

Scripps Networks partners with Nomadic Pictures on new original movie, ‘The Horseman’

Emmy® winners Barry Pepper and Kiefer Sutherland star in Nomadic’s original scripted production directed by Rod Lurie, with principal photography underway on the feature-length Western

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ATLANTA – Scripps Networks and Nomadic Pictures have announced production on “The Horseman,” a feature-length Western slated for global release in early 2027.

Directed by Rod Lurie (“The Contender,” “The Last Castle”), written by Emmy® winner Barry Pepper (“Saving Private Ryan,” “True Grit”) and Ed Gass-Donnelly and produced by Nomadic’s Chad Oakes and Michael Frislev (“Hell On Wheels”, “Broken Trail”, “ Fargo”), Pepper and Lurie, “The Horseman” unfolds in the late 1800s West, where America’s burgeoning demand for illumination sparked a transformative oil rush.

Pepper stars as “The Man,” a grieving father and husband devastated by the loss of his family who takes in a young colt, raising him as his sole companion. Over time, the two develop an extraordinary and profound bond. When separated against their will, The Man must go to desperate measures to reunite with the only family he has left.

Emmy® winner Kiefer Sutherland (“24,” “Designated Survivor”) joins cast members Pepper and C. Thomas Howell (“1923,” “The Outsiders”), Tzi Ma (“Rush Hour,” “24”, “Mulan”) and Ryan Michelle Bathe (“Boston Legal,” “First Wives Club”). Sutherland plays the film’s formidable antagonist – a narcissistic aristocrat consumed with demonstrating his superiority through intellect, wealth and violence. Educated, ruthless and lethal with a pistol, he pursues land and power with callous disregard for anyone who dares obstruct his path.

“The Horseman” is produced by Nomadic Pictures in association with Peace River Pictures and Scripps Networks, with principal photography currently shooting on location in Canada. The film will be presented on several Scripps Networks, including the western focused Grit – Scripps’ premier over-the-air broadcast network celebrating bold, brave and legendary action heroes. Nomadic Pictures retains the global distribution rights to “The Horseman,” partnering with Scripps on domestic U.S rights.

Creative Vision

“The nostalgic Westerns of my youth – ‘The Good, The Bad & The Ugly,’ ‘Pale Rider,’ ‘The Outlaw Josey Wales,’ and later ‘Unforgiven’ – were straightforward stories with lean dialogue, often featuring mysterious drifters with no name,” said Pepper. “These characters, embodied by my childhood heroes Clint Eastwood and Gary Cooper, served as the template for ‘The Man’ at the center of our film. The story for ‘The Horseman’ crystallized during the filming of ‘True Grit,’ where I witnessed firsthand the extraordinary intuitive and sensitive nature of horses – how they react to the smallest movement, sense your tension, your heartbeat, the turn of your head, the shift of your hips. I understood why wranglers develop such profound bonds with these magnificent creatures and wanted to bring that to life for modern fans of classic Westerns.”

“We have an immensely passionate audience on Grit who care deeply about this Western genre,” said Adam Harman, Scripps’ senior vice president of programming. “‘The Horseman’ aligns with what we look for in a film for our audiences; it’s a truly exceptional project that will connect both those who have a love of classic Western films and those who have rediscovered the genre through modern storytelling driving a cultural resurgence. Nomadic Pictures has a proven track record of creating award winning content, particularly in this genre. Combined with Barry’s vision, Rod Lurie directing and a strong cast led by Barry and Kiefer, we believe ‘The Horseman’ has all the ingredients to become a modern Western classic – one that audiences will return to for years with repeat viewing.”

“There are few things that make a director’s bucket list faster than a Western,” said Lurie. “Barry Pepper’s beautiful screenplay achieves two things at once. It is both a fully classical Western story and also a supremely emotional thing – a gorgeous study on enduring grief. With words like the ones that Barry has provided and the acting talent in our movie, my job has been made not just easy, but also blissful.”

“The Scripps team has been an amazing partner from day one,” said Nomadic Pictures Co-Chairman Chad Oakes. “To be the catalyst in bringing Barry Pepper’s amazing script to life makes this even more personal. Reteaming with our good friend and director Rod Lurie and DP Craig Wroblewski completes this incredible project, which we feel audiences will love.”

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About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP) is a diversified media company focused on creating connection. As one of the nation’s largest local TV broadcasters, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of about 60 stations in 40 markets. Scripps reaches households across the U.S. with national news outlet Scripps News and popular entertainment brands ION, Bounce, Grit, ION Mystery, ION Plus and Laff. Scripps is the nation’s largest holder of broadcast spectrum. Scripps Sports serves professional and college sports leagues, conferences and teams with local market depth and national broadcast reach of up to 100% of TV households. Founded in 1878, Scripps is the steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, and its longtime motto is: “Give light and the people will find their own way.”

About Nomadic Pictures

Chad Oakes & Mike Frislev founded Nomadic Pictures in 1995. Their feature film debut, “Hugo Pool” (Sean Penn, Robert Downey Jr.) was the audience’s favourite at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival. Since then, they have developed, financed and produced over Ninety Seven (97) television & film projects worth a combined \$1.5 Billion in production and remains one of the most active production companies in North America.

In addition to their Seventy-One (71) Emmy Nominations and countless awards, Oakes and Frislev have won Three Emmy Awards, including “*The Incredible Mrs. Ritchie*” (Gena Rowlands, James Caan, Kevin Zegers) (Showtime), AMC’s first scripted Original mini-series, “*Broken Trail*” (Robert Duvall, Thomas Haden Church), and an Emmy®, Golden Globe®, Television Critic’s Award and a Producers Guild Award for Best Mini-series with “*Fargo*” (Billy Bob Thorton, Martin Freeman, Colin Hanks, Alison Tolman) (FX/MGM). Some of Nomadic’s other notable productions are “*House of David*” (Amazon/Wonder), “*One Mile*” (Republic/Kapital), “*My Life With The Walter Boys*” (Sony/Netflix), “*Wilderness*” (Amazon), “*Hell On Wheels*” (AMC), “*Van Helsing*”, “*The Order*”, “*The I-Land*”, “*Wu Assassin’s*”, “*Ghost Wars*”, “*The Imperfects*” (all for Netflix), “*Copper*” (BBC America) “*LAND*” (Focus Features) and “*Klondike*” (Discovery).

2026 will see the release of “*House of David*” Season 2 (Amazon/Wonder) and Andrew Haigh’s CDN/UK feature “*A Long Winter*” (Mubi/Film4).

Kiefer Sutherland is represented by CAA, Entertainment 360, attorney Jamie Feldman and Wolf Kasteler Public Relations.

Barry Pepper is represented by Paradigm.

C. Thomas Howell is represented by Innovative Artists and Management Production Entertainment.

Michelle Ryan Bathe is represented by Principal Entertainment LA, The Kohner Agency and Gang, Tyre, Ramer, Brown & Passman.

Rod Lurie is represented by Ryan Saul at Evoke Entertainment and Gang, Tyre, Ramer, Brown & Passman.