

Rookie helmer to tell BELLE tale

Contributed by Liza Perez
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FROM: THR

BY: Borys Kit

- Producer Ed Bass is making his directorial debut with "Belle," the story of Belle Gunness, America's most prolific female serial killer, which is being produced and financed by First Line Media.

Working mainly from her farm base in La Porte County, Ind., around the turn of the 20th century, Gunness left a trail of buried bodies as she allegedly killed two husbands and dozens of suitors to whom she wrote love letters and who arrived at her farm with fat wallets. Several of her stepchildren mysteriously disappeared as well.

Bass co-wrote the script with Eva Mayer, whose family purchased the farmland and discovered some of the love letters.

"It's classic theme: a woman looking for love and never quite finding it," Bass said. "And when she finally does find love, it eludes her."

Producing are First Line chairman Hubert Gibbs and Christopher Beatty.

Bjorn Johnson and George Hamilton are set to co-produce, and Mariana Santo is joining as an associate producer. Harrison Kordestani is exec producing.

In negotiations to produce "Belle" is Nehst Studios, whose Larry Meistrich would produce and Ari Friedman would executive produce.

The producers are eyeing a shoot in Ohio. ∂

First Line also picked up "Ponzi," Bass' script about Charles Ponzi, one of the greatest swindlers in American history.

Bass' producing credits include the ensemble indie movies "Mini's First Time" and "Bobby," and he exec produced the upcoming indie drama "The Killing Jar." He recently penned "The Hunt," with Jeremy Workman directing, which is in preproduction with Michael Mailer films.