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## **Miners' ordeal sparks film, TV projects**

**Features, docs, telepic projects popping up worldwide**

**By EMILIANO DE PABLOS, ANNA MARIE DE LA FUENTE**

The race to adapt the story of the rescue of 33 miners in Chile is under way, with filmmakers rushing into production on multiple movie and TV projects.

The dramatic story of the men entombed for 69 days in a copper and gold mine has gripped the world since they were discovered alive 2,300 feet underground in August and the last miner was pulled out Wednesday.

The drawing power of the spellbinding events was clear from the impact they had on ratings in the U.S., which spiked for cable news outlets during coverage of the rescues.

In Chile, helmer Rodrigo Ortuzar ("Mujeres Infieles") is likely the first filmmaker out of the gate with the \$5 million "Los 33" (The 33). He's had cameras rolling at the rescue site since August. "We'll be focusing on the first 17 days after the San Jose mine collapsed, when they lost contact with the outside world," Ortuzar said.

Co-produced by U.S.-based Chilean thesp Cristian de la Fuente, principal photography will start early next year. The screenplay is by Mario Velasco, with script guru Robert McKee tapped as a consultant.

Meanwhile, Spanish broadcaster Antena 3 and Colombia's Dynamo Factory started shooting TV movie "Los 33 de San Jose" (The 33 of San Jose) at the site 10 days ago and will start shooting underground scenes on Monday in another mine close to San Jose.

Based on a script by executive producer Jacobo Bergareche, the \$1 million co-production led by Antena 3's A3F is the directorial debut of Antonio Regio. A3F's Juan Carlos Caro is co-executive producer.

Colombian thesp Adelaida Buscato ("Karabudjan") plays the lead as a journo covering the event. The TV movie is slated to air in Spain before Christmas.

"It's a universal story and we aim to recover the main part of our investment from the international market," said A3F prexy Mikel Lejarza, adding that he is in advanced talks with Buenos Aires-based Enrique Maya's American Video Films to handle international rights.

In the U.S., Discovery Channel has ordered up interviews with the miners and their families to be aired Oct. 28 in a special, "Rescued: The Chilean Mine Story." And the PBS series "Nova" will unspool an hourlong documentary, "Emergency Mine Rescue," on Oct. 26.

Riding on the coattails of the event, Spike TV is preparing an original docu-reality skein "Coal" focusing on the lives of West Virginia coal miners. The 10-episode, one-hour program will debut in April.

With the dramatic events continuing to unwind on Wednesday, coverage on News Corp.'s Fox News Channel (6.18 million viewers) outdrew entertainment programs like "Hell's Kitchen" on Fox (6 million) and "Undercovers" on NBC (5.9 million) during the 8 o'clock hour.

CNN, buoyed by its first primetime victory over Fox News in years (on Tuesday), scored 2.67 million total viewers in the 8 p.m. hour vs. a paltry 196,000 on Monday. MSNBC did not carry the final rescues but managed to register a gain nonetheless: 1.1 million total viewers on "Countdown With Keith Olbermann" vs. Monday's 837,000.

Read the full article at:

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118025715.html>

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