

'Need for Speed' Sequel in Development as U.S.-China Co-Production

 Clifford Coonan  8 Apr 2015



A sequel to the 2014 action thriller *Need for Speed* is being developed.

A joint venture between China Movie Channel, Jiaflix and 1905.com has teamed with game publisher Electronic Arts to make the film. It will be an official co-production, which means much of the movie will be filmed in China with a significant amount of local talent.

The co-production is the latest in a flurry of deals between Hollywood and China, after Bob Simonds' STX Entertainment pactured with Chinese

film company Huayi Brothers and Lionsgate announced a major tie-in with Hunan TV.

The original 2014 movie, based on Electronic Arts' hit video game franchise, was released by Disney's Touchstone Pictures and grossed more than \$200 million in worldwide theatrical box office, with more than \$65 million of that coming from the China market.

Cao Yin, chairman of China Movie Channel, said he was delighted that much of *Need for Speed 2* would be filmed in China, and include much more Chinese talent and elements.

"This venture is another great endeavor to bridge the cultures between China and the West through films. We look forward to cooperating with excellent films and filmmakers to thrill and entertain movie lovers internationally with more outstanding films with Chinese labels," said Cao.

China Movie Channel, Jiaflix and 1905 Pictures most recently teamed up with Paramount on 2014's *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, which took more than \$300 million in China and was the biggest movie in Chinese history.

The Beijing-based venture was involved in the film's production as well as the design and implementation of the China marketing, anti-piracy and grassroots programs.

Jiaflix streams international feature films in partnership with the China Movie Channel's streaming movie website M1905, both of which operate under China's State Administration of Press, Publications, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT).

The company was founded by Hollywood veteran and former Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences President Sid Ganis, Kenneth Huang and Marc Ganis.

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"We look forward to bringing our market expertise and execution strategies to the project to accelerate demand and drive box-office performance in China," said Marc Ganis.

The creative team for the film will be announced in coming weeks, with production anticipated to begin later this year, the companies said in a statement.

The sequel is being packaged by UTA, which represents Electronic Arts.

The EA videogame franchise has sold over 150 million units and grossed over \$4 billion in retail sales during its 20 years of high-octane chases. This year will see the release of both a new console game and new mobile game in the franchise.

Need for Speed starred Aaron Paul (Breaking Bad) as street racer Tobey Marshall, who sets off to race cross-country as a way of avenging his friend's death at the hands of a rival racer.

The film was directed by Scott Waugh, written by George Gatins and John Gatins and produced by Mark Sourian, John Gatins and EA's Pat O'Brien.