

Clooney nixes political career, sees US recovery post-Trump

LONDON, Oct 11, (AP): George Clooney on Sunday ruled out having a second career in politics, saying he would rather have a "nice life" and is looking to reduce his workload.

Nevertheless, the 60-year-old actor and director waded into politics during an interview with the BBC's Andrew Marr. Clooney, a long-time supporter of US President Joe Biden, described America as a country that is still recovering from the damage caused by Donald Trump.

When asked whether he had any intentions of running for office, Clooney was quick to dismiss the idea.

"No, because I would actually like to have a nice life," said Clooney, who appeared on the show to promote his new movie, "The Tender Bar."

Clooney said he planned to take on fewer projects while he is healthy and can still "play basketball and do the things I love."

"I turned 60 this year and I had a conversation with my wife and we were working a lot, as we both do, and I said we have to think of these as the halcyon years," he said. "In 20 years, I will be 80 and that's a real number. Doesn't matter how much you work out, what you eat, you're 80 and so I said we have to make sure we enjoy and live these years in the best possible way."

Clooney shrugged off concerns about Biden's sagging poll numbers, saying the president is still struggling with Trump's legacy.

"It's like taking a battered child and thinking everything's going to be OK his first day in school," Clooney said. "There's a lot of things that have to be repaired, there's a lot of healing that has to happen, and its going to take time."

Trump remains a factor in US politics, Clooney said, adding that he hopes Americans have "a little better sense" than to return him to the White House.

"It's so funny, because he was just this knucklehead," Clooney said. "I knew him before he was a president. He was just a guy who was chasing girls. Every time you went out he'd be like, 'What's the name of that girl?' That's all he was."

Also:

NEW YORK: A TV adaptation of the late Sue Grafton's million-selling Kinsey Millhone mystery novels, a prospect the author once swore she would return from the dead to prevent, is now the works.

A+E Studios announced this week that it had acquired rights to Grafton's alphabet series, with such titles as "A Is for Alibi" and "E Is for Evidence." Grafton completed 25 Millhone books, through "Y Is for Yesterday," but died in 2017 before she could write a story for Z.

"Sue Grafton is the ultimate storyteller who spent decades entertaining readers through her rich characters and spellbinding mysteries," Barry Jossen, president and head of A+E Studios, said in a statement. "We are honored to carry on her legacy and bring these timeless stories to life. We are actively speaking with interested platforms and seeking a showrunner for the series, as well as the perfect actress to embody the coveted lead role of Kinsey Millhone."

Grafton's many fans might celebrate the chance to see her work on the screen, and wonder who might play the famed sleuth Millhone. They might also remember a vow she made back in 1997, recalling her unhappy experiences writing for television movies before she

caught on as a novelist.

"I will never sell (Kinsey) to Hollywood. And, I have made my children promise not to sell her. We've taken a blood oath, and if they do so I will come back from the grave: which they know I can do," she told January Magazine. "They're going to have to pass the word on to my grandchildren: we do not sell out our grandma."

Grafton's daughter **Jamie Clark** reaffirmed her mother's vow when announcing her death four years ago, but the author's husband and executive producer of the series, **Steve Humphrey**, says he and the family have agreed that the times — and the medium — have changed.

"Television has greatly evolved since Sue was writing in Hollywood in the 1980s. From her experience then, she was concerned that her stories and characters would be diminished when they were adapted. But as the power of television has transformed over time, so too has the quality from writing and acting to the production values and viewing experience," Humphrey said in a statement issued through A+E and also posted on Grafton's Facebook page.

"I selected A+E Studios as my partner because they understand the importance of maintaining the tone and tenor of Sue's work and the character and are dedicated to working with us to bring her stories to life in a way that will please both current and new fans, and will also honor her legacy."

"Together her children and I believe Sue would bless this decision and would be delighted to see her cherished Alphabet murder series live on and reach millions of new and existing fans around the world."

People

Variety



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Cooper Carter, (from left), Lee Pace and Terrence Mann in 'Foundation.' (AP)

Film

New series redefines sci-fi onscreen

'Foundation' thinks big – galaxy big

By Mark Kennedy

Most TV dramas try to tell stories over a few years with maybe half a dozen central characters. The new series "Foundation" is a bit more ambitious — try 400 years and 25 million worlds. To say it's sweeping doesn't do it justice. World-building is one thing. "Foundation," a four-year project debuted on Apple TV+ on Sept 24, is galaxy-building.

"I love being transported in story. I love epics. I love generational sagas. And so I just wanted to go for it," said David S. Goyer, the series' co-creator, executive producer and showrunner.

"Foundation" is built on author Isaac Asimov's short stories that he started writing just after World War II as a 21-year-old and have gone on to become a cornerstone of the sci-fi genre. The series is ambitious enough to redefine sci-fi onscreen.

The saga begins 12,000 years in the future. Under the rule of the Galactic Empire, humanity has spread to the far corners of the galaxy and it has been peaceful, though authoritarian. Brilliant scientist Hari Seldon (played by Jared Harris) has discovered a mathematical theory that proves the empire is crumbling. Is he right? "Do you trust the math?" he asks.

"When you got a character who can predict the future, the question is, 'Is he predicting the future or a possible future? And in a world where you can predict the mass movements of civilization, does one person's will matter? Do I matter in the broad scheme of things? Does it matter what choices I make?'" Goyer asks.

Visually stunning and inventive, the series explores the trade-offs between individual liberty and the dangerous safety of dynastic rule, the notions of fate and free will, and extremism and dissent.

It's a series that puts science and math at the

center of life, streaming into homes at a time when the facts of science are being challenged everywhere. "Math is never just numbers," goes one line in the show. "In the wrong hands, it's a weapon. In the right hands, deliverance."

Our guide is a gifted mathematician Gaal Dornick (actor Lou Llobell), who leaves her distant planet to go to the home of the empire and is as wide-eyed as the folks watching at home on their couch.

"I think she's an ally for the audience," says Llobell, whose character was male in the books. "I think that's quite a cool tool for the audience to kind of feel like they have someone that they can trust and follow and learn about all these worlds."

Goyer, whose screenwriting credits include "The Dark Knight" and "Batman Begins," had been offered the chance to adapt Asimov's "Foundation" earlier in his career as a feature film but turned it down. Back then, the notion was to condense it. His new 10-part series goes the opposite direction.

Possibility

"I was excited about the possibility of having enough real estate so that I could expand it and expound upon it," he says. "It was the most ambitious thing I ever attempted even prior to the pandemic, and then once the pandemic hit, it just became so monumental that it was almost funny."

The look of the series is bold and arresting, mixing old and futuristic. There are laser cannons and yet flickering candles, Roman Empire-inspired costumes and biohacking. Simple water jugs sit beside hologram devices. It might be a time of massive space ships, but their commanders might sip from old-timey liquor flasks. Goyer says he wanted a classic, timeless feel.

"I wanted the show to be very cinematic. I didn't want to film a bunch of it against green screen. I wanted to get out in the world. We filmed about

60% of it on location in six different countries. That was really important to me because I wanted it to be visceral and textural."

The series jumps back and forth in time — centuries and decades can flash forward — and Goyer did not want to lean on pre-existing props. Even basic items were rethought, like ingenious-looking wine glasses with the liquid filling the hollow stem.

"There's nothing that we can go to a store and just pick off the shelf. We had to manufacture everything and I mean everything," he says. The show also had to solve its own scientific problems, like how to fold space. The answer: Each spacecraft needed to generate its own black hole.

Llobell recalls filming on a soundstage in Limerick, Ireland, where the design team had built a replica of her character's water-covered planet. "You walked in and you smelt the ocean. You could smell fish and algae and it stank," she says. "It was amazing because you were there."

It turns out her character's water-covered planet wasn't always so wet. The population there is going through a dark age where knowledge is forbidden, leading to warming and rising seas. "Foundation" preserves Asimov's prescience.

"This is a show about climate change. It's a show about #MeToo. It's a show about the rise of factionalism and nationalism, Brexit. And now it's a show about a pandemic and the collision between science and politics," says Goyer.

Actor Leah Harvey plays the warden of a city on a planet at the farthest edge of the galaxy. Harvey laughs that despite all the high level quantum calculations, many in the galaxy refuse to acknowledge the truth.

"So many people can't understand it, but they question whether or not it's true. And that is definitely a relatable thing in this world at the moment," Harvey says. (AP)

Features

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LOS ANGELES: After over 18 months of pandemic delays, "No Time to Die" opened on target. The final James Bond film of the Daniel Craig era grossed \$56 million from 4,407 North American theaters, according to studio estimates on Sunday, to easily take the first-place spot.

It didn't break any pandemic or 007 records, but it didn't fall significantly short either and is in fact the fourth-best opening in the 25-film series. James Bond isn't Marvel when it comes to opening weekends. Bond has always had an older audience which is typically less inclined to rush out for the first weekend. In fact, the best Bond opening ever didn't even crack \$100 million. It was \$88.4 million for "Skyfall" which debuted in 2012.

"It's been a long time coming to get this movie on the big screen," said Erik Lomis, the head of distribution for United Artists Releasing. "It's right where we thought it would be and right where tracking predicted it would be."

Cary Joji Fukunaga directed this installment, which co-stars Lea Seydoux, Ben Whishaw, Naomie Harris, Ana de Armas, Lashana Lynch and Rami Malek, as the antagonist. Both critics and audiences have responded positively (84% on Rotten Tomatoes and an A- CinemaScore). According to exit data, audiences were heavily male (64%) and over 35 (57%).

Unlike many films released during the pandemic, a streaming or hybrid release was never even a consideration for "No Time to Die." In addition to being the longest Bond film ever at two hours and 43 minutes, it was also an expensive one with a reported production budget of around \$250 million. And that doesn't include marketing costs, which reportedly exceeded \$100 million.

"Michael Wilson and Barbara Broccoli are huge believers in the theatrical experience," Lomis said of the film's producers. "They delivered us a terrific movie and together we held it for theatrical. That was hugely important to us, to them and to the theater owners. And when you see this kind of result, it's very gratifying."

According to North American distributor United Artists Releas-

ing, 25% of moviegoers returned to theaters for the first time in 18 months this weekend, suggesting that the film will have legs.

"That, I thought, was a pretty significant statistic," Lomis added.

He said he's been getting calls from theater owners around the country saying that audiences have been regularly applauding at the



Fukunaga



De Armas

end of the movie.

But the profitability of Bond movies ultimately comes down to international, which in the Craig era has regularly accounted for over 70% of the global total. "No Time to Die" launched abroad last weekend, with Universal handling some territories and MGM others, and as of Sunday global grosses

were estimated to be over \$313.3 million.

"This movie became bigger than life because it was really the first high profile movie to move off of its release date when the pandemic began," said Paul Dergarabedian, Comscore's senior media analyst. "To have Bond still be appealing and viable and relevant some 60

years on is quite amazing."

In second place was last week's No. 1 film "Venom: Let There Be Carnage," which fell 64% from its record \$90 million launch, earning \$32 million in its second weekend. The Sony sequel, which is also playing exclusively in movie theaters, has earned \$185.6 million globally to date. (AP)