



Cash-crisis battle to woo the viewers



Guinness: Prize role



Rigg: Greek drama



Mirren: Signed up



Bastedo: Adventure

By James Murray

THE B.B.C. has raided its dwindling piggy bank to produce a spectacular £12 million challenge to the rich commercial TV companies.

And leading the cash-starved Beeb into the autumn ratings battle is Sir Alec Guinness.

The actor who made £1 million from "Star Wars" is taking B.B.C. peanuts for a prized role—spy-catcher George Smiley in "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy."

He will star in a major seven-part series based on John Le Carré's novel, the jewel in the B.B.C.'s line-up.

Other big names like Leonard Rossiter, Diana Rigg and Michael Crawford, are also signed up... and B.B.C. bosses will need them.

For I.T.V. has already plundered its top stars, Bruce Forsyth and Morecambe and Wise, as well as luring away off-screen talent like former B.B.C. 1 Controller Brian Cowgill.

RECORD

But the B.B.C., going for broke, has given its head of drama Shaun Sutton a record £12 million budget. "We could do with twice as much," he said.

Mr Sutton added: "We can still get the big guns because they know they get quality when they work for the B.B.C."

Diane Cilento stars in a 13-part series called "Tycoon" about the widow of a wealthy industrialist digging into her husband's past.

There's another Mediterranean adventure from Michael Jay Bird, author of "Who Pays the Ferryman." The new one, called "The Aphrodite Inheritance," is set in Cyprus and stars Peter McNery and Alexandra Bastedo.

Thrillers include Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca," Desmond Bagley's "Running Blind," filmed in Iceland, and "Malice Aforethought" which stars Hywel Bennett.

Funnyman Michael Crawford turns up in a straight role and Leonard Rossiter is the infamous American lecher, Frank Harris with Susan Penhaligon in the multi-roles of some of his thousands of girl friends.

There is also a strong team of women

BBC'S £12m STAR WAR!

KEPT OUT FOR LIFE

Father banned from proxy baby

By Maureen Knight

THE MAN who hired a vice girl to have his baby was yesterday banned from seeing the child again.

Three Appeal judges decided the 21-year-old girl should be free to bring up her year-old son alone.

The ruling overturns a court order last month which allowed the 29-year-old father and his wife access to the child for two years.

The father had offered the East London vice girl—Miss C—£3,000 to have the baby by artificial insemination when he found his wife was unable to have children.

But the girl changed her mind and decided she wanted to keep the child.

Marry

Lord Justice Ormrod said yesterday that it was almost certain that the mother would eventually marry and have other children. The best thing for the boy would be to become part of that family.

He said the boy must never be told the truth of his origins. He suggested the mother say the father died at sea.

The judge said the father's "most extraordinary plan" showed grave defects in his character. He criticised everyone involved in the affair, particularly the doctor who performed the operation.

The best way to pick up the pieces was to let the mother lead her life without interference from an obsessive father who had shown extraordinary determination to get control of the boy.

Lord Justice Cumming-Bruce said the girl, who was 19 when she entered the "guilty bargain" had bitterly regretted it ever since.

Mr Lionel Swift, Q.C., for the mother, said the father was obsessive to the point of fantasy and had been willing to part with his house and car to get the child.

The father was ordered to pay the costs of the appeal.

