THE INEQUALITY AT THE HEART OF UK DRAMA

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TV Calling
An ex-homicide man now directs a TV company with a different role.

D
eeded sharply in a black suit and tall hat, Paul Alston was sitting in the kitchen of his large apartment overlooking the river Thames. To say that his life has been an extraordinary one would be an understatement. The founder of Simple TV Productions, his career path has taken him from putting pen to paper, benefit claims and delivering silk underwear under cover – he once spent six months being a man in a dress.

Now celebrating his fourth year in business as the managing director of Simple TV, whose mission is to help British crime and war stories, Alston has just launched his domestic violence documentary, Silent Voices, on DVD. The project is funded by the National Crime Prevention Endowment.

"We have got a huge response from the public for Silent Voices," says Alston. "It didn't reach many people, but it had some domestic violence.

Born in 1968 to two white parents, a warning was issued about the child, Alston went to Art School and developed his passion for theatre.

His first experience of homelessness came after he had been in and out of a children's care home when, aged 16, he moved in with an older woman down the street. He moved into the lift shaft of a Cardiff car park, where he lived off food that he stole from the local supermarket. He was known as "Mr. Noisy" and did odd jobs to stay alive.

"Mr. Noisy," as he was known, worked in the music business before joining the police force where he worked on the murder squad.

In 2000 he set up his TV production company to make one of his first marketing campaigns for the anti-smoking charity, Action on Smoking and Health. In 2003, he began working on a documentary on how the police and the media work together in tackling domestic violence.

"I had to find out who the hell I was and where I wanted to sit in the world," says Alston. "I was constantly changing, trying to find my place."