

ABOUT TIME

IT'S SCARIER, IT'S EDGIER, BEN 'KILL LIST' WHEATLEY'S DIRECTING THE FIRST TWO EPISODES... AND THE NEW DOCTOR IS MALCOLM TUCKER! IT'S DEFINITELY TIME TO TAKE DOCTOR WHO SERIOUSLY

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• Peter Capaldi insisted his more grouchy Doctor wear dark clothes.



EARLY LAST YEAR, PETER Capaldi was invited by his friend Mark Gatiss to visit Doctor Who's Cardiff nerve

centre and see the recreation of William Hartnell's TARDIS, built for the 50th anniversary drama *An Adventure In Space And Time*. Gatiss asked Capaldi if he had any ambition to play the Doctor himself and Capaldi replied, "Well, I think that ship has sailed, hasn't it?" But he noticed that the crew were surprisingly keen to photograph him in the TARDIS.

"I thought, 'This is really weird.' It kept going around in my head why he'd asked me that," says Capaldi, sitting in a nondescript room at BBC Cymru Wales. This is his first one-on-one interview since becoming the 12th Doctor so he hasn't

boiled his ideas down to soundbites yet. He is rail-thin and naturally theatrical, speaking in bursts of vivid enthusiasm separated by long pauses for thought.

"I didn't get involved in it until after the speculation had started so I was a spectator, not realising I was a major element," he continues. "I thought, 'I wonder who they're going to get?' And then suddenly it was me." When he got the first call from his agent, "I laughed very hard, joyfully. It was such a wonderful notion."

Capaldi has an endearing habit of calling his character Doctor Who instead of the Doctor, which is wrong, as any Whovian will tell you, and strange, because he is a Whovian. He was five when the series first aired and he's been a fan ever

since: letters, autographs, memorabilia, the lot. "Doctor Who was a part of being a kid in the '60s with The Beatles and Sunday Night At The London Palladium and smog and bronchitis and all of that stuff," he says. "I think it's part of my DNA."

What he didn't know when he visited the set last year was that showrunner Steven Moffat had been pondering Capaldi's Time Lord potential for some time. When he asked Gatiss for a wishlist of contenders to replace the departing Matt Smith, Capaldi's name was at the top, with a blank line separating it from the rest. Early last summer, the actor was invited to Moffat's house to be filmed reading a few scenes and that was that. "I certainly sat down with the intention

BRIEFING

DOCTOR WHO: SERIES EIGHT

BROADCAST: August 23

SHOWRUNNER: Steven Moffat

STARRING: Peter Capaldi, Jenna Coleman

STORY: Everyone's favourite Time Lord is back in a whole new form: much older, much pricklier, much more like Peter Capaldi. And not only must his young companion Clara (Coleman) get used to his new incarnation, the pair have to deal with a fresh host of alien monster thingies.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT BEN WHEATLEY DIRECTING? That's right. He's done two episodes, in which the Doctor and Clara take mushrooms and travel the UK killing people in a variety of horrible ways... Kidding!

of making a long list of names and having a long audition process, but I couldn't get past those fierce eyebrows," says Moffat.

Moffat has been running Doctor Who since 2009, longer than original rebooter Russell T. Davies, so he's already overseen one regeneration, from David Tennant to Matt Smith. But Capaldi's arrival has spurred him to give the show a significant shake-up, starting with the choice of Ben Wheatley (*Sightseers*, *Kill List*) to direct the first two episodes. New Doctor, new Who.

"I saw the first episode and it's amazing how different it feels," says Jenna Coleman, who plays the Doctor's current companion, Clara Oswald. "It's darker. The limits feel like they're being pushed more in terms of the danger and the dread. It's scarier, that's for sure."

One thing you notice while talking to Steven Moffat is that running the BBC's two most hotly debated shows, Doctor Who and Sherlock, is liable to make you somewhat defensive. A neutral remark about the intricate, continuity-aware, timey-wimey storytelling in *The Day Of The Doctor* (the all-star 50th anniversary special) and *The Time Of The Doctor* (the Christmas regeneration episode) seems to spark memories of all the reviews and tweets that complained those stories were hard to follow.

"I think continuity is a slightly dull word," he protests. "I would use the word mythology. Obviously with the 50th and the regeneration episode it's pretty much all the myth. For the most part, you need to know very little to understand Doctor Who. It sort of resets itself. He turns up somewhere, has some adventures, gets

back into his TARDIS and flies off."

He does, however, admit that he'd fallen into some bad habits during the last series. "It was time to change. Certain things we were doing a little reflexively. Some of the humour was getting a bit glib. One of the hardest things to notice is when your new idea has become your old idea and it's time to get rid of it."

The new tone, he says, starts with Capaldi. "It feels counterintuitive to say Doctor Who is a star vehicle when it's got a changeable star, but it is. You do build your show around your leading man so it was the David Tennant show, then it was the Matt Smith show and now it's the Peter Capaldi show."

When Capaldi was revealed on a live TV special last August ("It's not something I'm used to but that's showbusiness," the actor says), the response was almost unanimous approval, with three twists. Fans wondered what to make of Capaldi's previous appearance as Roman banker Lucius Caecilius in the 2008 episode *The Fires Of Pompeii*, but Moffat points out that Karen Gillan, who played a soothsayer in the same episode, resurfaced as Amy Pond a year later. "I think the audience are perfectly well aware that the show is made up and the same actor might pop up in a different role," he says drily.

Tabloids, meanwhile, seized on Capaldi's most famous role, as sabretoothed spin doctor Malcolm Tucker in *The Thick Of It* and *In The Loop*. "Who the FS@#?" asked *The Sun*. Never mind that the Glaswegian has been acting since 1982, appearing in the likes of *Local Hero*, *Dangerous Liaisons* and *World War Z*, where he was presciently credited as "W.H.O. Doctor" (as in World Health Organisation). Nor that he's the first Oscar-winning Doctor, the director of 1994's tied winner for Best Live Action Short Film, Franz Kafka's *It's A Wonderful Life*. Malcolm casts a long shadow.

"Ironically the gap between me and the Doctor is smaller than the gap between me and Malcolm," says Capaldi, who doesn't even raise his voice, let alone swear flamboyantly. "Malcolm took a lot more out of me in some ways. It was a darker, more anxiety-ridden performance, which was always quite stressful. This is a joyful experience."

Finally, there's the age issue. Capaldi is 56, a year older than Hartnell was when Doctor Who began and 30 years older than Smith, the youngest-ever Doctor, was in his first episode. Given Smith's Doctor finally empowered the show to crack America, proving massively popular with a long-coveted (and huge) Stateside audience, it seems a risky move to suddenly hark back to the crustier Time Lord of 50 years ago. One of the world's most famous Whovians



• Silurian fan favourite Madame Vastra (Neve McIntosh) returns.

(Previous page) Set design: Stephen Nicholas

certainly thinks so. "To suddenly go older is a brave choice," Hobbit director Peter Jackson tells **Empire**. "What you felt as it took hold in America was the sex appeal. They had a reasonably young and sexy Doctor Who. But I know Steven Moffat well, and he has made a very wise choice, I am sure. I have every confidence in him. I am certainly excited!"

For Moffat, it wasn't so much a case of looking back as evolving. It would have been riskier to keep playing the young man's game. "I couldn't imagine what space there was around Matt Smith's performance to have another youthful Doctor. He nailed it. If we got someone like that it would just be another quirky young man with interesting hair. It would have been like exposing the formula. The main thing you need is someone who can absolutely own a show of that size but it's nice that he's so different from Matt."

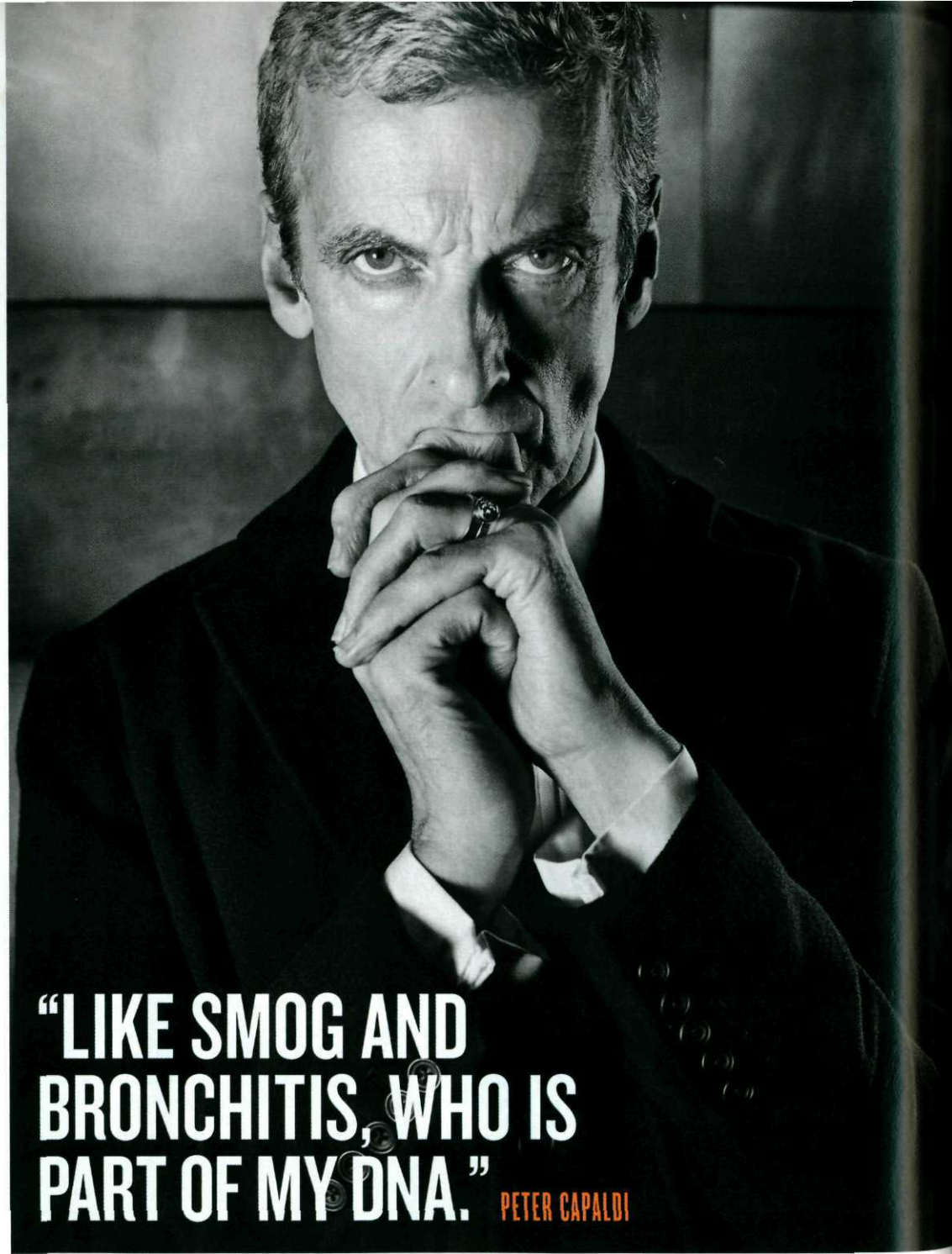
Shooting the climax of the regeneration episode was a peculiar day for everybody. Coleman calls the experience of switching stars within a single scene "brutal and unique". "They kept us separate because I didn't want to be seeing what Matt was doing and thinking, 'How do you follow that?'" remembers Capaldi. "And Matt didn't want to see his successor standing in the wings dressed the same as him. Then Matt gave me a big hug and gave me his watch that he wore as Doctor Who and left and I just had to get on with it. Everyone was conscious of this strange moment."

Capaldi's Doctor is a considerably more forbidding figure than Smith's boyish nutty professor. "He's travelled alone for 1,000 years and outlives everyone and gets a huge reminder that he's not one of them," says Moffat. "So he takes a step back, or at least imagines he does. He holds himself at a more Time Lordy distance."

"He's mysterious," says Capaldi. "He's more alien than he's been for a while. He doesn't quite understand human beings or really care very much about their approval."

He always wanted his Doctor to wear dark clothes, so as not to remotely resemble the ersatz Time Lords in the provincial pantomimes of his youth. After agreeably trying on "all sorts of silly, ridiculous costumes", he got his way. "It can become a kind of franchise where it's not a real character at all but just an amalgam of elements that people think are Doctor Who: a scarf, a bow tie... I wanted to be the *actual* Doctor Who."

reviewing a new series of Doctor Who is like trying to pin down smoke. Speaking before the notorious BBC Miami script and episode leaks, **Empire** tries various underhand strategies to trick the key players into revealing new information. But it would require the skillset of a CIA



"LIKE SMOG AND BRONCHITIS, WHO IS PART OF MY DNA." PETER CAPALDI

• Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, photographed exclusively for **Empire** at BBC Cymru Wales, Cardiff, on June 17, 2014.

interrogator to make them crack.

Wheatley won't even say whether or not his second episode takes place on Earth. "I'd be lynched if I gave stuff away," the director says apologetically.

"In this click-bait era you're aware that people will grab at everything you do," Moffat explains. "You want to give people surprises, and audiences want to be surprised. It used to be a hell of a lot easier before everyone carried a camera phone. Now it's really hard."

So you can imagine what it was like for Capaldi, concealing his new job for two months prior to the announcement. He was in Prague, playing the dastardly Cardinal Richelieu in *The Musketeers*. One day he was chatting with costume designer Howard Burden, and asked what he was

doing next. Doctor Who, said Burden, but it couldn't start until the new Doctor had finished his current job. "Do you know who that is?" Capaldi asked innocently. "And he said he had no idea, not knowing that he was sitting right next to him!" says Capaldi, raising his formidable eyebrows. "It was a wonderful secret to have."

"It was the same when I was cast," says Coleman. "You begin this web of lies that takes on a life of its own. It's amazing how good a liar you become."

Faced with such a deceitful bunch, what can **Empire** reveal about the new series? Well, the finale will bring back the Cybermen and the first episode, *Deep Breath*, features some newer fan favourites: married Victorian detective duo Madame Vastra and Jenny Flint, and their belligerent



Sontaran henchman Strax. Capaldi calls it, "Frightening. Sad. Exciting. Scary. Explosive. Dreadful—in the Ben Wheatley sense." Moffat says it's "big and epic" but his favourite scene is simply a five-minute argument between the Doctor and Clara over a restaurant table, a dramatic change of pace for TV's most frantic drama.

"It never happens in Doctor Who!" says Coleman. "A producer once told me this is the hardest job because you're creating characters and telling stories while always on the run. But Steven's changed the format quite a lot. We have much longer scenes now."

Moffat says that the throughline for this series is more emotional than plot-driven, based on "the fact that Clara was running around with this dashing young

bloke who could almost be her boyfriend and now she's not." We get to see more of Clara's ordinary life on Earth. "It's like seeing a control freak out of control," says Coleman. "She has a boyfriend and she's a schoolteacher and then she travels around the universe with the Doctor. She's trying to live both of those lives separately and not let them collide."

Coleman and Capaldi met for lunch a few times before filming began but they wanted to preserve a certain tension and unpredictability on camera. "Steven said to me that it's like seeing your friend after a major operation and you kind of have to start all over again," says Coleman. "It's like a death without a death. The whole dynamic's been thrown up in the air. What she soon realises is this Doctor doesn't >

DOUBLE VISION

CAPALDI'S ALREADY BEEN IN DOCTOR WHO — AS POMPEIIAN BANKER CAECILIUS, BACK WHEN DAVID TENNANT DROVE THE TARDIS. BUT THERE IS A LONG TRADITION OF TV ACTORS DOUBLING UP...*



LOU FERRIGNO IN THE INCREDIBLE HULK

Ferrigno is well known for playing 'David' Banner's (Bill Bixby) green alter ego in the '70s/'80s show, but in 1981 episode *King Of The Beach* he also appeared as weightlifter Carl Molino, allowing him to crack to Bixby, "Work on those muscles. You'd look great all pumped up."



ROBIN WILLIAMS IN MORK & MINDY

The character of ker-azy alien guy Mork wasn't a massive stretch for the [relatively] young Robin Williams. The other role he played was even less so, when he doubled up for episode 14 of season three, titled *Mork Meets Robin Williams*. Can you guess who else he played?



JOHN HILLERMAN IN MAGNUM P. I.

As stuffy Brit Jonathan Quayle Higgins, Hillerman spent most episodes being foiled by Tom Selleck's slick detective. But over the course of the show he also played Higgins' father and no fewer than three Higgins half-brothers, most memorably Paddy, a Northern Irish priest.



SHERYL LEE IN TWIN PEAKS

She was the face of *Twin Peaks* from the very start, playing the girl whose murder kicked off the whole strange, surreal, smalltown mystery. Then she popped up later in the series as Laura's brunette cousin... Basically her doppelgänger. Well, this was David Lynch...



GARRET DILLAHUNT IN DEADWOOD

Twitchy character-actor Dillahunt's main role in the HBO Western was the neat, tidy, whore-murdering Francis Wolcott. But he first appeared slurring under filthy prosthetics as Jack McCall — the guy who shot Wild Bill Hickok (Keith Carradine) in the first season. DAN JOLIN

* Twins, clones and cyborgs not included.



• Coleman and Capaldi bicker through a tense dinner in the first episode, *Deep Breath*.

SPIN DOCTOR WHO

MALCOLM TUCKER OR THE DOCTOR? TRY OUR QUOTE QUIZ!

1. "Come the fuck in or fuck the fuck off."

2. "Some people live more in 20 years than others do in 80. It's not the time that matters, it's the person."

3. "If some cunt can fuck something up, that cunt will pick the worst possible time to fucking fuck up because that cunt's a cunt! I've got that embroidered on a tea-towel at home."

4. "I seek audience with the Nestene Consciousness under peaceful contract, according to Convention 15 of the Shadow Proclamation."

5. "I'm not pulling anything out of my magic hat. The rabbits are falling to pieces, the fucking heads are coming off and frightening the kids. So somebody else is going to have to help out."

6. "I am and always will be the optimist. The hoper of far-flung hopes and the dreamer of improbable dreams."

7. "You can't make a dead person sick."



"THIS GUY'S A LOT LESS HUMAN-FRIENDLY."

JENNA COLEMAN

really know who he is either. He's an adrenaline junkie and his curiosity takes him to new levels of danger. With Matt's Doctor she felt quite safe, really. She knew she'd be caught if she was in danger, but this guy is a lot less human-friendly and a lot less patient. He's more removed and enigmatic. You can't quite access him in the same way."

What makes *Doctor Who* fun for directors, says Coleman, is that each episode can have "a completely different feel, look, genre and tone. Steven says to each director: own the episode." Wheatley had previously expressed interest in directing *Doctor Who* ("My son is a fan and I wanted to make something that he could watch, as opposed to all the other stuff I've done") and Moffat decided he was perfect for the hefty job of introducing a new Doctor. "It was like doing two discrete films," says Wheatley. "For me, they're back to classic *Who*, or the mid-Tennant adventures, where you'd tell a story and move on to the next one, less tied up in the final machinations of long plot arcs. Capaldi's his own man but there are elements of Baker and Troughton and Pertwee. He's inherently funny but inherently brooding and complicated, as a performer and a man."

"A hugely talented director with huge enthusiasm for the job. Why wouldn't you?" says Moffat. "Cinematic ambition on a budget that's anything but cinematic is what you need for *Doctor Who*."

The subject of money tends to rear its head when you're talking to Moffat. He's clearly frustrated that the BBC won't

invest more in its most lucrative export.

"*Doctor Who* is consistently made for exactly the same amount of money — not enough," he quips. "It will look bigger than ever and that's hard at times."

Does he feel in competition with a critical and commercial fantasy blockbuster like *Game Of Thrones*? "We all know that the more fantasy shows there are, the better those shows do. So far from being in competition you actually become part of the stable. It's hard being the only fantasy show on television. When *Doctor Who* first came back [in 2005] it was the only one of its kind and look how careful we all were with it — how much more timid we were about the fantastical angle. Now *Doctor Who* is as mad and as wild as it's ever been. So you're not really in competition but at a silly, petty, human level you are." He laughs. "I want their money and I want it now."

In the relatively small pond of British telly, however, *Doctor Who* is as big a fish as it gets, hence the decision to send Capaldi, Coleman and Moffat on a five-continent promotional tour. David Tennant told Capaldi when he got the job that he would become more visible than he ever thought possible, and so it's proved. After the casting announcement,

Capaldi had paparazzi outside his house for the first time ever. Following his fleeting appearance in the regeneration episode, awestruck children started to approach him, and this is just the beginning. Like Tennant and Smith before him, only much later in his career, Capaldi is suddenly public property.

"I don't know what to do about it," he says mildly. "You just have to suck it and see. My life has changed so completely in the space of a year and I anticipate it will change some more, not necessarily in ways you would welcome."

Having been a fan for half a century, Capaldi knows that the Doctor is the celebrity, not him. He is just the latest incarnation of a modern-day legend. "For me it's like a *Grimms* fairy tale because the Doctor takes the girl deep into the forest and shows her monsters but then returns her to safety. It's a basic human desire to be able to leave when the going gets rough." He seems quite taken by this idea. "If life is too terrible, wouldn't it be great if you could just get into a police box and leave?"

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DOCTOR WHO: SERIES EIGHT BEGINS ON SATURDAY AUGUST 23, ON BBC ONE.

ANSWERS: 1. Tucker, 2. The Doctor, 3. Tucker, 4. The Doctor, 5. Tucker, 6. The Doctor, 7. Trick question! It's actually W.H.O. Doctor from World War Z!