

Relative Values

David Cameron's head of communications, *Craig Oliver*, 45, and his brother, *Guy*, 46, an interior designer

INTERVIEWS BY RIA HIGGINS. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID VINTINER



The brothers at Mayfair's Connaught hotel. "I don't think I've ever met anyone more focused than Craig," says Guy (left)

GUY Our father started out as a policeman, like his dad before him. Dad, however, was also well read and, in his spare time, he obtained a PhD in criminal law and philosophy. He then worked his way up the ranks of the police force very quickly and, by the time he was 38, he was the chief constable of central Scotland.

From the start, life at home was quite ordered, quite strict, and the importance of education was instilled in Craig, me and our elder sister, Stephanie. Dad worked long hours so we often saw very little of him. His work also meant we moved around, and when I was about 11 and Craig was 10, we left Northumberland for Stirling in Scotland. Dad's family are from Edinburgh and Mum's are from Aberdeenshire, so for them there was a sense of going home. For us, that transition wasn't so easy.

We lived in a middle-class area of Stirling called King's Park, where most

of the kids went to private schools. We were sent to the local state school, so being the new boy from King's Park with an English accent and a chief constable for a father felt a bit like being thrown into a bear pit. Let's just say we learnt very quickly to adapt to our new environment.

Right from the start, though, Craig and I were different. There's only a year between us, but as kids we inhabited very different worlds — we didn't even play football together. He was high-achieving at school and always

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Craig
He started out as a reporter for STV in 1992. By 2006 he was the editor of BBC1's Ten O'Clock News. In 2010 he edited the BBC coverage of the general election

Guy
When he joined the navy, he was affiliated to HMS Edinburgh, serving on the same ship as Prince Andrew. He has also worked on several philanthropic projects with Prince Charles

reading at home. I was more creative; I loved objects, and in that sense I was more like our mother. She loved antiques, and when we moved to Scotland she opened up a little antiques shop just north of Dunblane. Even from the age of 9 or 10, I knew about period furniture, hallmarks and porcelain. Craig hated all of it.

Our mother's background was also very Presbyterian, very "don't get too big for your boots". For her, life was about duty and giving back to society. We all went to church and we all went to Sunday school.

As I got a bit older, the issue which slowly came to the fore was my sexuality. By my teens, I knew I wasn't really interested in girls, but I was also unsure of myself and thought I might change. I don't know if it ever crossed Craig's mind that I might be gay — or my parents'. Nothing was ever said. Craig probably thought that I was just a bit odd. ➤➤➤

Then, when I was 16, I shocked everyone by telling them I was joining the navy. For me, it meant independence. It also meant the navy would fund a university education, so I was no longer beholden to my parents. In fact, while I was at Edinburgh University, Craig was at St Andrews studying English literature. He wasted no time becoming the editor of the student newspaper and I could see a career in journalism was beckoning.

During this period we saw very little of each other. But then, not long after I finished my degree, I told my captain I wanted to leave. While I loved my time in the navy, I knew



He's my brother: Craig, aged 4, and Guy, 5, in Aberdeen in 1974

I was living a lie. Initially, I didn't tell my captain or my parents the true reason for leaving because, up until 1999, gay people were banned from the armed forces; if you were found out, you were court martialled. But in the end, the truth came out and I had to face the consequences.

When the navy took me to court, Craig turned up to support me and I will never forget that. By then he'd risen from being a news reporter in Scotland to a TV producer on the News at Ten. My battle with the navy ended in a six-year legal case and I was fined £1,000. Coincidentally, not long after, the law governing gay people in the UK's armed forces changed.

It was the start of a new chapter in my relationship with Craig. We were a bit older, a bit wiser, and I think both of us had gained a new respect for each other. It was probably no surprise to anyone that I went on to study history of art and history of architecture, and now work in interior design.

Craig has always been very level-headed. So while it was a surprise to some that he switched from the BBC to working for David Cameron, I knew that Craig never does anything unless he's 100% about it. His job at Downing Street is no exception. I don't think I've met anyone more focused than he is and I know he'll continue to make our family proud.

CRAIG When Guy was a teenager, his bedroom looked like a museum. While I had posters of Joy Division and U2 on the wall, he had Japanese-style wallpaper. While I had books and records on my shelves, he had champagne glasses with matching swizzle sticks. I'd look at things in there and say: "What on earth is this?" I didn't see the coolness in any of it.

The truth is, our parents — and my mother, in particular — were into antiques, and it had rubbed off on him. If I was reading *The Godfather*, he was reading a reference book on 18th-century china. And at weekends, we'd have to traipse round antique fairs. It was my idea of pure torture.

From an early age, our parents had instilled the importance of education in getting on in life. It wasn't something they preached about, we just knew. Luckily, I was very bookish anyway and never had to be told to do my homework. Guy did, and was forever getting into arguments with my parents over it. We knew he was bright; he just wasn't interested.

With my father's background in the police force and my mother's Presbyterian roots, there was always a sense of duty and of right and wrong. Our parents also wanted to know what was going on in the rest of the world, so papers and TV news were a daily staple. That no doubt gave both of us a desire to travel, but when Guy came home from school one day and told us he was off to join the navy, it took us all by surprise. He was only 16 and it seemed totally out of character.

But he'd made up his mind and off he went. I saw very little of him for the next few years until, of course... he surprised us all again. This time, he told us he was leaving the navy and he was gay. I had a sense that he might be gay, but for my parents it was very different. They needed time to process it all. Sure, I look back and wonder why he even went into the navy at all, but as a 16-year-old, I think he felt a lot of uncertainty about himself, and maybe going off to sea was his way of trying to sort it out.

But being up against the might of the Royal Navy wasn't easy. The court case that followed was tough and really made me see Craig in a different light. Watching him being grilled in court made me realise how brave he was. I really admired him for it, and what he was standing up for.

Once it was over, I admired him even more for not letting the whole experience screw up the rest of his life. And as we've grown older, we've grown much closer. That won't change ■ *Guy Oliver has just completed the refurbishment of the Champagne Room at the Connaught Hotel, Mayfair*



I WAS TOP OF POLICE training college, aged 22. I liked solving problems, and found detective work fascinating. I worked on a number of murders, but it's not like on TV. The run-of-the-mill work was petty crime, shoplifting, car theft. I wanted more freedom. After 10 years I left, and in 1992 became a private investigator.

I have an office and a motor home with a satellite dish on top. I can sleep in it. If someone has a problem anywhere in Europe, I can be there at short notice. My work involves gathering evidence of fraud.

One case was of a wealthy cat breeder in Switzerland. A British woman had bought cats from her and they became friends. The British woman suggested she invest in UK property because the prices kept going up. They agreed on a property and money was sent from Switzerland. But the house the Swiss woman thought she had bought was just a photo of someone else's home.

Then the British woman said she was renovating it and needed more money. After the total hit £1.5m, the British woman stopped answering the phone. That's when I got involved. I discovered the true identity of the woman and traced her in the UK. She had bought another house with the money instead.

The cat woman was lonely and rich — a combination of those things made her a target. But there isn't one defining trait — this sort of thing can happen to anyone. All fraudsters have greed and ego in common. They're convincing, superficially charming. They will try to be grandiose. I've met people who purport to live in properties they don't have, or drive cars they don't own. The fraudster is doing it because he wants to feel alive. What I enjoy is totally destroying him ■

Ad seen in Private Eye, Jan 11
Interview: Clare Conway



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