

# *Downton Abbey: A New Era* and *Memory*

By  Daniel Dercksen

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This week sees the release of the highly anticipated *Downton Abbey: A New Era* and the action thriller *Memory*.



## *Downton Abbey: A New Era*

From the award-winning creator, Julian Fellowes, comes the much-anticipated cinematic return of the global phenomenon reunites the beloved cast as they go on a grand journey to the South of France to uncover the mystery of the Dowager Countess' newly inherited villa.

It's 1928 and the family and household servants of Downton Abbey are all in attendance at the wedding of Tom Branson to Miss Lucy Smith, daughter of Maud, Lady Bagshaw. Since the decline in her health, the Dowager has moved back to Downton to be closer to the family. Lord Grantham shares the news that the family's lawyer will be visiting Downton at the Dowager's request and that the whole family should be present. Violet has inherited a villa in the South of France.

A film director from the British Lion film company wants to set his latest silent film *The Gambler at Downton Abbey*. As the movie crew and film stars prepare to descend on Downton Abbey, the family make plans to escape the impending chaos and take the opportunity to visit the villa in the South of France.

“The way of life of these fully staffed houses had always interested me, long before I wrote Gosford Park,” says Julian Fellowes. “There is something intriguing about a group of people living in such close proximity and yet with such different expectations. In these country houses, Julian talks of families living within “a curious universe, alongside their servants who are, on the whole, living a different life but are just as strongly graded as their masters so that, within their world, the butler is King and the housekeeper is Queen, with all their own hopes and dreams. “I hope in *Downton* we have a very balanced set up as both Gareth and I wanted it to be something recognisable and identifiable to audiences.”

“I hope *Downton Abbey: A New Era* will be a gift to the world of an enjoyable emotional, entertaining roller coaster, just when it’s needed,” says director Simon Curtis.

Read more [here](#).

## **Memory**

Liam Neeson plays an expert assassin with a reputation for discreet precision. Caught in a moral quagmire, an old contact gives him a final assignment. However, the job isn’t what Alex bargained for, and leads him into an FBI sting operation led by agent Vincent Serra (Guy Pearce).

When Alex finds a trail of abuse leading from a child prostitution ring south of the border to a wealthy, influential El Paso real estate magnate (Monica Bellucci) and her son (Josh Taylor), Alex secretly guides Serra’s FBI team in the right direction. Though his inability to remember details is putting him in ever greater danger, Alex uses the skills he’s honed from a lifetime in the shadows to force ugliness into the light — but he has to do it before powerful forces destroy Alex and erase Serra’s mission to get at the truth.

*Memory* is a remake of the Belgian thriller *De Zaak Alzheimer* (*The Memory of a Killer*), released in 2003, director Erik Van Looy's film adaptation of author Jef Geeraerts' 1985 book of the same name. Considered a classic in the genre and a winner of European film awards, the thriller stood out for writer-director Martin Campbell because of its intensity, rich characters, and serpentine plot.

"The Belgian film was excellent, so when I brought Dario Scardapane in to write it, we had a pretty solid structure to start with," says Campbell. "We reset the story on the border of El Paso, Texas, and northern Mexico — Juarez is literally just over the other side of the fence. There are basic elements to the story that are the same, but there are many changes of course. The ending is very different, and I enhanced all of the action, which is much more than what was in the original film. But overall, it's a psychological tension study."

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## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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