



Corbin Bleu Sued for Failing to Promote Film

Financiers of the box office bomb *Free Style* are looking to collect from producers and “High School Musical” star Corbin Bleu, according to the Hollywood Reporter. On Thursday, Third Eye Capital and Strative Capital filed a `id="mce_marker"2` million lawsuit alleging fraud, breach of contract and misrepresentation.

The claims were filed in LA Superior Court against Samuel Goldwyn Films, Del Mar Entertainment, various other producers and Bleu, who was supposed to translate the success he enjoyed in reaching teenage girls on “High School Musical” to a film about a young man chasing a national motocross championship. Instead, “Freestyle,” which came out in 2008, has generated just `id="mce_marker".3` million from all sources, including its theatrical run, foreign distribution and DVD sales. The suit alleges the revenue generated fell well short of the \$8.57 million loan that the plaintiffs put up, which was to cover P&A costs. The lenders blame alleged misrepresentations and poor promotion for their investment going sour. Bleu is being sued because he purportedly failed to honor an agreement that called for providing interviews to support the film. According to the complaint, Bleu and his reps had already decided that he “would be taking his career in a different direction from the teen romance works in which he had previously been involved (including “Freestyle”), and had decided that Mr. Bleu would no longer promote those kinds of projects.” The moneymen also claim producers misled them about the number of screens the film would open on nationwide, a “grossly inflated and false P&A marketing budget,” and funds supposedly being put up by other banks. Third Eye Capital now is seeking more than `id="mce_marker"2` million in damages, punitive damages, and legal costs. The complaint was filed by attorney Jeffrey Wruble.

Academy President Defends Oprah Winfrey’s Honorary Oscar

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences president Tom Sherak is defending the decision to give Oprah Winfrey the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. The Internet was rife with complaints over the selection after it was announced earlier this week. “Does this newly announced Academy prize prove that Oprah means the same thing to Hollywood as past Jean Hersholt Award winners Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Audrey Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor, Lew Wasserman, Charlton Heston?” NWFCC chair Armond White, who voted for Winfrey in the

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1986 National Society of Film Critics Awards and the New York Film Critics Circle Awards, asked The Hollywood Reporter rhetorically earlier this week. "Is this just another way for the academy to continue to grovel for TV ratings?" Sherak says the OWN CEO, who has given away more than \$500 million personally, plus more through her talk show, scholarship funds and her Angel Network, is "one of the most philanthropic performers in the world."

Oprah has given and given and given," he tells the Associated Press. "She's a member of the academy, she was nominated for an Academy Award and she has produced movies. This is not about personality. This is about a person who has come from the depths, risen to the heights and given back. That's a perfect example of why this award was created." Sherak says there are a number of philanthropists who are members of the film academy, but the governors "felt very strongly" about giving the award to Winfrey this year even though she has limited work in film.

"We have a lot of people who are TV people who have made movies," he said. "It doesn't matter that they do other things... She is definitely one of us. What really counts is her contribution to humanity." Sherak says the award "exemplifies giving back to the community, the world, society in an extraordinary way." James Earl Jones and makeup artist Dick Smith will also be honored at the non-televised Governors Award on Nov. 12. Moments from the show may be included in the Oscars on Feb 2012.

Tracee Ellis Ross on the Cover of September Essence

The lovely Tracee Ellis Ross sat down with Essence magazine to talk about her new role on a BET comedy called "Reed Between the Lines." And it's definitely been a long while since we've seen the actress apart from her role as Joan Clayton. "On Girlfriends I had become a woman, but it wasn't until three or four years later that I really began to embody who I had become," she told the magazine. The actress will be on the cover of Essence September fashion issue, which is perfect because she's a woman with a sense of style and class. She graces the cover in a chic dress and warms the inside pages with a beautiful smile and her story about her transformation. The issue goes on sale, August 12.

Lil Wayne Faces id="mce_marker"5M Copyright Lawsuit over 'BedRock'

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Lil Wayne has been sued for \$5 million by a Georgia company that claims he swiped the song "BedRock," according to a lawsuit filed in New York. Done Deal Enterprises accuses the rapper, whose real name is Dwayne Carter, of copyright infringement for the song that Done Deal claims it created in 2009, reports Reuters. The lawsuit, filed in District Court for the Southern District of New York on July 29, also names Universal Music Group, Cash Money Records and Young Money Entertainment as defendants. "BedRock" also features singers Drake, Nicki Minaj and Lloyd, and it reached No. 2 on Billboard's charts in 2010. Lil Wayne, who was released from jail in November last year after serving time on a gun possession charge, has been ordered to appear in court on Oct. 12.

NFL Star-Turned-Actor Bubba Smith Found Dead

Former NFL defensive star Bubba Smith, who found a successful second career as an actor, has died in Los Angeles at age 66, reports the Associated Press. Los Angeles County coroner's spokesman Ed Winter says Smith was found dead Wednesday at his Baldwin Hills home. Winter says he didn't know the circumstances or cause of death. Police spokesman Richard French says the death does not appear to be suspicious. Smith spent five seasons with the Baltimore Colts and two seasons each with Oakland and Houston. He played college ball at Michigan State. As an actor he played such characters as a police officer in the "Police Academy" series. {jcomments on}