

## "Grizzly" gang takes 3D leap of faith

**\$200 million deal to convert TV library to stereoscopic**

By DAVID S. COHEN  
May 18, 2010

While Hollywood ponders when and how to convert library titles to 3D, one content owner is making a leap of faith into the stereoscopic format.

Family and faith-based production company Grizzly Adams Prods. is joining forces with 2D-to-3D conversion company Passmore Labs to convert its entire library, some 700 programs totaling around 500 hours, to stereoscopic 3D. Company says the a project is expected to cost \$200 million over seven years.

That makes it the largest 3D conversion project announced to date, whether measured by number of programs, total hours or cost.

The majors have been sending footage out for tests and pondering when and how to convert library titles to 3D but have been slow to move ahead, in part due to concerns over the number of 3D screens.

Lightstorm Entertainment producer Jon Landau recently told Daily Variety that a 3D version of "Titanic" is "going to happen," though the project has not been officially greenlit and a conversion vendor has not been named. George Lucas has said he will convert the "Star Wars" pics to 3D, and those plans are firming up, though that project, too, has yet to be greenlit.

David Balsiger, senior producer and VP at Grizzly Adams, told Daily Variety: "If you get in on the beginning of the trend, you can get a big piece of the market. If we can get ours done ahead of (the studios) with very little product on the shelf, we should establish ourselves as a pretty good come-to source for family entertainment."

Passmore decided getting in early makes sense and has arranged funding through a combination of private placements and internal financing. The company will split revenue with Grizzly Adams Prods., which is putting up only about \$250,000 but will handle marketing and distribution.



Grizzly Adams Prods. and Passmore Labs have already converted religious doc 'The Fabric of Time' to 3D, while 'Friends of Life' will get a 3D release on homevideo in six weeks.

### MORE ARTICLES:

Oscars' fix for visual effects

Effects draw audience to 'Ghost Whisperer'

Biz discovers it's a cold, cruel twitterverse

TV eyes online, races to save biz model

CBS keen on green initiative

Videogame sales plunge 22% in April

### MOST VIEWED:

Fox announces 2010-2011 schedule

'Law and Order' is over and out

NBC goes on spending spree

Cameron Crowe to direct Fox's 'Zoo'

CBS orders four dramas, two comedies

Manson, Wood to star in slasher pic

The first 20 programs to be converted are being selected now, with 75-100 titles to be converted annually. Balsiger said the initial group will include five faith-based programs, programming on UFOs and some of the company's higher-rated documentaries.

Balsiger said religious networks have also indicated to him that they are looking at starting a 3D channel. "We'll probably be their only supplier," he predicted. Another target market for the venture: megachurches, which are installing 3D-capable projectors.

Greg Passmore of San Diego-based Passmore Labs said, "We're doing it because the Grizzly Adams library is a unique demographic. We think it's an underserved market."

Conversion has already been completed on one title, Shroud of Turin doc "The Fabric of Time." Family-friendly feature "Friends for Life" is due for 3D home video release within six weeks.

Some of the Grizzly Adams library is standard definition and will need to be converted to high-def as well.

The "Grizzly Adams" TV series is not among the first group of programs to get the 3D treatment. However, an original 3D movie reboot, "Grizzly Adams Begins," is on the slate.

Pic is among 18 original features covered under the agreement, all of which will be shot 2D and converted to 3D by Passmore.

Passmore Labs, which has converted the original "Night of the Living Dead," generally specializes in niche pics and programs.

Passmore added that the company is pursuing other niche libraries for future conversions, all aimed at TV and home video. He conceded that the conversion process is very labor intensive and "outrageously expensive for television" at around \$10,000 per minute, though he expects that figure to come down over time.

Passmore added that the project would require "an insane amount of capacity," so company expects to triple its workforce, which is mostly in Manila, with programmers in San Diego and Russia and a sales office in Los Angeles.

Grizzly Adams and Passmore management were encouraged to make this commitment by brisk sales for the first 3D TV units and a projection by Futuresource Consulting that 45% of U.S. households will have a 3D television set in four years.

But Passmore says his company and Grizzly Adams are prepared to wait for their return should the rollout take longer. Passmore said, "This is either the smartest thing or the stupidest thing I've ever done in my life, and it'll probably be 10 years before I know which."

