



Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Jessica Alba in talks to join 'Parents'

Jessica Alba is in talks to join the cast of the third installment of the "Meet the Parents" franchise, which is being prepped by director Paul Weitz for Universal Pictures and Tribeca Productions. Alba will play a key role alongside Ben Stiller, Teri Polo, Robert De Niro, Blythe Danner, and Owen Wilson. Jane Rosenthal and Jay Roach are producing. John Hamburg rewrote an original script by Larry Stuckey. Alba will next be seen in the Garry Marshall-directed ensemble romantic comedy, "Valentine's Day." She most recently completed filming roles in "Machete," the drama that Robert Rodriguez is co-directing, and "The Killer Inside Me," the Michael Winterbottom-directed adaptation of the Jim Thompson book. Alba is repped by WME, ThruLine Entertainment and attorney Warren Dern.

Fox, Chernin scare up a dramedy

Fox is looking for a funny spooky dramedy in the style of "Shaun of the Dead." Scribe Diane Ruggiero has been set to pen such a project for Peter Chernin's shingle and 20th Century Fox TV. Untitled project will revolve around a group of dysfunctional siblings who are forced to live together in the family's haunted house after their father dies. Fox has given the project a script order. Ruggiero will exec produce should it be picked up to pilot, along with Chernin and Chernin Entertainment TV chief Katherine Pope. The Ruggiero script marks the second project that Chernin's shingle has set up at Fox. His company is also shepherding "The Fallen," about a group of vigilantes who hunt down criminals in New York (Daily Variety, Sept. 21). Ruggiero is an alum of "Veronica Mars" who exec produced CBS dramedy "The Ex List," an adaptation of the Israeli series "Mysterious Ex," last season.

NBC U sets femme week

NBC Universal will feature Maria Shriver, California's first lady, during a weeklong programming initiative called "The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything." The initiative addresses issues facing women in the workforce and elsewhere and grows out of data compiled by the Center for American Progress for a study conducted with Shriver. Shriver will appear on the Oct. 18 edition of "Meet the Press" to kick off the initiative, followed by appearances on CNBC's "Power Lunch" and "The Suze Orman Show." Telemundo will air a five-part series within "Noticiero Telemundo," and newly revamped website iVillage will solicit discussion from its viewers. A former NBC News anchor herself, Shriver also will lead a Women at NBC U Advisory Board discussion on Nov. 10. Shriver will discuss the findings of the study, as well as her own research.

Avary sentenced to year in jail

Scripter Roger Avary, who won an Oscar for "Pulp Fiction," has been sentenced to a year in jail for causing a fatal traffic crash in Southern California. Avary was sentenced Tuesday in a Ventura court, the Ventura County Star newspaper reported. He also received five years of probation. Avary pleaded guilty in August to gross vehicular manslaughter and drunken driving for the 2008 crash that killed a passenger in Avary's Mercedes in Ventura County. Authorities say Avary's car was traveling at more than 100 mph when it crashed into a telephone pole. Avary's wife was ejected from the vehicle and was treated for non-life-threatening injuries. Avary and Quentin Tarantino shared the 1995 Academy Award for writing "Pulp Fiction." He also co-wrote the screenplay for the movie "Beowulf."

Thurman plans 'Ceremony'

Uma Thurman will star in "Ceremony," a Max Winkler-directed comedy produced and financed by Nala Films. Michael Angarano is set to play a young man who falls for an older woman (Thurman) who is about to get married. Nala Films' Darlene Caamano Loquet and Emilio Diez Barroso will produce along with Polly Cohen Johnsen and Matt Spicer. Jason Reitman and Dan Dubiecki will be executive producers. Winkler wrote the script. He most recently co-wrote, with Jonah Hill and Spicer, the Universal comedy "The Adventurer's Handbook." Production on "Ceremony" begins Oct. 21 on Long Island. Nala most recently wrapped Julianne Moore-Jonathan Rhys Meyers starrer "Shelter." The supernatural thriller was directed by Mans Marlind and Bjorn Stein. Thurman just finished playing the role of Medusa in "Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief."