BUZZ
VARIETY

Another Coppola star on the rise...

By MICHAEL FLEMING

Francis Coppola, whose use of family members in his films is well documented, may be taking the concept one step further. In "Girl Under Glass," Coppola not only plans to write and direct, he's also leaning toward playing the lead male role. The story sounds like a hellish version of "Pretty Woman" — a married college professor falls in love with a prostitute. Even though she is charging him for every minute they spend together, he mistakes her devotion for mutual love, and responds in violent fashion upon realizing he's been used. It would be Coppola's first featured role. A spokesman would only say that Coppola is writing it.


COPPOLA

H'WOOD POWER PLAYS

Tom Viertel and **Steve Baruch,** theatrical producers of "Driving Miss Daisy" and "Frankie And Johnny In The Clair De Lune," are going Hollywood. Scriptwriter **Paul Hapenny** said he's teaming with the duo and attorney **Miguel Valenti** to develop screen properties for the majors. According to Hapenny, the quartet will be meeting with studio execs this week on several projects. Viertel and Baruch watched "Driving" get made into an Oscar winner and are seeing "Frankie And Johnny" made into a Paramount pic with **Al Pacino** and **Michelle Pfeiffer.** Now, they will be able to keep hands-on involvement in future screen adaptations of their theatrical properties.

UNTRUTH

Perhaps the syndicated game show "To Tell The Truth" — which presents a guest along with two imposters and challenges panelists to guess the real one — should have expected media hoaxer **Joey Skaggs** to be less than truthful when he was invited to appear as a guest. He made the show his latest victim last Friday by sending an imposter in his place. Skaggs has gotten publicity as the proprietor of such unlikely businesses as a cathouse for dogs and a "fat squad" which forcibly restrains overeaters. He usually scams legit media on ridiculous-sounding stories to make them more skeptical on serious ones. But he said he couldn't pass up the chance to dupe the famed gameshow. "One of my dream hoaxes," he said. Producers, who read about Skaggs in a recent New York Times profile, asked him to send proof of identity before they'd let him appear. He sent an "Entertainment Tonight" report on hoaxers in which he was featured. Unfortunately, Skaggs had scammed "ET" by sending the same imposter. The show didn't return calls.

LOBBYIST

Time Warner supremo **Steve Ross** is becoming a strong presence on the D.C. lobbying scene. Ross, who pushed hard for passage of a cable tv reregulation bill last year, recently phoned members of Congress to urge passage of the Persian Gulf war resolution. Among the members called by Ross was Sen. **Bob Graham** (D-Fla.). Graham's aide said the last Hollywoodite to lobby the lawmaker was **Tom Selleck,** who asked for support for **Robert Bork's** Supreme Court nomination.

INDESTRUCTIBLE ICON

Peter Weller hung up his armor for good after "Robocop 2" turned in disappointing results. But the concept is apparently indestructible, and **Robert Burke,** who starred in "The Unbelievable Truth," has been hired to play the metallic patrolman in "3." The pic, which starts shooting soon in Atlanta, will be less violent than the last.


ROBO-WELLER

NO NEW LINE OF WORK

Despite making his directorial debut with "Book of Love," New Line Cinema head **Bob Shaye** isn't bent on becoming his company's hot new lenser. "I came into the business 23 years ago to direct, but discovered the real way to achieve independence was distribution, and I got caught up in that," Shaye said at the New York premiere at Loews 19th St. East. Directing was always in the back of his mind. "It takes a lot of time to run New Line, though. But if it's the right material, and the right time frame, I could probably be convinced [to direct another]."

CNN'S NEW BIZ

Germany's two national public broadcasters, ARD and ZDF, got lambasted by the print media for their coverage of the Gulf War. Both stations signed quick one-year deals with CNN Intl., with each paying $175,000. Germany's commercial broadcasters, SAT1, RTL Plus, and Tele 5, all have longterm agreements with CNN to avoid the high costs of setting up their own network of correspondents. The ARD and ZDF deals give them unlimited use of CNN coverage. Buzz hears deals had been in the works for awhile, but the pubcasters hesitated because CNN wanted access to their newscasts for its own European service, and it could then have been broadcast by ARD and ZDF's commercial rivals.

BUZZINGS

Civil War-mania continues. We knew **Paul Maslansky** and **Hugh Wilson** were teaming on a film about the Battle of Gettysburg. Now, ABC is planning a miniseries about the famed battle which turned the tide in the North's favor. This one is based on the book "Killer Angels" and will be directed by **Ron Maxwell** ("Little Darlings") ... former "West 57th Street" correspondent **Jane Wallace** will host "Rights And Wrongs," a pilot being produced for PBS by Globalvision, makers of "South Africa Now." The show examines human rights abuses and triumphs ... despite disastrous results of "Havana," Buzz hears **Robert Redford**'s "The President Elopes," is headed for Universal.

...Will Francis portray the professor?