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Making Men Out Of Boys

Babyfather returns to BBC TWO

Bolder, sexier and funnier, David Harewood, W

Hilary Salmon says: "Because we have a bigger canvas this time round with eight episodes, instead of four, we see each of the characters go on a rites-of-passage journey. I suppose this is the key growing up series for these guys, and in some ways marks the journey from boyhood to manhood."

"In terms of the writing, *Babyfather* 2 is going to be faster, funnier and bolder!" It was very interesting getting a group of writers together for this series. We knew Avril Russell who wrote all of the episodes for the first series, wouldn't have the time to write all eight, so we had to expand the team.

"We did quite a trawl of writers and discovered that there was a lot more undiscovered talent who'd come through since we were working on the first series that we weren't aware of. There was so much energy and confidence particularly among the black female writers who

Cast

Johnny Gus Linvall Beres Chantelle Lesley Kandii Caroline Pauline Lucy Marcia Evelyn Mrs Pottinger Mr Pottinger Mrs Lindo

REGIONAL INTEREST

BIRMINGHAM

David Harewood who plays Gus was born in Birmingham

WALSALL

Don Gilet who plays Johnny was born in Caldmore, Walsall

WOLVERHAMPTON

Billie-Claire Wright who plays Caroline was brought up in Perton, on the borders of Staffordshire and Wolverhampton

NOTTINGHAM

Avril . Russell writer of Babyfather was born in Nottingham where she still lives

LEEDS

Angela Griffin who plays Chantelle was born in Cottingley, Leeds

"I would love to play a villain next. I want to be a bad guy, to explore my darker side. The time is right to play lago in Othello. I would love to do that. I want to push the boat out and to stop playing it safe. My ambition is to be successful, and I think I've done that by becoming a leading character in The Vice.

"For the first time in my life I'm hungry. I've never been an ambitious person, but now I want the opportunity - not fame or money - but the opportunity to do good work.

The man who once described himself as the 'classroom clown' was more than happy to get naked in the name of art. "Filming the shower scenes in **Babyfather** where we all strip off didn't bother me at all. Although I'd never done anything like that before on television, it didn't faze me because I'm a bit of an exhibitionist! I was always first and probably the last one to put my clothes back on.

"In fact the girls in make-up took a vote and my butt was voted the best of the rest!

DAVID ON WOMEN AND RELATIONSHIPS

What do you think men want most in a close, intimate relationship? Lots of support.

Your idea of a good date? One filled with lots of laughter

What are the things you like most about women? The way they make me feel.

What do women want most in a close relationship? I really have no idea! I don't have a clue.

What irritates you most about the opposite sex? My failure to understand them.

Are women better at talking openly about their problems with friends than men are? Yes, of course they are. Men really don't talk about their personal relationships at all.

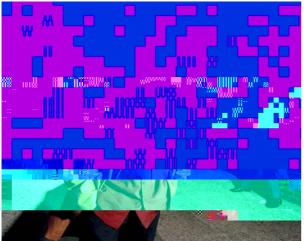
What do you think are the subtle differences between men and women? I think women listen more. I think they can read into situations. Women are much more complicated than men, which makes them more fascinating.

Have you ever been hurt in a relationship? Yes!

Do you believe in love at first sight? Yes, definitely.

Who would you most like to be the mother of your children, metaphorically speaking of course? Someone like Halle Berry.

WIL JOHNSON PLAYS BERES



Born – Tottenham, North London Trained – National Youth Theatre Appeared in – Buried Treasure, Clocking Off, Waking The Dead; Films Babymother; Theatre, Othello, A Midsummer Night's Dream. Wil will appear in the new series of Waking The Dead, txing in 2003 and Film: Emotional Backgammon.

The 'Mr Steady' of the group, Beres is on an all time high and is ready to settle down again. However how will be cope when his life takes an unexpected turn?

"The response to the first series of **Babyfather** has been phenomenal," says Wil Johnson. "I am so proud to be involved in a drama which affirms the positive aspects of black men in this society. I feel invigorated when I walk down the street and people tell me how much they enjoyed it and how much it has empowered them. It's for everybody, but it means that much more to black people than anybody else.

"When the new series opens it's a year later and Beres is at the highest point in his life. He's found a woman that he loves more than anything in the world, more than he even loved his ex-wife."

"He's got happiness and contentment and all he wants to do is take it that one step further and cement the relationship by getting married. Life's absolutely fantastic but then it starts to take an unexpected turn. Beres suffers a major health scare later on in the series, which has a profound effect on his life and those around him. It's much more poignant, because for the first time in his life, Beres is unable to talk to the other guys about it."

Although his personal relationship in the series takes a downward turn, things could not be far more removed in real life. "I got married last year and I'm very happy indeed," he says with a glint in his eye.

"Since the last series of Babyfather, I did a short film called The Target in which I play an assassin – and I'm in a movie, Emotional Backgammon, which comes out on general release next year. It's a great role about a guy who's in love with this woman who leaves him and he wants her back."

Currently filming the third series of Waking The Dead, Wil relishes the opportunity to play other roles: "There are two other short films in the pipeline which I hope to squeeze in next year. In one I play a love genie who gives this guy advice about women and in the other, The Danger Zone, I play a vigilante. It's great because as well as doing the long-running stuff, I get a chance to branch off and do something totally different. It also keeps the whole work scenario fresh and interesting.

FRASER JAMES PLAYS LINVALL

Born – Camden Town, London Trained – Guildhall School of Music & Drama Appeared in – Holby City, Bhaji On The Beach, The Armando Ianucci Show; Theatre – Leontes in The Winter's Tale. Fraser will appear in the new series of Judge John Deed on BBC ONE this autumn.

Fraser believes Linvall has to learn to balance responsibility and ambition in order to reach a level of maturity. But is Linvall ready to make that transition?

"Linvall is the classic bachelor: he is the one out of all of them who is still trying to keep in touch with his youth. We find him in a relationship with a much younger girl at the start of the series, a very gorgeous younger girl," says Fraser James. He is trying to get ahead with his photography, while also balancing the new-found responsibilities of being a father to 15-year-old Eric," he says. "Eric is not living with Linvall, but has a key and is free to turn up whenever he feels. However, Eric has been known to let himself in at the most delicate of moments!

"Eric is like a lot of people when you give him power he abuses it," continues Fraser. "He invites his friends round to Linvall's place and things get a bit raucous. Eric is a typical teenager - an adult's opinion doesn't mean anything to him; he's just going to do what he wants to do. All you can hope is that he's not going to get into trouble."

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The set was absolutely packed on the day the guys

And if Don found himself in that situation? "I would be pretty cut up. If I was in a long-standing relationship with someone and I found out they were having an affair - well, just the thought of it is pretty devastating."

Don's career to date has developed methodically, he says: "Things have happened organically; my career has been quite measured and paced, and I'm happy with the way things have gone for me." The quality of work has gone up a notch or two since the first series of Babyfather. Don played the lead role in a critically acclaimed production of Ben Johnson's The Alchemist in London's Riverside Theatre. He says it was a daunting experience: "It's just a matter of rising to the challenge, which is why I'm in this business. I would like to do an action movie or a sitcom next. The sky's still the limit for me. I want to do all those things I've enjoyed watching on the telly and in theatre.

In terms of opportunities for black actors, Don believes that "the door has opened a little bit wider, but it hasn't been flung open, because I don't think things are going to change as rapidly as that. It's

What do you think are the subtle differences between men and women?

Women are more rooted to the ground. Sometimes I tend to have my head in the clouds.

Have you ever been hurt in a relationship?

Yes, I have been hurt. Any occasion I have been hurt has been because of my own irresponsibility or my own blindness. I regained my wisdom because I had been dumped, so I had to sit and stew to analyse where and how it had all gone wrong. Sharing and honesty will remedy all that.

Do you believe in love at first sight?

Yes, sort of. I certainly believe in deep attraction at first sight and I believe you can fall in love pretty quickly. But I also think that you can fall out of love with that person pretty quickly as well. I believe that love is an emotion which has a limited shelf-life - I don't think you can be in love with someone for ever and ever.

Who would you most like to be the mother of your children - metaphorically speaking, of course?

Nicola Stephenson - she's very funny, very talented and she can also be very deep, meaningful and inspiring. So I suppose I'd let her carry my children if I could.

ANGELA GRIFFIN PLAYS CHANTELLE

Born – Cottingley, Leeds Trained – Children's Theatre group in Leeds

Appeared in - Under The Bedclothes; Coronati

Angela, who first burst onto our screens almost

What irritates you most about the opposite sex?

The way they generalise about women by claiming 'all women are like this' or 'all women are like that'. They assume women are going to be clingy and won't want them to go out with their mates.

What do women want most in a close relationship?

Exactly the same as men: intimacy and freedom.

Are women better than men at talking openly with friends about their problems?

Girls do talk a lot, but they only tell girlfriends what they want them to know. Men do talk, however. I was recently with a group of men and I discovered that they're really scared about going up and talking to girls - I never realised that.

What do you think are the subtle differences between men and women?

I truly believe in the saying 'men are from Mars and women are from Venus'. Men and women have two completely different ways of thinking and acting, and I think that the more we realise that, the better we will all get on.

Have you ever been hurt in a relationship?

Yes, I have been hurt and yes, it changed my attitude to relationships. It made me more cynical and I've learnt there's more interesting things to do than worry about what someone else is doing.

Do you believe in love at first sight?

No. I believe in lust at first sight, which can lead to love. How can you possibly love someone when you don't know them?

Who would you most like to be the father of your children metaphorically speaking, of

course?

Brad Pitt and Simon from the boy band Blue!

She has a sense of justice and she would get involved in other people's affairs, which happens in the series.

"From a personal point of view, if I knew something was going on behind my friend's back, I would ask her partner to tell her, and if he didn't, I would find a way of telling her myself unless it's a friend who knows but chooses to ignore what's going on. But if I knew she thought her relationship was based on integrity and honesty, then I think she would have the right to know."

DIANE ON MEN AND RELATIONSHIPS

What do you think men want most in a close, intimate relationship?

Loyalty first and foremost. Good sex – often! A certain amount of freedom which is important to them. Men are like Tom Cats if they can't roam, they'll just go off and find someone else to look after them who will let them roam. Also they need tenderness and understanding.

Your idea of a good date?

Something which took place in the daytime where I was driven somewhere like a forest for a walk. Then on to a pub for a drink and maybe going to see a matinee. Finally being dropped off home and called later on that evening for a brief chat.

What are the things you like most about men?

Their bawdy sense of humour. I enjoy men's company a little bit more than an average females. I have a lot of male friends and I think it's important to get a male perspective.

What irritates you most about the opposite sex?

When they behave differently because they're with other men. I respect men who are able to be one thing all of the time. I don't like my time being devalued, I don't mind what you do, but respect my time.

What do women want most in a close relationship?

Integrity, intimacy and their freedom.

Are women better able to talk openly about problems with friends than men are?

I don't know about that because with some of my male friends you can scratch below surface. I've had a male friend come round and cry his eyes out, which I found intriguing. Certain women can talk freely and there are others who can't.

Have you ever been hurt in a relationship?

Yes, but I think it was important that it happened when it did. It made me address things which I really needed to look at and I discovered so much about myself and then I went through a whole learning process when I realised it would be best to not jump straight into the next relationship and think that that could fix me, the only thing that could do that was me. Being hurt has been the most valuable thing in my life.

Do you believe in love at first sight?

Yes, it has happened to me.

Who would you most like to be the father of your children metaphorically speaking of course? Samuel L. Jackson would be ideal.

CAROLINE CHIKEZIE PLAYS KANDII

Born – London

BILLIE-CLAIRE WRIGHT PLAYS CAROLINE



Born – Wolverhampton Trained – Webber Douglas Appeared in – Messiah, The Bill, Casualty, Waking The Dead

Beres, the new man in Caroline's life, has all the right attributes to sustain a loving relationship, but is he person Caroline's really looking for?

"Caroline is spending a lot more time with Beres whom she represented in the first series when Beres went to court to gain custody of his daughter, Lara," explains Billie Claire Wright. Unexpectedly, he proposes to her, but is he really the person she wants to settle down with? Beres has all the right qualities - he's loyal, caring and loving. But Caroline is very ambitious. Do they get married in the end? Well, you'll just have to wait and see."

"The reaction to the first series of **Babyfather** was amazing, it really had an impact," says Billie. I was stopped by a lot of young people in the street. I lived in Tottenham, which as a large black population, and I was recognised all the time."

The young, free and single actress believes the industry is not only tough for women, but is even tougher for a black woman. "Although it's fabulous to see more black actresses on screen, it still feels very restrictive. I have been disappointed by the roles I have been offered since Babyfather. In order to get better as an actress one needs to get consistent work. I don't think there's one person to blame, but I do think it's a serious cause for concern."

"In the first series," confesses Wright, "there was hardly any sex, but they've made up for it this time! It's really saucy. Before Babyfather I'd never done a sex scene, not even a kissing scene – but I have plenty of experience now!

"One of the funniest things to happen on set was filming my sex scene with Beres (Wil Johnson). Wil and I were really going for it with the sound effects! We came out to rousing applause from the whole crew, all of whom were standing outside the closed set. Apparently we could be heard two streets down," she says laughing.

BILLIE ON MEN AND RELATIONSHIPS



PETRA LETANG PLAYS PAULINE

Born – Plaistow, London Trained – Anna Scher Theatre Appeared in – Family Affairs; Stage - Local Boys, Breath Room, Rough Road To Survival Upcoming –Film: Wondrous Oblivion with Delroy Lindo

Pauline knows she's affecting Johnny by not allowing him to see his son Tarjan. She's going to revel in that as revenge for all the hurt he has made her feel.

"Pauline is a lot more grown up and independent than she was in the first series. Her hairstyles and makeup are more sophisticated and, most importantly, she's a mum now," says Petra Letang. "Now it's Johnny who seems to be chasing her, because he wants to have a lot to do with their child. Of course, deep down she would like Johnny to be there and to live happily ever after with her, but she knows that's not going to happen. She is aware that preventing Johnny from having access to his son Tarjan is really affecting him. Pauline's going to play on that to try

PETRA ON MEN AND RELATIONSHIPS

What do you think men want most in a close, intimate relationship?

Honesty and a woman who looks good so that they are made to look good too.

Your idea of a good date?

I love food, so it would have to include a meal. I'd also love to be picked up from home and taken out for a drink and then on to a movie. It doesn't take much to please me, really.

What are the things you like most about men?

The first thing I notice are nice eyes, nice lips and pert bums.

What irritates you most about the opposite sex?

Men who lie, although that applies to both sexes, really.

What do you want most in a close relationship?

I want someone who is honest, someone who would make me laugh. Ideally, I'd like someone who is a friend as well as a lover.

Are women more able than men to talk openly with friends about problems?

Definitely. My friends and I will talk about every single detail. Women also talk a lot more about their personal feelings and personal experiences.

What do you think are the subtle differences between men and women?

Women are more emotional and more willing to talk about their feelings. I think men can be emotional as well, but are less likely to discuss it.

Have you ever been hurt in a relationship? Yes!

100:

Do you believe in love at first sight? Yes. It has happened to me!

Who would you most like to be the father of your children metaphorically speaking, of course?

A combination of Denzel Washington's face and Chris Rock's sense of humour

EVELYN DUAH PLAYS MARCIA



Born – Hackney Trained – Middlesex University, Anna Scher Theatre Appeared in – Holby City, The Bill; Films - dead (playing Lenny Henry's wife), Siding Doors

Marcia and Linvall didn't get it together after Gus and Chantelle's wedding at the end of last series. Marcia still feels Linvall has a lot growing up to do.

"It's been almost a year since we last saw Marcia and Linvall together," says Evelyn Duah. "Things haven't quite worked out, and the only interaction they have now is with regard to Eric, their son. Marcia believes a woman can't teach a boy to be a man, so she's hoping that Linvall will be a role model. But a year on, he has forsaken that promise and it has been left up to Marcia to pick up the pieces again."

A slow year in terms of acting work, meant that Evelyn was able to immerse herself in her other great love – teaching. "I have been teaching drama and choreography for seven years at the Anna Scher Theatre. I started out as a young professional at the Anna Scher Theatre, so it's quite ironic that I now teach the young professional group.

"I do enjoy teaching: it gives me the opportunity to give something back and perhaps be an inspiration. It's not necessary for them all to become actors, because I think this business is a hard path to follow and can be incredibly deflating. I have had a tiny input into some of the rising stars you see on our screens in dramas such as 2000 Acres of Sky, Byker Grove, Tracey Beaker - there's so many," she says proudly.

"I've been fortunate to have taught all over the world. Through my teaching, I have been able to work with so many people, from all kinds of backgrounds. I have found it fascinating because it has helped to keep my creative energy alive."

With some sadness, Evelyn recalls one of the most traumatic events which touched her life last year. "After filming the first series of **Babyfather**, I took a group of young professionals from the Anna Scher Theatre School to America. We were there on September 11, literally 20 miles away from the Pentagon where the plane crashed. It was so awful."

EVELYN ON MEN AND RELATIONSHIPS

What do you think men want most in a close, intimate relationship? Companionship, intimacy and lots of space as well.

Your idea of a good date?

To spend a Sunday afternoons with someone who is relaxed within himself.

What are the things you like most about men?

I like men who smile and who are confident; not arrogant or egotistical.

What irritates you most about the opposite sex? Men who don't put the loo seats down!

What do women want most in a close relationship? The same as men really.

Are women more able than men to talk openly with friends about problems? Yes, I think men just scratch the surface because it would appear weak for a man to breakdown and admit things were going wrong.

What do you think are the subtle differences between men and women?

MONA HAMMOND PLAYS MILLIE POTTINGER

A mother who only wants health and happiness for her son should be applauded. But there is a fine line between being supportive and being interfering! Chantelle's mother-in-law is every wife's nightmare - nothing is quite good enough for her only son, Gus, and Millie seizes every opportunity to let him know as much. Is Millie simply being overly protective or is she still coming to terms with the fact that Chantelle is her husband's illegitimate daughter? The journey for the Pottinger family in series two is a roller-coaster of emotions, a roller-coaster which ends abruptly by episode seven.

Best known for her role as Blossom in EastEnders, Mona was recently seen in C4's White Teeth. Her TV/Theatre credits also include: Storm Damage, Trial and Retribution (TV), Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Macbeth and The Crucible (Theatre).

T-BONE WILSON PLAYS LLOYD POTTINGER

Lloyd finds himself caught in the middle of Gus and Chantelle's marriage problems; he can't help but take Chantelle's side, leaving Gus equally frustrated. Lloyd also offers Johnny some sound advice.

In the first series, long forgotten secrets threatened to tear the Pottinger marriage apart. Not only did Lloyd discover that his son Gus was the product of an illicit affair, he also discovered that Chantelle, his soon-to-be daughter-in-law, was in fact his own daughter! Chantelle had been searching for her absent father following the death of her Irish mother. Fate has a way of turning your world upside down when you least expect it.

T-Bone, who came from Britain in the '60s from Guyana, trained to be an actor at the Mountview Theatre School. His Film/TV/Theatre credits include: Babylon (Film); Storm Damage, Prime Suspect 2 (TV); Smile Orange (Theatre).

JAY BYRD PLAYS MRS LINDO

What else is a good mother for but babysitting duties? Mrs Lindo has her arms full when friends and family exploit her time.

Mrs Lindo really loves her errant son Johnny, the young man who made two women pregnant at the same time in the first series. If only he would wise up, settle down and sort himself out! She's worried that if Johnny doesn't get his act together, his children are going to lose out. Like Jimmy Cricket, her role is to be Johnny's conscience, and she wastes no time when the opportunity arises to give him a good piece of her mind!

Jay Byrd has been concentrating on her writing for the past nine years. Born in Jamaica, her TV/Theatre/Radio credits include: Casualty, Auf Wiedersehen Pet, Jerusalem The Golden (TV); Revolution at Saint Barbara (Radio); The Ride Down Mount Morgan, Hair (Theatre).

AVRIL E. RUSSELL - SCRIPT WRITER

Avril Russell trained as a film technician by Intermedia and is a self-taught writer, with over 10 years experienced in television. Born in Nottingham where she still lives, Avril's credits include Slent Witness, Crucial Tales: Revolver, The Bill, Back-up and the first series of Babyfather. Avril's career as a writer/director was kicked started by the writers' workshop launched by actor/comedian, Lenny Henry and his independent production company, Crucial Films 10 years ago. Avril says: "I've never forgotten Lenny's generosity and support and will pay him back one day."

ROY WILLIAMS - SCRIPT WRITER

Winner of the Evening Standard Most Promising Playwright award, 2001, Roy Williams is an accomplished writer whose many theatre credits include: Sing Yer Heart Out (Lyttleton Loft); Clubland (Royal Court); The Gift (Tricycle); Local Boy (Hampstead); and Starstruck (Tricycle) winner of the 31st John Whiting Award and the EMMA for best play and The No-Boys Cricket Club. Radio/TV credit to-date: Homeboys for Radio 4 and Offside, a 30-min TV drama for BBC Factual & Learning.

Roy, who has recently completed a six-month residency at the Royal Court Theatre, is currently commissioned to write new plays for The Tricycle, the Royal Court, the Polka Children's Theatre, and Nottingham Playhouse.

SHARON FOSTER - SCRIPT WRITER

Babyfather 2 is Sharon Foster's first major project for television. A talented and gifted writer, with a degree in media studies, Sharon has been a scriptwriter for 10 years and was one of 12 upcoming writers selected to take part in the Lenny Henry/Crucial Films writers' workshop 10 years ago.Inspired by writers such as David E Kelly, Debbie Horsfield, Paul Abbott and Tony Marchant, she is currently developing a film project for television. Sharon was born in Hackney, East London where she still lives.

BABYFATHER WEBSITE

TOP 10 CHAT UP LINES AS SUBMITTED TO http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/babyfather

TOP 10

- 1. Can I check your label to see if you were made in heaven?
- 2. I think there's something wrong with my eyes because I can't take my eyes off you.
- 3. If I had invented the alphabet, I would have put U next to I.
- 4. That dress looks good on you can I talk you out of it?
- 5. I like my man just like my coffee, sweet, black and strong.
- 6. If your smile wants an audience, I'm buying a season ticket.
- 7. I have seen stars in the sky, but this is the first time I have seen them[a th,oj.3(one')6.1(s)8.1(y)0.6ticket.