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Joe O'Connell's
On Location

**From stick figures to stars,
Austin's latest television
prospects**

■ **While some film projects are at the ready from Austin names, there's lots of action on projects slated for TV, too**

By Joe O'Connell
Special to the American-Statesman

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The Austin film scene has long awaited the next Robert Rodriguez or Richard Linklater. The latest contender is an Argentina-raised engineer who has penned a pair of software books and owes his budding success to the Internet.

Jeffrey Travis, 32, is on the leading edge of the Lone Star State's budding small-screen movement. Next week he'll shoot a few sample scenes for "Except for Danny," a potential Fox television show. A full-fledged pilot may follow, and if that's picked up, expect the series to be shot locally.

Meanwhile, Christine Lahti is signed on for "Jack and Bobby," the WB series pilot shooting in Austin starting next week with Lahti's husband, Thomas Schlamme ("The West Wing"), producing.

And in Dallas, NBC is gearing up for "HUB," a high-profile pilot featuring Heather Locklear and Blair Underwood in an airport setting. Unfortunately, word is HBO may pass on Linklater's Austin-shot pilot, "\$5.15/Hr." Calls to his office to confirm were not returned.



Jeffrey Travis is aiming for a Fox pilot.

This Picture?" which includes flash animation by David Young, and gave Travis a call.

"You always hear the hype about the Internet changing things — blah, blah, blah — but in this case it really happened," Travis said.

Travis, a descendant of Alamo hero William B. Travis and the son of missionaries, is trying



Robert Rodriguez has 'Sin City' and 'A Princess of Mars' in the works.

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to stick to his guns as the network weighs in with script suggestions. The final product may end up in Fox's Sunday night lineup of quirky family shows. This one features a family of prodigies and 4-year-old Danny, the average son. A stick figure drawing comes to life and tries to help the boy, but often creates chaos instead. One sample scene involves an exploding television. If the pilot fizzles, Travis vows to remain steadfast about a film career, while keeping his day job as a software consultant.

Big screen news: Linklater is indeed set to direct an adaptation of Philip K. Dick's sci-fi tale "A Scanner Darkly," according to Production Weekly. Look for filming in Austin and a return to Bob Sabiston's rotoscope animation used in "Waking Life." Steven Soderbergh and George Clooney are producing for Section Eight films.

Robert Byington ("Olympia") wrote and will direct "Ghetto Blue" in Austin this summer with a cast including Kevin Corrigan, Paul Rudd, Stephen Root, Jon Seda, Tom Guiry and Will Patton. Tom Richmond, who shot "Love and a .45," will be behind the camera.

"The King," which is shooting in Austin and Corpus Christi with Gael García Bernal, Sam Shepard and Daryl Hannah starring, is seeking funny and embarrassing home videos to use in the film. Send your worst to corpusllc@sbcglobal.net. Those chosen get to visit the set for lunch with cast and crew.

"Friday Night Lights" has turned out the lights in Austin and moved on to Odessa. After Odessa, the film shoots for a few weeks at the Astrodome in Houston.

Mike Judge's futuristic comedy "3001" has opened an Austin office and is slated to start shooting next month.

No confirmation from Rodriguez's corner, but rumor is his soon-to-be-filming noirish "Sin City" will feature a unique semi-animated style. The quietly busy auteur also has the Edgar Rice Burroughs science-fiction classic "A Princess of Mars" on the burner.

Got a tip about the Texas film industry? Send it to Joeonlocation@hotmail.com

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