

PROGRAMMING

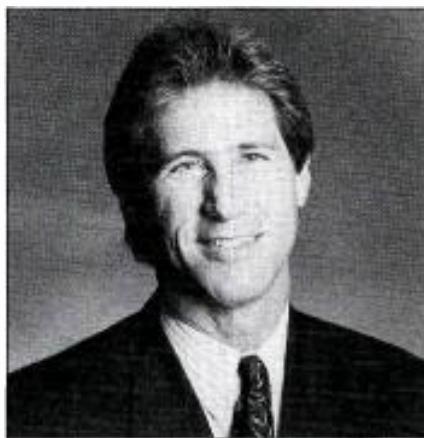
CPT TO ACQUIRE NEW WORLD PROPERTIES

Sony's Columbia will use acquisition to form TriStar Television; New World will now focus on international co-productions and productions for cable

New World Entertainment has signed a letter of intent with Sony Pictures Entertainment's Columbia Pictures Television to sell most of its production properties and development projects. Columbia is using the acquisition to form TriStar Television. Jon Feltheimer, president, New World Television, will oversee TriStar as the new division's president. Joining Feltheimer at TriStar will be a slate of New World's writer-producers including Bob Brush, executive producer of *The Wonder Years*. The move signals the end of New World as a player in the network production business. The company will focus its attentions instead on international co-productions and production for cable.

The announcement of the formation of Columbia's second network production division was announced last Monday in Burbank. Gary Lieberthal, chairman, Columbia Pictures Television, said both divisions (TriStar and Columbia Pictures Television) will operate as separate entities within Columbia, similar in structure to Time Warner's Warner Bros. Television and Lorimar Television. Also similar to the Warner Bros.' structure, product from both the TriStar and Columbia Pictures Television divisions will be distributed through one department. Feltheimer will report directly to Lieberthal as will Scott Siegler, president, Columbia Pictures Television. Joining Lieberthal at the hurriedly called press conference were Feltheimer, Siegler, Barry Thurston, president, Columbia Pictures Television Distribution and Alan Levine, president and chief operating officer, Sony Pictures Entertainment's Filmed Entertainment Group.

Under the agreement, which was signed after a week of negotiations and is expected to be finalized on Oct. 19, Columbia Pictures Television will secure all production and distribution rights to four New World-produced network series, *Get a Life* and *Charlie Hoover*, both on Fox; *The Adventures of Mark and Brian* on NBC, and *Boys of Twilight* on CBS. In addition, Columbia will also acquire *Trial*, a four-hour mini-



TriStar TV President Jon Feltheimer

series starring Beverly D'Angelo and Peter Strauss, and the two-hour made-for-television movie *Guests of the Emperor*, starring Mary Tyler Moore. Both

movies are slated for NBC. Columbia also gains the domestic distribution rights to two off-network series, *Tour of Duty* and *Sledge Hammer*.

The deal also delivers to Columbia more than 40 projects in various stages of development, consisting of series and long-form properties and including three pilot or presentation commitments—one from ABC and two from NBC.

Lieberthal said the agreement also includes a right of "first discussion" whereby New World will talk to Columbia first if they should decide to unload any more properties.

Part of the motivation behind the move, explained Lieberthal, was the positive effect "of having two labels in the marketplace," citing similar moves in the record and movie business. "The TriStar logo has also generated a fair amount of goodwill in the movie business," he said. —SC

NEW WORLD FOR NEW WORLD

With dealing of its network product to Columbia, company will concentrate on international co-productions and cable fare

The move by New World to transfer nearly all its domestic production properties and writer-producers to Columbia (see above) signals the start of a new focus for the company according to Jim McNamara, president, New World Entertainment. The company's attentions will now be on international co-productions and production for cable, areas McNamara says are the only arenas in which small independents can survive in today's marketplace of runaway production costs and burdensome deficits.

"Some time ago we asked ourselves: 'What's wrong with our business that we're not making the kind of money we should be, and in fact are losing money,'" said McNamara. "When we

asked ourselves what was causing us headaches, we decided, of course, on network prime time production, which is the big leagues. It takes major-league pockets to make it through the short-term to get to the nirvana of syndication." The move of unloading their network series responsibilities will save the company "millions of dollars," said McNamara.

New World's lone network success is ABC's *The Wonder Years*, now in its fourth season. The company sold the distribution rights to the 100 episodes to Turner Program Services for \$100 million nearly a year ago.

New World's other network forays recently have not been so successful.