

Television

Judge Judy returning to TV in November, with granddaughter

Jorja Fox hopes 'CSI: Vegas' will spark science appreciation

NEW YORK, Oct 10, (AP): Some familiar faces joined the investigation into gruesome murders as "CSI: Vegas" premiered last week on CBS.

Wallace Langham's David Hodges, William Petersen as Gil Grissom and Jorja Fox's Sara Sidle reprise their roles for the 10-episode limited series, described as "an epilogue" to the original "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation." New cast members include Matt Lauria, Paula Newsome and Mel Rodriguez.

The original "CSI," which aired its series finale in 2015 after 15 seasons, wowed viewers with the idea of using forensics to solve crimes. It created armchair experts out of people in their living rooms and coined the term "the CSI effect."

"CSI: Vegas" debuts 20 years to the day as its predecessor's premiere.

"In 2000, we were pretty sure that science could tell us somebody committed a crime or not. Now we're even more sure to the point where I would say, I don't know how anybody gets away with anything at all," Fox said. She hopes this series will once again draw people to the power of science — at a time when it's been scoffed at by naysayers of climate change and vaccines.

"We have a really smart audience and they want a smart show, said Fox. "And yet we have a lot of people that believe in science less than ever. So it's a really interesting time to do a show about science. It would be amazing... to make science really fun and exciting and dazzling and mysterious again."

"CSI: Vegas" was originally conceived as a 20th anniversary special episode but those plans were scrapped and the writing evolved into an actual series. One central mystery will loom throughout, but each episode will also tackle a case of its own.

Fox says we'll see "a lighter version of Sara Sidle than we've ever seen before," which she enjoyed, because in the original version she dealt with burnout. This time, "she's not carrying the Vegas weight of the world on her shoulders."

A big reason why Fox said yes to playing Sidle again was because it would mean she would reteam with Petersen, as a happily married couple (in the past they were on and off and back on again.)

"My onscreen relationship with Billy Petersen, Sara and Grissom, is definitely the longest relationship of my life. To get to be in a couple that's actually survived 21 years is very rare, and I think it's a really cool thing," she said.

She's even thought of other ways to reteam with Petersen in the future. Fox says they could easily play something akin to the old guys in the balcony from "The Muppets." She also adds "we could play a cool sibling thing, but I don't know if anybody would want to see that."

Judge Judy returning to TV in November, with granddaughter

Also:

NEW YORK: Judge Judy Sheindlin is returning to television on Nov. 1 with a new red robe, a granddaughter in tow and the challenge of competing with herself.

She announced recently the start date and name of her new show,

"Judy Justice," which will be available weekdays on the little-known IMDb TV, a free streaming service offered by Amazon.

Sheindlin, 79, moved to the new show when her syndication deal with CBS Media Ventures ended with some acrimony after 25 years. For more than a decade, "Judge Judy" has been syndication's most popular show with the tart-talking New Yorker arbitrating small claims cases.

CBS promptly cut a deal to keep "Judge Judy" reruns on the air. Sheindlin will be joined on "Judy Justice" by a new television bailiff and stenographer. **Sarah Rose**, a law clerk and Sheindlin's granddaughter, will be a legal analyst.

"She's smart, sassy and opinionated," her grandmother said. "Who knows where she gets those traits?"

Filming for the old "Judge Judy" ended after CBS bought the show's old episodes from Sheindlin. That enabled CBS to continue selling rights to air them through the syndication market without having to pay her to make new episodes. Sheindlin was widely believed to be the country's highest-paid television star.

Sheindlin, a former New York judge, was also said to be unhappy with CBS for giving priority time slots to **Drew Barrymore's** new show at the expense of "Hot Bench," another court show that Sheindlin created, according to The Wall Street Journal.

"We had a nice marriage," Sheindlin told the Journal earlier this year. "It's going to be a **Bill and Melinda Gates** divorce."

Two of her longtime producers, **Randy Douthit** and **Amy Frelsleben**, will join her on "Judy Justice."

Variety



This image released by National Geographic shows a scene from the documentary film 'The Rescue,' chronicling the 2018 rescue of 12 Thai boys and their soccer coach, trapped deep inside a flooded cave. (AP)

Film

In 'The Rescue,' a hugely intricate story

A perilous underwater mission in focus

By Jake Coyle

Richard Stanton, the elite British cave diver who helped lead the mission to save 12 boys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave in Thailand in 2018, isn't much for movies. Stanton will without hesitation plunge into the murkiest of waters but he rarely sets foot inside a darkened movie theater.

"I've got no interest in films," says Stanton. "I can't remember the last time I went to the cinema."

Stanton, 60, is partial to "Apollo 13" — a good thing, since its director, Ron Howard, is making a movie about Stanton and the other divers who made possible the Tham Luang cave rescue. (Viggo Mortensen is playing Stanton.)

But Stanton, one of Britain's foremost cave divers, has, in fact, been to the movies lately. A lot. Within days of its premiere at the Telluride Film Festival last month, Stanton had seen "The Rescue," Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin's riveting non-fiction account of the underwater ordeal, five times. At first, he says, it was "a bit weird."

"We were just like, 'Well, that's it, then,'" Stanton, a retired firefighter prone to pragmatism. "But the more I've seen it, the more intricate and the more layers I've realized are woven together. It's a hugely intricate story."

"The Rescue," which National Geographic opened in theaters Friday, is the fullest, most detailed and most heart-pounding documentary portrait of just how a global coalition — and a handful of cave-diving hobbyists — swam 13 people to safety after they had been stuck inside the Tham Luang cave for 16 days. It was trying just to find the boys, a 2 1/2 hour dive from the mouth of the cave, and harder still to get them out. With the world watching and monsoon rains in the forecast, Stanton and other volunteering divers swam each out individually while they were sedated. For any normal person, the kind of diving Stanton does for fun is too panic-inducing to jump into conscious.

"We love this story for the same reasons it cap-

ured the hearts and minds of the whole world. It's got all the right ingredients — an impossible rescue against all odds," says Vasarhelyi. "And it's got these characters."

"The Rescue" is Vasarhelyi and Chin's follow-up to "Free Solo," their Oscar-winning documentary about rock climber Alex Honnold's rope-less ascent of Yosemite's El Capitan. Their latest is likewise a tense and charming portrait of people with an extreme and rare obsession. But this time, instead of rappelling alongside their subjects (Chin is a world-class climber), they were assembling the film after-the-fact and navigating a much lower altitude.

Recognize

"We wanted them to show us how they did it, down to the smallest detail. Those details matter to us," says Chin, who's married to Vasarhelyi, with two children. "In the climbing world, if someone's making a film about you and you do something totally outrageous and wrong and people recognize it, that's kind of heartbreaking and annoying."

To do that, the filmmakers went through the decision making process in lengthy on-camera interviews with Stanton and others, including John Volanathan and Dr. Richard Harris, an Australian diver and anesthetist who sedated the boys. The filmmakers also shot recreations with the divers in Pinewood Studios. One thing Stanton had no interest in: Acting.

"All we said we'd do is we'd turn up with exact equipment we had in Thailand and do exactly what we did there," says Stanton. He had seen 2019's "The Cave," a 2019 dramatization of the rescue that starred diver Jim Wamy as himself.

"It really doesn't across very well in my opinion," says Stanton. "The only way we're going to come across as genuine is doing what we genuinely did."

The cave rescue was immediately followed by a rush for life rights. National Geographic landed those to the divers. Rights to the boys' stories, steered by the Thai government, ended up with Netf-

lix. Next year, the streamer will release a miniseries. Howard's big-screen drama "Thirteen Lives" is also due out in 2022.

The competing interests made it, Vasarhelyi says, "a rights quagmire." She and Chin wanted to capture the full picture of the operation but there were limitations — and not just because some, like the soccer team, couldn't appear on camera. They were piecing the film together during the pandemic, and it wasn't until this spring that Vasarhelyi was able to travel to Thailand, visit the cave and meet with other prominent figures in the ordeal, like the Thai Navy Seals. She secured the footage shot by the Seals in and around the cave, adding another vivid perspective of the rescue.

But the backbone of "The Rescue" is the British cave divers, whose very particular expertise led them to the cave. To Stanton, the film captures for the first time just how difficult and risky a task it was.

"It's not just the diving, per se. It's the whole thing," says Stanton. "And taking that massive responsibility. And trying to persuade a foreign government to do something that was, on paper, quite ludicrous."

To Vasarhelyi and Chin, "The Rescue" represents a disparate swath of humanity — some 5,000 were involved in the operation — coming together for one purpose. And how supreme dedication to one passion can lead to something greater.

"They're the people you might not think twice about or think they're oddballs," says Chin. "But in fact, they may have found the secret. And in this film, they use it for a very noble purpose."

Stanton, who received Britain's George Medal for gallantry, has gotten used to a spotlight following him since the rescue. But at the Telluride Film Festival, he experienced a more Hollywood brand of celebrity. The Hollywood Reporter called Stanton "Telluride's most eligible bachelor."

"I'm not even sure how she knew I was a bachelor," he says. "I'm used to people coming up and shaking my hand and saying, 'Well done.'" (AP)

NEW YORK: Steve Coll is stepping down as dean of the Columbia University Journalism School next June, saying that he will continue teaching there after nine years leading one of the nation's top training grounds for reporters.

Coll was behind the creation of a new master's degree in data journalism, and the creation of centers for global journalism, civil and human rights and the fighting of disinformation, the university's president, **Lee Bollinger**, said.

"Steve's life experiences gave him a special vantage point for appraising the present and future of journalism, and it served him, and us, exceedingly well," Bollinger said.

A former writer for The New Yorker, Coll, 62, is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner. (AP)

BEIJING: Harry Potter fans came dressed as wizards as Universal Studios opened its first theme park in China under anti-virus controls.

The Hollywood studio's "Jurassic Park," "Kung Fu Panda" and "Harry Potter" film franchises, plus Minions from "Despicable Me" feature prominently at Universal Studios Beijing on the Chinese capital's eastern outskirts.

The opening went ahead despite coronavirus outbreaks in China's southeast that prompted the government to tighten travel controls in some areas.

"We've been longing for the opening for quite a while," said a visitor, **Niu Haosuan**.

Visitors were required to wear masks and display a smartphone-based health code that shows whether they have been to regions deemed at high-risk of infection.

After a report of a possible case in Beijing last week, "we were very worried," said **Zoe Shi**. "We thought about whether we should still go. It turned out to be untrue in the end. We feel lucky."

Universal Studios Beijing is the Chinese capital's first foreign-branded amusement park. It is the fifth worldwide for Universal Studios and the third in Asia, after Japan and Singapore. Universal Studios is part of NBCUniversal, a unit of Comcast Corp. (AP)

BOSTON: A group of high school students in Massachusetts had

to ride on a party bus complete during a recent field trip — an experience their teacher said highlights problems with the education system.

Jim Mayers, an 11th grade Advanced Placement language and composition teacher at the Brooke Charter School in Boston, said in the since-deleted tweet that



Bollinger



Coll

the original charter bus had fallen through, Masslive.com reported.

"It is a funny story, but there actually is a real bus shortage and it speaks to major flaws in our education system," he said, adding that the field trip was a success.

He is now using the attention he's getting because of the original

tweet to urge people to better understand educational inequities and other problems facing the nation's schools.

"I'm worried that there is too much attention being paid to the tweet itself, or simply the fact that it went viral, instead of attending to the many systemic issues that are facing not just my students, but

students all across the country," he wrote in a followup tweet.

For example, districts across the nation are struggling to hire enough drivers to shuttle kids to school, and some states have become creative, including Massachusetts, which is enlisting National Guard members to drive school transport vans. (AP)