

JOHN N. SMITH TO DIRECT GUY VANDERHAEGHE'S THE ENGLISHMAN'S BOY

(June 27, 2006) Guy Vanderhaeghe is adapting his Governor General Award-winning novel, *The Englishman's Boy*, as a two-part, four-hour mini-series to be directed by John N. Smith and produced by Kevin DeWalt of Minds Eye Entertainment for CBC Television. *The Englishman's Boy*, which was shortlisted for the Giller Prize and the International IMPAC Dublin Award, weaves two parallel narratives into one spellbinding story.

In 1920s Hollywood, the young Canadian writer Harry Vincent is engaged by a movie mogul to track down an elusive old-time Western actor. Vincent's relationships with both the actor and the studio boss expose the dark side of myth-making.

In counterpoint to the realm of Hollywood is the haunting story of a young drifter known simply as "the Englishman's boy." In 1873, the boy joins a group of wolf hunters on the trail of horse thieves. It is a journey that climaxes in a brutal encounter with the Assiniboine Indians in the Cypress Hills – an encounter which will change this country forever.

"Guy is a writer of rare power," comments director John N. Smith. "We have been collaborating on bringing this riveting story to the screen for a very long time. Canadian viewers are in for a great treat, I promise you."

"This is very much a cautionary tale," explains Vanderhaeghe. "It is a western and an examination of the mythic political power of westerns. It is also a little-known tale of Canada. I can't think of a more sensitive director than John to transform my words into images."

John N. Smith directed the touchstone mini-series *The Boys of St. Vincent*. Dealing with sexual abuse of boys by priests, the provocative mini-series won numerous international awards including a Peabody Award, three Gemini Awards, two gold medals and two bronze medals at New York Festival of Broadcasting as well as awards in Italy, France and Germany. His other television credits include the miniseries *Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*, *Dieppe*, *Revenge of the Land* and *Random Passage*.

Guy Vanderhaeghe won the Governor General's Award for his first book, *Man Descending* (1982). This collection of short stories went on to win the Faber Prize in Britain. *Homesick* (1989), a novel exploring the power of family bonds to heal and destroy, was co-winner of the City of Toronto Book Award. His most recent novel, *The Last Crossing*, won the 2004 Canada Reads.

Filming will begin in Saskatchewan July 31.

