

ITV commissions six part spy thriller The Ipcress File

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[Drama](#)

ITV commissions six part spy thriller The Ipcress File from Altitude

High octane series written by BAFTA winner John Hodge, directed by Emmy Winner James Watkins and starring Joe Cole, Lucy Boynton and Tom Hollander

Globally renowned Len Deighton novel, The Ipcress File has been adapted into a six part television series for ITV starring Joe Cole (Gangs of London, Peaky Blinders) in the iconic role of Harry Palmer alongside Lucy Boynton (Bohemian Rhapsody, Murder on the Orient Express) and BAFTA award winning actor, Tom Hollander (The Night Manager, Birdbox).

Adapted by Oscar nominated and BAFTA award-winning screenwriter, John Hodge (Trainspotting, T2 Trainspotting) The Ipcress File is an enthralling and

atmospheric espionage thriller set in Berlin and London during the 1960's and Emmy award-winner James Watkins (McMafia, Black Mirror, The Woman In Black) will direct each of the 6 x 60' episodes.

The series marks the first major production for Altitude Television, part of the larger Altitude independent British media group behind notable releases such as Amy, Moonlight, Diego Maradona, Calm With Horses, Horrible Histories: The Movie – Rotten Romans, and Rocks. The series will be produced in association with ITV Studios.

The Ipcress File will be executive produced by Will Clarke (Filth) and Andy Mayson (Ghost Stories) for Altitude Television, Andrew Eaton (The Crown) for Turbine, Sandy Lieberman (Performance), James Watkins and Hilary and Steven Saltzman. The series will be produced by Paul Ritchie (McMafia, Slumdog Millionaire).

ITV Studios are providing significant financing, with other co-financiers comprising of the Liverpool Film Office, Lipsync, Filmgate and the Finnish National and Regional Funds, with Cofiloisirs Bank cashflowing. Reno Antoniades at Lee & Thompson will be handling legal.

The Ipcress File was Len Deighton's first spy novel introducing the iconic British spy Harry Palmer and set against the backdrop of Cold War Europe. To date the novel has sold 10 million copies worldwide since it was first published in 1962.

ITV's Head of Drama Polly Hill has commissioned the series from Altitude and will oversee the drama from the channel's perspective.

Commented Polly Hill:

"I'm thrilled to be bringing John Hodge's brilliant adaptation of such an iconic novel to ITV. Harry Palmer is an incredible part and this would have been impossible without the right actor, so we are all delighted that Joe Cole will take on the role. The talent on and off screen means this will be a treat for audiences when it comes to ITV."

It's 1963. Cold war rages between West and East. Nuclear bombers are permanently airborne. In this highly charged atmosphere, we join Harry Palmer – a British army sergeant on the make in Berlin. In this newly partitioned city, a sharp working-class young man with sophisticated tastes can make a lot of money. Wholesaler, retailer, fixer, smuggler, Harry's varied interests bring him

into contact with everything and everyone – until the law catches up and it all comes crashing to a halt.

Harry finds himself sentenced to eight years in a grim military jail in England, all his prospects abruptly torn away.

But his impressive network and efficiency have not gone unnoticed, and a gentleman from British intelligence has a proposal. To avoid prison, Harry Palmer will become a spy. And the case on which he cuts his teeth will be The Ipcress File.

Harry's links to the man suspected of kidnapping a missing British nuclear scientist result in him being conscripted for a dangerous undercover mission that takes him from the Beatles' London to the Berlin Wall, from the back alleys of Beirut to the white hot sand of a Nuclear Atoll in the Pacific.

A twist-laden spy thriller with a rich cast of characters, The Ipcress File is a stylish and tense tale of abducted scientists, brainwashing, inter- departmental rivalry, treason, and a possibly unwise romance.

Producers Altitude Media Group are a film and television company encompassing production, finance, factual film and television, international film sales and UK and Irish distribution. The company was formed in May 2012 by Will Clarke, Andy Mayson and Mike Runagall with the remit to shape 'creative partnerships' with both emerging and established talents. The collaborative team oversees a distinctive slate of diverse and eclectic film and television productions.

Will Clarke, Chairman and Co-CEO of Altitude Film Entertainment said:

"Altitude are delighted to be taking our first steps into Television as the company continues to grow and we are very excited to announce The Ipcress File as our debut production with our friends at ITV and ITV Studios. James Watkins and I are both huge fans of Len Deighton's Harry Palmer books and have wanted to film The Ipcress File for a long time. John Hodge's incredible writing talents have wonderfully adapted those stories into a thrilling six-part series."

Director and Executive Producer James Watkins commented:

"We can't wait to bring Len Deighton's intoxicating web of spies - sexier than Smiley's people, more real than Bond - to a wider television audience. With his sly wit and understated integrity clashing against the establishment, working-class spy Harry Palmer is more relevant than ever."

Writer and Executive Producer John Hodge said:

“This is a wonderful opportunity to inhabit a time when the post war world was morphing into the way we live now, when social mobility, civil rights, and modern feminism were forcing their way into public consciousness, and all of it happening with the world divided in two and both halves threatening to blow the whole thing sky high.”

Ruth Berry, Managing Director, Global Distribution at ITV Studios said:

“We’re proud and excited to introduce this timely adaptation of Len Deighton’s best-selling novel, which has not been out of print since 1962. With its stellar on and off-screen talent, rich characterisation and rollercoaster of twist and turns, The Ipcress File is set to thrill the modern, global audience. Being the first in a series of books featuring the intriguing Harry Palmer, it also has potential to run and run.”

The Ipcress File will be filmed on location in Liverpool and Croatia during 2021.

Details of further key casting and production personnel will be announced in due course.

ITV Studios will be responsible for the international distribution of the series.

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Note to Editors:

About Altitude

Altitude Media Group is the independent UK based studio led by Will Clarke chairman and joint-CEO with Andy Mayson, comprising of Altitude Film Production, Altitude Film Sales with Managing Director Mike Runagall, Altitude Film Distribution with Managing Director Hamish Moseley and Altitude Factual with Managing Director Paul Sowerbutts. In February 2020 US based investment group 30WEST took a significant minority stake in the group.

Altitude Film Production’s first film was Samuel L Jackson’s elevated action adventure Big Game. The Altitude team then co-produced Kevin Macdonald’s Cannes title Whitney and Jeremy Dyson & Andy Nyman’s Ghost Stories. Turning their focus to family audiences, Altitude secured rights to much-loved franchise Horrible Histories and brought Horrible Histories: The Movie - Rotten Romans to cinemas in the summer of 2019. Altitude’s current developments include Fred Astaire coming of age movie The Astaires and true-life World War II manhunt

thriller The Kommandant of Auschwitz and in October 2019 Altitude established a production partnership with LA-based outfit Soluble Fish Productions.

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