THE FALL
on Netflix

Allan Cubitt:
Creator/Executive Producer/Writer/Director/Showrunner

British writer Allan Cubitt has long been writing compelling drama. There was Prime Suspect II, which was BAFTA Nominated for Best Drama Serial and won the Emmy Award for Outstanding Mini Series (1993). He went on to write The Hanging Gale, which was also BAFTA Nominated for Best Drama Serial (1996). A stint writing two BBC Sherlock Holmes adaptations followed, The Hound of the Baskervilles (2002) and The Case of the Silk Stocking (2004), both of which he also co-executive produced. Cubitt’s adapted screenplay for The Boys are Back was nominated for an Australian Film Institute Award in 2010. The Fall, which Cubitt created, executive produces, writes, directs and showruns, gained recognition with several awards and nominations, including a BAFTA Nomination for Best Mini Series (2014), the Irish Film and Television Award for Best Television Drama (2014) and the Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Television Episode Teleplay (2014).

Cubitt is currently in development on Season 3 of The Fall.

Neil Landau: What was your original spark or inspiration for this series: handsome family man as serial killer... or something else?

Allan Cubitt: Something else! My starting point was the idea of a crime drama that identified the criminal from the very beginning and therefore relinquished from the start the traditional building blocks of the whodunit. I had become aware of the pitfalls of revelatory dramas very early in my own career. One of the first pieces I wrote for television was a thing called The Countess Alice that starred Dame Wendy Hiller in her last role for television. In the wake of the fall of the Berlin wall her daughter decided to go back to visit the old family home in what became, in the post-war period, East Germany. Her mother, Wendy Hiller, opposes her going but the daughter makes the trip just the same. What she discovers there is her own childhood grave. She returns to confront her mother who tells a story about losing her biological daughter, fleeing the advancing Red Army and “adopting” an orphaned refugee girl on the long journey back to England. Although I think it was quite a powerful and moving story about grief and genuine maternal love that transcended the lack of a biological bond it nevertheless
made me think about the problems of third act revelations and how they work against one of the key principles of strong drama: show don’t tell. There was too much third act exposition. My feeling was that the traditional whodunit was often let down by the last minute revelations. Often the finger of suspicion will have been pointed at a whole range of characters not responsible for the crimes before the real culprit is revealed. At that point the risks of anti-climax are massive. The writer will either have disguised the real villain’s perfidy completely which can feel like a cheat or implicated the character to the extent that the audience have got there in identifying him or her first. Having therefore gained no insight into the motivation of that individual it’s often left to the brilliant detective to explain everything that has been withheld from the audience, sometimes with the help of clunky flashbacks.

In that way any detailed exploration of the criminal’s motivation is impossible. That for me was the key question and the thinking behind the structure of *The Fall*: mightn’t it be interesting and maybe even instructive to have insights into the behavior and the mentality of the criminal from the very beginning? Obviously it’s a risky strategy because much of the tension in traditional crime dramas or thrillers revolves around not knowing who it is who is out there committing the crimes, not know when they will strike next.

The Fall *eschews those traditional tropes and tries instead to build tension out of character and a sense of dramatic irony, that is to say, the audience, at the start particularly, knows more than the police officers investigating the crimes. Gradually that balance shifts but certainly at the beginning the audience knows a great many things that Gibson does not.*

**NL:** Did you begin with the pathology (or profile) of your serial killer, or perhaps with Stella’s fearlessness and promiscuity, or perhaps another yin/yang dynamic?

**AC:** I probably did start with Spector’s psychopathology but I quickly started to conceive of the central characters in opposition, as a kind of yin/yang dynamic as you suggest—or perhaps more anima/animus in so far as both characters are an admixture of both of those two primary anthropomorphic archetypes of the unconscious mind as outlined by Jung. I tried to construct a believable modus operandi for him. I did extensive reading about male violence and the particular characteristics of a sexually orientated killer. My starting point with Gibson was somewhat different. It had seemed to me that many fictional detectives were more a collection of character traits, tics even, than properly constructed, integrated personalities. They are frequently given considerable baggage: failing marriages, troubles at home, troubles with drink or drugs or other addictions to battle alongside the battle to find and stop the criminal.
I wanted to avoid any of that and give the audience very few clues about Gibson’s character up front in the drama. I wanted people to get to know Gibson by virtue of the choices she makes, professional and personal in the way I think we largely get to know other people in the real world. I wanted them to have to work at it a bit. One of the questions The Fall poses is how far do we really know ourselves or other people so it was important to allow the audience to draw their own conclusions about them. It was, of course, a deliberate choice that the first time we see Gibson in the drama she is wearing a facemask. The Fall is, to a very considerable degree, a dissertation on the difference between appearance and reality, most obviously embodied in the character of Spector but extending to many other characters as well. Whilst I agree she is fearless I take issue with the idea that she is promiscuous. I guess it depends how you define the term but one of the things I was seeking to explore and challenge—consider the scene between Gibson and Eastwood in series one—is the significant double standard that exists between how men and women are judged for perceived promiscuity.

NL: That’s so true! I suppose I’m an overprotective (judgmental) father of 2 teenaged sons.

AC: And those gender divisions are often reflected in the different way we parent boys and girls. It’s worth noting that Sarah Kay is talking about a matrilineal society—the Musuo—when we first meet her, discoursing on the notion of a “sweet night” where women have the choice to invite men of interest to their private sleeping room. Women are free to have multiple partners. There is a judgment to be made about how that reflects on Gibson but for me it’s not a moral one. The question of her essential isolation, the fact she seems to have made a decision not to have a husband or partner or children, but to dedicate to her work will be explored a little more in Series 3 but you won’t find me condemning her.

NL: Can you please comment on the concept of “mirroring”? Are Stella and Paul two sides of the same coin, given that they’re both hunters, methodical, meticulous, controlling? And both seek out sexual domination and control without intimacy. He’s an orphaned kid; she’s estranged from her dad, and so on. And yet both Stella and Paul display highly sensitive, compassionate responses to victims’ loved ones and Paul to his kids. There is also the commonality of Stella’s meticulous crime scene investigations and Paul meticulously preparing (washing, posing) his victim’s corpses.

AC: That’s an idea that Spector puts to Gibson during their phone call at the end of Series 1—an idea she rejects utterly. So whilst I wouldn’t say two sides of the same coin—what coin would that be I wonder?—I do recognize the significance of mirroring in the drama. In fact, the notion that underpins a lot of the thinking in The Fall is more that of a continuum than a double sided coin. In terms of sexuality, or love, or empathy, or personality disorder, or any of the other main themes The Fall explores, it’s a question of where we sit on that continuum. Take the issue of fantasies and their significance in our lives. Spector’s are dark and disturbed, sadistic and seem very far removed from the rest of us healthier individuals, but as Gibson
points out we all have sexual fantasies that are somewhere on that same continuum. It’s debatable whether Spector feels genuine compassion for anyone but if Spector lacks empathy — again Gibson raises the issue that we all have limits to our empathy — he is still somewhere on the empathy continuum. We are all ranged along it at some point. Spector is meticulous. Beyond his squeamishness about the bodily functions that result from his violence it reflects his desire to possess and control another human being. Gibson talks about the extreme objectification that represents — he treats his victims like dolls — but she acknowledges she has been guilty of objectifying Olson. Again, one could say they are on the same continuum, just very far apart.

One of the other things I am exploring with several of the characters is the issue of compartmentalization. Spector has become a master of compartmentalizing his life. In talking to Jamie as an actor I again stressed the idea of a continuum. Anyone who has conducted an extra-marital affair, leaving a lover let’s say in the afternoon before going home to kiss the wife or husband and put the children to bed, will have tried to keep those conflicting, disturbing, guilt-inducing parts of their life separate. Gibson makes a further point in a conversation with the pathologist, Reed-Smith, that as professionals they need to do a similar thing, keeping the trauma of their day job under some kind of control to lessen the potential psychic damage it can cause. Gibson says it’s called “doubling.” Sally-Ann becomes emotionally involved with the young girl and the premature baby to the extent that it disturbs her equilibrium as a professional.

Mirroring in the technical, filmmaking sense, is a device I relied on less and less as the drama unfolded but the point was made by those initial juxtapositions. Mirroring is also used in the psychological sense that Spector, in a moment of stress, mirrors the words and gestures of his boss Chandler when he is trying to discipline him. Spector is not trying to create a rapport with Chandler but is using it aggressively — the opposite of its more normal empathetic use. Police officers use it as a technique in rapport building and Spector would be familiar with that technique as a counselor.

It also underpins notions of the alter ego and specifically the idea of splitting as a way of dealing with childhood trauma. Again this will be explored in more detail in Series 3.

NL: Could you comment on the specific use of the red nail polish?

AC: It's Spector's choice not mine! Certain body parts have gender significance and in creating Spector's specific etiology I chose to focus on hair and fingernails. It's something Gibson picks up on and tries to use against him. She changes into a red top to interview him. Why she does that will, again, be explored a little more in Series 3. It's perhaps an obvious choice for Spector, a brash form of sexual ornamentation, symbolic I suppose of good health and of course blood, menstrual blood included. Red lips, red nails with dark hair must appeal to him.
in some way. It’s in the nature of his specific paraphilias that such things become deeply imbued with meaning for him. Incidentally, the fictional name of the specific shade was Jezebel Red—a reference to another female stereotype that would not be lost on Gibson. It’s made clear Sarah Kay would not herself choose to wear bright red nail polish—it’s something imposed upon her by Spector and part of his objectification of her as his victim and an expression of his power over her. In some ways it stands in the drama for the far more grotesque defacement of the body that, in reality, can happen under such circumstances. It relates also to issues surrounding the way Gibson choses to present herself. The way she dresses, the way she looks is an expression of her independence and self-assurance, a show of female strength.

**NL:** How do you begin? Do you outline? Write character bios or monologues? Do you have a system or creative process, or does it vary from project to project?

**AC:** I invariably start with research, with extensive reading. While that is going on I start to think in terms of character and story. It’s a fairly lengthy process but I will at some stage start to write a treatment, or rather a beat-by-beat outline. That will be read by the team around me, my producers, my leading actors, and will provide the map when I am scripting, though I reserve the right to deviate if I have new and better ideas. I wouldn’t start with character biographies although in creating a character like Gibson you have to have some idea of the career structure and trajectory that has brought her to your starting point.

I do have a number of systems I employ that are really an aid to making sure that the characters I create all have their own distinct view of the world, their own individual psychology, their own way of reacting and interacting within the drama. To do that I’ve drawn on a number of systems that have been used across the centuries to categorize various personalities. For example, the 4 humors of Hippocratic medicine give us 4 distinct temperaments: sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic. Each of those is associated with an excess of one of the 4 bodily fluids: blood, yellow bile, black bile, phlegm and, more usefully to a writer, an element—air, fire, earth, water. Those elements can in themselves help generate imagery to employ in relation to your characters. Also of interest is Jung who said that there are 2 contrasting attitudes, by which he meant the person’s predisposition to act in a certain manner: extroversion and introversion; again a reflection of the classic yin/yang symbolism you mentioned. Jungian theory also proposed four functions of personality, feeling, thinking, sensation and intuition. Combine those with one of the 2 types of attitudes and you get 8 varying types of personality. Exploring Jungian archetypes with particular reference to his thoughts about the shadow side—those parts of one’s personality which are unacceptable to the ego and projected externally—can also be fruitful in creating character and finding interesting ways of setting your characters in opposition to each other. Even astrology can be of value—sun and moon signs are also related to the 4 elements.
In psychological terms personality trait theory has probably won out, but as a writer the personality type theory can provide an interesting starting point, upon which to build your distinctive characters. As a writer there is no need to subscribe to any of these systems, the idea is to simply plunder them in an attempt to create living breathing autonomous characters that do not all speak in the same voice or respond in obvious, predictable ways to the situations you create for them.

**NL:** How much research do you do before you start writing, particularly in terms of police procedure and psychological/pathological? Are you primarily driven to explore truth and justice, or the investigative twists and turns of a good mystery/thriller? Or would you say you’re after something more existential?

**AC:** I research as much as I possibly can in an attempt to get it right. I seek out the opinions of experts wherever possible. The nature of drama and the constraints of the budget and the shooting schedule will mean you sometimes have to cut corners and cheat but the overall aim is to get it right. I have a police advisor on The Fall and I read as widely as I can around the subject when I’m writing. I like to feel I’m learning new things because that new input will keep things alive and fresh for me.

I consider that all the groundwork. Once you know the lie of the land then you are free to invent. The detail is there to serve the higher aim, which is to engage the audience in a way that is challenging and thought provoking. That means twists and turns in the plotting if they can be achieved organically—have been earned. It’s about seeding things carefully so they can be paid off later in a way that hopefully feels surprising but plausible.

I started in the theatre so it is integral to my working processes that drama is about something, preferably something profound and important. To that degree the desire to connect with the audience in an existential way is the ultimate aim. By that I mean asking them to engage in a debate about individuality, freedom and personal responsibility. Without wanting to sound too pompous I would always want the things I write to have some higher thematic, socio-political purpose, to have something to say about the human condition.

**NL:** Did you figure out Seasons 1 and 2 and then reverse-engineer your plot? Or did you mainly work out the plot for the first 5 episodes, and take it from there?

**AC:** I originally asked the BBC for 12 hours so I always had the overall arc of the first 2 series mapped out—in broad brushstrokes at least. My idea was a simple one: to explore a single story in as much detail as I could across as many hours as I could! The idea is to keep moving the story forward and to keep shifting ground. I hope the third series is going to allow me to fulfill that ambition.
NL: Given your enormous success and accolades for *Prime Suspect 2*, did you pitch *The Fall* first, or write it and then set it up directly into a production deal?

AC: I pitched the idea initially to my partners in the Artists Studio. I have had a long creative relationship with Gub Neal, it was Gub, in fact, who offered me *Prime Suspect 2* when he worked at Granada TV. We then talked about which broadcaster to approach. We all agreed it felt like a BBC 2 project so we took it to BBC Northern Ireland with whom I had an ongoing relationship. They liked the idea and it was then pitched to Ben Stephenson. I was commissioned to write an outline and the first 2 scripts I think. On the strength of that we were given the green light to go ahead and make it. The order was for a first series of 5 parts but the concession was that I didn’t have to finish the story. If all went well we’d be back to continue in a second series.

NL: Do you map the power dynamics between characters, or is that instinctual as you write? For example: Stella stepping into her former lover Jim’s jurisdiction; abused wife (Liz Tyler) vs. her violent husband (Jimmy Tyler); Paul vs. his loyal wife Sally Ann vs. her own good sense; teenage babysitter Katie’s game to control and possess Paul despite the dangers vs. her mum who seemingly only wanted what was best for her wickedly promiscuous, precocious daughter.

AC: I take issue with “wickedly promiscuous”! To me she’s just a vulnerable teenage girl who has lost her father in a meaningless accident, who has failed to mourn adequately for him and who feels abandoned and angry. People like Spector prey on such vulnerability. He seems to be giving her the kind of attention she craves when in fact he is simply using her as a mildly amusing distraction. We know she’s playing with fire but what she really thinks is going on with Spector has not yet been made completely clear. Essentially she’s an insecure, inexperienced, isolated girl who is enjoying the attention and, once the police become involved, the notoriety. Her journey has a way to go yet.

With regard to the power dynamics, they are partly mapped out and partly intuited. One of the things you hope to get better at with experience is finding ways of making the drama you create resonate, internally as well as for the audience. I am drawn to those juxtapositions, those internal rhymes as it were, and, if I’m lucky, they will emerge quite naturally. The moment when Olivia hides the letter from her father in the loft in Series 2 for example and sets the mobile swaying in the way Spector has in Series 1 will have occurred to me in the moment rather than being part of a schematic structure.

NL: Theme also appears to be a unifier between plotlines. How much do you write toward a common theme? For example, the theme of guilty conscience and feeling responsible: PC Dani Ferrington, for not following up on a suspicious break-in at Sarah Kay’s flat; or how both Stella and Dr. Reed blame themselves for the abduction of Rose Stagg?
AC: I would seek to unify plotlines in precisely that manner. I think it’s something the best dramas tend to do—to create variations on a series of themes. Notions surrounding issues of shame and guilt are certainly part of that. I think in that way any chosen theme—take the central idea about male violence as an aspect of patriarchal society—can be played out though various characters, not just Spector or the way Gibson interprets Spector. The plotlines featuring Burns, Tyler, Father Jensen etc. all impact on that central issue. Again they are all positioned somewhere on that continuum.

NL: Several of your characters keep diaries (Stella, Paul, Katie). Did you utilize their journals for insight into their psyches or to help shed light on the voids in the investigations to serve as clues to the truth?

AC: The starting point was probably Spector’s journals, which are highly charged for him and even if only glimpsed, offer us an insight into his psyche. They are fetishized objects for him. Simultaneously I would have thought of Gibson keeping some kind of journal, too—one also imbued with symbolic power for her. They interest me both as a record and as deeply private and subjective works and they function, as you suggest, as a way of accessing unguarded thoughts in the drama. Katie’s diary became a somewhat different document as she sought to embellish it with her fantasies about Spector also with an eye to its potential evidential value. She is using it in an attempt to please and impress Spector. For Spector and Gibson their journals are secret, as Gibson says “not for publication.” Gibson experiences Spector’s invasion of her privacy in that way as a violation.

NL: Can you shed light on your enigmatic ending? Does Paul smile at Stella at the end to express his happiness of finally being free of being a monster... or because he did the “right” thing that led Stella to Rose Stagg? Deep down, is Paul seeking atonement via Stella’s approval?

AC: Well, of course, it’s not an ending in that sense—Series 3 is on its way. The smile was something Jamie did in the moment and not something that was either scripted or that I directed him to do. It felt very right for Spector to me and was for me more a reflection that he was “lapsing out” to use a Lawrentian phrase rather than expressing specific thoughts or emotions. He would certainly not be thinking about doing the “right thing.” He has taken the police to Rose to try to keep exerting his will to power and exercise his control. Anderson recognizes that, so, of course, does Gibson it’s just that she feels she has no other choice. The preservation of life is a police officer’s first duty. Beyond that Gibson is driven by a deep and abiding need to protect, even save, the women around her. The notion that Spector is seeking Gibson’s approval is interesting but does not feel quite right to me. Spector is not seeking atonement and Gibson will consciously withhold any approval. She says she despises him with every fiber of her being. I hope the audience recognizes that it is more complex than that – after all she runs to him when he has been shot, not to Anderson. Anderson surely has a point.
when he says Spector has a strange allure—but Gibson’s life is dedicated to opposing manifestations of misogyny and Spector is, after all, an extreme and criminal example of that destructive trait. Why she seemed so distraught at the end in the forest will be explored in Series 3.

**NL:** Was Stella somehow Paul’s “fantasy mommy” figure all along: smart, strong, perhaps the only person capable of understanding his transgressions? Stella seems to be the only one who truly got to know him and yet didn’t abandon him... To Paul, did Stella provide a sense of intimacy and/or connection by knowing the unknowable?

**AC:** All interesting notions I think! Some of them will be played out more explicitly in the next series. Clearly there are issues of abandonment at the heart of Spector’s personality, perhaps even mental, disorders and we might well get into issues surrounding motherhood as a result. He is a very damaged individual and there is no doubt that little by little *The Fall* seeks to delve deeper into his psyche. Gibson has a desire to understand him partly because it will make her a more effective police officer. Understanding him is not to condone or sanction his behavior. Gibson doesn’t abandon him because she wants to bring him to justice. She is motivated by compassion for his victims and their families, for the victims within his own family, not compassion for Paul. For me and for the drama, the deeper I can go into the characters of both Spector and Gibson the richer the outcome will be. That tension will be integral to the way Series 3 unfolds.

**NL:** Have you always been attracted to the dark side of human nature, our repressed desires? And if it’s not too personal, could you please elaborate as to why?

**AC:** I think I’m primarily attracted to the “sweetness and light” that Spector references in a disparaging way to Katie. Gibson is the hero of *The Fall*; she is the heart of piece. I have tried throughout to make sure that there are no faceless victims in *The Fall*, that the audience would get some kind of understanding of the enormity of Spector’s actions—feel his essential isolation set against the connectedness of his victims. That’s why I made Sally-Ann a neo-natal nurse, someone dedicated to saving life. That’s why in Series 1 we saw the devotion of the young mother to her new premature baby. I wanted to indicate how strong love for a child can be, even such a new child, and also how strong the life force is in all of us—even a premature baby. This was all an attempt to contextualize Sarah Kay’s death, an attempt to convey the enormity of Spector’s actions. For me key scenes are moments like Ian Kay identifying his dead daughter with the words, “my baby, my baby” when the young mother is doing the same thing with her newborn. Those are the feelings Spector, it seems, cannot access. Human beings need to be in close, loving, supportive relationships.
Spector has a wife and 2 children but that still can’t cushion him sufficiently against the demands of his psychopathology, his deep-rooted paraphilias. Ultimately love is the only thing that can counteract that destructiveness. As a dramatist I feel you have a responsibility to acknowledge the shadow side Jung references, the darker aspect of human nature, but there needs to be a balance, light and shade. My aim is to shed some light on the kind of toxic mindset that an individual like Spector expresses. Some things are so shocking to us; each day the papers will be full of new cases of male violence against women—rape and murder and child molestation—they seem inexplicable. I think it’s the writer’s responsibility to try to shed light on those troubling, devastating events. I would not choose them as a subject for drama if it were just to entertain or titillate. Again, Jung springs to mind: “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making darkness conscious.”

It’s a challenge to describe such events in an acceptable way, possibly even more of a challenge to explain or even understand such behavior. But for me understanding is the first step towards prevention, the first step towards guarding against such appalling events. Boys need a particular kind of education, one that replaces the idealization and/or demonization of women – the Madonna/Whore binary that Gibson mentions in relation to the media’s depiction of victims in Series 1—with something that develops respect and equality.

**NL:** Does Paul deserve our compassion or revulsion? Or both? Do you ever worry about alienating your audience or crossing a line?

**AC:** Both, I think. He reflects the reality of these situations—that the abused child can sometimes become the sexual predator. As such he is deserving of our revulsion as well as some degree of compassion. This is something that will be explored more fully in our next series.

Gibson has deep understanding of human motivation, she recognizes the issues of attachment, the damage that can be done in childhood but she has to walk a specific professional line—one that will hopefully end up with criminals being brought to justice and punished for their crimes. A psychiatrist is much more likely to see Spector as a patient and someone in the grip of very severe personality disorders, even mental illness. There is no suggestion that understanding such behavior condones it. Gibson sees the world in a complex, sophisticated way but she is dedicated to finding the truth and bringing the perpetrators of such atrocities to justice. It is a fine line to walk for sure.

**NL:** Should writers of fiction feel a sense of social responsibility and/or morality? Or does that responsibility rest in the hands of the audience?

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1 Paraphilia (also known as sexual perversion and sexual deviation) is the experience of intense sexual arousal to atypical objects, situations, or individuals. American Psychiatric Association, June 2000, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV* American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.
AC: No, I think writers should feel a sense of social responsibility acutely. I think a writer should be fully aware of what he or she has put into their work and be prepared to defend it against criticism. You try to present things in such a way as to influence your audience’s reactions but something alchemical happens between any work of art and its audience. People bring their own life experiences to bear when responding to any artwork and there’s nothing the creator can do about that.

There’s a certain kind of art that runs the risk of being seen to condone the very thing it sets out to critique. Serious drama should set up serious reverberations in the audience. We are surrounded by pain and suffering, by death and destruction. If we are lucky we also experience the transformative power of close relationships, intimacy and love. I would never write anything ultimately reductive. My aim is to be life enhancing.

NL: Given that you write, produce and direct your work, are you as compulsive and meticulous in life as your driven (anti) heroes and heroines? Do you sense that new New Media is going to favor the auteur?

AC: I'm not sure that I am compulsive though I might own up to being obsessive. I am passionate about writing, art and music and endlessly fascinated by people and relationships. I think that passion for life is essential if you want to write and produce anything of value. Directing means of course driving the entire unit—cast and crew—along in an attempt to realize your own vision. If that sounds a bit megalomaniacal I would say that. Again, that is something that works best if it is done with love and good humor. It's teamwork in the end.

I guess auteur theory holds that a film reflects the director's personal creative vision. For obvious reasons I'd prefer to see the writer's vision realized. It's true to say that any filmed drama is shaped in 3 quite distinct phases: the writing, the shooting and the editing process. Each stage is an opportunity to shape the material, to tell the story in as effective a way as possible. Being in overall control significantly increases my chances of realizing my vision for the piece. I put up a sign on the wall in my production office: “Don’t Fuck it Up.” That's the bottom line. I'm grateful for the opportunity not to fuck it up.

NL: Last, I’d love to know your intention and meaning(s) of the title. Does “The Fall” apply to Stella and Paul’s loss of control, descending from a height and falling... much like the compulsion of physical attraction: falling in love/lust with someone – even at one's own expense?

AC: It is meant to encapsulate something of that sort, the idea of a fall from grace. Spector has a thing about the innocence of childhood, even he, one assumes, was an innocent little boy at one time. Specifically I had in mind Milton. Paradise Lost is about Adam and Eve's loss of paradise and their eating of the forbidden fruit—the tree of knowledge, of course—has often been called “the fall” as in a fall from innocence, or a fall from grace. Satan and his
legions are newly fallen. In the poem people are responsible for their own downfall, it’s not a matter of fate or some other force at work. Adam is described as “Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.” According to Milton, Satan and his legions throw themselves out of Heaven, “headlong themselves they threw /Down from the verge of Heaven.”

Series 3 will explore issues relating to free will and choice in greater detail. One specific application is the moment when someone like Spector acts on his fantasies for the first time—that crucial moment when something imagined many times before becomes a reality. That is the key moment of crossing the line. The reason why that happens for some people is in many ways the key question, the most difficult thing to explain or understand. Was it a choice, in any meaningful way, an exercise of free will? That moment of crossing the line between fantasy and reality might be the most particular use of “fall” in the title.

**NL:** Was Stella sexually and/or violently abused by her father or did she mainly have an Electra complex? Per her dream diary it seems that her past with her dad was complicated and possibly traumatic. I’m wondering how her past informs her present/future?

**AC:** Wasn’t it Jung who coined that term? He seems to have featured quite a lot in this interview! I’d concede complicated and possibly traumatic for her but more than that I’m not going to say—largely because we learn a bit more about that relationship in the next series. In life, as in *The Fall,* everyone’s past informs his or her present and future. Watch this space!