

PRESS RELEASE

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Three River Studios Options Bryan Talbot's Graphic Novel Series *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* and *Heart of Empire*

London, XX April 2021: Three River Studios today announces it has optioned the rights to develop, finance and produce a live action, returnable TV series based on Bryan Talbot's ground-breaking and multi-award winning graphic novels: *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* and its sequel *Heart of Empire*.

Considered to be one of the most significant graphic novel series to come out of Britain, the stories from *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* and *Heart of Empire* are rich in lore and legend, vast in the scope, and have an incredible breadth of complex characters.

Written for a mature readership and born out of the anti-establishment wave of the 70s and 80s and in part as a protest at the rise of the far right, *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* are a violent, raunchy combination of satire, science fiction and thrilling adventure into what has been described as the very first steampunk comic.

The graphic novels weave an apocalyptic tale across a multiverse in which many alternate versions of history exist parallel to one another. With the ability to move between these 'parallels' by sheer force of will, Talbot's hero, psychic secret agent Luther Arkwright, fights the malign influence of the Disruptors, a group who have manipulated humanity throughout history. He is aided by fellow agent Rose Wyld, a telepath who can communicate with her many alternative selves across the multiverse.

The central plot of *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* focuses on Arkwright's battle with a fascist dictatorship in a parallel reality where Oliver Cromwell's Puritans, secretly controlled by the Disruptors, never lost their grip on power. The sequel *Heart of Empire* is set twenty-three years later and centres on Luther's daughter Victoria, a princess and engineering genius who is heir to a globe-spanning British Empire. Luther and Victoria face a new threat in the form of a twisted psychic horror hidden somewhere in the heart of the Empire's capital.

The series is being produced by Jonathan Drake, CEO of Three River Studios. Author of *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* and *Heart of Empire*, Bryan Talbot, is attached as an Executive Producer and further talent will be announced over the coming year.

Jonathan Drake, CEO of Three River Studios says "Bryan Talbot's work is everything science fiction should be. He stands at the very beginning of a tradition that gave us the likes of Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Garth Ennis – his works were then, and remain now, cutting edge. The best Sci-Fi always says something meaningful about the world or asks new questions about it. *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* is unique for its time in being aimed squarely at adult readers, with a rich and sophisticated visual style that echoes some of the great auteur film makers. It thrills, challenges readers, and makes you think. Luther's unique status as a traveller between parallel realities and his saviour-like qualities might liken him to *Doctor Who* – but an R-Rated version, that doesn't shy away from sex, politics and the grim realities of violence. Bryan's parallel worlds are woven together with a complex and consistent mythology, a rich array of human characters (never monster of the week!) and an eye for a much grander story and purpose."

Bryan Talbot, creator of The Adventures of Luther Arkwright adds "I'm very excited that Three River Studios is working on a TV adaptation of the Luther Arkwright stories. With the digital technology at their disposal and a genuine love of the original, I'm very much looking forward to the series."

Previously the graphic novels have been adapted into an audio play, which starred David Tennant. Bryan is also currently writing a new instalment of Arkwright's saga, The Legend of Luther Arkwright, due for release in 2022.

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About Three River Studios

Founded by Jonathan Drake, Three River Studios has been active in all stages of television production from development to financing, producing and licensing since 2013. As parent company to Impossible Factual, a blue chip factual producer, and Three River Fiction, a development and production arm for scripted programming, Three River Studios has stood behind critically acclaimed series in both genres.