



MIKE MYERS

Busts a Move With DreamWorks



JOHN WOO

Rocks at Paramount



ICE CUBE

Joins the Revolution

Taking a cue from the music industry, comedian **Mike Myers** has inked an unusual feature film production deal with **DreamWorks Pictures** in which the studio will acquire the rights to existing motion picture hits and classics, write new storylines and—through the use of state-of-the-art digital technology—insert Myers and other actors into the film, thereby creating an entirely new piece of entertainment. Myers and DreamWorks have dubbed the new form “film sampling”—akin to music sampling, in which an artist takes an existing song and reworks it, sometimes with new lyrics and music. The move follows Myers’ previous collaborations with the studio on “Shrek” and the upcoming “Cat in the Hat.”

“Film sampling is an exciting new way to put an original spin on existing films and allow audiences to see old movies in a new light,” Myers says. “Rap artists have been doing this for years with music, and now we are able to take that same concept and apply it to film. Think of me as the Puff Daddy of film or ‘M. Diddy’ or ‘M&M’ or just ‘M,’ or maybe when you sample movies you don’t need a special name.”

Michael Douglas will further his producing ambitions as his shingle **Further Films** has inked a two-year, first-look deal with **Warner Bros.** The deal comes just a few months after Douglas wrapped shooting “The In-Laws,” which Further co-produces for Warners. Further’s slate also includes the romantic comedy “As Told To...” for the studio as well as comedy/drama “It Runs in the Family” for MGM, a remake of the Lion’s 1972 thriller “The Mechanic” and Paramount’s political thriller “The Sentinel.”

“It is a compliment in these tough times, and I thank both [studio president and COO] Alan Horn and Jeff Robinov for their support in giving our company the chance to continue to make the quality-type of pictures I have always tried to produce throughout my career,” Douglas says.

Producer/director John Woo and his partner Terence Chang are rolling their **Little Rock** production banner from MGM to **Paramount**. The two-year, first-look pact includes directing and producing services.

Woo and Paramount have collaborated in the past on blockbusters “Face/Off” and “Mission: Impossible 2.” Woo is also attached to direct “Paycheck,” a sci-fi thriller starring Ben Affleck, and is developing a CGI version of “Mighty Mouse” for the studio. Previously Little Rock was

housed at MGM, where Woo made “Windtalkers,” a box-office disappointment that was the only film released under the deal, although MGM picked up thriller pitch “Endgame” late last year for Woo to develop and produce.

Revolution Studios will chill with Ice Cube. The multihyphenate has inked a deal to star in and produce a minimum of three films for the shingle, which will also house his production company, **Cube Vision**, in which he is partnered with Matt Alvarez. Cube, who told one industry trade paper that he expects to produce five or six movies in a three-year period, already has three projects lined up at Revolution to star in and produce: comedy “Are We There Yet?,” about a playboy bachelor whose new girlfriend’s kids have a history of disliking their mother’s beaus; actioner “Clash,” about a reformed ex-con on a mission of vengeance for the murder of his family; and drama “Willie,” about a high-school custodian who gets the chance to coach the school’s basketball team.

“Ice Cube is a phenomenal talent,” says Revolution founder and topper Joe Roth. “As an actor, writer, producer and musician, he reaches the same level

of remarkable success. We welcome him into the Revolution Studios fold and look forward to an outstanding collaboration.”

Cube has proven a hot commodity, writing, producing and starring in low-budget urban projects that have become crossover hits, including the “Friday” franchise and “Barbershop,” a sequel to which he’s next starring in for MGM.

John Wells Prods. has reupped with **Warner Bros.** for the next five years in a film and television production and development pact worth \$70 million. Under the deal, which includes a \$15 million discretionary fund to be used for both features and television, JWP will continue to have a first-look agreement with Warner Bros. Pictures.

JWP has ramped up its feature production activity over the past few years, most recently producing “White Oleander” for Warner Bros. and “The Good Thief” for Fox Searchlight. Among the dozen films in development at JWP are “Bandits,” a remake of Katja Von Garnier’s 1997 German film; an adaptation of Stephen Carter’s best-seller “Emperor of Ocean Park”; and “Raveling,” to which Bart Freundlich is attached to direct and Julianne Moore to star.

STUDIO NEWS

WINTER BOX OFFICE CHILLY: Winter 2003 was one of discontent at the box office, which fell 11 percent behind the 2002 season with \$1.55 billion, compared with the record \$1.75 billion registered last year, according to industry trade paper The Hollywood Reporter. Meanwhile, admits were down as well, from 305.5 million last year (another record) to 257.3 million—a 16 percent drop.

It is notable that the winter season comprised the first 10 weeks of the year, compared with last year’s 11, though not enough to make up the difference: Late 2002 releases did not exhibit the same momentum going into the New Year as their year-before counterparts—only “Chicago” grossed more than \$100 million in the frame—and there were fewer family-friendly titles—only “Kangaroo Jack.”

DILLER BIDS ADIEU: Barry Diller has ankled his position as chairman and CEO of Vivendi Universal’s Entertainment division. Ostensibly the move will allow him to focus exclusively on his electronic commerce company USA Interactive. However, although he has denied a direct connection, some industry insiders have speculated that Diller can now more effectively pursue a takeover of the conglomerate’s entertainment unit. Meanwhile, respected equity firm the Carlyle Group has joined Marvin Davis’ \$20 billion bid for said assets (see **Studio News**, February 2003), and Viacom chief Sumner Redstone has met privately with VU boss Jean-Rene Fourtou to similarly discuss such an acquisition. The activity comes as VU has posted a loss of \$25.4 billion in 2002—the largest in French corporate history.

ON THE MOVE: John Calley, chairman and CEO of **Sony Pictures Entertainment**, has extended his contract with the studio for another two years...**Viacom** president and COO **Mel Karmazin** has reupped with the conglomerate for another three years...**Sony Pictures Entertainment** has tapped **David Hendler** as CFO; he replaces Bedi Singh...Former MGM marketing and distribution gurus **Gerry Rich** and **Larry Gleason** look likely to reprise these roles at **Miramax**, which recently saw the departure of Mark Gill and the promotion of Rick Sands...**Mark Ordesky**, who oversees **New Line’s** specialty label Fine Line and was the point person on “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy, has been named executive VP and COO.