strand identity, which seems odd given their obsession with "stripped" schedules. The public and industry profile of the single play was in steep decline by the late 1980s. Where once stood **The Wednesday Play** (BBC-1, 1964-1970) and **Play for Today** (BBC-1, 1970-1984), now there were two loose umbrella titles, often for films: the populist **Screen One** which started in 1989 and achieved hits like **Pat and Margaret** (tx: 11th September

1994, Wr: Victoria Wood, Dir: Gavin Millar), and BBC-2's edgier **Screen Two** which launched in 1985 with the brilliant **Contact** (tx: 6th January 1985, wr: Tony Clarke, Dir: Alan Clarke) and featured such varied classics as **East of Ipswich** (tx: 1st February 1987, Wr: Michael Palin, Dir: Tristram Powell), **The Firm** (tx: 16th February 1989, Wr: Al Hunter, Dir: Alan Clarke) and **Memento Mori** (tx: 19th April 1992, Wr: Alan Kelley, Jeanie Sims, Jack Clayton, novel: Muriel Spark, Dir: Jack Clayton). **Screenplay** was commissioned to break new ground in terms of content and production techniques and to employ new talent from film schools and theatre. Head of Drama Peter Goodchild argued that, without being "self-consciously experimental or avant garde", BBC Drama was "prepared to fall flat on our faces if necessary in order to try something new and inventive... (and) to get as far away as possible from the rather static feel of TV plays".[1] But in the changing Thatcherite economic climate and with a burgeoning independent sector, such drama had to be competitive: "we can produce hours of top quality entertainment yet remain within a strict budget - we're offering about 14 hours of quality TV costing something like £150,000 an hour. We've proved we can do it, now it's up to the independents to do as well and as cheaply".[2] David M Thompson, one of the strand's originating producers, recalls that "the idea was to do drama of a different kind... definitely lower cost... to be more like a guerrilla operation, to work with different methods. So we did one drama for instance set in South America called **Land** (tx: 22nd July 1987, Wr: Barry Collins, Dir: David Wheatley), without any costume, make-up or design, which was really radical in those days. We had a cameraman, a director (but) what we didn't have, unfortunately, was an armourer, in a film about bandits... it was nearly a total disaster... In between takes, [the director] had a gun in his hand, it went off, he narrowly missed his foot. I actually nearly got sacked over this - apparently the thing they were most upset over was not the absence of the armourer but the absence of the make-up artist, which was thought to be a terrible breach of union protocol, because we had blood but no make-up artist. So we were really pushing the boat out on that level - most notably in a (very very bold and experimental) film like **Road** (tx: 7th October 1987, Wr: Jim Cartwright, Dir: Alan Clarke). There was **Carani and the Courtesans** (tx: 5th August 1987, Wr/Dir: Leslie Megahay), a film set in Venice all shot in the studio in Ealing"[3] **The Trial of Klaus Barbie** (tx: BBC-2, 15th July 1987, Wr: Ray Jenkins) was another landmark, pieced together during the real-life trial with no fixed studio provision even a month earlier; its transmission ten days after the end of the trial made it according to Goodchild "the fastest-produced drama production ever".

In the wake of **Film on Four**, many **Screen Ones** and **Screen Twos** had a cinematic afterlife. By comparison, **Screenplay**, although also featuring filmed plays, was conspicuously a television strand (aided by its off-shoot **Screenplay Firsts** (BBC-2, 1987-1993)). Arthur Ellis, who earlier co-wrote **Christine** (tx: 23rd September 1987, Wr: Arthur Ellis and Alan Clarke, Dir: Alan Clarke) for the strand, found himself writing a more traditional television studio play, of the kind which was being rapidly phased out in favour of film. Echoing the opportunities which strands had afforded writers in earlier years, Ellis recalls that producer Brenda Reid "had a 60 minute studio tape slot she needed filling and nothing to fill it with. I wrote up the 2 page premise and, as I recall, within four days or so, was given the nod by Brenda to write up the script... The only rule given me was that there could be absolutely no exterior or location filming. The entire thing had to be shot in the studio. Which was fine by me. It gave me boundaries, format, discipline and structure, without having to think about them... I completed the script within maybe a month or so". [4]

It's impossible to appreciate the quality of the play's themes and ideas without discussing its source text. **The Blue Lamp** (1950). George Dixon (Jack Warner) has come to represent the archetypal British policeman, the "bobby on the beat" idealised by successive Home Secretaries. Outliving **The Blue Lamp** by 26 years - some feat given that he's killed during it - he was resurrected for his own series, **Dixon of Dock Green**, which ran from 1955 to 1976, a period during which the screen image of the police fundamentally changed. **The Black and Blue Lamp** works upon juxtaposing

A play within a play: *The Filth* (© BBC)

the world of Dixon with the more cynical modern portrayals of the police, in the process demonstrating the lasting importance of Dixon as an icon and wittily raising the issue of how fictional treatments of the police affect perceptions of their role in society.

The Blue Lamp establishes veteran Dixon as "representative of all policemen throughout the country, steady-going, tolerant, unarmed, carrying out a multitude of duties".^[5] He passes on to PC Andy Mitchell (Jimmy Hanley) local knowledge gained from years of experience as a copper both of and from the community, and integrates Mitchell into inter-related families: Dixon's own family (replacing Dixon's dead son), and the occupational family of the police, which with its choir, darts team and camaraderie is "repetitively signified as being loosely integrated within the wider community".^[6] In this community and the police service, to quote a song sung by Dixon and repeated by the 80s Hughes, "all" is "correct". But this society is under threat from a crime wave, a personified in Riley (Dirk Bogarde), a young delinquent, excluded from the film's normalised society. Unlike Mitchell, Riley fails to join an occupational family, as the criminal underworld rejects him for lacking the "code, experience and self-discipline of the professional thief". The juxtaposition between them is reinforced by editing, as in a cut from Mitchell shining a torch to Hanley lighting a cigarette, or their respective night beats around contrasting London streets - Riley's being the jazz-scored neon-lit underworld. The film cuts between Dixon, his wife and Andy in their respectable working-class house to the squalid flat in which we find Riley, his girlfriend Diana and associate Spud. The Dixon family, including visiting colleagues, are filmed in a placid cinematic style, as if we too are sitting contentedly round the table with them. By contrast, Riley, Diana and Spud argue in compositions stressing their disunity, each seeking dominance in the frame, and stylised camera angles which almost expressionistically show this as an off-balance world.

These two worlds come into conflict in the film's pivotal scene, around halfway through, when Riley shoots Dixon. What's striking is the powerlessness of the armed man, who commits the cardinal sin in British cinema of losing control (the rest of the film shows him to be sexually charged). His own accomplices scream and call him a "maniac", and as the getaway car careers around the streets, the subtext is clear: the policeman's enemy is a danger to us. After this we see the controlled professionalism of the police, in a semi-documentary montage of police procedure as they process the information, which shows order restored - they will trace the threat for us. Dixon's sacrifice is good propaganda, reminiscent of the death of a fireman in *Fires Were Started* (1943, Dir: Humphrey Jennings), requested by the Ministry of Information to show the sacrifices needed to defeat Nazi Germany. Dixon may be the lead character, but "The real hero of the piece, in fact, is the police force".^[7] *The Blue Lamp* was made with the unprecedented support of the Metropolitan Police (who warmly welcomed it at a time when they were developing new public relations strategies), and is dedicated to them.

The collision between Dixon and Riley is particularly effective because they represent conflicting aspects of post-war society. *The Blue Lamp* shares the core perceptions of Britishness delineated in comedies made by the same studio, Ealing; a belief in community and tradition, stoicism and stability.^[8] This was heightened by the allocation of the screenplay to T.E.B. Clarke, author of key Ealing comedies; *The Blue Lamp* and Dixon's character had been developed by Jan Read and the writer often viewed as his sole creator, Ted Willis. Dixon is a reassuring figure, representing the normative qualities of a nation to be returned to after wartime upheaval. This is reflected structurally: we are given a sense of community, it is threatened by an outsider, and then, as the community re-asserts itself, all returns to normal (which also happens, with a very different effect, in *The Black and Blue Lamp*). This is related to the police in the repetition of images from the start of the film at its end: a blue lamp outside a police station, and Mitchell giving the same directions to a member of the public that Dixon gave at the start - one generation takes over from another, but continues its values. Dixon's killer is equally the product of war. A voice-over describes Diana as "showing the effect of a childhood spent in a home broken and demoralised by war", producing delinquents "responsible for the post-war increase in crime". However, the idea that war has caused social dislocation is underplayed, and must be placed in the context of Riley's capture at White City. The dangerous loner is repelled by the community, including the criminal underworld. Consensus is therefore rooted in wartime rhetoric - it's another menace that we can defeat together, if we stoically overcome traumatic losses. After his death, Dixon's absence dominates the film. A sense of lost fathers works its way through the film (an auteurist critic might point out here that director Basil Dearden lost his own father as a child during the First World War); Mitchell finds a surrogate father, Riley doesn't (arguably, he kills him, refusing to give up his gun as Dixon asks - and psychoanalytical critics would have a field day with the phallic way Bogarde handles the gun in later scenes). The association of the police with paternalism is part of the film's representation of the police which has retained its symbolic potency.

This was reinforced by *Dixon of Dock Green*, which relocated Dixon from the real Paddington Green to the fictional Dock Green. That his return was so successful was hardly surprising: *The Blue Lamp* had been 1950's most successful film, and won Best British Film, whilst Jack Warner remained a major star. Making his name in radio series like *Garrison Theatre* (BBC, 1939-41), in which his comic songs on censorship earned him the sobriquet Jack "Blue Pencil" Warner, he went on to play the father of the Huggett family in four films from *Holiday Camp* (1947, Dir: Ken Annakin) to *The Huggetts Abroad* (1949, Dir: Ken Annakin) and in the radio hit *Meet the Huggetts* (BBC, 1952-61). He soon became synonymous with policemen, to the extent that a famous song was reworded "If you want to know the time, ask Jack Warner".^[9] During the early years of Dixon he appeared as policeman in such diverse films as Ealing's dark comedy *The Ladykillers* (1955, Dir: Alexander Mackendrick) and the science-fiction horror *The Quatermass Experiment* (1955, Dir: Val Guest). In 1965, after Dixon was finally promoted to sergeant, the Queen presented him with an OBE and told him that she looked on Dixon as part of the fabric of Britain. *Dixon of Dock Green* drew large audiences well into the 1970s - even though Dixon had been approaching retirement age back in 1949 - and ended in 1976, when Warner was 80 years old.

The series was overseen by Ted Willis, who - ironically, given the dominance of police series in the schedules ever since - was sceptical that he could find enough material to fill six half-hours. He needn't have worried, as the series ran for 430 episodes over twenty-two seasons. The first episode, *P.C. Crawford's First Pinch* (tx: 9th July 1955, Wr: Ted Willis, Dir: Douglas Moodie), introduces the series as a mid-50s variation on *The Blue Lamp*; although borrowing its structure in Dixon's assimilation of a rookie PC, called Andy into the police family, it also introduces us to Dixon's daughter, whom Andy will soon marry. Displacing the psychological tension and post-war symbolism of the Dixons' dead son, Mary is a homely daughter offering a more literal marriage into the family. The series remains evocative, with its opening sequence ripe for nostalgia - the blue lamp of the police station, the whistled theme (initially "Maybe It's Because I'm A Londoner", later "An Ordinary Copper"), the to-camera introduction ("Evenin' all") and conclusion by Dixon, as the demands of episodic drama for narrative resolution led to the replication each week of the film's sense of all returning to normal. This device was quoted in Ben Elton's sitcom *The Thin Blue Line* (tx: BBC1, 1995-1996), with Rowan Atkinson's quaintly anachronistic copper affectionately satirising Dixon (at one point reprimanding armed robbers with the line "I've never seen such naughtiness"). This is the stereotypical view, that times changed but Dixon didn't, remaining an old-fashioned promoter of family values, with the show becoming "an anachronism, and a dangerously naïve one at that".^[10] Its representations of race have certainly dated - take Dixon's unmasking of an Eastern religious guru as a blacked-up white conman in *Bangles, Baubles and Beads* (tx: 15th March 1975, Wr: Derek Ingreby, Dir: Joe Waters) - as has Dixon's attitude to domestic violence. In *The Blue Lamp*, he laughed at Mitchell hurrying to an incident because the husband "don't kill his old woman off too quick as a rule"; and in the Dixon episode *Pound of Flesh* (tx: 25th August 1956, Wr: Ted Willis, Dir: Douglas Moodie) observed that "if I arrested every bloke in Dock Green who clocked his wife, I'd be working overtime".

The BBC's archive holdings demonstrate how transitory *Dixon of Dock Green* was expected to be - only 43 episodes still exist, and only 5 of these are from its 50s peak. But the series remains interesting, not least for its longevity, as it "has reflected changes in society, in attitudes to the police, and in the police forces themselves".^[11] Also, the series does comment on its own worldview. In *The Roaring Boy* (tx: 18th August 1956, Wr: Ted Willis, Dir: Douglas Moodie), Dixon is held hostage by an armed man who sneers at Dixon's daughter marrying a cop because "you lot stick together closer than ants", and rejects Dixon's paternalism, snapping at his repeated use of the term "son". Of particular interest are episodes that discuss the possibility of police corruption or incompetence. *The Late Customer* (tx: 4th December 1965, Wr: Gerald Kelsey, Dir: G.B. Lupino) looks at the possible conviction of an innocent man, while in *Firearms Were Issued* (tx: 20th April 1974, Wr: N.J. Crisp, Dir: Vere Lorrimer), the CID are investigated after shooting an unarmed criminal with a gun issued by Dixon. As in *The Blue Lamp*, crises close with the resolution of the status quo; the latter episode ends with Dixon's complacent statement that "I think I'd've done the same... in those circumstances. Goodnight all!". The earliest surviving episode, *The Rotten Apple* (tx: 11th August 1956, Wr: Ted Willis, Dir: Douglas Moodie), shows Dixon angrily confronting Paul Eddington's corrupt PC: "There's nothing worse than a rotten copper... the lowest thing that crawls on God's Earth". That the miscreant is the rotten apple in the barrel, separate from the police as an institution, is shown symbolically in Dixon's refusal to arrest him until he has removed his uniform, and is then reinforced by Dixon's closing speech: "that was the only bad copper I ever met... the police have to build on trust... when we find a bad 'un we're down on him like a ton of bricks". He may not have been "the only bad copper" on duty in the 50s, but he was certainly a rare sight on television.



Riley wipes the In-tray off his face (© BBC)



Drury, Hammond and Cherry ponder the situation (© BBC)

The officers of *Z Cars* (BBC-1, 1962-78), flawed men who smoked on duty and were as likely to commit domestic violence as investigate it, were initially promoted as a reaction against Dixon. Director John McGrath insisted that the show should have "No slick tie-ups. No reassuring endings, where decency and family life triumph".^[12] Where Dixon's officers brought "care" to their own community, changes to social cohesion were reflected in *Z Cars'* "Newtown" setting. The series was welcomed by critics as a welcome relief from Dixon's "sugary nonsense" featuring a "too good to be true" copper written by Willis, "the police's PRO".^[13] A 14-year-old letter writer stated that "if *Dock Green* is authentic I am not surprised at the high crime rate in this country".^[14] And yet, the series remained popular, precisely because of its style and setting. The series did have a core of research; Willis based Dixon on a P.C. that he met at Leman Street Police Station while researching *The Blue Lamp*, and years later reiterated that if you "go into any London police station... you will find a Dixon".^[15] Before each series, Willis would visit Scotland Yard's Public Relations Officer, who "outlines the main points they would like to put over. He doesn't interfere with the programme in any way, but he mentions such things as 'can you put in a bit about locking your car when you leave it?'... This advice keeps things topical".^[16] Its take on the "police procedural" series represents a purity for which later series, notably *The Bill* (ITV, 1983-present) in its first decade, have strived. In its own way, Dixon was innovative, as Ted Willis sought "to break away from the accepted formula for police and crime stories. Dixon couldn't be Dixon in a programme which was full of wailing sirens, screeching brakes, gun fights... The average policeman might go through a life-time of service without being involved in one murder-case. His life is one of routine... Would [viewers] take simple, human stories about a simple ordinary copper and the people he meets?"^[17] It would be ironic to attack the show now given the popularity of *Heartbeat* (ITV, 1992-present), a quiet, primetime family drama set around an idealised representation of old-fashioned police (though its period detail and pop music make it a consciously nostalgic package, apparently signifying that people wouldn't accept that the police are like this now).

Though *The Sweeney* (ITV, 1974-78) is often described as smashing up Dixon's cosy world, this ignores the anomaly that *Dixon of Dock Green* survived into this era (with Dixon a desk sergeant and Andy Crawford with CID involved with "shooters" and "blags"). There is also a fundamental connection between the two. Arthur Ellis: "in the mid 70s, when Jack Warner was about 200 years old... the idea of a decent beat copper was supplanted by John Thaw's Regan, who was a tad more aggressive in his pursuit of criminal scum - aggressive, but not bent - pretty much an updated version of Barlow. The interesting thing was, both series, requiring cops as heroes, played into the hands of the Met, in terms of PR... The only variant was that *The Sweeney*, cashing in on what was happening all around it in films, romanticised screen violence, which gave the Met a nice tough little image that invariably helped them employ it". Of far more consequence was *Law and Order* (BBC-2, 6th - 27th April 1978). Written by G.F. Newman, "a graduate of the 'all coppers are bastards' school", *Law and Order*'s brutal and corrupt characters "made *The Sweeney* look like boy scouts".^[18] Far from Dixon's "one bad apple", Newman believed that "the person who becomes a policeman has almost exactly the same pathology as the criminal".^[19]

In *The Black and Blue Lamp*, Arthur Ellis confronts the 1949 Tom Riley with this breed of copper, charting the changing perceptions of the police in the media and society. Ellis was friendly with Newman, and an admirer of his Terry Sneed novels which began with *Sir, You Bastard*, which "entirely changed the perception of how the police operated. They also had a high influence on officers themselves, who for the first time saw themselves written about as in fact they would like to be perceived... [meeting a cop a few years later, he said that] a few years back the books, though fiction, were documenting procedure and lingo, now the lingo was being adopted by the incoming cops. Fiction was influencing fact". *Law and Order* in turn "completely changed the way TV looked at cops, with an authority that had no basis in *The Sweeney*'s romantic and Met friendly propaganda. Naturally enough *The Police Federation* and the police in general loathed the series and demanded redress".

After *The Blue Lamp* sequence (Ellis would now "compress all the clips from it at the beginning, because it's way too long"), *The Black and Blue Lamp* enters borderline telefantasy territory as, in a joyously unexplained switch, Riley and Hughes end up in a 1980s police station. The credits for *The Filth* are the play's third title sequence, after those of *The Black and Blue Lamp* and *The Blue Lamp*, which adds to the sense that what we are looking at are, above all, representations (the melancholy music over the end credits recalls the memorable end credits of *The Sweeney*). Riley and Hughes have replaced 80s versions of Riley and Hughes, after the murder of an 80s version of Dixon. *The Blue Lamp* is affectionately satirised - Cherry takes one look at the Bogarde character and asks, "Is that the presence of a hardened criminal? He looks like he's just come out of RADA". Hammond sneers: "Twenty-five years a pissing woodentop and old George still didn't learn anything... you wouldn't catch me trying to win an award



PC Hughes and Riley close the door, and the world changes... (© BBC)

with some wanker aiming a twelve-gauge at my meat-and-two-veg". Indeed, it's no coincidence that one of the first lines is "Dixon. Isn't anything sacred?" The comment that Dixon's killing is "good PR" for Hendon is reminiscent of The Blue Lamp's origins as police propaganda - as Dearden's collaborator Michael Relph said, **The Blue Lamp** was "more an animated recruitment poster than an analysis of youthful crime".[20] Worse still are the unsavoury allegations which Dixon's murder saved him from. Ellis admits that "I was expecting flak from Ted Willis, creator of Dixon, for suggesting his character was involved in child swapping parties. But not a word from him. However, The Police Federation came out vehemently against the play via a full page Daily Mail article, even though they hadn't then seen it. Thousand and thousands of pro police TV hours, and they resent the occasional hour going the other way".

The Black and Blue Lamp isn't just a modern spoof (Ellis "loved *The Blue Lamp*") but a brilliant inversion of its source film, with Riley carrying Forties values into a view of the police which is just as mythologised as Dixon's cosy world. The scene in which Hughes confronts Riley directly quotes from the scene in **The Blue Lamp** in which Riley shoots Dixon, but this time the unarmed villain tries to talk the policeman down. Their dialogue is the same, and when Riley is shot, Sean Chapman even captures Jack Warner's facial expression as he falls. Given that the dialogue reverberating in Taffy's head is a surprisingly harsh line from **The Blue Lamp** - "We're onto the bastard that shot George Dixon" - it has an eerie sense of 1940s coppers acting out vengeful impulses which that film could not represent. By this stage in the play, "the difference between them and us" has gone, and the play implicates the act of representation in this. After all, it is Hughes who commits the worst atrocities in an identity crisis caused by discovering that he "was not the affable beat bobby he was back in the late 40s", and by being corrupted by this mode of representation. (That the 80s Hughes is "irredeemably bent" had been made even clearer the first draft, in a scene in which his wife visits him at the station "to ask for more money to pay off her innumerable debts and the rental of Taffy's splash pad - a rented room where Taffy (in his post modern existence) had sex with a variety of young boys and girls, and stashed his graft... The scene was cut due to Brenda not wanting me to present the only female in the story as a leech... [and by me wanting] to make the entire play a male arena". Another element which was "watered down, though still in the script somewhere, was the fact that Taffy's father was, as a young man, at Rourke's Drift (see **Zulu** (1963, Dir: Cy Endfield)), and though discovering proof of his own corruption, needed to believe himself more heroic and courageous than the slowly revealing facts were telling him... he saw himself as a VC winning soldier (with John Barry's **Zulu** score written into the script), just like his old man, and not as the corrupt character".

The play revolves around the collision of conventions of set design, costume (Cherry's wardrobe contains a row of identical macs) and, particularly, dialogue. As Mark Lawson wrote, Ellis "was alert to a war of words", and "delighted in



Cherry tries to defuse the situation (© BBC)

the time-travel of language so that the chump, chummy, mug, mullarkey of Tom Riley met the blag, monkey, shooters and copy-cat Rambos of Supt Cherry and Sgt Hammond".[21] Turning wearily from a conversation about a "fag blag", Hammond observes that when he retires he'll be happy to put this "CID semaphore behind me. Janet hasn't understood a word I've been saying for twenty years". Meanwhile, Riley is beaten up after not knowing what a "blag" is, while Hughes is shocked by hearing policemen "using rude words". The sense you're left with is that **The Blue Lamp**, **Dixon of Dock Green** and the programmes that **The Filth** is based on have tricky relationships with their times.

Equally, **The Blue Lamp** itself isn't afraid to satirise its own vision of consensus - a robbery victim who tries to hide his identity because he is with his mistress is frustrated by interfering busybodies who swarm around to help or to ring 999, and a driver berates Mitchell for stopping her for a petty violation when there's a cop killer on the loose. Far from being a consensual nation with the occasional dangerous loner, Britain was suffering a crime wave. As has been recently documented, that most mythologised of consensual eras, the Second World War, was in fact plagued by robbery, rape and murder, from such relatively famous figures as John George Haig and "Chicago Joe" and the *Showgirl* to innumerable unsolved cases.[22] Furthermore, **The Blue Lamp** was inspired by a real-life killing, that of PC. Nat Edgar by the 22-year-old army deserter Donald Thomas. Following the 1948 Criminal Justice Act, Thomas was not hung, a decision that angered the police and indirectly led, according to David Yallop and others, to the hanging of the young and innocent "delinquent" Derek Bentley in 1952, one of many miscarriages of justice that were not a part of George Dixon's world.[23] A Royal Commission was set up in 1960 after bribery and corruption scandals emerged. Later, Leeds detectives were found to be involved in a child porn ring. Meanwhile, the famously hard-working and much-commended Detective Sergeant Harold Challenor was investigated under the 1964 Police Act for his overzealous policing techniques (not least fabricating evidence and attacking prisoners), finally suspended in February 1965. Joe Orton, reportedly reputed to have said to a protestor at a royal visit: "You're fucking nicked, my old beauty" (later repeated by Monty Python's **Life of Brian**).[24] Orton argued that "it's very unhealthy for a society to love the police the way the English do... When you have that kind of affection for authority, you begin to have the makings of a police state". In the published version of *Loot*, Orton uses an epigram from George Bernard Shaw's *Misalliance*: "Anarchism is a game at which the police can beat you".[25] Sean Chapman picked up on this, eulogising the "sheer, delicious mania of Arthur's script, which struck me as a brilliant post 'Ortonesque' statement about the disparity between the Official, sanctified face of Policing and the actual reality".[26] In the 1980s, the "them and us" relationship between the public and the police was worsened by their deployment as state troops during inner city riots and the miners' strike. Chapman observes that the play "was written against a recent background of Police catastrophes such as the battles at Broadwater Farm, the Miner's Strike/Orgreave and the emerging scandal of the Guildford Four. The exposure of corruption in the West Midlands Special Branch was shortly to make the action in **The Black and Blue Lamp** all too plausible". Far from television changing public perceptions of the police, the media have arguably just got around to reporting incidents that could not be reported in Dixon's heyday.

"One of the things that's interesting about **The Blue Lamp**", writes Arthur Ellis, "is that its certain authenticity - procedure, location filming etc - is sponsored in a credit at the opening of the film by the then Scotland Yard Commissioner, Harold Scott. Naturally enough, part of the deal (implicit) for Scotland Yard's help would have been a script that showed his men in a good light... In no small way, because of TV and film's portrayal of probitious cops who always get their man, rampant on UK TV through the 60s - **Gideon's Way** (ATV, 1964-1965), **No Hiding Place**

(Associated Rediffusion, 1959-1967) etc - the facts of police corruption were entirely unmentionable, allowing police corruption to thrive with absolutely no scrutiny until the issue was raised in the Kray and Richardson trials, and only followed through a few years later, exploding with Humphries and, ironically, his Flying Squad Soho porn jiffy bag collections. And at that time, retirement with full pension intact, prior to any trial, was de rigeur. The crime wasn't being bent, it was being caught being bent". Viewing the ending of **Dixon** episode **The Rotten Apple** with this in mind, Dixon's anger at the corrupt officer, and subsequent disclaimer, feel slightly more sinister. In **The Black and Blue Lamp**, George Dixon is eulogised by a character suffering from concussion, lending his whole representation the aura of a deluded daydream. As one critic wrote of the film at the time, Dixon and Mitchell were not "policemen as they really are but policemen as an indulgent tradition has chosen to think they are".[27]

Dixon-style "soft" policing has become a term of abuse in police circles, but the potency of the Dixon myth remains. Roger Graef, noted for his fly-on-the-wall documentaries **Police** (tx: BBC-1, 4th January - 15th March 1982) and **Police 2001** (tx: BBC-2, 25th November 2001), has argued that, although Dixon may not have existed literally, "a trust between police and their community did... Affection for Dixon's avuncular persona reflected approval of the police by a huge majority of postwar Britain".[28] Steve Chibnall casts doubt on the nature of the public's acceptance of Dixon: "it would be naive to suppose that the Dixon image was embraced as a realistic representation of the policeman, rather than a romantic idea of what he should be like".[29] The police remain a core social myth, and such representations will always outnumber counter-myths. Like **Law and Order** before it, **The Black and Blue Lamp** attracted the ire of the police (see Ellis above), and neither programme has ever been repeated or sold abroad. This contrasts with the popularity within the force not only of **Dixon** (after Warner's death in 1981, his coffin was borne by Paddington Green officers) but also of **The Sweeney's** Regan and Carter, who as Ellis indicates were great PR at a time when the Police Federation sought a "law and order" platform. Despite stylistic and tonal shifts in police dramas, "the dominant myths of the British police retain core ('caring' and 'humane') values which do not change".[30] Tracing a "dialectical progression" in the politics of policing, Robert Reiner argues that **Dixon of Dock Green** represents the "thesis", presenting the police "primarily as carers, lightning rods for the postwar consensus climate"; that **The Sweeney** is the "antithesis", presenting the police "primarily as controllers"; and that **The Bill** represents the "synthesis", suggesting that "care and control are interdependent".[31] This core notion of community "carer" policing demonstrates that, even now, when public trust in institutions has collapsed into cynicism, the ideal represented by George Dixon remains attractive.

Ellis's script superbly incorporates such ambitious themes within a darkly entertaining and knowing structure. He recalls that he "had a lot of fun writing it... The general approach to writing it was to try to get laughs from credibly twisted situations. Parody certainly plays an element, but I wanted more to get the feel of a farce, with an increasing number of bodies". Ralph Brown recalls that the cast "all had the utmost respect for the script", and that Ellis was "a true original", with whom he later worked in Ellis's full-length directorial debut (after several highly-respected short films) **Don't Get Me Started** (1994, aka **Psychotherapy**).[32] It would be hard to mess up such a script, but the at-times lightweight production tries its best. Ellis himself "felt despondent" and "loathed the final version", whilst generously admitting that, like most writers, "All I see is what it might or could have been". Ellis puts his finger on it by pointing out that the director had "played all the laughs way, too loudly. Like a rag revue", over-playing "like Basil Brush" rather than under-playing as the script required. Ralph Brown argues that the cast "felt we were over-directed. Every beat, every minuscule reaction was choreographed and had the juice almost squeezed out of it by the director... All the cast were very instinctive TV actors and didn't need this kind of mollycoddling". Arthur Ellis describes the director as a "safe" choice meant "to soften it all up". It's hard to disagree, particularly given the musical score - for instance the cute sting which accompanies the Dixon revelations - and moments at which the tone is allowed to slip. Ellis particularly hated "the graphic close-up of the pencil up the boy's nose... being lingered on as if the director was saying 'look how brave I am to show this'". Sean Chapman also bemoans the "lack of variation in visual mood" and the "rather dull unsympathetic lighting plot", and argues that "the black and white sequence at the beginning of the play is too flat, it's simply shot on a studio camera with the colour button turned down, which lacks the grainy, pseudo cinema-verite atmosphere of the original film", which "compromises one of the essential premises of the piece". As a result of all this there were what might be described as creative differences; Ellis recalls that he "was banned from the read throughs, and at one stage threatened, impotently I might add, to chuck him out of the TV Centre 5th floor window".

Ellis was, however, happy with most of the casting: "Originally I had wanted George Sewell [for Cranham's part] but he was up for **Doctor Who** (Remembrance of the



PC Hughes loses control and kills a witness (© BBC)



Hughes and Riley are offered tea and a jam bun (© BBC)

Daleks, tx: 5th to 26th October 1988, Wr: Ben Aaronovitch, Dir: Andrew Morgan) and because that show paid out residuals in foreign sales, he went for that - knowing our play wouldn't get a repeat. Also, he didn't particularly want to play a cop again, even though he'd be playing against his former image, primarily **Special Branch** (Thames, 1969-1974)... Ray Winstone came along for the part Ralph Brown played. Good man, but at that time had too much of a violent image, and Ralph, though the part was small, was required to listen well with his eyes. Having caught **Withnail & I** (1986, Dir: Bruce Robinson), I was only too glad he came on board. John Woodvine was good, as were the rest of the cast, particularly the doctor, who I liked, and of course Sean, who was first choice as Riley, and solid". Chapman came to the play having played the lead Danny in the earlier **Screenplay** production **No Further Cause for Concern** (tx: 13th July 1988, Wr: Rib Davies, Dr: John Bruce), as well as **Contact** (tx: 6th January 1985, Wr: A.F.N. Clarke, Dir: Alan Clarke). "It was possible" in this period, Chapman recalls, "for an actor working in television to play *Paratroopers*, *Prison Lifers* and retro 'Cosh' boys all within a few years, and to feel that the work was a real contribution to contemporary culture and its analysis".

The coda is such a treat, and the last line so wonderfully right, that it's unthinkable that Ellis heard - not from producer or director - "that they had decided to cut the final scene, in particular the line of dialogue, 'What's he think I am, a fucking sausage'. Though the one 'fucking' had been in it all along, for some reason they felt the play would be better without it, failing to take into account that the last scene offered an insight into the parallel world that might have occurred in reverse... it was only through the intervention of Michael Winner, and by default *Private Eye* magazine, that the scene was pressured to remain". Result.

Transmission Details

The Black and Blue Lamp was transmitted on BBC-2 between 21:27:37pm and 22:26:19pm on Wednesday, 7th September 1988. A trail had earlier been shown between 08:10:26pm and 08:11:11pm. It was the eighth play in the third season of the **Screenplay** strand.

Radio Times provided only a bare listing: "In 1949 Tom Riley is arrested for the murder of PC George Dixon. As he awaits interrogation at the station he is mysteriously transported into an episode of *The Filth* - a 1988 police series where the hard men rule. This black comedy questions whether the police have changed or the way film and television present them". Mysteriously, their credits didn't list Arthur Ellis at all.

The reviews, some of which I have already quoted from, were largely excellent. Mark Lawson called this "a cracking play" and "a velvety black comedy", and praised Kenneth Cranham and John Woodvine, for playing their parts "like glorious anti-auditions for **The Bill**". [33] Peter Waymark was less impressed: "I suspect there was serious intent... but it ends up like a Monty Python sketch which has outstayed its welcome... There are many good jokes in **The Black and Blue Lamp** but in the end they defeat their purpose. If the modern segment is supposed to be a parody of **The Bill**... it is not a very subtle one". [34] But Peter Lennon loved it, and put the play in its true context: "T.E.B. Clarke and Basil Dearden's 84 minutes of goody-goody law and order was the lace curtain behind which bent coppers went about their felonious little affairs for more than 20 years... Arthur Ellis's witty and cunningly crafted video play landed at a moment when many of us must be weary of the relentless, mechanistic recording of law enforcement barbarity, particularly since this element has quite lost its moral force". Though "farcical", the play was "more than burlesque": "It stirred regret for the old days, along with a proper perplexity about the gulf between the two images that we have accepted about the police... How true was the image of the kindly, honest, reliable copper? He certainly existed for many - those who were not slum kids or blacks or Chinese, or poor European foreigners, or labouring Irishmen, or East End Jews, etc. But has this Bobby totally vanished? Myths have a powerful force, and while the old myth of courtesy and scrupulous fairness still prevailed, perhaps most coppers had to conform to it. But when it was loosened, the Bobby had, again for conformity's sake, to join the Filth. Ellis satirised received opinions of both tribes, and could usefully start scriptwriters pondering what new approach they could manufacture". [35]

We shall leave the last word to two of the play's cast.

Ralph Brown: "I remain extremely proud of **The Black and Blue Lamp**, which I think was an astonishingly brave TV drama. Nothing we see on TV now comes close".

Sean Chapman: "It is very important that contemporary and future students of Television drama are shown what a powerful tool of social criticism and polemic this medium can be. Not something immediately apparent from today's output... I suppose the most interesting thing about this period of drama was how impactive it was. People would stop you on the street for weeks (sometimes years) afterwards, and want to talk about the themes, the issues and the performances... It's a truly saddening experience to go for (rare) drama castings at the BBC today, to walk along

the corridors and remember when the offices were full of writers and producers free to commission and develop almost at will. There was an atmosphere of purpose; of constructive debate and critical analysis wholly missing from current broadcast drama... It's already difficult to credit just how much more antagonistic Television Drama and indeed almost all creative media at the time were to the prevailing status quo".

Archive Details

The Black and Blue Lamp exists at the BBC Film and Television Library as 1" tape, D3 backup, VideoCD and timecoded viewing VHS, all at the same duration of 58'43".

Cast

Supt. Cherry	Kenneth Cranham
PC Hughes	Karl Johnson
Tom Riley	Sean Chapman
Supt. Hammond	John Woodvine
Insp. Drury	Ralph Brown
Sgt. Brooks	Nick Stringer
PC Sneed	Peter Lovstrom
PC Totley	Ian Brimble
Insp. Rogers	Barry Woolgar
Police Surgeon	Garrick Hagon
Mr. Bromley junior	Anthony Smee
Mr. Bromley senior	Paddy Ryan
Fat Boy	Jonathan Chater
Voice overs	Kathy Burke
.....	Christopher Driscoll
Walkons	Ian Bodenham
.....	Derek Van Wenen
.....	James Clements
.....	Frank Glowinski
.....	Colin Baldwin
.....	James Durdy
.....	Danny Boyd
.....	Peter Gates Fleming
Supporting Artists	Rodney Hood
.....	Paul Teague, Steve Amber
.....	Bob Appleby
.....	David Melbourne
.....	Ian Johns, Alan Crisp
.....	David Duffy
.....	Richard Baron
.....	Ravindir Singh Reyatt

Crew

Written by	Arthur Ellis
Director	Guy Slater
Producer	Brenda Reid
Script Editor	Jill Raistrick
Designer	Michael Young
Production Associate	Geoffrey Paget
Lighting Director	Alan Horne
Sound Supervisor	Richard Chubb
Videotape Editor	Peter Reason
Costume Designer	Christine Rawlins
Make-Up Designer	Pauline Cox
Studio Camera Supervisor	Rodney Taylor
Vision Mixer	Shirley Coward
Technical Co-Ordinator	Tony Mutimer
Video Effects	Ian Simpson
Visual Effects Designer	Steve Lucas
Graphics Designer	John Salisbury
Properties Buyer	Celia Bobak
Assistant Floor Managers	Jane Cossey
.....	Stewart Edwards
Production Assistant	Glenys Williams
Production Manager	Ruth S. Mayorcas
Fight Arranger	Malcolm Ranson

Production Information

Project Number	1/LDP/M 776 D
Camera Rehearsals	18th to 21st April 1988
Camera Recording	18th to 21st April 1988
Duration	58'43"
Studio	Television Centre
Recording Format	625 line 1" VT with
.....	monochrome 35mm inserts
Archive Format	1" tape, D3 backup, VideoCD and
.....	timecoded viewing VHS

Film Sequences Used

- o '04'25" excerpts from **The Blue Lamp** (Licensor: Weintraub Entertainment, Elstree)

Music Listed as Used

- o *Incidental music* (31 pieces) composed by Ken Howard: Played by 17 ad hoc musicians conducted by Mark Warman, and recorded at Lansdowne Recording Studios on 30th August 1988.
- o Yes, No, Interlude, composed by P. Pyle: Virgin-V=2030 - Scene 1: page 1. *The Rotters Club*: Side 1 track 5: Hatfield and the North, 00'35"
- o *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*, composed by Brovini/Kellett - Scene 16: whistled by actor as part of dramatic action, 00'05"
- o *When The Red, Red Robin Comes Bobbin Along*, composed by Harry Woods - Scene 36: whistled by actor as part of dramatic action, 00'14"

Footnotes

- [1] Angela Thomas, 'Goodchild takes a risk on a trial run', **The Stage and Television Today**, 16th July 1987, p. 18.
- [2] Anonymous, 'BBC drama issues a budget challenge', **The Stage and Television Today**, 16th July 1987, p. 17.
- [3] Taken from an interview with Thompson, now the BBC's Head of Films, on his work with Alan Clarke. Such generosity with time in allowing digressions onto forgotten play strands - "God, I never thought anybody would ask me about this!" - was very kind.
- [4] This quotation and all those which follow are taken from a memoir of the production very generously written for me by Arthur Ellis, for whose help researching this play and **Christine** I am hugely grateful.
- [5] **The Blue Lamp** press book. Steve Chibnall, 'The teenage trilogy: **The Blue Lamp**, **I Believe in You** and **Valent Playground**', Alan Burton, Tim O'Sullivan, Paul Wells (editors), **Liberal Directions: Basil Dearden and**

Postwar British Film Culture. Flicks Books, Trowbridge, 1997, p. 139.

- [6] Chibnall, 'The teenage trilogy...', p. 140.
- [7] Dilys Powell, 'The Blue Lamp', January 1950, reproduced in **The Golden Screen: Fifty Years of Films**, Pavilion Books Limited, London, 1990 edition, p. 87.
- [8] This is developed by Charles Barr in Ealing Studios, Cameron & Tayleur, London, 1980.
- [9] 'PC. Warner', **Radio Times**, 1st June 1956, p. 7.
- [10] Paul Cornell, Martin Day, Keith Topping, 'Dixon of Dock Green', **The Guinness Book of Classic British TV**, Guinness Publishing, Enfield, 1996, 2nd edition, p. 217.
- [11] Jack Waterman, **The Listener**, 15th April 1976, quoted in Geoffrey Hurd, 'The Television Presentation of the Police', Tony Bennett, Susan Boyd-Bowman, Colin Mercer, Janet Woollocott (editors), **Popular Television and Film**, British Film Institute, London, 1981, p. 53. Also anthologised in Simon Holdaway (editor), **The British Police**, Edward Arnold, London, 1979.
- [12] John McGrath, 'TV Drama: The Case Against Naturalism', **Sight and Sound**, volume 46, number 2, Spring 1977, p. 103.
- [13] Frederick Laws, **The Listener**, 18th January 1962, p.145 and Derek Hill, **The Listener**, 3rd May 1962, quoted in Stuart Laing, 'Banging in Some Reality: The Original Z Cars', John Corner (editor), **Popular Television in Britain**, British Film Institute, London, 1991, pp. 130-1.
- [14] Jane Halton, letters column, **Radio Times**, 29th March 1962, quoted in Laing, 'Banging in Some Reality', p. 131.
- [15] Ted Willis, **The Listener**, 17th May 1962, p.787, quoted in Laing, 'Banging in Some Reality', p. 131.
- [16] Ted Willis, 'Just an Ordinary Copper', **Radio Times**, 27th November 1959, p. 7.
- [17] Ted Willis, 'George Dixon of Dock Green is Back', **Radio Times**, 4th January 1957, p. 5.
- [18] Cornell, Day, Topping, 'G.F. Newman', **Guinness Book**, p. 405.
- [19] G.F. Newman, 1993 interview, quoted in Cornell, Day, Topping, 'G.F. Newman', p. 405.
- [20] Chibnall, 'The teenage trilogy...', p. 137.
- [21] Mark Lawson, 'From Bobby to Old Bill', **The Independent**, 8th September 1988, p. 14.
- [22] Studies include Angus Calder, **The Myth of the Blitz**; Stuart Hylton, **Their Darkest Hour**; and **Secret History: Wartime Crime** (tx: Channel 4, 6th September 2001).
- [23] See for instance David Yallop's investigation of the Craig-Bentley case, **To Encourage the Others**, W.H. Allen, London, 1971.
- [24] See Joe Orton, **Loot**, in **The Complete Plays**, Methuen, London, 1976.
- [25] John Lahr, **Prick Up Your Ears**, Allen Lane, London, 1978, pp. 236-238.
- [26] This and subsequent quotations taken from a letter to the editor from Sean Chapman.
- [27] **The Times**, 20 January 1950, p.8, quoted in Clive Emsley, 'The English Bobby: An Indulgent Tradition', Roy Porter (editor), **Myths of the English**, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p.114.
- [28] Roger Graef, 'Whose Side Are You On?', **The Guardian Weekend**, 24th November 2001, p. 45.
- [29] Chibnall, 'The teenage trilogy...', p. 139.
- [30] John Tulloch, **Television Drama: Agency, Audience and Myth**, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 7.
- [31] Robert Reiner, 'The Dialectics of Dixon: The Changing Image of the TV Cop', Mike Stephens and Saul Becker (editors), **Police Force, Police Service**, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1994, p. 20.
- [32] This and subsequent quotations taken from a letter to the editor by Ralph Brown.
- [33] Mark Lawson, 'From Bobby to Old Bill'.
- [34] Peter Waymark, 'An arresting contrast', **The Times**, 7th September 1988, p. 19.
- [35] Peter Lennon, 'In the nick of time', **The Stage and Television Today**, 15th September 1988, p. 47.

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Warm thanks to the following for their invaluable contributions to this article: Arthur Ellis (written memoir, March 2002), David M Thompson (interview, BBC Films, Mortimer Street, London, 7th November 2002), Sean Chapman (letter, November 2003) and Ralph Brown (letter, December 2003). Continued gratitude goes to Erin O'Neill at BBC Written Archives for paperwork, to Nick Cooper for advice, and to the editor for his hard work. Some of the research was conducted for a conference paper I presented at Leeds University on 7th April 2002, "The afterlife of P.C. George Dixon: from The Blue Lamp to The Black and Blue Lamp", bits of which are reproduced here.

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Waiting patiently for tea and a jam bun...(© BBC)