

## Studios USA gathering its wits

By Cynthia Littleton

Studios USA has beefed up its roster of comedy writers, inking two-year development pacts with Eric Gilliland, David Zuckerman and Erik Moe.

"These are writers that I have admired for a long time," Studios USA president of programming Davis Kissinger said. "The one thing they all have in common is they're very smart and original, and they don't adhere to formulaic sitcom writing."

Gilliland, an alumnus of "Roseanne" and "The Wonder Years," will serve as an executive

producer on Studios USA's new CBS comedy "Welcome to New York" in addition to brainstorming new projects for the studio. On "Welcome to New York," he will work as showrunner alongside creators Barbara Wallace and Thomas Wolfe and star Christine Baranski.

Zuckerman comes to Studios USA after serving as executive producer on the Fox animated comedy "Family Guy." He also worked as a co-executive producer on Fox's "King of the Hill" and as co-producer on NBC's "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air."

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## USA

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Moe is an up-and-comer who has recently penned pilots for Fox and the WB Network, in addition to co-writing and directing the forthcoming indie feature "No Sleep 'Til Madison." He worked in advertising for San Francisco's Goodby,

Berlin & Silverstein, where he earned nine Clio honors for his commercial campaigns for such clients as Budweiser and Pizza Hut.

Gilliland is repped by Endeavor and attorney Jeanne Newman, while Zuckerman is with Newman and the Kaplan Stahler Gumer Agency. Moe is repped by Endeavor and attorney David Weber. □

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## Gitter captures 'Wildlife'

By CHARLES LYONS

Eric Gitter and his Chickie the Cop Prods. have preemptively optioned the black-comedy spec script "Wildlife, Inc." from writer Erik Moe.

Gitter, who produced Dimension Films' "O," will privately finance "Wildlife" and produce it with his partner and sister Lisa Gitter. Lensing will begin in spring.

"Wildlife" is a comedy about a would-be Hollywood filmmaker and his adventures with the quirky, rustic characters of a small, fame-obsessed town in Wisconsin.

Moe penned "Tales of a Young Urban Failure" for Chronicle Books, and the "The Moe Chronicles," broadcast on Comedy Central.

"O," a modern-day retelling of Shakespeare's "Othello," is due in theaters in March.



Gitter

UTA and attorney Fred Goodman at Goldberg & Marin repped Gitter; David Weber of Bloom, Hergott, Cook, Diemer & Klein negotiated Moe's end of the pact.

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## USA MINING MIRTH

### Studio signs trio of comic writer-producers

By MICHAEL SCHNEIDER

Studios USA has inked three multi-year development deals with comedy writer-producers Eric Gilliland, Erik Moe and David Zuckerman.

The production house is shoring up its stable of comedy writers in the belief that the embattled sitcom genre soon may make a comeback.

"It certainly was always our intention to grow the comedy presence of the studio, and last year we made three or four deals," said Studios USA TV prexy David Kissinger. "This is not the end of it. We're looking for a few other pretty significant deals to add to the stable."

#### Laffer lift

Kissinger is convinced that the comedy form will be revived over the next few years.

"It doesn't take a genius to say the business is so cyclical," he said. "The next likely form to have a re-birth is the half-hour."

As part of new deal, Gilliland will join the new CBS comedy "Welcome to New York" as exec producer. He most recently served as a consulting producer on Fox's "That '70s Show."

His credits include serving time as exec producer on "Roseanne." He also created short-lived ABC comedy "That's Life," worked as a producer on "Nurses" and was story editor of "The Wonder Years."

Moe's background include stints as a Clio Award-winning advertising writer (for clients such as Energizer batteries, Budweiser and Pizza Hut) while working with San Francisco-based agency Goodby, Berlin & Silverstein.

He also wrote the Fox pilots "Starbase 13" and "Applewood 911" and the WB pilot "Wheat Kings."

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## USA inks writers, sees sit-comeback

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He directed and co-wrote the indie feature "No Sleep 'Til Madison" and penned the humor book "Tales of a Young Urban Failure."

Zuckerman was an executive producer on the Fox animated sitcom "Family Guy." Other credits include co-exec producer on another animated Fox laffer, "King of the Hill." Zuckerman also created Fox's "The Last Frontier" and

co-produced the NBC comedy "Fresh Prince of Bel Air."

"These are writers whose careers I've been following for a long time," Kissinger said.

Gilliland is repped by Endeavor and attorney Jeanne Newman; Moe is repped by Endeavor and attorney David Weber of Bloom, Hergott, Diemer and Cook; and Zuckerman is repped by the Kaplan Stahler Gumer Agency and attorney Newman.