

## **“A good, kind, decent man”<sup>1</sup>: Modifying masculinity in fan fiction depictions of Gene Hunt**

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### **Abstract:**

The act of writing fan fiction requires some element of modification, an inevitable consequence of a new author taking on established characters. A recurring feature in the fan fiction written about the television character of DCI Gene Hunt, from the two drama series' *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*, as written by female authors and posted on the website *fanfiction.net*, is a move towards repositioning the character in more emotional and romantic contexts. These authors are building on the original character, who has a tendency to be aggressive and violent onscreen, but are also drawing on literary and cinematic archetypes to create a more intimate exploration of the character and his motivations.

**Keywords:** fan fiction, female authors, masculinity in television drama, star persona, romantic heroism

The academic analysis of fan fiction since the seminal works of Camille Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women* and Henry Jenkins' *Textual Poachers* (both 1992) has contributed to exploring the development of the multi-dimensional activities of fan cultures and communities. Fan creativity based around popular culture texts such as films, television programmes, novels, and comic books, has traditionally been shared through small runs of fanzines and home publishing. These have been staples of fan conventions, shops specialising in science-fiction and fantasy products as well as early online communication. The development of online fan communities since the mid-1990s has provided forums and home sites for the sharing of creativity from the gathering of images on sites such as Tumblr, to compilations of scenes set to music on Youtube, to examples of literary fiction on archival sites such as *fanfiction.net*. Fan fiction as a literary genre allows the author to share

their work with the wider world based on a range of cultural texts, from films and television programmes to video games and classical canonical literature. *Fanfiction.net*'s welcoming statement reads 'Unleash your imagination' thus allowing for any variation on any theme, and the site houses a breadth of works to support this statement.

The narratives provided by fan fiction authors allow for the expansion of the story information provided in the original texts; they suggest answers to unanswered questions and offers possibilities for the 'what if' situations left open by the text. As Deborah Kaplan notes, 'fan authors need not create original characters from scratch, they produce complex texts that take advantage of the multiplicity of fanon and canon characterizations available' (Kaplan 2006, 136).<sup>2</sup> As scholars from Bacon-Smith and Jenkins onwards have illustrated, the creation of extensions to the official or original narrative allows the fan community to personalise their experience of the series or source text, but also to build connections and develop friendships across a community drawn together by their fandom of single – or potentially multiple – cultural texts.

A key aspect of fan fiction is that it allows, and encourages, the adaptation of canonical characters as they are repositioned in unusual or, at least, unfamiliar narrative contexts. Characters are moved into different narrative realms, such as those of other series', or can be depicted in settings left unexplored by the original series, such as on holiday or within their domestic spaces. By moving a character into an unfamiliar space, there is potential to modify the characterisation and examine the thoughts and actions of the familiar character in an off-screen context. Fan authors provide characters with interior monologues, which are rarely heard onscreen,<sup>3</sup> – but which can often drive the narratives of fan fiction. As noted by Jenkins, authors can fill in the gaps left between scenes, saying what's been left unsaid by the original text:

Because popular narratives often fail to satisfy, fans must struggle with them, to try to articulate to themselves and others unrealized possibilities within the original works. Because the texts continue to fascinate, fans cannot dismiss them from their attention but rather must try to find ways to salvage them for their interests (Jenkins 1992, 23).

Often the story will be from a character's perspective as the authors explore the unsaid, and through first person narration the character's thoughts create the key narrative points and inform the reader's reactions (to the narrator as well as the remaining characters). An established character can be remodelled to the fan author's specifications, with alterations to behaviour, physical form and costume. A notable example of such explorations in a more culturally legitimate context might be Tom Stoppard's 1966 play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Stoppard's play takes minor characters from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and explores their "off-stage" moments, as they attempt to understand the situation which has brought them back to Elsinore.

In this study I will analyse fan fiction representations of the British television character Gene Hunt. These fan stories offer commentaries on the character's life history, his attitude to work, his childhood and family, and most significantly his romantic or sexual interests. I will provide a textual analysis of the onscreen character of Gene Hunt and will compare this with examples of the fan fiction of various authors published on the site *fanfiction.net*. I have chosen this site due to the breadth of its content, as a repository of fan fiction based on a range of films, television, books, comics, plays, games and anime. The site's popularity allows for a proliferation of stories based around Hunt as a character and features stories from a range of authors of both genders as well as from different age groups. What is often overlooked in the study of fan fiction is the significant role of the star or actor in the modification of the character. As well as analysing how fan authors respond to the character of Gene Hunt, I also wish to look at the significance of the actor who plays him, in order to consider how the image and public reputation of Philip Glenister informs the fan fiction based around Gene Hunt.

A leading character in two popular, though unconventional, police procedural dramas – *Life on Mars* (BBC, 2006-2007) and *Ashes to Ashes* (BBC, 2008-2010) – Hunt has been lauded and lambasted in the media as a representation of values and forms of expression trampled by the advancement of political correctness in society and the media (Harris 2007). Hunt is a character who speaks his mind on every subject, who will rarely bow down to etiquette or social niceties, is violent and aggressive in his professional life, and who happily throws around the weight of authority presented to him as a senior police officer. In both series Hunt was depicted at work and at his favoured drinking establishment, but never at home, with family, or seemingly off-duty. Even when seen heavily inebriated he would always be in the company of his work colleagues, thereby positioning him outside of the domestic sphere. These have subsequently become areas of particular interest for fan fiction authors, eager to explore the unseen side of Hunt's life and the alternative aspects of his character.

The fan authors that publish their work on the site *fanfiction.net* draw on the onscreen characterization of Gene Hunt as well as the imagery that surrounds him. Within both *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*, Hunt's presents himself as the 'sheriff', the representative of the law on the streets of Manchester in the former, as well as his attempt to remove corruption from his corner of London's Metropolitan police in the latter. I will discuss how the onscreen character is framed as the lone hero, echoing the sheriff of the cinematic Western genre, as well as how he can be read as a more historic literary figure by drawing on Byronic archetypes. The work of fan authors can also be seen through debates around the adaptation of Byron's characters by female authors in the nineteenth century, as they too are modifying problematic male characters in order to produce more acceptable romantic heroes.

This analysis does focus predominantly on stories based around the series *Ashes to Ashes*, however, Hunt's persona in *Life on Mars* and the treatment of this series in fan fiction is considered. Overall, it is the character of Hunt and its construction through both

series and re-construction in fan fiction that takes priority. Though Sam Tyler, the protagonist of *Life on Mars*, has been featured in several hundred fan stories, his character in these does not appear to change as dramatically as Hunt's from his behaviour onscreen. Tyler is a more varied character onscreen and appears in every scene of *Life on Mars*, sharing his emotions and experiences with those around him as well as in scenes of isolation. Hunt is far more enigmatic onscreen, only occasionally providing glimpses of his life story, which appear to have inspired fan authors to create a more detailed life around him.

The academic analysis of *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* is a developing field, with articles following from James Chapman's overview in the article 'Not 'Another Bloody Cop Show': *Life on Mars* and British Television Drama' published in 2009, and the first edited collection on the series *Life on Mars: From Manchester to New York* edited by Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy published in 2012. Within this collection there are a few references made to online culture, but it is McElroy's own contribution, 'Consuming Retrosexualities: The Past Live On Screen, Online Now', that addresses the character of Gene Hunt and more specifically the reaction to him from female fans. McElroy does not specifically focus on the practice of fan fiction but does address relevant issues and questions about the attraction of modern women to a seemingly offensive period archetype. By examining fan fiction that focused on this character from the *fanfiction.net* site, it is possible to examine not only the apparent attraction of the fans as well as their characters to Gene Hunt but also to explore and identify the prominent flaws that make Hunt an unlikely – or is that likely – figure of focus for female fan authors.

### **The character of Gene Hunt**

Gene Hunt first appeared in the BBC drama *Life on Mars* which ran for two series, before returning for three series in the follow up instalment *Ashes to Ashes*. Both series featured modern day police officers being involved in violent encounters which leave them comatose, before waking in the past in a significant year of their personal histories. In *Life on Mars*, Sam Tyler wakes in 1973 to be confronted by a police force he barely recognises, and bigoted, violent, and corrupt colleagues who have no time to contemplate finding evidence when trying to lock up those they feel are guilty of any crime. In *Ashes to Ashes*, a female officer (and Sam Tyler's psychologist when he returned to 2006) Alex Drake is shot during a hostage situation and wakes in 1981 to meet the characters from Tyler's coma fantasy. In both series these characters become the junior officer to Detective Chief Inspector Hunt, and, thinking themselves above him morally and intellectually, attempt to avoid his corrosive influence. In both cases the modern officers cannot help but be drawn to Hunt and are often disarmed by the complex nature of his character. The conflict of good, bad and ugly in Hunt's character drives the actions of Tyler and Drake until they can no longer deny the attraction they feel towards him, be it professional, platonic or otherwise.

Fan fiction based around both series draws on the various genres seen onscreen, primarily the police procedural drama and science fiction/ fantasy television. They also build

further on themes used in the series, including the narrative potential of time-travel, crime fighting, comedy and various romantic pairings. The work of fan authors also emulates Hunt's onscreen persona as a swaggering, funny, foul-mouthed, hard-drinking and violent police detective, but use this as a site for exploration, elaboration and adaptation. He is framed as the kind of man a sensible woman (specifically in *Ashes to Ashes*, Alex Drake) would usually avoid, but ultimately cannot resist. Narrative journeys in fan fiction involve police cases, developing romantic and sexual relationships, and feature modification to Hunt's character in order to make him a 'better' man.

Fan fiction based on Hunt and his colleagues not only refer to the events seen onscreen, but also the events that go unseen – what happens when Hunt leaves work at the end of the day, or leaves the pub at the end of the night. Though the need to maintain the character's mystique onscreen has often been discussed by the series' creators Matthew Graham, Ashley Pharoah and Tony Jordan, as well as by *Glenister* himself, the scope for exploration of his character by fans is illustrated in online forums and through the creation of fan fiction.<sup>4</sup>

Hunt has been embraced by some in the British media as a "man's man" and as symbolising a return to the no-nonsense attitudes of policing as depicted in the series' 1970s setting, in an attempt to foreground a characteristic apparently lacking in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain.<sup>5</sup> *Life on Mars* was claimed as a male-orientated series, glorifying the macho attitudes of earlier crime dramas such as *The Professionals* (ITV, 1977-83) and *The Sweeney* (ITV, 1975-78) and it has also been claimed that this was enhanced by the period location.<sup>6</sup> The police officers, most prominently Hunt himself, swagger through crime-scenes and assault suspects to get results; they fight with each other, and do whatever might be necessary (legal or otherwise) in order to protect their community (Chapman 2009, 14). James Chapman's summary of the series in his article 'Not Another Bloody Cop Show', links Hunt specifically to *The Sweeney's* Jack Regan – an archetype of 1970s masculinity which particularly appealed to the readership of men's magazines 'whose thirty- and forty-something demographic had grown up with *The Sweeney*' (Chapman 2009, 15). Set between 1981 and 83, *Ashes to Ashes* alters the tone of the earlier series by presenting the gradual changes of procedure across the decade since *Life on Mars*, and by placing Hunt in opposition to a female officer, DI Alex Drake.

Hunt's character can be interpreted in relation to a number of social categories including gender, age, period, class, marital status, profession and location. He is a middle-aged, white, working-class man from the north-west of England in the middle of the twentieth century. He is married (later divorced) but his wife is never seen, he is a police officer of unchanging senior rank working in Manchester and later London in the 1970s and 80s and a detective with a solid success-rate on cases, though his means of solving cases are at times questionable. He holds the perceptions associated with his time, place and profession and at various times demonstrates racist, homophobic, misogynistic and class-based views and prejudices; but he is allowed to go beyond these prejudices in the series and display a pragmatic approach to what his work entails and an awareness of the

expectations and criticisms held against the police by the general public at this time. Hunt's use of violence, offensive language, and excessive consumption of alcohol, nicotine and a questionable diet, clearly contribute to his popularity with audiences but overshadow subtler elements of characterisation in the series, regarding his family history (a violent and abusive alcoholic father, and the early death of his drug-addicted brother) and the unhappy consequences of various decisions in his professional life regarding suspects and colleagues.

The fan fiction around the character of Gene Hunt finds more to say about the man who remains steadfastly enigmatic onscreen, be it in moments of angst, moments of intimacy, or moments of revelation. It is rare that these onscreen moments are discussed in the series itself, but are extensively elaborated upon by fan authors. It is the moments of intimacy, however, that provide the opportunity for authors to make basic physical alterations to Hunt. As described by Sam Tyler in the first series of *Life on Mars* (and oft repeated in countless fan stories), Gene Hunt is "an overweight, over-the-hill, nicotine-stained, borderline-alcoholic, homophobe, with a superiority complex, and an unhealthy obsession with male bonding".<sup>7</sup> It is this damning of Hunt that is the first issue addressed in various stories. I shall deal with the issue of Hunt being "overweight" later, but the other characteristics are swept away quickly as an individual fan fiction narrative develops. The characteristic of being "over-the-hill" tends to be dealt with through contextualising Hunt historically. For these authors, it is an accusation made by a modern man and subsequently a modern woman who apply 21<sup>st</sup> century standards to a man in the 1970s and 80s. Onscreen and in fan stories Hunt's methods are often presented as the standard, techniques learnt from the previous generation which are gradually falling out of favour, but in both contexts Hunt is usually successful in catching the perpetrator of each crime. The characteristics of being "nicotine-stained" and "borderline-alcoholic" are also dealt with through reference to context in fan stories as most of the period characters smoke and Tyler and Drake onscreen and in fan stories both become dependent on alcohol in their enforced visit to the past. Various fan stories refer to Hunt's general aroma of smoke and whiskey, combined with something 'uniquely Gene', as reassuring and attractive. It is also something that Tyler and Drake are often said to miss if the fan narrative returns them to a clean and fresh modern world. The issue of Hunt as a homophobe is dealt with slightly differently, predominantly in stories inspired by *Life on Mars* and then only in a small number that actually deal with male homosexuality. Hunt's attitude within the series may be subverted by placing Hunt and Tyler in a sexual relationship (his homophobia is therefore a front to hide his true sexuality), or, in stories based on *Ashes to Ashes* though Hunt building a strong friendship with a character who is later revealed to be gay, and forcing Hunt to change his views.

Hunt's onscreen attitude towards life, work and women is often associated in fan stories with the period of his upbringing and the contrast between the 1970s and 80s and the 21<sup>st</sup> century attitudes of both Tyler and Drake. During the final episode of *Ashes to Ashes*, Hunt's personal history is revealed as is the fact that his life is contemporary to the age in which he exists. He is a man who came of age in the early 1950s and died on

Coronation Day in 1953, before rock 'n' roll and *Rebel without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955). As noted explicitly throughout his onscreen development, his icons of heroism and masculinity include Winston Churchill and Gary Cooper and their various symbolic associations with honour, responsibility and justice. He is out of step with Tyler and Drake, and though he learns from his relationships with them both, he is the product of a different era. He takes on the western iconography of his youth not only in the posters of *High Noon* (Fred Zinnemann, 1952) and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (Sergio Leone, 1966) that decorate his office, but also through references to himself as the "Sherriff" of his town.

Hunt's devotion to the western genre also affects his choice of women, illustrated in one scene when he questions Drake on the subject before taking their relationship further.<sup>8</sup> The treatment of masculinity in the western also plays an important part in Hunt's self-image and the way in which the character is portrayed morally and romantically onscreen:

The western may be the supreme genre for the depiction of traditional, laconic, dominating masculinity... Moreover, while nearly all Hollywood narratives include a romance which culminates in marriage, cowboys can be such loners that at the end of the film they may ride into the sunset still alone (MacKinnon 2003, 41).

That Hunt remains alone at the end of *Ashes to Ashes*, through an act of self-denial which involves sending Drake away to a peaceful afterlife whilst he stays diligently at his post, evokes the romanticism of the western genre and the lone western hero. This ending is also an inspiration for several stories where the authors express their frustration over the series' conclusion as it did not feature an emotional reunion between Alex Drake with her daughter, or alternatively a romantic union between Drake and Hunt. However, this onscreen resolution appears to be the logical conclusion for Hunt, as his sense of morality and heroism were so heavily based on those of the western genre. This is altered in the majority of fan stories, as the authors are more interested in providing Hunt and Drake with a more conventional romantic future with the possibilities of marriage and children.

Hunt's own fandom of the western genre frames his self-image as a man and as a police officer; this proves to be a vital part of his personal history in the final revelation of his back story in the series. Hunt died as a young constable in the real world whilst on duty alone during his first week of work. Having heard suspicious sounds in an isolated farmhouse and assumed that its origin was children breaking in, Hunt lived out his fantasy by breaking down the dividing door in emulation of his western heroes as played by Gary Cooper, John Wayne and James Stewart, overcoming his fear by playing the western hero. This image of heroic masculinity, which allowed no room for fear or restraint, failed him when the presence beyond the door was not what he had assumed and he was instead confronted by an armed man who immediately shot him dead and subsequently buried him in a shallow grave. The life he lives in *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* is part of a police-centric purgatory through which Hunt guides troubled colleagues to a rewarding afterlife.

This view of the hero as active and fearless has coloured Hunt's character throughout the onscreen narrative, but is reined in by his more sensible, mature and modern colleagues Tyler and Drake. With hindsight, Hunt's recklessness can be read as his adolescent attitude, having not developed through a 'real' career in the force but through a fantasy world of heightened experiences.

The Hunt character onscreen, as well as in fan stories, can also be seen to share qualities with Romantic literary figures such as the Gothic figure of the Noble Outlaw, a rule-breaker out of place with the modern world and 'a largely sympathetic character. He is figured as having been wronged either by intimate personal friends or by society in general and his rebellion is thus always given a plausible motive' (Thorslev 1962, 69). Though Hunt is a police officer rather than an outlaw, he does exist on the outskirts of acceptable behaviour within the context of his profession. His attitudes are often seen as outdated by other characters in the series, and his 1980s career is often threatened by changes in protocol and attitude as embodied by the Scarman and Countryman inquiries of the time.<sup>9</sup> These are seen to be contrasted heavily with Hunt's experiences throughout his career and the attitudes of his mentors during his formative police training. However, despite the difficult nature of Hunt's professional conduct throughout both series, he is depicted as noble in intention and with an honourable moral code. He may not be the best example of the modern police force, but he is often presented in both the series and even more so in fan fiction, as stated by Drake, as 'a good, kind, decent man'.

The Noble Outlaw, as noble in heart if not by birth, was a significant figure in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Gothic literature as he displayed positive qualities that defied his apparently lowly and unconventional social position:

In all of his appearances the Noble Outlaw personified the Romantic nostalgia for the days of personal heroism, for the age when it was still possible for a leader to dominate his group of followers by sheer physical courage, strength of will, and personal magnetism (Thorslev 1962, 69).

In the case of Gene Hunt, who was by no means created as a Romantic figure, the mystique of his onscreen character is balanced by far more upfront and recognisably problematic character traits. Within both series, he is a clear leader, not only in relation to his senior rank in the police force but also in the way that outside of work his officers will continue to follow his lead. Both Tyler and Drake exhibit horror at his work practices but cannot help following him into difficult and potentially dangerous situations. In addition, despite the inappropriate style of his policing practices, his attitudes and practices are often presented as preferable to those of his peers. Hunt's contemporaries and senior officers are often presented as lazy, offensive, indolent, dangerous and corrupt. Characters such as DCI Litton in *Life on Mars* represent the officer Hunt was initially, before developing into a better policeman through his relationships with Tyler, whereas Hunt's superior officer Detective Superintendent Mackintosh in *Ashes to Ashes* is shown as part of a strain of corruption

within the police force that Hunt must overcome alongside Drake. Hunt is seen to accept better work-practices, and learn from his 21<sup>st</sup> century colleagues whilst his peers do not. His actions are depicted as noble and born out of a good heart and moral code but hidden beneath a thick layer of bravado, which can be seen to resonate with the conventional narrative of the western hero: doing what is morally right despite challenging opposition.

The Byronic nature of Hunt throughout *Ashes to Ashes* is more apparent in his behaviour than in his physical appearance. He is tall and broad but also blond and blue-eyed which may not suggest the traditional Byronic brooder; however he often appears to be dark due to his glowering demeanour and temperament, his habit of lurking within a darkened office, and a tendency to swathe himself in a black overcoat. Sarah Wootton characterises the Byronic hero as embodying the 'deflated spirit of a generation', specifically in Byron's case following the French Revolution, but this loss of innocence is embodied in the hero's 'suffering, isolation, and defiance of authority and conventional morality' (Wootton 2004, 122). Hunt's onscreen transformation when he arrives in *Ashes to Ashes* can therefore be seen as a visual manifestation of his loss of innocence, in the visual shift from light to dark as his camel coat from *Life on Mars* is replaced by one of heavy black. He sits silently and alone rather than surrounded by the team in which he features as the life and soul of the party; he is in mourning for what he has lost (Sam, his marriage, his Manchester home) rather than celebrating new beginnings. In the penultimate episode of the final series, he even verbalises the loss of home and friendship when he equates leaving Manchester with being 'thrown out of Paradise'.

The embrace of Hunt by the predominantly female fan writers on *fanfiction.net* can be compared with Wootton's discussion of the appropriation of Byronic figures in the works of female writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The reaction of authors such as Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters and George Eliot to the Byronic hero modified the archetype in order to transform him into a more palatable romantic figure in narratives where 'the egotism of the Byronic type is exposed and the hero is subsequently destroyed, redeemed, or domesticated' (Wootton 2004, 123). Similarly, in the fan fiction based on *Ashes to Ashes*, reasons are given for Hunt's dangerous nature, his emotions are exposed and he becomes a suitable romantic, and often domestic, partner for Alex Drake. In EastAnglia's 'Not Alone', Drake becomes pregnant after a one-night stand with Hunt; his reactions are blunt and traditional, at first proposing marriage and, when rejected, humiliating Drake publicly at work. As the story progresses, however, he overcomes his fears about building a relationship with Drake and his impending fatherhood, falling in love with both mother and child. The story ends with them as a functioning family with a three-year-old son, Sam, and Hunt demonstrating his commitment to this lifestyle through physical changes: he's cut his hair, lost weight, curbed his drinking habits and is attempting to give-up smoking. As Drake begins to realise the extent of Hunt's domestic remodelling, she accepts his flawed character and decides to finally accept his marriage proposal. In four chapters, Hunt is recast as a happy domestic husband and father instead of the kind of man who only ever engages in a one night stand.

The stories published on *fanfiction.net* demonstrate a trend to reframe Hunt both aesthetically and emotionally. Though the character's original incarnation appears to maintain a fascination for fan authors – new stories are still being posted more than two years after the series' end – they are not averse to fixing him up a little. What Tyler's comment, as discussed above, encapsulates is the typical two-dimensional reaction to the character, rather than the fuller and more complex man revealed in brief moments of calm throughout the two series and then built upon by the fan authors. Jenkins's 'Ten Ways to Rewrite a Television Show' (1992, 162-175) discusses the concept of 'recontextualisation', which outlines how fan stories, 'fill the gaps in the broadcast material and provide additional explanations for the character's conduct' (Jenkins 1992, 162). In relation to Hunt as a character, his quieter moments onscreen are a key part of his character but tend to be overlooked in favour of his louder traits; however, in fan fiction stories these quiet moments provide 'points of entry into the character's larger emotional history' (Jenkins 1992, 163). In *Ashes to Ashes*, Hunt's moments of quiet brooding are a regular feature; however, they are never discussed onscreen by Hunt himself as he is not a character who tends to discuss his emotions openly. Fan fiction therefore provides a space to discuss these moments and their potential meanings; Hunt does not need to voice his emotions but, through the use of internal monologue, first person narration or a more open emotional register, fan authors are able to speculate on what these might be.

The need to modify a character from their familiar televisual form occurs as soon as that character is placed by fan authors in a new situation. For example, any story that takes Hunt into his own domestic space alters the character, as he has never appeared in this setting onscreen. The decisions made about Hunt's home, whether it is a house or a flat, his furnishings, whether he is neat or messy, and what he wears when at home, are entirely those of the author.<sup>10</sup> The potential to develop the behaviour and emotions of the character is one of the primary impulses of the fan fiction writer, taking characters and programmes to new places. As Francesca Coppa suggests, 'one could define fan fiction as a textual attempt to make certain characters "perform" according to different behavioural strips' (Coppa 2006, 230). Different contexts allow different codes of behaviour; though the character is still recognisable, their motivations and thereby their 'performance' has changed.

The perceived failure of a show to provide a satisfactory ending to an episode or series as a whole creates a situation where the fan author's frustration is driven to creative ends.<sup>11</sup> Rather than attack the creators, without whom there would be no ur-text for the fandom, fan authors create the desired narrative climax. The original characters remain, occasionally interacting with new characters devised by the fan author, and often scenes from the broadcast episode will be used as a starting point, but they will be played out to a different ending. This provides emotional and narrative fulfilment for the fan author and their readers by creating a more positive and romantic conclusion, which offers a form of compensation for that which was missing in the source material. The narratives are adapted or extended to fit the requirements of the fans; for example, just because Alex Drake leaves Hunt at the

end of the official series, there is no reason that she cannot change her mind at the last minute or return later in the fan's own narrative. In the Huntgoeson's story 'The Return',<sup>12</sup> Drake returns to Hunt's office from heaven, moments after the closing lines of the onscreen narrative. She states how unsatisfying the afterlife was without Hunt's company, and has paperwork from superior forces – "Him" – stating that Drake must return to Fenchurch East to continue working with Hunt, despite his reservations. Higher powers, be it God or possibly the fans themselves, overrule the original authors' decision to divide the couple. Alternatively, Siggys story 'Alone' features Hunt's superior officer at Fenchurch East station handing him transfer papers to send him on his way as a reward for his years of service.<sup>13</sup> When Hunt crosses to the reappeared Luigi's restaurant across the road from the police station, Drake appears to meet him, finally allowing their relationship to begin before guiding him to heaven.

### **Love and relationships**

Gene Hunt is not, in himself, a romantic character and makes no declarations of love onscreen, though he does demonstrate sexual interest on various occasions and performs one, unenthusiastic and unsuccessful, marriage proposal. During the two series of *Life on Mars*, he is described as married, but by the time of his arrival in London in *Ashes to Ashes*, Hunt is divorced and refuses to discuss the details. He is not immune to discussions of sex and desire but these are predominantly framed as forms of humorous objectification of women rather than as romantic revelations. He is also seen as a little prudish in relation to the issue of pornography and sex guides, although this appears contrary to his view of professional female striptease and prostitution. Hunt is also occasionally positioned onscreen as the object of the female gaze, confirming that the audience is encouraged to think of him as a potential figure of love or at least desire. This is developed more during *Ashes to Ashes* as a challenge to the unspoken attraction between Hunt and Drake, and to exploit the attention paid to Hunt's position as an unlikely sex symbol following the success of *Life on Mars*.<sup>14</sup>

The significance of unspoken romance as well as the unresolved sexual tension perceived onscreen allows for fan interpretations of the characters, and, due to the devotion and knowledge the fans hold about these characters, they might see themselves as best placed to extend the characters' narrative universe:

The fans' particular viewing stance – at once ironically distant, playfully close – sparks a recognition that the program is open to intervention and active appropriation. The ongoing process of fan rereading results in a progressive elaboration of the series "universe" through inferences and speculations that push well beyond its explicit information (Jenkins 1992, 155).

The potential for onscreen romance between Hunt and Drake is investigated throughout *Ashes to Ashes*, but very specifically over the course of two 'dates': the first across episodes 7 and 8 of series one, and the second in episode 7 of series three. In the first case, Hunt nervously asks Drake to dinner – undermining his possible vulnerability or romanticism by asking that she wears 'something slutty'. This date is initially cancelled but reinstated in episode 8, where the two declare a sense of mutual respect rather than mutual attraction. The second date is instigated by Drake far more directly and confidently and is framed far more as conventional romance through a sequence of intercut scenes of them both getting ready. Their clothing provide examples of evening wear – him in dinner jacket and black tie, her in an evening gown – as opposed to work-wear as with the first date. The sequence is also overlaid with a romantic pop song,<sup>15</sup> and they are predominantly filmed in extended medium shots and close-ups throughout. The date is interrupted by work but is continued later the same night in Drake's flat when the two get closer to consummating their attraction with a slow dance.<sup>16</sup> The implication is that the evening would end with a kiss and then move to the bedroom, if not for another, final interruption.<sup>17</sup> Hunt and Drake do share a single kiss in the final episode but the romance is nullified as the kiss signifies the end of their relationship (and the series), rather than the beginning of something new.

Hunt's masculinity in these romantic scenes changes according to his control of the situations and the women involved. Though his persona is forthright, and displays the confidence of an alpha male, Hunt finds himself pursued by equally confident women. He is never seen chasing women, whereas women are seen to present themselves to him. However, when Drake drunkenly appears to offer herself to him (Series 1, episode 3) his reaction is chivalrous and professional as Drake's superior officer, with him refusing to take advantage of the situation. When he asks her to dinner later in the series he is clearly nervous, avoiding eye contact, shuffling awkwardly and backtracking on the invitation almost immediately to avoid rejection; it is only when Drake accepts that he reverts to his usual confident persona. Hunt is allowed vulnerability, however brief, in these scenes, not necessarily puncturing his usual persona but providing additional components to his character. This also provides inspiration for greater exploration of this character trait by the writers of fan fiction, many of whom have drawn out these key scenes by adding the internal thoughts of both characters and additional scenes which outline what may have occurred had they both been bolder.

The development of the Hunt/ Drake relationship in fan fiction leads them to a variety of scenarios, often leading to a combination of communal living, marriage and children. The battle to reach these conclusions can be hard-fought, based around the couple's argumentative nature as demonstrated consistently onscreen, combined with countless consummations of their sexual chemistry in the majority of fan fiction.<sup>18</sup> The majority of romance, angst and smut fics develop Hunt's character in various directions, inspired by the tight-lipped and brooding nature of his character in *Ashes to Ashes*, and offering possible reasons for his troubled silence.<sup>19</sup> This more pronounced brooding element of Hunt's nature

onscreen allows authors to draw on more Romantic types of dark and troubled masculinity as suggested by Gothic and Byronic heroes.

### **Gene/Sam**

The significant academic attention paid to the literary genre of fan fiction began, in particular, with investigations into the writing of slash fiction, narratives that demonstrate, as noted by Jenkins, 'the movement from male homosocial desire to a direct expression of homoerotic passion, the exploration of alternatives to traditional masculinity' (Jenkins 1992, 186). The character of Gene Hunt and his relationship with male colleague Sam Tyler in the original series of *Life on Mars* has been popular with fans and has inspired high productivity at various fan fiction sites. However, the reactions of readers at *fanfiction.net* have tended to veer away from slash maintaining a focus on heteronormativity for the most part. There are slash stories posted at the site but they tend to receive less attention than other stories, receive far fewer reviews and tend to only be 'one-shot' stories<sup>20</sup> rather than complex extended narratives.<sup>21</sup> Following the end of *Life on Mars* and the arrival of the follow up series *Ashes to Ashes*, the fans were given a female alternative to Sam Tyler in the form of Alex Drake, which allowed for the development of Hunt's character in the source material in a romantic direction in more heteronormative terms.

There are sites devoted to slash interpretations of Hunt's relationships with his male colleagues,<sup>22</sup> but the more mainstream setting of *fanfiction.net* appears to favour heterosexual narratives. In the few reviews received for many slash stories on *fanfiction.net*, a common strand of comments starts with "I don't usually enjoy slash but...". At least two stories attempt to lower the guard of their possible readers by writing about threesomes (Hunt, a second male [Tyler or another] and a female), allowing for the retention of heterosexuality as well as playing with non-canonical interactions. It is not that the *fanfiction.net* readership is prudish (anything but) and many contributors are happy to indulge their readership with pure 'smut' when asked (or when the mood takes them),<sup>23</sup> but the slash contributions on this site that focus on this character and the actor who plays him are dominated by heterosexual partnerships and lengthy stories based on traditional male-female relationship. These stories (especially those that progress to formidable word counts) follow the boy meets girl pattern, concluding more often than not with a marriage and children. Stories such as cats-tale's 'Hearts & Flowers', clownish's 'A New Year', Lucinda Bright's 'Storm in a D Cup' and Siggy's 'The Rage of Angels', reach extensive word counts of more than 150,000 words and are published over several months.<sup>24</sup> These stories feature the troubled beginnings of long-term relationships between Hunt and Drake, but also take them through various stages on the way to an apparently lifelong devotion.

### **Clothes**

The desire to re-dress Hunt is a feature of many stories. Scenes based around the idea of Hunt 'off-duty', something rarely seen in the series itself,<sup>25</sup> often draw on the image of

Glenister in publicity materials such as filmed interviews and photographic portraits used in the press. Some authors are merely happy to send Hunt out for a formal evening where he is required to wear white-tie and tails, which may not be related to a specific Glenister performance (either in a different drama or perhaps an appearance at an awards ceremony) but are a distinct change from the Hunt-norm. Others shift Hunt's image to the casual choices of jeans, t-shirts, jumpers and trainers, which constitute the typical attire of Glenister when interviewed in television promotional interviews or those featured as DVD or on-line bonus materials.

The clear focus on a shift from work to domestic spaces and between on- and off-duty can be seen in the way Hunt is dressed by fan authors. Both the removal of jacket and tie and the appearance of an otherwise unseen wardrobe is notable in extended stories, or those with no interest in professionally located narratives. Jabberwockette's 'Think Clean' sees Hunt and Drake bonding over a night of laundry and anecdotes.<sup>26</sup> Hunt arrives showered and unshaven, in jeans and a casual jumper, and is described throughout as relaxed and casual.<sup>27</sup> His appearance is a surprise to Drake, who has only seen him in work-clothes, but her reaction to him is positive and romantic, reinforced by other women at the laundrette eyeing him with interest – 'Gene was typically oblivious as he made his way towards her but it didn't escape her that two cute 20-somethings were clocking him like a magnet as he passed, their approving eyes on his backside. Not without reason, she noted'.

The placing of Hunt in denim jeans is a recurring motif throughout *Ashes to Ashes* fan fiction on *fanfiction.net*. The move of this item of clothing from work-wear to youthful fashion statement, and then on to universal clothing regardless of specific age groups across the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is a notable aspect of scholarly discussion in relation to types of masculinity. Dick Scheuring contrasts the role of denim in fashion in the mid-1980s with more traditional adult-wear; 'Suits were for the old and established, jeans for the young and rebellious' (Scheuring 1989, 226). The generations are divided by fashion statements as are their roles in society – those who went out to work in the 1980s did so in a suit, those without work wore jeans. However, Scheuring goes on to note that there was a change in those who bought jeans in the 1970s as the middle-aged attempted to hold on to their youth, '[t]he concept of 'leisure fashion' had arisen, which meant that in this disguise every father or mother could slip into a youth role after work' (Scheuring 1989, 231).

Onscreen, Hunt is never seen in jeans, and rarely is he out of a suit; within fan fiction, especially in extended narratives, Hunt is shown to own jeans and wear them in the domestic setting when he is alone or at least alone with Drake.<sup>28</sup> As Scheuring argues, they are an item of clothing kept well away from the work place, though the fan stories make no suggestion that Hunt is attempting to regain his youth. Hunt's jeans are usually described as old, faded, well-worn, or stained with paint or oil from a domestic task. As it is suggested that the image of Hunt in jeans is a surprise when witnessed, the suggestion of denim as a fashion statement for Hunt is also dismissible. In the story 'A New Year' by Clownish, Drake encourages Hunt to modernise his wardrobe by buying a pair of jeans amongst some other items, to which he reacts "I don't wear jeans, Alex. I'm not seventeen".<sup>29</sup> Hunt echoes

Scheuring, stating that jeans are – or were in the early 1980s – predominantly associated with youth and with Hunt’s own youth in the early 1950s. Though Drake convinces him that jeans are widely worn by adults by the late-20<sup>th</sup> Century, he is mostly convinced by her reaction to the sight of him in denim, ‘the approving stares coming from the much younger women’, and the promise of sex. In other stories, Hunt clad in denim is a focus for the female gaze, both for female characters in the story and for the author and their readership. As noted above, in ‘Think Clean’ it is not only Drake who is distracted by Hunt in casual dress, but also the other women in the launderette. In addition, the reviews posted for these stories demonstrate the approval of the female readership of the author’s choice of Hunt’s wardrobe.<sup>30</sup> Scheuring’s discussion of denim across generations and profession is one that can be read in the onscreen view of Hunt as a professional middle-aged man in the 1980s; however, by redressing Hunt in Glenister’s modern wardrobe, fan authors are crossing period verisimilitude to create an image they prefer. Not only are they remodelling Hunt emotionally but redressing him according to their preferred imagining of Hunt off-screen.

The issue of Hunt’s body shape and physical appearance is addressed in fan stories when his relationship with another character becomes intimate, something never really examined in the series. Hunt is a man in his forties and his physique is not unusual for his age, especially when one considers his lifestyle.<sup>31</sup> He doesn’t go to the gym or exercise beyond the requirements of his work (occasionally a foot chase or beating up suspects), and in the course of both series when he is seen eating it is usually confectionaries, biscuits, Italian meals or fried foods. However, what is conveyed in countless stories is that the initial impression of Hunt being fat is misleading. Hunt’s bulk is associated with muscle rather than being entirely down to bad diet – he is broad and strong rather than weak and flabby – and for fan authors though his stomach looks a little large it is solid and strong to the touch. In the fan fiction based on *Ashes to Ashes*, Hunt’s physique can change through actual weight-loss rather than wishful thinking. This often occurs due to the positive aspects of a steady relationship with Alex Drake, time spent at home rather than in the pub, a sensible and regulated diet rather than curries after work and fry-ups for breakfast, as well as the exercise from their apparently boundless sexual enthusiasm and the occasional romantic walk in the park. In contrast to this, if a story features the end of a Hunt-Drake relationship – be it through a misunderstanding or her return to the modern world – Hunt loses weight for other reasons, perhaps stress, grief or the replacement of food with alcohol intake. Another reason for a reduced body size is presented in stories where Hunt wakes in the modern world himself, often from his own coma, having lost weight from an extended period in hospital. In each case his middle-age physique is reduced through less than conventional means, creating a smaller and occasionally healthier body-size.

What is interesting in stories where Hunt wakes in the modern world is that the changes to his image often bring him more in line with the general look of Glenister when appearing as himself. The first clear sign of this is that, upon waking in the future, Hunt is quickly described as having shorter hair which can be a little spiky on top. Apart from in the

earliest episodes of *Life on Mars*, Hunt has relatively long hair for a working man, which at its longest curls around his collar (especially in the context of 1973), or alternatively is swept back in the context of the early 1980s. In various interviews with Glenister when he is not filming as Hunt, his hair is shown to be much shorter. There are two immediate characteristics that separate the actor from the character, one being his hair length and the other being their contrasting regional accents (Hunt is Mancunian whereas Glenister is a Londoner). The means of distinguishing modern Hunt from the 1970s/80s version is a closer approximation to the modern man that is Glenister.<sup>32</sup> Many fans and authors express their attraction to Glenister as well as Hunt, noting not only the appeal of different characters from his career but also the appeal of the actor in interviews and public appearances. When questioned about this subject – as he often is – Glenister insists that it is purely the character that fans are attracted to, as he himself is not immune to the appeal of Hunt as a creation.<sup>33</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The modifications to Gene Hunt as seen in the fan fiction around *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* illustrate the appeal of his character whilst allowing the minor moments of vulnerability and emotion seen onscreen to grow and flourish into an image of a more acceptable romantic hero. By taking a character so associated with set locations onscreen – work and the pub – and placing him in new settings, the possibility for development is immediate. In addition, by taking an alpha-male and removing him from a homosocial environment, at work as well as post-work events, the style and content of his conversation is changed. The need to dominate every situation is reduced, whilst the freedom to discuss more emotional and intimate matters is increased. The change of environment, costume and company provides the fan author with a wealth of opportunities to create their own version of the character, brusque or sensitive, challenging or compliant. There are often attempts to retain Hunt's voice in the writing, be it an attempt to suggest his Mancunian accent, the cadence of his speech, or his vocabulary. Fan authors also use Hunt's onscreen persona to justify certain elements of characterisation in their stories, be it bad or offensive language which they feel might affect the story's rating on the site (suitable for younger readers, or for the mature reader only).<sup>34</sup>

The combination of romantic and Romantic archetypes assigned to Hunt onscreen and in fan fiction help to build a character that is far more complex than the reaction in the press and print media might suggest. Yes, Hunt is violent and offensive, and occasionally these elements of his character are played out for the sake of humour in the series, but his actions are often depicted as instinctive behaviour rather than thought through, as though he cannot always control himself. Hunt is impulsive, behaviour which the series has often used for explosive exchanges, but is also shown as a weakness in him, and ultimately presented in the final episode as the cause of his early death. Within fan fiction however, the brief glimpses of weakness or vulnerability shown onscreen are seized upon by fan

authors as significant and often Hunt's emotions – be they love, lust, anger, embarrassment or grief – are the driving force of a fan story.

This analysis of Gene Hunt through literary and cinematic archetypes demonstrates the complexity of the character, as well as suggesting a possible reason for his popularity with audiences, regardless of gender. Several fan authors use a combination of texts to inspire their repositioning of Hunt within individual stories, such as introducing an unconnected narrative into Hunt's world, as in the Huntgoeson's 'Much Ado About Fenchurch East'. In this story various characters from *Ashes to Ashes*, are inspired by an advertisement for a theatre event in a newspaper to use Shakespeare's narrative for their own ends. Hunt is placed, unknowingly, into the role of Benedick, bickering wittily with his lady love Alex/Beatrice, and stepping in to save the reputation of the wronged Shaz/Hero after a disastrous wedding ceremony. Though I am not suggesting that every fan author takes inspiration from canonical literature, I do suggest that Gene Hunt as a character is complex enough to allow for diverse readings and can be seen to draw on a tradition of masculinity that connects to a variety of existing archetypal male heroes.

The masculinity of Gene Hunt, from the onscreen characterisation to that in fan fiction, is informed by a shift in pop cultural masculine types. The onscreen character of Hunt is a combination of familiar and iconic masculinities. DCI Hunt is drawn from the familiar image of police detectives in 1970s television dramas such as *The Sweeney*, a brash and swaggering figure who is willing to do anything to resolve a case. Hunt's self-image is that of the Western sheriff, built on his fandom of the Hollywood genre, an honourable man standing strong and defending society from disorder. The vision of Hunt in *Ashes to Ashes* in particular is of a dark and haunted figure, a troubled and misunderstood Byronic hero on the edge of cultural acceptance.

The modifications to Hunt's character in fan authored stories include his behaviour, attitude, appearance and expression. Though Hunt does not achieve the open-mindedness and sensitivity of an ideal modern man that might be associated with the character of Sam Tyler, there is a distinct move towards Hunt's domestication. Fan fiction places him more regularly in the home, performing domestic tasks such as laundry and cooking, demonstrating the abilities of a single man albeit with these skills not being ones he may wish to perform in male company. Domestic tasks are often viewed in relation to Hunt's association with Alex Drake, as he proves himself to be more than the limited Neanderthal she assumes him to be, and therefore a potential lover. The changes in Hunt's appearance are equally an attempt to modernise his character, providing him with a life and lifestyle unseen onscreen. The modernisation of Hunt's wardrobe in the fan fiction clearly draws on the image and persona of the actor Philip Glenister. By transforming Hunt into a 'modern' man the fan author therefore brings the character closer to the actor Glenister, echoing the image of the actor in promotional interviews and photographs as well as through references to him in other roles. The romantic nature of many fan stories draws on other familiar literary archetypes. In the end, the Byronic onscreen Hunt's is transformed into an acceptable romantic male hero, devoted to a long-term relationship with Drake and headed

for the 'happy' ending of marriage, family and home. In the process, Hunt is transformed through fan fiction into a modern, domestic and emotionally literate hero.

### **Biographical note:**

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> *Ashes to Ashes* Series 2, episode 5 (written by Julie Rutterford), DI Alex Drake is impressed by the sensitivity of Gene Hunt towards a culprit's elderly mother.

<sup>2</sup> The canon refers to the events of the original broadcast television series, whereas the fanon describes the events and information added to the narrative universe unofficially by the fans themselves. As Kaplan notes, the term fanon will encompass 'the noncanonical knowledge about a source text, is the sum of the community's shared interpretive acts' (Kaplan2006, 136).

<sup>3</sup> Situation comedies such as American series *Scrubs* (NBC/ABC, 2001-2010), and the British series *Peep Show* (2003- present), are some of the few examples of television programmes that use the characters' internal monologues to draw humour from actually expressing the characters' thoughts.

<sup>4</sup> The mystery of *Ashes to Ashes* was explained in the final episode, when the 'truth' was finally revealed about the characters and the world in which they lived.

<sup>5</sup> John Harris in *The Guardian* described Hunt as an ironic return of Seventies Man and 'the ambivalent feelings he arouses' (Harris 13/02/2007).

<sup>6</sup> James Delinpole in *The Telegraph* discussed *Life on Mars* and its appeal as drama for men. The article 'Life on Planet Male' notes that the series 'sticks two fingers up at the petty regulation and nanny-stateism which have become such an oppressive part of our lives' (Delinpole 11/02/2007).

<sup>7</sup> Dialogue featured in *Life on Mars* series 1, episode 8 (written by Matthew Graham).

<sup>8</sup> In Series 2, episode 8, Hunt asks Jenette Rivens whether she prefers John Wayne, Gary Cooper, James Stewart or Clint Eastwood. Also, in Series 1, episode 8, he suggests ending a date with Alex Drake by watching a VHS of *They Died with their Boots On* (Raoul Walsh, 1941).

<sup>9</sup> The Scarman inquiry of 1981 and Operation Countryman which ran from 1978-82 were both concerned with the investigation of police corruption, particularly in the London area. The Scarman report followed a period of rioting in the Brixton area of London in April 1981, an area of major social problems such as unemployment and street-crime, where the population of predominantly African-Caribbean residents were victimised by, what was seen as, institutionalised racism on the part of London's Metropolitan police.

<sup>10</sup> Hunt's house appeared in the penultimate episode of *Life on Mars*, but was only viewed from the front doorway, and Hunt himself was not present.

<sup>11</sup> Stories such as 'Behind the Door' by Mage of the Heart (2,222 words published 21/05/10) and introduced with statements such as 'I'll be honest... I was disappointed with the ending, so here is my interpretation of events, from the moment Alex enters the pub'.

<sup>12</sup> A one-shot story, 2,979 words, published 23/05/10.

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<sup>13</sup> A one-shot story, 3,807 words, published 06/06/10.

<sup>14</sup> Hunt's position as a sex symbol is discussed in the behind-the-scenes documentary 'Life after Mars' on the Series 1 DVD, where the series' executive producers Jane Featherstone and Simon Crawford Collins note it as an element to exploit in the development of the spin-off series.

<sup>15</sup> John Martyn's 'Couldn't Love You More' (Martyn, 1977) Island Records Ltd.

<sup>16</sup> To the Spandau Ballet ballad 'True' (Gary Kemp, 1983) Chrysalis Records Ltd.

<sup>17</sup> In an earlier draft of this scene Hunt and Drake share a passionate kiss and are interrupted en route to Drake's bedroom,

<http://www.monasticproductions.com/public/scripts/pdf/ASHES%20TO%20ASHES%20Series%203%20Episode%207.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> On 4/04/12, of the 1.587 stories on *fanfiction.net*'s *Ashes to Ashes* strand, 922 were listed under the genre of Romance. These combined the genre of Romance with others including: Friendship, Angst, Hurt/Comfort, Family, Crime, Humour, Fantasy and Drama.

<sup>19</sup> Though Hunt was enigmatic in *Life on Mars*, his personality was brighter and more positive than in *Ashes to Ashes*, where, though still brash and witty, was more subdued.

<sup>20</sup> 'One-shot' stories are single chapter narratives on *fanfiction.net*, which offer a quick adventure or brief romantic or sexual encounter, which are occasionally inspired by a specific episode (or moment within an episode) of the broadcast series.

<sup>21</sup> On 4/04/12, of the 416 stories on *fanfiction.net*'s *Life on Mars* strand, 134 were listed under the genre of Romance with less than a third (approximately 35-40) listing themselves as featuring Slash content.

<sup>22</sup> Slash sites include: 'Is there life on mars?' (lead author Elfin)

<http://www.sundive.co.uk/lifeonmars/> The site's opening statement is 'Slash Fiction. Please note – These are SLASH stories- that means two men in romantic &/or sexual situations. Proceed at your own risk'.

<sup>23</sup> The term 'smut' is used to describe stories with only minimal narrative detail. The purpose of a smut-fic is to establish a narrative context that allows for a sexual encounter. They are usually short stories whose entire purpose is to present a sexually explicit scene (or scenes) between the characters of the author's choosing. Some extended stories such as Cats-tale's 'Hearts & Flowers' or Clownish's 'A New Year' contain 'smut' chapters as a break in the main narrative, which are less about the developing the overarching narrative, and more concerned with presenting the characters of Hunt and Drake in more extensive sexual contexts than in an average chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Cats-tale's 'Hearts & Flowers' ran for 56 chapters (250,487 words), published between 15/06/08 and 17/04/09. Clownish's 'A New Year' ran for 60 chapters (212,066 words), published between 23/04/08 and 22/12/08. Lucinda Bright's 'Storm in a D Cup' ran for 40 chapters (189,846 words), published between 5/06/08 and 21/03/10. Siggys's 'The Rage of Angels' ran for 26 chapters (150,128 words), published between 25/01/09 and 27/07/09.

<sup>25</sup> Both *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes* feature scenes of Hunt away from work in his regular drinking establishment, his dress is unchanged as he has arrived there directly from work.

<sup>26</sup> Jabberwockette, 'Think Clean'. An incomplete story of 8 chapters (14,087 words) published between 19/07/10 and 09/06/12.

<sup>27</sup> This outfit resembles that worn by Glenister during his appearance on BBC2's motoring programme *Top Gear* on 21/05/06 (Series 8, episode 3), as well as that worn on the *Life on Mars* Series 2 DVD box-set interviews (released in 2007).

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<sup>28</sup> An exception to this would be when stories place Hunt in the modern world of 2006, where his ownership of jeans is less surprising due to the universality of the item in modern society.

<sup>29</sup> Clownish, 'A New Year' – chapter 41. Hunt and Drake are on holiday together in Cornwall and in an on-off romantic relationship since the story's first chapter.

<sup>30</sup> A review by Malena Hunt posted on 19/07/2010 states: 'Love how affected Alex is by his casual look and his "just-out-of-the-shower" gorgeousness. Can't blame her'.

<sup>31</sup> The policeman's diet, as represented on television involves a reliance on snacking, as well as a lifestyle that features numerous late nights, heavy drinking and smoking.

<sup>32</sup> An interesting aspect of Glenister's persona is that when he expresses a negative view of the modern world in an interview he often slips into a northern accent, as though unconsciously evoking Hunt.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with James Rampton in *The Scotsman* (Rampton 26/03/2010).

<sup>34</sup> Many authors claim a higher rating for their stories on *fanfiction.net*, due to the robust and possibly offensive language featured, blaming 'Gene, being Gene'.