

Simon MacCorkindale plays Consultant Harry Harper



It was at the age of eight that Simon took his first steps into the world of theatre by writing a play based on *Sleeping Beauty*. It was staged with the help of his school friends and from there he was encouraged to develop his writing talent, eventually being persuaded to take a role himself.

A life in the military beckoned as his father was in the RAF but he opted instead to attend drama school in London. At the end of his first year there he was spotted in a play at the George Bernard Shaw festival and landed himself an agent. From there he appeared in the West End and on British television before making his international debut in *Death On The Nile*. Moving to Hollywood in the early Eighties he appeared in *Jaws 3*, *Manimal*, *Hart To Hart*, *The Dukes Of Hazzard* and *Falcon Crest*.

Age: 50

Home town: Born in Cambridgeshire but now lives near Exmoor

Simon on playing Harry: “Harry is a mix of new man and old school. He’s very switched on and bright and values discipline, rank and status which is why he likes to wear his uniform, a suit, at work. It tells people that if you’ve got a problem then this is the guy in charge. Also, because he’s a father of a large family (the youngest is nine months, the eldest is 16) and his wife works in her own profession then he has a real understanding with new man and the way a household has to run. Harry brings his world to work, his family is very much part of him and his day – though in episode one we see him out for the day with his children when an

emergency happens and it comes first. He believes he has a very strong and ordered sense of priorities. His family is always in the top five of the most important things but number one might be a patient on a given day. He cannot genuinely say that his family always come first and he has to juggle, which is sometimes to the detriment of the relationship with his children.”

Harry’s temperament: “He is a reasonable and fair man but doesn’t suffer fools gladly and though he’s got a quick fuse he will give people a chance. After a day working with Harry you should know exactly how he ticks and realise he doesn’t harbour grudges. During a shift, for instance, Harry can have words with someone but still have a drink with them afterwards.”

Harry’s motivations: “Harry loves the job and knows he’s good at it. He has no problem with who he is and what he knows. And don’t think that he’s arrogant, it’s just that he’s supremely confident. He also loves his family and the people he works with for what they are and what they do. They are selfless just like him. He also tries to give his full energy to both his work and family and would leave, for instance, the hospital for an hour if a family member needed him. But only if he knew there was someone back at the hospital capable of running the ship in his absence.”

Harry’s best and worst traits: “Some of his strengths are also his weaknesses. In episode one, Harry thinks he has given adequate time to his injured son but his son doesn’t agree. He is very relaxed with women and that might sometimes appear like he’s available and coming on to them, which he isn’t. He’s a very free character but doesn’t mix business with pleasure very easily. He may well have slept with the ex-nanny but getting involved with a nurse would be too compromising in his eyes. He’s aware of his power with women, though he doesn’t use it self-consciously. However, he’s a strong, fair and talented guy and in a position of power so he knows he could get most people to do whatever he wanted them to do.”

Harry’s future storylines: “Time is something that is always a conflict with Harry. Episode one is a very good example of this when his daughter needs him – she is about to run away from home at 16 – and yet he has to go save lives. Another important storyline is Harry’s involvement with Lara when she is imprisoned and subsequent events to that. He believes she is a good doctor and wants her back on his team which means he is willing to go out on a real limb for her.”

Similarities with Harry: “If you’re playing a leading man, which is what this is, then there are lots of parallels you draw on. Like Harry I’m a total one hundred percenter and take on too much work. But it’s something I thrive on.”

Did you know?

- Simon recently moved the Arabian stud farm he runs with his wife Susan George close to Exmoor.
- He starred in his own series for NBC, *Manimal*, which subsequently became a cult hit in France.
- Returning to the UK in 1988 he formed, along with Susan, his own production company called Amy International. One of its current projects is *Dick Francis Presents*, a series of original films for UK television, based on the author’s canon of novels.
- While living in Hollywood he was part of the rebirth of the live theatre scene there during which he directed and acted in various productions and worked with Douglas Fairbanks Jr and Howard Keel, among others.