

## **WRITER/DIRECTOR CHRIS WEITZ TO HELM *THE GOLDEN COMPASS***

### Weitz Returns To Director's Chair For Project Based On His Screenplay

LOS ANGELES (May 5, 2006) – Writer/Director Chris Weitz has returned to the director's chair to helm New Line Cinema's *The Golden Compass*, the feature film adaptation of the first installment of author Philip Pullman's popular *His Dark Materials* trilogy, it was announced today by Toby Emmerich, New Line Cinema's President of Production.

Weitz, who penned the film's screenplay, was originally attached to direct the project in 2005 before stepping down and being replaced by Anand Tucker. Tucker has exited the film due to differences in creative direction with New Line.

"Chris absolutely over-delivered on the script. He wrote a very strong adaptation of *The Golden Compass*, and we are eager to see him bring those pages to life on the screen," says Emmerich.

Weitz adds, "I've never lost my love of Philip Pullman's work, and staying on as screenwriter gave me a better understanding of how a great film version can be accomplished. Though I'm disappointed that New Line and Anand didn't end up seeing eye to eye, when I was told the job of directing *The Golden Compass* was open, there was just no way that I could pass it up. I feel very confident in the creativity and expertise of the technical crew that is assembling to take on this challenge."

"I trusted Scholastic and New Line to look after my story, and when Chris Weitz came along I knew at once that he had as clear and strong a grasp of the story as anyone I've ever met," says Pullman. "His personal knowledge of English school and university life gave him an insight into Lyra's background that was invaluable."

Producer Deborah Forte adds, “Chris has demonstrated both passion and a unique understanding of how to take Philip’s magnificent story and translate it into a stunning, epic film for families. I have enjoyed working with him and have tremendous confidence in his ability to make this film succeed on every level.”

*The Golden Compass* is being produced by Scholastic Entertainment and Weitz’s Depth of Field production company. Paul Weitz and Andrew Miano will serve as executive producers on the film.

A filmmaker with an extensive literary background, Chris Weitz holds a bachelor’s and master’s degree in English Literature from Cambridge University. Along with his brother Paul, he has written such films as *Antz* and *About A Boy*, the latter of which he also directed.

Based on the bestselling and award-winning Pullman novels, the *His Dark Materials* trilogy is comprised of *The Golden Compass*, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*. It revolves around a young girl who travels to the far north to save her best friend. Along the way she encounters shape-shifting creatures, witches, and a variety of otherworldly characters in parallel universes. *The Golden Compass* is being produced by Deborah Forte of Scholastic, the U.K. publisher of the *His Dark Materials* books.