

**The Sixth
Commandment**
BBC1 • Monday & Tuesday
DRAMA

When university student Ben Field woos his lecturer Peter Farquhar, it seems the respected academic has found love despite the 40-year age gap. But – as this four-part, fact-based drama reveals – the truth is much more sinister...

'We learn early on that Peter was a serious, devout Christian and found it very difficult to reconcile his repressed sexuality with his faith. Although he had many friends, he was quite lonely and felt deeply isolated within himself,' explains Timothy Spall, who plays him. 'Ben is the kind of young man he's been secretly desiring for years without doing anything about it.'

As the couple grow closer, Ben declares his love for the older man before they commit to each other in a betrothal ceremony. But after changing his will and making Ben his beneficiary, Peter mysteriously falls ill and begins to hallucinate. The reality

is he's being drugged by Field.

Following Peter's death, Field moves on to seduce his elderly neighbour, the deeply religious retired head teacher Ann Moore-Martin, for financial gain. She also experiences dizzy spells as her health deteriorates. Concerned about the relationship, Ann's niece alerts the police.

'This young man becomes friendly with her, and she finds him very pleasant and attractive,' says Anne Reid, who plays Ann. 'She's also a very religious woman and Ben feigns a religious belief to gain her confidence. She gets taken in completely.'

While the third episode concentrates on the police investigation, the concluding part is taken up with the court case as Field is accused of murder.

So how did actor Éanna Hardwicke find playing Field?

'I had to set aside any horror and disgust I felt about what my character had done and get into his headspace. There's a real balancing act in telling that story.'

Nick Fiaca

● All four eps also available on BBC iPlayer from Monday

NEW



Field reels Peter (Timothy Spall) in...

Uterior MOTIVE

The true story of
the victims of an
evil predator



...before turning his attentions to Ann (Anne Reid)