

PRESS RELEASE

## SKY ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST CO-PRODUCTION WITH HBO/CINEMAX

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**LEFT BANK PICTURES' *STRIKE BACK* RETURNS FOR SECOND SEASON - 10-PART SERIES TO PREMIERE SKY1 HD and HBO –**

Following the success of the first season of Sky1 HD drama *Strike Back*, a second season has been jointly commissioned by Sky and HBO/Cinemax. This will mark the first ever co-production between Sky and HBO/Cinemax and follows on from the exclusive output deal between the two pay TV broadcasters. Left Bank Pictures will once again produce the high-octane drama, which, in addition to making its US debut, will increase its run from six to 10 parts.

The co-production builds on the existing relationship between Sky and HBO. Sky Atlantic HD, which is now the home of HBO in the UK and Ireland, launched to Sky customers on the 1st February 2011.

The *Strike Back* co-production demonstrates Sky's increasing commitment to content origination, particularly in genres such as drama. In addition to the first season of *Strike Back*, Sky 1 HD received commercial and critical success for the likes of *The Take* and *Thorne*. A number of high-profile dramas - including *Mad Dogs*, *Treasure Island* and *The Runaway* – are due to hit the Sky 1HD schedule shortly.

In creating even more content that pays to the passions of its 10 million customers, Sky has continued to increase its commitment to original content - across drama, comedy and the arts. In addition to an increased commissioning budget, Sky also recently announced that it has more than doubled its development pot for original content.

Elaine Pyke, Sky's Head of Drama, said:

*"The scale and ambition of the first series of Strike Back really showed UK audiences the scope of Sky's ambitions for drama. Now, with HBO as a co-producer, and a longer series of ten parts, we look forward to series two being even bigger and better. I really feel that this ambitious co-production highlights the importance of creating compelling original drama for our customers."*

Andy Harries, Executive Producer, Left Bank Pictures comments:

*"Strike Back was conceived as a high octane action adventure with the scale and impact of a US series and to have HBO/Cinemax on board will turn this ambition into reality. Sky's commitment to original drama and HBO/Cinemax's ambitions for the series makes this a very exciting collaboration."*

Produced by BAFTA winning production company Left Bank Pictures, *Strike Back* was commissioned by Elaine Pyke, Executive Producer for Sky1 HD and Kary Antholis, the executive in charge of the production for Cinemax. Michael Casey will be Series Producer with Trevor Hopkins and Sue De Beauvoir producing in South Africa and Hungary respectively. Directors include Dan Percival (the lead director from the first series), Bill Eagles and Alex Holmes. The first six episodes will be filmed on location across South Africa before the production moves to Hungary in the early summer. Filming begins in late February.

*Strike Back* is a contemporary, action-fuelled drama which was conceived from the hugely successful novels by ex-SAS soldier, Chris Ryan. The second series will feature original story lines that run across globe-spanning settings as a former US Special Forces operative teams up with Section 20 to stop an international terrorist group. Richard Armitage returns as John Porter and two new characters will be introduced, played by Philip Winchester and Sullivan Stapleton.