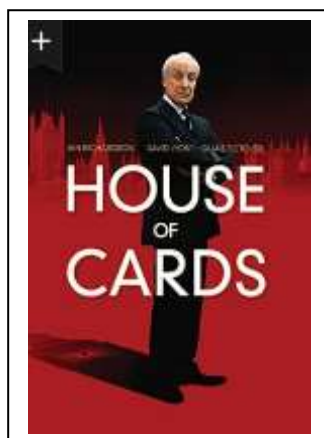
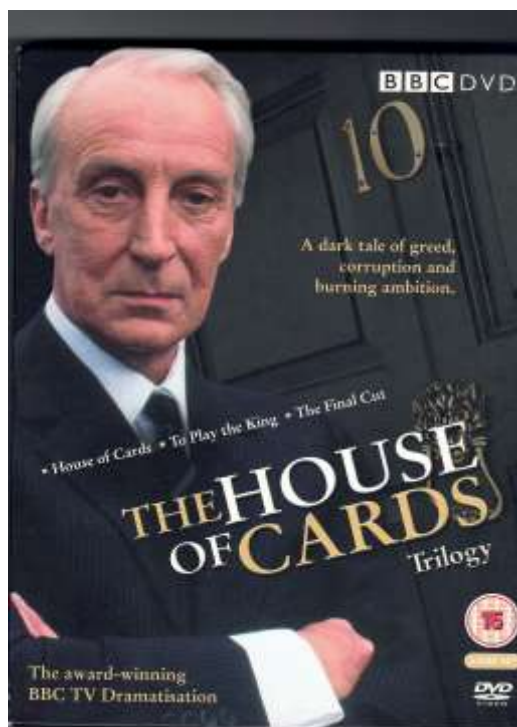


# The Paragon Multimedia DVD, VHS Collection

## Title: **The House of Cards – Box Collection**

Trilogy (discs 3)

Library Image



ISBN:5014503145125

## Information

Release **Title:** The House of Cards 18<sup>th</sup> November 1990 (United Kingdom)

From:

AKA: BBC Production

Release date:

Origin:

Genres: Drama

Disc Nos. - 1

Certification: 15

Duration: 3h 46m

Region Code:

Region: 2

Product Code:

MPN:

EAN:

UPC:

Languages: English

Filming locations: Houses of Parliament, Westminster, Greater London, England, UK (Houses of Parliament - exterior shots)

Sound mix: BBC

Colour: PAL

Aspect Ratio: 4:3



**Based on** *House of Cards*  
by Michael Dobbs

**Written by** Andrew Davies  
Michael Dobbs

**Directed by** Paul Seed

**Starring** Ian Richardson  
Susannah Harker  
Miles Anderson  
Alphonsia Emmanuel  
Malcolm Tierney  
Diane Fletcher  
Colin Jeavons  
Damien Thomas  
Kenneth Gilbert  
David Lyon  
Kenny Ireland  
James Villiers  
Isabelle Amyes

**Music by** Jim Parker

**Country of origin** United Kingdom

**Original language** English

**No. of episodes** 4

### Production

**Producer** Ken Riddington

**Running time** 55 minutes

**Production company** BBC

### Release

**Original network** BBC1

**Original release** 18 November –  
9 December 1990

### Related

*To Play the King*  
*The Final Cut*

## Storyline

After Margaret Thatcher's resignation, the ruling Conservative Party is about to elect a new leader. Francis Urquhart (Ian Richardson), a Member of Parliament (MP) and the Government Chief Whip in the House of Commons, introduces viewers to the contestants, from which Henry "Hal" Collingridge (David Lyon) emerges victorious. Urquhart is secretly contemptuous of the well-meaning but weak Collingridge, but expects a promotion to a senior position in the Cabinet. After the general election, which the party wins by a reduced majority, Urquhart submits his suggestions for a reshuffle that includes his desired promotion. However, Collingridge – citing Harold Macmillan's political demise after the 1962 Night of the Long Knives – effects no changes at all. Urquhart resolves to oust Collingridge, with encouragement from his wife, Elizabeth (Diane Fletcher).

At the same time, with Elizabeth's blessing, Urquhart begins an affair with Mattie Storin (Susannah Harker), a junior political reporter at a Conservative-leaning tabloid newspaper called *The Chronicle*. The affair allows Urquhart to manipulate Mattie and indirectly skew her coverage of the Conservative leadership contest in his favour. Mattie has an apparent Electra complex; she finds appeal in Urquhart's much older age and later refers to him as "Daddy". Another unwitting pawn is Roger O'Neill (Miles Anderson), the party's cocaine-addicted public relations consultant.

Urquhart blackmails O'Neill into leaking information on budget cuts that humiliates Collingridge during the Prime Minister's Questions. Later, he blames party chairman Lord "Teddy" Billsborough (Nicholas Selby) for leaking an internal poll showing a drop in Tory numbers, leading Collingridge to sack him. As Collingridge's image suffers, Urquhart encourages ultraconservative Foreign Secretary Patrick Woolton (Malcolm Tierney) and *Chronicle* owner Benjamin Landless (Kenny Ireland) to support his removal. He also poses as Collingridge's alcoholic brother Charles (James Villiers) to trade shares in a chemical company about to benefit from advance information confidential to the government. Consequently, Collingridge becomes falsely accused of insider trading and is forced to resign.

In the ensuing leadership race, Urquhart initially feigns unwillingness to stand before announcing his candidacy. With the help of his underling, Tim Stamper (Colin Jeavons), Urquhart goes about making sure his competitors drop out of the race: Health Secretary Peter MacKenzie (Christopher Owen) accidentally runs his car over a disabled protester at a demonstration staged by Urquhart and is forced by the public outcry to withdraw, while Education Secretary Harold Earle (Kenneth Gilbert) is blackmailed into withdrawing when Urquhart anonymously sends pictures of him in the company of a rent boy whom Earle had paid for sex.

The first ballot leaves Urquhart to face Woolton and Michael Samuels, the moderate Environment Secretary supported by Billsborough. Urquhart eliminates Woolton by a prolonged scheme: at the party conference, he pressures O'Neill into persuading his personal assistant and lover, Penny Guy (Alphonsia Emmanuel), to have a one-night stand with Woolton in his suite, which Urquhart records via a bugged ministerial red box. When the tape is sent to Woolton, he is led to assume that Samuels is behind the scheme and backs Urquhart in the contest. Urquhart also receives support from Collingridge, who is unaware of Urquhart's role in his own downfall. Samuels is forced out of the running when the tabloids reveal that he backed leftist causes as a student at University of Cambridge.

Stumbling across contradictions in the allegations against Collingridge and his brother, Mattie begins to dig deeper. On Urquhart's orders, O'Neill arranges for her car and flat to be vandalised in a show of intimidation. However, O'Neill becomes increasingly uneasy with what he is being asked to do, and his cocaine addiction adds to his instability. Urquhart mixes O'Neill's cocaine with rat poison, causing him to kill himself when taking the cocaine in a motorway service station lavatory on the M27 at Rownhams. Though initially blind to the truth of matters thanks to her relations with Urquhart, Mattie eventually deduces that Urquhart is responsible for O'Neill's death and is behind the unfortunate downfalls of Collingridge and all of Urquhart's rivals.

Mattie looks for Urquhart at the point when it seems his victory is certain. She eventually finds him on the roof garden of the Houses of Parliament, where she confronts him. He admits to O'Neill's murder and everything else he has done. He then asks whether he can trust Mattie, and, though she answers in the affirmative, he does not believe her and throws her off the roof onto a van parked below. An unseen person picks up Mattie's tape recorder, which she had been using to secretly record her conversations with Urquhart. The series ends with

Urquhart defeating Samuels in the second leadership ballot and being driven to Buckingham Palace to be invited to form a government by Elizabeth II.

## Cast

Ian Richardson - Francis Urquhart  
Susannah Harker - Mattie Storr  
Miles Anderson - Roger O'Neill  
Alphonsia Emmanuel - Penny Guy  
Malcolm Tierney - Patrick Woolton  
Diane Fletcher - Elizabeth Urquhart  
Colin Jeavons - Tim Stamper  
Damien Thomas - Michael Samuels  
William Chubb - John Krajewski  
Kenneth Gilbert - Harold Earle  
Christopher Owen - McKenzie  
David Lyon - Prime Minister Henry Collingridge  
Kenny Ireland - Ben Landless  
James Villiers - Charles Collingridge  
Isabelle Amyes - Anne Collingridge  
John Hartley - Greville Preston  
Nicholas Selby - Lord Billsborough  
Tommy Boyle - Stephen Kendrick

## Parents Guide

Certification

Germany:12 Japan:13+ (self-applied) United Kingdom:12 United Kingdom:15 (original rating) United States:TV-14

Sex & Nudity

Mild

Violence & Gore

Mild

Profanity

Mild

Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking

Moderate

Frightening & Intense Scenes

Moderate

