

Cutting It

Main cast

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Introduction

For the acclaimed writer of *Making Out*, *Born To Run*, *The Riff Raff Element* and *Sex, Chips & Rock 'n' Roll*, this will be her third workplace drama. “*Making Out* was based on a factory, then there was *Born To Run* which centred on the car industry, and now this. What I am doing is working through the jobs that I have done in the past!” laughs the Eccles-born mother of four.

With Manchester fast becoming the production capital for many new dramas on the BBC, Debbie is happy to continue the tradition of setting her dramas in the North. “I’ve only ever written about something that I have personal experience of, which is why I write about the North. It is where I grew up. It is my background. It’s what I know,” she says proudly.

Jane Tranter, Controller of Drama Commissioning adds: “*Cutting It* has all the right ingredients – love, betrayal, humour and desire, written by Debbie Horsfield on top form. Her style is unique and we’re proud that she continues to write such quality drama for BBC ONE, after the success of her other shows with us.”

The cast also includes: James Midgley as Shane; Lucy Gaskell as Ruby; Pearce Quigley as Eugene; Annette Badland as Brawdie; Bill Thomas as Tom; and Philip Martin Brown as Smedley.

Produced by Diederick Santer, the directors are Andy De Emmony and Catherine Morshead; the executive producers are Sally Haynes, Debbie Horsfield and Laura Mackie. *Cutting It* is a BBC production for BBC ONE.

For additional material, check out the BBC’s new Press Office website at www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice for recorded interviews with the main cast and writer Debbie Horsfield.

Main cast/ production team

Amanda Holden
Sarah Parish
Jason Merrells
Ben Daniels
Angela Griffin
Siân Reeves
James Midgley
Lucy Gaskell
Pearce Quigley
Annette Badland
Bill Thomas

Mia Bevan
Allie Henshall
Gavin Ferraday
Finn Bevan
Darcey Henshall
Sydney Henshall
Shane Ince
Ruby Ferris
Eugene Eubank
Brawdie Henshall
Tom Henshall

Executive Producers

Sally Haynes
Debbie Horsfield
Laura Mackie
Debbie Horsfield
Diederick Santer
Andy De Emmony (1-3)
Catherine Morshead (4-6)
Elizabeth Binns
Ian Liggett
John Coleman
Andy Pryor
Michael Johnson
Kathy Ducker
Manda Levin
Mark Hinton Stewart
Stephen O'Connell (1-3)
Nick Arthurs (4-6)

Writer
Producer
Directors

Associate Producer
Director of Photography
Production Designer
Casting Director
Costume Designer
Hair and Make-up Designer
Script Editor
Composer
Film Editors

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Sarah gossip:

What's your worst hair disaster story?

She's gutsy, strong and ambitious, but will Allie allow her heart to rule her head?

Secrets and lies can return to haunt you when you least expect it, and for Allie Henshall it's time to face up to painful events of her past – long-buried, but never forgotten.

Allie Henshall, 36, is happily married to Gavin, but appearances are not what they first seem. After 10 years of concentrating on their salon, Henshall Ferraday, Gavin is desperate to start a family, but Allie isn't ready for motherhood; in fact it terrifies her!

Ambitious, with no thoughts yet of having children, Sarah confesses that "Allie Henshall is very similar to me".

"I think Allie's at that age where she's wondering if she's maternal or if she's a business woman, and she thinks if she takes one year off, everything will fall apart. Also, as the story transpires, there's a much more gripping reason why Allie doesn't want to have kids.

all went away on holiday together and it sort of happened then,” she laughs. We got on really, really well, and that’s always the best way to start a relationship, as good friends. He’s honest and fun to be with.”

Brought up in Yeovil, Somerset, Sarah – who first found fame in a Boddingtons TV advert – didn’t have time to be instructed in the art of hairdressing before filming began: “I didn’t do the training everyone else did. I was doing something else called *Impact* at the time, so my make-up ladies on that got me a fake dummy’s head, stuck a wig on it and I’d come in and take its ends off and give it a perm.

“I’m now very good at blow drying. I’ve taken Ben Daniels’s ends off and given the director, Andy De Emmony, a number two. I think he wanted a number four, but he got a number two!” she laughs. “It was very short, he looked like he was about to join the military.”

Fans of *Hearts And Bones* will be knocked out by Sarah’s transformation, but she found the experience of wearing hair extensions all too much and couldn’t wait to return to her usual cropped style. “I found it very difficult to blow dry myself. And when it hadn’t been washed, it looked a bit like Rod Stewart’s!”

The award-winning actress will be seen later this year starring alongside Greg Wise and Daniela Nardini in *Sirens*

Jason Merrells plays Gavin Ferraday

Handsome, capable and caring, Gavin is desperate for a baby with wife Allie.

Dependable, patient, supportive and successful, 34-year-old Gavin has all the hallmarks of an ideal husband, but will that be enough to prevent wife, Allie (Sarah Parish), from straying into the arms of ex-lover Finn Bevan (Ben Daniels)?

Gavin is almost too good to be true. He's very much in love with Allie and can't understand why she's so reluctant to take the obvious next step in what seems to be a very happy marriage.

"I suppose at the back of Gavin's mind he knows there's more to why Allie doesn't want to have kids," says the Essex-born actor. "He loves her and is prepared to wait and be patient. But I feel he waits too long before doing anything."

With the inner confidence that only comes from having really proved oneself (while Allie built up the salon Gavin was stylist to the Manchester pop-ocracy, jetting about collecting plaudits and silverware), Gavin has even offered to give up work and be the primary carer for their child. And if Allie has really set her heart on a second salon, he's prepared to give her all the support she needs to expand the business and have a baby.

Like Gavin, Jason would be happy to be a stay-at-home dad: "I do that anyway. I spend a lot of time taking care of my son now my wife's gone back to work. It's something I enjoy doing and why I'm happy having a break, not really working at the moment."

The arts graduate also enjoys putting brush to canvas, and is currently painting a 5ft-by-6ft abstract to go with the number of other pieces taking up space in his garage! "I hate leaving my paintings locked in a garage where no-one can see them," he says. "I've sold some pieces in the past when I exhibited in the Brighton area

where I lived. I used to exhibit more than I do and it's something I will push eventually, but there's no need to at the moment because I'm concentrating on my acting."

With *Clocking Off*, *Fat Friends* and *Queer As Folk* under his belt, the popular actor did not attend drama school before landing his first TV role in *Casualty*. "I did loads of different jobs (none of which was hairdressing) to make ends meet and was earning about 50 quid a week doing fringe theatre before *Casualty* came along.

"My character in this is very similar to the guy I played in *Clocking Off* and, to some extent, like Matt in *Casualty*. I always seem to be cast in similar roles as nice, easygoing guys. I long to play a dark character in something like *The Outsider*, a slightly more challenging role. I think as an actor it's important to stretch oneself."

The kickboxing expert will be seen later this year in BBC ONE's *The Inspector Lynley Mysteries* and the new series of *Fat Friends*.

Ben gossip:

What's the worst haircut you've ever had?

I wanted to have hair like Terry from Funboy 3,

Ben Daniels plays Finn Bevan

With charisma in buckets, Finn's on a mission to win Allie Henshall back!

Tall, blond, with steely blue eyes, 39-year-old Finn Bevan is a man on a mission: to win back the love of his life, Allie Henshall. But if he can't get her, he's quite prepared to bed as many women as possible until he does. And it's easy to see why the lovable rogue wins women over, body and soul.

"He is a bit of a sex addict," confesses Ben, with a wry smile. "Women fall for Finn because he's incredibly flattering. He admires women and isn't phoney in his appreciation of them."

"People may have mixed feelings about him. But hopefully they'll like him. Finn is a very successful businessman who comes up to Manchester from London ahead of his wife. He's quite Machiavellian. He owns three bars in London and the stylish Byzantium bar in Manchester. He's on his fourth marriage and his wives are getting relatively younger," he laughs.

"I don't think he's in love with his wife, Mia. I think he likes her. I'm not sure to what extent she's aware of this. I think their marriage is great but it's not filled with love. She's highly ambitious and Finn is the same, but Allie is the love of his life, they were very young when they first got together and now he wants her back!"

Debates will rage between women across the country – should Allie be reckless and choose Finn over dependable Gavin?

A tough businessman on screen, the Nuneaton-born actor says he couldn't cut it in the real world. "No, I'm too soft," he admits. "I'd be a terrible businessman. My parents had businesses, my mum had a children's clothes shop and my dad a grocers – they were very business-minded. You have to be ruthless to make it work and I'm a pushover."

London-based Ben nearly didn't take up the opportunity to play the dynamic Finn: "I was about to get on a plane to Croatia for a holiday when my agent said: 'I think you'd really, really like this – I'll send you a few pages over to read'. Then I met the director, Andy De Emmony, and producer Diederick Santer before taking the script on holiday to Croatia."

The actor, whose film credits includes *Fanny And Elvis*, *Beautiful Thing* and *Conspiracy* with Kenneth Branagh, recalls with some hilarity his moment of glory last year when he was taken completely by surprise: "I won the Olivier Award for Best Supporting Actor for *All My Sons* which I did at the National Theatre. I had been doing a film in Amsterdam and arrived that morning to go to the ceremony. My agent told me I hadn't won, so I enjoyed myself and got slightly drunk. When they got to my category and said: 'And the winner is, Ben Daniels,' I was stunned! I went running up on the stage and gave Sarah Brightman a kiss that was a little bit too big!" he laughs.



Angela Griffin plays Darcey Henshall

Elegant, streetwise and sexy, Darcey is the ultimate kept woman.

Henshall Ferraday's resident beautician is Darcey: feisty, streetwise and sexy. Angela Griffin's new role is her most glamorous to date.

"It's been brilliant playing a glamorous character. She's had her boobs done, her stomach and legs done, everything's done. It's all about image and I've never worn so much make-up to play a character before!"

The *Coronation Street* and *Holby City* star confesses she would opt for plastic surgery: "I would consider having liposuction done, because I don't think there's anything wrong with it, but there's a danger with things going wrong. I think after I have my kids, and if gravity starts taking over, I would definitely go off and have a boob job and get it all brought back up again!"

A hairdresser, nurse, salsa teacher and now a beautician, Angela's major TV roles have all been to take care of the needs of others. However in *Cutting It*, her needs are being met by several married men, all eager to please.

Smedley Butt (Philip Martin Brown), her latest fling, has installed Darcey in a chi-chi Manchester apartment, with an array of store cards and more platinum from his jewellery shop than she knows what to do with. Darcey Henshall is very content with her status as a kept woman.

"I would love it, to have someone with loads and loads of money to look after me, but I think I would get bored," says the National TV Award-winner. "My extravagance is cars," she laughs. "I've recently bought a big 4x4 to get me up and down the motorway. I also love eating out."

"I went off to do some research for *Cutting It* which involved going to Kendals in Manchester and having an Elemis massage. The facial massage was great because it works on your five senses. The funny thing is, in *Cutting It*, they can't actually film me doing any of my massage treatments because it's always done in silence, in a room where the person's always got their kit off!" she laughs.

Like the salsa teacher in search of her father in the award-winning BBC TWO drama series *Babyfather*, issues about Darcey's parentage are a moot point as she is the only brown face in the Henshall family clan.

"Darcey's been told by her mum, Brawdie, that she's some kind of genetic throw-back from a great, great grandmother, Eunice, who came from Jamaica. But in the back of her mind she doesn't really believe that story at all." And as viewers will find out, she has good reason not to.

Spoiled rotten from childhood, Darcey is the only Henshall sister with mother Brawdie's wholehearted approval. "She loves Darcey, but Darcey can't stand Brawdie. She's this big, fat disgusting slob of a woman who's always eating and pigging out. Darcey loves her sisters to bits; but she's trying to please everybody else, she's trying to fit in with everybody around her and what she thinks they want."

From a close-knit family, the 25-year-old's strong bond with mum, Sheila, could not be further from that of her screen mum, Brawdie. "It was great filming so close to home, it meant that I was able to go off and see my mum and friends miles more than I normally get to see them."

From Hollywood stars to TV stars, renowned hairstylist Lino Carbosiero's impressive list of clientele reads like a roll call. With 20 years experience under his belt, he was the perfect choice to put Amanda through her paces when she embarked on a week's training for her role as Mia in *Cutting It*.

"I had to bring Amanda Holden up to speed very quickly because she only had a week. First of all we started with a head block (false model). I'd literally show her once how to put hair up and then down, and then she would do it. I know hairdressers who couldn't put hair up like that! It was actually quite funny," he smiles.

"Then she worked on real hair, first by observing. She learnt the technique of holding the scissors, then holding the comb and scissors together. There's a way of holding the hair, scissors and comb together and Amanda could do that easily. She has natural ability, an eye for detail, and was very comfortable blow-drying, shampooing, and putting rollers in. My juniors have to hold hair up for me while I work, and she did that – no problems at all – there were no airs or graces. She interacted well with the clients and just got on with job.

"She even swept the salon floor! She was my junior, so I certainly made her work; and even though she had a busy schedule she did put in a lot of time.

"We only had one week, but if I had six months with her, I could have turned her into a hairdresser, quite comfortably. Marks out of 10? – I'd give her 10! I said to her at the end of the week that if she wanted a job as a junior I would gladly take her on – but I don't think it would pay her mortgage!" he laughs.

"I have been styling and cutting Amanda's hair for about four or five years now. We've been through thick and thin. I have customers that go

Sydney Henshall (Siân Reeves)

Sydney (34) is a woman of many neuroses. A reluctant single mother to the pubescent Calypso, Syd is terrified that her daughter has firmer breasts and a better bottom than she does. Stick-thin, Sydney exercises for England – she’s the first to succumb to any new-age health fad, from detox to pilates, millet to meringue. Her eclectic dress sense (Brawdie calls her “tripe dressed as lobster”), her dogged reliance on self-help manuals, and her paranoia about being single and getting old characterise eccentric Sydney. Funny, sweet and sometimes vulnerable, Allie and Gavin try to keep a close eye on her. Syd also works at Henshall Ferraday, where she has turned nail care into an art form.

Born in West Bromwich, near Birmingham, Siân Reeves was brought up in Brewood, Staffordshire. Her TV credits include: *In A Land Of Plenty* and *Making Astronauts* for the BBC and *Urban Gothic* for C5. More recently, she was cast as Pauline in C4’s *Swallow*. On stage, she was Cossette in Trevor Nunn/John Caird’s *Les Misérables*, Maria in Bob Thomson’s UK tour of *West Side Story* and, more recently, Milly Dews at the RSC in

