

M-Net's *White Lies*: A thrilling exploration of wealth, privilege and murder

By [Aa-isha Hassiem](#)

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In an age where wealth, privilege and one's overall position in society are at the forefront of most minds, M-Net brings a dramatic whodunnit miniseries that highlights these very themes. Starring Natalie Dormer (*Game of Thrones*), and Brendon Daniels (*Four Corners*), *White Lies* underlines the topics that are so often swept under the rug and avoided, while gripping your attention with almost relentless twists and turns.



The series takes place in Constantia, Cape Town, an area most known for its affluent residents, a quality often associated with security and safety. This is what makes it the perfect setting for a (possible) double homicide – it's completely unexpected.

The plot revolves around Edie Hansen (Natalie Dormer), a journalist and estranged sister to the victims (her brother and his wife), and Fortune Bell (Brendon Daniels), the lead cop with emotional troubles and a major grudge against Hansen. The two struggle for power and authority, Hansen having a personal connection to the case and very little confidence in Bell's abilities, and Bell being adamant that her orphaned niece and nephew, Jamie and Daniel (Daniel Schultz and Morgan Santo), are the prime suspects.

The first two episodes showcase Hansen attempting to reconcile with the teenagers, as their mother remains in a coma, all while trying to clear their names and find the real killer, knocking heads with Bell at every corner.



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Over the first two episodes, we are introduced to other possible suspects, each with their own motive. And at the end of the second episode, a jaw-dropping scene leaves us with more questions than before. Thereby throwing out all the theories you might have built up over the previous hour and 40 minutes and leaving you desperate for the remaining six episodes.

The idea behind *White Lies*

Darrel Bristow-Bovey, an award-winning screenwriter, showrunner and head writer for the show, describes himself as someone who has always had an interest in the psychology of wealth and how it makes people build walls around their own lives, keeping neighbours and their communities at bay, as well as the people who would otherwise love them. This is a reference to his own experiences, as his wealthy grandmother disinherited and disowned his family when his mother chose to marry someone from a different class. Very old money.



Image by Riaan West

This personal connection is prevalent in the show, making the audience connect with it as well.

When it comes to the choice of setting, Bristow-Bovey describes Cape Town as a place that “produces mixed feelings,” saying that the outside is very pretty but the inside is questionable, referring to the inequality that is often ignored. This is his reasoning for his decision, as the city allows him to explore the ideas of class and race, concepts that are relevant in the local culture.



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In a now almost uncommon method, audiences will receive weekly episodes, instead of allowing them to binge. And while this can be annoying, there is something to say for the old method of viewing, as it helps viewers build a relationship with shows – a rarity these days. “The show reveals itself in the second half. The walls start coming down,” says the writer. “I hope people will follow through to the end.”

White Lies premieres on 7 March at 8 pm on DStv, channel 101.

ABOUT AA-ISHA HASSIEM

Content Assistant at Bizcommunity

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