

Masterclass with **Declan Lawn**

The Salisbury Poisonings

Cleraun Media Ethics Forum

Thursday 28 October 2021, 19:00 to 21:30

(It is hoped that a small number may attend in-person in Dublin, with the rest taking part online)

For young documentary filmmakers and journalists



The film portrays the 2018 Novichok poisonings and decontamination crisis in Salisbury, England.

Declan Lawn

is a screenwriter and director. He worked for 15 years as a reporter, director and producer for BBC Current Affairs Television on programmes such as *Panorama* and *Spotlight*. He now works with Adam Patterson, writing and directing television drama and feature films. Together they wrote the BBC TV

drama *The Salisbury Poisonings* (2020), and the short film *Rough*, which won the IFTA award in 2021 for best short film, as well as at the Krakow International Film Festival and the Kerry International Film Festival. They recently finished their first feature film, *Freegard*, starring James Norton and Gemma

Arterton, which they wrote and directed. It will be released early in 2022. Filming also begins in January 2022 on a BBC One Drama, *Blue Lights*, a six-part series about rookie police officers in Belfast, where Declan lives with his wife and four children.

Case study: *The Salisbury Poisonings*



is a fact-based television drama, starring Anne-Marie Duff, Rafe Spall and Annabel Scholey. It portrays the 2018 Novichok poisonings and decontamination crisis in Salisbury, England. The series was broadcast in three parts on BBC One in June 2020, and in four parts on RTÉ in July - August 2021. On

4 March 2018, Sergei Skripal (66), a former Russian military officer and double agent for British intelligence agencies, and his daughter Yulia Skripal (33), were found unconscious on a public bench by a passing nurse and doctor. They had been poisoned with Novichok. The news of the poisonings sparked international controversy. The British government accused Russia of attempted murder and announced a series of punitive measures, including the expulsion of diplomats.

Those attending will:

- Watch **The Salisbury Poisonings** on the RTÉ Player (4x45 minutes) or on the BBC iPlayer (3x60 minutes) in advance, with a view to answering a series of questions set by Declan Lawn.
- On the evening of the masterclass, break into teamwork groups for 40 minutes to consider those questions among themselves; Declan will spend time with each group.
- Then all join Declan to discuss those questions, followed by an open forum.

Cleraun Media Ethics Forum

With the ongoing support of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), Cleraun Media Conferences (www.cleraunmedia.com) developed from a small event in 1986 into a national conference focussing on professional integrity and ethics. Following the last conference, it was decided to organise online masterclasses every few months for smaller numbers of young documentary filmmakers and journalists. The aim is to allow those taking part to develop a network of contacts who could help one another when facing challenges in the context of professional integrity and ethics. The masterclasses are supported by Screen Skills Ireland and the BAI.

Upcoming masterclasses

- Wednesday 1 December 2021:
TJ Berden (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm3885256/>): **Unguarded** (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11660938>)

Recent masterclasses

- September 2021: **Brendan Byrne**, award-winning Belfast filmmaker: **One Million American Dreams**
- June 2021: **Marcus Vetter**, award-winning German documentary filmmaker: **The Heart of Jenin** (Best Documentary, German Film Awards 2010)
- April 2021: **Martina Durac**, award-winning documentary filmmaker: **The Rehab**, 3-part production, Virgin Media One, 2017
- February 2021: **Lisa Pereira**, RTÉ Morning Ireland studio and web producer: **Why accuracy and fairness matter**
- December 2020: **Michael Beattie**, award-winning Belfast documentary filmmaker: **Robert Campbell — Mountain Man**, BBC TWO NI

Attendance limited to 30 participants. The event is free of charge.

To book:

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