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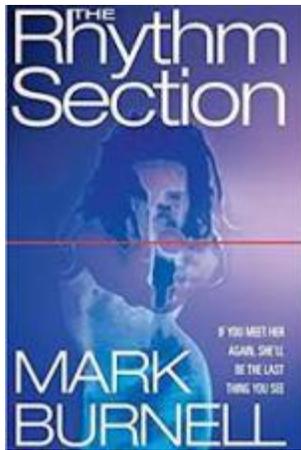
Paramount Lands Blake Lively Spy Thriller ‘The Rhythm Section’ By 007 Producers & IM Global



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**EXCLUSIVE:** Paramount Pictures just landed itself a potential new global franchise. The studio will team with IM Global and James Bond producers [Michael G. Wilson](#) and [Barbara Broccoli](#) for *The Rhythm Section*, a female global espionage thriller to star [Blake Lively](#), with *The Handmaid’s Tale* director/exec producer [Reed Morano](#) to helm the first of what they hope will become a film franchise. Paramount acquired the film and will release in most world territories.

Both Paramount and IM Global confirmed the deal. Said new IM Global chief [Rob Friedman](#): “I’m thrilled to be working with Barbara and Michael on this very exciting project.”



Harper Collins

Lively, Morano, Eon Production and recently exited IM Global head [Stuart Ford](#) aligned earlier this [summer](#) to the thriller that is fueled by the work of British novelist [Mark Burnell](#), who wrote the script. Ford, who forged a relationship with Broccoli on the Toronto-bound *Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool*, will be exec producer along with Greg Shapiro and Burnell. It is worth noting that for the producers of the iconic male 007 franchise, this is the first espionage thriller they've done outside that, and they've chosen one built around a female protagonist.

Production will begin this fall. Lively plays a woman who is on path of self-destruction after the death of her family in an airplane crash, a flight that she was supposed to be on. After being told by a journalist that the crash was an act of terror covered up by intelligence agencies, and then watching that journalist get killed, the woman's anger awakens a new sense of purpose and she rises to uncover the truth by adapting the identity of an assassin to track down those responsible. The new and lethal Stephanie Patrick is on a mission to fill the void between what she knows and what she is told. Other novels in Burnell's popular series include *Gemini*, *The Third Woman* and *Chameleon*. Lively is coming off the sleeper summer 2016 hit *The Shallows*, the Woody Allen-directed *Café Society* and *The Age of Adaline*. She also co-starred in the Ben Affleck-directed *The Town*. The cinematographer-turned-director Morano most recently helmed (and was DP) *I Think We're Alone Now*, with Peter Dinklage and Elle Fanning. That film is in post for a 2018 premiere.

Morano and Lively are repped by WME, latter also by Management 360.