

PLAYBACK

TIFF 2011: Jeffrey Steiner lines up Frank Marshall for action feature



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Jeffrey Steiner (pictured), the main municipal architect behind Pinewood Toronto Studios, has lined up veteran Hollywood action producer Frank Marshall to develop British writer Jeffrey Archer's *Matter of Honour* novel into a feature film.

Marshall, whose credits at The Kennedy/Marshall Company in Los Angeles include *The Bourne Identity* and *The Back to the Future* franchises, is to develop the first page-to-screen adaptation to emerge from Steiner's New Franchise Media shingle in Toronto.

"Our company's business plan is to develop our Archer properties in collaboration with experienced and respected producers. Frank Marshall's talent, integrity and track record of success in the action genre is second to none in Hollywood," Steiner, president and CEO of New Franchise Media, said Monday.

Steiner told *Playback Daily* a shortlist of screenwriters for the project has been drawn up.

But well before that, Steiner and Dianne Schwalm, VP of partnership development at New Franchise Media, first met Marshall in Los Angeles in February 2011, during the Oscars week, to pitch the Archer project.

Their conversation soon fell upon developing *A Matter of Honour* as an actioner, and using its main character, Adam Scott, as a recurring character in a second international espionage-driven feature to be based on the *Honour Among Thieves* novel by Archer.

"On that idea and combination we shook hands," Steiner recalled, before lawyers and paperwork led up to this week's signing of a development deal.

A Matter of Honor is an international spy thriller based on the Adam Scott character, a young ex-military officer who finds himself between rival intelligence agencies in pursuit of an object that threatens the global balance of power forever.

"Frank is a perfect partner to help translate my work from the written page to the big screen, and I congratulate Jeff Steiner on pulling off this great collaboration," Jeffrey Archer said in a statement on the signing of the development deal.

Steiner said he would ideally like to shoot his two action movies in Toronto, and in Pinewood Toronto Studios, the complex he helped bring on stream as the one-time head of the Toronto Economic Development Corp.

At same time, Archer's novels are set in international locations, which will likely require extensive second unit shooting abroad.

Additionally, Steiner sees a host of post-production and special effects opportunities back at home.

"The skill sets of our Toronto, Ontario and Montreal is strong," he said.

New Franchise Media is to unveil details on a TV project to emerge from its Archer novel properties in the coming weeks.

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