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Nicole Richie gets ABC series

Nicole Richie is plotting a return to primetime, this time as the star of a scripted comedy. The one-time "Simple Life" celeb is headlining a single-camera half-hour sitcom in development at ABC. The script, which is being produced through Sony Pictures TV, would feature Richie as a professional woman with complicated family relationships and struggling to figure out what role she'll take as her life and her family evolve. Daisy Gardner ("Californication") is set to write the comedy; Warren Bell ("According to Jim") will exec produce and supervise the pilot script. Jamie Tarses is attached as an exec producer. Richie had the initial idea for the show. She'll get a producing credit in addition to starring. Michael Baum of Impression Entertainment is also a producer. Richie's TV credits include NBC's "Chuck." She's also guested on "8 Simple Rules," "American Dreams" and "Eve." She starred with Paris Hilton in "The Simple Life," the semi-scripted reality show for Fox that played like a sitcom. Separately, Richie is working on her second novel, as well as the debut of her clothing collection and shoe line.

GE, Vivendi reach deal on NBC U stake

The table is set for Comcast's takeover of NBC Universal. Word surfaced late Monday that Vivendi and General Electric have come to terms on a price of \$5.8 billion for Vivendi's 20% stake in NBC Universal. Agreement removes the biggest hurdle standing in the way of GE's plan to sell 51% of NBC U to Comcast. But insiders cautioned that the Comcast-GE deal will still require a few more days of heavy-duty talks and lawyering to finalize the deal terms now that the Vivendi portion of the transaction is set. Reps for GE, Vivendi and Comcast declined comment. Sources in the know said that, barring any last-minute surprises, a final agreement between GE and Comcast could be unveiled by week's end or early next week. Comcast is expected to fork over \$4 billion-\$6 billion in cash and contribute its cable networks to NBC U, which will become a joint venture between GE and Comcast but controlled by the Philadelphia-based cable giant. The pending deal also calls for NBC U to take on about \$9 billion in debt from GE as part of the sale. GE will have the right to sell more of its stake to Comcast over a seven-year period. ([Full Story](#))

'Hurt Locker' tops Gotham Awards

"The Hurt Locker" emerged as the big winner at Monday's Gotham Independent Film Awards at New York's Cipriani Wall Street. Though it didn't sweep the Gothams, Summit's actioner picked up prizes for feature -- the night's top prize -- as well as for ensemble cast. Feature prize went to producer-helmer Kathryn Bigelow, producer-scribe Mark Boal, and producers Nicolas Chartier and Greg Shapiro. Cast trophy went to Jeremy Renner, Anthony Mackie, Brian Geraghty, Ralph Fiennes, Guy Pearce, David Morse and Evangeline Lilly. "Locker" missed out on its third nom, the breakthrough actor kudo, which went to Catalina Saavedra for Chilean-set "The Maid." Pic, helmed by Gotham-based Sebastian Silva, bowed in Sundance's World Cinema section in January and was released by Elephant Eye Films Stateside. Renner was also nommed in the category. Robert Kenner's "Food, Inc.," Magnolia Pictures' nonfiction hit, took the documentary prize. Elise Pearlstein produced. The breakthrough director kudo went to Robert Siegel for his

debut "Big Fan." Siegel also penned 2008's "The Wrestler." ([Full List of Winners](#))

Madden circling 'My Fair Lady'

Eliza Doolittle has finally found her Svengali. John Madden is in talks to direct Columbia Pictures' redo of the classic musical "My Fair Lady." Madden, who is completing production on the Helen Mirren starrer "The Debt" for Miramax and Marv Films, will ramp up the search for his leading lady and man in the new year. Though Keira Knightley has been circling the project for some time, there is no formal agreement for her to play Eliza. The pic is being produced by Duncan Kenworthy ("Love Actually," "Notting Hill") and London legit maven Cameron Mackintosh. CBS Films, which owns the film rights to the Lerner and Loewe musical, will co-develop. It will draw more closely on Alan Jay Lerner's book and the original play it is based on -- George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" -- than on 1964's George Cukor-helmed Warner Bros. film starring Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison.

'Office' pair team for film

"The Office" scribes Brent Forrester and Mindy Kaling are looking to boost their self-esteem with a bigscreen project at Mandate Pictures. The duo have set up "The Low Self Esteem of Lizzie Gillespie" with the team behind "Juno" and will pen the original romantic comedy, which will be produced by John Malkovich via his Mr. Mudd shingle. Mandate and Mr. Mudd collaborated on "Juno." Story centers on a woman whose lack of self-worth has limited her choice in men to losers. Just as she is about to hit the bottom of the barrel, her life takes an unexpected turn when she is pursued by the hottest guy ever. Kaling, who is also an "Office" cast member, will play a supporting role. Mr. Mudd's Lianne Halfon and Russell Smith are also onboard to produce "Lizzie Gillespie." Kaling and Forrester will exec produce alongside Mandate's Nathan Kahane. Kahane dubbed the duo "the most comically endowed writers out there." He added, "Mindy's unique world view injects an authentic sense of humor into her writing." Mr. Mudd has a first-look deal with Mandate. The two companies had enormous success with "Juno," which became a box office and critical success. Mandate and Mr. Mudd are together developing an adaptation of the John Green novel "Paper Towns" as well as "Broken City," a noir drama with a political twist written by 24-year-old playwright Brian Tucker.