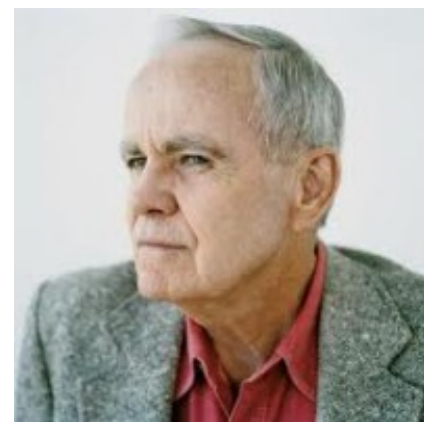


Pulitzer Prize-winning Author Cormac McCarthy Sells His First Spec Script

By MIKE FLEMING Tuesday January 17, 2012 @ 4:44pm PST



EXCLUSIVE: While Cormac McCarthy's novels have been turned into *No Country For Old Men*, *The Road* and *All the Pretty Horses*, he's left the film adaptations to others. McCarthy has surprised everybody by writing his first spec screenplay. Nick Wechsler, Steve and Paula Mae Schwartz, the producing trio behind the adaptation of McCarthy's Pulitzer Prize-winner *The Road*, have just closed a deal to take *The Counselor* off the table with a preemptive acquisition.



The terrain of the script is reminiscent of the rough and tumble world depicted in *No Country For Old Men*. The protagonist in *The Counselor* is a respected lawyer who thinks he can dip a toe in to the drug business without getting sucked down. It is a bad decision and he tries his best to survive it and get out of a desperate situation. While McCarthy's ICM agents Binky Urban and Ron Bernstein were expecting McCarthy to deliver his next novel, he instead surprised them with the spec script before returning to the book. The producers moved quickly and spent their own money to buy it in a sizable deal. They tell me they will go looking for a filmmaker as they talk to financiers.

"The spec falls smack in the middle of what everyone responds to with Cormac's novels," Wechsler said. Steve Schwartz told me: "Since McCarthy himself wrote the script, we get his own muscular prose directly, with its sexual obsessions. It's a masculine world into which, unusually, two women intrude to play leading roles. McCarthy's wit and humor in the dialogue make the nightmare even



scarier. This may be one of McCarthy's most disturbing and powerful works." The script is contemporary, and set in the Southwest.



Wechsler and the Schwartz's are prepping *The Host*, the adaptation of *Twilight Saga* author Stephenie Meyer, which shoots February 13 in Baton Rouge with Saoirse Ronan starring and Andrew Niccol directing. They are producing the film with



Meyer. The Schwartz's also produced *Cogan's Trade* with Brad Pitt and Dede Gardner and were exec producers of *The Tree of Life*, while

Wechsler's in production in the Jonathan Glazer-directed *Under the Skin*, and wrapped the Steven Soderbergh-directed *Magic Mike*.

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