



TRADES

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Sarah Palin near deal for reality show

Sarah Palin is close to a deal for her travelogue reality show. Sources say Discovery Communications has edged out rival A&E Networks in the bidding for the project, titled "Sarah Palin's Alaska." An agreement could be announced in the next few days. It's still undecided which network in the Discovery suite would air "Alaska," which is being produced by Mark Burnett Productions. Although travelogues are on brand for the Discovery flagship, having Palin as a centerpiece also makes the show a fit for mom-friendly TLC. Clearly nature docs are still viable for the company -- Discovery's latest effort in genre, the miniseries "Life," just debuted to 11.8 million viewers on Sunday night. In her numerous TV appearances across a variety of programs, Palin has likewise proven she can draw an audience. Yet her show won't come cheap. The former governor's asking price was \$1.2 million per episode. A network paying anywhere close to that figure would make "Alaska" one of the most expensive nature series ever produced.

Jaime Pressly to star in CBS pilot

"My Name Is Earl's" Jaime Pressly has signed to star in CBS' untitled Bays/Thomas comedy pilot. The multicamera comedy -- penned by "Hoe I Met Your Mother"'s Carter Bays, Craig Thomas, Kourtney Kang and Joe Kelly -- revolves around an unmarried couple, Tommy (Kyle Bornheimer) and Gina, and their friends in Pittsburgh. The CAA-repped Pressly will play Tommy's best friend, a veterinarian who works with him at the local zoo. This marks the TV return for Pressly, who won an Emmy for her role on "Earl."

IFC unveils programming slate, new brand ID

IFC on Tuesday unveiled new tagline "Always On. Slightly Off" along with a programming slate featuring such stars as David Cross, Will Arnett and the Kids in the Hall, as well as satire newspaper The Onion. Launching this month, the new brand identity evolves IFC's focus from indie films to more original programming, especially in the area of edgy comedy. It also differentiates it further from sibling network Sundance Channel, which is also part of Cablevision's Rainbow Media network unit. The company said the new tagline and focus reflects "the attitude of its influential 70% male audience." Centerpieces of IFC's new slate are "The Increasingly Poor Decisions of Todd Margaret," starring David Cross and Will Arnett in their first project together since "Arrested Development," set to launch in the fall; and "Onion News Network," the first TV series based on the weekly fake newspaper and web series, slated to kick off in the first quarter of 2011. IFC also has acquired "Kids in the Hall: Death Comes to Town," a Kids in the Hall reunion series debuting in August, as well as "Dead Set," a satirical zombie horror series taking place on the set of the U.K.'s "Big Brother" house, premiering in October.

Doris Roberts set for Hallmark Channel movie

Doris Roberts is returning to Hallmark Channel to star in a sequel to the network's popular movie "Debbie Macomber's Mrs. Miracle." The follow-up, "Call Me Mrs. Miracle," also is based on a book by

Macomber, which she wrote specifically for Hallmark Channel after the success of the first film last year. Hallmark plans to announce the casting during its upfront presentation to advertisers Tuesday in New York. In the new movie, it's Christmas in New York City, and Mrs. Merkle (Roberts) is a saleswoman in a family-owned department store and works her magic on those around her.

HBO, Polone team for 'American Family' movie

Before the Kardashians, the Gosselins and the Osbournes, there were the Louds, America's first reality TV family. HBO and producer Gavin Polone are teaming for a behind-the-scenes look at the Santa Barbara clan and the making of "An American Family," the groundbreaking documentary series that featured them. Titled "Cinema Verite," the film was penned by "The Omen" writer David Seltzer, with writing-directing duo Shari Springer Berman and Bob Pulcini ("American Splendor") on board to direct. "American Family," from Oscar-winning doc filmmakers Alan and Susan Raymond ("I Am a Promise: The Children of Stanton Elementary School"), premiered in 1973 on PBS and stirred a considerable amount of controversy for exploring subjects rarely seen on TV at that time.

Central Talent Booking