

# ITV commissions thriller, **Protection**, starring **Siobhan Finneran, Nadine Marshall and Katherine Kelly**

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**ITV commissions thriller, *Protection*, starring Siobhan Finneran, Nadine Marshall and Katherine Kelly, from multi award winning producers, New Pictures and written by acclaimed screenwriter Kris Mrksa**

ITV's Head of Drama Polly Hill has commissioned compelling thriller, *Protection*, created and written by acclaimed screenwriter Kris Mrksa and produced by multi award winning production company, New Pictures (*Des*, *The Missing*, *The Long Shadow*, *Dalgliesh*), part of All3Media, starring Siobhan Finneran (*Happy Valley*, *Alma's Not Normal*, *Time*, *The Stranger*, *A Confession*) in the leading role.

The series will premiere on ITV1 and be available for streaming on ITViX.

Nadine Marshall (Champion, Sherwood, Trigger Point) and Katherine Kelly (The Long Shadow, Bloods) also take starring roles in the six-part series which is being produced in association with All3Media International.

Additional casting includes Barry Ward (Bad Sisters), Chaneil Kular (Sex Education), David Hayman (Sid and Nancy), Nichola Burley (The Gold) and Akiya Henry (Silent Witness).

Witness protection is often glamorised as keeping innocent witnesses safe from harm but the truth is darker, murkier, and far more complex. Many protected people are themselves criminals. It's a life of moral compromise. It also involves maximum secrecy, false identities, and a world where you can't trust your own colleagues.

Based on the first-hand experiences of a long serving witness protection officer, Protection is about what happens when the system breaks down. It's about a police officer, Detective Inspector Liz Nyles (Siobhan Finneran), who finds herself at the heart of such a breach; personally compromised by an affair with a colleague, but determined to fight back, and uncover the true source of corruption within her unit. To redeem herself, the reputation of her lover, and to keep her witnesses safe. Even if they don't always deserve it.

Navigating the morally-grey, clandestine world of witness protection, Liz's mission to find the truth will take her deep into the heart of the criminal underbelly and beyond as she becomes more and more torn between caring for her family, her loyalty to her lover and her duty as a police officer. This is the story of a smart, tough cop, out of her depth in a world where nothing is as it seems.

With a deft narrative that engages from the outset, Kris Mrksa creates suspenseful twists and with every hairpin turn perfectly navigates the story to ensure the audience won't know who to believe and who is telling the truth.

Commented Kris Mrksa:

"Protection is a suspenseful conspiracy thriller, but it also explores some complex moral questions, about how far we should be prepared to go in order to serve the greater good. The murky world of witness protection, where hardened criminals are often sheltered, in the hope that they will help bring down other criminals, provides the perfect context for examining these thorny issues. I'm incredibly excited to be working with the team at New Pictures again, in bringing this complex world to life."

Protection is based on an idea by a witness protection specialist who served in the Met for 30 years. During his time in witness protection, he looked after a number of high-profile cases and informants, including, war criminals, terrorists and criminals of all kinds.

New Pictures Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Willow Grylls (Des, The Missing, The Long Shadow) and Charlie Hampton (The Spanish Princess, The Deceived) will executive produce Protection alongside Elaine Pyke and Kris Mrksa. The series will be produced by Rebecca Davies (Cobra) and line produced by Tracy Chapman (Cobra).

ITV's Head of Drama Polly Hill will oversee production on behalf of the broadcaster.

Commented Polly Hill:

"The clandestine world of witness protection creates a thrilling backdrop for this intriguing crime thriller written brilliantly by Kris Mrksa. We've attracted an amazing cast including Siobhan Finneran, Nadine Marshall and Katherine Kelly and I'm delighted to commission the series from Willow Grylls and her team at New Pictures."

Commented Willow Grylls and Charlie Hampton:

"Kris Mrksa has created an exciting and compulsive thriller that takes us into the often-hidden world of witness protection with some incredible female characters at its heart, led by the brilliant Siobhan Finneran, Nadine Marshall and Katherine Kelly."

Protection will be directed by Simen Alsvik (Fenris, The Nest, Neste sommer) and Sasha Ransome (Cobra, McDonald & Dodds). Writers are Kris Mrksa (Episodes 1, 3 and 6), Polly Buckle (Episodes 2 and 4) and Giulia Sandler (Episode 5).

Filming has commenced in Liverpool and the series will air on ITV and ITVX next year. All3Media International has exclusive worldwide distribution rights for the series.

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