

'Need For Speed' Sequel?

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 8 Apr 2015



Trio Of Chinese Partners In Early Discussions With EA And DreamWorks

Jiaflix — the company hatched by former Movie Academy head Sid Ganis, Kenneth Huang and Marc Ganis to facilitate the production and distribution of films in China — is partnering with China Movie Channel and 1905 Pictures and are in early talks to develop a sequel to *Need For Speed* as an official China-U.S. co-production.

The trio of Chinese companies are in talks with Electronic Arts and DreamWorks to secure the rights to move forward with the project. They previously worked with Paramount with great success on *Transformers: Age Of Extinction*, and envisage *Need For Speed 2* as an English-language pic filmed in China with significant Chinese talent attached.

There is no cast, writer or director yet, and negotiations are still ongoing for the rights, but sources tell Deadline that DreamWorks Studios is open to looking at a proposal from the trio and potentially exploring a deal. Aaron Paul-starrer *Need For Speed*, based on EA's hit videogame franchise, grossed more than \$200 million worldwide when it was released in 2014 and was especially successful in China, where it grossed more than \$66M — by far the biggest overseas territory for the pic.

1905 Pictures is a subsidiary of, and fully funded by, state-owned China Movie Channel and 1905. It has a joint venture with Jiaflix, a hybrid SVOD-transaction VOD platform, that has the ability to distribute through IPTV, WiFi and set-top-boxes, in addition to theatrically. The trio previously collaborated on *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, which grossed more than \$300 million alone in China and becoming the country's all-time top grosser.

"We expect this partnership, which brings together a winning brand like *Need For Speed* with the team that propelled *Transformers 4* to unprecedented success, will create one of the next great franchises for movie fans around the world," said Jiaflix president Marc Ganis.

UTA, which reps EA, would package the sequel if it moves forward.