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Hollywood Films on Terrorism Held Up After Attacks

Photos


[Reuters Photo](#)

By Bob Tourtellotte and Steve Gorman

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Reality hit home in Hollywood on Wednesday as studios delayed release of two major films featuring bombs or terrorists -- including [Arnold Schwarzenegger's](#) ``[Collateral Damage](#)'' -- and yanked ads for "Spider-Man" a day after the deadliest attacks in U.S. history.

Executives at the nation's major television networks, too, reconsidered their fall TV schedules with one, NBC, deciding to postpone fall premieres altogether by at least a week to make way for ongoing news coverage of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon ([news](#) - [web sites](#)), which may have left thousands dead.

Walt Disney Co.'s Touchstone Pictures postponed the September 21 premiere of comedy film ``[Big Trouble](#),'' starring [Tim Allen](#), and AOL Time Warner Inc.'s Warner Bros. delayed its October 5 release of ``Collateral Damage," in which Schwarzenegger goes after terrorists.

Neither studio set new debut dates for the movies.

Based on a novel by Miami-based humorist Dave Barry, ``Big Trouble" follows a group of people who find a mysterious suitcase leading to a terrorist plot revolving around a black-market nuclear bomb, shady businessmen, FBI ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) agents and hit men.

``NATIONAL TRAGEDY" CITED

A two-sentence statement from Touchstone cited the "national tragedy that occurred" as the reason for the delay.

In ``Collateral Damage," Schwarzenegger portrays a fireman who sees his wife and son die in the terrorist bombing of a building. But when he travels to South America to avenge the deaths, he finds himself caught up in political intrigue.

Similarly, Warner Bros. issued a statement citing "yesterday's tragic events" as a reason for its action.

Sony Pictures Entertainment, a division of Japan's Sony Corp ([news](#) - [web sites](#)), pulled from theaters trailers for next May's "Spider-Man" in which bank robbers are caught in a web spun between the World Trade Center towers. Sony also recalled posters in which the towers are shown in a reflection of the comic book hero's eyes.

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On U.S. airwaves, Disney's ABC television network canceled a planned broadcast on Saturday of the 1997 thriller "The Peacemaker," which involves nuclear terrorism.

HUMOR AND ROMANCE INSTEAD

"It just didn't seem appropriate at this time," network spokeswoman Annie Fort said. ABC instead will air the romantic comedy "Hope Floats," starring Sandra Bullock and Harry Connick Jr., and an episode of "America's Funniest Home Videos."

Likewise, Fox is bumping a Sunday broadcast of the 1996 hit film "Independence Day," in which aliens destroy the White House and New York's Empire State Building, and instead will air a repeat of "That '70s Show" and the film comedy "Mrs. Doubtfire," a network spokesman said.

And on Friday, Fox will replace the feature-length "X-Files" movie, which includes a scene of an office building blowing up, with the romantic comedy "Nine Months," starring Hugh Grant and Julianne Moore.

But the biggest development in television came with NBC's announcement to push back its heavily promoted premiere week of new shows to September 24 from the planned September 17.

"In light of the recent tragic events in our country, NBC has decided to postpone the premieres of the network's fall prime-time programs ... Further developments could alter this plan," the network said in a brief statement.

ABC and CBS executives also were contemplating postponing the premieres of returning series and new shows next week due to the heavy demand for news, network officials said.

The smaller Fox network is less affected because its fall lineup follows a more staggered schedule with many new shows not slated to debut for several weeks.

All major networks said they were taking a hard look at their fall shows to safeguard against content that might seem insensitive in light of Tuesday's tragedy.

A number of upcoming shows feature stories that may strike too close to recent events, including several CIA (news - web sites)-themed dramas -- ABC's "Alias," CBS' "The Agency" and Fox's "24."

NBC's fall lineup also includes the espionage-themed new drama "UC Undercover." Another NBC show likely to draw network scrutiny is a five-hour miniseries slated to run across the three editions of NBC's "Law & Order" that centers on an act of terrorism against the United States.

CBS is a unit of Viacom Inc., and Fox is a division of Fox Entertainment Group Inc., which is controlled by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Ltd.

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