

OCTOBER 19-21, 2007

Claman back in business at Fox Biz

NEW YORK — Fox Business rolled out another big name in its battle against CNBC, putting former CNBC star Liz Claman on the air with a rare live interview with investor Warren Buffett. Claman left CNBC this year after a long career. Her noncompete contract expired Monday, the same day Fox Business opened shop. It wasn't until Thursday when, at a little after 2 p.m. EDT, she appeared on Fox Business for the first time. She normally will be co-anchoring with David Asman from 2-5 p.m.

Croff's days as Biennale boss in the books

ROME — Davide Croff, longtime head of the Venice Biennale Foundation, will not continue in that capacity, Italy's Ministry of Culture said Thursday. A replacement is expected to be named next month. Speculation about Croff's future started when Prime Minister Romano Prodi was elected last year. The position traditionally has been considered a political appointment, and Croff had been appointed by media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, Prodi's main political rival.

Shakira shares 'Love'

Latin singer-songwriter Shakira will perform songs that she contributed to New Line's "Love in the Time of Cholera" at the movie's Nov. 6 premiere at the Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas. The event also will serve as a benefit for the Bare Feet Foundation, a Colombian nonprofit organization she formed to improve the quality of life for children and their families in Columbia.



Shakira

AFTRA warns against 'hijacked negotiations'

AFTRA national president Roberta Reardon has sent an e-mail to members warning them not to "let a few hijack our negotiations." Reardon's plea comes in response to the widening rift between AFTRA and SAG about disparate contracts the unions sign with individual basic-cable shows. Many SAG members and guild leaders contend that AFTRA's contracts offer lower, unfair rates for actors' pay and residuals, thereby undercutting SAG's contracts. According to an AFTRA statement, Reardon's e-mail is a direct response to SAG national executive director Doug Allen's 12-page report that details significant differences between guild and AFTRA contracts for basic-cable programs.

After Dark hits 'Nail' on head

After Dark Films has picked up Mark Young's cannibal tale "Tooth and Nail" for its After Dark Horrorfest 2007 film series. The feature, produced by Jonathan Sachar and Patrick Durham, will be released nationwide Nov. 9-18. Other films in the series include "Borderland," "The Deaths of Ian Stone," "Frontiers," "Nightmare Man" and "Unearthed." Steve Break of Break Thru Media negotiated the deal on behalf of Durham/Sachar Prods.

Thoren aboard for Intermedia reboot

COLOGNE, Germany — In an attempt to salvage a company in financial freefall, IM Internationalmedia, the German parent of producer Intermedia, has appointed Konstantin Thoren its new co-head alongside CFO and acting CEO Sascha Konzack. Thoren, a member of IM's supervisory board and a former producer with Germany's UFA International, will have to clean up the mess that followed the collapse of the company's flagship production — Jan de Bont's "Stopping Power" — and the suspension of former CEO Martin Schurmann.



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"Rendition"

How to market a war film: Leave out the battlefields

By Gail Schiller

NEW YORK — For New Line, one of the biggest challenges in marketing "Rendition," which stars Reese Witherspoon as a young American mother whose Egyptian-born husband mysteriously disappears, has been differentiating the film from other recent movies set against the backdrop of the Middle East.

The studio has been insistent on one point: The movie is not about the Iraq War.

Trailers, TV spots and posters have tried to position the Gavin Hood-directed film opening today as an engaging thriller that features an all-star cast that also includes Jake Gyllenhaal, Meryl Streep and Alan Arkin.

The goal is to convince moviegoers that the film stands apart from a recent string of war-relat-

ed films that have been a disappointment at the boxoffice. In "Rendition," Witherspoon's character discovers that her husband, who disappears on a flight home from South Africa, was secretly flown to a prison overseas, where he is tortured under a controversial U.S. anti-terror policy called rendition.

"One of the biggest challenges beyond the topicality of these different movies is their sheer number," said Chris Carlisle, New

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Ray finds a new 'buddy' in Bertinelli

By Kimberly Nordyke

Valerie Bertinelli has signed on as a "celebrity content buddy" for CBS Television Distribution's daytime talk show "Rachael Ray."



Bertinelli

The actress and Jenny Craig spokeswoman will develop segments reflecting her personality and interests as a mom and working woman, starting with a trip to

See **BERTINELLI** on page 80

No 'April Fool's': Sony's Stage 6 takes on classic

By Leslie Simmons

Newly launched Sony label Stage 6 Films has signed on to distribute the Butcher Brothers' reimagination of the 1986 horror classic "April Fool's Day," currently filming in North Carolina.

The film is the latest addition to the new banner, which operates under the umbrella of Sony Pictures Worldwide Acquisitions Group.

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War films

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Line president of domestic theatrical marketing. "It becomes a muddle for the consumer. But 'Rendition' is very different. Despite its Middle East backdrop, it doesn't take place in Iraq. We played up our cast and the thriller aspects of the story line. This film is an engaging, entertaining and emotional story, and that's where we focused our campaign."

The marketing challenge faced by "Rendition" also will be confronted by other movies about the Iraq War, the war on terror and the politics of the war in Washington.

Even "Redacted," the controversial Iraq war film from Brian De Palma that focuses on a group of U.S. soldiers who rape an Iraqi girl and kill her family, depicts no footage of soldiers, war or weapons in its trailers. Instead, Magnolia Pictures' campaign emphasizes De Palma's track record and the film's festival awards while taking advantage of its theme of images of the war being redacted or withheld. For nearly one entire trailer, only text appears on the screen with voice-overs from the movie.

"We're marketing 'Redacted' not as an Iraq film necessarily but as a film that is going to provide an experience that is going to be rich for moviegoers," said Jeff Reichert, Magnolia senior vp publicity and marketing. "That's why we went with this trailer, which we feel is intriguing and powerful. You're given a certain amount of information and you probably assume the film is about the war, but you don't see a soldier, anyone in fatigues or a weapon. The only image you see at the end is a man in a suit crying with his wife in a bar."

Partly because of the abundance of war-themed films, the Weinstein Co. recently pushed back the opening of "Grace Is Gone," which stars John Cusack as a widower struggling to raise his two daughters alone after his sergeant wife is killed in Iraq. The date moved from Oct. 5 to Dec. 7.

"Fortunately, 'Grace Is Gone' is not a typical Iraq movie," said Gary Faber, executive vp marketing at the Weinstein Co. "It's a movie about family. Its setting against Iraq makes it timely, relevant and, sure, somewhat controversial. But because the main theme, while serious, is ultimately emotional and uplifting, it should easily be able to separate itself from the heavier and medicinal Iraq/war on terror fare

that the marketplace has seen recently."

The first films in the current wave have demonstrated the hurdles such movies face.

"A Mighty Heart," starring Angelina Jolie in the adaptation of Mariane Pearl's best-selling book about the kidnapping and murder of her journalist husband Daniel Pearl in Pakistan, has grossed slightly more than \$9 million at the U.S. boxoffice. Studio executives said the June release amid summer blockbuster fare and the fact that Jolie's superstar status overshadowed the theme of the movie were at least partly to blame for the lackluster results.

"In the Valley of Elah," directed by Paul Haggis and starring Tommy Lee Jones, Charlize Theron and Susan Sarandon, also has been a boxoffice disappointment, earning only \$6.4 million in the U.S. since its Sept. 14 release. "It's really disappointing when you have a really good movie that audiences aren't ready to step up to," said Laura Kim, executive vp marketing at Warner Independent. The film is about a war veteran and his search for his son, a soldier who mysteriously disappeared upon his return from Iraq. It too was marketed not as an Iraq War movie but rather as an investigative thriller.

With a production budget of \$70 million, Universal Pictures' "The Kingdom" also has fallen short, with nearly \$41 million in U.S. ticket sales since its Sept. 28 release. The movie was marketed as an action thriller with Jamie Foxx and Jennifer Garner, who star in the film about an FBI team working with Saudi authorities to track down a terrorist who blew up a Western compound in Riyadh.

"This movie was not made to be a political film," Universal president of marketing and distribution Adam Fogelson said. "It was made first and foremost to be a piece of entertainment that was going to take the modern realities of our time and integrate them into that piece of entertainment."

Studio marketers are blaming the weak boxoffice results for such films on the fact that American audiences want to be entertained and escape the war they see daily on the news.

"Any time you deal with the current war situation anywhere in the Middle East, you risk U.S. audiences just glazing over," Picturehouse president Bob Berney said. "They look at movies as an escape and they want to be entertained."

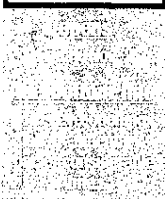
'Sharkwater'

Looking to reclaim some of the integrity snatched away by Mr. Benchley and Mr. Spielberg, "Sharkwater" is both a startlingly photographed portrait of that maligned denizen of the deep and a chronicle of filmmaker Rob Stewart's efforts to curb rampant shark poaching in Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands.

While those twin intentions don't always merge swimmingly, Stewart's documentary is seldom

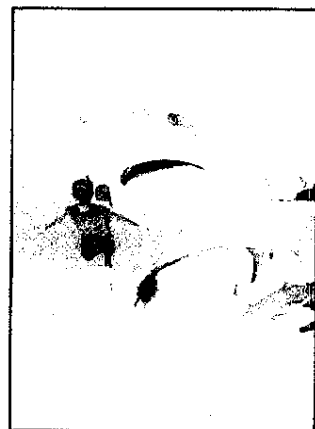


BY
MICHAEL
RECHTSHAFEN



less than compelling in its quest to raise international awareness about a situation that is threatening to put sharks on the endangered list. The Canadian production, which had the largest opening of any indigenous docu when it opened north of the border in March, should attract some "An Inconvenient Truth"-style attention when it opens Nov. 2 in 20 U.S. markets on the heels of a regional Florida release last month.

Stewart, an award-winning photographer who has been swimming with the sharks since he was a child, initially sets out



Rob Stewart debunks myths about sharks as he aims to protect them.

to show the heavily sensationalized creatures through his eyes, intermingling the vibrantly breathtaking HD footage with archival snippets of old black-and-white shark attack instructional films.

Myths are debunked in the process, with narrator Stewart noting that in 2005, human encounters with the mighty predator led to just five fatalities worldwide, a fraction of the deaths caused each year by tigers and charging elephants.

But what starts off as something of a marine version of "Grizzly Man" soon changes course when Stewart hooks up with renegade conservationist and Greenpeace co-founder Paul Watson.

It turns out that China's appetite for shark fins — specifically for soups and medicinal purposes — has created a multi-

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SHARKWATER

Freestyle Releasing

SW Prods./Tribute Entertainment Group

Credits: Director-writer-director of photography: Rob Stewart; Producers: Rob Stewart, Brian Stewart; Executive producer: Sandra Campbell; Music: Jeff Rona; Editors: Rob Stewart, Michael Clarke, Jeremy Stuart, Rick Morden.

MPAA rating PG, running time 89 minutes.

Many studio marketers noted that such successful Vietnam War movies as "The Deer Hunter" and "Apocalypse Now" were not made until years after the war ended. "The Iraq War is so present right now, and it's too early for people to want to run out to the theater on a Friday or Saturday night to see a movie about a really tough subject," one studio executive said.

"Lions for Lambs," directed by Robert Redford and starring Redford, Tom Cruise and Streep, is

another film about to be released that deals with the politics behind the war on terror and the media's coverage of it.

In "Lambs," two characters in the film fight in Afghanistan after they're inspired by their professor (Redford) to make a difference with their lives. The marketing for "Lambs" focuses on the movie's star power, its positive reviews and theme of making a difference but doesn't shy away from the film's political war-related themes.