

PLAYBACK

Frankie goes to Vancouver

by: Denis Seguin

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Academy Award winner Halle Berry has begun principal photography in Vancouver on the \$20-million psychological thriller *Frankie and Alice*. Directed by *White Noise* helmer Geoffrey Sax, the film is produced by Berry alongside her longtime manager Vincent Cirrincione and Hassain Zaidi of Toronto-based Access Motion Pictures. Simon DeKarcic is also producing.

Vancouver's Brightlight Pictures is line-producing the film, with Brightlight principal Shawn Williamson as executive producer. Toronto-based salesco Cinesavvy, which will be shopping the picture at the upcoming AFM, is handling worldwide rights.

Berry stars as Frankie, a woman who learns she suffers from multiple personality disorder. As her condition deteriorates, one personality becomes stronger and then threatens to destroy her: Alice, a violent white racist. Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgard plays the doctor who is working to save her.

The screenplay is by Mary King, Marko King and Jonathan Watters. Thomas Sigel (*The Usual Suspects*, *X2*) is DOP. Apart from *White Noise*, which grossed over \$100 million worldwide, Sax has made a splash in his native U.K. directing telefilms for the BBC, including *Tipping the Velvet* and a contemporary interpretation of *Othello*.

Cinesavvy managing director Abhi Rastogi says the project is financed completely through private equity, though he declines to identify the sources of financing. He says that although the company had tipped the production at Cannes, the AFM would be its official market debut. Filming continues through mid-December.

Founded by Zaidi, Access is currently in post on *Cell 213*, a supernatural horror-thriller directed by Stephen Kay (*Boogeyman*). Access is also behind *Phantom Punch*, the Sonny Liston biopic directed by Robert Townsend and starring Ving Rhames. Both projects were also backed entirely by private equity.