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ITVS creating Canadian soap

Lygo eyes global soaps market as ITV Studios looks for 'transformational' impact

BY JAKE KANTER

ITV Studios is in advanced talks with a Canadian broadcaster about creating a new soap opera on the scale of *Coronation Street*.

In an exclusive interview with *Broadcast*, ITVS managing director Kevin Lygo said it was "quite far down the line" with discussions about a potentially long-running, daily drama, which, if commissioned, would be "transformational" for the business.

The deal is set to be the first move in a major push on soaps for ITVS.

"We want to take our expertise in long-running dramas, with huge casts and many writers, and export that technique and experience," Lygo said. "*Coronation Street* is a big success in Canada, so we're leveraging that reputation to make an equivalent that's domestic to Canada, Australia or anywhere we can get going."

Lygo declined to name the Canadian channel, but *Broadcast* understands that public broadcaster CBC, which airs *Coronation Street* in the country, is the likely partner.



Coronation Street: shown in more than 60 territories, including Canada

Lygo said the UK's ability to produce high-volume, writer room drama was often overlooked. "*Emmerdale* and *Corrie* are two of the most successful dramas in the UK and they're on nearly every day of the year. We need to do something of that scale internationally to transform."

ITV chief executive Adam Crozier has marked out drama as one of the key genres ITVS must crack internationally if it is to make a significant contribution to the company's five-year plan to reduce its dependence on advertising revenue.

Titanic, which has been sold by ITVS Global Entertainment to 96

Three- or six-part dramas are fine, but have little impact on the bottom line

Kevin Lygo, ITV Studios

territories, is indicative of this strategy, but Lygo said the business needs to produce more sustainable propositions.

"It's hard to start [a soap opera], but if we can get it right, it is transformational because of its volume. A three- or six-part drama is fine, but then it stops and has little impact on your bottom line," he explained.

It is hoped that ITVS could sell the Canadian soap around the world, and even back to the UK.

CBC extended its multi-year deal for *Corrie* last year, adding in catch-up rights for the soap, which airs every weekday at 6.30pm and 7pm. The Manchester-based drama is now shown in more than 60 territories, including China, Australia, Africa and the Middle East.

► For full Lygo Interview, see page 22

N&S eyes YouView for adult content

Channel 5 owner Northern & Shell wants to capitalise on its position as a shareholder by launching a range of adult channels on YouView.

Portland TV's Television X and Red Hot TV could be among the first YouView channels, raising eyebrows at its other partners. **Page 3**



Donal MacIntyre's 10 years with the 'Sopranos of Manchester' **Page 32**

Kudos branches out via C4 drama

Kudos is to make its first Channel 4 drama in more than a decade – a conspiracy thriller written by the co-creator of the musical *Matilda*.

Utopia centres on a group of people forced to go on the run from a dangerous group known as The Network. **Page 3**

Unpaid invoices dog freelancers

Freelancers lost out on £500,000 in 2011 and face being even more out of pocket this year, as a result of a significant spike in bad debts.

Bectu blamed indies and post houses not paying up as their budgets are being squeezed by broadcasters. **Page 5**

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All is forgiven if you are straight and honest
with your contributors from the start



Donal MacIntyre, Behind the Scenes, page 32

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Behind the Scenes

AT HOME WITH THE NOONANS

My decade with the Sopranos of Manchester

We built a lot of trust with Domenyk Noonan and his family – but we were careful not to get drawn too far into their world, says **Donal MacIntyre**



Donal MacIntyre
 Producer/director

I first met Domenyk Noonan a decade ago outside Court 13 at Belmarsh Crown Court in London. He was facing a drugs trafficking charge after being caught in possession of half a million pounds worth of heroin. “My brother was offered a contract to kill you,” was his opening play. “Really?” I replied. “Well, he’s not very good then.”

Noonan, then 40, had spent nearly 25 years in jail and was facing another 25 if convicted of the charges. In this window of vulnerability, he agreed to be filmed. In the event, he was acquitted in typical swashbuckling style and we have kept filming him, his immediate family and associates, ever since.

Over the years, we have followed him through kidnapping, torture, rape and gun charges, and witnessed as he dealt with the murder of his hitman brother Desmond.

There is no doubt that Noonan is television gold. It’s not often you come across an Urdu-speaking gay gangster who occasionally does stints as a stand-up comic and runs his alternative community police station, offering justice services openly to rival the police.

More than that, he was one of the architects of the Strangeways riots, and his family firm is indelibly linked with Manchester’s Hacienda nightclub, where it provided security for many years. More recently, Noonan made the headlines when he was arrested at the

scene of the riots in Manchester last summer and it was revealed that he was a cousin of Mark Duggan, the Londoner shot dead by a police marksman, sparking the four-day rioting spree.

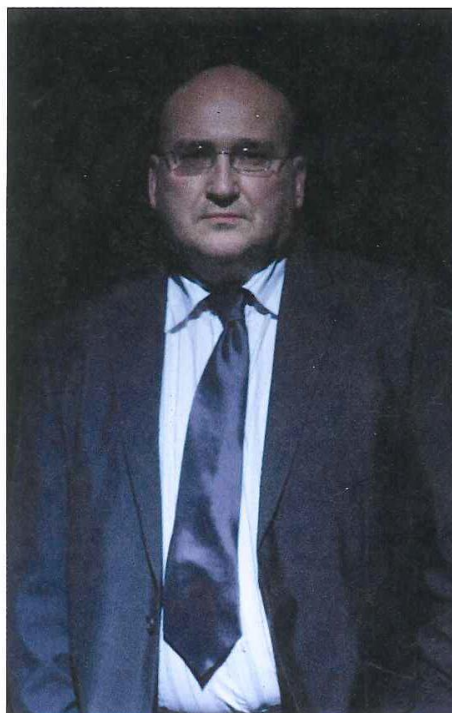
The US press called him Manchester’s answer to Tony Soprano. They revelled in the combination of charisma and menace that he seemed to exude, and yet he and his family’s standing in the community brought 3,000 people to his brother’s funeral.

Controversy follows Noonan wherever he goes, and with all the cameras in his world, it’s hard not to make a compelling documentary about him. It is 38 years since Paul Watson made *The Family*, an inside look at a middle-class family, and it’s taken 10 of those years to bring the six episodes of *At Home With The Noonans* to TV.

Our early forays with the Noonans were broadcast on Channel 5 and edited for cinema as *A Very British Gangster*, which was selected for Sundance and got a theatrical release in the US, France, Spain and the UK. Dealing with such difficult material was made easier due to the production team’s considerable current affairs experience, which helped to prevent them being bullied by the participants.

The challenges were immense. Legally, we had only one attempted injunction against the project in a decade, and that was by the Greater Manchester Police, which failed at the courts. Ironically, while they were taking me to court, I was filming with their car crime unit for another series.

The most recent bout of filming, over the past two years, has allowed us to create an episodic TV vehicle for the Noonan story. I think this is the best



‘It’s not often you come across an Urdu-speaking gay gangster who occasionally does stints as a stand-up comic’

Donal MacIntyre

AT HOME WITH THE NOONANS

Production companies Eyeline Entertainment/Dare Films
TX Sunday 22 April, 10pm, Crime & Investigation Network
Commissioner Koulla Anastasi
Producer/director Donal MacIntyre
Executive producer Sean O’Kelly
Series producer David Malone
Producers Duncan Napier-Bell, Nick Napier-Bell
Camera Simon Moule, Mike Turnbull
Post-house DMR Film Ventures
Summary Donal MacIntyre’s ob doc centres on the most notorious family in Manchester, headed by crime boss Domenyk Noonan.

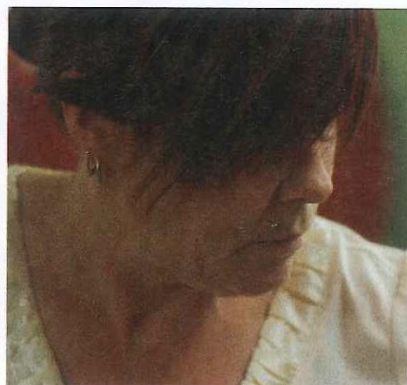
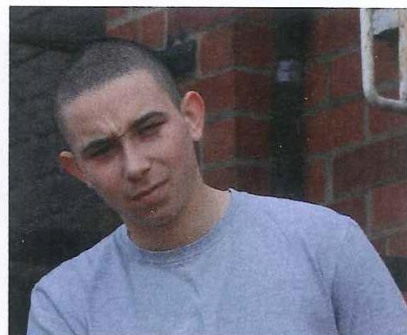
Donal MacIntyre My tricks of the trade

- Make your phone number available to every one of your subjects – day or night. They rarely call, but it can make for a more balanced relationship.
- Remind your participants on camera that programme-makers don’t incite, encourage or in any way advance crimes of any sort. Set out your rules of engagement: you’re there to reveal their world, not their modus operandi.
- Show your contributors the films in advance. Give them no editorial control but let them know you’re happy to correct any inaccuracies and be advised of any issues or consequences that arise.

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way of following their ins and outs over the years. We have ended up with a 7 Up for gangsters, with a bit of *The Family* thrown in for good measure.

We don't just discuss children living in a cycle of crime but film it. The viewer witnesses the descent into crime of Bugsy from innocent seven-year-old to 17-year-old offender. Poignantly, he goes to the same juvenile prison his dad went to 30 years earlier.

The series is indebted to the beautiful camera work from Crewed Up's Mike Turnbull and much of the material has been shot on Red Cameras and the Sony 5D.

The making of the series has been based on trust and respect with our participants, without ever crossing the line or getting our hands dirty. It is very much old-style access documentary-making, but the unique quality is the subject matter and the time we have had in the field. Despite the occasional misunderstanding and error of judgement, our approach has allowed us to maintain and forge relationships with the Noonan family over 10 years.

All is forgiven if you are straight and honest with your contributors from the start. Despite my previous undercover heritage, this has proven to be an invaluable golden rule in all our documentary productions.

Clockwise from left: crime boss Domenyk Noonan; Noonan and his henchmen; son Bugsy Noonan; matriarch Mandy Noonan

AT HOME WITH THE NOONANS MAINTAINING ACCESS



David Malone
Series producer

Filming *At Home with The Noonans* was quite different to the usual documentary model. The access was solid, the relationship with the family had been built up over a decade, but there were potential pitfalls.

First, the series was never going to succeed with a large team. We pared it right back, so that in Manchester we had only three core people: cameraman Simon Moule shot on a 5D SLR with a specially built rig; as producer, I was responsible for content and also recorded sound; and as director, Donal put his visual stamp on the series.



Keeping the team tight allowed us to react quickly to events, such as when the police raided the matriarch Mandy Noonan's house (left). At all times, the Noonans knew they were dealing with just three people. Relationship-building is

critical to maintain the quality of access in documentary-making.

We also laid out some strong ground rules. Top of the list was the fact that under no circumstances would our team observe any wrongdoing; the criminals respected that. We also felt strongly that the series would only succeed if we were in the right place at the right time, waiting for events to happen. Inevitably, we passed many hours having cups of tea with criminals, but when it did kick off, we were all perfectly placed.

I am often asked if we feared for our safety. The simple answer is "rarely", but with the caveat that we were always aware that a careless sentence could cost us the access, and unleash the temper of men not afraid to use extreme violence. It became as much an exercise in diplomacy as the practicalities of filming a six-part ob doc.

I'm proud of the series, most of all for its difficulty. Creating TV from controlled scenarios is one thing, but making six hours of peaktime viewing with some of Britain's most volatile gangsters called upon all of our collective years of experience.