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BBC Worldwide

THE BOSS

SERIES 2

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6 x 30 minutes

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THE BOSS

SERIES 2

Title Page

Jim Broadbent returns as the bank manager no one can count on

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



THE BOSS

SERIES 2

Introduction

Laughing all the way to the bank...

Actor **Jim Broadbent** returns to cash in on trouble as the bungling bank manager Peter Duffley, with **Claire Skinner** as his super-efficient nemesis, assistant manager Susan Harvey.

Duffley, a pompous dimwit, is exceptionally lazy. He relies on everyone around him to prevent banking disasters, including his new secretary Barbara (**Beverley Callard**) in her first TV role since leaving behind her character of Liz McDonald in Granada's long-running soap, *Coronation Street*. **Daniel Flynn** plays handsome area manager David Edwards; **David Schneider** is the hapless Bradley Wilson; **Stephen Moore** is vengeful counter clerk Geoffrey Parkes; and **Wendy Nottingham** is nervous assistant Evelyn Walker.

During the new series, Peter "borrows" a pedigree greyhound from two tough brothers when they visit his office for the reading of a will; becomes concerned that one of his clients is undergoing a sex change; and discovers, to his horror, that Bradley is his own son, the product of a night of passion 25 years ago. Meanwhile, Susan's relationship with the area manager heats up when David's marriage collapses.

Says producer **Dan Patterson**: "This series could do for banking what the World Cup did for English cricket. Everybody works with a Peter Duffley in every office and nobody can bring him to life like Jim Broadbent."

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



THE BOSS

SERIES 2

Regular Cast List

Peter Duffley	Jim Broadbent
Susan Harvey	Claire Skinner
Barbara	Beverley Callard
David Edwards	Daniel Flynn
Bradley Wilson	David Schneider
Geoffrey Parkes	Stephen Moore
Evelyn Walker	Wendy Nottingham

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes

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THE BOSS

SERIES 2

Production Credits

Written by **Mark Burton**, **John O'Farrell** and **Dan Patterson**

Producer **Dan Patterson**

Director **Nick Wood**

A Hat Trick production for BBC Television

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



THE BOSS

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Characterisations

Jim Broadbent (Peter Duffley)

Nice guy Jim wants to be nasty

Jim Broadbent can take centre stage as one of Britain's leading actors – but the star of *The Boss* still cherishes a secret ambition.

"I wouldn't mind being more of a baddie," he confides. "Peter Duffley (his character in *The Boss*) is a bit of a baddie but I wouldn't mind doing something quite nasty for a change."

The Lincolnshire furniture maker's son, who has just celebrated his 50th birthday, believes he knows how Duffley has managed to keep his job after the first series.

"Peter hasn't basically changed but now he is slightly less indolent and lazy. The question was raised as to how he still had his job, but now he has proved that even though he is by no means good at it, he can just hang in there. He spends a lot of time explaining his inadequate behaviour and justifying himself. He has a sort of native cunning; he knows how to watch his back and look after himself, but he is basically still incompetent and his career will always be somewhat in the balance."

Jim says he can now empathise with those who have someone like Peter Duffley in their office. "If I had to work under him, I would become like Geoffrey – rather bitter, twisted, cynical and probably disruptive."

Jim compares the weekly turn-around of a sitcom to being a part of a theatrical company, when the same group of people put on a play a week. "It generates a good team spirit and I was looking forward to working on it and seeing everyone again. I spent most of last year doing a Mike Leigh film based on Gilbert and Sullivan, called *Topsy-Turvy*, so it was a good change." The four-times-Oscar-nominated movie, also starring Allan Corduner, Timothy Spall and Alison Steadman, was premièred at the Venice Film Festival in September where Jim won the Best Actor award for his role as librettist WS Gilbert.

This is not the first time Jim has worked with Mike Leigh, who directed him in *Life Is Sweet*, in which *The Boss* co-star Claire Skinner played his daughter. Other high-profile and prolific directors he has worked with include Mike Newell and Woody Allen. He recalls being invited to appear in Allen's *Bullets Over Broadway*. "Woody is great. He just knows what he's doing so well, to write and direct a new film every year is a phenomenal achievement."

Entertainment

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Jim remembers the day he received his phone call from Woody. "I was in a hotel in Ireland at the time and I got the call that he would be ringing in half-an-hour. It was very exciting, I was pacing the room, thinking if the phone is going to ring, it's going to be Woody Allen, so I'll have to be cool. It's just like getting your first job or getting into drama school."

His other movie roles have included *The Borrowers*, *The Crying Game*, *Little Voice*, *The Avengers*, *Enchanted April* and *Brazil*. He is currently in Australia working on Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* with Ewan McGregor, Nicole Kidman and director by Baz Luhrmann.

Jim has followed in the footsteps of his parents who were both members of an amateur dramatic society. After finishing his art foundation course he decided to go to drama school and was accepted by the prestigious LAMDA. His first acting job was with the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre immediately he left college, but it wasn't until four years later that he got an agent or worked outside the arena of the theatre.

To supplement his income he took a variety of temporary jobs. "I worked on farms in Lincolnshire in the summer, did temporary jobs in London – van driving, table clearing, washing up in the Bank of England canteen, labouring, shop fitting, domestic cleaning, helping in a tea tent at a golf tournament... whatever was around. I quite enjoyed it all, actually, it was an experience I wouldn't have been without."

One job Jim remembers as one of his least successful was when he joined a modelling agency called the "Ugly Agency". "They had all sorts of beautiful young men and women and, of course, character men and women. I went in on the character side but I didn't get one job, perhaps I wasn't ugly enough!"

Jim's many television credits encompass a wide range of comedy and dramatic roles and, for the BBC, his performances include *Heroes and Villains*, *Wide-Eyed and Legless*, *Bird of Prey*, *The Insurance Man*, *Murder Most Horrid*, *Blackadder*, *Only Fools and Horses* and *Victoria Wood As Seen On TV*.

He is also well-known as one half of the National Theatre of Brent, which he founded with Patrick Barlow.

Away from the spotlight, Jim makes small gargoyle sculptures, a talent he inherited from his mother. He also enjoys writing – he has written three short films – and likes walking and golf which, he admits, he plays badly.

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



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Characterisations

Claire Skinner (Susan Harvey)

Love is in the air...

The price of love could be too high for Claire Skinner, as the highly-capable assistant bank manager Susan Harvey, in the new series of *The Boss*.

Area manager David (played by Daniel Flynn) found Susan very attractive in the last series and Claire explains that their relationship has now developed, although he is still very married! "It gets really good as David and Susan turn into a will-they-won't-they? scenario. They are on the verge of falling into a relationship all the time and they do get a snog." Claire also admits: "I love doing the will-they-won't-they? situations with Dan as he plays David so earnestly; he just makes me laugh as he is so serious."

Claire feels Susan is under the illusion that she keeps incompetent bank manager Peter Duffley in check. She says: "Susan is actually quite neurotic herself. She throws her weight around and thinks that she keeps him under control, when I don't think she particularly does. She thinks she's so efficient but, actually, she is quite flawed herself!" Underneath that bossy attitude towards Peter, Claire believes that Susan is actually quite fond of him. "There's one episode in which she goes to the airport and tells him: 'You're not such a bad bloke after all! I think there is a little soft spot in there.'"

Claire adds: "I do enjoy sitcoms but it's a different discipline. I came straight to it from a drama and it's quite odd as it takes a different type of concentration. Although it's larger than life, it's actually quite specific and you have to be a bit 'larger' than you would ordinarily choose to be. I also enjoy the adrenaline of studio audiences. When you are filming, you don't get the adrenaline rush that comes when you have an audience."

Claire had previously worked with Jim in Mike Leigh's film *Life Is Sweet*, in which she played his daughter, and is delighted to be reunited with him for *The Boss*. She says: "Jim is so clear about what he is doing and it is just lovely watching him – he has such an easy way with him, both in life and in work. There is something quite paternal about Jim, but not in the traditional sense. There's something quite calm. If you are feeling a bit barmy, he'd always be able to make you feel more relaxed."

It was Claire's childhood dream to become an actress and she completely immersed herself in achieving her ambition "I just acted all the time, at school, in my spare time, neglected all my school work and then went to drama school. My first role was in *Hanky Park*, by Walter Greenwood, at the Oldham Rep – a really traditional start."

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Her BBC television credits now include *South of the Border*, *Chef!* and *Six Sides of Steve Coogan*. This winter, she stars in the BBC drama, *Second Sight*.

Her theatrical credits include *Playboy Of The Western World*, *Night Must Fall*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Othello*, *Measure For Measure*, *The Importance Of Being Earnest*, *Charley's Aunt*, *Look Back In Anger* and *The Glass Menagerie*.

Reflecting on some of her toughest roles, Claire reveals: "Shakespeare's Isabella, in *Measure For Measure*, was pretty challenging, as I was quite young in terms of experience when I played it. Desdemona was also quite a challenge; it was very difficult playing someone who is quite victimised and trying to make her stronger."

She has also worked with some prolific directors including Mike Leigh, Trevor Nunn and Sam Mendes, but she remembers one particular director, Alan Ayckbourn, when she first started out. "He was a great influence for me as he pushed me so hard, but every director you work with has a big influence in some way, they really push you."

Off-stage, Claire likes to relax with a generous helping of soap operas. "I am a terrible soapaholic," she admits, "but I have to ration myself. I also get addicted to chat shows but I could never see myself on one of those – I'd be so embarrassed."



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Characterisations

Beverley Callard (Barbara)

Beverley plays Barbara, Peter Duffley's new reliable and attractive secretary.

The Boss is Beverley's first television role after *Coronation Street*. Beverley's television credits include *Hells Bells* (BBC), *Lucifer* and *Hinge and Bracket* (both ITV). Beverley has also appeared on stage and in pantomimes. She joined the cast of *Emmerdale* for four months in 1985 playing the character of Angie Richards. She then appeared in several episodes of *Coronation Street* as the character June Dewhurst.

In 1989, Beverley was invited back to *Coronation Street*. For nine years, she played the character of Liz McDonald in the Granada soap, and became a national star in Britain.

Beverley is one of the United Kingdom's most successful fitness presenters, with both her videos, *Real Results* and *Rapid Results* reaching No 1 in the UK video charts. Her *Complete Real Results* Book was published in 1998.

She also writes a weekly fitness column for *The Mirror*, and is fitness advisor to *Good Health* magazine.

Beverley is married to Steven and they have two children, Rebecca and Joshua. Rebecca has followed her into acting and has already made a name for herself in series such as *The Borrowers* and *Sunburn*.

Daniel Flynn – David Edwards

Daniel plays the handsome area manager David Edwards.

Daniel's other BBC appearances include *Bugs series 3*, *The Choir*, *The Breed of Heroes*, *The Detectives*, *Casualty*, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Goodbye Mr Chips* and *Call Me Mister*. His other TV credits include *Peak Practice series 6*, *Soldier Soldier series 4*, *The Bill*, *No Excuses* and *The Two of Us* (all for LWT), *Heidi* for Walt Disney Films, *Kit Curren* for Channel Four and *Startrap*. Daniel has also appeared in the film, *Biggles*.



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Characterisations

Stephen Moore – Geoffrey

Stephen Moore plays the long serving Senior cashier, Geoffrey.

He has enjoyed a varied and busy career in the theatre, on television and in film. Stephen's many television credits for the BBC include *Prince of Hearts*, *The Missing Postman*, both series of *The Queen's Nose*, *Dangerfield*, *Black Hearts In Battersea*, *Fry and Laurie*, *Men of the World*, *Love on a Branch Line*, *Middlemarch*, *Casualty*, *Tales From Hollywood*, *Thacker*, *Blore MP*, *Clowns*, *The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy*, *Solo*, *Happy Autumn Fields*, *Soldiers Talking Clearly*, *Love on a Gunboat*, *Keep Smiling*, *Three Men in a Boat* and *Dinner with the Family*. Comedy fans will also recognise him as Kevin the Teenager's dad in *Harry Enfield & Chums*, *Kevin's Guide to being a Teenager* and the movie *Kevin and Perry Go Large*.

Stephen's other television credits include *Sharpe's Sword*, *Third Broker* for Hallmark, *And the Beat Goes On* for Mersey TV; *For the People by the People* for Holmes Associates; *Let's Get Divorced* for Tyne Tees; *Paris* for Noel Gay; *Life & Crimes of William Palmer*, *Downwardly Mobile* and *Just Between Ourselves* for YTV; *Soldier Soldier*, *Perfect Scoundrels*, *Van Der Valk*, *Countdown to War*, *The Last Place on Earth*, *Small World*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Adrian Mole* and *Rock Follies*, all for ITV.

Stephen's film credits include *Truel*, *Brassed Off*, *Under Suspicion*, *Clockwise*, *Pilkington's Pluck*, *Diversion*, *The White Bird*, *A Bridge Too Far* and *The White Bus*.

Wendy Nottingham – Evelyn

Wendy plays the nervous assistant Evelyn.

Wendy appeared in *The Boss* as a guest in the first series. Her other BBC-TV appearances include *The Sculptress*, *The Wimbledon Poisoner*, *Casualty*, *Kinsey*, *The Vet*, *A Very Peculiar Practice*, *What's Got Into You*, *Tumbledown* and *Precious Bane* all for the BBC. Her other TV credits include *Extremely Dangerous*, *McCallum*, *A Wing and a Prayer*, *The Bill*, *Bliss*, *Bramwell*, all for ITV and *The Pale Horse*, *Shrinks* and *Short and Curlies*.

Wendy also appears alongside Jim Broadbent in Mike Leigh's new film about Gilbert and Sullivan, *Topsy-Turvy*. She also worked with Mike Leigh in *Secrets and Lies*. Other film credits include *Mary Reilly*, directed by Stephen Frears.

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



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Characterisations

David Schneider – Bradley

David plays the dim-witted bank clerk, Bradley.

David Schneider is an actor, writer and stand-up comic. He co-wrote and performed with Armando Iannucci and Peter Baynham for the BBC comedies, *The Saturday Night Armistice*, *The Friday Night Armistice*, *Election Night Armistice* and most recently *The Armando Iannucci Show*.

As a performer on television, David's many credits include *Knowing Me Knowing You... With Alan Partridge*, *The Comic Strip*, *The Day Today*, *Kavanagh QC*, *Hangar 17*, *Up to Something* and *Here Comes Sunday* (all for BBC-TV), *Mr Bean* for ITV, *Paris, Life's a Bitch* and *Go Now* (Channel Four) and the forthcoming *666*.

His film appearances include *The Full Monty*, *You're Dead*, *Comic Acts*, *Mission Impossible* for 20th Century Fox and *The Saint*, with Val Kilmer.

David's credits also include theatre and radio work, again including *The Armando Iannucci Show* and *Knowing Me, Knowing You*.

A regular on the comedy circuit from 1991-1994, Daniel has played all major venues, including The Comedy Store and Jongleurs in London. He also had a one-man show at the Edinburgh Festival.

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



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Production Biographies

Mark Burton and John O'Farrell – Writers

Mark and John co-wrote *The Boss* with Dan Patterson of Hat Trick Productions.

Mark and John are best-known as leading sketch writers, particularly topical/satirical productions. Their BBC work includes *Have I Got News For You*, *Room 101* and *Murder Most Horrid Series III*. They were lead writers for the *Spitting Image* series on Central Television and for *Clive Anderson Talks Back* and *Rory Bremner – Who Else?* for Channel Four. They also write the head-t-head sketches for *Smith & Jones*.

Their topical Radio 4 series, *A Look Back At The Nineties*, co-written with Pete Sinclair, has won a string of awards. The second series, *A Look Back At The Future*, also won many awards, including a Sony Radio Award for Best Comedy, a British Comedy Award for Best Comedy, the Premier Ondez Award for Radio Comedy and they were nominated by the Writers' Guild for Best Radio Comedy.

They have recently been writing on the first full-length Aardman Animations Film (of *Wallace and Gromit* fame) for Dreamworks Production.

John's book, *Things Can Only Get Better*, was recently a Number One best seller in the United Kingdom, whilst Mark has just been commissioned by Dreamworks to co-write the second Aardman feature film.

Dan Patterson – Co-Writer and Producer

Dan Patterson began his career in Broadcasting as a producer in the BBC Radio Light Entertainment Department working on a number of programmes including *Weekenders* and *The News Quiz* and devising new shows such as *Saturday Night Fry* and *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

When *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* transferred to television in 1988, Dan went with it and has since produced 10 series. The programme has won numerous awards including the 1990 BAFTA Light Entertainment Award and the US Cable Ace Awards three years running. Other producing credits include *Clive Anderson Talks Back*, *Clive Anderson All Talk*, *Room 101*, *S & M*, *The Brain Drain* and *Never Mind The Horrocks*.

Dan is currently producing a second series of *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* for the ABC network in America.

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



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Production Biographies

Nick Wood – Director

Nick Wood has successfully directed his own career through theatre and then into BBC Television. He worked as a Floor Manager/First Assistant Director on the comedies *Sitting Pretty*, *Doctor On Top*, *One Foot In The Grave*, *One Foot In The Algarve* and *Waiting For God*.

Since 1993, Nick's directing credits include two series of *Nelson's Column*, *Top of the Pops*, *The Stand Up Show*, *Fist of Fun*, *Funny World*, *London Shouting*, *Douglas*, *2point4 Children* and two series of *Dad*. For Hat Trick Productions, Nick has directed two series of *The Boss* and a pilot sitcom *Hewitt*.

He has also directed three series of the Royal Television Society/British Comedy Award-winning sketch show, *Goodness Gracious Me*.

Hat Trick Productions

Hat Trick Productions is one of the UK's most prolific and successful independent production companies and is pre-eminent in the field of TV comedy programming. Hat Trick is also now exploiting its formats throughout Europe. The Company is currently in production with its second US network series, to be aired on the ABC Network later this year.

Hat Trick's programmes have been nominated for every major award in the industry, and its many successes include the double Emmy award-winning *Drop The Dead Donkey*, BAFTA award-winners *Father Ted* and *Have I Got News For You*, British Comedy Award-winner *Clive Anderson Talks Back* and the Silver Rose d'or-winner, *Whatever You Want*. Other successful productions include *Clive Anderson All Talk*, *If I Ruled the World*, *Room 101*, *Confessions* and *Game On*.

Hat Trick has successfully moved into comedy drama production with the award-winning series *Underworld* and with television films, including *Eleven Men Against Eleven*, *A Very Open Prison*, *The Lord of Misrule*, Emmy award-winning *Crossing The Floor*, *Boyz Unlimited* and *Mr White Goes to Westminster*.

As well as recommissioned series, Hat Trick is producing at least four new comedy series for the networks.

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes

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Episode Synopses

1. Un Homme Et Une Femme

The bank business is changing and Peter Duffley is struggling to deal with his diminishing status as branch manager. So when Susan is promoted onto a Fast Track management course, it's no wonder he starts to feel emasculated. He also has to cope with the fact that one of his clients is undergoing a sex change. Meanwhile, Bradley has a sexual encounter with a 1.8m Brazilian beauty with a pipe and a terrible secret.

2. Desperately Seeking Susan

Peter Duffley's feelings of job insecurity are exacerbated when he is visited by Victor (Owen Brenman), a fellow manager who has been destroyed by redundancy and, as a consequence, has become completely bonkers. Despite efforts to "play the corporate game", Peter is horrified when David's marriage collapses and Susan moves in. Meanwhile, believing Peter to be Susan's lover, mad Victor sets about exacting a terrible revenge with only a staple extractor and a small guillotine.

3. Greyhound Day

A will-reading brings mixed fortunes in the Country & Provincial Bank. Two brothers from the inbred local farming community come in for a will-reading, which leads to Peter Duffley finding himself the temporary guardian of a pedigree greyhound. Geoffrey persuades him to "borrow" the animal for the afternoon and do a bit of stud work – a coincidence, as Susan and David have similar ideas at a Nuneaton conference.

4. There's Something About Geoffrey

Peter Duffley is triumphant when he is notified that royalty is coming to the branch – well, almost royalty – in the shape of the Viscount Graham of Kent, patron of the Viscount of Kent's Countryside Hunt Fund. The only problem is, the visit coincides with the imminent retirement of Geoffrey, the long-serving Senior Cashier. Meanwhile, Geoffrey's svelte young replacement has Bradley in a bit of a lather. Will the visit, and Geoffrey's retirement, turn into a right royal disaster?

5. Truly, Bradley, Deeply

Bradley finds himself fired when Peter Duffley decides to follow the correct corporate procedures following a run-in with his boss. Things improve for Bradley when Barbara tells Peter that – thanks to a night of passion 25 years ago in a Morris *Marina* – Bradley is his son. Peter starts to see himself in Bradley's vacant stare and gormless expressions and undergoes a dramatic change of heart.

6. Casabanka

Susan has decided to end her relationship with David because his wife is pregnant. Of course, when she tells Peter Duffley that she is emigrating to Canada, immediately, he can't wait to celebrate. Bradley loves Susan and wants to tell her the truth – that David's wife is pregnant by another man – so Peter locks him in the vault. Neither must she learn the truth from David, who is trying frantically to talk to her. But can Peter really be so heartless?

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



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Ratings

Episode	UK Txn Date	Channel	Time On	Viewers	Audience Share
1 repeat	03.02.00	BBC1	2130	3.7 million	15.6%
2 repeat	10.02.00 15.02.00	BBC1 BBC1	2130 2315	4.2 million 1.3 million	18.2% 15.2%
3 repeat	17.02.00 19.02.00	BBC1 BBC1	2130 2345	3.5 million 1.1 million	16.1% 12.2%
4 repeat	21.02.00 22.02.00	BBC1 BBC1	2245 2330	2.3 million 0.9 million	15.6% 9.9%
5 repeat	28.02.00 29.02.00	BBC1 BBC1	2245 2330	2.0 million 1.1 million	16.1% 15.5%
6 repeat	06.03.00 07.03.00	BBC1 BBC1	2245 2320	2.6 million 1.0 million	20.1% 13.5%

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



THE BOSS

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What the Papers Say

"The gentle characters are timeless except for the odd bizarre cultural reference...[there were] a large number of set-up gags which were quite amusing... I did find myself laughing out loud at times... well-produced, competent, amusing comedy." *Western Morning News*

"Not big, not clever, but silly... there were a few of us who appreciated its unreconstructed charm, painfully contrived set-ups and, above all, Jim Broadbent's face, which ranks alongside James Finlayson's as one of the most eloquent in comedy." *Guardian*

:...rapidly gathering a devoted audience..." *Sunday Mirror*

"Broadbent's wry comic presence..." *The Times*

"The week's events at Link, the cash machine network, suggest that *The Boss* scriptwriters' portrait of a bank executive may be closer to reality than we had thought.." *The Times*

"Priceless: Jim Broadbent is the gormless hero of *The Boss*." *Birmingham Post*

"Raising the occasional out-loud laugh, this relies more on the quality of performances..." *Daily Mail*

"Jim Broadbent... delivers his lines with a quality of timing." *Daily Telegraph*

"Jim Broadbent is one of the finest comic actors around." *Daily Mail*

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes

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What the Papers Say

Feature: Eastern Daily Press

The Broadbent principle

Actor Jim Broadbent was desperately unlucky not to win an Oscar nomination for his performance as WS Gilbert in acclaimed film *Topsy-Turvy*. Hettie Judah meets a talent for whom comedy is serious business.

It seems strange that someone as physically particular as Jim Broadbent could go so unrecognised. That long nose and the comical, woebegone softness of his features combined with his rather apologetic height should make him popular property for enthusiasts of the "Oi, it's him off telly!" pointing game. This particular him-off-the-as the star of *The Boss*, Slater from *Only Fools and Horses*, and a whole host of dodgy earls and northern ne'er-do-wells from TV dramas over the past 25 years. He has strutted his big-screen stuff for Woody Allen in *Bullets Over Broadway*, cleared the stage for Jane Horrocks in *Little Voice*, and abseiled down John Goodman in *The Borrowers*. It is, however, his long-term working relationship with Mike Leigh (freshly adorned with an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay) for which we should recognise him. And the Venice Film Festival has led the way by giving Broadbent this year's Best Actor Lion for their latest collaboration, *Topsy Turvy*, in which he plays the librettist WS Gilbert of "and Sullivan" fame. "I've never had an award before, of any sort," snuffles Broadbent, with a kind of comic mournfulness.

It is a couple of weeks since Venice, and between flying there, jetting off to New York and limbering up for Australia, the actor has somehow developed a cold of probably exotic provenance. "I do sort of wonder vaguely why I've never been nominated for anything," he muses. "Now I feel that I'm not completely out on a limb, I find it quite comforting." Comforting is a very Broadbent word at the moment: he finds being 50 very comforting, it seems; also anonymity, wood carving, steady learning curves, working with Mike Leigh and not having to travel too much. What he has always found rather discomfiting is the prospect of talking to journalists, although he thinks that he has, as he puts it, "broken the back" of that problem now. "It's not that I felt the Press were evil, I just didn't much like talking about myself, so why bother, really? But now I'm quite happy to waffle on." This is not your standard "Who, little me?" play-acting actorishness; the man really doesn't enjoy talking about himself. If this is Broadbent waffling, I pity those who came in the years before.

Of course, it all fits into the grand anonymous scheme of things; Broadbent is seldom recognised because he is invariably covered in costume facial hair, greasy wigs and strap-on beer bellies. When he snaps into character at various points during the interview his face stiffens in unexpected places and his voice becomes afflicted with a well-researched heritage of awkwardness. The problem is that when Broadbent is playing himself in an interview, he seems to expend most of his energy on the pauses; for all his physical particularity, the man is, to the best of his abilities, doing an impersonation of a blank piece of paper.

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes

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What the Papers Say

Feature: The Broadbent principle continued/2

"Yes, maybe there is a thread there," he nods, when I ever so gently suggest that his characterisations all seem to rotate around awkwardness and discomfort. "Everyone has it to a degree; I can sort of empathise with that awkwardness. I am drawn to roles that have that."

Difficulty, in the case of WS Gilbert, is putting it mildly. In Broadbent's hands the man becomes a wreath of believable contradictions; witty and mournful, sensitive but cruel, bumbling yet alive with peculiar rhythmic tics. It was a character that Broadbent built up over a year in classic Mike Leigh style: researching, improvising, working out the rhythm of the man as they developed a filmable script. "The process of learning about life in 1885 was something we all did together," explains Broadbent. "All that stuff that you take for granted in a normal Mike Leigh film; what newspaper you read, what you have for breakfast and all that is usually common knowledge had to be discovered and researched." With such intense working methods, Leigh's actors often find it hard to cut their characters off from their home life. "I did used to find it hard to switch off," Broadbent admits, shaking his head. "I'm better at it now; I have to be really, what with the 10 months it takes from going into rehearsal to the end of the shoot. I had to switch off, otherwise I'd have ended up a single man; really, you can't keep coming home with a Gilbert over you."

Indeed, such is Broadbent's professional control that there is almost no crossover between work and personal life. Artistic pursuits at home are limited to quirky bouts of craftsmanship. "I've got wood carvings all over the house and I give them away; I don't mind showing my wood carving to people, because it's not that important, really, but I don't have any acting memorabilia around the house at all." Acting, in other words, is not the stuff of fun or interior decoration, it is deadly serious.

For all Broadbent's earnest discussion of theatre craft and "serving the script" he still finds the temptation to prat about in rehearsals impossible to overcome. "I'm very naughty," he grins, "quite troublesome in rehearsals and I muck about a lot, and don't listen, and behave like the boy at the back of the class. In a way, that is part of taking it seriously because if you are going to do something to entertain people, you should feel fairly light-hearted about doing it yourself, otherwise it is going to be deadly."

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



THE BOSS

SERIES 2

What the Papers Say

Feature: Edinburgh Evening News

Jim is a Man of Principle

Jim Broadbent is an unlikely star. With the best of wills, it's impossible to describe the star of the Beeb's *The Boss* as handsome and his shy demeanour is hardly typical of a big name actor.

But despite all that, he's made it to the top of his profession in this country. Broadbent is pretty popular in the States, too. He has worked with Woody Allen on *Bullets Over Broadway* and his film credits also include work with top directors Neil Jordan in *The Crying Game* and Terry Gilliam in *Brazil* and *The Time Bandits*. But that, he argues, is very different from the Hollywood mainstream. "Woody Allen is a true independent," he says. "When they asked me to do a tape for Demi Moore for the film *Striptease*, that was different. I can't really put my weight behind something I don't like and if I wouldn't like to go and see the film, then I don't want to get involved. But Woody is great. He just knows what he's doing so well. To write and direct a new film every year is a phenomenal achievement." Jim remembers the day he got his phone call from Allen. "I was in a hotel in Ireland at the time and I got the call that he would be ringing in half-an-hour. "It was very exciting. I was pacing the room, thinking if the phone is going to ring, it's going to be Woody Allen, so I'll have to be cool. It was like getting your first job or getting into drama school."

So if Broadbent is unhappy about the prospect of swimming with Hollywood's sharks, it's a good job he's managed to establish himself as such a big fish in his home waters. The preference for working on British soil is probably why he finally agreed to be tied down by *The Boss* after having turned down several alternatives over the years. As incompetent, pompous and lazy bank manager Peter Duffley, Broadbent presides over an office including new secretary Barbara, played by Beverley Callard in her first TV role since leaving her *Coronation Street* role as long-suffering Liz McDonald. "I have always wanted to do a sitcom but I wanted to do a really successful one," says Broadbent, whose name was in the frame for the original Del Boy in *Only Fools And Horses*. He did make it into the Peckham-based comedy in the end – as Del Boy's devious nemesis, Slater.

Broadbent compares the weekly turn-around of a sitcom to being part of a rep theatre company where the same group of people stage a different play every week. "It generates a good team spirit and I was looking forward to working on it and seeing everyone again." The sitcom routine was a break from Broadbent's film work last year, when he played one of the lead roles in Mike Leigh's upcoming Gilbert and Sullivan biopic *Topsy-Turvy*. It's not the first time Broadbent has worked with enigmatic Mancunian Leigh – he also starred in 1990's *Life Is Sweet*, alongside *Boss* co-star Claire Skinner, who played his daughter.

But Broadbent's dilemma is that he loves acting too much. He admits that he wants success, but easily gets bored - and he never works just for big bucks, or to rub shoulders with the stars. Instead, it's excitement and challenge which keeps Broadbent ticking. "I have a low boredom threshold so I'm always out to do something different. I like to spread the net quite wide. If I've been doing drama I'll do a bit of comedy or theatre next. I don't like to do the same thing twice."

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes



THE BOSS

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The result is a career full of spicy roles- a killer in *Inspector Morse*, an estate agent-turned-bank-robber in *Work*, and a no-hoper in *Gone To The Dogs*, to name but a few. Casting agents love him but despite his current popularity, success was not always so cut and dried.

As a struggling young actor he spent four years supplementing his income with a variety of low-paid jobs. "I worked on farms in Lincolnshire in the summer, did temp jobs in London, van driving, table clearing, washing up in the Bank of England canteen, labouring, shop fitting, domestic cleaning, helping in a tea tent at a golf tournament, whatever was around. "I quite enjoyed it all, it was an experience I wouldn't have been without."

Another job came as a would-be model with *The Ugly Agency*: "They had all sorts of beautiful young men and women and, of course, character men and women. I went in on the character side but I didn't get one job – perhaps I wasn't ugly enough!"

Broadbent admits that his blokish looks got his acting career off to a slower start than that enjoyed by some of his pretty-boy fellow drama students. "When I was at drama school I saw all the handsome, good looking boys kick off very well," he recalls. "I always knew I'd be hanging around longer before I got going and hopefully I'll be around longer as well. I was always going to be a character actor and knew I'd have to wait until my thirties or forties to come into my own."

Well, late developer or not, Broadbent is now well into his stride. In fact, his success in a notoriously insecure business has given him the luxury of being a bit choosy over his roles, but he admits to thinking twice before turning work down. "I do it from time to time because I'm lucky enough to have a bit of choice," he explains. "I suppose the characters I portray are all, in some way, a reflection of aspects of me, but I still manage to hide behind them to some extent.

"The best thing about acting is that you never really know what's around the corner. I like the excitement of the unexpected."

Entertainment

6 x 30 minutes