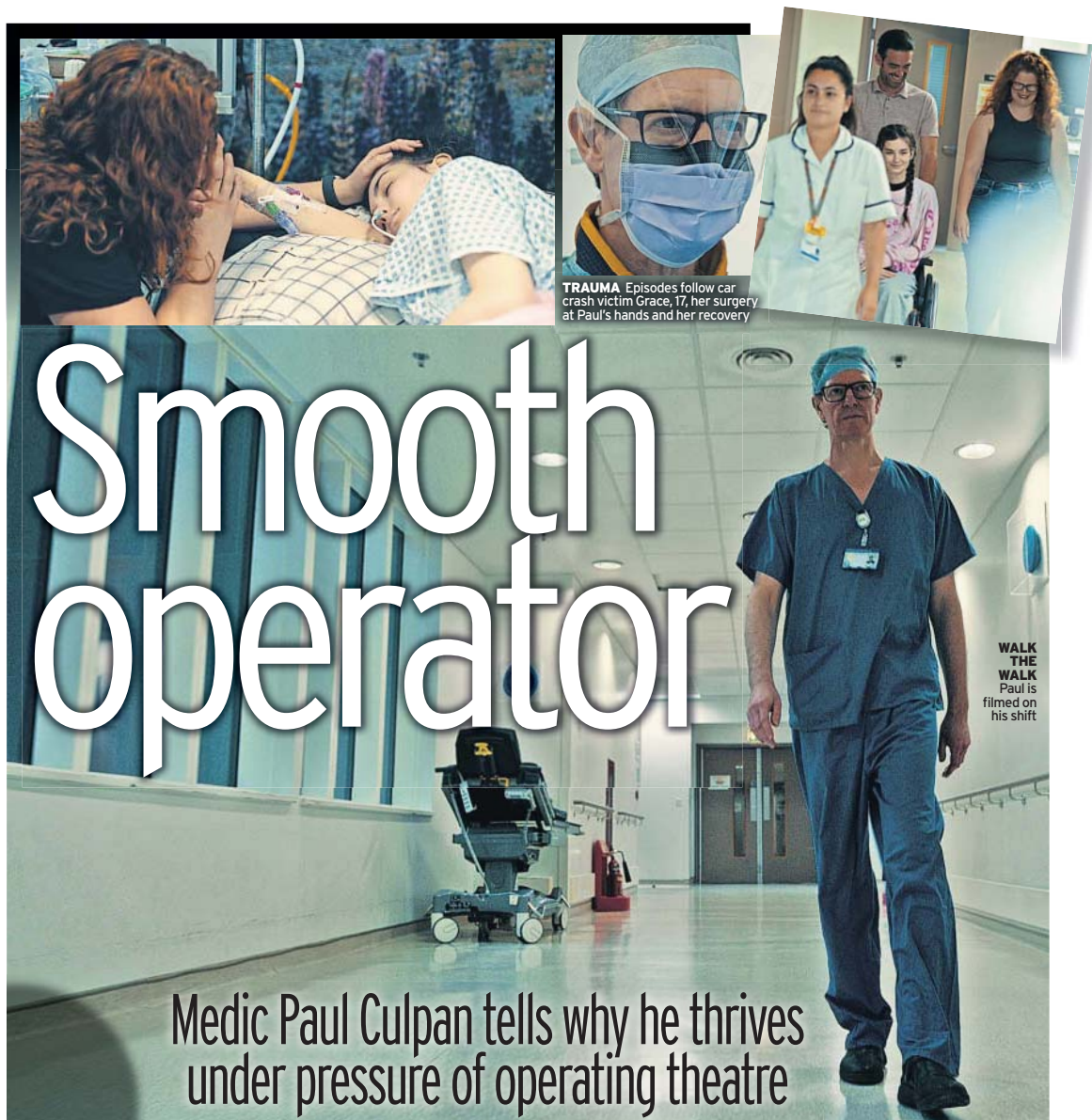


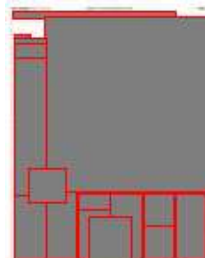
SCOTS SURGEON'S STARRING NETFLIX ROLE



BY RICK FULTON

LIFE-SAVING surgeon Paul Culpan is set for fame as he stars in a dramatic Netflix medical series.

The London-based Glaswegian, 52, is already a globally in-demand hip and



knee surgeon.

And this week he will star in Netflix documentary Critical: Between Life and Death.

It shows him operating on Grace, a 17-year-old girl struck by a car while crossing a zebra crossing, leaving her with a traumatic head injury and shattered pelvis.

Viewers will be on an emotional rollercoaster as the show reveals how Grace fares on the operating table.

But for Paul, the operating theatre is his happy place.

He told the Daily Record: "Being a surgeon is not a stressful element of my life. I go to operate and relax.

"That's the most relaxed time of my week. My phone is off. I can do nothing else."

The dad of two, from Jordanhill, Glasgow, is regarded as one of the world's best hip and knee surgeons and has operated on royalty, rock stars and sportsmen, none of whom he can mention by name.

He knows there is a lot of pressure on him to save his patients but he has to treat it like any other job even when the person he is operating on is famous.

He explained: "All the focus is on you. There's no margin for error.

"I do the operation and go home and listen to it on the news, 'The guy has had his operation'."

He reckons he operates 300 times a year, leaves for work early in the morning and, if he's doing clinics, won't return home until 11pm at night.

My wife,

Isabelle, is very tolerant," he said, smiling, "just about.

"Surgeons work immensely long hours. I take my youngest daughter to school twice a week and once a week I get home early and put her to bed."

Isabelle, 52, from France, met Paul at St Andrews University, where they were studying. They have daughters Camille, 18 and Lucine, six.

He's not sure all the family will be able to watch him on TV. "The six-year-old saw the trailer and wasn't too happy. She thought it was people dying and got upset," he said.

Made by the same people behind Channel 4's 24 Hours in A & E, Critical had 40 cameras

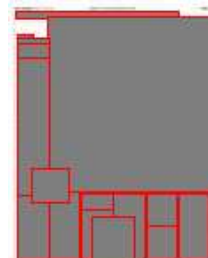
embedded for 21 days across the London Major Trauma System, which includes Royal London, King's College, St George's and St Mary's hospitals.

Instead of using fixed-rig cameras, the six-episode series makes use of portable single cameras and body cams, putting the viewer amid the unfolding drama of what is happening to the patients.

Paul, who trained and became a surgeon in London before working in the Middle East, returned to the UK in 2010 to create Royal London's Orthopaedic Trauma Unit. He now splits his time between NHS and private work.

Paul said: "I feel so unbelievably privileged. The immediate impact you have on people's lives is immensely gratifying.

"There are few jobs that can offer that level of reward. You leave work feeling like you've done something really positive.



"The families look upon you with such faith. They have their deepest prayers and wishes you are taking on board.

"You don't process that at the time but when someone asks you about it on camera, it's what you realise."

Paul saw Grace's thankful family after her operation but hasn't seen her since, which he knows is the big change

in the NHS. To streamline the business and improve communication it has meant some of that consistent bedside manner has been lost.

He said: "We are a big team and it means patients aren't always coming back to us for their follow-ups. I heard she's doing fine but we have lost some continuity of care following a patient through their full journey."

With junior doctors back in the news and threats of strike action, Paul is hoping viewers will be reminded of how they felt about the NHS during Covid. He said: "I do worry the strikes will

damage perceptions of the NHS. There's not a lot that gives a proper insight into some of the good things that happen within the NHS.

"But delivery of trauma care is amazing. It's world class so hopefully the TV series will do that and some of the positive rewards we receive for that.

"I'm very worried about the NHS. It's going to have to change and big decisions are

going to have to be made to make it sustainable."

Paul's mum, Janette, was a nurse and he realised at school that he could follow her into the medical profession. He went to St Andrews and then Manchester University for another three years, graduating in 1996 and moving to London in 1997 as a junior doctor. He realised he enjoyed working in teams so planned on becoming a surgeon. Eventually this led to orthopaedics.

He said: "It's quite mechanical. You're fixing things. Putting broken bones back together on one side or doing keyhole surgery or repairing ligaments on the other."

Since moving to the Royal London and starting the orthopaedic trauma unit, he has trained another 15 surgeons including one now in Glasgow. But his elder daughter won't be following him.

He said: "She did a one week work experience at King's. It was her most enjoyable work experience. But at the end of it, she's decided she wants to be a lawyer. I think she's smarter than me."

● Critical: Between Life and Death streams on Netflix from Wednesday.

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DR PAUL CULPAN TAKES
JOB IN HIS STRIDE

