

Aug. 31, 2005

Zane putting Romar on map for distrib'n

By John Gaudiosi

Billy Zane has partnered with James Schramm to form Romar Entertainment, an independent distribution company that the actor said will offer an innovative business model for creators and performers.

Romar is designed to give producers a wholesale media buy along with a studio-style wide theatrical release for a fraction of what a typical distribution deal costs, Zane said. When the theatrical run is complete, the producer retains all rights and ownership of the film.

"As an actor, I've never received a net point from any film I've done," Zane said. "I look forward to paying net points out to others through this radical new model."

Zane said that Romar's approach to distribution will allow a different caliber of film to enter the marketplace, including mainstream, independent and foreign films that otherwise might be overlooked by the current distribution networks. He added that Romar will deliver a complete package to producers, including ancillary markets like DVD and TV sales, as well as print and billboard advertising and wholesale media buys.

"Romar is a form of self-distribution that invites productions to cover their P&A costs and get an incredible reach for their investment," Zane said.

Romar can open the door for a lot of good movies that are out there but otherwise would never make it into theaters, Zane said. "We're able to deliver a studio reach with independent rates," he said. "Everyone can win with this model, which gives more control and profits to the artists."

The first picture to be distributed by the new company will be producer-director Uwe Boll's "BloodRayne," which Romar has set to bow on 2,500 screens Jan. 6. Based on a best-selling video game from Majesco, the \$20 million film stars Zane along with Ben Kingsley, Kristanna Loken, Michelle Rodriguez and Michael Madsen.

Boll said he is pleased with the unique distribution model that Romar brings to the table, which he said eliminates the middlemen and inflated marketing costs.

"Romar makes sure that we are getting out on 2,500 screens and that every P&A dollar gets spent properly," Boll said. Roxane Barbat at Fantastic Films is handling the foreign distribution for "BloodRayne." Boll still holds DVD and TV rights for the film.

TV spots for "BloodRayne" will begin airing in October across 14 network, cable and syndicated TV shows, including "Stargate: SG-1," "The X-Files," "Punk'd" and "Smallville," to generate awareness for the R-rated film as part of a three-month print and

advertising campaign.

Boll has operated outside of the Hollywood system during the past few years, raising funds through private investors to film movies based on such video games as "House of the Dead," "Alone in the Dark," "BloodRayne" and "Dungeon Siege." He is filming the \$60 million video game-based "In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale" in Vancouver, and he also owns film rights to the video games "Far Cry," "Hunter: The Gathering" and "Fear Effect." Having worked through traditional studio distributors in the past, Boll said he is looking forward to the new opportunities that Romar offers.