

Disney development deals

The Walt Disney Studios announced two development deals last week. Matt Williams, creator and former executive producer of ABC's hit series, *Roseanne*, has signed an exclusive, multiyear deal to develop network television series and theatrical motion pictures for the studio. Four writer-producers with *The Golden Girls* have also signed a development deal with Disney, under the banner KTMB Productions.

Williams joins Disney from Carsey-Werner Productions, where he worked on the company's three hits, *The Cosby Show* (producer and executive story editor), *A Different World* (co-creator and pilot co-executive producer), and *Roseanne*. Midway through the season just ended, Williams left *Roseanne* after a highly publicized dispute with the series's star, Roseanne Barr.

Williams described his parting with Carsey-Werner as "amicable."

The deal with KTMB Productions includes former *Golden Girls*

co-executive producers and head writers Kathy Speer, Terry Grossman, Mort Nathan and Barry Fanaro. All four have earned Emmy Awards for their work on the program.

The four writer-producers have been associated with *Golden Girls* producer Witt-Thomas-Harris for the past nine years. They have been with the show since its inception in 1985. The program has wrapped up production for the current season, and none of the four will be associated with it next season. Among the replacements named last week by WTH is Marc Sotkin, who was named co-executive producer, joining Paul Junger Witt and Tony Thomas in that capacity. In addition, Tom Whedon and Philip Lasker were named supervising producers. Sotkin and Whedon join *Girls* from another WTH show, the first-run comedy, *It's a Living*, which has just concluded its original production run. Lasker joins the company from Danny Arnold Productions, where he worked on the short-lived *Joe Bash* series seen on ABC.

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said Steinlauf. ESPN, CNN, Headline News and SportsChannel America all have wrap-up sports news programs through their weekday and weekend schedule, but Steinlauf said: "We don't view current programming as the competition."

The programming "will be designed for the shorter attention span of today," he said. "Viewers will tune in and out several times a day."

Commonwealth Associates has helped raise \$4 million in a public offering and another \$14 million in warrants and other lines of credit to fund the venture. The stock was sold in \$6 units. Mizlou plans to use much of its existing infrastructure (it's been a sports syndicator for over 26 years) to hold down costs on launching the new service. (Steinlauf said Mizlou intends to hire from the cable ranks to bring in cable marketing and affiliation expertise.) Steinlauf said the service will not spend money for sports rights packages. Feature stories, in-depth analysis, highlights and talk shows will typify the programming.

Using freelancers in cities nationwide, the service will also be able to go live to sporting events and provide audio reports, for instance, of a no-hitter in progress, then show highlights of the previous innings once they are concluded, said Steinlauf.

Steinlauf said Mizlou is targeting Jan. 1, the date when syndicated exclusivity will kick in and when channel capacity constraints may be eased in the cable industry. Mizlou has had some "informal discussions" with MSO's, said Steinlauf.

Mizlou plans to charge a "modest, low-cost" license fee, said Steinlauf, but there are long-term hopes that advertising will make up the bulk of Mizlou's revenue. Mizlou plans to make the service attractive by providing "more avals than most of the networks," said Steinlauf. Most networks provide affiliates two to three minutes of

Dangerous rights

World TV and home video rights to six-hour mini-series, *A Dangerous Life*, have gone to ITC Distribution of Studio City, Calif. The \$13 million production, a dramatic recreation of the fall of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, starring Gary Busey as an American TV journalist, aired on HBO in November 1988.