

ITV commissions Post Office scandal drama, Mr Bates vs the Post Office

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[Drama](#)

ITV commissions Post Office scandal drama, Mr Bates vs the Post Office written by Gwyneth Hughes and produced by ITV Studios, Patrick Spence, and Little Gem

One of the greatest miscarriages of justice in British legal history, affecting dozens of innocent sub-postmasters and postmistresses, wrongly accused of theft, fraud and false accounting due to a defective IT system, will be brought to the screen by Patrick Spence, ITV Studios and co-produced by Little Gem.

The 4 x 60' drama, entitled *Mr Bates vs the Post Office* will be written by acclaimed screenwriter Gwyneth Hughes (*Honour, Vanity Fair, Dark Angel*) and executive produced by Patrick Spence (*Adult Material, Marvellous*), ITV Studios, Gwyneth Hughes, and Natasha Bondy and Ben Gale (*Surviving the Virus, This is our Family*) on behalf of Little Gem.

Many of the wronged workers who were prosecuted, some of whom were imprisoned for crimes they never committed, are already working with the producers to document how their lives were irreparably ruined by the scandal.

Commented Natasha Bondy, Little Gem's Creative Director and Executive Producer, and Patrick Spence, ITV Studios:

"Being trusted with telling this story is a huge honour for the whole production team. We are going to ensure the biggest possible audience get to hear how much the subpostmasters suffered, how hard they had to fight for justice and how determined they are that the fight is not yet over."

Following the landmark Court of Appeal decision to overturn their criminal convictions, dozens of former sub postmasters and postmistresses have been exonerated on all counts as they battled to finally clear their names. They fought for ten years finally proving their innocence and sealing a resounding victory, but all involved believe the fight is not over yet, not by a long way.

Commented Gwyneth Hughes:

"I've been talking for a while now to some of the people whose lives were turned upside down by this appalling business. I find it just astonishing, and deeply troubling, that this could have happened in my country, and I confess it's shaken my confidence in British justice. The sub postmasters at the heart of the fightback are such a lively, interesting and indomitable bunch. They never gave up, and I'm honoured to be telling their stories."

Between 2000 and 2015, the Post Office held thousands of its own sub postmasters and postmistresses liable for financial discrepancies thrown up by Horizon, its hugely expensive but unreliable computerised accounting system.

Despite warnings that the system was flawed, the Post Office relentlessly pursued the sub postmasters and postmistresses, telling many of them they were the only ones having problems with Horizon.

Of those affected by the faulty IT system, 736 were prosecuted, hundreds more lost livelihoods, homes and life savings because they paid back money the Post Office claimed was missing.

Several went to prison, some whilst pregnant or with young children and many were shunned by their communities. Some have since died before they could find any justice.

The drama will narrate how in 2009, a group of sub postmasters from across the UK, decided enough was enough and formed the Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance.

People vs. Post Office has been commissioned by ITV's Head of Drama, Polly Hill, who will oversee production on behalf of the channel.

Commented Polly Hill:

"This is the story of how the sub postmasters fought back against seemingly insurmountable odds. Having followed their fight for justice and the landmark decision by the Court of Appeal, I'm delighted we can now tell their story."

Filming of the drama will take place in early 2022 with transmission expected later that year.

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

Press Contacts

janice.troup@itv.com

Picture Contacts

patrick.smith@itv.com

Viewer enquiries

<https://www.itv.com/contact/how-to-get-in-touch>