

BBC Studios and Post Production remasters ITV cult classic The Professionals

25 March 2014: BBC Studios and Post Production's award-winning Digital Media Services team has restored the complete first series of the cult classic British crime-drama, The Professionals, for leading indie distributor Network, with the other series to follow. The High Definition version is released worldwide on Blu-ray on 31 March 2014.

Broadcast on ITV from 1977 to 1983 and starring Martin Shaw and Lewis Collins as agents Doyle and Bodie of the fictional 'CI5', The Professionals was created by Brian Clemens, one of the driving forces behind The Avengers. The series was produced by Avengers Mk1 Productions for London Weekend Television.

The variable condition of the original film footage was one of the main challenges BBC Studios and Post Production's Digital Media Services team faced. The joins between scenes presented a particular problem during the restoration process, not only due to residual movement after scanning, but also because of the cement and tape splices. As a result, considerable manual intervention was required to bring the film up to an acceptable standard for an HD master, including shot-by-shot grading, grain and dirt management, stabilisation and scratch concealment.

Another challenge facing the Digital Media Services team was the fact that the master negatives had been re-versioned at some point after the initial broadcast to correspond with the later series in terms of main titles, end titles and background graphics. This meant the original look and feel of series one had to be ascertained by examining as much material as possible, including prints from 1977 and 1978. Only then could the restoration work on the first 13 episodes begin, to restore the programmes to their original construction.

"The Professionals was a series that I grew up watching, so to have the opportunity to restore this cult classic was a pleasure," said Jonathan Wood, Colourist at BBC Studios and Post Production. "The condition of the film was in such a poor state in places that it posed many challenges during the restoration. However, our extensive experience restoring other TV classics shot on 16mm, such as House of Cards, Trials of Life and The Sweeney meant that we were well equipped to handle the material and bring it back to life."

Tim Beddows, Managing Director of Network, added: "Unbelievably, The Professionals is one of the last shows of its kind to undergo any kind of restoration and we wasted no time in commissioning BBC Studios and Post Production's Digital Media Services team to do the work. Thanks to Jonathan Wood and his colleagues the series has undergone a genuine, startling transformation. Viewers and fans will be as thrilled as we are."

Notes for editors - The workflow

To achieve the optimum end results, BBC Studios and Post Production's Digital Media Services team worked from the 16mm A/B negative source material and colour reversal inter-negs that were held in the British Film Institute's archive. The film was first scanned

into a SCANITY film scanner before being conformed and graded in Nucoda Film Master. The material was then put through DVO processing before being painstakingly manually cleaned using Diamant Dustbuster to remove scratches, taped joins, in-camera dirt and other marks.

For the soundtrack, the original 35mm triple track sep mag soundtracks were newly transferred and slightly processed to create cleaner and crisper audio. The footage was delivered back to Network as HDCAMSR 4:3 pillar-box format masters.

- Ends-

About BBC Studios and Post Production

BBC Studios and Post Production is a commercial subsidiary of the BBC, providing world-class studios, post production and digital media services. It works with media companies and broadcasters, making content for a variety of broadcasters including BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five and Sky, from Channel 4's Deal or No Deal and Big Fat Quiz to EastEnders and Strictly Come Dancing.

Its award-winning Digital Media Services team preserves, remasters and manages content through its digital archiving, restoration and distribution services, working with content owners like Imperial War Museums to conserve and maximise the value of their material. Credits include Dr Who, David Attenborough's Life on Earth and Trials of Life, The Sweeney, The Queen's Coronation and The Trumptonshire Trilogy.

While Television Centre is being redeveloped, BBC Studios and Post Production has relocated its London studio business to Elstree, where it offers fully equipped HD TV studios and post production services. Its award-winning Digital Media Services team operates from a permanent and purpose-built facility at Odyssey Business Park, South Ruislip.

For more information please visit www.bbcstudiosandpostproduction.com.

For more information please contact:

Louise Wells at Red Lorry Yellow Lorry
bbcstudiosandpostproduction@rlyl.com / 020 7403 8878