

Donnie Yen Joins SLEEPING DOGS



Original Film and DJ2 Entertainment are going to brave the video game adaptation market. They have signed on to producer Neal Moritz's *Sleeping Dogs*, based on the top-selling video game by Square Enix. Joining him in the lead role is the original *Ip Man*, Donnie Yen (*Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*).

No director has been named, but Moritz's Original Film has experience with action fare films including the *Fast And Furious* franchise as well as the *XXX* franchise. Joining his producing team are Dmitri Johnson and Dan Jevons, with Toby Ascher and Stephan Bugaj executive producing.

The movie is based on the action video game, which is set in Hong Kong and focuses on martial arts fighting, racing, boat chases....and shooting while doing all that. Yen is set to play no-nonsense decorated cop, Wei Shen, on a one-man mission to bring down a dangerous Triad gang on the streets of urban Hong Kong.

Usually turning a video game into a movie can be difficult with complicated story lines. Moreover, they are not given great scripts, which can be hard for the actors. However, the studios do keep making money off them. *Sleeping Dogs* does not have a complex lore to follow, like *Assassin's Creed*. It is the basic tale of good guys versus bad guys and everyone stuck in-between.

The addition of Yen should also seal the deal for the movie.

He has a long background as a fight choreographer and is well known as the star in the *Ip Man* franchise. It is the biographical martial art story based on the life of Yip Man, a grand master of the marital art Wing Chun and teacher of Bruce Lee. The first film, released in 2008, focuses on Ip's life that took place in Foshan during the Sino-Japanese War. The second movie, *Ip Man2: Legend of the Grandmaster* (2010), centers on his life in Hong Kong, which is under British colonial rule as he attempts to promote his discipline of Wing Chun. *Ip Man 3* was released in 2015 and introduces the relationship between Ip and a young Bruce Lee. *Ip Man 3* brought in \$124 million in China last year.

Using the popularity of Yen in the Chinese market, Paramount placed Yen front and center when marketing for *xXx: Return of Xander Cage*, where he plays Xiang opposite Vin Diesel. The moved paid off when the film had the second biggest IMAX February debut ever in China, behind the 2014 *The Monkey King 2* and has pulled \$283 million worldwide - more than \$121 million from China alone.

Sleeping Dogs released in 2012 for PlayStation 3, Windows PC, and Xbox 360. Two years later a “Definitive Edition” re-releases hit PlayStation 4 and Xbox One. The developer, United Front, and Square Enix attempted a spin off called *Triad Wars*, a free-to-play multiplayer PC game which takes place in the *Sleeping Dogs* universe. However, lacking the charm of the original game, the reception was lukewarm and the game was shut down in early 2016. United Front did attempt a pitch of an official sequel to *Sleeping Dogs* however, Square Enix passed. Now that United Front closed down in October 2016, unless a third party comes in, a game sequel may not see the light of day.

Currently there is no mention of a release date for the film.

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