

National Geographic enters *The Hot Zone* from 3 July 2019

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Starring Golden Globe and Emmy Award-winner Julianna Margulies, the six-episode limited series hails from Fox 21 Television Studios; Lynda Obst Productions; Scott Free Productions; and Executive Producers Kelly Souders, Brian Peterson and Jeff Vintar

Noah Emmerich, Topher Grace, Liam Cunningham, Paul James, James D'Arcy, Robert Sean Leonard and Grace Gummer Also Star in Series, Premiering 3 July at 21h00



In 1989, in a scientific facility outside Washington, DC, the deadly Ebola virus made its first known appearance on US soil. The finding — and eventual containment — of this lethal filovirus, which had a fatality rate of up to 90 percent at the time, was thanks to a group of courageous scientists and soldiers led by Lieutenant Colonel Nancy Jaax. National Geographic's six-part limited series, ***The Hot Zone***, inspired by the true events detailed in Richard Preston's international best-seller of the same name, shares the harrowing tale of a global crisis that never was.

Starring Golden Globe and Emmy Award-winning actress **Julianna Margulies** ("The Good Wife", "ER") as Nancy Jaax, the six-hour, edge-of-your-seat thriller ***The Hot Zone*** will premiere on **3 July at 21h00** with the first two episodes double billed that evening. The limited series is produced by Fox 21 Television Studios, Lynda Obst Productions and Scott Free Productions. Kelly Souders and Brian Peterson serve as showrunners and executive producers, with Jeff Vintar as a co-executive producer.



Joining Margulies in the cast are **Noah Emmerich** (“The Americans”) as Jaax’s husband, Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Jaax, who does not hesitate to risk his life during the operation to contain the Ebola virus; **Topher Grace** (“BlackKKKlansman”) as Dr. Peter Jahrling, a virologist for the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, who butts heads with Nancy Jaax over the best way to contain the virus; **Liam Cunningham** (“Game of Thrones”) as Dr. Wade Carter, Nancy’s vital ally in the race to prevent the virus from spreading; **James D’Arcy** (“Homeland”) as Travis Rhodes, a Center for Disease Control official and Carter’s former assistant and current nemesis; and **Paul James** (“The Path”) as Ben Gellis, a lab tech at the pathology lab in Virginia, assisting Nancy and Dr. Jahrling.

Rounding out the cast are **Robert Wisdom** (“The Wire”) as Colonel Vernon Tucker of the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), Jaax’s superior; **Robert Sean Leonard** (“House”), who plays Walter Humboldt, the liaison between Hazleton, a scientific research corporation, and its primate lab in Virginia; and **Grace Gummer** (“Mr. Robot”) as Melinda Rhodes, one of the first people to chase the virus into the jungle.



The Hot Zone begins with a terrifying look back to 1980, when an unsuspecting doctor in Kenya examines a patient with symptoms unlike anything seen before. Flashing forward to 1989, a colony of primates has become sick at a research facility in Virginia, just over 30 kilometres from the US Capitol, and sample tissues are sent to Nancy Jaax (Margulies), a lieutenant colonel with USAMRIID, the US Army's main facility for defensive research into countermeasures against biological warfare. Jaax's instincts and experience tell her she is seeing something far worse than a run-of-the-mill primate infection. Despite the skepticism of her colleagues Dr. Peter Jahrling (Grace) and Col. Vernon Tucker (Wisdom), but with the support of her husband, Lt. Col. Jerry Jaax (Emmerich), a US Army veterinarian, and her mentor Dr. Wade Carter (Cunningham), she pushes forward to find the truth.

Through Nancy's perseverance, scientific testing reveals the dire truth of the situation, forcing the Army into action to contain an outbreak. The series also flashes back to the late 1970s to see how Dr. Carter and Travis Rhodes (D'Arcy) first tracked, studied and attempted to contain Ebola in Africa. But will the lessons they learned help stop this disease from hitting the human population? A dramatic, high-stakes scientific thriller with a courageous and determined heroine at its core, **The Hot Zone** brings true science and human drama together for a gripping tale that still resonates today.

"After premiering in May this year, The Hot Zone has become National Geographic's best ever scripted series for the U.S. We cannot wait to broadcast this much-awaited drama series in Africa, especially seeing the show was partly shot in Durban and features local talent, Warren Masekela, Bohang Moeko and Sive Mabuya in moving cameo roles. This show is guaranteed to be a riveting watch" said Evert van der Veer for Media Networks, The Walt Disney Company Africa.

EPISODES INCLUDE:

ARRIVAL

3 JULY AT 21h00

Lt. Col. Nancy Jaax is a wife and mother of two, with one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Every day, she dons layers of protective gear and enters the Biosafety Level 4 lab at USAMRIID, where she handles the world's deadliest viruses. One day in 1989, upon arriving at work, she tests a sample and fears it may be in the deadliest category of viruses, known as filoviruses. Even more unnerving is the location it came from — a monkey research facility 30 kilometres from the nation's capital. When a breach in the lab causes the samples to be lost, it is Jaax' instincts against the world.

CELL H

3 JULY AT 22h00

Lt. Col. Nancy Jaax must take matters into her own, capable hands. She convinces an employee at the Hazleton research facility to hand over more samples from the infected monkeys. Back in the USAMRIID lab, she and her overly confident partner, Dr. Peter Jahrling, test the new specimens and come face to face with the virus through their microscope. Jaax is determined to figure out the source of the virus. She brings in her mentor, reclusive Ebola expert Dr. Wade Carter.

CHARLIE FOXTROT

10 JULY AT 21h00

When representatives from varying agencies disagree on how to handle Nancy Jaax's discovery, she quickly realises there are few protocols in place for containing a deadly virus on US soil. An employee at the monkey research facility falls ill, causing Jaax to fear the virus has spread to the human population. Travis Rhodes, from the Center for Disease Control, arrives with a different way of handling matters. As Jaax battles the obstacles on the ground, viewers find out Carter and Rhodes were among the first responders to discover Ebola in Africa decades earlier.

EXPENDABLE

17 JULY AT 21h00

Nancy Jaax begins to lead a team from USAMRIID to prepare for the most dangerous mission any of them have ever faced. With full access to the research facility, the life-threatening stakes cause great concern in the Jaax family home. Her husband, Jerry, searches for a way to protect his wife. Meanwhile, Jaax believes her mentor, Dr. Wade Carter, may have a different agenda. His obsession with exposing the dangers of Ebola is driving him to make questionable decisions. The team of animal care specialists at USAMRIID, led by Jerry, heads out to eradicate the virus at the

facility, while more employees are tested for possible exposure.

QUARANTINE

24 JULY AT 21h00

Inside the primate research facility, unforeseen dangers arise. Nancy Jaax works tirelessly in Biosafety Level 4 to find out why the virus is behaving differently in human victims than expected. With the daunting task of euthanising monkeys, unforeseen dangers arise, and even the strongest of the team are pushed to the brink. The families of the employees are quietly gathered to protect others from possible exposure, and Jaax is forced to make an impossible choice between her family and her duty to her country.

HIDDEN

31 JULY AT 21h00

An already volatile situation inside the infected research facility boils to a head. With Nancy Jaax stepping up while those around her fall, exhaustion threatens the precision needed to sterilise the threat. Their efforts to contain panic are threatened when the press arrives and neighbours become aware of the danger next door. Jaax is forced to confront her mentor, Dr. Wade Carter, when a situation spills out of the monkey facility and puts people on the outside in danger. Jaax ultimately must face the ramifications of trying to balance her dangerous career and her loving family. Longtime rivals Dr. Carter and Travis Rhodes reach an impasse that could determine how many more people outside the lab have been exposed.

***The Hot Zone** is executive produced by Lynda Obst Production's Lynda Obst; Scott Free Production's Ridley Scott; and David Zucker, Kelly Souders, and Brian Peterson. Michael Uppendahl is also an executive producer. Jeff Vintar serves as a co-executive producer. For National Geographic, Carolyn G. Bernstein is executive vice president and head of global scripted development and production. The series is produced by Fox 21 Television Studios, Lynda Obst Productions and Scott Free Productions.*

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