

Programmes 8-14 October 1988 37p

TVS
and Channel Four

Time

Catch up

with

IAN

HOLM in

GAME,

SET &

MATCH

SEE PAGE 4 AND
C4, SATURDAY;
ITV, MONDAY

Joan Collins, and
Plus! Your chance to
a signed copy
of her first novel—in LA!

Plus!

JULIO IGLESIAS

on women

SEE PAGE 8 AND ITV, SATURDAY

HYWEL BENNETT

on booze

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ANNE DIAMOND

on how she got
to the top

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Len Deighton calls West Berlin a small island in the middle of a Communist sea, 400 kilometres inside East Germany.

Totally isolated, it is either (according to your mood) a brash, bustling modern city or a walled garden of remembrance to a horrific and not-so-distant past.

Outside one of the main underground stations stands a permanent list of Nazi death camps: Treblinka, Auschwitz, Belsen and the rest. Surprisingly, nobody has attempted to deface this monument to madness.

Near the graffiti-daubed Berlin Wall, a step or two from Checkpoint Charlie where American soldiers eyeball their twitchy East German counterparts, is a large eerie open space. Buildings where once the Gestapo ran its remorseless programme have been flattened, but this is a place of ghosts where imagination rocks reality.

By the time I reach the location where sequences for *Game, Set & Match* are being filmed, I'm quite ready to believe anything.

On the banks of the River Spree, a wide moat separating the two ideologies and patrolled by East German border guards, British actors Ian Holm and Mel Martin, who play MI6 agent Bernard Samson and his wife Fiona, stamp their feet as a chill wind blows across the water.

They are watching the old people, women mostly,

who survived the war, walking across Oberbaum Bridge to buy some Western food and goods. It is a melancholy place and Holm, a small, compact man, is clearly affected by what he sees.

'The old people are the only ones the East Germans will allow to come over,' he says. 'They come to do their shopping. Very few stay, no more than a handful. The rest return to East Berlin because that is where their home is. They have no other life to escape to so they stay where they are.'

His view of Berlin is as divided as the city itself. 'There are too many ghosts really, but the people seem kind. Perhaps things are changing slightly. I crossed into East Berlin the other day and actually got a smile out of one of the officials.'

'The Wall is an anachronism but I think, from an architectural point of view, East Berlin is preferable to West Berlin. On the East side of the city they are refurbishing all the old buildings whereas here in the Western half all they seem to do is tear every interesting building down and build these vast modern concrete blocks. Very garish... but terrifically modern and antiseptically clean.'

Holm, who at other times has played Goebbels and Himmler but, as yet, not Hitler, has some respect for German order and efficiency but dislikes the traditionally heavy German food.

He gives an example of the day's lunch menu - a piece of pork with vinegared red cabbage and caraway-flavoured potato

dumplings - it clearly does little to excite him.

Len Deighton describes Samson as a man of 40, getting fat and wrinkled. Holm, is in fact, 55 and says he has certainly put on weight while making the film. 'It's all this hotel living,' he says. 'I can hardly get into my trousers. It's terrible because when you get to my age, buttons start popping off if you aren't very careful.'

In the trilogy on which the series is based, there are constant references to Samson being short-winded and trying to give up smoking. 'We've cut that out,' says Holm, who only has an occasional cigarette in the evenings if he goes out for a drink.

Samson has two children whereas Holm, who married in 1982 for the third time, has five, three daughters and two sons.

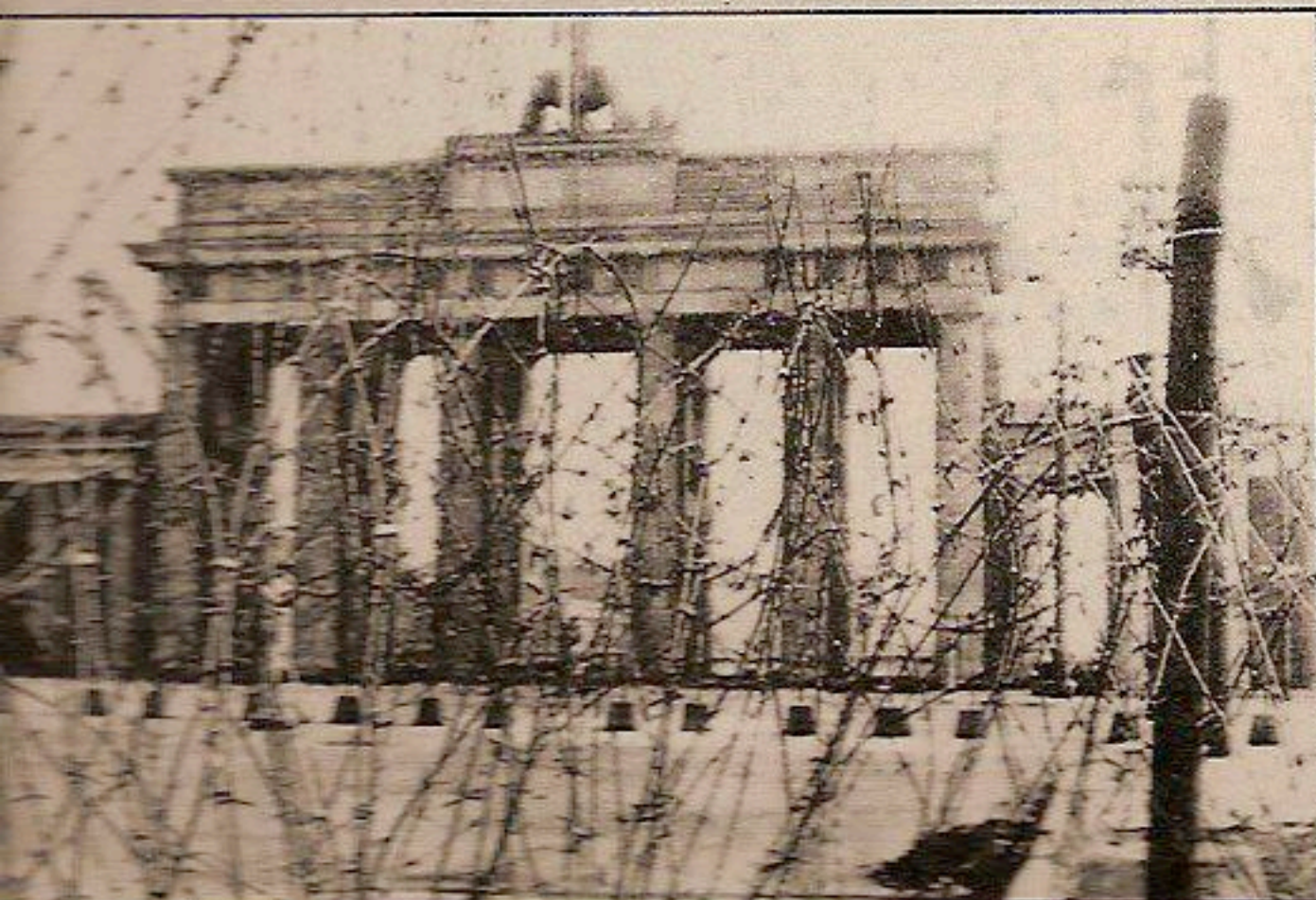
Like Samson, he is a fan of the late, great W C Fields and, unlike Samson, has no taste for the punch-up. 'I'm a totally non-physical person. And have managed to avoid all physical violence since I was about six years old.'

Mexico, which is where the story is later set, was uncomfortably warm by comparison. 'Acapulco was amazingly hot,' says Holm. 'Well over a hundred degrees. And it was horrible, just like Benidorm. Mexico is a smoggy, hot, dusty City packed full of cars chucking out

If you missed the first episode of 'Game, Set & Match', you can still catch Saturday's repeat on C4. If you didn't miss it, chances are you're already hooked. STEWART KNOWLES meets the stars of this year's classiest spy thriller series - in Berlin

The Games people play

'It's eerie... it makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end'



IT IS EVENING and in the cocktail lounge of the hotel Len Deighton regards as the best in Berlin, a pianist is playing.

Mel Martin, who has spent her working day dazzling onlookers in a white fur hat, olive green mid-length coat and black boots, is changed and packed, ready to take an early-morning flight out of this extraordinary city back to London.

It has been her first visit to Berlin and she finds it 'a pretty difficult town to get

hold of. It is possible, she says, to believe in espionage here, and just about anything else.

'It is a very eerie feeling which really can make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end because the history of this city is very frightening. There is a real feeling of energy about Berlin. It's full of intrigue and hidden undercurrents.'

Mel, who became known to viewers in 1977 as the star of *Love for Lydia*, first worked with Ian Holm in the ITV play *Night School* in

1978. Since then she has married and divorced actor Paul Ridley.

As Fiona in *Game, Set & Match*, Mel plays the part of Bernard Samson's wife and has two children.

Fiona went to Oxford and achieved brilliant results in philosophy, politics and economics; whereas Mel cheerfully admits: 'I was useless at school - bored, idle. From the age of 10, I always knew what I wanted to do so I just didn't bother with anything else.'

Fiona is an accomplished

sonous exhaust fumes.
the Mexican people are
rable.

The problem with all
ation filming is that you
en't time to see much of
place and, whenever I
get a day off I'm
hausted. This is the hard-
thing I've ever done as
in virtually every shot. I
hope the public don't
sick of the sight of me.
doubt if Bernard Sam-
s going to become a
figure, but a lot of
ple will be watching it
I suppose, it's inevit-
e that I'll become public
perty,' says Holm, with
air of a man who has just
en offered a week's
iday on the Costa del

It's something I'm going
have to come to terms
t, but I hate the idea as
a very private person
I have so far managed to
and being in the public
Up until now I've found
very easy to blend with
crowd.'



linguist who studied
Russian at the Sorbonne in
Paris and speaks fluent
French. Mel, on the other
hand, says, 'I took French at
school and failed but do in
fact speak quite good
French thanks to spending
a year in Paris as an au pair
when I left school.'

Fiona – clever girl – took
a course at the Cordon Bleu
cookery school. Mel laughs.
'That is definitely not me.
I'm not a bad cook, but I'm
not interested enough to
practise. My cooking first
started with opening cans
and gradually moved on to
a little gentle entertaining.

While Fiona crewed for a

transatlantic yacht race,
Mel is 'terrified' of small
boats. 'I love being on the
water in a big boat but
definitely not in little sailing
boats that go over
sideways.'

There are a few similari-
ties between the two
women, however. Fiona
worked for an art dealer,
while Mel's father is Frank
Martin, the artist. She was
born and brought up in Lon-
don's Chelsea, where the
Samsons are supposed to
have lived and, like Fiona,
she has a sister, Tessa.

The amazingly accom-
plished if irritating perfect
Fiona, who dabbles in

haute cuisine, politics and
sailing, drives a red
Porsche. Or at least she did
in the books.

'It was impossible to film
in a Porsche,' says Mel. 'It
was far too cramped with a
cameraman crammed in
the back and the two
children there, too, so we
use a dark blue Mercedes
instead.'

'It is a lovely car, except
for it being an automatic. I
have never driven an
automatic before. I hate
them. It's that horrible
business of not feeling
completely in control,' says
Mel Martin, homeward
bound.

TV