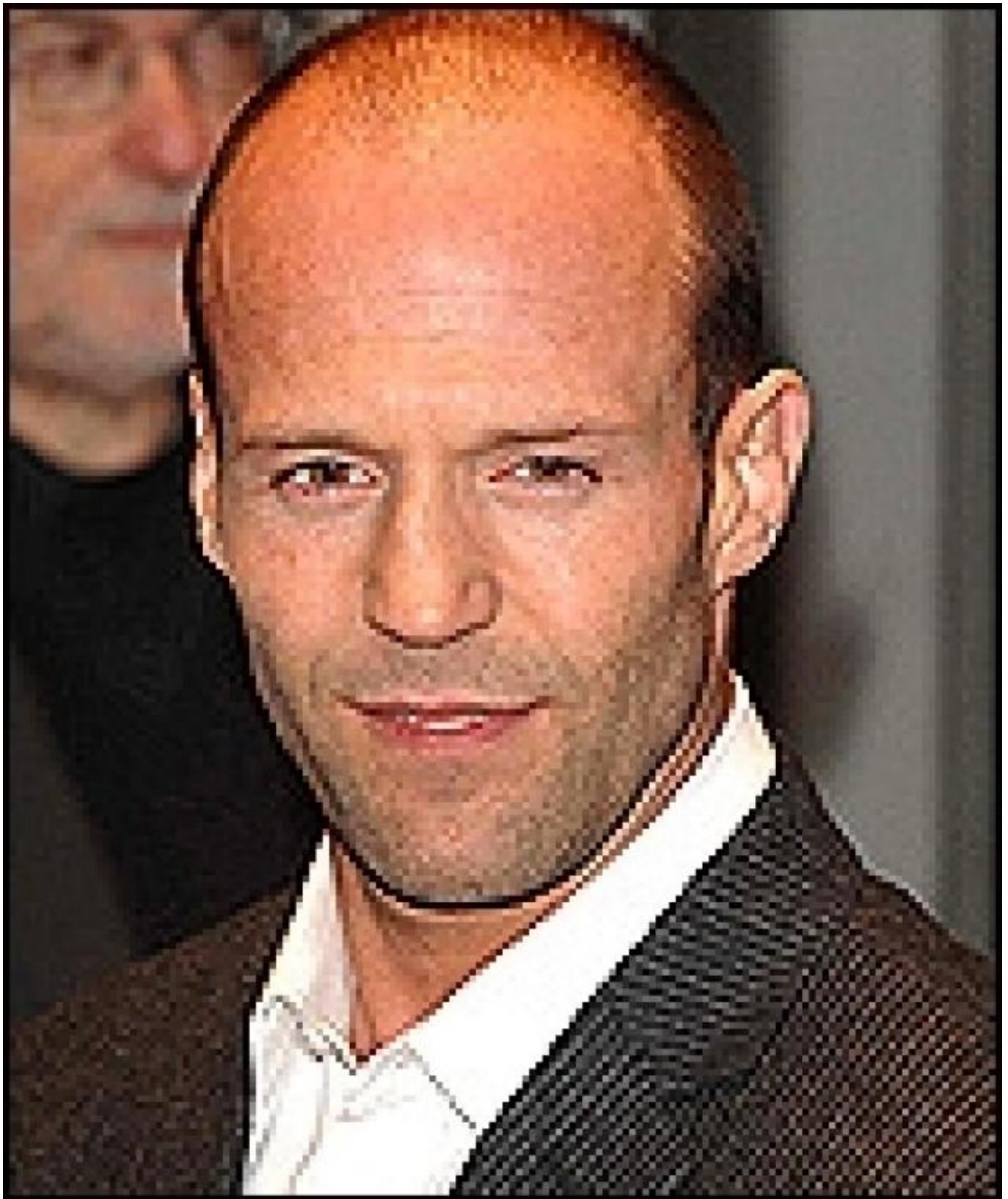




## **Could Jason Statham Be A Professional?**



The last time we heard about a film version of classic '70s action show *The Professionals*, it was sitting amongst the pile of projects Neil Marshall was considering as his next movie after *Centurion*. But now it appears that the gang at C15 - which, if the producers get their wish, will include Jason Statham - are looking for a new director.

Deadline reports that Lionsgate UK is still pushing ahead with the idea, looking to get it into pre-production before the year is out. Producer Richard Whelan is apparently taking meetings in Los Angeles to find a new director to call the shots (and explosions and car chases) and cast-wise, there's the usual wish list of Brit talent.



So who do the team want to play former special ops mercenary Bodie and counter-terrorism 'tec Doyle? Step forward Statham, Tom Hardy and Gerard Butler, with Liam Neeson and Gary Oldman as fantasy casting choices for their Scots boss, George Cowley.

Right now, it's simply the film's backers trying to drum up a little interest, but the idea of turning the series about hard nuts battling terrorism and major criminals is A) one that's still very relevant and B) the fuel for a potentially great pic. "We really felt there was an opportunity for a bigger British action film," says Lionsgate UK chief Zygi Kamasas. "The ambition is to make a powerful commercial movie with the best of British talent." Let's just hope they don't try to "modernise" the awesome theme with some godawful new band...

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