

LAKESHORE, BUTLER TO PLAY 'GAME'

'Crank' duo's thriller begins shooting in January

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Lakeshore is "cranking" it up again.

Company headed by chairman and CEO Tom Rosenberg is reteaming with "Crank" creators Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor on "Game," a high-concept futuristic thriller that will star Gerald Butler. It's one of Lakeshore's more ambitious projects, though not as costly as its most expensive, the \$75 million "Runaway Bride" of a few years ago.

Neveldine and Taylor have written the script and will direct the movie, which will begin lensing in January.

Although no details were available, the company is also set to produce, probably late next year, a remake of "Fame," which will go out domestically through MGM.

The more immediate "Game" will be produced by Lakeshore's Tom Rosenberg, Gary Lucchesi and Skip Williamson, and Lakeshore will retain foreign rights.

Stateside, Lakeshore is deciding what to do with the film since it has deals with MGM and Warner Bros. and also works occasionally with Screen Gems and Lionsgate, Rosenberg said. ("Crank" went out domestically via Lionsgate.) On the foreign front, "Game" will get talked up by Lakeshore's sales team in Cannes.

This latest pic is set in a dystopian future of implanted nano-devices, where the ultimate online simulation environment is humans remote-controlling other humans in mass-scale, multiplayer online gaming. The lead character, played by Butler, is a worldwide sensation, and the top-ranked warrior in a game called "Slayers." With his every move tracked by millions, he battles to regain his identity and bring down the entire system.

"As the world witnessed in '300,' Gerard Butler is a commanding performer, connecting with an audience on many levels. He is the perfect actor to play Kable, a man who represents the fight against the ruthless commercialization of our lives," Rosenberg said.

Butler will next star opposite Hilary Swank in the romantic comedy, "P.S. I Love You," directed by Richard LaGravenese for Warner Bros.

Lakeshore will soon commence its second collaboration with the duo, on the thriller "Pathology," directed by Marc Schoelermann. "Pathology" is being sold here in Cannes.

David Dinerstein, who took over as president of worldwide marketing and distribution in January, absorbed some of the international oversight duties formerly performed by British exec Peter Rogers. Latter, who was London-based, anklled several months ago.

Lakeshore has six features in various phases of production, including an adaptation of Philip Roth's novel "The Dying Animal" starring Penelope Cruz and Ben Kingsley.

As for "Fame," Dinerstein said doing a remake is something of a no-brainer, and will likely reflect the renewed interest around the globe in music and dance movies.

A few of Lakeshore's recent pics, including "Blood and Chocolate," did not perform well at the box office. But Dinerstein said the Lakeshore portfolio has had some notable successes, both domestically and internationally, with pics including not only "Million Dollar Baby," (\$220 worldwide) and "Runaway Bride" (\$310 worldwide) but also smaller pics like "The Exorcism of Emily Rose" (\$150 million worldwide) and "Underworld" (\$100 million worldwide).

"In all fairness, businesses are built on portfolios. Our aim is to produce projects with universal appeal -- but also made for the right price," said Dinerstein, who had stints at Miramax and Paramount.