

PRESS RELEASE

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REDEMPTION OR REVENGE? A LOVE LETTER TO BROKEN BRITAIN.

Candy Jar Books is excited to announce the release of its latest crime thriller, *The Release*, by Alistair Moore.

Dealing with the legacy of a brutal murder on a neglected high-rise council estate, *The Release* offers a clear-eyed view of Broken Britain in all its desperation, decay and, yes, splendour.

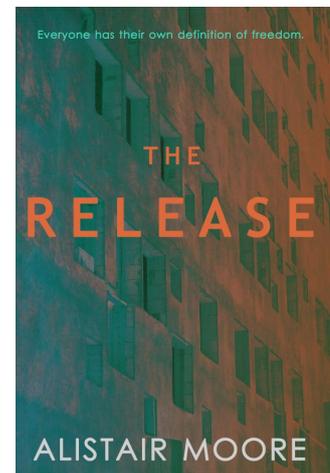
It is a side of the country that its author knows well. Moore grew up in Islington, North London, but spent time in Hackney as a teenager, falling in with a crowd prone to low-level mischief.

From the '50s to the '70s, hundreds of high-rise social housing developments were constructed all over Britain. They remain the most divisive of all of the products of the postwar political consensus. Depending on who you ask, they are either an expression of utopian ideals – the 'all in it together' spirit that also built such institutions as the NHS – or human rabbit warrens, putting economics before livability and human dignity.

The fictional estate in Moore's book looms omnipresent over the story, as similar estates do over the lives of thousands every day, providing a visual metaphor for the moral dilemma around which the narrative revolves. The book's protagonist Bennie is – in his own mind, at least – a detective; a less charitable description might be a stalker for hire. When he is charged by the father of a murder victim to track down the killer, soon to be released from prison, he is faced with a choice: perpetuate the cycle of violence by sharing his findings; or to make a break, and allow the killer a chance at redemption.

Through this quandary, *The Release* explores the youth cultures of high-rise developments: the pressures that force some down the wrong roads, and those which at the same time see many succeed. Moore asks whether criminal behaviours are a result of a flaw in the design of these developments, or whether they are despite the designs – which, lest we forget, were aiming to produce the homes of the future: accessible, affordable, and welcoming to all.

Moore himself moved on from the less savoury influences of his teenage years, becoming an award-winning screenwriter and now, of course, a novelist. But he



knows many that weren't so fortunate. His experience informs the probing narrative of *The Release*: how much of our life is choice? How much is decided for us? If things go right, who deserves the credit? If they go wrong, who gets the blame?

These developments were avowedly futuristic, but the future they were predicting never came. Who's to blame for that? The residents for not embracing the ideals, or the architects for misreading the residents? And perhaps more to the point, is there anything wrong with how things did go? Thousands of people live decent, law abiding lives in these developments; we just don't hear about them. Yet, to say that these high-rises haven't also facilitated crime would be naïve. These places undeniably have their own dynamic, it is just a more nuanced one than we are often presented with. *The Release* explores this world – the light and the shade, the good and the bad, the particularities of these places, their people, and how they interact.

And by exploring these themes in the streets and settings where they are played out every day, *The Release* achieves a multifaceted portrait of one of Britain's most maligned social environments. Unflinching, at times contentious, but with an unmistakable humanity to it, *The Release* is truly a novel for our times.

Candy Jar's head of publishing, Shaun Russell expands: '*The Release* looks with clear eyes at issues that many writers would shy away from. It offers a nuanced portrait of its setting, one which is compassionate and empathetic, but one which also doesn't indulge in the kind of political correctness that pretends everything's rosy. It's honest, unsparing, and genuinely wants to get to the heart of its themes. We think that in the modern moment, in times of great import but also great obfuscation, this is exactly what readers want.'

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