



Tricked: The retired headmistress is taken in by Field's charm

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT | BBC1 | MON & TUES

# “Dreams are fulfilled – but they turn into a nightmare

**TIMOTHY SPALL AND ANNE REID PLAY DELUDED VICTIMS OF A SMOOTH CRIMINAL IN A SHOCKING TRUE-CRIME DRAMA...**

**T**elly favourites Timothy Spall and Anne Reid team up for a gripping thriller this week based on a bizarre true crime story. And if that isn't enough incentive to

catch it, *The Sixth Commandment* has been penned by Sarah Phelps, the former *EastEnders* writer also known for her brilliant adaptations of Dickens and Agatha Christie.

In the drama, churchwarden Ben Field (Eanna Hardwicke) fakes a relationship with university lecturer Peter Farquhar (Timothy Spall) in a bid to inherit his estate, then over a period time



Malign force: Ben Field casts a spell over his lonely victims

poisons the smitten pensioner. Following Peter's death, Field turned his attention to his neighbour, retired headmistress Ann Moore-Martin (Anne Reid). Here Timothy and Anne talk about playing Fields' victims...

**Why are your characters drawn to Ben?**  
Timothy Although Peter had many friends, he was quite lonely and felt deeply

Next target: Sheila Hancock plays Peter's lodger, Liz

“**BEN FIELD DRAWS ANN IN AND WINS HER CONFIDENCE**” ANNE



## Cause for CONCERN

**THE SPLIT'S ANNABEL SCHOLEY PLAYS ANN'S DEVOTED NIECE...**

"The differences in Ann are very subtle, and most people probably wouldn't notice," shares Annabel. "But Anne-Marie senses that she's not herself – slightly distracted, a little bit dishevelled, unsteady on her feet, which is very out of character."

"She becomes very closed off when Anne-Marie confronts her. She defends Ben like a new lover and Anne-Marie can't understand that at all – it definitely comes between them. They are best friends, as well

as like mother and daughter, but that changes as Ann becomes quite cold towards Anne-Marie, which is obviously incredibly hurtful.

"Anne Reid plays Ann so powerfully. She's not just an older woman – she's a headteacher, glamorous, intelligent, sharp, smart and funny. I've admired Anne forever, so it's amazing to work with her. We all have relatives and neighbours who live alone and are vulnerable. So it's a very relatable, frightening story."



Deceived: Peter thinks he has found true love

isolated within himself. He had resigned himself to spending the rest of his life as somebody who has a massive hole in his life. Field makes the running in telling Peter that he's fallen in love with him. His prayers are answered and his dreams are fulfilled – but they turn into a terrible nightmare. Anne Field wins Ann's confidence and draws her in. Then he tells her that he's fallen in love with her which, you know, is quite beguiling when you're 83. To have some young man paying all this attention – and she gets taken in by him completely.



Smiling assassin: Field bombards Ann with attention

**What appealed to you about the scripts?**

Anne Oh, they're very, very good. There's a tremendous responsibility in playing somebody who was a real person – I've only ever done that once before and that was a very different character, [the romantic novelist] Barbara

Cartland. But I've never taken a role before where I had to play somebody whose relatives are still alive, and that's a huge responsibility. Timothy I thought they were superb. There is real poetry in the series of events which reveal themselves slowly; it's a development of emotions,

focusing on the subtlety of things that can happen; of how people can be deluded.

**What is the appeal of *The Sixth Commandment*?**

Timothy This drama is a tribute to murdered people, and to the bravery from within the family in finding justice for them, because they loved them so much. It's usually the murderer who gets top billing, not the victim. Anne I think the audience will find the whole story fascinating. Often you look at other people and you wonder, 'Why are they attracted to each other?' But I've got to imagine that they might be, because she was an intelligent woman who was being drugged, and that was tricky to play – I've never taken drugs, so that was quite a challenge!

Tricia Martin