

Horror, espionage and human drama

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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This week, three local films will have a limited release to qualify for consideration as South Africa's official entry for the 2018 Oscars. This is to ensure that the films are eligible for submission for the 2018 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film; the Academy stipulates that a film must play theatrically for seven consecutive days to qualify for entry. The films are Akin Omotoso's award-winning drama *Vaya*, John Trengove's controversial *Inxeba (The Wound)*, and the contemporary western *Five Fingers for Marseilles*. Other releases are Stephen King's horror *IT*, action-espionage thriller *American Assassin*, romantic comedy *Home Again*, Richard Gere's *Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer*, the action-horror film *Armed Response*, and this week's Bollywood release is *Lucknow Central*.

Vaya

The South African drama *Vaya* will open for a limited release at Cinema Nouveau Rosebank in Johannesburg.

Akin Omotoso's award-winning feature film examines the lives of a group of strangers who arrive in Johannesburg to fulfil various personal missions. The screenplay is based on the experiences of a group of homeless writers who make up the Homeless Writer's Project.

Inxeba (The Wound)

Multiple award-winning South African film *Inxeba (The Wound)* is a powerful and complex tale that examines sexuality, patriarchy, class, and repression. The film will screen for seven days at Cinema Nouveau Rosebank and at the Cinema Nouveau V&A Waterfront in Cape Town.

Five Fingers For Marseilles

This contemporary South African western set in the rugged badlands of the Eastern Cape will screen for seven days at Ster-Kinekor Tygervalley in Cape Town.

Directed by Michael Matthews and written by Sean Drummond, *Five Fingers for Marseilles* is a predominantly Sesotho, western-inspired tale of an outlaw who returns home after years on the run, and finds a chance for redemption.

IT

Based on the hugely popular Stephen King novel of the same name, the film tells the story of seven young outcasts growing up in the township of Derry, Maine, who call themselves 'the Losers' Club'.

Andy Muschietti (*Mama*) directed the film from a screenplay by Chase Palmer, Cary Fukunaga, and Gary Dauberman.

American Assassin

American Assassin is non-stop action-espionage thriller rooted in the raw reality of today's hard-to-detect enemies invisible black ops, high-level surveillance, portable nukes, and murky agendas.

The film follows a one-of-a-kind American assassin as he goes from heartbroken fiancé to cunning renegade to off-the-charts CIA trainee to his first must-not-fail mission.

Directed by Michael Cuesta, the screenplay is based on the novel by Vince Flynn and was adapted by Stephen Schiff, Michael Finch, Edward Zwick, and Marshall Herskovitz.

Home Again

Home Again stars Academy Award-winner Reese Witherspoon in a modern romantic comedy about love, friendship, and the families we create. And one very big life lesson: Starting over is not for beginners.

The movie was produced by filmmaker Nancy Meyers (*Something's Gotta Give*) and written and directed by her daughter Hallie Meyers-Shyer. *Home Again* is Meyers-Shyer's directorial debut.

Norman

Norman Oppenheimer (Richard Gere) lives a lonely life in the margins of New York City power and money; a would-be operator dreaming up financial schemes that never come to fruition. As he has nothing real to offer, Norman strives to be everyone's friend, but his incessant networking leads him nowhere.

This new film by Academy Award-nominated director Joseph Cedar is a comic and compassionate drama of a little man whose downfall is rooted in a human frailty all too easy to forgive - a need to matter.

Armed Response

In the action-horror film *Armed Response*, a team of trained operatives find themselves trapped inside an isolated military compound after its artificial intelligence is suddenly shut down.

There, they begin to experience strange and horrific phenomena as they attempt to uncover what killed the previous team.

Armed Response was directed by John Stockwell (*Kickboxer Vengeance*) and stars Dave Annable, Colby Lopez, Wesley Snipes, and Eyas Younis.

Lucknow Central

Directed by Ranjit Tiwari, *Lucknow Central* stars Farhan Akhtar as a prisoner who forms a band with his fellow inmates. The prison walls are full of positive thoughts to inspire the prisoners, giving them an opportunity to improve and change their bad habits, and start life afresh.

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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

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