

The Rig – Speaking to Iain Glen and Martin Compston

When we last saw them, Magnus and Fulmer were being helicoptered to who-knew-where, as the first season of The Rig reached its devastating climax.

While fans of the hit sci-fi series were sure to be delighted by the announcement that both characters would return for the second season, none were as pleased as Edinburgh-born Iain Glen and Line of Duty favourite Martin Compston, who reprise their roles of Magnus and Fulmer respectively.



For Glen, it's allowed him to return home to work, again, something he reflects hasn't happened that often in his long career.

He recalls, "A series called The Fear was the break out job for me moving away from Scotland as I played the Cockney head of a protection racket. I remember thinking at the time, 'Why haven't you got Gary Oldman or Tim Roth to do this?' But I was so chuffed to get that job."

As a result of the impact of that character, Glen never got to work in his homeland as often as he would have liked making The Rig a very special project for him.

He says, "A lot of stuff from America used to come through London but I was always keen to do stuff in Scotland; I did Silent Screen with Peter Mullen way back in 1990 and then just

didn't work in Scotland again. But now, things feel like they are coming back. We've all been talking about how proud we are to be doing The Rig, which is very much a Scottish show set initially on an oil rig in the North Sea, and shooting it in Edinburgh.

"It was fantastic to be back. My mum's still here and doing the first series it was lovely to be on a job that allowed me to spend time with my mum and dad."



Cast at the Premier of the Amazon Prime Video Series RIG2 in Edinburgh. Picture: Jamie Simpson / Prime Video

Glen is currently sitting alongside Compston in Edinburgh's W Hotel, which has glorious views of the castle and city beyond. It's a city Compston admits he loves, "I do, I love it here," he confirms. "My wife, being an American, sees it as a bit of a fairytale city; where else have you got a castle on top of a volcano? It's magic and we were so lucky to film this job here. We stayed at The Meadows during the filming of Season 1 and, one day, I met the actor Phil McKee while I was out

jogging around the park. He asked, 'What are you doing?' and I said, 'Filming this thing called The Rig'... and now he's been cast in Season 2 as well, which is great."

Picking up immediately after their escape from the North Sea tsunami that has devastated the coasts of the UK and Northern Europe, Season 2 opens with the surviving Kinloch Bravo crew being taken captive.

Glen elaborates, "We find ourselves in the Arctic Circle, on this very high-tech rig called the Stac. It is a monumental but mobile unit that is investigating the sea floor for precious metals and minerals. These are becoming more of the focus of energy companies – as alternative assets they can exploit to produce power in this electronic age."

Compston laughs, "When the first series ended and we headed off on the choppers we had no clue where we were going, but we were hoping for somewhere a bit hotter. We didn't know until we got the last scripts for Season 1 whether we would survive, but if you didn't make the chopper then it was very unlikely you were surviving, so it was nice to see my name on there."



Cast at the Premier of the Amazon Prime Video Series RIG2 in Edinburgh. Picture: Jamie Simpson / Prime Video

Glen adds, “There was actually no guarantee of a second series but we got really good viewing figures globally. That’s a mark of the writing, David Macpherson is such a brilliant writer. He takes on these big canvas themes but also writes really strong characters the audience cares about – they were as worried about where we were going at the end of the first series as we were.”

Throughout filming of the first season, Glen reveals that from day one, writer Macpherson had the cast, like viewers, left guessing as to the direction the story was taking. “When I read the script for the very first episode it was a page-turner and I was surprised by the ending of the first episode. As we only had the first three episodes to read before we started shooting, we were kind of holding our breath to see where episodes four, five and six would go... and if we survived. It’s been a great adventure.”

That adventure continues in Season 2, which Compston is keen to point out is more than just entertainment. He says, "It also has an important message about climate change, it isn't an existential threat, it's here and it's happening. I think David has done a wonderful job writing a drama that pushes the entertainment value while getting that message across. The core of the second series is deep sea mining, which we are now seeing become the next front line in the climate change battle."



Joining that battle in Season 2 is a new protagonist, Lennox, played by Star Trek's Queen Borg, Alice Krige, an actress who makes a big impact on the storyline, while making an equally big impression on her co-stars. "Alice is so full of grace," admires Compston, and Glen agrees, "She is a lovely lady and has no idea of just how good she is."

Season 2 of The Rig finished filming in Leith's FirstStage Studios last summer leaving one last question hanging in the air, will there be a third? "David Macpherson's world is so

clever, you could do a series three, four and five with the world he has created,” says Compston.

Glen concurs, “We’d love to do a third, it’s one of the happiest jobs to do and I definitely think there’s more story to tell.”

The Rig’ Season 2 premieres on Prime Video on 2 January 2025.



Cast at the Premier of the Amazon Prime Video Series RIG2 in Edinburgh. Picture: Jamie Simpson / Prime Video