

All Hail Peter Morgan!

It's high time for a miniseries about the highly imaginative creator of Netflix's "The Crown."



by Bruce Bawer

ll hail the creative genius of Peter Morgan, who realized years ago just how big a market there was for movies, plays, and TV series about the House of Windsor.

After a middling early career as a TV and film writer, Morgan hit pay dirt in 2006 with the movie "The Queen," which garnered Oscar nominations for his screenplay as well as for best picture and nabbed Helen Mirren the best actress nod as Queen Elizabeth II.

In 2013 came “The Audience,” Morgan’s West End and Broadway play consisting entirely of meetings between Queen Elizabeth II—again played by Mirren—and every last one of her prime ministers up to that date.

Along the way, Morgan worked on other projects, including the play and movie “Frost/Nixon” and the Freddie Mercury biopic “Bohemian Rhapsody.” But like a moth to a flame, he kept returning to Buckingham Palace. In 2016 came his *chef d’oeuvre*, “The Crown”—the high-budget Netflix series that follows Queen Elizabeth II throughout her reign.

“The Crown” is fun to watch, of course, and gorgeous to look at. But from the beginning it’s been criticized for taking outrageous liberties with the facts. Some of its most engaging sequences have turned out to be total fiction. For example, Elizabeth and Jackie Kennedy escaping from a posh reception at Buckingham Palace to bond cozily over the Queen’s dogs. Or Princess Margaret exchanging dirty limericks with LBJ at a White House dinner.

Almost every scene involving Margaret Thatcher is not just pure invention but borderline calumny. Which isn’t surprising, given Morgan’s partiality to Tony Blair, who not only was the hero of “The Queen” but also was at the center of Morgan’s films “The Deal” (2003), and “The Special Relationship” (2010).

The fifth season of “The Crown,” covering the 1990s, will debut on November 9—two months and a day after the Queen shuffled off this mortal coil. But Morgan and friends aren’t letting her death cramp their style: the fabrications in this round of “The Crown” are reportedly more plentiful than ever. We’ll see Prince Charles intriguing against his mother and Prince Philip pressuring her to make nice with his mistress. Shades of “Richard III”! And that’s just the tip of the iceberg, apparently.

No surprise, then, that there's more outrage than ever about "The Crown's" high hooley quotient. In a November 4 [article](#) at the BBC website, for example, one Hugh Montgomery posed what he described as "the big question of the moment," namely: "should *The Crown* and its creator Peter Morgan be playing so fast-and-loose with the facts?" Morgan has already replied to that: five years ago, defending the liberties he'd taken thus far with the details of the Queen's life, he said, "I think there's room to creatively imagine, based on the information we have about her."

Well, given that sanction, I've come up with a TV project of my own: a miniseries about the life of Peter Morgan. Don't think for a second that he doesn't merit such treatment. After all, his *oeuvre* has had a huge worldwide impact. He's played a major role in reshaping the reputations of several leading royals *and* prime ministers.

No, films about authors aren't too popular these days, but they used to be hot ticket items. "The Life of Emile Zola" (1937) won best picture. So did "Shakespeare in Love" (1998). Then there are all those movies like "Finding Neverland" (2004), the sentimental story of pedophile "Peter Pan" author J. M. Barrie and "Trumbo" (2015), a tribute to hard-core Stalinist screenwriter Dalton Trumbo.

So why not a biopic about Peter Morgan? Of course, I'll need to take a few liberties with the specifics of his life, just as he's done with the Windsors. In reality he grew up in London, the son of a Polish Catholic mother who, according to Wikipedia, "fled the Soviets" and a German Jewish father who "fled the Nazis." Nothing particularly interesting there. Wouldn't it be far more exciting to make the mother a Gulag guard and the father a member of the Gestapo?

Morgan went on, as noted, to write several properties centered on Tony Blair. Which raises the question: why, exactly, was he so fixated on Blair? Could it be that they had a secret, long-

term affair, involving, say, bondage and discipline? What if they traveled together to Jeffrey Epstein's island? And perhaps they were Bronies, too, getting together in secret to watch "My Little Pony" and play with multicolored pony figurines? Can anybody prove definitively that they didn't? Hey, there's a whole episode right there.

Finally, given Morgan's fascination with the Queen, surely it's within the realm of possibility that he bribed some equerry to sneak him into the Royal Mews to engage in unnatural acts of equine intimacy?

And that's just for starters. Wait till I really get going on this thing! Boy, what a series this'll be! Peter Morgan has the right idea: why let the facts get in the way of gripping, sensational drama?