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JACOBS JOINS 'WOLF' PACK AS WRITER "Chocolat" wordsmith to adapt Marvel comic

By Michael Fleming

Dimension Films has set Oscar-nominated screenwriter Robert Nelson Jacobs to try to scare up a feature franchise from the Marvel Comics creation "Werewolf by Night."

Dimension co-head Bob Weinstein is betting that the "Chocolat" and "Shipping News" scribe will provide a strong pedigree to the latest entry in the oversized-dog-bites-man story. Marvel Studios and Crystal Sky will produce.

"Werewolf by Night," a comic series that originated in the '70s, revolves around a guy who tries to accept and live with the curse that transforms him into a wolf like beast during a full moon.

Hearty seconds

Marvel has had great success with repeat business. "Daredevil" is on its way to a sequel and a spin-off for Jennifer Garner's Elektra character. A second installment of "X-Men" is due this summer and a "Spider-Man" sequel is about to start production. The Ang Lee-directed "The Hulk" bows this summer.

Avi Arad, the Marvel Studios CEO who's producing with Crystal Sky's Steven Paul, said Jacobs' pedigree gives Marvel's "Werewolf" credibility at a time when several studios are howling with competing werewolf projects.

"Beautiful love story"

"It is our aim to bring the werewolf genre to mainstream audiences in the same character-driven way we have done with our other superhero films," said Arad. "'Werewolf by Night' is at its core a beautiful love story reminiscent of the great Shakespearean tragedies. It needs the meticulous heartfelt crafting that Robert Nelson Jacobs is known for."

Arad will exec produce. Brad Weston and Nick Phillips will shepherd the film for Dimension, along with Marvel's Kevin Feige and Crystal Sky's Patrick Ewald. Dimension's Andrew Gumpert made Jacobs' deal with Gersh Agency.