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**Justin Webb (presenter):** A woman who was in a relationship with police officer for five years without knowing his true identity has criticised a new BBC drama for, she says, sensationalising her experiences and those of women like her. 'Alison' talked to the writer of the drama, it's called *Undercover*, Peter Moffatt is his name, about the relationship she had with Mark Jenner. But she's told us that the programme that has been made is "inauthentic":

**'Alison' (recorded piece):** I think there are things, in the story that are strong. There's a different story in real life, and the difference is in the banality, if you like, of our experiences. The real life story is about ordinary women who are standing up against injustice. They're not top lawyers who go on to become the DPP. And I think that for it to be authentic and believable it needs to link up with some of the real facts. The departure from so many of the key facts has changed the nature of the story.

**Justin Webb:** Peter Moffatt is here, writer of *Undercover* as well as similar programmes, *Criminal Justice*, *Silk*, as well.

**Peter Moffatt (screenwriter):** Morning.

**JW:** Have you let her down, and other women who in the same position?

**PM:** I really hope not, and I really hope that when she watches the second half of the series, when Sophie Okonedo's character Maya discovers who her husband really is, confronts him with all that he's done, and the shocking truth contained therein, that she'll have a different and I hope better perspective on the programme. The great advantage of writing a fictional version of something over a documentary is that I can have my characters do or say whatever I want them to. So it is possible for Sophie Okonedo's character to confront him, accuse him of, for example, raping her, because she's consented to having sex with somebody other than the person she thought he was. Which interestingly, for example, is a different point of view compared with the real DPP, who says it isn't possible to bring criminal charges any of these undercover police officers for rape. My fictional DPP doesn't agree with that, and puts that directly to the protagonist played by Adrian Lester.

**JW:** One of the things that 'Alison' was saying in that clip is that the real life stories are ordinary women who have to stand up to these things, well, first face up to that they happened, and then try and get some kind of justice. Your one is a top lawyer, and that in itself is inauthentic and doesn't tell anything like the true story of what happened to these women.

**PM:** Well we know that Stephen Lawrence's friends were spied on by the police. We know that Janet Alder, whose brother Christopher died on a police station floor in Humberside, left alone there with his trousers and pants round his knees by a group of police officers who paid no attention to his choking to death, and Janet was spied on, afterwards, by police officers who infiltrated the support groups surrounding the campaign that Janet ran on behalf of her dead brother. And I was interested actually in writing about institutional racism in the 1990s, deaths in police custody, the cover-

ups that almost always follow on from deaths of that nature in police custody...

**JW:** Do you regret meeting 'Alison' to discuss it? Might it have been better I suppose in retrospect to read what happened in the papers...

**PM:** We had one meeting, it became clear to me and I think her that we were after different things. I was very clear that I wanted to describe a character who had been married for twenty years to the same person and then discovers that he's not who she thinks he is. That isn't her experience. I wanted to write about somebody, a character, Maya Cobbina, who's in the heart of public life, who's making big choices and big decisions that matter, and is being undermined by therefore by the establishment and by the police because they know what she's thinking.

**JW:** But can you sympathise with 'Alison' and others, who are so desperate to have their story told, and told in a way that feels authentic, that this is naturally a disappointment, what you've...

**PM:** Well, Adrian Lester's character adopts the identity of a dead child - that's absolutely accurate, it's usually the way that real undercover police officers functioned. He lies consistently to her. I'm just glad I got the opportunity in this drama to put Adrian Lester's character on the spot and ask him how is his conscience to do this? How is it, what is it like to have a child with someone who you're also spying on? I don't think Bob Lambert and Mark Kennedy or any of the real undercover police officers are going to be talking in public about how their consciences feel.

**JW:** And fall in love with them, and that's the other issue you raise, isn't it?

**PM:** Yeah. I think that's a really...

**JW:** So I can imagine if I were one of the women I'd be quite, I'd find that a very difficult area to go into and I could see why they find that a very discomfoting thing.

**PM:** I really understand that, I really understand that, but I think it's certainly feasible, certainly plausible, that a man who is spying on someone behaving as badly as he is can also be in love with the subject of his spying.

**JW:** And you were saying right at the beginning the second half of the series you think will do more, if that's the right phrase, do more justice to the actual truth of what happened to those women...

**PM:** Well, she says "You raped me!", she says "You've stolen my life!", she says "You're monstrous!", she says "You're a murderer!" That really does represent some of the pain and anger that women like 'Alison' and Helen Steel who've done an amazing job of bringing all of this to the public's attention. But I really think that they'll feel a lot better, I really hope so, when they've watched the rest of the series.

**JW:** Peter Moffatt, thank you.