

A SAMPLING OF THE PROGRAMING WARES AT INTV

Paramount going boldly with 'Trek' spinoff

As first reported in BROADCASTING ("Bi-Coastal," Nov. 25, 1991), Paramount Domestic Television delivered preliminary closed-door presentations to key independent station group executives of a spinoff of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and a revived version of *The Untouchables*, both being slated for January 1993 first-run rollouts. Although Paramount officials at the studio's INTV hospitality suite declined to talk on the record (a press conference announcing the hour series will take place next week at the NATPE International program conference in New Orleans), station executives said Paramount will offer each hour project to stations on seven-minute national and five-minute local barter ad splits, matching the split offered with *Star Trek: TNG*.

Those present for the development pitches said Paramount is planning to create a *Star Trek* spinoff set concurrently with the time period of *Star Trek: TNG*, not as a "prequel" as had been rumored. One senior-ranking Paramount executive, who wished to remain nameless, said the matching timeframe would permit current *Star Trek: TNG* regulars to make "crossover" appearances in the spinoff as an effort to lure loyal *Trek* viewers.

Meanwhile, *The Untouchables*, the Paramount source says, will not mark the return of Robert Stack as the mob-busting tough guy, Elliott Ness, from the original series (ABC, 1959-63). It will cast a new Ness.

While skirting the question of whether the two shows will be marketed in a two-hour prime time block similar to Warner Bros.' two-hour January 1993 action-adventure block for the independent station-led Television Consortium (BROADCASTING, Nov. 25, 1991), the Paramount source re-emphasized the studio has yet to complete its marketing plan. The source said each series will be budgeted at roughly \$1.2 million-\$1.4 million per episode, close to the benchmark production cost established by *Star Trek: TNG*.

More weekend cartoons for Disney

Buena Vista Television has decided to carve additional cartoon turf for itself, with a one-hour weekend block beginning in the fall of 1993. It's expected that most, if not all, of the company's Disney Afternoon affiliates (now covering 94% of the country) will take the afternoon block.

BVT also confirmed earlier reports that it would add a new cartoon to the Disney Afternoon weekday block next fall—*Goof Troop*. Another new series, *Bonkers*, is scheduled to join the block in the fall of 1993. *Duck Tales*, the first of the Disney Afternoon shows, is being renewed as a weekday morning series.



BVT's Bob Jacquemin outlines children's program expansion plans at INTV

Making the rounds of exhibits and suites

■ Group W Productions has cleared the new Vicki Lawrence talk show in 50% of the country, including KCAL-TV Los Angeles; WMAQ-TV Chicago and KPIX(TV) San Francisco. The company has also cleared its new game show, *That's Amore*, in roughly 30% of the country and agreed last week to sell the barter avails in Rysher Entertainment's *Captain N*, the off-network cartoon strip for next year.

■ Buena Vista Television has cleared the off-network *Empty Nest* in 40% of the country, including KCAL-TV Los Angeles; WGN-TV Chicago;

WPHL-TV Philadelphia and KTVU-TV San Francisco. And it has done so with some unique deal making that will see the show play in consecutive windows on two different stations in a number of markets.

■ Worldvision picked up the rights to *Night Heat*, the off-network late-night show that aired on CBS. The 96 episodes are available for cash next summer. Multimedia just purchased the off-network rights to *Sweating Bullets*, currently on CBS late night.

■ New shows from All American Communications: *Hollywood Celebrity Mysteries*, a weekly similar to Blair Entertainment's *Famous Hollywood Mysteries*. All American is also launching a new children's strip: *Adventures of T-Rex*. Meanwhile, LBS, which All American has proposed acquiring out of Chapter 11, is selling a new cartoon, *Spiff & Hercules*, and several two-hour "live event" specials: *The Elvis Conspiracy*, *The Marilyn Files* and *The JFK Conspiracy*. In addition, *Baywatch* and *Family Feud* are being renewed.

■ Viacom Enterprises apparently initiated preliminary talks regarding the launch of *Jake and the Fatman* for fall 1993. Although Dennis Gillespie, Viacom's off-network sales president, declined to confirm or deny the speculation, insiders say *Jake* will likely be marketed as a companion to *Matlock*, which is currently cleared in 133 markets (83% of the U.S.). The word is that Viacom executives are placing an emphasis on achieving enough station deals to cover the higher residual costs in syndication, leaving open the possibility that *Jake* could still go the cable route. Per-episode residual costs for syndication are estimated to be \$55,000-\$60,000, while residual obligations are in the \$20,000 per-episode range.

■ Apparently, an unplanned public statement of Faye Wattleton's intention to resign as head of Planned Parenthood to host a new daytime talk show had Tribune Entertainment officials rushing out an announcement of their intention to initiate a slow rollout of the strip this spring or summer. Meanwhile, Tribune's Jan. 20 rollout of *The Dennis Miller Show* has 120 stations on board (88% U.S. coverage), with KPIX-TV San Francisco signing during the convention.

-MF,SM