



# TRADES

Thursday, February 25, 2010

## **Keri Putnam to run Sundance Institute**

Keri Putnam, conversant in the indie film world after stints at HBO and Miramax, is joining the Sundance Institute as its executive director. That post has been open since Ken Brecher stepped down in April after 14 years on the job. Putnam, who most recently served as Miramax's president of production, became available when Disney beginning shutting down its specialty film unit in October. Wally Weisman, chairman of the board of the Sundance Institute, announced Putnam's appointment Wednesday. Based in Los Angeles, Putnam, who will report directly to the board, is expected to begin in mid-April. As exec director, Putnam will oversee all programs at the 29-year-old nonprofit, which includes its Feature Film Program, Documentary Film Program, Film Music Program, Theatre Program and Native and Indigenous Program as well as the Sundance Film Festival. "Keri Putnam has a passion for the arts, a leading profile in the film community and a stellar reputation for her intelligence, creativity, collaboration and leadership at the highest levels of business," Sundance president and founder Robert Redford said.

## **NBC shelves 'Prime Suspect' remake**

NBC's "Prime Suspect" remake is being pushed. The network on Wednesday decided to postpone production on the pilot because of difficulties casting the lead. The project, based on the award-winning BBC series, was written by "Without a Trace" creator Hank Steinberg. It follows a fearless female detective as she investigates complex mysteries in a politically loaded big city. "Prime Suspect" hinges on the main character, played brilliantly by Helen Mirren in the original series. After a long search, NBC execs felt they couldn't find the right actress for the role and opted to shelve the project until June.

## **'Daily Show' correspondent joins ABC pilot**

Jason Jones is the latest "Daily Show" correspondent heading to primetime. The actor-comedian has been tapped as the lead in ABC's comedy pilot "How to Be a Better American." "American" centers on a father (Jones) who embarks on a journey to be a better person and drags his family along kicking and screaming. Jones, who has worked on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart" since 2005, co-penned a comedy project for CBS with his wife and fellow "Daily Show" correspondent Samantha Bee last season, which was eyed as a potential starring vehicle for them. He also did an arc on CBS' "How I Met Your Mother."

## **Media vets Wolf and Dash launch Activate**

Entertainment industry and consulting veteran Michael Wolf has launched a new business focused on strategic growth and technological positioning advice for companies in the media, entertainment, communications, Internet and tech spaces. Wolf's partner in the new consulting venture, called Activate, is blog and social Web pioneer Anil Dash. The duo wants to take a very different approach from that of traditional consultants. As the technology and media sectors continue to converge, the firm wants to help clients develop products and tools that suit the digital age and tackle such strategic and

financial challenges as a changing distribution landscape and increased competition for consumers and advertisers. "This is very different from the legacy consulting business with its focus on such things as cost cuts and restructurings," Wolf told THR. "Many of the old tool sets are not sufficient anymore. We want to focus on growing and building new things."

#### **Another John DeLorean film in the works**

The DeLorean sweepstakes just gained another entrant. Nine/8 Entertainment, Evolution Entertainment and CAA agent-turned-producer Michael Menchel are moving forward with the development of a feature about the life of carmaker John DeLorean. Thomas Fenton, who is repped by APA and Evolution, wrote the screenplay. Andrew Trapani and Brian Gilbert of Nine/8 are producing along with Andrew Wilson and Stephen Gates of Evolution. Menchel will serve as an executive producer on behalf of his Relevant Entertainment shingle. DeLorean's only daughter, Kathryn, is partnering with the producers on the film. "Other producers have asked me to back their projects on behalf of the DeLorean estate," Kathryn DeLorean said. "We felt this was the team to tell the right story the right way. This is the definitive John DeLorean movie. We wanted to ensure my father's story was handled properly; the headlines do not begin to tell the tale."

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