

Spall: 'Terrible responsibility' in playing a murder victim

Star on role as lecturer killed by evil lover

BY **NICOLA METHVEN** TV Editor

TIMOTHY Spall has told how playing a murder victim whose relatives will be watching left him with a great sense of responsibility.

The 66-year-old stars in BBC1 drama *The Sixth Commandment* as Peter Farquhar, a university lecturer drugged and suffocated by his lover Ben Field.

The churchwarden then duped neighbour Ann Moore-Martin out of cash, after persuading her he was in love with her despite their 50-year age gap.

Spall revealed Peter's family, including brother Ian and sister-in-law Sue, watched the four-part show and felt he had done justice to Peter, who was 69.

He said: "The responsibility of playing somebody who has loved ones still alive is enormous. I managed to find footage of him and watch it, observe him, and try to connect my psyche with his, really.

"It was trying to just inhabit someone, rather than impersonate them. So it means a hell of a lot that people who knew him feel that side is authentic."

Field killed Peter at his home in Maids Moreton, Bucks, in October 2015. Anne

Reid plays Ann, who was in her 80s when Field turned his sights on her.

The 88-year-old actor agreed: "It's a terrible responsibility playing somebody whose relatives are still there and still loving them. But they were absolutely lovely to us. They were very, very nice."

Ann died in May 2017 of natural causes. Field was accused but cleared of

killing her. He is played by Irish star Eanna Hardwicke, who had to put aside his "horror and disgust" to portray him.

He said: "I find it all unfathomable. Truth was something he bartered with, not something he lived by."

Field, 32, was jailed for 36 years in 2019. The court was told he had either a narcissistic personality disorder or a psychopathic personality disorder.

Writer Sarah Phelps said she was at pains not to glorify him. She added: "I didn't want to feed Ben Field with that sense that, in fact, he was the main part of the story. I wanted Peter and Ann to be the main part of the story."

■ *The Sixth Commandment* starts Monday July 17, 9pm, BBC1.

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“It means a lot that those who knew him felt the part authentic”

TIMOTHY SPALL ON HOW FAMILY BACKED HIS ROLE

DUPED Eanna and Anne as Field and Ann in show

A portrait of Peter Farquhar, an older man with glasses, wearing a dark blue sweater over a collared shirt and a maroon tie. He is holding a dark book in his hands. The background is a library with wooden bookshelves filled with books, many of which have blue spines.

CONVINCING
Spall as tragic
Peter Farquhar