

# Chinese Investor Puts Money on Film Blockbusters

**MOVIES:** Sylvester Stallone projects could benefit from billionaire's backing.

**R**AMBO could be heading to China under a film financing deal being negotiated by Sylvester Stallone.

Chinese billionaire Dr. Shi Jianxiang has been in Los Angeles for the past week examining movie investment opportunities, and said he was interested in backing Stallone's next two action projects, "The Expendables 4" and "Last Blood," the final film in the "Rambo" franchise, under certain conditions.

"I'm willing to provide 60 percent of the financing so long as some Chinese element can be added to the films, meaning Chinese actors or locations," he said. "Negotiations are continuing."

Shi, 48, is a major player in Shanghai media, with thriving film, TV, book publishing and other media interests along with production and distribution outlets.



Shi

The businessman says he loves movies, but puts commerce over art. Asked if he would rather win an Oscar or own a hit movie franchise, he laughed. "The second one, of course."

Shi said he has also taken meetings in Los Angeles with veteran movie executive Mike Medavoy and Kimberley Kates, chief execu-



Abiding: Bill Shore, left, Susan Feniger, Mary Sue Milliken and Jeff Bridges.

tive of Hollywood's **Big Screen Entertainment Group**, which is developing projects in China.

## The Dude

Movie star **Jeff Bridges** is calling on local business leaders to join his campaign to pressure politicians into releasing funds to provide breakfasts at school for low-income kids.

"I'm not ending childhood hunger on my own. It's going to take all of us – CEOs, restaurateurs, politicians and performers like me – to turn around the fact that 2.2 million children in California aren't getting the breakfast they need at school," said the activist actor, a spokesman for the No Kid Hungry campaign, founded by **Bill Shore**.

"We are all connected to powerful people and we can affect them, inspire them and work with them to help the vulnerable kids in our state that need healthy meals every day," Bridges added.

Rallying fellow chefs and restaurateurs in Los Angeles behind the effort is **Mary Sue Milliken**, co-owner with **Sue Feniger** of the **Border Grill** chain.

"I'm reaching out to my culinary industry colleagues to ask them to stand up for the kids by advocating directly to California's leaders to demand that federal funds be made available to feed kids in our backyard," she said. "After all, today's kids are tomorrow's workforce and by making them strong and healthy we can achieve a hunger-free generation."

## Sweet-Toothed Stars

Chocolatier to the stars **John Kelly Chocolates** is attributing a 15 percent sales growth since last year to famous customers such as **Leonardo DiCaprio**, **Gwen Stefani**, **Steven Tyler** and **Neil Patrick Harris** raving about its high-end sweets.

Even in a weight-obsessed city like ours, a fattening product like chocolate can still thrive in celebrity circles, judging by the way Oscar nominees were scooping up boxes recently at the **GBK Academy Awards** gifting suite in Beverly Hills.

"Stars wouldn't scarf down a big pie, but a little chocolate isn't going to hurt and requires just a couple more minutes on the treadmill," said **Kelly**

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**Green**, who co-founded the confectionary company with **John Kelson** 10 years ago.

"The stars tell their friends and, in some cases, their Twitter followers about us and it's all helped raise our profile," said Kelson, whose company has stores in Santa Monica and Hollywood, with their chocolate factory in the back of the latter.

## Above the Line

When "Big Hero 6" won the Oscar for best animated film there were big cheers at CalArts, where winning director **Don Hall** was once a student.

He recently visited the college and advised aspiring moviemakers to never lose touch with the audience, saying, "A storyteller without an audience is basically a crazy old hobo who babbles to himself."

This latest success is being used in a student recruitment drive for the institution, burnishing the reputation of CalArts, whose alumni have generated more than \$31.5 billion in box-office grosses since 1985. ... Pop culture cable TV channel **Pop**, a joint venture of **CBS Corp.** and **Lions Gate Entertainment**, has promoted **Brad Schwartz** to president of the network, giving him control over business operations as well as creative issues. Current shows on Pop include comedy "Schitt's Creek" and reality show "Rock This Boat: New Kids on the Block."

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