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LA Screenings 2017

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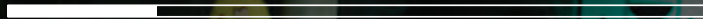
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TBI at the LA Screenings



Contents

- 2** Network pick-ups
This year's new shows, by network, at a glance
- 4** Screenings in focus
Studio distribution chiefs talk exclusively about their slates
- 12** Branded with an indie label
Andy Fry speaks to US indie studios about their drama plans

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+++US NETWORK PICK-UPS 2017-18+++US NETWORK PICK-UPS



ALEX, INC. (Prod: Sony, Davis Ents, Gimlet Media, ABC Studios; **Sales:** Sony)
THE CROSSING (Prod: ABC Studios; **Sales:** Disney)
DECEPTION (Prod: Warner Bros TV; **Sales:** Warner Bros)
FOR THE PEOPLE (Prod: ABC Studios, Shondaland; **Sales:** Disney)
THE GOOD DOCTOR (Prod: Sony, Shore Z, ABC Studios; **Sales:** Sony)
THE GOSPEL OF KEVIN (Prod: ABC Studios, Fazekas & Butters; **Sales:** Disney)
INHUMANS (Prod: Marvel TV, ABC Studios; **Sales:** Disney)



9JKL (Prod: CBS TV Studios, Kapital Ents; **Sales:** CBS)
BY THE BOOK (Prod: Warner Bros TV, Alcide Bava Prods; **Sales:** Warner Bros)
INSTINCT (Prod: CBS TV Studios, Secret Hideout; **Sales:** CBS)
ME, MYSELF & I (Prod: Warner Bros TV, Kapital Ents; **Sales:** Warner Bros)
SEAL TEAM (Prod: CBS TV Studios, Timberman-Beverly Prods; **Sales:** CBS)



9-1-1 (Prod: Fox, Ryan Murphy TV, Brad Falchuk Teley-Vision; **Sales:** Fox)
THE GIFTED (Prod: Fox, Marvel TV; **Sales:** Fox)
GHOSTED (Prod: Fox, 3 Arts Ents, Getting' Rad Prods; **Sales:** Fox)
LA TO VEGAS (Prod: Fox, Gary Sanchez Prods; **Sales:** Fox)
THE RESIDENT (Prod: Fox, 3 Arts, Fuqua Films; **Sales:** Fox)
THE ORVILLE (Prod: 20th Century Fox, Fuzzy Door Prods; **Sales:** Fox)
Cancelled: Rosewood, APB, Bones, Making History, Pitch, Sleepy Hollow, Son of Zorn



A.P. BIO (Prod: Universal TV, Broadway Video; **Sales:** NBCU)
CHAMPIONS (Prod: Universal TV, Kalling Intl, 3 Arts; **Sales:** NBCU)
THE BRAVE (Prod: Universal TV, Keshet Studios; **Sales:** NBCU)
GOOD GIRLS (Prod: Universal TV; **Sales:** NBCU)
LAW & ORDER TRUE CRIME - THE MENENDEZ MURDERS (Prod: Universal TV, Wolf Ents; **Sales:** NBCU)
REVERIE (Prod: Universal TV, Amblin TV; **Sales:** NBCU)
RISE (Prod: Universal TV, True Jack, Seller Suarez; **Sales:** NBCU)
WILL & GRACE (Prod: Universal TV, KoMut Ents; **Sales:** NBCU)
Cancelled: Emerald City, Grimm, Powerless



BLACK LIGHTNING (Prod: Warner Bros. TV, Berlanti Prods, Akil Prods; **Sales:** Warner Bros)
DYNASTY (Prod: CBS TV Studios, Fake Empire; **Sales:** CBS)
LIFE SENTENCE (Prod: Warner Bros. TV, Doozer Prods; **Sales:** Warner Bros)
VALOR (Prod: CBS TV Studios; **Sales:** CBS)
Cancelled: No Tomorrow, Frequency, The Vampire Diaries, Reign

PICK-UPS 2017-18+++US NETWORK PICK-UPS 2017-18+++US

THE MAYOR (Prod: ABC Studios, Brownstone Prods, Bluegrass FanFare; **Sales:** Disney)
ROSEANNE (Prod: Carsey-Werner TV)
SPLITTING UP TOGETHER (Prod: Warner Bros TV, Piece of Pie Prods, A Very Good Prod; **Sales:** Warner Bros)
SOMEWHERE BETWEEN (Prod: Thunderbird Ents, ITV Studios; **Sales:** ITVS)
TEN DAYS IN THE VALLEY (Prod: Skydance TV)
UNTITLED GREY'S ANATOMY SPIN-OFF (Prod: ABC Studios, Shondaland; **Sales:** Disney)
Cancelled: American Crime, The Catch, Secrets & Lies, The Real O' Neals, Dr Ken, Imaginary Mary, Last Man Standing



The Gospel of Kevin



Alex, Inc.

S.W.A.T. (Prod: Sony, CBS TV Studios; **Sales:** Sony)
WISDOM OF THE CROWD (Prod: CBS TV Studios, Universal TV, Keshet Studios; **Sales:** CBS)
YOUNG SHELDON (Prod: CBS TV Studios; **Sales:** Warner Bros)
Cancelled: The Great Indoors, Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders, 2 Broke Girls



9JKL



Me, Myself & I



The Gifted



Ghosted



The Orville



Law & Order True Crime - The Menendez Murders



The Brave



Reverie



Life Sentence

Key (full distribution companies' names)

CBS: CBS Studios International
Disney: Disney Media Distribution
NBCU: NBCUniversal International Distribution
Sony: Sony Pictures Television
Fox: Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution
Warner Bros.: Warner Bros. International Television Distribution



International broadcasters are desperate for American procedurals, and this year the Hollywood studios believe they've got the supply to satisfy demand. Jesse Whittock reports from L.A.

Military procedure



SEAL Team

Major international networks have been demanding more procedurals from the US studios for years. The ratings stability the format offers is not matched on a consistent basis by the edgier, serialised cable fare that has become a staple of schedules in recent times.

While some recent years haven't necessarily been rich pickings in terms of procedurals, it is right to acknowledge the number of new closed episode shows lined up for the 2017/18 broadcast season.

"We have an unparalleled record in edgy shows, but we are aware people need that event programming that gives someone a reason to tune in on a specific evening," says Sony Pictures Television (SPT) president of international distribution Keith Le Goy. "As broadcasters fly in from around the world, we can say, 'we heard you', and that we did not forget these kinds of shows."

"We heard the message loud and clear," confirms Mark Endemano, senior VP and general manager of Disney Media Distribution (DMD) EMEA. "The free TV networks across Europe especially have had a strong demand for this type of programming."

Those heading to Sony's Culver City studio will find *SWAT*, which follows a group of elite police agents and stars Shemar Moore (*Criminal Minds*). "It's a 'supercop' show with a super cast and a super-evolved level of action," says Le Goy.

Disney is offering series such as *The Gospel of Kevin* ("a light comedy-drama procedural centering on a callous and self-serving man who is visited by an angel that wants him save the world", Endemano says), and new Shonda Rhimes series *For the People*, which follows young New York lawyers (billed as "pure play procedural").

Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution (TCFTVD) will be screening *The Resident*, which follows a trio of young doctors who are exposed to the harsh realities of life in the hospital by a brilliant but difficult senior. "It is terrific," says TCFTVD's senior VP and managing director of EMEA, David Smyth.

"It's just a wonderful, fast-paced and compelling medical procedural about the business of medicine and the choices doctors have to make in very stressful conditions."

NBCUniversal International Distribution & Networks president Belinda Menendez says NBC has taken a slightly different approach. "We have quite a focus on procedural shows with a serialised narrative – what we would call 'hybrid' shows," she says.

"We had this several years back with *House* and are extremely excited to have this with *The Brave and Reverie*. What is nice about these shows is that they can play well on both linear and SVOD platforms."

CBS Studios International (CBSSI) president and CEO Armando Nuñez claims that while other studios have focused on "super-serliased fare that's incredible well done, but is difficult for linear players" in recent years, "The truth is CBS never went off that procedural track".

CBSSI will be pushing David Boreanaz-fronted procedural *SEAL Team*, which is one of a number of military- or elite operations-themed series in LA this year. "This is a big budget, movie-in-looks drama," he says.

"So much of television is cyclical," Nuñez adds. "*SEAL Team* just provides great stories that can be told through the eyes of a military operative, and that doesn't necessarily make it American-centric. Don't forget *NCIS* has military roots."

This season will also be remembered as one of vertical integration. Warner Bros. Worldwide Television Distribution president Jeffrey Schlesinger reels off stats showing that of the 34 shows the four top-rated networks (ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC) ordered, only nine went to non-affiliated networks. "NBC gave 100% of commissions to its affiliate studio; Fox, 100%. At ABC, it was 58% and CBS was 50%," he says.

Warner has five new shows on those **> Continued on page 8**

INSIDE THE STUDIO: SONY

Sony Pictures Television has a pair of new broadcast dramas and a comedy on offer for buyers in LA this year. Though the figure is lower than the Culver City studio's best years, the number should be seen in context of the high volume of vertical integration.

SPT president of international distribution Keith Le Goy is upbeat about the chances of ABC comedy *Alex, Inc.*, David Shore medical drama *The Good Doctor* and CBS show *S.W.A.T.*

He recognises that there is a need for the broad style the three shows have at their core. "That's what we're doing with these shows," he says. "They will be hits and they have to be in order for us to get in front of the networks' studios sisters."

Alex, Inc. is Zack Braff's return to broadcast television, with the *Scrubs* star playing a father who launches his own company, attempting to live his dream and simultaneously balance the needs of his family.

"Zack Braff is a massive and hugely beloved international star," says Le Goy. "People have been waiting for his return, and here we go."

The Good Doctor, meanwhile, also marks a return – this time of *House* creator David Shore to medical procedural programming. Instead of Hugh Laurie's curmudgeonly genius, the new season show stars Freddie Highmore (*Bates Motel*) as a medical savant and talented doctor who has autism.

"Like Hugh Laurie's *House*, Freddie Highmore's character has a very specific condition," says LeGoy. "Freddie's portrayal will give the condition a platform. This is a fantastic opportunity tell stories that raise issues around autism and how we look at the condition around the world."

S.W.A.T., a coproduction with CBS Television Studios and Perfect Storm Entertainment, is inspired by a 2003 movie that was itself a reworking of the 1975 series of the same name, with ex-*Criminal Minds* star Shemar Moore starring as part of an elite police team.

"Last year we had *Kevin Can Wait*, and every knew exactly what they were getting from Kevin James and what that show was going to be: physical comedy and big laughs," says Le Goy. "This is the same thing: it is Shemar in exactly the role you want to see him in – action from minute one to minute 48."



The Good Doctor



The Gospel of Kevin

INSIDE THE STUDIO: DISNEY

After a relatively quiet year in the 2016/17 season, Disney Media Distribution (DMD) is restocked and ready to go this time around. "We are very happy to be back in full effect this year," says DMD's senior VP and general manager for EMEA, Mark Endemano.

The pipeline of Marvel Universe series also continues this year with *Marvel's Inhumans*, which is literally getting the biggest launch of any broadcast network series this year.

An innovative launch set up will see the first two, extended episodes of the show debuting on giant IMAX screens in the US before the episodes go out on the Alphabet network.

"*Inhumans* will be like nothing we've ever seen before," says Endemano. "The scale and ambition is supported by the fact we're working with IMAX."

The series follows an alien royal family who are forced to flee to Hawaii after a military coup on their homeworld. Anson Mount plays the lead character, Black Bolt.

Elsewhere, ABC Studios' relationship with Shonda Rhimes has once again come to the fore, with the *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scandal* and *How to Get Away with Murder* creator behind two new series.

The first is legal drama *For the People*, which young, ambitious prosecutors in the New York high court work to win cases. "This is pure play procedural," says Endemano. "You get a serialised arc around the young lawyers, but this is really a case-of-the-week, ripped-from-the-headlines format."

Like *For the People*, the second series is also for ABC. It is another spin-off of medical drama *Grey's Anatomy*, coming after *Private Practice*, which ran between 2007 and 2013, but is set in a Seattle fire station.

The series will launch as a backdoor pilot within the latest season of its progenitor. "Grey's has been such a hit for us that it is great to be able to offer more related content," says Endemano.

INSIDE THE STUDIO: CBS



Wisdom of the Crowd

While it's true CBS has had bigger broadcast scripted slates in the past, distribution chief Armando Nuñez says this represents the US channel's settled schedule, and numerous returning series.

"We don't have as many holes in the schedule as the other networks," says Nuñez, CEO and president of CBS Studios International. "We still always bring in new shows, and have strength and stability to market new shows with. Plus, we have stuff sitting on the sidelines such as *Elementary* that can slot in where there is weakness in the schedule."

One highlight of the new schedule is Mark Feuerstein's *9JKL*, which Nuñez compares to *Everybody Loves Raymond*. "There's lots of physical humour," he adds, noting that the fact it follows *The Big Bang Theory* on Monday night shows CBS is placing a high degree of faith in the series.

Warner Bros has secured CBS's other comedy slots, but on the drama side CBSSI is offering Alan Cummings vehicle *Instinct*, David Boreanaz action series *SEAL Team* and *Wisdom of the Crowd*, which is based on an Israeli format.

Instinct sees Cummings, well known on the network from *The Good Wife*, playing a former CIA operative who returns to duty to track down a serial killer. Like former summer series effort *Zoo*, Nuñez notes, adding: "Alan is very engaging."

SEAL Team, which comes from writer Ben Cavell, is one a number of similar-themed dramas on the market this year, and is believed to be loosely based on the unit team killed Osama bin Laden in May 2011.

"There is plenty of action, but the story has to be believable," says Nuñez. "While the SEALs are fighting and engaging in missions around the world, this is still all about their families and the challenges of trying to lead a normal life back home. That makes it incredible."

Wisdom of the Crowd, meanwhile, stars Jeremy Piven (*Entourage*, *Mr Selfridge*) as an innovative Silicon Valley tech innovator who creates a crowd-sourcing hub in order to find his daughter's killer, and then assembles a team of crime-fighting experts who can use the platform to fight all crimes. "This is bread and butter for CBS: an old-fashioned procedural of solving crimes, with the difference being he uses social media to help him," says Nuñez.

INSIDE THE STUDIO: NBCUNIVERSAL

NBCUniversal International Distribution's entire slate comprises shows for the NBC network this year, and studio sales chief Belinda Menendez says buyers will find everything from 'hybrid' serial-cum-procedurals to anthology series.

For the latter, she points to *Law & Order True Crime – The Menendez Murders*, which follows the gripping true-life case of a pair of brothers who were tried for brutally killing their parents.

"Crime is hot right now, and no story is more compelling than this Dick Wolf drama," says Menendez, NBCUniversal International Distribution & Networks president.

On the procedural-hybrid front comes *The Brave*, which is one of two series Keshet Studios has landed on major broadcast networks in its first year of operation.

The drama, about a Defence Intelligence Agency surveillance team, stars Anne Heche, and, according to Menendez, is "a true procedural with a hybrid component to keep viewers hooked. The cases and villains are relevant to the challenges and threats we face today".

She describes virtual reality-inspired drama *Reverie* as "a fresh take on the procedural with a modern twist around dreams". It comes from *Extant* creator Mickey Fisher, and stars Dennis Haysberg (*The Unit*).

NBCU's noisiest comedy is, of course, *Will and Grace*, which was taken straight-to-series after Universal Television convinced the

network to reboot the groundbreaking LGBT-themed sitcom.

Menendez notes the new season, which comes a decade after the last went off air, will reunite the main cast (Debra Messing, Eric McCormack, Megan Mullaly and Sean Hayes) and anchors the return of NBC's 'Must See TV' Thursday nights.

Also on the big ticket comedy front is *A.P. Bio*, which comes from *Saturday Night Live* chief Lorne Michaels and Seth Meyers. The series is about a philosophy teacher who uses honour students from the high school where he works to get back at his job-stealing nemesis, who made him lose his dream job.

"It's smart, and with universally relatable characters," says Menendez.



Reverie

INSIDE THE STUDIO: FOX

Similar to NBCUniversal, Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution (TCFTVD)'s broadcast slate is entirely comprised of shows for its own network. "What matters is the quality and we have that in spades," says David Smyth, senior VP and managing director of Europe at TCFTVD.

Probably the most notable series is *The Gifted*, which is a Marvel Television series, and has *Burn Notice* creator Matt Nix and Hollywood director Bryan Singer attached. The *X Men*-like show follows two ordinary parents, one of whom is a district attorney who prosecutes mutants, who are forced to go on the run with their children after they begin displaying incredible abilities.

Smyth says the family unit is a "compelling way into the Marvel Universe", adding: "Matt Nix and Bryan Singer are known for being able to create amazing worlds, so to get them together gives you a clear sense of how this world will play out."

Also on the dramatic front is *The Resident*, one of a number of medical procedurals coming out of the studios for the new season. Manish Dayal (*Halt and Catch Fire*) stars as a young, idealistic doctor who are exposed to the good and bad of medicine by a tough but brilliant senior resident, with every decision potentially shattering.

Smyth notes the reaction has been "really hot", with those that have seen it commenting on a "tremendous energy".

"It is a terrific, wonderful, fast-paced and compelling medical procedural about the business of medicine and the choices doctors have to make in very stressful conditions," he says.

Comedies come in the shape of Seth MacFarlane's sci-fi comedy-drama *The Orville*, US airline spoof *LA to Vegas* and extraterrestrial buddy comedy *Ghosted*.

The Orville follows South Park creator MacFarlane as the new captain of a star ship 400 years in the future. "It's a love letter to shows like *Star*



Trek: The Next Generation and *Buck Rogers*," says Smyth. "However, certain shows defy little genre boxes and this is one of those. People will pick that up right away."

LA to Vegas is an ensemble comedy about the ensemble crew of a California-Nevada shuttle that has Will Ferrell as an executive producing. *Modern Family*'s Steve Levitan directed the pilot, while Dylan McDermott (*The Practice*, *Stalker*) has, according to Smyth, a "wonderful star turn" as a Ron Burgandy-type pilot.

Ghosted, meanwhile, stars Adam Scott (*Parks and Recreation*) and Craig Robinson (*The American Office*) as a pair of unwitting heroes, who are whisked away from their mundane lives to work for as supernatural investigators. "If you're a fan of *Ghostbusters* or *Men in Black* you'll want to see this," says Smyth.

channels, however. Among the buzziest pre-market titles is *Young Sheldon*, which follows the Sheldon Cooper character from CBS sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, while other notable comedies include Fox's *LA to Vegas*, Disney's *The Mayor*, CBSS's *gJKL*, NBCU's *Will & Grace* reboot and Sony's *Alex, Inc.*

From Warner's shows for The CW, Schlesinger predicts networks and services with younger-skewing audiences will go for *Life Sentence*, which harks back to the period before superheroes when *Pretty Little Liars* drove the channel almost on its own.

"The SVOD buyers are now all over the place – *Riverdale* is a Netflix exclusive in many territories" says says. "That show is a bit narrow for ProSieben or ITV, but it is the sweet spot for SVOD. Those services should be interested in [*Pretty Little Liars* alum] Lucy Hale and *Life Sentence*."

Menendez says crime shows that linear channels normally search out are, in fact, also interesting to subscription video services. "We see these types of shows being valuable to SVOD services, often in the second window," she adds.

Fox's Smyth contends vertical integration isn't necessarily a trend. "Fox has the top rated show on six networks in the US, including *Modern Family* on ABC, *This is Us* on NBC and *American Horror Story* on FX. It's a demonstration that we make shows for everybody."

He also acknowledges the number of orders is down across the board. "This year there are a lot of shows coming back," he says. "There are some years where it is like that and some years where there are more new ones."

Each studio chief independently makes the point that finding "the right buyer" for their new shows is now crucial – a deal with the wrong network can mean a series disappearing without a trace and losing back-end value. With CBS Corp. CEO Les Moonves recently saying advertising revenues had fallen below 50% for the first time, controlling rights and properly exploiting them is a more pressing concern than ever.

"This year we have more drama than comedy, but the main point is we have a very varied portfolio of content so we can work with buyers across the gamut," says Disney's Endemano. "We have also wanted to make sure the shows are with the right broadcasters and reach the right audiences."

Ultimately, it's a good time to be in the distribution business, even if the networks see an uncertain future ahead. "For networks fragmentation is a bad thing, but for distributors it is great, because there's an interested buyer for almost all genres of programming," says Warner Bros. sales chief Schlesinger.

SPT's Le Goy says this all means there is one winner – the consumer. "It is a fantastic time to be a TV viewer," he says. "People talk about the golden age of TV production, but it's a golden age of TV viewing." **TBI**

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Buyers Briefing

The Wright approach

Sarah Wright heads to the LA Screenings as one of the most powerful international acquisitions executives. She tells TBI about buying US shows for the Sky pay TV business in the UK

Sarah Wright's role as director of acquisitions at London-based, Europe-wide pay TV giant Sky means she has one of the largest buying budgets in international TV.

While Sky has become a major investor in original high-end drama in the UK, Italy and Germany, and the cost of sports rights rise exponentially, Wright says there's plenty of cash in the pot for US and international acquisitions.

TBI: How do you view your studio output deals with HBO and Showtime?

Output deals got a bad name many moons ago because often they weren't the right deals, but these two align our vision with our partners. The HBO and Showtime deals were the right ones for us, but they were very boutique in the sense that we're not buying thousands of hours of shows we don't want. We're going to do more commissioning with HBO, and we've already done *Penny Dreadful* and *Guerrilla* with Showtime, and that means we have real content partnerships compared to the old school output deals. We're really happy with our deals, and we hope HBO and Showtime would say the same.

Last year, UK terrestrial ITV bought its first studio show for primetime in some years, *Lethal Weapon*. What does that mean for Sky?

We think it's the more, the merrier; there is more than enough to go around. Our customers watch ITV, and we want American programming to do



Blindspot



Criminal Minds

well. *Lethal Weapon* is a great show, and it's a very ITV show. The deal was not an annoyance in any shape or form: the more competition, the better it gets for our customers.

What genres or types of show do you hope to find at the LA Screenings?

In the last few years, the US has moved away from procedurals, but *Criminal Minds* is still consistently one of our most popular shows. If you could find me another one of those, I'd love that, and that's the same for most broadcasters, particularly in Europe. It doesn't have to be a murder-of-the-week. The procedural is undervalued – hard to do well and easy to do badly. Several shows look like they have the potential to be long running, closed ended shows, such as a couple of SWAT projects and medical shows. Sky Living's audience really likes those self-contained stories with a series arc, while our Sunday nights still do gangbusters with *NCIS: Los Angeles* and *Hawaii: 5-0*. People



Modern Family

still underestimate how hard those shows are to do each week.

What works for your flagship channel, Sky 1?

Our Sky 1 audience still likes a great big, high concept series like *Fringe*, *24* or *Lost*. The networks haven't produced as many procedurals in the last few years and it would be nice to see some more. *Blindspot*, which is on Sky Living, really does well.

Are you looking for comedies?

If I could find something to sit alongside *Modern Family* it would be brilliant, as it's a quite European show in tone: smart, ironic and beautifully written. It has become such an important show for Sky 1 – channel defining, really, and was also the first thing I bought at Sky, so I feel very affectionate towards it. Overall, it's going to be a strong year for comedy, though some of the blue-collar comedies with laughter tracks are a bit harder to find. You can't tell until you get to LA – *Young Sheldon* looks great on paper, but you have to see it first. **TBI**



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Branded with an indie label

Away from the major studio lots, non-affiliated producers are muscling in on the high-end scripted space. Andy Fry speaks with the likes of ITV Studios America, IDW Entertainment and MGM about how their latest US dramas and how they are competing with the big kids

The Son

The LA Screenings was set up initially as an opportunity for the major US studios to show their scripted series to international buyers. However, over the years it has evolved to the point that it is starting to resemble markets like NATPE, MIPTV and MIPCOM.

While the likes of Disney, Fox, CBS, Sony and Warner Bros. continue to be a key attraction, this year's event (May 16-19) at the Intercontinental Hotel involved 79 exhibitors from all around the world, showcasing scripted and unscripted content. In addition, many more companies circled the edge of the event – taking advantage of the fact so many buyers are in La La Land at the same time this month.

MGM president of worldwide television distribution and acquisitions Chris Ottinger says the event is “a great opportunity to showcase content”.

“We have screenings, but these days the event almost seems to stretch out over two weeks – which means you get proper lengths of time to talk,” he adds.

A big priority for MGM will be *Get Shorty*, a ten-part reimaging of Elmore Leonard's 1990 New York Times best-selling novel previously adapted by MGM that starred John Travolta as Chili Palmer, a loan shark who comes to Hollywood on a job and ends up stumbling into the movie business. “The new series doesn't have the Palmer character, but it deals with the same subject and has the same biting humour,” says Ottinger. “Humour, which we've seen in shows like *Breaking Bad*, *Fargo* and *Justified*, is missing from the market at the moment.”

The series, which will be screened across a number of days, will air in the US on cable channel Epix, leading to another talking point.

“We've just acquired control of Epix, so the Screenings are a chance for us to talk about our content and our plans for the channel,” says Ottinger.

Alongside *Get Shorty*, MGM will be screening never-before-seen footage of *Condor*, a contemporary TV adaptation of the classic movie *Three Days Of the Condor*. Set to air in the US on AT&T's Audience Network, it centres on a CIA analyst who returns to his office after lunch to find everyone has been killed, and sets out to solve the mystery.

The LA Screenings will also be a chance to update buyers on Margaret Atwood adaptation *The Handmaid's Tale*, which recently started airing Hulu in the US, and has been sold to Channel 4 in the UK and HBO Nordic. “It's a beautifully shot show that has been greenlit by Hulu for a second season already, and been picked up by a lot of international networks, so we'll be continuing with the sales effort,” says Ottinger.

MGM is one of a number of large independent studios that has taken advantage of the recent boom in demand for scripted shows. Others include Lionsgate Entertainment, which will be in town with *Ten Days in the Valley*, the story of a single mother TV producer whose daughter goes missing in the middle of the night, and *Dirty Dancing*, a reimagining of the iconic movie starring Abigail Breslin as Baby, Debra Messing as Marjorie Houseman and Colt Prattes as Johnny Castle.

A+E Studios will also have a high profile at the LA Screenings, showcasing *Knightfall*, a period drama about the fabled Knights Templar that is set to air on A+E Networks' History channel. The series stars Tom Cullen and has Dominic Minghella as showrunner.

For A+E Studios executive VP Barry Jossen, it's an example of the “high quality, well-produced drama buyers are looking for”. “We've set ourselves the challenge of working with the best talent and that's what we've been able to do with *Knightfall*,” he adds.

It's a similar story with A+E Studios's *Six*, which launched on History in January. A fictional series about the US Navy SEALs, the show was the number one new scripted series in ad-supported cable during its run and has already been picked up for an extended second season (up to ten episodes, from eight). “It proved particularly popular with young males,” says Jossen.

Not to be overlooked is A+E Studios' burgeoning relationship with female-focused network Lifetime (sister to History). Jossen points to the well-embedded series *UnREAL* and new psychological thriller *You*, the latter of which received a ten-part straight-to-series order, and comes from the prolific Greg Berlanti and *The Magicians* co-creator Sera Gamble.

Based on Caroline Kepnes' best-selling novel, it tells the story of a bookstore manager who is obsessed with a young writer – transforming himself from stalker to boyfriend.

Paul Buccieri, president of A+E Studios and A+E Networks Portfolio Group, says A+E Studios was launched as a platform to get into the high-end scripted game. “Out of the gate, we have created tremendous momentum with series like *Roots*, *UnREAL*, *Six* and *Knightfall* that connect with our viewers and contribute to the global prominence of A+E Networks,” he says.

Buccieri says shows like these are part of a strategy to deliver more high-end series to History – with another as-yet-unnamed show to be unveiled shortly. “We are increasing the volume of scripted production delivered to History, but we aren't limited to working with A+E's portfolio of channels,” he adds.



Get Shorty



Wyonna Earp

“We also have scripted projects with ABC and Hulu among others.” Entertainment One Television president of global scripted programming Pancho Mansfield says the way his firm approaches the Screenings depends on production and distribution cycles at the time.

“Last year, we screened the Mark Gordon titles *Designated Survivor* and *Conviction*, which were both network shows, but cable and SVOD are greenlighting shows all year round, so the launch pattern doesn’t always tie directly to LA in May,” he explains.

Key titles on eOne’s slate include *Sharp Objects*, an eight-part drama for HBO based on the best-selling novel by Gillian Flynn. “We have Amy Adams starring and Jean-Marc Vallée directing after his success with HBO’s *Big Little Lies*,” says Mansfield.

eOne has also secured high-profile talent for *Picture Paris*, a half-hour comedy project starring Meg Ryan that will air on Epix.

While all of the above are US-anchored shows, Mansfield stresses that his company’s output is more internationally balanced than ever, with shows like *Gap Year* and *The Other Guy* coming out of the company’s development hubs in London and Sydney.

Also on the slate is *The Rocks*, “a love story and a mystery where the action happens in reverse”, says Mansfield. Based on the Peter Nichols novel of the same name, the show will be directed by Tom Harper (*War and Peace*, *Peaky Blinders*).

Although the novel is set in Mallorca, a final decision hasn’t yet been

taken on where to locate the TV adaptation. “One of the advantages of having different development hubs is that we have options in terms of where we decide to locate a story,” says Mansfield.

Jenna Santoianni, executive VP of television series at Sonar Entertainment, agrees with Mansfield that the level of a company’s activity at the LA Screenings depends very much on project timing. “This year, we’ll be very active at the Screenings with *Mr Mercedes*, our new mystery thriller for AT&T’s Audience Network,” she says.

Adapted by David E. Kelley from a Stephen King novel, the ten-episode show follows an insane killer (played by Harry Treadaway) who taunts a retired detective (Brendan Gleeson).

“The result is a really tense cat and mouse thriller in which the two try to outsmart each other,” says Santoianni. “Season one is just wrapping production and it looks fantastic.”

Sonar is also celebrating the fact that its Western/oil industry drama *The Son*, which stars Pierce Brosnan, has been greenlit for a second season by AMC.

“*The Son* targets a different audience to some of AMC’s genre shows like *The Walking Dead*, but it resonates well with the channel’s traditional audience,” says Santoianni. “One of the things you have to do in this competitive market is identify subjects or stories that you know are popular, but are not on television right now.”

Another company with a packed agenda at the Screenings is ITV Studios America. Company president Philippe Maigret says the studio will be showcasing *Somewhere Between*, a drama for ABC based on a format from SBS in Korea.

The ten-part show, which recently started shooting in Vancouver, is about a mum who knows her eight-year-old daughter is going to be murdered.

Soon after joining last year, Maigret set himself the ambitious task of making ITV Studios America one of the leading indie scripted studios within five years. He points to the affiliation with its parent, leading UK commercial broadcaster ITV as a boon. “That gives us the financial resource we need to build this company into a real creative force,” he says. “At the same time, we benefit from the distribution network provided by ITV Studios Global Entertainment.”

Financial clout is only part of the story though. “Within the US, our advantage is our independence,” says Maigret. “It means we can be aggressive, nimble and flexible in our deal-making with talent.”



The Handmaid's Tale



Rebel



Dirty Dancing

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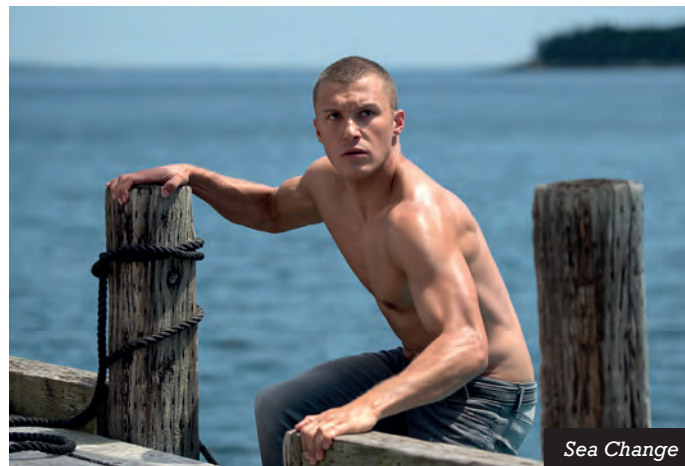
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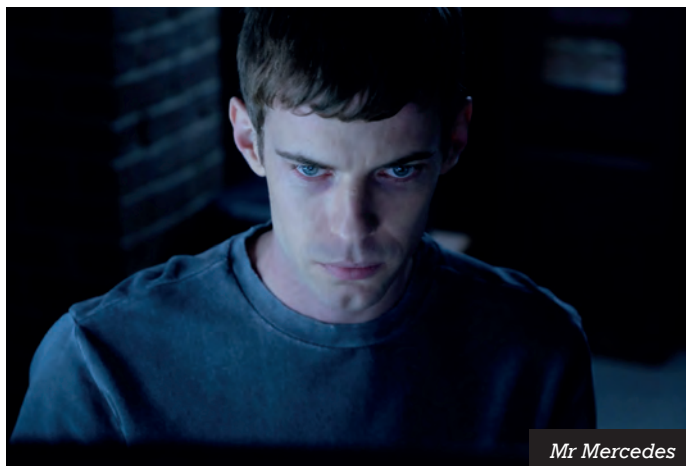
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American Gods



Sea Change



Mr Mercedes

Maigret has targeted partnerships with established talent. He points to Tomorrow Studios, a joint venture with Marty Adelstein that is currently working on a TV version of Korean movie *Snowpiercer*, and the formation of Circle of Confusion Television Studios, a joint venture with talent management and *Walking Dead* production company Circle of Confusion. Time will tell if ITV is successful in its goals.

Also active around the LA Screenings is Keshet Studios, which received two network pilot pickups for the new season (with one more at ABC pending): CBS's Israeli format adaptation *Wisdom of the Crowd* and NBC drama *The Brave*.

While the likes of MGM, ITV and eOne are particularly well-positioned to take on the major studios, continued demand for scripted series has created opportunities for several independent studios.

Critical Content, whose credits include *Start Up* (Crackle) and *Limitless* (CBS), has just optioned the TV rights to produce a limited series based on Ursula K. Le Guin's iconic novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Endemol Shine Studios, meanwhile, has acquired the rights to Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water for Chocolate* to adapt for TV. Elsewhere, FremantleMedia's adaptation of Neil Gaiman's cult novel *American Gods* has been awarded a second season by Starz.

MarVista CEO Fernando Szew has recently expanded his company's activities into scripted series. On air at time of writing is *Rebel*, a John Singleton drama for Viacom-owned channel BET that tells the story of

a female cop who becomes a private investigator after the police kill her brother. "At a time of racial tension and allegations of police brutality, it's a topical show, and John is a force of nature – an inspiring character who knows how to attract talent," says Szew.

Marvista's push into series has also seen it join forces with US production firm Piller/Segan on supernatural Lifetime drama *Sea Change*, and, more ambitiously, pact with IM Global on a TV series based around the world of *King Kong*, titled *King Kong Skull Island*. "It's an origin story that will have a female protagonist," says Szew. "We were really attracted to it because it is a universal brand that has never been adapted for TV."

Another company enjoying success in the new TV landscape is IDW Entertainment (IDWE), a subsidiary of comic book and graphic novel publisher IDW. "Until a few years ago, IDW would option its IP to movie studios, take the cheque and watch as the option expired," says IDW Entertainment president David Ozer.

"However, this division was set up to take advantage of the growing demand for quality TV series. Our key success to date is *Wynonna Earp*, a major ratings success for Syfy channel."

IDWE's development slate today is a mix of ideas based on IDW and third party IP, as well as some original ideas. The beauty of the model, says Ozer, is that a TV hit can be reverse engineered into comic book publishing if the conditions are right.

In terms of other projects, IDWE recently completed a pilot of *Brooklyn Animal Control* for USA Network. "We have also just been given a pilot order by Hulu for *Locke and Key*, a horror/fantasy adaptation based on an IDW comic by Joe Hill," says Ozer. "The project has Carlton Cuse on board, which illustrates the kind of talent we're able to attract with our IP."

IDWE is also teaming up with the increasingly significant IM Global Television on *LD50*. Created by Scott Dacko, it is set in a world in which a virus has decimated the male population.

Of course, one big question for all of these indies going into the LA Screenings is whether the scripted market is capable of sustaining its current levels of activity. One key talking point in Hollywood is the significant drop in the number of pilots and series picked up by the big five US networks (down from 88 pilots to 73 year-on-year).

Sonar's Santoiananni sums up the general mood, however, when she says: "The buyers may change on almost a daily basis, but as one door closes another opens. There are more opportunities than ever for great stories and scripts." **TBI**

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