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Benioff, Warners knit 'Kashmir' deal

Action drama centers on ex-soldiers hunting wanted man

By **MICHAEL FLEMING**

"Troy" scribe David Benioff has set up his second producing project at Warner Bros., godfathering a deal for "Kashmir."

Dan Weiss-scripted action drama centers on three ex-soldiers who get a hot tip and embark on a hunt for the world's most wanted man -- a terrorist with a \$50 million bounty on his head. Deal is worth mid-six figures. Benioff will produce with Guymon Casady.

Weiss has no previous screen credits but has served as the sounding board for every script and novel Benioff -- one of the town's best-paid scribes -- has written.

The two first met as grad students at Trinity College in Dublin, where they studied Irish literature. Benioff veered from becoming an academic and began writing novels and scripts like "The 25th Hour," while Weiss wrote the novel "Lucky Wander Boy."

"Dan was the first one to read 'Troy.' He's someone close enough who can be critical and not end our friendship," said Benioff. "I've served a similar role, and when he sent me 'Kashmir,' I said, 'This is exceptional. Let's go sell it.'"

"I guess it is an action movie, but what's most interesting is what happens to these guys on the quest that reminds me of 'Treasure of the Sierra Madre.'"

As a writer, Benioff is about to complete his adaptation of the Ernest Hemingway novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" for WB. His next scripted feature is New Regency's "Stay," a Marc Forster-directed drama Fox will release this fall.

Benioff recently made a deal to produce "A Spell for Chameleon" with Wolfgang Petersen and Diana Rathbun. Novel is the first installment of

the 30-title "Xanth" fantasy series by Piers Anthony, and WB is hoping it will turn into a franchise.

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