



Four Britians Travel to Syria to Join ISIS in "The State"

07.13.2017

Four young Britians travel to Syria to join ISIS and are impacted in different ways in *The State*, a new series from National Geographic Channel and the U.K.'s Channel 4.

Although fictional, the four-part series is based on months of extensive research about the realities of life in Raqqa, Syria and attempts to "address through drama one of the most troubling issues of our age," said writer and director Peter Kosminsky (*Wolf Hall*, *The Promise*, *The Government Inspector*) in a statement.

"ISIS and its adherents have caused pain and suffering the world over," he said. "But unless we understand why some of our young men and women chose to give up the lives they were living and travel to Syria, why men and women born and brought up in our liberal democracies opt to lay down those lives in its name, how can we ever hope to combat its nihilistic creed?"

According to Channel 4, the story focuses on Jalal (Sam Otto, *Collateral*) who is following in his older brother's footsteps in deciding to travel to Syria and fight for ISIS, and has persuaded his best friend Ziyaad (Ryan McKen, *Bancroft, NW*) to accompany him. Single mother Shakira (Ony Uhiara, *Law and Order*) arrives

in Syria with her 9-year-old son Isaac, determined to bring her skills as a junior doctor to the aid of the Islamic State; and teenager Ushna (Shavani Seth, Youngers, Homeland) has left her family behind to fulfil what she sees as her religious duty after being radicalised on the internet.

As they experience more of the realities of life in Raqqa, witnessing horrific atrocities carried out by the regime and the bloody aftermath of air strikes, their journeys diverge - into disillusionment and despair on the one hand and increasing commitment to the Caliphate on the other.

The State is produced by Archery Pictures for Channel 4 and National Geographic Channel. It was developed by Channel 4 and commissioned by Beth Willis, head of drama, with executive producers Liza Marshall, Kris Thykier and Peter Kosminsky. For National Geographic Channel, Carolyn G. Bernstein is executive vice president and head of global scripted development and production.

The State is set to premiere in August.