

Gross, Fichman go with Gunless

by: **Denis Seguin**
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The hyphenate hero of the number one Canadian movie and its producer are teaming up again. Paul Gross will star in *Gunless*, a spoof western for Passchendaele producer Rhombus Media, about an American gunslinger who finds himself at home on the sedate Canadian range.

William Phillips (*Foolproof*, *Treed Murray*) wrote the script and will direct. The copro by Rhombus and Vancouver's **Brightlight Pictures** is set to shoot next spring in the southern Okanagan region of British Columbia. The film will be backed by **Telefilm Canada** and provincial and federal tax credits.

Rhombus' Niv Fichman, who produces with Brightlight's Stephen Hegyes, says the project is in the final stages of financing. He describes the film as "a fish out of water story" and compares it with the 1983 Scottish comic drama *Local Hero*. "He's trying to make sense of a gun-less society.

"It's a quirky comedy. It plays with the Canadian brand. It makes fun of us and the Americans," he adds.

Referring to Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*, Fichman notes that "the Canadian brand is not as well-embraced as it should be. Our job is to change that, in a big way. I have always wanted to shatter the myth that Canadians don't want to see their own stories, and Passchendaele has done that. Now we need to spread the Canadian brand. We have great stories that the world will be interested in."

He adds: "It shouldn't be too long before we can make a film called 'Canada'."

As for Rhombus' collaboration with Brightlight, says Fichman, "Steve and I have been drinking buddies at film festivals, but this is the first time we've had a chance to work with each other. It's nice to be collaborating with someone domestically who is on the same wavelength."