



May 16, 2003

Cage has “Rights” stuff

By Michael Fleming

Nicolas Cage is ready to cop a deal on “Dead to Rights”, starring in a screen version of the bestselling videogame.

Lorenzo di Bonaventura will produce the film with Cage and his Saturn Pictures partner Norm Golightly, and they will begin pitching the project to studios immediately. Screenwriter Kevin Brodbin, whose credits include “Constantine”, “Mindhunters” and “Glimmer Man”, will make the pitch and likely write the script.

Cage will play Jack Slate, a disgraced cop who is hell-bent on discovering who murdered his father. The film is designed to have the Honk Kong-style action that has made the game so popular. “Dead to Rights” is controlled by videogame maker Namco, which is aboard a package being shipped by CAA.

A sequel game is being produced for Christmas 2004 for the PlayStation 2, Xbox and GameCube formats. “The videogame is so compelling because it has so many rich elements and the trick is to cut them down and to get the core story”, said di Bonaventura. “The central character is emotionally tortured and that always makes for a good movie and a good Nic Cage movie”.

While running production at Warner Bros., di Bonaventura worked with Cage on “City of Angels”, the upcoming Ridley Scott-directed “Matchstick Men” And Tim Burton-directed version of “Superman” that fell short of the start line.

“Each time we met, we found we had similar sensibility so that when I was chasing this and found he was interested, it was a natural fit”, said di Bonaventura. “He does many different kinds of movies, but he understands how to reach this kind of male-dominated audience, and has a gut instinct about what works.

They’ll pitch the project first to Paramount, where di Bonaventura Pictures is based.

Cage will next star in “Ghost Rider”, a Columbia adaptation based on the Marvel Comics character that is being directed by Mark Steven Johnson.