

# JAMES BOND DISTRIBUTION RIGHTS EXPLAINED?

PLUS, WHICH MGM TO HAVE A DISTRIBUTION DEAL WITH A SPECIAL STUDIO?

A CONCEPT NOVEL BY  
CALLUM PRECIOUS

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## CHAPTER 1 – THE AFTERMATH OF SPECTRE:

*Spectre* (2015) is a 24<sup>th</sup> instalment of the James Bond film series based on the world's most famous spy. It was released in the UK on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 and November 6<sup>th</sup> in America.

But now, the James Bond distribution rights are up for grabs.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015, an entertainment magazine *Variety* published the article about Tom Rothman talking about the distribution rights to the James Bond film series.

Back in 2004, Sony acquired 20% of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and the sale was completed by 2005.

Columbia Pictures, a division of Sony, first brought the distribution rights to the James Bond films; it lasted until 2015.

Distribution rights to the first four films are listed below:

1. *Casino Royale* (2006)
2. *Quantum of Solace* (2008)
3. *Skyfall* (2012)
4. *Spectre* (2015)

In April 2011, after MGM having faced the Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2010, the first bidding war of the James Bond distribution rights started. Paramount was the first studio to withdraw the bid and Sony finalises the deal with MGM on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

However in 2015, Sony's distribution rights to co-produce 007 with MGM and EON Productions expired with the release of the 24<sup>th</sup> James Bond film *Spectre*.

Will Sony retain the Bond business or will go to other partner?

## CHAPTER 2 – THE BIDDING WAR BEGINS:

It begins, the distribution rights to James Bond is now up for grabs. It is understand in which major film studio will approach *Bond 25*?

For days, there are no signs of the new distributor at all. Nevertheless, the owner of MGM; Gary Barber; said the Bond films will come out every 3-4 year cycle and there's no rush to chose the new distributor for now during the conference call earlier this year.

The producer, Michael G Wilson, said that the new distributor of James Bond was due to revealed in January/February this year but doesn't according to a plan.

MGM will understand that there could be a new distributor to be chosen, it's a surprise.

Anyhow, I can recall that if I'm about to host James Bond Live (unless BBC One will create it); then I'll reveal the new distributor of the James Bond film franchise.

The magic of the *Bond 25* distributor news gets well underway. Besides though, I was watching James Bond films for four years since 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012.

As a fan, it is cool that one of my favourite distributors of all time could be chosen by MGM. I'm not going to reveal that until we finishing off Cheaper 2.

*Spectre* has reaching more than \$80million in the worldwide box office. But it was beaten by *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, in which is made for more than \$2.05billion in the worldwide box office since I've watched it at home on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

But to reveal the new distributor, let's go to Chapters 3 & 4

## CHAPTER 3 – THE MOST UNLIKELY DISTRIBUTORS:

Let's take a look at 4 very unlikely film studios to hold the distribution rights to the James Bond film series.

### WARNER BROS PICTURES:

Previously, it was reported that WB could hold the new distributor of James Bond; but the disappointed box office drop of *Batman v Superman: Dawn for Justice* meaning become the second studio to withdraw the bid because of this.

### PARAMOUNT PICTURES:

Paramount is currently in partnership with MGM to release the historical fact movie *Ben-Hur*, a remake of the 1925 film. But, as a film studio, it feels unlikely to become the James Bond distributor.

### 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY FOX:

Having being the home video distributor of the MGM releases, in which the deal will expire this year. But in October 2009, rumours above that MGM plans to sell Bond to Fox; it was confirmed to be false the following day.

### UNIVERSAL PICTURES:

Luckily, it wasn't interest in the Bond franchise because of the *Jason Bourne* film series based on the character of the same name. Although, Deadline.com adds Universal that it will getting the distribution rights to James Bond but it has no plans to buy it.

So who will get James Bond film series?

Let's go into the final chapter.

## CHAPTER 4 – WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR:

This is it; I can now reveal that it will be the best-loved film studio of all. Established in 1923 and the magic having wishes come true for more than 90 years.

So perhaps... It has to be once again...

### WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES:

This is more likely that, having since the acquisition of Marvel and Lucasfilm, it could be the brand new James Bond distributor.

Over the years, Disney and MGM join forces to build a theme park for Walt Disney World called ‘Disney-MGM Studios’; in which become ‘Disney’s Hollywood Studios’ in 2008; opened on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May 1989 and what could be meaning that if MGM’s theme park partnership with Disney remained today, then it could be a new partnership for films and television.

It’ll be very special studio that MGM could strike the deal with Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures under the most recent banner to date, Walt Disney Pictures, for the first time since the only MGM film released by Disney under it’s former label Miramax (through Dimension Films) was *The Brothers Grimm*; released on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2005.

It’s suggested that *The Magnificent Seven*, a remake of the 1960 western film, could be the last Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film to be released by Sony Pictures through Columbia Pictures on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016.

MGM have, since, currently partnered with Warner Bros to release recent films including *Me Before You*; based on true events; and *Barbershop: The Next Cut*, the new chapter of the comedy series.

After all, Walt Disney Pictures may become the next studio partner for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to release *Bond 25* and future films.

Not just the theatrical rights to all MGM films will be under the Disney-brand, but also includes home video rights from Fox.

You never know that the Disney logo may appear in the James Bond reissues in the near future before the MGM logo appears!

In addition, MGM could co-produce *Marvel Cinematic Universe* films with Marvel Studios since Paramount Pictures in 2008.

As well as that, it could be also co-producing *Indiana Jones 5* with Lucasfilm; a company founded by George Lucas in 1971.

This may caused the end of Touchstone Pictures, the first mature label and the last surviving adult label of The Walt Disney Studios, with the release of the coming-of-age drama *The Light Between Oceans*; based on the incredible true story set over the years.

For now, Disney has focus on four of the main studio units as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

So, it could replace Sony (and WB) as a distributor. Maybe?

The announcement of the new 007 distributor may affect ITV's broadcasting rights in the UK and it could force to pass it over to BBC One by early-June 2016. Since then, the BBC owned US TV rights to the Bond films via BBC America.

FINAL NOTE: Disney **MAY** interest at acquiring 70% stake of MGM, unlike Sony (in which owned 20% of it) and Comcast (same as before).

Gary Barber and Roger Brinbaum were the old friends of Disney from 1998-2007 through their own company Spyglass Entertainment, in which defunct in 2012.

I hope it may happen very soon, if true.

By the way, If Daniel Craig will have one more contact for the next film *Bond 25*; then he might be playing *Doctor Who*.

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