

Official Secrets, Jumanji: The Next Level and NT Live's Present Laughter

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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Films opening in South African cinemas, this week, include a new one from Oscar-winning South African director Gavin Hood, *Official Secrets*; another instalment in the *Jumanji* universe, *Jumanji: The Next Level*; and Old Vic Theatre's production of *Present Laughter* on NT Live.

Official Secrets

Gavin Hood (*Eye In The Sky*, *Tsotsi*) directs this political thriller that tells the true story of British Intelligence whistleblower Katharine Gun (Keira Knightley) who, prior to the 2003 Iraq invasion, leaked a top-secret NSA memo exposing a joint US-UK illegal spying operation against members of the UN Security Council. The memo proposed blackmailing member states into voting for war.

Screenplay by Gregory Bernstein, Sara Bernstein and Hood, based on *The Spy Who Tried to Stop a War* by Marcia and Thomas Mitchell.

Hood was hooked by a story that didn't feel "abstract and theoretical" like, say, the Chilcot Report, the Iraq inquiry led by

Sir John Chilcott published in July 2016. “When I read the story,” he says, “it felt like this was a way into a very large event through a particular individual. It allowed me to look at this period of time in quite a personal way, through the story of an essentially ordinary person who found themselves in an extraordinary situation.”

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Jumanji: The Next Level

The four teenagers who survived the trials of *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* as they return home to Brantford, New Hampshire from their respective colleges for the holiday break. Now college students, they're trying to navigate the next level in their individual lives.

According to the film's star and producer, Dwayne Johnson, they knew how high expectations were from the outset: “The scope and the scale of the film is really epic; when it's *Jumanji*, it commands that. We went into this knowing that the pressure was on, and we've got to raise the bar. We've got to level up. So we brought in the best filmmakers, and the best in class with all our department heads and our crew. Also, what's really cool about *Jumanji* is we have no constraints because it's a video game.”

Directed by Jake Kasdan and written by Chris McKenna, Erik Sommers, Scott Rosenberg and Jeff Pinkner, based on a story by McKenna.

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NT Live: Present Laughter

Present Laughter is a giddy and surprisingly modern reflection on fame, desire and loneliness. As he prepares to embark on an overseas tour, star actor Garry Essendine's colourful life is in danger of spiralling out of control.

Engulfed by an escalating identity crisis as his many and various relationships compete for his attention, Garry's few remaining days at home are a chaotic whirlwind of love, sex, panic and soul-searching. It was filmed live during a sellout run at the Old Vic Theatre in London earlier this year. Matthew Warchus directs.

It stars Olivier award-winner Andrew Scott (BBC's *Sherlock*, *Fleabag*) as star actor Garry Essendine, with Indira Varma (*Game of Thrones*, *Luther*) and Sophie Thompson (*Four Weddings and A Funeral*, *Eastenders*).

It is screened at Cinema Nouveau Brooklyn on 13, 14, 18 and 19 December 2019, and at Cinema Nouveau in Joburg and Cape Town and Gateway Commercial KZN on 14, 15, 18 and 19 December.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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