



Friday, October 30, 2009

Ellis a 'Follower' for HBO, Lionsgate

HBO and Lionsgate TV have set Bret Easton Ellis to pen a series adaptation of "The Follower," the stalker tale by crime novelist Jason Starr. The drama is described as a dark social satire chronicling the dating lives of a group of twentysomething New Yorkers as seen through the eyes of a stalker. It was published by St. Martin's Press late last year. "The Follower" will be exec produced by "Paranormal Activity" producer Jason Blum, Vertigo Films partners Doug Davison and Roy Lee and Media Talent Group's Geyer Kosinski. Vertigo's Gabriel Mason is co-exec producer, and Steven Schneider is associate producer. Ellis, the author of "Less Than Zero" and "American Psycho," just made a deal to team with Gus Van Sant on a script that tells the story of New York artists and lovers Theresa Duncan and Jeremy Blake, who made a suicide pact and ended their lives within days of each other in 2007. The book was sold by Rabineau Wachter Sanford & Harris.

Jackman opts out of Oscarcast gig

While speculation is running high on who'll host the Oscars, one name that can be crossed off the list is Hugh Jackman. The thesp, who's starring on Broadway with Daniel Craig in the drama "A Steady Rain," quietly turned down the job within the past few weeks, sources said. Jackman drew praise for his first Oscar hosting gig in February under producer Laurence Mark and exec producer Bill Condon. He may take on hosting duties again in the future, but it's understood that he didn't want to do the show two years in a row. Once his Broadway run ends, Jackman will take time off and prepare for "The Real Steel," the Shawn Levy-directed DreamWorks drama that will begin production in the spring. The 82nd annual Academy Awards, to be held March 7, will be produced by Bill Mechanic and Adam Shankman.

Charlize Theron to star in 'Mad' film

Charlize Theron is revving up for "Mad Max: Fury Road," with producer-director George Miller set to start filming next August in Australia. British actor Tom Hardy ("Black Hawk Down") will also star opposite Theron.. Thesps are the first major castings announced in the fourth version of the futuristic "Mad Max" franchise, which has been dormant for 2½ decades. Theron will next be seen in Dimension's post-apocalyptic "The Road" opposite Viggo Mortensen. Logline on the script, also penned by Miller, is being kept under wraps. Doug Mitchell is producing with Miller, and Warner Bros. is set to distribute. Miller had announced last weekend that pre-production work was starting in New South Wales but he didn't give any indication as to whether Mel Gibson might return or who would play the male lead. "It could be Mel, it could be anyone," he told reporters. Miller and the 21-year-old Gibson launched their careers with "Mad Max" in 1979, shot in Victoria and portraying a broken-down future society. The duo teamed on "The Road Warrior" (1981) -- which was a worldwide success -- and "Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome" (1985). Miller, who went on to produce "Babe" and direct "Happy Feet," announced in 2003 that a script had been written with Brendan McCarthy for "Mad Max 4" and that pre-production was in early stages, but security concerns over trying to film in Namibia put the project on the back burner. Miller's also

directing "Happy Feet 2," for which Warners has set a release date of Nov. 18, 2011.

NBC axes 'Trauma'

NBC has lost a patient in "Trauma." Medical series has been cancelled by the Peacock and production will be halted after its 13-episode order has been completed. Despite not giving it a back-season order, network has no intention of pulling the show off its Monday lineup and will continue to air episodes until the run is complete. Universal Media Studios show from Peter Berg's Film 44 shingle was supposedly the most expensive show on the Peacock's fall lineup. The network was put in a tough spot earlier in the year when "Parenthood" had to be pushed back to 2010 when co-star Maura Tierney was ill. The move forced the net to put two medical series on the air: "Trauma" and "Mercy." The latter has already been given a full-season order. Wednesday, NBC ordered six more episodes of "Chuck," which will air on Mondays paired with "Heroes." Exec producers are Berg, Sarah Aubrey, Jeffrey Reiner, Peter Noah and Dario Scardapane.

Hopkins Joins "Thor"

Anthony Hopkins has been cast in "Thor," the Marvel Studios production that begins production in January. Hopkins will play Odin, the king of Asgard and the father of Thor and Loki. Chris Hemsworth is playing Thor, and Tom Hiddleston plays his nemesis, Loki. The pic is directed by Kenneth Branagh. Natalie Portman is also set to play Thor's love interest, Jane Foster. The pic was scripted by Mark Protosevich and Zack Stentz & Ashley Miller. The Mighty Thor is a powerful but arrogant warrior of Asgard, but after his reckless actions reignite an ancient war, his father banishes him to Earth to live among humans. He learns the meaning of heroism when he stands tall as his arch enemy from home sends the darkest forces of Asgard to invade Earth. Kevin Feige is producing. Stentz & Miller are "Fringe" writer/producers. Paramount Pictures will distribute the film May 20, 2011. Hopkins will next be seen starring with Benicio Del Toro in the Joe Johnston-directed "The Wolfman," which Universal releases next February, and the Woody Allen-directed "You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger." He's repped by UTA.