

Scorsese+Nesbo in DN

Martin Scorsese is set to direct Jo Nesbø's *The Snowman*, the bestseller in which Harry Hole is on the hunt for a serial killer. Filmfredag can now confirm the rumors that have been buzzing lately.

Just a few years ago, that same Jo Nesbø refused to release his fictional detective hero Harry Hole to the big screen. With one exception: "If Martin Scorsese calls, I'll reconsider."

The masterful American director has now agreed to direct the crime novel in which the original Oslo police detective is facing a mysterious case involving several young mothers disappearing without a trace on the day when the first snow falls.

- Scorsese is my favorite director. When I was a student, a movie poster from *Taxi Driver* was the only artwork I had on my wall. I've never met him, but it feels like I have because I spent so many hours at the cinema watching his movies. I want to give this novel the very best chance to become a good movie, a happy Jo Nesbø says.

The rumors that Scorsese will direct the novel about a Norwegian serial killer who builds snowmen have been buzzing in recent weeks. Working Title and Jo Nesbø have now confirmed for [the Dagens Nyheter newspaper] that the contract is signed and sealed. The movie will be produced by the experienced duo Tim Bevan and Eric Fellner, the founders of the British production company Working Title who are currently producing Tomas Alfredsson's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. Working Title is also the production company behind blockbusters such as *Notting Hill*, *Fargo*, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, *Atonement* and *Elizabeth*. Jo Nesbø and his Swedish agent Niclas Salomonsson will serve as executive producers and have been working closely with Working Title to sign Martin Scorsese as director and Matthew Michael Carnahan as scriptwriter. Carnahan has previously written scripts for *State Of Play* and *The Kingdom* and will also guide James Ellroy's *White Jazz* to the screen.

- To me it is obvious that they should be allowed to do their own version and interpretation. The novel is just a kind of raw material that Scorsese can treat as he wishes. The film is his medium and there's no one that does it better than him. His only obligation to me is to make a good movie, Jo Nesbø explains.

The Snowman will be the first Harry Hole novel to be filmed and as of a few weeks ago the film adaptation of the stand-alone novel *Headhunters* has been showing at the cinemas. The fact that Scorsese and Working Title Films settled on *The Snowman* is partly because that was the novel that became Jo Nesbø's international breakthrough. Several production

companies have previously courted Nesbø to release the film rights, but he turned them down.

- I felt very ambivalent at first since I was writing about Harry Hole. I've always loved film but at that moment I felt reluctant for someone else to define the character for me, Nesbø explains.

Interest in "Scandinavian Crime" has become red-hot around the world over the last few years. In a month the launch of David Fincher's film adaptation of *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*, which was filmed in Stockholm, will premiere, while Kenneth Branagh has been in Ystad to give Wallander the right atmosphere for the BBC series. Scorsese has not yet decided where he wants the movie to be filmed. Nesbø has no requirement for the movie to be filmed in Oslo.

- No, for me Oslo is only a means, not a goal. I'm interested in almost biblical themes that might take place anywhere. Questions about the nature of evil and moral dilemmas are thus slightly larger than Oslo, Nesbø laughs.

- I would be very annoyed if I had another creator hanging over my shoulder saying that Harry should live in Bergen instead of Oslo. It would be a limitation to my artistic freedom, he says.

It is chiefly the Swedish literary agent Niclas Salomonsson who has worked to match his Norwegian client with the perfect production company. That they decided on Working Title was due to the company's collaborative attitude and previous track record. Nesbø met with Working Title for the first time around the turn of 2009/2010 and signed the contract about a year ago.

- This feels fantastic. Ten years ago I worked in a video store and recommended Scorsese movies and many of Working Title's films to customers. Now we will produce a movie with them, says Niclas Salomonsson.

Scorsese+Nesbo in VG

Martin Scorsese to direct *The Snowman*

Acclaimed director Martin Scorsese (69) will direct the film adaptation of *The Snowman*. Harry Hole may become an international film hero. –Reasonable and crazy, Jo Nesbø says.

The author, his agent at Salomonsson Agency and the production company Working Title Films confirms that Martin Scorsese will be directing *The Snowman*. The fate of Harry Hole is placed in very proficient hands.

Martin Scorsese is the director behind films like *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Raging Bull* (1980) and *Goodfellas* (1990). **The American Film Institute** considers these films to be three of the best movies ever made in America.

Among Scorsese's most recent movies are *Shutter Island* and *The Departed*, which was awarded four Oscars - one of them for Best Director. Martin Scorsese is also a producer and his productions include the TV series *Boardwalk Empire*.

- Martin Scorsese has been my favorite director since I was a little kid and *Taxi Driver* was indisputably my favorite movie. I got a hold of a used movie poster of *Taxi Driver* at the Molde movie theater when I was 17 and the poster followed me around various dorm rooms where I hung it above the bed, Jo Nesbø says.

The British production company Working Title Films owns the movie adaptation rights to Jo Nesbø's seventh novel featuring Harry Hole - *The Snowman*, published in 2007. Jo did set some requirements for the novel to be adapted into a movie.

- I was ambivalent to turn it into a movie, so they asked me what was needed to change my mind. I then said that I wanted to have a say on the choice of director. I knew it was unrealistic, but they said yes. I made a list of five possible candidates, crossed one of them off the list, so there were four again. My agent, Niclas Salomonsson, just shook his head when he saw the list. But he runs the premier literary agency in Europe and got working. Martin Scorsese was at the top of my list.

-How did the negotiations take place?

- The agent of Martin Scorsese received the book and liked it so he gave it to Martin Scorsese who also must have liked it. And so the negotiations with Working Title began.

-Do you feel reassured?

-Yes, reassured is the word. No author is guaranteed a good book and no director is guaranteed a good movie. But I cannot think of any other director than Martin Scorsese where the possibility of something turning out good is greater.

-You are co-producer on the movie, what is your role?

-My job is to be a storyteller. I'm well aware of the fact that as a storyteller you can't work without a great deal of freedom. I have finished my story about *The Snowman* and have given it to a great storyteller. It has never been a claim of mine to have any influence on anything else than the choice of director, whether it is the choice of actors, location or plot. The only thing I am concerned about is that a narrator can use their talent to make a good story.

-Can the plot be set anywhere other than in Norway?

-Everything is possible. On the one hand I like the Harry Hole-universe. On the other hand, it would be a relief to see the story take place as far away from the Harry Hole-universe as possible. Either way, I won't interfere.

-Who do you see playing the character of Harry Hole?

-I have never really pictured an actor as Harry Hole. On the other hand I have never really seen Harry myself. He is slightly out of focus for me.

-Is it possible that there will be more film adaptations made?

-When a film company owns the rights to the characters and the universe, they practically own the rights to the whole series, so it's up to Working Title to decide.

-Harry Hole can be one of the great suspense heroes in the cinemas in years?

-I haven't thought that far ahead.

-When and where will the filming begin?

-It is not decided yet, but the work on the screenplay is in progress. Matthew Michael Carnahan will write the screenplay.

-What does it feel like to have the wish of your favorite director handling the film adaptation of Harry Hole fulfilled?

-Well, what can I say? A mixture of it being completely reasonable and absolutely crazy. As a writer, I probably have a megalomaniac belief in my books, you need to have that, it comes with the job. At the same time I asked my agent Niclas to double check that it really was the signature of my Martin Scorsese, the name on the *Taxi Driver* poster, on the contract.