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THE LAST ENEMY

On MASTERPIECE CONTEMPORARY

Sundays, October 5 through November 2, 2008 at 9pm ET on  PBS.

A mathematical genius takes a wild ride through the boundless paranoia of a surveillance society on *The Last Enemy*, a five-part thriller set in England in the not too distant future. Scripted by award-winning writer Peter Berry (*Prime Suspect 6: The Last Witness*), *The Last Enemy* launches the first season of MASTERPIECE CONTEMPORARY and airs Sundays, October 5 through November 2, 2008 at 9pm on PBS.

Biometric ID cards, ubiquitous security cameras, and “Total Information Awareness,” a program to give authorities unlimited access to personal data, have turned Britain into a virtual police state. And it turns out that Big Brother has even bigger plans for keeping track of citizens.

Benedict Cumberbatch (*Atonement*, *To the Ends of the Earth*) plays Stephen Ezard, who returns to London to attend his brother Michael’s funeral after four years of seclusion doing mathematical research in China. Michael (Max Beesley) died in a landmine explosion in Afghanistan, leaving behind a band of devoted friends and fellow relief workers who assemble at his graveside.

He also leaves an enigmatic and beautiful wife, Yasim (Anamaria Marinca, *4 Months, 3 Weeks, & 2 Days*), a Bosnian physician who starts an affair with Stephen the night that her husband is laid to rest.

To Stephen’s distress, much more gets started besides. A female refugee dies of a mysterious illness in his apartment. Then her body just as mysteriously disappears. Out of the blue, he is made an offer he can’t refuse by a company called Inquirendo that wants his services for diffusing opposition to TIA—Total Information Awareness. But he does refuse and suddenly receives a visit from his old college girlfriend, Eleanor Brooke (Eva Birthistle, *The State Within*), now a government minister responsible for getting TIA through Parliament.

When Stephen is kidnapped by a rogue agent named David Russell (Robert Carlyle, *The Full Monty*), hell-bent on extracting information about the dead refugee, the bewildered

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mathematician is presented with this riddle: "How many microbiologists does it take to change a light bulb?" The punch line: "Just one, but you'd better ask quick because they're dropping like flies." Russell explains that sixteen prominent microbiologists have recently died of unnatural causes. Conspiracy? Terrorism? Cover-up? Stephen must enter the sinister cyberworld of TIA to unravel the clues...

Spurred by heightening surveillance and identity laws in contemporary England, Peter Berry crafted *The Last Enemy* as a cautionary fable of post-9/11 society, where technological and political trends are converging on a culture that is the antithesis of everything represented by Britain's ancient charter of individual liberty, Magna Carta.

"There are those that argue that the innocent have nothing to hide," says Berry, "but soon the innocent are going to have to prove that they are in fact innocent—suspects until proven innocent by the data logged on their ID cards. Ordinary citizens will become the enemy—the last enemy."

The Last Enemy is a coproduction of Box TV and WGBH Boston and BBC. It was written by Peter Berry (*Prime Suspect 6*) and directed by Iain B. MacDonald (*Mansfield Park*). The producer is Gub Neal for Box TV. The executive producers are Rebecca Eaton for WGBH and Patrick Irwin, Justin Thomson-Glover, and Adrian Bate for Box TV.

MASTERPIECE has been presented on PBS by WGBH since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting and public television viewers provide funding for **MASTERPIECE**.

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