entertainment

Thursday, March 31, 1988 O&E

Quality partners

Glemmer, Pace pair up for miniseries, movies

NNIE CLEMMER and Bill Pace, two well-known names in Detroit television, names in Detroit television, two descence on tacking the Holly-tood scence now tacking the Holly-tood scence now taken the Holly-tood scence on the Holly-tood scence on the Holly-tood scence of the Holly-tood scenario and the Holly

ing a network TV mini-series and a feature-film. They have moved their base of op-eralions to Los Angeles but have a third partner, their financial one, in the Degvoit area. He is Southfield en-tergreeur Dick Kughn, president of Longtow. "We're new guys on the block," (Teinmer said during a recent visit to the offices of the Observer & Ex-centic. Pace arrived later, to join him in the interview, where they dis-cussed how their move to Los Ange-les has helped them develop TV and fills projects.

filing projects.

THEIR FIRST production is a mini-series they are co-producing with Lorimar (where "Dallas" and "Paleoncrest" are produced). The series, which will run in two-hour segments two nights on CBS, is about the 1925 murder that in Detroyment of the 1925 murder that in the 1925 murder that in the 1925 murder that an opportunity is see a drama about this same trial, in an original play presented locally (Arthur Beer did the play at the University of Detroit), but Clemmer said that play was not their inspiration. "We had started research the previous year," he said.

Briefly retelling the story,

"We had started research the previous year," he said.

Briefly reteiling the story, Clemmer said it's about a 30-year-old black doctor who wanted a nicer bonde than Paradise Valley and mored into a white area. Racial treats led him to ask his brothers and friends to help him defend the house. Weapons were smuggled in, and when whites rushed the house, behales opened fire, killing and injuring two of the attackers.

Sweet and his friends were put on trial for conspiracy to commit murder, and eventually were acquitted.

The Sweet trial is known in academic circles and to historians, Clemmer pointed out. A network TV dramatization would bring the elements of this important, emotion-charged case into focus with a wide viewing audience.
"Derow come out of retirement

to take the case," he said. The fa-mous defense lawyer had just fin-ished the Leopold-Loch trial and the Scopes Monkey Trial. "Darrow called it the single most important case of his career."

DESCRIBING THE plot implications, Clemmer said, "It's coming to
terms on an influnate black and
white drama, as well as a largescale social drama."
"We originate took it to PBS, but
they already had a Darrow project.
They were doing the life of Darrow."
Clemmer and Pace were told by a
contact that Lorimar was looking
for something special. The partners'
project proved to be what Lorimar
wanted.
"You're going to hear they're not

project proved to be what Lorimar wanted.

"You're going to hear they're not open to quality drama anymore, they (producers) just want slash and trash," said Clemmer, who is grateful that isn't true.

Getting the project off the ground was difficult. "The real test was selling the writer," Clemmer said. They managed to get Hollywood's Joel Ollansky, "a highly respected writer. Once he was committed, CBS went for the deal."

Clemmer said he and Pace bave been in and out of Detroit several times, doing research on the production. Helping them is researcher. Susie Levin of Southfield, who was an intern working with Clemmer when he was at the WJBK-TV show "PM Magazine."

"NOW JOEL is writing the script.

sweet, a black doctor in Detroit who was defended by Clarecton the property of the state of the state of the property of the state of the property of the state of the sta



Former metro Detroiters Ronnie Clemmer (left) and Bill Pace are vice presidents of Longbow Productions in California. They are working with Lorimar on a miniseries on the murder trial of

Another Longbow project is "P.J. and the Dragon," a TV movie based on the story of a Detroit family whose son was striken with lieukem-la. Detroiter Harvey Ovshinsky has written the script. Ovshinsky also helped develop the Darrow mini-series, writing the original treatment on which the story is based.

SINCE MOVING to California, lemmer and Pace have had to lis-Clemmer and Pace have had to listen to the gibes of some Detroit critics who wonder if they can contend with the lifestyle of La-La Land. "If you're going to be in the Hollywood game, you have to be out there," Clemmer emphasized. "If you're happy with what you're doing, you're happy no matter where you are."

Every time he is in Detroit, Clemmer visits Detroit Country Day School in Beverly Hills, where he used to teach English, direct drama and coach football. He sees Don

Productions in Cantorina. Iney miniseries on the murder trial of Craig, who is an old friend there, as well as other teachers and students. "I came back" or a 10th remote of the class of

said. "It's just an exhaustive process."

One of the surprises of research emerged when they talked to an 80-year-old man who was a friend of year-old man who was a friend of when Sweet and other friends got to gether to talk about defending the house, not took place. During Pace's years as a producer and director in Detroit, he worked at V studios "on the cutting dege" at various times for four different TV studios "on the cutting dege" at various times for four different TV studios" on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios "on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios" on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios "on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios" on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios "on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios "on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios "on the cutting dege." at various times for four different TV studios "on the cutting object happen." Pace: "Tus a partnership in the truest sense of the word. I would not all to the true to the process without Romine as a "Alt to a people knew me from "La-rious times for four the true to the process without Romine as a "Alt to a people knew me from "La-rious times for four different TV and the process without Romine as a "Alt to a people knew me from "La-rious times for four different TV and the process without Romine as a "Alt to a people knew me from "La-rious times for four different TV and the process without Romine as a "Alt to a people knew me from "La-rious times for four different TV and the process without Romine as a "Alt to a people knew me from "La-rious times for four different TV and the process without Romine to the process witho

Dr. Ossian Sweet, for CBS-TV, and are raising money to produce a feature film called "Montana."

HIS BACKGROUND didn't signifi-cantly alter the toughness of break-ing into the L.A. market, however. "A lot of people knew me from "La-teNite America," be said, "It was carried on the network in Los Ange-les, but it gave us no real edge. We

mg process without rolline as a partner."

What makes it especially rough is that "so many people say, "No," Pace said.

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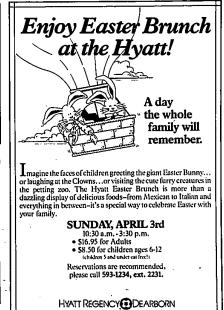


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