

How The 9th Life of Louis Drax was born

The Canada-U.K. coproduction, to be released in September, reunites a trio of partners from 2013's *Horns*.

By Jordan Pinto

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After the screening of Daniel Radcliffe-starrer *Horns* at TIFF 2013, Brightlight Pictures' Shawn Williamson, director Alexandre Aja and actor/writer Max Minghella decided they wanted to work together again. The trio, who had all been involved with *Horns*, bounced around some ideas, and the one that stuck was a script Minghella was developing based on a novel, *The 9th Life of Louis Drax*, from author Liz Jensen. Minghella had initially been working on the screenplay with his late father Anthony Minghella. "It was a commercial project that was accidentally Canadian in that we had a French filmmaker, English filmmaker and Canadian filmmaker who all wanted to work together," Brightlight president Williamson told *Playback Daily*.

Set up as Canada-U.K. treaty coproduction, the project went to camera in [October 2014](#) in Vancouver, with a high-profile cast that included Jamie Dornan (*50 Shades of Grey*, *The Fall*), Aaron Paul (*Breaking Bad*) and Canadians Sarah Gadon and Molly Parker. Williamson noted that landing a high-profile cast was important due to the perennial struggle of "trying to raise enough money out of Canada to attract enough star talent to interest U.S. buyers."

Aside from Vancouver, some of the film's scenes were shot in San Francisco to capture iconic elements such as the Golden Gate Bridge. Filming took about two and a half months to complete, with post-production then heading to the U.K.

Williamson said the film went through multiple test screenings to decide how best to position it for audiences.

"It's more of a commercial art film, but it's not in a typical genre world and it's not a straight-up drama," Williamson explained.

The feature starts on Louis Drax's 9th birthday, when he survives a near fatal fall that sets into motion a series of mysterious events.

The film is produced by AntColony Films, Brightlight Pictures and Miramax, with Tim Bricknell, Minghella, Shawn Williamson and Aja all serving as producers. Rosanne Korenberg executive produced the film.

Entertainment One is releasing the film in Canada, while Lionsgate is releasing the film in the U.S. and Miramax is handling distribution globally. *Louis Drax* opens in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal on Friday, Sept. 2.

Among the other projects on Brightlight's slate is family comedy *Status Update*, which recently wrapped production in Vancouver. Williamson said the \$15 million feature is going into post now and will likely be ready for a spring release.

Source: <http://playbackonline.ca/2016/07/22/how-the-9th-life-of-louis-drax-was-born/>