

King World gets Tribune's 'Geraldo'

Tribune, KWP officially announce joint first-run development pact

By Steve McClellan

King World, Tribune and Geraldo Rivera signed an agreement last week that transfers distribution rights to the nine-year *Geraldo!* talk show from Tribune to KWP.

The show will be relaunched next season as the *Geraldo Rivera Show*, and Rivera already has embraced a new "viewers' bill of rights," a commitment to clean up the show's act in the face of escalating criticism from special interest groups, viewers and station managers.

The deal also calls for Tribune and KWP to jointly develop first-run programming projects. That does not include KWP's new dance and music information show, *Off the Hook*, although Tribune has picked up the show in at least four of its markets—New York, Boston, Philadelphia and San Diego (see story, page 24).

Rivera, who had two and a half seasons remaining on his contract with Tribune, has extended that by one more, which will take him through at least 1998-99. KWP has additional options that could take *Geraldo* several seasons beyond that.

Tribune will continue to handle barter advertising sales for *Geraldo*, and the company will share barter responsibilities with KWP on future jointly developed shows. KWP will

Making the announcement (l-r): Roger King, Rivera, Tribune's FitzSimons and Michael King



sell the show to stations, and Tribune will commit station time periods covering 26% of the country.

Geraldo is cleared in about 84% of the country, mostly in daytime time periods, and one of KWP's key objectives will be to get the show upgraded to early fringe (late afternoon) time slots. "The first year will be very tough," said KWP President Michael King. He cited station commitments to other shows, as well as the need to get the word out about the "new" *Geraldo*.

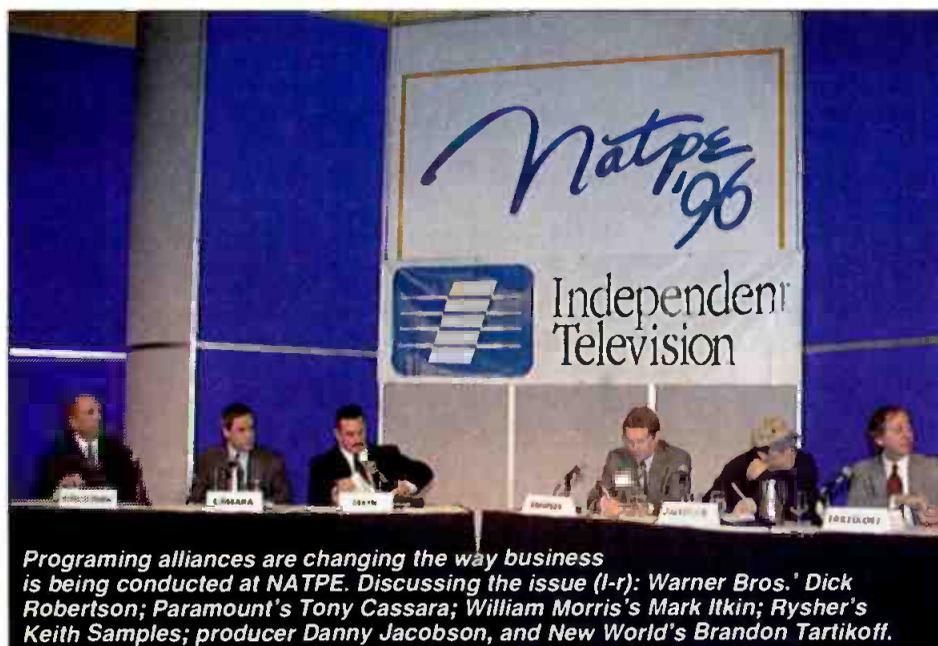
At a press conference last Tuesday, Rivera said his bill of rights should satisfy critics, including William Bennett "if he is an honorable and honest man,

and is not simply exploiting the issue for political gain.

The addition of *Geraldo* to KWP gives the syndicator the two oldest talk shows on the air, now that Phil Donahue has announced that he'll retire at the end of the season.

The third talk show in the KWP corral is *Rolonda*, which also had been criticized for taking the low road in some segments. "She wanted to do that, but we wouldn't let her," said KWP Chairman Roger King.

Meanwhile, KWP steered clear of confirming *Rolonda* as a definite renewal for next season. "We hope so," said Roger King. ■



Programming alliances are changing the way business is being conducted at NATPE. Discussing the issue (l-r): Warner Bros.' Dick Robertson; Paramount's Tony Cassara; William Morris's Mark Itkin; Rysher's Keith Samples; producer Danny Jacobson, and New World's Brandon Tartikoff.

It's the mergers, stupid

Alliances increasingly shape syndication business

By Steve McClellan

The rules of the syndication programming game have changed dramatically in the past year and a half. Content may still be king, but strategic alliances between powerful media companies determine more than