



SCREENING NOW: The Unlisted

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Firefly preps English drama duo

NEM: Serbia's Firefly Productions is adapting two novels into English-language TV series, including the latest work from Bafta-winning former BBC journalist Tim Sebastian.



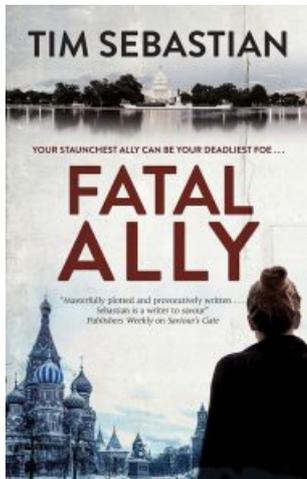
Ivana Miković

Fatal Ally is the latest novel from Sebastian, who used to present BBC series Hardtalk and The Doha Debates before moving over to Deutsche Welle. He has had spy novels published since the 1980s.

Firefly has acquired the TV adaptation rights to Fatal Ally and has tapped UK scriptwriter Kevin Rundle (Hollyoaks, EastEnders) and Serbia's Ivan Knezevic (Working Class Heroes) to adapt it into a 4x60' miniseries.

The MI6 espionage thriller is mostly set in the UK and follows a female spy whose operation to bring in a Russian defector goes wrong. Firefly is currently here at NEM in Zagreb, Croatia looking for coproduction partners in order to start shooting in 2021.

The Belgrade-based prodco has also acquired TV adaptation rights to 1983 novel Rabies by Serbian author Borislav Pekić. The dystopian thriller is set in London's Heathrow airport in the 1980s as a Soviet delegation arrives during a rabies outbreak.



The 10x60' series will see Firefly recreating Heathrow's Terminal 2 in its new Firefly Studios complex outside Belgrade, which is under construction and due to open for business in the first quarter of 2021.

"The series will be set in the UK, Serbia, Russia, the US and Israel, so we are talking to potential copro partners from those countries," Ivana Miković, Firefly MD and former BBC news producer, told C21 here in Zagreb.

Fatal Ally and Rabies are two of 16 drama series Firefly currently has in development, the others being in the Serbian language for the local market. An adaptation of 2014 Serbian-language Second World War novel Constantine's Crossing by Dejan Stojiljkovic is among them.

Firefly also has three series wrapping production: criminal-turned-businessman saga Tycoon (10x50'), gangster series The Clan (10x50') and music-driven detective thriller Underneath (10x50'). All three will air on Serbian Telekom's Superstar channel next year.

"In the current drama boom, rights to adapt novels for TV are becoming so expensive and the deals are much more complicated and strict as novelists now know the value of their work and are aware of all the new distribution platforms," said Miković.



Ed Waller
12-12-2019
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