



# TQEA MEDIA STUDIES

# VIGIL



**YOU MAY BE SHOWN A CLIP FROM VIGIL AND BE ASKED TO ANALYSE FOR LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATIONS. YOU ALSO NEED TO KNOW HOW THE 2020S CONTEXT INFLUENCES THE SHOW AND ITS IMPACT ON AUDIENCES**

| KEY VOCABULARY   |
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| <b>Nuclear weapon</b> - a bomb or missile that uses nuclear energy to cause an explosion.  |
| <b>Deterrent</b> - making someone less likely to do something by making it difficult for them to do it                                     |
| <b>Genre hybrid</b> – A programme which mixes different genres together. Vigil is a blend of <b>crime drama/ thriller / murder mystery</b> |
| <b>Verisimilitude</b> – the appearance of being true or real   |

| KEY FACTS  |
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| 1. Vigil was scheduled on BBC One during peak viewing time in 2021 Sundays at 9pm.   |
| 2. The series is based on the UK's Trident nuclear deterrent programme based in Scotland. Its purpose is to "deter the most extreme threats" with submarines loaded with nuclear missiles. |
| 3. The programme was expected to attract a mass, diverse audience by offering them a range of characters in the hope that they would identify with one or more of them.                    |
| 4. The programme was post-watershed so the producers were freer to use swearing and extreme violence.  |

| MISE-EN-SCENE  |
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| 1. On land - naturalistic settings that we recognise with natural lighting.  |
| 2. On Vigil - synthetic lighting and dark subdued limited palette, colour grading to differentiate internal and external locations |
| 3. Costume and props fit generic conventions for crime dramas (Navy uniforms, coats, suits, walkie talkies).                       |

| CAMERAWORK and EDITING   |
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| 1. The majority of the camera shots include Amy or Kirsten to indicate they are the main characters, and we follow their experiences and interactions with others. |
| 2. There are shot/reverse shots during conversations   |
| 3. Tracking shots to follow characters.  |
| 4. Extreme close-ups in moments of tension.  |
| 5. A handheld camera is also used at times to give a 'documentary' feel, as if its recording 'real-life'.  |
| 6. Fast paced editing is used to help create the sense of tension and urgency.   |
| 7. Cross-cutting between the submarine and the land is used to link the progress of the case.  |
| 8. Continuity editing is used to establish the illusion of continuous action.  |

| SOUND   |
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| 1. Fitting with the verisimilitude of the programme, familiar <b>diegetic</b> sound is used such as —dialogue, sirens and Radio Broadcasts. Ambient sound used to create atmosphere/danger. |
| 2. Suspenseful <b>non-diegetic</b> music begins during tense scenes. Rise in volume and tempo of sound puts audience on edge.   |

## CONTEXT and REPRESENTATION

**The Cold War** - After World War II, the USA and its allies (including the UK), and the Soviet Union (Russia) began a decades-long political struggle for supremacy. Soldiers of the Soviet Union and the United States did battle directly during the Cold War, instead, for more than forty years, the two superpowers directly threatened each other with nuclear weapons.

**Women** – Since the 2000s, stronger roles for women have been developed in television series, reflecting many changes in gender equality. For example, **Amy Silva** has important status as lead investigator and has power in the police force because of her status, reflecting the number of women in positions of authority in 2022. Another example is **Tara Kierly**, a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy. She is a Warfare Specialist Submariner assigned to the Vanguard class submarine HMS Vigil. She is a person of colour and woman holding a position of respect and is anti stereotypical.

**Masculinity** – The Navy is dominated by men, who hold the positions of authority and power. Some of the men such as **Mark Prentice** is a stereotypical white male in a position of power who is arrogant and overconfident.

**Sexuality** – The Equality Act of 2010 made discrimination against LGBT people illegal. By 2022, audiences are used to seeing gay characters on TV. **Amy Silva** is bisexual. She used to think she was straight and never considered getting involved with a woman until she fell in love with a fellow police officer **Kirsten**. Plays the hero role stereotypically played by men. She has a contradiction of weakness and strength

**Multiculturalism and ethnicity** – By 2022 audiences recognise that Britain is a multicultural society, despite political debates about immigration and Brexit. In Vigil, there are a number of different ethnicities in the Navy, but these are hardly remarked on or noticed as differences are just accepted. **Commander Neil Newsome** is high ranking person of colour showing anti stereotypical representation and shows the BBC commitment to diversity.

## PLOT


Officer Craig Burke, a member of the crew of a ballistic missile nuclear submarine HMS Vigil, reports his concerns over unusual sonar readings while on patrol. Confined to quarters following insubordination, he is later found dead in an apparent drug overdose. The Scottish police are asked to investigate and DCI Amy Silva and a man called Doward, Burke's replacement on the crew, are airlifted to Vigil's classified location. Unable to contact her colleagues by radio due to the sensitive nature of the patrol mission, she suspects the sailor was murdered, but the captain and other officers disagree. On land, Silva's DS and former lover, Kirsten Longacre, has begun a parallel investigation into Burke's movements and his acquaintances. She finds a clue during a search of Burke's room which she keeps hidden from the Royal Navy. Vigil loses power suddenly when the reactor shuts down and the boat lurches in an



**DCI Amy Silva**  
Protagonist / Hero



**DS Kirsten Longacre**  
Love interest / Helper




**Craig Burke**  
A sonar mapping expert on HMS Vigil



**Commander Neil Newsome**  
Captain of HMS Vigil



**Elliot Glover**  
Coxswain of HMS Vigil



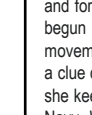
**Lieutenant Commander Mark Prentice**  
Executive Officer of HMS Vigil



**Simon Hadlow**  
Engineering Officer on HMS Vigil



**Gary Walsh**  
Engineering Officer on HMS Vigil



**Jade Antoniak**  
A peace activist