

News

'Q&A' tops Worldvision package

By Steve Brennan

A new syndicated movie package from Worldvision Enterprises that includes such titles as "Q&A" and "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" could go to the same independent broadcast consortium that paid an estimated \$12 million for Worldvision's first package in 1990.

The consortium, led by the Tribune Broadcasting and Turner Broadcasting System, has been aggressively spending to reverse the movement of A-movie titles to cable in recent years. The indie stations allied in 1990.

Worldvision president and chief executive officer John Ryan confirmed Wednesday that talks are currently taking place with various broadcast entities about the package. It is understood these include the consortium, the indie buying

group, which includes the Tribune Broadcasting Group, Gaylord, Renaissance Communications and the TBS superstation WTBS.

The "Worldvision II" package is not set for unveiling until next week at the annual National Association of Television Program Executives program conference in New Orleans. Ryan said that the final plan for the package would depend entirely on the result of the sales launch at the market.

The indie consortium outbid cable last year for a major 50-title movie package from Buena Vista Television that included "Pretty Woman," "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" and "Dick Tracy."

But Ryan said, "We have just begun our marketing efforts... I am not going to say that we won't change our marketing plan."

If the movies go to the independent station sector, they will probably be sold on the same basis as the first Worldvision package that involved a barter sale on an ad-hoc network basis. "We are exploring a similar arrangement again," said Ryan.

Other titles in the lineup include the Dennis Hopper, Michael J. Pollard starrer "Riders of the Storm"; the Jeff Goldblum vehicle "The Tall Guy"; and "Strike It Rich" with Molly Ringwald. Also in the package is the Michael Caine starrer "A Shock to the System." □

Par, Orion sued by creator of TV's 'Addams'

By Karen Cusolito

The creator of "The Addams Family" TV series filed a \$50 million-plus lawsuit Wednesday against Paramount Pictures Corp. and Orion Prods., claiming they used his ideas from the TV show in the hit film without his permission.

The suit was filed in Los Angeles Superior Court on behalf of David Levy, who created the concept for the series in 1963 with the permission of cartoonist-creator Charles Addams. In addition to the studios, it names as defendants Paramount chairman Brandon Tartikoff, producer Scott Rudin and

See "ADDAMS" on page 60

Lifetime slates celeb couples

By Paula Parisi

Steven Spielberg and wife Kate Capshaw are attached to upcoming projects on basic cable Lifetime, which has also nabbed Roseanne and Tom Arnold as show hosts in this season of the hot celebrity couple.

Linda Ellerbee and George Hamilton are among individuals set for upcoming Lifetime projects.

See "LIFETIME" on page 61

'Quantum' leaps to USA Network

The USA Network has acquired from MCA Television Entertainment the rights to the NBC series "Quantum Leap."

The network will add the show to the schedule this fall, though no time slot has been selected, said

See "QUANTUM" on page 61

Sundance fest back with backing of stars, business*Ephron's 'Life' opens Utah film event tonight*

By Duane Byrge

The 1992 Sundance Film Festival kicks off tonight in Salt Lake City with the world premiere of 20th Century Fox's "This Is My Life."

The film marks the directorial debut of writer Nora Ephron, who will be in attendance at the gala premiere, along with its star, Julie Kavner, and Carly Simon, who composed the film's music. The film's producer, Lynda Obst, as well as its executive producers, Patricia Meyer and Carole Isenberg, will also attend.

Sundance Institute founder and president Robert Redford will also be at the gala premiere screening, which will include a number of star

attendees, including Drew Barrymore, Jennifer Beals, Willem Dafoe, Faye Dunaway, Jeff Goldblum, Jeremy Irons, Mimi Rogers and John Turturro.

The festival, which moves Friday to Park City, Utah, for its duration through Jan. 26, has attained a record level of corporate support, 53% more than last year, according to the Sundance Institute's executive director, Gary Beer.

The increased sponsorship was necessary to meet the cost of the expanded program of this year's festival. The '92 festival budget is approximately \$1 million, of which half is earned through ticket sales and registration fees, said Beer.

See "SUNDANCE" on page 60

Stone bashes coverage of 'JFK'

By David Kelly

WASHINGTON — Filmmaker Oliver Stone stridently defended his conspiracy-laden "JFK" Wednesday while telling members of the National Press Club that the files on the Kennedy assassination should be released immediately in the interest of democracy.

"I hope congressman Louis Stokes' (D-Ohio) consideration of the issue will ripen into final approval," Stone told a capacity crowd at the press club. Stokes headed the House Select Committee on As-

sassinations that investigated the assassination.

But the controversial producer was pessimistic about what the country would find in the files, which have been sealed until 2029. "Even if we could get into the files it could be the equivalent of leaving a Mercedes in the South Bronx for 20 years — nothing of value left."

Stone began his speech by attacking reporters who have criticized his handling of history in the

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Stone

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making of "JFK." He has been roundly trounced in the press for allegedly playing fast and loose with the facts in an effort to prove his own negative views of the U.S. government.

The movie claims that Kennedy's assassination was the result of a giant cabal featuring the "military industrial complex" and U.S. intelligence because they feared Kennedy was de-escalating America's involvement in Vietnam and was adopting a less strident adversarial view of the Soviet Union.

Stone, noting that there is no well thought out conclusion on the assassination, said that most Americans do not accept the findings of the Warren Commission, which came up with the theory that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and murdered Kennedy with one bullet.

"There is this notion that I have set out to distort history and confuse the young," Stone said. "I doubt that the young believe everything they see on the screen."

Stone then went on at length defending his version of the assassination while freely admitting that it was fact mixed with conjecture.

He criticized journalists who have panned the movie as failing to investigate the allegations and clinging to the notion that the Warren Commission's findings are somehow sacred and above reproach.

"They are afraid to question this for fear of being called kooks and cranks," he said.

Citing the secret bombing of Cambodia, Watergate, Iran-Contra and possibly the October Surprise, Stone admonished that Washington is hardly the place to ridicule conspiracy theories.

He also identified the real "X" — a mysterious character in "JFK" played by Donald Sutherland who was a sort of "Deep Throat" revealing cryptic bits of information to the lead character Jim Garrison, played by Kevin Costner.

"X exists and is here today on the podium," Stone said, motioning to the end of the head table to an older gentleman. "X is Fletcher Prouty who served in World War II, worked in the Pentagon in the 1960s, was liaison to the CIA and provided them with military hardware for covert operations."

Stone said Prouty, a colonel who wrote "The Secret Team," a book critical of the CIA, came to him two years ago and told him stories of what went on in the Pentagon

during the Kennedy years.

"I was shocked and in disbelief over some of the things he said," Stone remarked without giving specifics on the stories. He admitted that in real life Prouty, now retired and living in Virginia, never met with Garrison as they did in the movie.

"Fletcher never met with Jim Garrison, he met with me," Stone said.

Under questioning from the audience, Stone denied that he was fixated on the 1960s.

"I have made three movies about the 80s — 'Wall Street,' 'Salvador' and 'Talk Radio,'" he said. "When I started the Kennedy movie I never even saw the linkages with Vietnam until I started talking to Prouty and Garrison."

Stone also said he believed the U.S. government could have been behind the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy.

Quoting Thomas Jefferson, who said freedom and truth can only exist in the marketplace of ideas, Stone said, "I tried to open a stall in the marketplace of ideas. Hopefully, when this film has been put out on video, at least 50 million more Americans will know something about this part of history." □

Sundance

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The remaining half is made up by corporate sponsors through cash donations and in-kind contributions of services and equipment.

In addition to its increase in corporate sponsorship, the festival has also registered a boxoffice increase of 5% in festival package sales. This marks the seventh consecutive year of increases in boxoffice sales for the festival.

"We have expanded the number of premieres and special screenings in this year's festival," said Geoff Gilmore, the festival's director of programs. "The independent feature competition has slightly more films, too. We're very excited about the diversity, as well as the numbers, of this year's films."

In past years, the festival has become renowned as a showcase for independent filmmakers and has drawn thousands of industry attendees in search of new talent and product. Past winners in the Sundance Film Festival's prestigious Independent Feature Film Competition (dramatic and documentary categories) have included "American Dream," "Poison," "Metropolitan," "sex, lies, and videotape" and "Paris Is Burning," among others. □

Fries

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Wednesday.

In Wednesday's decision at a Los Angeles federal court, Judge Geraldine Mund approved a company motion to secure a contract with producer Lou Rudolph, authorizing the use of internal company funds to pay a \$75,000 fee to the producer under certain circumstances. Rudolph can also pocket normal producer fees for any projects that get picked up.

Fries' attorneys said the action would allow the company to pursue production deals for 13 existing Rudolph TV development projects, including two with network deals pending.

"Because we did not have a binding agreement with Fries and Rudolph, (one project) has been put off," said Philip Gasteier, Fries' attorney from the law firm Robinson, Diamant, Brill and Klausner. "No one is going to go forward with us in these projects if our rights are subject to litigation uncertainty."

Fries' lawyers asserted NBC Entertainment is agreeing to license domestic network rights to "Women on the Ledge" and FBC wants to produce a series with the working title "The Tom Topor Tabloid Project," which are among the 13 projects developed by Rudolph. Rudolph already produced three previous TV projects through Fries: "Small Sacrifices," "Double Standard" and "Mafia

'Addams' suit

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Barbara Colyton, who assisted in the production.

The suit says Levy created the series title, names of characters, character development, new characters and props and supervised design of the set. It also says he commissioned the music, came up with the snapping fingers idea and cast the show.

Among the ideas Levy says the filmmakers used are Morticia's pruning of roses, the romance between Gomez and Morticia, the use of French, Gomez's hobby of destroying model trains and Gomez's ability as a fencer.

The suit claims he approached Orion when it was handling the film and later approached Paramount, but neither responded to his overtures.

Levy is seeking \$50 million in compensatory damages plus unspecified punitive damages and an injunction against the use of ideas he created. The suit claims unjust

enrichment, interference with economic advantage, unfair competition and conspiracy.

Harry Anderson, vp corporate communications at Paramount, said the studio has not yet been served with the suit and therefore had no comment. □

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Hoffs

Continued from page 1—

company Jan. 6.

Hoffs will work under senior vp development Deborah Newmeyer and company topper Kathleen Kennedy. Hoffs was with Rudin nearly two years. He worked on "The Addams Family."

Before Rudin, Hoffs worked as a program executive at FBC.

At Rudin Prods., Speed will work directly under senior vp production Romi Straussman and Scott Rudin.

Speed was at Columbia nearly two years and worked as a junior executive on a number of films, working specifically with Teddy Zee. □