

TV 'Addams' creator sues producers of film version

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rug, and Gomez's cigar-smoking, fencing and hobby of destroying model trains.

A Paramount spokesman said he was not aware that Par had been served with the lawsuit and could not comment.

The television series first ran on ABC in the 1964-65 season with Levy listed as creator and executive producer under a production agreement with Filmways Television Prods. Inc.

Levy said he first contacted Orion when he heard about the film because he was concerned

about the loss of syndication value of the original if the film flopped, or competition from a new series if the film was a hit.

He later contacted Paramount when production switched to that studio. Both companies ignored his concerns, the suit said.

Also named as a defendant was Paramount president Brandon Tartikoff. Tartikoff was not at Paramount when the studio acquired "The Addams Family" last March.

Levy is currently an organizer with the Caucus for Producers, Writers & Directors, a TV industry lobbying and policy organization.

Sundance Film Fest launching with record corporate backing

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ducers Patricia K. Meyer and Carole Isenberg; and film's musical composer and singer, Carly Simon.

Opening-night gala will be hosted by cable company TCI in association with HBO. Other major sponsors include Piper-Heidsieck, Entertainment Weekly, Columbia Pictures, Warner Bros., United Talent Agency, Duart Film & Video, Eastman Kodak, Foto-Kem, Bank of America and the Utah Film Commission.

Beer said Sundance staff had "set a very aggressive goal for our-

selves to raise more corporate donations than before."

Friday's opening-night film in Park City, where majority of fest takes place, is "Mississippi Masala," with other premieres to include "Fool's Fire," "Light Sleeper," "Storyville," "Night on Earth" and "Monster in a Box."

Festival, which centers on a dramatic and documentary competition involving some 33 independent films, is a program of the Utah-based Sundance Institute, which was founded by Robert Redford in 1981.

EX-PAR EXEC HORBERG RETEAMS WITH DORAN, POLLACK AT MIRAGE

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scope Communications. Earlier, he was president of a Chicago-based indie film production and distribution concern called FutureVision. In a prepared statement, Pollack said of Horberg's appointment: "Bill's reputation among writers, directors and actors speaks for itself. We want Mirage to be, more

than anything else, a production company for filmmakers. The high esteem in which Bill is held within the community makes him an ideal choice for us as we continue to build the company."

Mirage is currently completing the Ed Zwick-directed movie "Leaving Normal" for Universal and "Miss Sherri," directed by Joan Micklin Silver, for HBO.

The company's upcoming productions include "Leatherheads," a comedy set in the early days of pro football, to be directed by Steven Soderbergh, and "The Perez Family," based on a novel by Christine Bell.

Other recent Mirage films include "Presumed Innocent," "The Fabulous Baker Boys," "King Ralph" and "Major League."

WHO'S WHERE

Eric Gardner to Gotham.
Lance LeGault back from Atlanta.
Shelley Taylor Morgan in from Chi.
Jason Stuart back from Corpus Christi.
Linda Yellen in from Gotham.

MAGGIE SHANE



Co-Starring
on
L.A. LAW
Tonight
10:00 NBC

Theatrical:
Howard Talent West
(818) 786-5300

Commercial:
Irv Schachter Co.
(310) 278-8070



EXEC SHUFFLE

NEW YORK—Nickelodeon has named Howard Smith VP of affiliate marketing for Nickelodeon/Nick at Nite, where he will be responsible for building and supervising an affiliate marketing team that will develop strategies, direct trade advertising, provide materials and work with the Nickelodeon affiliate roundtable and MSOs. Smith has been with MTV Networks for the past six years, most recently serving as VP of marketing for Nickelodeon Studios.

Jack Morrow has been named executive vice president of licensing and merchandising at Dakin Inc., a new post. The company has set up its first licensing and merchandising office in Woodland Hills. Morrow formerly was senior

VP and general manager for licensing and merchandising at Hanna-Barbera Prods. in L.A.

NEW YORK—Ruth Seovill has been named VP of operations for Nickelodeon Studios in Orlando, Fla., where she will be responsible for television production at the studios, including facilities, crews, scheduling and all technical operations and maintenance. Before she joined Nickelodeon, Seovill was executive producer of graphics for Henniger Video in Washington, D.C.

Randy M. Schienberg has been named director of business affairs at Dick Clark Prods., replacing David Woolson, who recently left the company to head the Oregon Film Commission.

Schienberg was most recently an associate with the law firm of Loeb & Loeb. She also practiced entertainment law with the firm of Copper, Epstein & Hurewitz. She will be responsible for contract negotiations in TV property acquisitions, as well as handling business affairs of the Dick Clark Agency.

Rick Montez has been named director of technical operations at Twentieth Television. Montez had been promoted to director of video operations in 1986 but left Fox the following year to create trailers and sell film-to-tape transfers.

Associate producer Vida Pelletier has been named producer of entertainment for USA Network, a new post. She will be responsible for writing and producing openings for USA's movies, as well as video graphics, commercial editing and voiceovers.

STONE ATTACKS SCRIBES FOR 'JFK' BASHING AT NAT'L PRESS CLUB MEET

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its alleged distortions—for not questioning the validity of the Warren Commission report.

"When confronted with the crime of the century, they stand mute," said Stone.

Sarcastically, he asked, "How much work has the sage of Bethesda—George Will—done in the 20 years he has been a columnist to try to uncover the answers to some of the dark secrets in Dallas '63? Will Tom Wicker and Dan Rather spend their retirement years examining closely the possibility of a second or a third gunman, or will they content themselves with savaging those who do?"

"What 'JFK' has brought out is that those who talk the most of history have no commitment to it, either," said Stone.

Stone said he made the film "to make people think and re-examine their history." He said he "tried to create a stall in the marketplace of ideas" and has offered a "version of what might have happened."

Later, when asked whether his art differs from propaganda, Stone replied, "Good question. I'm not sure I can answer that." He then said he has "always said this film is a hypothesis."

The director said he is "very proud" the film has prompted Congress to reconsider opening government files on the Kennedy assassination that were intended to remain sealed until the year 2029. Rep. Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), chairman of a House committee that investigated the assassination, has hinted he might seek to open the files in light of the interest spawned in the documents by "JFK."

Stone defended Jim Garrison, the New Orleans district attorney who pursued the Kennedy assassination. Garrison, said Stone, "took on the establishment and paid a heavy price."

Stone was asked whether he would ever "take on" the press in a film. "That's a great subject," he said, "and possibly I will."

HBO unveils Shandling starrer, other '92 plans

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R.J. Reynolds Nabisco corporate takeover—written by MASH producer, writer and director Larry Gelbart. James Garner will star as RJR chief exec Ross Johnson, with Glenn Jordan ("Sarah, Plain and Tall") directing.

Michael Caine will star in the international spy thriller "Blue Ice." "Running Mates," starring Diane Keaton, will tell the story of a writer who becomes engaged to a politician making a bid for the presidency.

HBO will add a new dramatic series examining the challenges facing contemporary teens, "Life Lessons." Fact-based "Life Lessons" will take on explosive subjects such as date rape, abortion and AIDS.

Also in the works: An animated half-hour series "Shakespeare: The Animated Tales," an interna-

tional co-production from HBO, the BBC, Welsh Broadcasters S4C, Japan's Fujisankei and Russia's Soyuzmultfilm. It will present the Bard's classic tales, such as "Romeo and Juliet," "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and others. Looking to the year ahead on the business side, Fuchs described multiplexing—providing pay TV subscribers with additional viewing options by delivering several counter-programmed channels—as "the most important story for HBO in 1992" and "the important development in the last 10 years."

Fuchs said National Cable Television Assn. research shows that "HBO is still the most valued channel among cable subscribers," but that consumers feel it's expensive. But multiplexing—"a simple, elegant concept" in Fuchs' words—has the potential to deflate subscriber complaints that

"there's nothing on when they want to watch."

In field testing, consumers responded positively to multiplexing, according to Fuchs. He said complaints of HBO's costs dropped 27% in markets where it has been tested, with perceptions of too many repeats dropping sharply—from 32% to 35%.

HBO is going to try to bring more vitality into the pay TV business this year, by creating "the new concept of premium pay television," which multiplexing will help achieve.

While the cable TV industry treats basic cable as the primary cable TV product, "there should be a way to sell all three (basic, pay TV and pay-per-view) as cable television," Fuchs said.

"The marketing of cable television is not at its sophisticated highest," concluded Fuchs.

ITC, HSN mulling talk 'n' shop strip for fall premiere

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pilot, but one commented, "It seems that it is neither fish nor fowl. In the past, those kind of (hybrid) formats have had trouble getting anyone's acceptance."

The proposed barter program, which could be introduced as a late addition at next week's National Assn. of Television Program Executives conference, would contain four minutes of national time and eight minutes of local inventory. Greenburg, an indie producer who was previously aligned with Gaylord Prods. and Columbia Pictures Television, and who once oversaw NBC's daytime sked as vicep, is reportedly still seeking a host and co-host for the program.

Before he joined HSN, Greenburg produced infomercials for two years. He has developed and produced programming for the network, cable, first-run syndication and homevid markets.

'Trek,' spinoff to journey on parallel routes

BY JIM BENSON

Paramount's new "Star Trek: The Next Generation" spinoff for first-run syndication is reportedly known under the working title of "Deep Space Nine" and will focus on life aboard a space station, in the same time frame as "Star Trek: TNG."

The parallel story lines of the two series will permit "TNG" cast members to make crossover appearances on the new show—probably most of them during sweeps periods—when it is rolled out in January 1993.

To foot the bill for the two series, which are each reported to be in the range of \$1.2 million to \$1.4 million per episode, Par is expected to seek a barter split of seven minutes for the producer-distributor and five minutes for the stations.

If the title for "Deep Space Nine" has a ring to it, that may be because the new Warner Bros. independent program consortium has already announced plans for "Babylon Five"—yet another program with a deep-space plot.

The WB effort is being produced as a special two-hour telepic for consortium stations, but WB noted that the show could become a weekly series. It most likely would be viewed as a replacement in case one of the first two consortium series bombs or, in the event they both succeed, as an anchor for a second night.

Industry sources suggested the new Par space project, expected to be formally unveiled at a press conference Monday at the National Assn. of Television Program Executives confab, could wind up undercutting the series potential of the WB project.

As previously reported (*Daily Variety*, Jan. 10), Par is expected to target the new weekly space series to stations carrying "TNG."

—Jim Benson

HBO unveils series starring Shandling

BY JENNIFER PENDLETON

Comedian Garry Shandling will star in a new HBO comedy series, "The Larry Sanders Show Starring Garry Shandling," which casts the comic as a late night talk-show host who questions the meaning of life.

Unlike spoofs of the talkshow genre that have populated the TV dial in the past, this series will portray the late night program straight, with real celebrities dropping by to plug their latest features, and other staples of that programming genre.

But when the talkshow is over, Shandling's character will step backstage and assume Larry Sand-

lers' true identity, speaking frankly on various subjects, including other real-life talkshow competitors—by name.

Shandling, who co-created "Larry Sanders" with exec producer Dennis Klein, describes twice-divorced Larry Sanders as "likeable and self-aware," a person who "gets caught in the trap of showbiz," but is looking for balance between his personal and professional life.



Shandling

Shandling said the show does not fit into any traditional pro-

gramming genre. "It's something different," he said. "Hopefully, the series will be intriguing."

HBO will start filming the 13 half-hour episodes in March in Los Angeles. It expects to be on the air in May, after the retirement of late night talk show king Johnny Carson. HBO has not yet assigned an airtime for the series.

HBO chairman and chief executive Michael Fuchs cited "The Larry Sanders Show," as one of the pay TV service's programming highlights in an "HBO State of the Union" address at the National Cable Forum of Television Critics' Assn. tour in Marina del Rey yesterday.

Among its plans, HBO has added three new films to its 1992 slate, plus two new series to its roster of family programming.

Ray Stark will produce a dramatization of the bestseller "Barbarians at the Gate"—the story of the

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ITC, HSN looking at syndie talk/shopping strip for fall

BY JIM BENSON

ITC Entertainment and the Florida-based Home Shopping Network may proceed with a proposed syndication strip for this fall called "Day by Day Live," which would be the first interactive daily talk/shopping show.

If the parties come to terms, it will be the first time that a cable network and distributor have teamed on an original first-run strip.

Nickelodeon and sister division Viacom Enterprises joined forces several years ago for the live-action kid strip "Double Dare," but that show had already been on the cable network before additional first-run episodes were produced for syndication.

ITC exex declined to comment on the project, but in videotaped sales presentations to station rep firms this past week the concept was explained by Earl Greenberg, who last April signed on as proxy of

newly formed Home Shopping Entertainment. The HSN subsid is devoted to infomercials, celebrity alliances and joint entertainment ventures.

Some of the reps who saw the presentation said Greenberg described having guests on the talk-show plug projects, with viewers invited to phone into HSN's Tampa/St. Petersburg studios (where the show would originate) if they were interested in what they had to sell.

Reps declined to comment on the show's chances for success until they had a chance to see a

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SUNDANCE FILM FEST LASSOS RECORD CORPORATE BACKING

BY AMY DAWES

The Sundance Film Festival, industry's premiere showcase for American independent cinema, is boasting a record level of corporate sponsorship as it kicks off tonight in Salt Lake City with the world premiere of 20th Century Fox's "This Is My Life."

"Given the general state of the economy, we consider it a testament to the growing success and

stature of the festival that we have been able to raise 55% more than last year," said Gary Beer, exec VP of the Sundance Institute.

Fest's 1992 budget is approximately \$1 million, according to Beer, with half made up of corporate cash donations and in-kind services and half coming from ticket sales and registration fees.

Festival box office is announcing a 5% increase in advance ticket sales over last year, marking the seventh consecutive year of increased sales.

Kickoff screening tonight at Salt Lake's Crossroads Cinemas unveils the directorial debut of Nora Ephron, a two-time Academy Award nominee for her scripts "Silkwood" and "When Harry Met Sally." Special guests expected at the screening and opening-night gala include Ephron; "My Life" star Julie Kavner; pic's producer, Lynda Obst; exec pro

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STONE ATTACKS SCRIBES' 'JFK' BASHING AT NAT'L PRESS CLUB

BY DENNIS WHARTON

WASHINGTON—"JFK" director Oliver Stone yesterday went on the attack at the National Press Club against top journalists who have criticized his film as propaganda, claiming D.C. is "the wrong city to ridicule people who believe in conspiracies."

Many historians and journalists, Stone complained, have chosen to

"close ranks, criticize and vilify" him for not accepting the "truly absurd" account of the Kennedy assassination put forth by the Warren Commission.

Stone singled out CBS anchor Dan Rather, New York Times columnist Tom Wicker and Anthony Lewis, Washington Post reporter George Lardner and syndicated columnist George Will—five journalists who have trashed "JFK" for

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Femme directors fest set in Seattle

The sixth Intl. Festival of Films by Women Directors will be held Jan. 22-Feb. 8 in Seattle.

Moving its dates this year from its former October setting, fest will unspool in the new, Venturi-designed Seattle Art Museum and will open with the Australian film "Proof." Director Jocelyn Moorhouse will be in attendance.

In addition to eight feature film programs, the fest, which has an interactive, discussion-oriented format shaped around maximum public participation, will offer a workshop on directing led by Beban Kidron ("Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit," "Antonia & Jane").

Also on tap is a lecture by L.A. Weekly film critic Ella Taylor, and a panel, "Shaping the Public Image: Film Criticism and Distribution in the '90s."

Another new feature will be a historical program spotlighting the work of Marguerite Duras.

TV 'Addams' creator sues over film

The creator and executive producer of "The Addams Family" television series has sued the producers of the movie "The Addams Family" for allegedly using elements of the show he created without including him in the project.

David Levy, in a complaint filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, is seeking at least \$50 million in general damages plus unspecified punitive damages from Paramount Pictures, Orion Prods., producer Scott Rudin and Barbara Colyton, Charles Addams' widow and heir to his estate.

Levy also wants an injunction against continued use of a series of

creative elements that he says he either created or supervised the creation of for the show. The elements include the names of the characters, the title of the series and film, development of the primary characters, and finger snapping with the theme music.

In addition, Levy says he came up with a number of other aspects for the series that were used in the film including the light bulb in Morticia and Gomez, Lurch's keyboard playing, the growling bear

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Oscar nom ballots going out tomorrow

Academy Awards nomination ballots will be mailed tomorrow to voting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences throughout the world, along with a reminder list of eligible films.

More than 4,950 members are eligible to vote in the 64th annual Oscar competition. Each branch votes to nominate 1991 achievements within its own category or categories and for best picture, with all voting members of the Acad subsequently choosing the winners in all categories.

Nomination polls close at 5 p.m., Feb. 5. The Oscars will be awarded March 30 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Los Angeles Music Center.

Indies galled as Gallic giants swap screens

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

PARIS—In a move that some here see as a further threat to independent exhibitors, Gallic film majors Pathe Cinema and Gaumont have reached agreement to exchange more than 60 screens in seven cities.

The move means that with the exception of Paris, where Pathe holds on to a dozen screens, the pair will no longer be in competition in any French city.

Under the agreement, Gaumont hands Pathe 35 screens and withdraws from Caen, Grenoble, Nice, Toulon and Aix-en-Provence. In return, Pathe gives up 31 screens.

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