



TRADES

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Conan O'Brien deal finalized

NBC has finished a deal with "The Tonight Show" host Conan O'Brien for his exit, clearing the way for Jay Leno to return to the late-night program he hosted for 17 years, the Associated Press cited a spokeswoman as saying early Thursday. The deal, expected to be announced Thursday morning, is worth a reported \$44 million. According to The Wall Street Journal, O'Brien is getting \$32 million from NBC, with the network also agreeing to pay his staff \$12 million in severance. NBC's "Today Show" also confirmed the deal Thursday morning. O'Brien took over "The Tonight Show" seven months ago after hosting "Late Night" since 1993.

NBC stocks up on scripted episodes

NBC is loading up on primetime content, ordering additional episodes of several series. The network is picking up additional episodes of 10 p.m. dramas "Law & Order" (three more) and "Law & Order: SVU" (two more), which can help fill gaps created by the departing "Jay Leno Show." The network is also picking more of ratings-challenged 9 p.m.-drama "Trauma" (four) and more from Thursday comedies "Community" (three) and "Parks & Recreation" (two). That means NBC will have 25 episodes of "Community," "Parks" and "SVU" this season. The "L&O" flagship will have 22. "Trauma" -- which was actually canceled at 13 episodes before being given a second lease on life -- is now up to 20.

Disney brings on Mandate exec

Tendo Nagenda has been hired as a vp production at Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. Nagenda signed on before Sean Bailey was named head of production, becoming chairman Rich Ross' first hire in the production ranks, though Nagenda is not expected to start until March. Nagenda most recently worked as a vp production at Mandate Pictures, where he was overseeing and acting as a co-producer on the untitled James McAvoy-Seth Rogen cancer dramedy, which goes before cameras next month. Nagenda also was overseeing the Jay Baruchel-Seth Rogen comedy "Jay and Seth vs. the Apocalypse" and the Nacho Vigalondo action comedy "Gangland." Other projects he shepherded include horror project "Burst 3D" and "The Substitute," both of which were being developed with Sam Raimi's Ghost House banner. He also was executive producer on Mandate's "My Dinner with Herve," a biopic of actor Herve Villechaize.

'We Are the World' sequel set to aid Haiti

Quincy Jones and Lionel Richie are planning a massive 25th anniversary re-recording of "We Are the World" to aid Haiti. The duo is summoning lots and lots of talent from Grammy weekend to stay an extra night -- Monday, Feb. 1 -- and come to the Nokia Theater in Los Angeles. Roger Friedman's Showbiz411 column has the full story.

Ang Lee and Schamus noodling with new project

THR's Matthew Belloni and Stephen Galloway sat down with Focus Features CEO James Schamus in advance of his receiving the Hollywood Reporter's Indie Icon of the Year award up at the Sundance Film Festival Friday. They covered a lot of ground, but among the moments that stand out of the interview is mention of a new project Schamus has just begun writing for his frequent collaborator Ang Lee ("Hulk," "Lust, Caution," "Taking Woodstock"). Schamus jauntily describes the unnamed material as "going back to the good old, tragic, suicidally depressing Ang!" Schamus also strenuously defends Focus as a solid indie space in the face of multiple closures in the last few years. He claims that the resources he's being given to create a continuing slate mean that Focus isn't going anywhere.

Central Talent Booking