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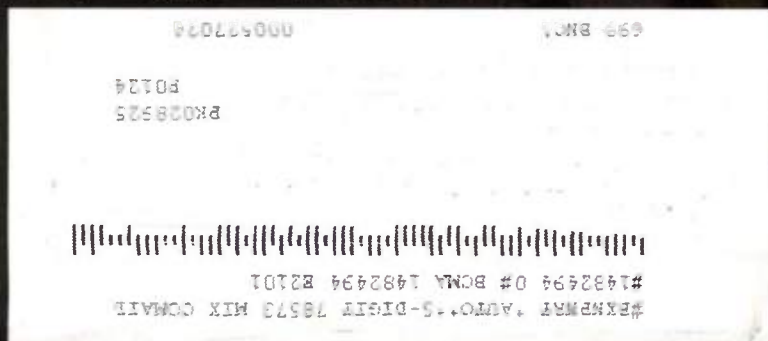
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Anchor, CBS News Detroit

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2022 STATION AWARDS

LOCAL LUMINARIES

Broadcaster of the Year
Debra OConnell of Disney
headlines our group of
behind-the-scenes and on-air
station standouts



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+
CBS NEWS DETROIT
REVS UP
FOR MOTOR
CITY DEBUT

WWJ anchor
Shaina Humphries



• WHY THE NEW
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10 COVER STORY:

'B+C' STATION AWARDS

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CBS station WWJ Detroit will get a unique opportunity in the new year: Launching a big-market local newsroom it built from scratch.
By Michael Malone

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By Paige Albinak

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Disney Media & Entertainment Distribution president of networks Debra O'Connell at the 2022 Gracie Awards.



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34 SYNDICATION

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FUTURE

Connectors
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Dad Does Sports for CBS Station, Daughter Anchors at CBS News

Ronnie Duncan is on the local beat, and Jericka Duncan is on the national one



By Michael Malone
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When CBS News Detroit launches in January, viewers in the Motor City will get a healthy dose of

the Duncan family on their air. Ronnie Duncan is the sports anchor at CBS News Detroit, as the WWJ news operation is known (see Programming, page 26), while his daughter, Jericka Duncan, is a national correspondent at CBS News and anchors CBS Weekend News on Sundays.

Ronnie's career has taken him all over the country, including stations in Philadelphia, Cleveland and Phoenix, and Jericka has childhood memories of visiting her father at his various outlets. She was too young to remember when Oprah Winfrey, then of WJZ Baltimore, held her as a baby (Dad was WJZ sports reporter and weekend sports anchor). But she reminded Winfrey of their connection decades before when Winfrey visited CBS Mornings in recent years.

Jericka's daughter now accompanies Mom to her job on occasion. "As a single mother, it's not a big deal to bring my child with me to work when I can," Duncan said, "because that's what my father did with me."

Jericka, 39, initially wanted to direct music videos, but also saw how much her father enjoyed delivering sports and, at times, news. "Even with his crazy hours, the job afforded him opportunities to see me and my brother and sister at our plays, football games, track meets," Jericka said. "I thought, if my Dad can do

it, I can probably do it. And he seems like he has a lot of fun with his job."

Before coming on board at CBS News in 2013, Jericka worked at KYW Philadelphia and WIVB Buffalo, among other local outlets. Ronnie points out that his daughter occasionally filled in on the sports side.

Ronnie, 64, was drawn to WWJ Detroit for what he called the autonomy the sports anchor position represented.

WWJ Detroit's Ronnie Duncan and CBS Weekend News anchor Jericka Duncan have made TV news a family affair.

Unlike many veteran sports anchors, he can shoot and edit his own segments. "You get a chance to just go," he said, speaking from an event involving the Motor City Cruise, an NBA G League affiliate of the Detroit Pistons. "I don't have to go to the assignment desk. I just pick up a camera, go, do the story, and do the interview afterwards."

A Proud Dad

He's extraordinarily proud to see Jericka on the network news, and to think that, on Sundays, she takes the seat that Walter Cronkite occupied for so long. "To know that she has risen to that level — we know as a family, it's a blessing," he said. "And we're very proud."

Ronnie has been a vital role model for Jericka, but he's quick to credit his wife for passing along her grace under pressure. "She gets her moxie, her coolness and her calmness from Yvonne Griffin Duncan," Ronnie said. "When you see Jericka on TV, it's not my talent — it's her mom's."

Jericka said her mother and father are the two people she trusts more than anyone else in terms of career decisions. But their advice is not limited to the workplace. "It's a blessing to be able to talk shop, but also just talk about life," she said. "It doesn't always have to be about the business."

Ronnie has one more milestone he'd like to reach before he retires — to be at the anchor desk, and kick it over to Jericka on the network news. It might sound something like this: "Jericka, tell us what's coming up next on the CBS Evening News," Ronnie said. "Well, Dad ..." ●



Jericka Duncan



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AMC's *The Walking Dead*

Nantz, O'Brien, Ray, 'Walking Dead' Tapped for 'B+C' Hall of Fame

31st group of industry leaders, stars to be honored May 3 in New York



By Michael Malone
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@BCMikMalone

Jim Nantz, Rachael Ray, Soledad O'Brien and *The Walking Dead* will share the spotlight with on-air stars and impactful executives at the Broadcasting+Cable Hall of Fame gala at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in New York City on May 3.

"We are thrilled to once again honor our industry's most accomplished pioneers, creators and innovators and leaders," said Bill McGorry, chairman of the Broadcasting+Cable Hall of Fame. "These individuals all share a common bond — their collective vision, remarkable achievements and unbreakable will to succeed have changed our business forever and brought it to another level. We look forward to recognizing these worthy individuals on May 3 as we welcome them as the newest inductees into the B+C Hall of Fame — our industry's highest honor."

The full class is: **George G. Beasley** (1932-2021), founder, Beasley Media Group, and **Caroline Bea-**



The 2023 inductees include (clockwise, from l.): Jim Nantz of CBS Sports, chef and talk-show host Rachael Ray and journalist Soledad O'Brien.

sley, CEO, Beasley Media Group; **Matthew Bond**, chairman, content distribution, NBCUniversal; **Ray Cole**, president and chief operating officer, Citadel Communications; **Frank Comerford**, chief revenue officer & president, commercial operations, NBCUniversal Owned Stations; **Ray Hopkins**, president, U.S. networks distribution, Paramount Global; **Wonya Lucas**, president and CEO, Hallmark Media; **Soledad O'Brien**, CEO, Soledad O'Brien Productions; **Rachael**

Ray, host, Rachael Ray; **Deborah Roberts**, ABC News senior national affairs correspondent and contributing anchor for 20/20; **Al Roker**, weather and feature anchor, Today, co-host of Today third hour; and **James Thompson** (1947-2022), past president, Broadcasters Foundation of America.

Jim Nantz of CBS Sports gets the Lifetime Achievement Award and AMC's *The Walking Dead* wins the Iconic Show Award.

It is the 31st Hall of Fame event. More than 400 honorees have been inducted.

A portion of the night's proceeds is donated to The Broadcasters Foundation of America, which provides grants to industry colleagues and their families who are in acute need. The Paley Center for Media is also a beneficiary.

Honorees will be profiled in the April issue of B+C Multichannel News. For sponsorship, tables and ticket information, contact Jessica Wolin at jessica.wolin@futurenet.com, 212-685-4233 or www.bchalloffame.com. ●



THE WATCHMAN

Senior content producer Michael Malone's look at the programming scene



By Michael Malone
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@BCMikeMalone

'Jack' Is Back On Prime Video

Season three of Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan is on Amazon Prime Video December 21. Ryan is a CIA case officer in Rome who gets tipped off about a secret plan to restore the Soviet Empire. Ryan sets out to confirm the tip and gets wrongly implicated in a larger conspiracy. Accused of treason, he's on the run from the CIA.

"He's doing what Jack Ryan does so well — believe in himself, believe in what he's uncovered and discovered," executive producer Vaun Wilmott said. "Bad guys are carrying out a plot. He believes in [the tip] and goes after it."

John Krasinski plays Ryan and is an executive producer, too. Wilmott singled out Krasinski, formerly Jim on *The Office*, for helping "shape the world, the storyline and the episodes."

That, and he inhabits Ryan quite nicely. "He brings a real humanity, a likeability, a believability to the character," said Wilmott.

The show shot all over Europe, including



Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan

Italy, Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria.

Wendell Pierce plays CIA officer James Greer and Michael Kelly portrays former CIA officer Mike November. There's plenty of intense action, but Wilmott likes the quiet scenes, too.

Asked about a season three highlight, he mentioned "when things slow down and there's a fun moment between friends."

'City Island' Has Noo Yawk Accent

PBS Kids premieres *City Island*, a series of animated shorts for early elementary-school children, on December 26. The title shares its name with a waterfront neighborhood in the Bronx, but creator Aaron

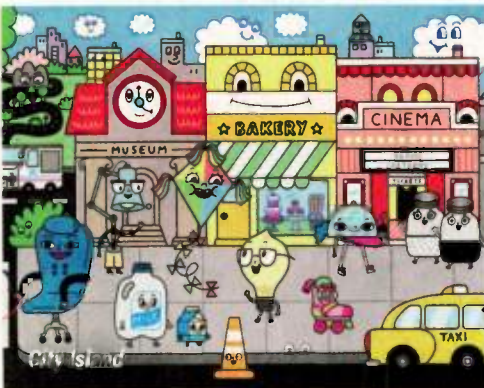
Augenblick says *City Island* is its own burg. That's not to say New York has not been an influence. "I have great, great love for New York City," said Augenblick, who runs Augenblick Studios in Brooklyn. "As I created the idea for *City Island*, it bloomed into a love letter for this city."

Augenblick stressed that *City Island*'s influences don't come from New York alone. "New York is definitely a big inspiration," he said, "but the whole country is an inspiration."

The shorts star Watt, a little lightbulb with big ideas. Watt meets members of the community and learns about how they make the city run, exploring locations such as the library, airport and museum.

Augenblick cited *Sesame Street*, *The Muppets* and *Peanuts* as influences. He mentioned how *Sesame* taught kids valuable lessons without them necessarily realizing they were learning. "When I watched *Sesame* as a kid, I just thought I was watching an awesome show," he said. "I wasn't thinking I'd turned on the show to learn my ABCs and learn how to count."

Viewers may see some New York architecture, geography and attitude in *City Island*. Said Augenblick, "The show is New York City on its very, very best day." ●



WATCH THIS ...



When Christmas Was Young

Sheryl Crow is all over holiday movie *When Christmas Was Young* on CBS and Paramount Plus. It follows a music manager, played by Tyler Hilton, in desperate need of a hit song, who falls for a singer-songwriter (Karen David) as he attempts to secure rights to a Christmas song she wrote years ago. Crow exec produces and wrote the title song. On December 23, *Glass Onion* premieres on Netflix. The follow-up to *Knives Out*, the movie sees Benoit Blanc return for a juicy whodunit at a lavish estate on a Greek



Glass Onion

island. Daniel Craig is in the cast with Edward Norton, Janelle Monáe and Kathryn Hahn. On January 3, *Will Trent* debuts on ABC. Trent is a special agent in the Georgia Bureau of Investigations. He was abandoned at birth. With the GBI, he's making sure no one is abandoned. Ramon Rodriguez stars. On January 4, *Star Wars: The Bad Batch* premieres on Disney Plus. The animated series follows the experimental clones introduced in *The Clone Wars* as they find their way in a rapidly changing galaxy. On January 8, *All Creatures Great and Small* starts season three on PBS. The show, based on the memoir by veterinarian James Herriot, is part of *Masterpiece*. Nicholas Ralph plays the vet.



Star Wars: The Bad Batch

Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan: Attila Szvaczek/PrimeVideo; City Island: PBS Kids; Christmas Was Young: CBS; Glass Onion: Netflix; Star Wars: The Bad Batch: Disney Plus



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On May 3, the industry will come together for the prestigious, annual Broadcasting + Cable Hall of Fame Awards Dinner. The celebration is a salute to the pioneers, the innovators, the torch carriers and stars of the media who have made exceptional contributions to the industry throughout their careers.

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LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Jim Nantz

Sports Commentator
CBS Sports



Soledad O'Brien

CEO
Soledad O'Brien Productions



Rachael Ray

Host
Rachael Ray



Deborah Roberts

ABC News Senior National Affairs Correspondent and Contributing Anchor for 20/20
ABC News



Al Roker

Weather and Feature Anchor, TODAY; Co-Host of 3rd Hour, TODAY
NBCUniversal



James Thompson

Past President
Broadcasters Foundation of America

Iconic Show Award

THE
WALKING DEAD

AMC NETWORKS



O'CONNELL MAKES MOST OF ABC LOCAL, NATIONAL BRANDS

2022 'B+C' Broadcaster of the Year sets a standard for local TV

DEBRA O'CONNELL DISNEY MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRIBUTION



By Michael Malone
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[@BCMikMalone](https://twitter.com/BCMikMalone)

Debra O'Connell is president of networks for Disney Media & Entertainment Distribution, where her duties include P&L oversight of all Disney linear channels, as well as business planning, network/channel commercial marketing and audience strategy for the ABC network, its owned stations and cable networks that include Disney Channel, ESPN Networks, FX Networks and National Geographic.

ABC Owned Television Stations is a peerless group, seizing the lion's share of ratings points and viewer loyalty in its eight markets, and earning the division B+C's Station Group of the Year honors in 2022.

O'Connell took on the expansive role in late

2020, following her stint as WABC New York president and general manager. She's also chair of the International Radio & Television Society (IRTS), and is on the board of directors for the TVB and The Broadway Association.

She spoke with B+C about her 2022 highlights, how broadcast stays relevant in an increasingly mobile world and what she's looking out for in 2023. An edited transcript follows.



Rita García, Jacob Rascon, Elita Loresca and Samica Knight deliver the news for ABC-owned KTRK Houston.

B+C: What drew you to the president of networks position a couple of years ago?

Debra O'Connell: It was the perfect elevation and transition, all at the right time. What drew me to this role was the opportunity to take my, at that time, 23 years of experience across Disney and almost 30 years across the industry. You think about how your skill set has prepared you for an opportunity like the one that was in front of me, meaning I had both the business and creative and content sides. I had an opportunity to continue to keep the No. 1 station in the country [WABC New York], and this incredible team, as part of my purview, as well as having the opportunity to work across our networks again.

Thinking about the businesses that had so many similarities and adjacent opportunities, it was a very attractive opportunity for me to consider.

B+C: How did running WABC prepare you for this position?

DO: When you're leading a television station,

especially one with the size and the market scope of WABC in New York, and also have the opportunity to lead a national syndicated show, *Live with Kelly and Ryan*, you think about the fact that you're sitting in multiple spaces — everything from news, from original content development, long form and short form. We had just launched our CTV apps while I was at WABC. Touching every platform, as well as working extremely closely with our distribution team because of our content sales and distribution with *Live with Kelly and Ryan*, and also the national efforts there ... The fact that New York is such an important market in terms of driving our network business, whether it's ABC Entertainment or ABC News — working closely with those groups and also having the opportunity to be part of The Walt Disney Company, we would tap into telling the stories around the stories that were being told. It was great access to content, and having that wide breadth and depth of experiences and touchpoints, as well as running the P&L for the station and the entire business operations — it prepares you to do that more broadly, either taking those best practices and working across various groups, or being able to collaborate in a really deep way with partners across the organization and the industry.

B+C: How do you ensure that the networks have the same presence for users on the go as they do for linear viewers?

DO: We have very robust TV everywhere platforms. Our ABC app actually gives you access to a variety of content opportunities. As an authenticated user, you can watch us live, and we were the first broadcaster to be live inside of a mobile on-the-go platform. At the same time, we have offerings for those that are not authenticated. News is something that we want our communities to have access to at any given time.

We are constantly improving and looking at our user experience inside of ABC News and ABC Owned Television Stations. Earlier this year, we launched a few efforts to make sure that we are connected with our audiences wherever they may be or how they choose to be served. One was our 24/7 ABC Owned Television Stations streaming channels across our eight markets. We developed a really great partnership in terms of programming and scheduling and content windowing between ABC News Live and ABC Owned Stations. Inside of Hulu, if you are in any



Mark Reinertson/Future Publishing



The last several years have been somewhat challenging, from a news-coverage perspective, because there are many shifts and turns.”

of our eight markets, you have an ABC News Live channel that gives you the best of both national and local news.

We’re constantly looking at ways that our consumers want to connect with us in any space, and certainly the opportunity to connect with them on the go through a variety of different access points. We want to make sure that they have the opportunity to engage with us, to get information from us, for us to entertain them.

B+C: What are you most proud of in terms of your portfolio this year?

DO: First, the team. The entire team, across not only the networks group, but the entire company, because it is a team sport.

Second, and almost tied with first, our strength, our No. 1 positioning against our competitive set, in each of the areas of focus that we have across our networks, across ABC Owned Television Stations. We know that we’re serving our communities and our audiences the way they want to receive us, because they’re engaging with us.

The fact that we continue to have growth in live entertainment — everything from year-to-year increases in the Oscars, the CMA Awards, *New Year’s Rockin’ Eve* — we have a really great opportunity to continue to showcase our strengths. When you think about sports, we are experiencing our high-water mark over the last three years across ESPN and ESPN2, and our ABC Sports portfolio as well.

We have the largest-growing cable network, FXX. We serve our audience with a very specific programming strategy that we developed around adult animation, and that’s given [FXX] incredible growth this year.

B+C: When you look ahead to 2023, what’s the biggest challenge for broadcast networks?

DO: Environment. The last several years have

been somewhat challenging, from a news-coverage perspective, because there are many shifts and turns. At times it feels like a scripted narrative, as if we were actually creating a series like what we’re living through. Health care is part of it. You’re covering really challenging moments for communities, which affect everybody who works for you and affects the long-term ability to continue to serve. But these teams are resilient across the entire industry.

And then competition. I don’t see it as something that takes over the strong position that we have as broadcasters and our networks group. It’s share of attention. We want to continue to make sure that we’re providing the highest quality and continue to be the best in the business, because consumers have choice. We need to make sure that we are fulfilling their value proposition. That’s more of a continued challenge in a positive way.

B+C: Tell me about your efforts to mentor young executives.

DO: One of my favorite quotes is, life begins at the end of your comfort zone. As opportunities come, some executives or some who are aspiring to be executives are often concerned with, do they have the right qualifications? I encourage those to consider not only elevations, but job expansions where possible, meaning, is there an opportunity for a budding executive to take sometimes a lateral move to grow their expertise? I’ve done that several times.

We’re very fortunate to work for The Walt Disney Company. Our access to opportunities is limitless. There’s no better place to become a student of the business and there’s no better place to open up opportunities to expand not only your knowledge, but to raise your hand for stretch assignments so that you can lean into different opportunities. It gives you a chance to realize what you love, and maybe what you don’t love.

There’s nothing that is more rewarding to me than to see young potential executives continuing to grow and being a part of that. Maybe they’ve taken a bit of your advice and it’s helped them throughout the course of their career.

I also try to remind people that they should always throw kindness like confetti. ●



Market leader WABC’s *Eyewitness News This Morning* team (l. to r.): Traffic reporter Heather O’Rourke, anchors Ken Rosato and Shirleen Allicot, and meteorologist Sam Champion.

Disney CONGRATULATES



Debra O'Connell

BROADCASTING & CABLE'S
BROADCASTER OF THE YEAR

How Chad Matthews Gets Even More From Standout ABC Stations

Helped leading big-market stations extend their domain into digital

STATION GROUP OF THE YEAR ABC OWNED TELEVISION STATIONS



By Michael Malone
michael.malone@futurenet.com
@BCMikMalone

The ABC Owned Television Stations, including WABC New York, KABC Los Angeles and WLS Chicago, have long been market leaders in terms of morning, early evening, late news and other daily news battles. But garnering the most Nielsen ratings points does not always translate to digital domination.

With that in mind, each of the eight ABC-owned stations launched a 24/7 streaming channel in January. The digital channels offer unique newscasts, such as new 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. weekday newscasts on WLS, breaking news, upbeat Localish stories and other exclusive content.

Users are watching them. ABC's stations had between 276% and 1,278% more streamed hours on their apps and websites than the next best station in their markets this year, the group shared.

Chad Matthews, ABC Owned Stations president, said the products "came out of the gate on fire."

"We've seen incredible performance," he said. "Every time I look at it, I pinch myself."

Besides WABC, KABC and WLS, the ABC-owned stations are WPVI Philadelphia, KGO San Francisco,



KTRK Houston, WTVD Raleigh-Durham and KFSN Fresno. Matthews conceded being a news leader in a given market, and having a robust network news partner, gives a station a giant advantage in the digital derby. "How can you go wrong with the No. 1 local news and No. 1 network news in the country?" he said.

It's been an extraordinary rise to group chief for Matthews. He was named president of ABC Owned Stations in January 2022, following a year as WABC president and general manager, after three years as the news director. (He was B+C's GM of the Year in markets 1-25 in 2021.)

Asked about a learning curve in his latest role, Matthews, who entered the WABC newsroom in 2000, stresses that he knows local news intimately, and that is the backbone of the station business. Matthews cites Debra OConnell, his predecessor as WABC general manager, and now president, networks — Disney Media & Entertainment Distribution, as "a tremendous resource who has been there for me every step of the way."

The ABC group enjoys enviable resources in its corporate portfolio, including ABC News, ESPN, Hulu and FiveThirtyEight, and uses those to enhance both content and distribution.

The ABC stations have become known for their groupwide reports, including those under the Our America banner, which Matthews described as "a spotlight on underrepresented and underserved communities"; and the

Neighborhood Safety Tracker, which investigates crime in individual neighborhoods. An Our America report titled "Lowballed" looked at housing inequality in America. It debuted on the stations' streaming channels and apps, as well as Apple TV and Hulu, starting December 2, and was on air at the eight stations starting December 5.

Another Our America report, subtitled "Mission Montford Point," examined the first Black men to serve in the Marines. World War II veteran John L. Ramos finally got the medal he had long been due after seeing the one-hour documentary.

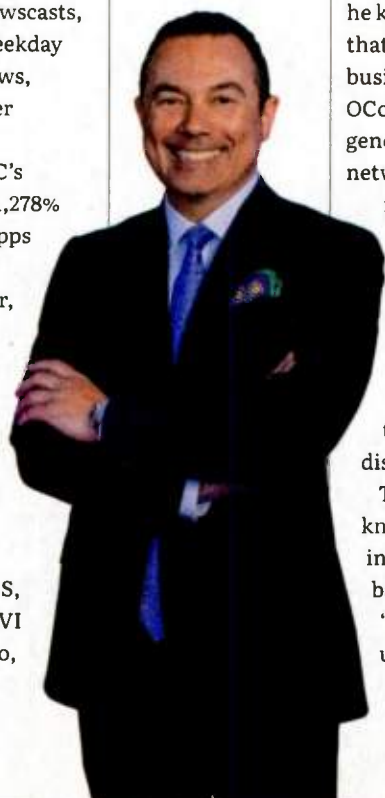
The ABC group has a data journalism department to provide critical context to reportage. Matthews said "putting data and numbers behind [stories] puts things in perspective for viewers." A race and culture department also gives stories extra pop.

Viewers across the country have been bombarded with unpleasant news over the last few years, including the pandemic and battles over racial inequality. The ABC stations are all over those important stories, but reporters also make an effort to find positive news in their communities as well. Matthews said "audiences want a mix."

"People are looking for an escape," he added. "They want to see bright spots in life."

OConnell said Matthews is off to a solid start as group president. "First of all, Chad is an incredible journalist," she said. "He also had a wonderful business mind and is a fantastic leader."

Matthews shared that, as long as the ABC station newsrooms continue to crank out rock-solid, compelling local content, they'll retain the crowns they wear in their markets. "The power of our stations is the power of our news brands," he said. "We're the most powerful brands in local television and we don't take that for granted. Our teams come in every day, looking to produce the most impactful content for our communities." ●



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**BROADCASTING & CABLE'S
STATION GROUP OF THE YEAR**

Houston GM Canales Shares Managerial Magic With Second Station

Adds Albuquerque station to his daily to-do list

TONY CANALES KTMD HOUSTON/KASA ALBUQUERQUE (NBCUNIVERSAL LOCAL)

For Tony Canales, it's been a hectic year and a rewarding one as well.

Canales is president and general manager of KTMD Houston, known as Telemundo Houston. In October 2021, he was asked to also oversee KASA Albuquerque, which NBCUniversal Local had just acquired. He quickly set out rebranding KASA, now known as Telemundo Nuevo Mexico, and launching local news.

Forming a partnership with KOB Albuquerque, Telemundo Nuevo Mexico debuted local news two weeks after the acquisition closed, with 5 and 10 p.m.

newscasts running on same-day delay. Three months later, they were live.

"He got newscasts up and running there in no time," said Valari Staab, chairman, NBCUniversal Local.

On September 26, Telemundo Houston debuted Noticias Telemundo Texas, at 5-7 a.m. and serving five Telemundo stations; and Noticiero Telemundo Houston at 10:30 p.m. That same day, Telemundo Nuevo Mexico added an hour of weekday news at 4 p.m., a partnership with Telemundo El Paso. Canales calls it a regional newscast.

KTMD nearly doubled its weekly news output that day. KASA now has around 20 newsroom staffers.

"I'm invigorated by an opportu-



nity to start something from scratch," Canales said.

Canales is enjoying how the two stations, a well-entrenched one and a startup, deploy different sides of his brain and different sets of muscles. "Never is one day the same," Canales said.

KTMD news director Gerardo Vazquez lost his battle with cancer October 29 at age 54, and staffers were devastated. Staab mentioned the effort Canales put in to keep morale up and keep employees focused.

Staab called Canales a logical choice to oversee Albuquerque. "Tony is a really good person," she said. "That's always a good first step in a good general manager."

KTMD won Lone Star Emmys for Overall Excellence and for News Excellence in November, beating out every other Texas station. Canales is quick to share praise with his station colleagues. "I'm most proud of the way the team has rallied around the different opportunities," he said. — Michael Malone

KSHB Kansas City GM Choal Stays Cool Under Pressure

NBC affiliate's chief keys on community, positivity

KATHLEEN CHOAL KSHB KANSAS CITY (SCRIPPS)

Kathleen Choal, VP and general manager of KSHB Kansas City, has an unusual entry in her LinkedIn profile. In between news director jobs at WGCL Atlanta and KVOA Tucson, she spent two years as a police officer in Surprise, Arizona.

"At the end of the day, both journalists and cops want to make their community a better place," Choal said.

E.W. Scripps Co. VP of operations Ed Fernandez, who hired Choal to be GM at NBC affiliate KSHB, said the composure she developed as an officer contributed to her performance at Scripps' San Luis

Obispo station KSBY. "She never loses her cool," Fernandez said.

KSHB's staff follows her lead. "She's helped bring a calm and a direction and a fortitude to the station," Fernandez said. "She has a strong mind and a good heart. She always credits the team, even though I know she's the one who led the effort."

Choal faced a tough task at KSHB, which had been sued for race discrimination by Black news staffers. She had to rebuild the station's culture and improve its performance in the community. Now it's a model for Scripps stations, Fernandez said.

"There were good people who work here and we had to utilize their strengths and get them moving in the same direction," Choal said.

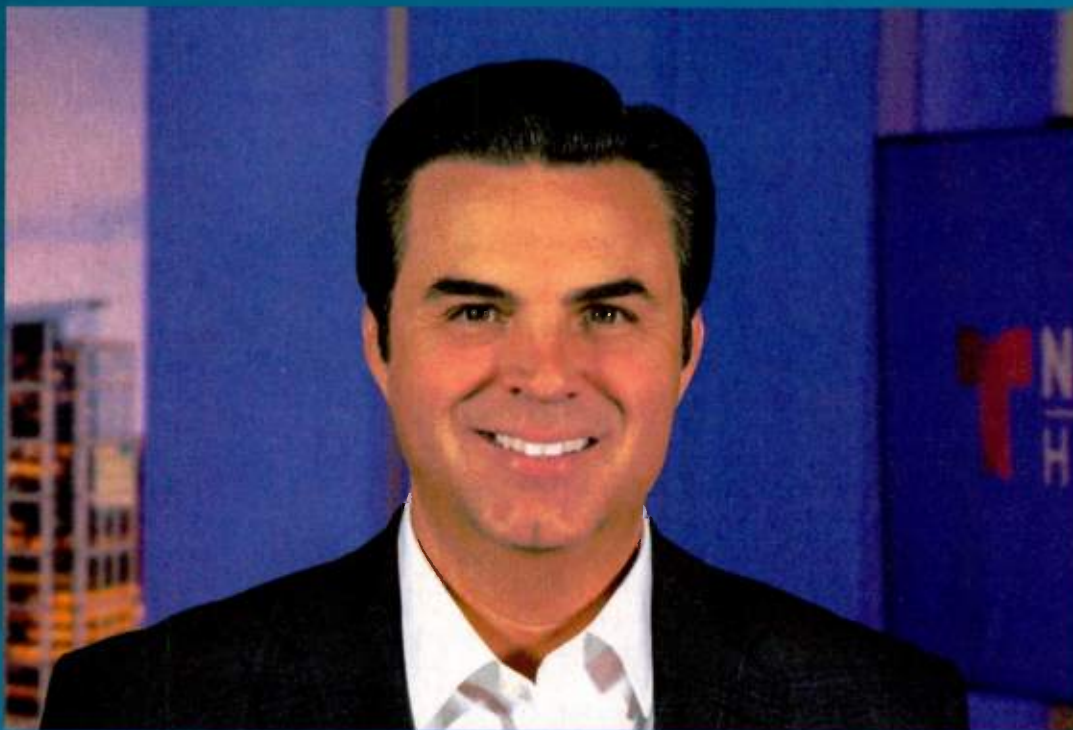


The station had openings at news director, creative services director and sales director. She also added a community relations director. After making those hires, they focused on what kind of news station they wanted to be. KSHB replaced its decades-old Action News branding with simply KSHB 41 News and a tagline of "KHSB 41: A Voice for Everyone."

"Our focus became depth, community and positivity," Choal said.

Choal also spearheaded community programs, notably the Gift of Sole Gala, which invites viewers to donate money to buy sneakers for children whose families are struggling.

KSHB's local content does a better job these days of reflecting its community. "We wanted to be that station that had real authentic people on the anchor desk who were out in the field reporting," Choal said. "The goal is to help our community be a better place by shining a light on problems but also on the people who are doing good things." — Jon Lafayette



Congratulations to our friend and colleague **Tony Canales** on being named **B+C's 2022 General Manager of the Year**

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Daboval Builds Lasting Legacy in Baton Rouge

Retiring WBRZ GM is all about relationships

ROCKY DABOVAL WBRZ BATON ROUGE (MANSHIP FAMILY)

Rocky Daboval is GM of the year for markets 51-plus, but this is more of a Lifetime Achievement award for the legendary executive. He is retiring in early 2023 after more than 40 years with WBRZ in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, DMA No. 94.

It all started for the New Orleans native in 1979 in the sales department. "I learned a lot of things that I attribute to my success as a GM, and even a person," Daboval said.

Top of the list: forging relationships and making sure everyone is happy. Whether he's negotiating retransmission deals or communicating with his employees, Daboval is all about fairness. "That's what I live by in any arrangement," Daboval said.

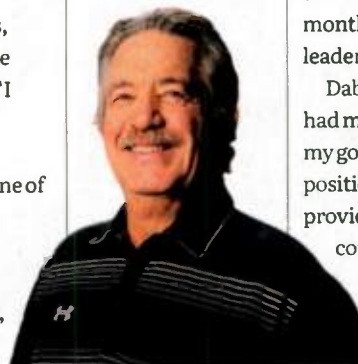
He was promoted to general manager 18 years ago. Months after he settled into his new office, Hurricane Katrina happened.

"I believe that for four weeks we housed over 40 people at WBRZ while we went 24/7 through Katrina and the rebuilding," he recalled. "That probably was the most difficult, challenging time."

For Katrina and other major storms, Daboval led by example, sleeping at the station in solidarity with his staffers. "I figured my news people were there, I should be there," he said.

WBRZ's live coverage of Katrina is one of the proudest times of his career.

Owned by the ManSHIP family, the ABC station has expanded news, and launched a 24-hour streaming service,



WBRZ Plus. Daboval has spent this year restructuring engineering and in-house production and designing a roving production suite to shoot on location.

Counting down his final days, Daboval fondly recalls how young talent has used the Baton Rouge station as a stepping stone, such as reporter Reggie Chatman moving on to WXIA Atlanta. "Many people who have worked for me have gone on to pursue their dreams and reach their dreams," he said. "That's really gratifying."

Trey Schmaltz will take over as WBRZ GM early next year. "I'm ecstatic that I get to learn from him over the next few months as we transition our executive leadership," Schmaltz said.

Daboval will stay in Baton Rouge. "I've had many opportunities to go places, but my goal has never been looking for a higher position or prestige," he said. "WBRZ provided me with the opportunity that I could help people, hire people, watch people grow and try new and different things." —Jerry Barmash

McDaniel Revamps News in San Diego

Big-market veteran spearheaded Tegna's moves at KFMB

DANA MCDANIEL KFMB SAN DIEGO (TEGNA)

When KFMB San Diego was acquired by Tegna in 2018, the station was in need of a refresh. It was the first station in the market and had been owned by Midwest Television for decades. "There were a lot of people in my newsroom that had never worked anywhere else," said president and general manager Alberto Mier y Terán.

Tegna made significant investments in the station's look and newsroom infrastructure. And Mier y Terán hired Dana McDaniel as the director of content in September 2019. "She had worked in major newsrooms in Washington, D.C., in San Francisco, in Detroit, in Kansas City,"

he said. "I knew she would bring new perspective and new ideas and processes to the newsroom."

McDaniel's first TV job had been overnight master control operator at WSJV in Elkhart, Indiana. She moved to Chicago to work at CLTV, and then, to be closer to her family, to WJBK Detroit, where she stayed for 12 years, rising to VP of news.

When McDaniel got to KFMB, the staff appeared to be experiencing culture shock. "Tegna came in and gave them a lot of technology and wanted them to grow, but I don't think that they knew what to do with all of that," she said.

Ratings were sliding and digital wasn't a major priority. "There was a lot of catching up to



do," McDaniel said. "My marching orders were to get people trained. There was tons of potential here, but they didn't have the tools or the knowledge they needed to get to the next level."

The station took on the slogan "Working for You," and McDaniel said it wasn't hard to sell it to the staff. "This gives the journalists a focus and a purpose," she said. "They know the work they're doing is truly trying to help our communities be a better place to live."

The station succeeded in small things that are important to communities, like getting a stop sign installed at a dangerous intersection. And it's now working on an investigation, looking at the roots of crime in one section of the city that McDaniel anticipates will lead to change.

The station unveiled a new news set in time for Election Day. It also launched a streaming platform. "We are producing a ton of original content that is now being shared with Tegna stations across the country," McDaniel said. —JL



Scripps Congratulates
Kathleen Choal

GM & VP, KSHB-TV, KANSAS CITY

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Hearst Television Eyes Changes in the Weather

Group uses all available platforms to forecast climate change's impact, other local issues

HEARST TELEVISION

Hearst Television staffers thought and talked a lot about the weather this year.

"Forecasting Our Future" was the group's multiplatform initiative, an effort to localize the issue of climate change to one where stories illustrate local impacts, prospects and possible solutions.

In mid-November, Hearst TV director of special projects David Hurlburt said 600 stories had aired, which is more than 20 hours. "And that's just within the newscast," he said. KOAT Albuquerque ("New Mexico's Drought Crisis"), WTAE Pittsburgh and WYFF Greenville ("Hurricane Outlook") were among the 33 Hearst stations that did local-issue specials.

Hearst also has a national investigative unit, led by chief national investigative correspondent Mark Albert, which produced eight stories on related topics including dealing with rising floodwaters and "green jobs." Chief national consumer correspondent Jeff Rossen produced a monthly story on topics such as "wish cycling" (trying to recycle something that can't be recycled) and reusable dryer products.

Then there was the groupwide special, *Forecasting Our Future*, that aired in April, with another one airing in December, with content from every Hearst station around the country.

"We wanted to harness the power of all the stations in all the various regions of the country, and in particular the experts that



Top: Barbara Maushard and David Hurlburt

we have in our meteorologists and the weather folks," Barbara Maushard, senior VP of news, explained about the selection of the project's theme. "We have more than a hundred of them around the group who really understand the different impacts of the different weather patterns in the different markets. They are all involved."

Some stations found hidden stories in checking the local impact of climate change:

- KCRA Sacramento: How warmer, drier weather impacts wildfires;
- WCVB Boston: How weather patterns make the Massachusetts pothole season more costly;
- WLKY Louisville: Tornado activity is increasing across Ohio Valley;
- WAPT Jackson: Pollen season could be getting longer.

"The stories that make you feel good about some of this are the solution stories," Hurlburt said, "from families to organizations and companies doing large-scale things to just try to reduce their own impact, because all of this plays a role in the way we're seeing the severity of weather." — Kent Gibbons

'Heartbeat' of KTRK Goes The Extra Mile for Staffers

Managing editor helps newsroom cover stories, tackle hardships

JULIE GRIFFIN KTRK HOUSTON (ABC)

Julie Griffin has spent her professional life at KTRK Houston, staying on past her initial internship with the consumer reporter by about 21 years and rising to senior manager and managing editor. "The very heartbeat of our newsroom," Wendy Granato, president and GM of KTRK, said of the La Marque, Texas, native and University of Houston graduate.

Griffin had a viral moment in 2017

when she caught a call in the newsroom that turned out to be a woman driving the pursued car in a 40-minute high-speed highway chase. Griffin advised the driver to pull over and surrender. (The driver did.)

More typically, Griffin's actions are behind the scenes, as she juggles story-resource assets "on a minute-by-minute basis," as Granato put it, along with supporting dozens of people at the station



through hardships like the pandemic and deaths in the family. She earned kudos for helping colleagues after the deaths of four current or recent employees in just over two years, most recently this past October (editor Lewanda Sullivan).

"Quite simply, she cares — about our people, our community, our audiences in a way that can't be mandated or forced," Granato said. "She is authentic and real, with a heart of service and humility. Julie Griffin represents the very best of local journalism and we are blessed to have her on our team."

Griffin is right where she belongs at ABC13. "I tell people when they're first starting out, you're gonna have to love this job to do it or else it'll eat you alive," she said. "And I still love doing what I do every day. I think that's the only way you can survive." — KG

B+C MULTI-PLATFORM BROADCASTER OF THE YEAR

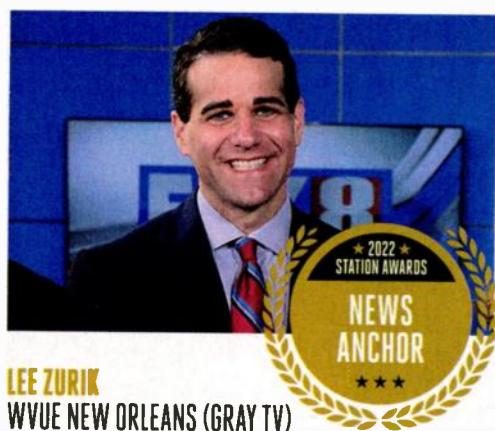


HEARST
television

FORECASTING OUR FUTURE

Impactful Local Journalism Addressing the Impact of Severe Weather





LEE ZURIK
WVUE NEW ORLEANS (GRAY TV)

Few reporters have made as big of an impact in the community where they were born and raised as WVUE New Orleans anchor and chief investigative reporter Lee Zurik.

Crescent City native Zurik anchors the 5, 9 and 10 p.m. newscasts for the Gray Television-owned station referred to on-air as Fox 8 (see Local News, page 24). Station executives said his investigative reporting has led to impactful criminal investigations of high-ranking officials.

Zurik has also forged a strong connection with viewers through his close community knowledge, covering intrinsically local stories from impending hurricanes to Mardi Gras costuming.

"It's that kind of work that makes local journalism so important," WVUE VP and general manager Mikel Schaefer said.

Zurik is arguably the most decorated anchor and investigative journalist in New Orleans TV history, earning him multiple Edward R. Murrow Awards and Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards over a career of more than 25 years.

If that wasn't enough, he also serves as VP of investigations for WVUE parent Gray. The unit, which focuses on investigations of national scale, develops stories for Gray stations in 113 markets.

Zurik's stellar career accomplishments come as no surprise to Schaefer, who — while working as a sports producer at WWL in the 1990s — first met Zurik as a 15-year-old high school sophomore.

"He came to our sports department just about every weekend in his sophomore, junior and senior year in high school," Schaefer said. "By the time he went to college at Syracuse, he could produce [video news packages] and he was a good writer. He's had journalism in him for a long time and I couldn't be more proud of him personally and professionally." — R. Thomas Umstead



JEFF BERARDELLI
WFLA TAMPA (NEXSTAR)

In reliving the 30th anniversary of Hurricane Andrew, WFLA Tampa chief meteorologist Jeff Berardelli produced *Surviving the Storm*, only to be reminded about Mother Nature's fury as Hurricane Ian approached Tampa this year.

Berardelli is there to caution viewers about the worst of weather. "The most important thing that I do is to educate the public about hurricanes beforehand, so that when a hurricane does hit, they're prepared," he said.

When it's calm and sunny, Berardelli can get looser with the delivery. It's those more serious situations when Berardelli, who was born in Brooklyn and grew up on Staten Island, earns his keep. "I have to make sure that I'm very measured in the way that I communicate," he said. "I don't want people to panic."

When conditions warrant evacuation, though, Berardelli must do whatever he can for residents in harm's way to "keep them safe," he said.

Berardelli, who knew he'd be a meteorologist from the time he was a child, started professionally in 1996. He arrived at Nexstar Media Group-owned WFLA 10 months ago — his second stint in Tampa. WFLA is committed to tracking severe weather using the most advanced technology.

But it's his role as climate specialist, which he first did for CBS News, that is most gratifying.

"That's the one thing that I'm doing differently than many other meteorologists, if not most meteorologists, in the country," he said. "On a weekly, if not more than once-a-week basis, [I'm] educating people on climate change."

The WFLA website has a Climate Classroom page, with videos and articles from Berardelli educating users on climate change. He speaks regularly to students, sharing vital weather information with young consumers. "I really do like that aspect of my job," he said. — JB



BOB POMPEANI
KDKA PITTSBURGH (CBS)

Think of Pittsburgh sports icons and Willie Stargell, Terry Bradshaw and Mario Lemieux come to mind. Yet if you ask local sports fans, KDKA sports director and anchor Bob Pompeani should be in the same conversation.

A Pittsburgh native, Pompeani has been a fixture in the city for 40 years, not only as sports reporter but also as weekend sports anchor, before becoming sports director at the CBS-owned station. He joined KDKA at 22 and endeared himself with viewers by developing and hosting segments like "The Nightly Sports Call," "The Sports Showdown" and high school-focused "Extra Effort," spotlighting students who excel in athletics, academics and community service.

"He embodies what Pittsburgh is, what KDKA is and what sports is in the city," KDKA VP and general manager Chris Cotugno said.

Throughout his four-decade tenure, "Pomp" has covered three Steelers Super Bowls and six Penguins Stanley Cup Finals, among other memorable stories and events.

"Anytime there have been championships and parades, the teams have called Pomp to emcee it," Cotugno said. "They understand that he's part of the community."

Pompeani has won three Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards and eight AP Awards. More closely reflecting his character and commitment to the community, he's also been named by viewers as the city's favorite sportscaster and is a member of the Pennsylvania, Beaver County and Hopewell (High School) Viking Sports halls of fame.

"He is Pittsburgh — he's not here to make a name for himself and then disappear; he's part of the community," Cotugno said. "The athletes understand that, the community understands that. That's why he's been here for 40 years and that's why people trust him." — RTU

CONGRATULATIONS

Lee Zurik

Congratulations! Lee Zurik, WVUE
New Orleans anchor and chief
Investigative reporter, and Gray
Television's VP of Investigations,
wins the Broadcasting+Cable's
Station Award honor. Best wishes
to him and his fellow awardees.

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Are the Globes Still Golden?

NBC is airing the awards after dropping the 2022 ceremony. Are the Globes ready for primetime?



By Michael Malone
michael.malone@futurenet.com
@BCMikMalone

The Golden Globe Awards happens January 10. NBC airs the event, and Peacock streams it, a year after the network did not air the Globes in response to the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's glaring lack of diversity and other issues.

The 2022 Golden Globes were neither on television nor live-streamed. A year later, one wonders how much the Globes still matter. They've long been known as a looser, more spontaneous event than the Emmys — “the fun cousin of the awards party,” Cultique CEO and founder Linda Ong said — where attendees sit at tables and enjoy a few glasses of wine.

As with any major awards event, the Globes mean prestige and marketing for a winning, or even nominated, star or show. The HFPA often singles out less-heralded properties than the Emmys. Some, such as *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* getting top comedy in 2014, were unexpected and respected. Some, such as *Emily in Paris*, nominated for best comedy in 2021, were mocked.

Dom Caristi, professor emeritus of communications at Ball State University, said the Globes still matter. “Almost all of the awards shows draw significant audiences — maybe not sizeable like they once were, but large enough to fuel a surge in audience interest in the movies, TV shows and stars that win,” he said.

NBC dropping the Globes in 2022 was a big deal in the industry. Outside of it, Preston Beckman, chairman of media consultancy The Beckman Group, said



Tina Fey (l.) and Amy Poehler host the last televised Golden Globe Awards ceremony in 2021. The event will air on NBC and Peacock in 2023.

viewers probably don't recall that the Globes were not on last year. They'll tune in this time to see their favorite celebrities in action.

“It's three hours of content that will bring people to either my network or my streaming service,” he said. “Period.”

Industry watchers say the emergence of social media platforms gives consumers a direct connection to the stars. So the hunger to see A-listers at the Globes or Emmys is not what it once was. “The shows thrived in the age before social media, when you'd never see talent with their hair down,” said Ong. “Now you can always see that.”

Rebuilding the HFPA

The Globes got waylaid after a series of reports, including those from the *Los Angeles Times*, revealed how none of the HFPA's 87 members were Black. The HFPA added 103 new voters to its ranks. The voters pool is represented by 62 countries. It is 52% female and nearly 52% racially and ethnically diverse.

NBC believes the HFPA is moving in the right direction. “We recognize the HFPA's commitment to ongoing change,” said Frances Berwick, chairman, entertain-

ment networks, NBCUniversal Television and Streaming, when NBC announced it was back with the Golden Globes in September.

NBC is committed to 2023's Globes only.

Has the HFPA done enough? “They've got a long way to go,” said Caristi, “but it's an improvement.”

'Succession' Finds Success

Golden Globes nominations were announced December 12.

Succession got top drama last year, while *Hacks* was top comedy. HBO claimed six Golden Globes and Apple TV Plus, Amazon Prime Video, FX, Hulu and Netflix got one apiece.

Awards events are hardly the draw they used to be, just as nothing on broadcast TV is the draw that it used to be. That so many networks are cranking out quality programming on a range of platforms means the viewer has probably never seen much of what gets awarded on these nights. “Awards shows in general are on a path of diminishing returns,” Ong said, “because tastes have gotten so fragmented.”

Beckman noted that the Globes are primarily about celeb-watching, more than tuning in to see if a favorite show wins. “Most people have not seen the shows and movies they will nominate,” he said.

A few mass-market movies, such as *Top Gun: Maverick*, will draw some attention to the Globes. But awards event ratings aren't likely to pick up again. “It's going to continue a downward trend, as the younger generation looks at Rotten Tomatoes instead of awards shows to tell them what to watch,” Caristi said.

For NBC, Ong said the Globes are both an ad-sales vehicle and a promotional platform, so a hefty Nielsen number is less of an issue. As viewers of the Oscars back in March will attest, most anything can happen in a ballroom full of celebrities, especially if there is wine involved — even if no celebrity gets slapped at the Globes.


“Worst case, nobody talks about it, but NBC pockets the money from advertisers,” Ong said. “Best case, something happens.” ●

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CBS News Detroit Set to Launch

WWJ will offer both streaming and linear newscasts in January



By Michael Malone
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@BCMikMalone

DETROIT — The promos are rolling for CBS News Detroit, as WWJ launches its first full-fledged local news lineup in January.

"Pardon our dust," they begin. Owned by CBS, the station has hired news gatherers, including a lineup of embedded multimedia journalists, is building out the newsroom set, and is poised to launch.

WWJ is the rare Big Four station without local news. "It's the 14th-largest television market in the country, and the fact that there was no news really stood out glaringly to me," Adrienne Roark, president of CBS Stations, said. "It's a strong news market, and the opportunity to imagine this in a totally innovative way really was too hard to pass up."

WJBK Detroit was a CBS affiliate, offering local news, until News Corp. purchased the station in 1994 and aligned it with Fox. CBS acquired an independent Detroit station that same year, which became WWJ. Known as CBS 62, WWJ has offered some news over the decades, including an 11 p.m. program produced by WKBD, and a morning newscast with help from Detroit Free Press and WWJ Radio. Neither show exists today.

WWJ VP and general manager Brian Watson pitched a full news operation in his first one-on-one with Wendy McMahon, president and co-head of CBS News and Stations. There was interest, and McMahon wanted a detailed plan. After some back and forth, the project got the green light in late 2021.

WWJ initially aimed to launch in late 2022, but supply chain issues and the pandemic pushed back the premiere. Launching news is a massive job, but Watson said

it's gone relatively smoothly. "The excitement kind of overshadows any stress we might have," he said.

Watson would not share the project cost or number of new hires, but suggests the headcount is comparable to the competition. "There's not been one major piece of equipment or talent that's been rejected" by corporate, he said.

CBS News Detroit will have a streaming-first mentality and linear newscasts at 4, 5, 6 and 11 p.m. weekdays, as well as morning news in the coming months. Paul Pytlowany is news director. Watson and Pytlowany speak of a "working newsroom," with reporters and producers hustling in the background of newscasts. The tone will be conversational.

Ratings points are bitterly contested in Detroit. Graham Media's WDIV (NBC) is located downtown. Fox's WJBK and Scripps's WXYZ (ABC) are, like WWJ, in Southfield, a 15-20 minute drive from downtown. Stations in Southfield get dozens of acres to play with.

Multiskilled journalists will be embedded in the community they cover. There are 14 Ford Broncos, outfitted with mobile editing systems in the passenger seat, which can be accessed from the back seat. Thirteen will be in neighborhoods around Detroit and one will be in Lansing, Michi-

Jeff Sversky and Shaina Humphries moved from rival Philadelphia stations to share the anchor desk at WWJ.



gan's capital. Reporters won't have to visit the newsroom to produce their reports.

Input From Everybody

Pytlowany stressed that everyone will have a say in how the news comes together. "The word is out that I can come in as an entry-level news person, a producer or assignment editor, and have an equal voice with the anchor, the assistant news director or the executive producer, as to the kind of content that I want to bring," he said. "We tell everybody, show up with your painting brush, because this thing is yet to be fully colored in."

Shaina Humphries and Jeff Sversky will anchor at 5, 6 and 11 p.m. weekdays. Humphries is from WTXF Philadelphia and Sversky from WPVI Philadelphia. Humphries said she was drawn to the chance to be part of "something truly innovative."

"There's the startup aspect and the energy, and there's a lot of that here," she said.

Sversky did sports in Philly and jumped at the chance to be a news anchor. He was also enticed by the enthusiasm of Watson, Pytlowany and assistant news director Lisa Borich Palmer. "I could feel it coming through the phone or through Zoom, just how passionate they were about this," he said. "It was just contagious."

Asked about their new rival, Detroit's other general managers say another competitor is good for their station, and ultimately good for viewers. They also believe launching a news operation in 2023 is a tall order, and note how WWJ just missed the election windfall.

"I applaud their efforts to think about how to do things differently," said Bob Ellis, WDIV VP, general manager.

Indeed, WWJ newscasts won't be traditional, and they won't be overly polished. "We're showing the public that people are working," Watson said. "We're Detroiters. We're gritty." ●

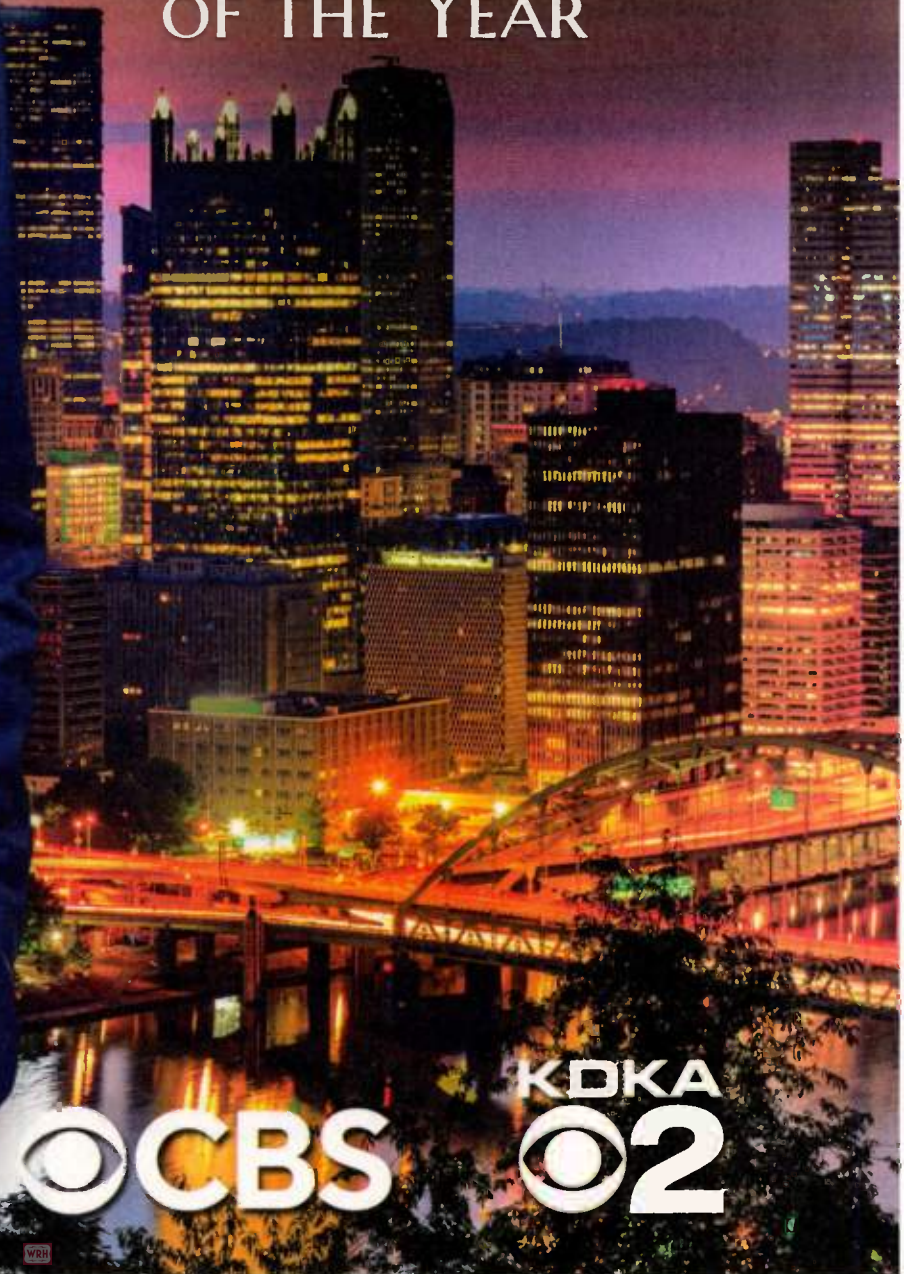
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A Melting Pot of Holiday Cheer

Christmas-themed original films deliver on-screen diversity and inclusion



By R. Thomas Umstead
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As the television industry continues to deck the halls with more than 130 original holiday-themed films, this year's slate has more of a diverse and inclusive feel as people of color continue to influence holiday images and storylines on the screen and behind the camera.

An unprecedented number of this season's holiday films have persons of color in leading roles or as executive producers, eager to reach audiences who over the years have felt underserved or unseen in movies from this genre, according to industry observers.

Paramount's BET Plus and VHI, for

example, will offer 14 original Christmas-themed films featuring predominantly African-American casts, up from 11 a year ago. Lifetime will deliver 15 holiday originals featuring actors of color in starring roles.

Hallmark Channel, Netflix, UPtv and Great American Family also are featuring movies with inclusive casts and high-profile talent to help ring in the holidays. Entertainers of color such as Rita Moreno (Hallmark's *Santa Bootcamp*), Freddie Prinze Jr. (Netflix's *Christmas With You*), Gladys Knight (Great American Family's *Someday at Christmas*), Mario Lopez (Hallmark's *Stepping Into the Holidays*) and Loretta Devine (VHI's *All I Didn't Want for Christmas*) are starring in holiday-themed films through the end of December.

Just as impressive,

(Clockwise, from top l.): Dorian Wilson and Jasmine Guy in BET Plus' *A Wesley Christmas*; Hallmark Channel's *Santa Bootcamp*; A New Orleans Noel on Lifetime; and Freddie Prinze Jr. and Aimee Garcia in Netflix's *Christmas with You*.

celebrities such as Jamie Foxx (VHI's *Hip Hop Family Christmas Wedding*), Toni Braxton (Lifetime's *A Christmas Spark*), Robin Givens (BET Plus's *The Christmas Clapback*) and Idris Elba (VHI's *A New Diva's Christmas Carol*) have taken the directorial and executive producer reins in an effort to deliver more authentic holiday stories.

The holiday programming genre needs to make more room for unique portrayals of how people of color (who are major consumers of entertainment) experience the festive season in order to remain viable and attractive to an increasingly diverse population, network executives said.

Authentic, Inclusive Fare

"I think it's important for us to maintain authenticity and inclusiveness when focusing on the holidays,"



Lifetime executive VP of movie, limited series and original movie acquisitions Tanya Lopez said. “Just looking at an image and saying, ‘that person is my skin color,’ is not enough.”

Of Lifetime’s 26 new original holiday movies, 60% feature a person of color either in front of or behind the camera. Lopez said the network’s holiday films over the years have consistently featured inclusive casts, and this year the network offered more films with directors of color.

Lifetime’s lineup of holiday films directed and executive-produced by people of color includes *A New Orleans Noel*, executive-produced by actress Keshia Knight Pulliam, and Kirk Franklin’s *The Night Before Christmas*, executive-produced by the gospel songwriter.

“It’s been part of our DNA for so long that we haven’t seen it as a big pivot at all,” Lopez said. “We want to show as many holiday family traditions, no matter what that looks like.”

Holiday stories told from a different perspective give viewers a glimpse of life that doesn’t revolve around the tropes typically associated with seasonal films, said Knight Pulliam, who played Rudy Huxtable in the 1980s sitcom *The Cosby Show*. *A New Orleans Noel*, starring Tim Reid and Patti LaBelle, showcases some of the holiday traditions of African-American families in the Crescent City.

“Oftentimes [traditional holiday] movies won’t culturally reflect who we are as African-American people, and we have a culture that’s all our own and



Above, Hallmark’s *A Big Fat Family Christmas* and *Christmas at the Golden Dragon* have Asian American themes. Below, Hallmark’s *All Saints Christmas*.

specific to us,” Knight Pulliam said during a virtual press event for the movie before it premiered on December 3. “Seeing that ... opens up windows to people to show what’s possible and opens up windows to empower people. When you start from a real and authentic place, you can’t go wrong.”

Hallmark Channel’s *Christmas at the Golden Dragon* — in which a beloved Chinese restaurant closes on Christmas Eve, forcing patrons and workers to reevaluate the importance of family and friends around the holidays — showcases the holiday season from the perspective of its Taiwanese writer/producer Emily Ting. Ting said the story is based on her family’s desire to experience a traditional Christmas after coming to the U.S. from Taiwan.

“I had such high expectations only to realize that, sometimes, eating Chinese takeout with your family on Christmas is all you need to celebrate the holidays,” Ting said.

Hallmark executive VP of programming Lisa Hamilton Daly said movies like *Christmas at the Golden Dragon* and the Asian-American themed *A Big Fat*

Family Christmas help the network attract a more diverse audience by allowing storytellers to tell stories that are familiar to one segment of the audience while exposing different traditions to others. Also on Hallmark’s holiday movie list is *The Holiday Stocking*, produced by Hallmark’s African-American targeted Mahogany content production brand.

Holidays Are for Everyone

“On the most basic level, the holiday season is for everybody,” Daly said. “We really want to make sure that we are including the broadest range of holiday traditions and people that we can. As we get better at this, we’re seeing bigger and broader audiences.”

UP Entertainment VP of content strategy and acquisition Hector Campos said that the network has seen an early ratings bump for UPtv’s lineup of 17 original Christmas-themed films — seven of which feature diverse lead characters.

“It’s important to us that our audience sees themselves reflected authentically on the screen, and we have actors from all backgrounds in starring roles,” Campos said. “Through our second week of Christmas premieres the response from viewers so far has been great.”

TV analyst Marc Berman said the popularity of holiday-themed movies is only enhanced by providing original movies targeting diverse groups, which has the benefit of delivering new viewers and advertisers.

“We live in a diversified world, and as a distributor you need to show the world as it is,” Berman said. “There’s been a lot of discussion about the lack of diversity in media, and these outlets are beginning to understand that if they don’t represent the world as it is, their brands are going to ultimately pay the price. Advertisers realize that they have to represent brands that represent the world, and I think these outlets realize that, whether it’s scripted dramas or holiday movies.” ●



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In New Orleans, Easy Does It

Market offers newsrooms plenty to cover, both good and bad



By Michael Malone
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With its colorful festivals, two major pro sports teams and lots of crime and corruption, New Orleans feels like a larger market than No. 50 to the newsgatherers toiling in the region. There's never a shortage of big-time happenings. A peek at the calendar reveals the Allstate Sugar Bowl on New Year's Eve, Mardi Gras beginning February 21 and Jazz Fest in late April.

But on any given night, there's merriment in the French Quarter, in Tremé, Uptown or in most any New Orleans neighborhood.

"From a news perspective, it certainly feels a lot bigger than market 50," said Tod Smith, president and general

manager, WWL-WUPL. "There's always something going on."

Gray Television owns the Big Easy leader, Fox affiliate WVUE. Hearst Television holds NBC outlet WDSU. Tegna has WWL-WUPL, a CBS-MyNetworkTV duo. Nexstar Media Group owns WGNO-WNOL, an ABC-The CW pair. Mayavision has Telemundo station KGLA.

Cox Communications is the market's main pay TV operator, and Spectrum has a significant cable presence, too.

WVUE goes with a Fox 8 moniker. In October, Fox 8 was No. 1 at 6-7 a.m., in both households and viewers 25-54, with WDSU in second in both races. At 5 p.m., WVUE again won both contests, with WWL the runner-up. On to 6 p.m., where WDSU took both households and the demo, with WWL in second in households, and WVUE second in viewers 25-54. And at 10 p.m., WVUE had a 14.6 rating in households, ahead of WWL's 11.3, WDSU's 10.5 and WGNO's 1.2. In the demo derby, WVUE scored a 9.6 in late news, WDSU

The WVUE/Fox 8 10 p.m. team includes sports director Juan Kincaid, anchor and chief investigative reporter Lee Zurik, anchor Meg Gatto and chief meteorologist Bruce Katz.

a 7.5, WWL a 6.3 and WGNO a 0.9.

WWL was the leader for decades, but WVUE wears the crown today. WWL had a unique arrangement where it ran local news, not the CBS morning show, from 7 to 9 a.m. That ended in late 2016, with the local wake-up show shifting to WUPL.

Fox 8 had a local morning newscast for those who went looking for one at the time.

The word "aggressive" comes up a lot when Mikel Schaefer, WVUE VP and general, describes the station's rise. Aggressive in cranking out content, including investigative and a new 4 a.m. news, aggressive in bringing rival talent on board, including Lee Zurik and John Snell, and aggressive in marketing its wares to viewers. "We work really hard to get the best talent and do the best work," Schaefer said. "It's just a lot of hard work by really smart and hard-working journalists."

Zurik, New Orleans-raised WVUE anchor, was named News Anchor of the Year by B+C this year (see page 22). Schaefer was B+C's News Director of the Year in 2013.

Sandy Breland, former WVUE general manager, supervises the station as Gray TV's senior VP of local media, and is based in New Orleans. "Conversations with Sandy about what we want to do and what we need to do are much easier conversations," Schaefer said.

Happy Anniversary!

Michael Neely recently reached his first anniversary as WDSU president/general manager, shifting from the top spot at WAPT Jackson (Mississippi) when WDSU's Joel Vilmenay took over CBS-owned KCBS-KCAL Los Angeles in September 2021.

Next year, WDSU celebrates 75 years on the air. "I think we might have a little party," Neely said. "New Orleans is known for its parties."

WDSU aired the Children's Hospital Holiday Parade December 3. The inaugural event featured floats, musicians, balloons and Santa himself. WDSU's telecast streamed throughout Hearst Television on the group's Very Local app.

"We're real excited to bring this to the people," Neely said before the parade.

WDSU's tagline goes "Live, Local, Late Breaking." Melissa Dart took over as WDSU news director at the start of 2021. Neely previously was the news director at Hearst TV stations WLKY Louisville and WLWT Cincinnati. He spoke of WDSU journalists focusing on the difference between entertainment and news, since the market has loads of both. "What people want to see," he explained, "and what people need to see."

WWL launched *The Talk*, which focuses on race relations and is anchored by Charisse Gibson, following the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. The program picked up a National Murrow Award last year. WWL's "Wounded City" segments focus on crime. Recent stories include investigations into how other cities' police departments cut back on crime, and steps taken to address mental health issues in the city. "It's from the perspective of, yes, it exists, why it exists, and what can people do to mitigate it," Smith said.



Ricknise Riggins (above) has boots on the ground for WWL in the Big Easy. WDSU morning anchors Chad Sabadie and Randi Rousseau (below) present the news to New Orleans.

The Tegna station also has segments called "Historic Neighborhoods," which offer a deep dive on a different neighborhood, be it Stapleton, New Orleans East or Ponchartrain Park. They sometimes turn into half-hour specials.

WWL, which recently had its 65th anniversary, deploys that deep-dive approach in its news product too. "We look at issues and try to go more in depth than headlines and quick splashes," said Smith. "We don't just present the problems. We talk to the people who have been impacted, and we talk to the people who are addressing the issues."

WGNO is focused on ATSC 3.0 conversion and in the fall aired specials tied to Hispanic Heritage Month and to veterans. The station introduced *News With a Twist*, a 6 p.m. program that mixed news with lifestyle content, in 2011, and the motif



spread to 5, 6 and 10 p.m. news. It now offers one-off Twist specials.

"We went back to traditional news once the pandemic hit," said John Cruse, VP/general manager.

The stations are doing what they can to get ahead. WDSU welcomed anchor Darryl Forges, previously of CNN, to its noon and 4 p.m. programs. WWL revived its "Louisiana Made, Louisiana Proud" segments, which are paid for by companies with roots in the region.

WVUE has sports shows in the 10:30 p.m. slot most nights, including Final Bet and Deuce McAllister-hosted Saints program *Black and Gold Review*.

Saint Misbehaving

The NFL's Saints are a huge source of local pride, but the football team is in the midst of a losing season. "People will watch the Saints no matter what," said Schaefer. "But if they're not winning, the mood of the city is somewhat affected."

The New Orleans economy is so-so. Midterm elections came and went with light political spending. "I think we're hanging in there," Neely said. "The circumstances are tough for just about everybody, but the business community is chugging along."

Hurricane Ida, which walloped New Orleans in 2021, set the market back a bit. "I don't think the rest of the country realized how big a deal it was here," Cruse said.

But residents love the multifaceted ethnic flavor of New Orleans, be it Cajun, Creole, European or African. "Each culture comes in and adds something to the culture," Smith said.

New Orleans is known for extraordinary cuisine, music, nightlife, history and architecture. It's a small city, Schaefer noted, but is nonetheless an international one. "People don't move from New Orleans," he said.

Neely has appreciated the friendliness of the residents upon his arrival, and the lively atmosphere that greets residents most every day. "There's always something to do," he said. "You have to try to be bored in New Orleans." ●

Fall Review: New Syndies Seem Ready to Stick

Next year looks lean in terms of new program offerings



By Paige Albiniak
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It's early days yet and no announcements have been made, but it's a safe bet that all of the new shows introduced this fall will return for second seasons.

The reason is not the unadulterated success of any of these syndicated programs. It's more because of the lack of other choices. Debmar-Mercury's *Sherri*, starring Sherri Shepherd, is the highest rated of the batch at a 0.7 live-plus-same-day national household rating, with Warner Bros.' *Jennifer Hudson* running a bit lower but often landing in a virtual tie with *Sherri*.

At this juncture, there are very few shows in development for next fall, and low ratings mean low viewer awareness. Both factors argue for keeping shows on the air and giving viewers time to find them rather than churning through programs in search of an audience.

"Awareness is something that used to happen in two or three months, but now awareness is so minimal that it might take a year or more to get the word out," Debmar-Mercury executive VP, programming Lonnie Burstein said.

As a result, new talk shows *Sherri*, *Jennifer Hudson* and NBCUniversal's *Karamo*, starring Karamo Brown, are all likely to return for second seasons, as are CBS Media Ventures' *Pictionary*, hosted by Jerry O'Connell; Trifecta's half-hour true-crime viral video show *iCrime* with Elizabeth Vargas; and Allen Media Group's *We the People* with Lauren Lake. Better to stick with the devil you know than to go produce a new one.

That said, can anyone turn a profit at

a 0.7 national household rating and below? According to industry sources, yes, but margins are narrow and growing thinner all the time.

"Syndication is just part of the landscape," Allen Media Group chairman Byron Allen said. AMG produces a whole flight of court shows, including *America's Court* with Judge Kevin Ross, now in its 13th season; *Justice for All* with Judge Cristina Perez; *The Verdict* with Judge Hatchett; *Justice* with Judge Mablean; and *Supreme Justice* with Judge Karen. Next fall, it intends to launch a seventh court show, *Equal Justice* with Judge Eboni K. Williams.

"When we produce our shows, they could be on The Weather Channel and then be in broadcast syndication and on our cable network, Justice Central. I think you need to ideally have at least two strong platforms to monetize the content if not three or four — broadcast, cable, international and streaming. It's very challenging to fund content on

just one platform," Allen said.

"The only way you can monetize these shows is to give them away free to a cable network or a diginet for barter," Fox Television Stations executive VP, programming Frank Cicha said. "If it was up to me, I would put these shows on everywhere I could for marketing and awareness. But for someone to ever get paid in this other world of digital and streaming, something is going to have to work."

Formats Get a Rethink

Broadcast syndication has long been a business model in need of innovation. After the highly disruptive pandemic, necessity has finally become the mother of invention, with shows, syndicators and TV stations all starting to think differently about the business.

For example, this year CBS Media Ventures' *Drew Barrymore* went from being produced as a standard one-hour talk show to two half-hours, which TV stations can either run as one half-hour, two back-to-back half-hours that feel like an hour or two half-hours split into two different (or more) dayparts or even across two different stations.

The change was made largely to serve the needs of the CBS-owned television stations, which wanted to add a half-hour of local news. But the show's producers, including Barrymore, were also willing to try something new.

"The thinking really was to constantly try to innovate and disrupt the format," *The Drew Barrymore Show* executive producer Jason Kurtz said. "This is just another way of doing it, sort of observing the audience, how they are consuming and the pace at which they are consuming. It reflects the way people are watching television. It's a faster pace that feels more digital."

The change has already yielded positive results for the CBS stations, with the show up 16% in homes and 14% in total viewers. The show is up or even on CBS-owned stations in all of the top 10 markets. Comparing this year's primary runs to last year, it has improved 7% in households and added 46,000 viewers on average, Kurtz said.

Jennifer Hudson performed a song from *Sister Act* in costume during the show's Halloween episode.



Competing with Barrymore in the talk space are three new entries, Sherri, Jennifer Hudson and Karamo Brown. All are finding their footing, but, thus far, station groups are happy with what they are seeing.

Sherri took the crown as highest-rated newcomer after replacing Debmarm Mercury's Wendy Williams this fall following a year of guest hosts. Sherri also averages 710,000 viewers and a 0.4 in daytime's key demographic of women 25-54.

"Debmar did a terrific job with the program," Cicha said. "Having Shepherd as a guest host on Wendy prior to launch mattered a lot. Her comfort level is rising by the day."

"Having launched a lot of new shows over the span of my career, Sherri walked out on her very first show of the season as if she's been doing it for years," Debmarm Mercury executive VP, programming Alexandra Jewett said.

Jennifer Hudson, which largely took Nick Cannon's time slots on Fox stations in major markets, has a little tougher row to hoe when it comes to ratings. The show runs earlier in arguably damaged time periods, considering that Cannon averaged a 0.4 national household rating all last year. Jennifer Hudson's primary run also goes head to head with ABC's *The View* in New York and Philadelphia. But Cicha sees a lot of upside in the show.

"When Jennifer starts getting better at her Xs and Os, her charm will start coming through," Cicha said. "She is likable. She needs to build her curiosity a little bit on interviews, but you'll start to see that look a little smoother."

Hudson, an *American Idol* finalist who is now an EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony) winner, is mostly known as a singer and an actress and is earning her talk-show chops. One of her strengths, executive producer Mary Connelly said, is her ability to connect with the audience, either in the studio or through the TV screen.

"When we as producers just allow her to talk to the audience about the stuff that's important to



Above, Trifecta's iCrime, with news veteran Elizabeth Vargas, has been holding its own. Below, Sherri, starring Sherri Shepherd, was the top-rated new series.

her, it is magic in a way that a writer can't write and a producer can't produce," Connelly said. "You hear her talk about stuff that is meaningful to her and I can feel the audience behind me just leaning in and being fully on board with her."

Hudson is already learning how to have fun with the daytime audience, dressing up as Sister Deloris Van Cartier for Halloween and belting out a medley of Sister Act songs, drinking out of a different coffee mug with a different affirmation on it every day and wearing lots of fun fashion that keeps viewers noticing.

"It's all directed from her," Connelly said. And now Hudson is going all in on Christmas, her favorite holiday, including a couple of days of holiday giveaways.

Fox has another new show, *Pictionary*, starring Jerry O'Connell, added to its game block this year, which it produces and distributes in partnership with CBS. That show is also expected to be renewed.

"Skewing younger than other game shows is good for our business and for the show and for the stations," said Stephen Brown, executive VP, programming and development, Fox TV Stations and Fox First Run. "The energy of *Pictionary* and the feel-good nature of it will find its audience."

Sherri, Jennifer Hudson and other shows on Fox were set for some ratings interruptions from November 20 to December 18 — and particularly in the first half of that period — as the network aired the FIFA World Cup, making it hard to gauge how they are actually performing.

Looking ahead, Fox would like to take some swings at different types of programming, including live game shows.

"If you offer live news or live sports, people will come to your platform for that," Brown said. "We have to create something that is imaginative, important or immediate so that the audience will say that's worth their time. We're looking at a lot of possibilities."

'iCrime' Finds a Niche

One other new show holding its own is Trifecta's *iCrime* with Elizabeth Vargas, a sort of viral video take on true crime. The show finds cellphone videos of people committing crimes and then explores them, talking to experts about what actually happened. The show is averaging a 0.5 in households with an average of 633,000 people tuning in. It is up 23% among women 25-54 since its September premiere.

Part of what is working for *iCrime* is having an experienced host in Elizabeth Vargas, who was with ABC News for 22 years and served as the co-anchor of *World News Tonight* and *20/20*.

"We had perfect timing with this show in that last year all of the groups were going to add a lot of news," said Kim Sterton, senior VP, national sales manager, Trifecta. "We started out with the big news organizations — Scripps, Tegna, Cox — and they felt it was a good fit because Elizabeth is such a news brand herself. From the get-go, people understood it and saw where it could go on their schedules. It works in a variety of dayparts but really complements what stations are trying to do."

"She felt that this is what she does and we told her she could do interviews with experts and have opinions on different clips. And the daytime audience knows who she is," executive producer Scott Sternberg said.

Whether stations are happy or not with this batch of shows, they are likely to be what they've got for now. Said Cicha: "There certainly doesn't appear like there are a lot of people lining up with choices for next year." ●



Ad Tech Flourishes While Traditional Business Is Battered

Transition to connected TV bolsters programmatic platforms



By Jon Lafayette
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In a twist that makes sense only on Wall Street, media company stocks are being pummeled in part because of weakness in the ad market caused by an uncertain economic outlook and expectations that inflation will constrain consumer demand — yet ad-tech stocks stay relatively strong.

The explanation for this conundrum seems to be that the same forces driving marketers to be more conservative with their advertising dollars are also making them more interested in spending those dollars as wisely, efficiently and effectively as possible. That means greater reliance on data and technology.

Ad-tech companies are also benefiting from the shift of ad dollars from linear TV, dominated by traditional media companies, to connected TV, with more players.

Matthew Swanson, analyst at RBC Capital Markets, told B+C Multichannel News that for companies in the linear-TV business, the shift to CTV “can be cannibalistic, since they are taking ad dollars away from linear.” Still, it’s better to get some CTV dollars rather than being disrupted with no benefit at all, he said.

On the other hand, ad-tech companies generally don’t profit much from linear television spend. That means “the influx of CTV ad spend coming from linear is all net new to the environment,” Swanson said.

Ad technology firms benefit from the rapid 30% growth of CTV spending, even more than publishers, Swanson added. “While ad-tech vendors benefit from the overall demand, each individual publisher can only benefit from its own.”

The difference can clearly be seen in the mood of executives as they addressed investors and analysts. Executives at big

media companies were concerned about the ad market, while tech execs acted as if they were floating above the economy’s dark clouds.

Warner Bros. Discovery CEO David Zaslav was among the most alarmed by the ad market outlook. “The advertising market right now is very weak,” he said at the RBC Capital Markets Technology, Internet, Media and Telecommunications Conference on November 15. “And it’s weaker than it was during COVID.”

Paramount Global chief financial officer Naveen Chopra told the same conference that in the third quarter, Paramount’s ad business rose 1% and the digital part of its ad business grew 4%. “We feel good about that performance, particularly in a weak market,” he said.

On the ad-tech side, signals were pointing up and the numbers were much bigger.

Jeff Green, founder and CEO at The Trade Desk, said his company’s revenues grew 31% in the third quarter. “It is very clear that under the current operating conditions, we are significantly outpacing the market regardless of the macro environment,” he said on an earnings call.

Green said CTV was a catalyst for a



Top, Jeff Green, founder and CEO, The Trade Desk. Below, Zvika Netter, CEO and co-founder, Innovid.



“massive change” in the market, shifting power to the open internet and away from walled gardens.

When Lexus wanted to reach millennial luxury car buyers, Green said, it chose CTV outlets over linear TV and was able to reach 15 million potential new customers and generate a 67% improvement in purchase intent among key targets.

Similarly, at Innovid, CEO and co-founder Zvika Netter reported a 47% jump in revenue, with record-breaking gains for CTV.

“We feel confident our business will continue to thrive due to our leadership position in the CTV and broader converge TV industry,” Netter said. “In spite of the headwinds, actually CTV, we believe, is more immune to overall pressure than desktop mobile display in other formats.”

Ad Tech’s Place in Streaming

While some TV programmers may be threatened by the entry of Disney Plus and Netflix into the ad-supported streaming business, Innovid is working with both.

“The consensus is that linear TV advertising has passed its peak, which presents new opportunities for advertisers to adopt traditionally digital-centric strategies on the big screen and know-how. We believe the demands for automated technology to help unify converge TV advertising will expand as viewership increasingly pivots to the streaming space and Innovid will continue to deliver volume growth,” Netter said.

Swanson, the RBC Capital Markets analyst, noted that despite the tough economic atmosphere for advertising, revenue for the ad-tech companies he covers missed consensus levels by just 1.1% in Q3. Four of five companies outperformed on adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization. ●



It is very clear that under the current operating conditions, we are significantly outpacing the market regardless of the macro environment.”

— Jeff Green, The Trade Desk



Members of the 2022 class of Cable TV Pioneers, who were honored at a Sept. 19 gala event at the Union League of Philadelphia (back row, l. to r.): **Janice Arouh, Matthew Deprey, Ralph Brown, John Piazza, Shelley Brindle, Joseph Guariglia, Camilla Formica, Dale Ardizzone, Richard Rioboli, John Bickham** and **Michelle Rice**. (Front, l. to r.): **Theresa Sauerwein, Bill Connors, Charlie Herrin, Nomi Bergman, John Dowd** and **Allison Olien**.



Cable TV Pioneers **Char Beales** (l.) and **Doug Holloway** at the Cable Pioneers gala in Philadelphia.



(From l.): Pioneer **Mike Egan**, guest **Dimitri Sevastopoulo** and Pioneer **Cathy Rasenberger** and at the Cable TV Pioneers gala in Philadelphia.



Members of the Radio City Rockettes flank (second from l.) Hallmark Media CEO **Wonya Lucas, Ginna Claire Mason** and Hallmark Cards president **Mike Perry** at Hallmark's "Countdown to Christmas" Kickoff at Radio City Music Hall in New York.



(From l.): Executive producer **Greg Brenman**; cast members **Kimberly Norris Guerrero, Chaske Spencer** and **Emily Blunt**; writer/director/EP **Hugo Blick**; and Amazon Studios head **Jen Salke** at the premiere of Prime Video's *The English* at Metrograph in New York.

DIVERSITY WEEK

Diversity Week made its return to New York from October 9-13, with The WICT Network Leadership Conference and Touchstones Luncheon, the NAMIC Conference and the Walter Kaitz Foundation Annual Fundraising Dinner all returning to in-person status for the first time since 2019. Some snapshots from the week:



WICT Network president and CEO **Maria E. Brennan** (l.) and **Robin Roberts** of ABC's *Good Morning America* on stage Oct. 11 at the WICT Network Leadership Conference & Touchstones Luncheon in New York.



Sandra Howe, WICT Network board chair; inaugural Fearless Leader Award winner **Jill Campbell**, president and chief people and operations officer, Cox Enterprises; and **Leigh Woisard**, WICT Network vice chair.



Colleen Langner, executive VP and COO at Cox Communications, accepts the Woman of the Year-Operator award from Cox president **Mark Greatrex** at the October 10 WICT Touchstones Luncheon.



At The WICT Network/NAMIC/Kaitz Foundation Diversity Town Hall (l. to r.): **Maria E. Brennan**, WICT Network; **Michelle Ray**, Kaitz; **Rhonda Nesmith Crichlow**, Charter; **Loren Hudson**, Comcast Cable; **Ann McGlennen**, Midco; **Michael Powell**, NCTA; moderator **Suzanne Malveaux** of CNN; **Kia Painter**, Cox; **Aisha Thomas-Petit**, AMC Networks; and **Sandra K. Howe**, WICT Network.



At the NAMIC National Town Hall Meeting "The Power of Diverse Storytelling Through a Sports Lens" (l. to r.): **Gustavo Coletti**, ESPN; **Michèle Stephenson**, co-director, ESPN's *Play*; **Angela Rye**, ESPN contributor; **Jimmy Pitaro**, chairman, ESPN & Sports Content, Disney; **Shima Oliaee**, creator, writer and producer, *30 for 30 Podcasts: Pink Card*; and **Joe Brewster**, co-director, *Play*.



Walter Kaitz Foundation executive director **Michelle Ray** and NCTA-The Internet & Television Association president and CEO **Michael Powell** on stage at the foundation's Annual Fundraising Dinner at the Marriot Marquis.



At the NAMIC Conference's Opening General Session Oct. 11 (l. to r.): **Freddy Rolón**, ESPN; **Rhonda Nesmith Crichlow**, Charter; **Michael Powell**, NCTA; **Shuanise Washington**, NAMIC; **Jimmy Pitaro**, ESPN; and keynote speaker **Leland Melvin**, former NASA astronaut and NFL wide receiver.



Kaitz dinner ChangeMaker honoree **Gabe Middleton**, co-founder and CEO, Human-I-T.



FCC chair **Jessica Rosenworcel** speaks during the WICT Network Touchstones Luncheon.



On the WICT Leadership Conference's "Rare Air: Insights From Women Chiefs" panel (l. to r.): **Frances Berwick**, NBCUniversal Television and Streaming; **Jessica Fischer**, Charter; **Sujata Gosalia**, Cox; **Wonya Lucas**, Hallmark Media; moderator **Hena Doba** of Cheddar News; and **Christina Spade**, AMC Networks.

Gary Gershoff; Luis Marin Creative; Gary Gershoff/Getty Images for The WICT Network

People

Notable executives on the move



CBS STUDIOS

Kristen Hall has rejoined CBS Studios in Los Angeles as executive VP of communications, overseeing all publicity and communications strategies. She returns after four years at Amazon Studios/Prime Video, where she was director of original series publicity.



COMCAST

Michael Slovin was named VP and general manager of Comcast Smart Solutions, based in Philadelphia and tasked with overseeing integration of the cable company's advanced connectivity options with leading smart technology partners. He was VP, national field sales.



COMMON SENSE MEDIA

Sharon Kroll Cohen advanced to chief marketing officer at Common Sense Networks in Los Angeles, parent of kids' streaming service Sensical. Formerly VP, marketing, she joined the company in December 2021 from Nickelodeon, where she had been EVP.



THE CW

The CW Network has appointed **Rebekah Dopp** as executive VP of distribution, strategy and affiliate relations. The former CBS and HBO affiliate relations executive was most recently global head of diversity, equity and inclusion, brand and reputation at Google.



FOX

Cheryl Dolins was named senior VP, comedy programming and development at Fox Entertainment, based in Los Angeles. She was senior VP, comedy development at 20th Television, leading the development of all studio comedies for streaming, broadcast and cable.



GRAY TELEVISION

Gray Television has elevated **Jaime Sayre Kawaja** to general manager/general sales manager of Fox affiliate WFLX West Palm Beach, Florida. She had been general sales manager at Gray-owned CBS station WKYT Lexington, Kentucky.



HALLMARK MEDIA

John Matts joined Hallmark Media as chief financial officer, based in New York and reporting to president and CEO Wonya Lucas. Most recently CFO of Golf Channel, he also held financial leadership posts with NBCUniversal in the broader NBC Sports Group and at NBC News.



HALLMARK MEDIA

Hallmark Media added **Alice Rao** as senior VP, publicity, based in Los Angeles. She was a communications and publicity consultant working with Netflix, HBO Max, Turner Networks and MRC Media on series such as *Stranger Things*, *Emily in Paris*, *Russian Doll* and *The Upshaws*.



HEARTLAND VIDEO

Heartland Video Systems named **Alex Hudgins** as Middle Atlantic regional sales manager. He comes from Videndum Production Solutions, where he handled Midwest and Southeast accounts for brands such as Vinten, Sachtler, Autoscript, Anton Bauer, Litepanels and Quasar Science.



NICKELODEON

Makeda Mays Green was elevated to senior VP, cultural and consumer insights at Nickelodeon, based in New York. An 11-year veteran of the network, she is the former director of education and research, digital media, at Sesame Workshop.



NICKELODEON

Nickelodeon promoted **Andrea Strauss** to senior VP, content and brand insights, adding oversight of the West Coast insights group to her duties. A Nick veteran of more than two decades, she will continue to lead the brand, consumer insights and content insights teams.



STUDIO RAMSAY GLOBAL

Cyrus Farrokh has joined Studio Ramsay Global, the production company created by Gordon Ramsay and Fox Entertainment, as senior VP, strategy. He had been president, distribution at Propagate Content, where he launched international operations.



RELO METRICS

Jay Prasad, a veteran ad technology and measurement executive, was named CEO of Relo Metrics, formerly known as GumGum Sports, which uses artificial intelligence to measure the value of sports sponsorships. Prasad was most recently LiveRamp's chief strategy officer for TV.



TRULY ORIGINAL

Christy Coffey has joined Truly Original as VP, development and talent, overseeing casting and talent relations. She had been casting director with Big Fish Entertainment as well as with Netflix and Viacom, with credits including *Teen Mom*, *The Hills* and *Martha Knows Best*.



SINCLAIR

Valerie Koonce was named VP and general manager of Sinclair Broadcast Group's stations in Boise, Idaho, CBS affiliate KBOI and The CW affiliate KYUU. She most recently was marketing sales manager at Sinclair's KUTV Salt Lake City, Utah.



WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

Warner Bros. Discovery upped **Marybeth Strobel** to executive VP, advertising sales, responsible for Food Network, TLC, OWN, Cooking Channel, TBS Entertainment, Cartoon Network and WB Syndication. She had been at Warner Bros. Discovery Sports.



SINCLAIR

Sinclair Broadcast Group also named **John Manzi** VP and general manager of KRCR (ABC), KRVU (MyNet) and KUCO (Univision) in Chico, California. He will also oversee Sinclair's provision of services to KCVU (Fox). Manzi was VP/GM at Sinclair's KSAS-KMTW in Wichita, Kansas.



WSB

Cox Media Group-owned WSB Atlanta has elevated **Brad Nitz** to chief meteorologist and leader of Severe Weather Team 2. A meteorologist with the CBS station for 17 years, he has also worked for NBC News and at stations in Orlando and Jacksonville, Florida.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Other industry execs making moves

Streaming technology provider Brightcove tapped **Scott Levine** as senior VP, head of product, based in New York. He was senior VP of product and technology at TelevisaUnivision.

... **Ross Liberman** has joined Hotwire Communications as senior VP of government affairs, based in Washington, D.C. He had served in the same role at ACA Connects.

... **Camie Nicholas** was named VP and general manager of Sinclair-owned Fox/MyNet affiliate KSAS in **Wichita-Hutchinson, Kansas**. She will also oversee Dabl station KMTW. She had been general sales manager of the stations. ... The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) has elected its officers for 2023: **Richard T. Jenkins** of Warner Bros. Discovery, president; **Richard Welsh** of Deluxe Media, executive VP; **Michael Zink** of Warner Bros. Discovery, education VP; and **Lisa Hobbs** of MediaKind, secretary/treasurer, all for two-year terms.

Ad Meter

Who's spending what where

2022 TV ADVERTISING RECAP

The most-seen brands and industries on TV, and more



Impressions Spotlight

Highlighted here are top programs and networks ranked by TV ad impressions delivered this year (from Jan. 1-Nov. 21), as well as top advertisers and industries.

Total TV ad impressions:
7.01 trillion (-3.8% YoY)

Big 4 (ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC) primetime TV ad impressions:
420 billion (-3.3% YoY)

Key takeaway: iSpot's end-of-year TV ad recap highlights the continued importance of live sports for advertisers to get messaging in front of large audiences. These tentpole events are growing by share of TV ad impressions compared to the rest of TV.

TOP 5 PROGRAMS

By share of TV ad impressions – new program airings only (Jan. 1-Nov. 21)

1. NFL

Share of impressions: **5.94%**
Top advertiser: **GEICO** (2.43%)



2. College Football

Share of impressions: **2.80%**
Top advertiser: **Allstate** (2.27%)



3. NBA

Share of impressions: **2.25%**
Top advertiser: **State Farm** (2.70%)



4. Good Morning America

Share of impressions: **1.85%**
Top advertiser: **Target** (2.02%)



5. Men's College Basketball

Share of impressions: **1.82%**
Top advertiser: **AT&T Wireless** (3.68%)



TOP ADVERTISERS

By share of TV ad impressions (Jan. 1-Nov. 21)

1 Domino's

Share of impressions: **0.83%**
Top network: **Fox News** (7.46%)
Top program: **Friends** (2.52%)

2 Liberty Mutual Insurance

Share of impressions: **0.73%**
Top network: **Fox News** (8.42%)
Top program: **Law & Order: SVU** (2.18%)

3 PROGRESSIVE

Share of impressions: **0.71%**
Top network: **CBS** (12.07%)
Top program: **NFL** (8.03%)

4 GEICO

Share of impressions: **0.70%**
Top network: **CBS** (11.67%)
Top program: **NFL** (5.07%)

5 SUBWAY

Share of impressions: **0.56%**
Top network: **MSNBC** (6.20%)
Top program: **NFL** (5.07%)

MOST-SEEN INDUSTRIES

By share of TV ad impressions (Jan. 1-Nov. 21)

- 1) QSR (4.64%)
- 2) Automakers (3.73%)
- 3) Auto & General Insurance (3.57%)
- 4) Streaming Services (2.45%)
- 5) Department Stores (2.02%)
- 6) Wireless Services (1.88%)
- 7) Skin & Foot Care (1.80%)
- 8) Vitamins & Supplements (1.75%)
- 9) Pizza (1.63%)
- 10) Candy & Gum (1.48%)

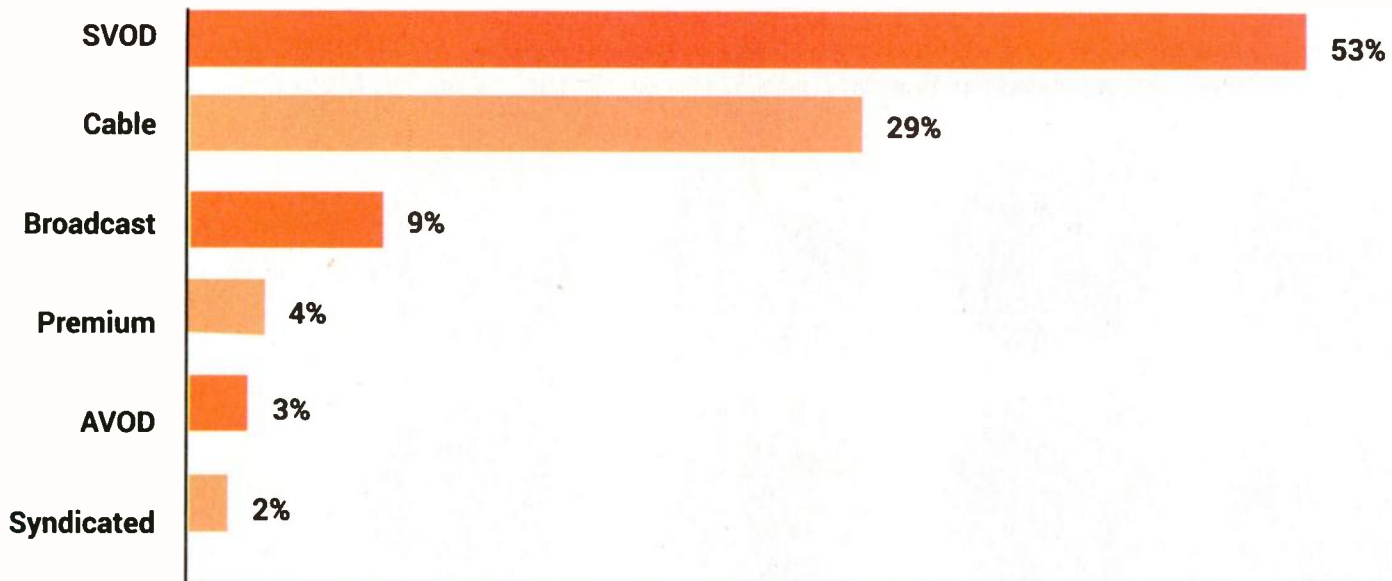
TOP NETWORKS

By share of TV ad impressions – new program airings only (Jan. 1-Nov. 21)

- 1) CBS (14.48%)
- 2) ABC (12.16%)
- 3) NBC (11.69%)
- 4) Fox News (10.03%)
- 5) ESPN (5.28%)
- 6) CNN (4.89%)
- 7) MSNBC (4.75%)
- 8) Fox (4.69%)
- 9) Univision (4.27%)
- 10) Telemundo (2.54%)

WHERE ARE NEW AND RETURNING SERIES PREMIERING?

Perhaps a sign of the times, a greater number of new and returning series are premiering on SVOD services than cable, broadcast, premium, AVOD and syndicated platforms combined, according to One Touch Intelligence's VODTRAK intelligence service.

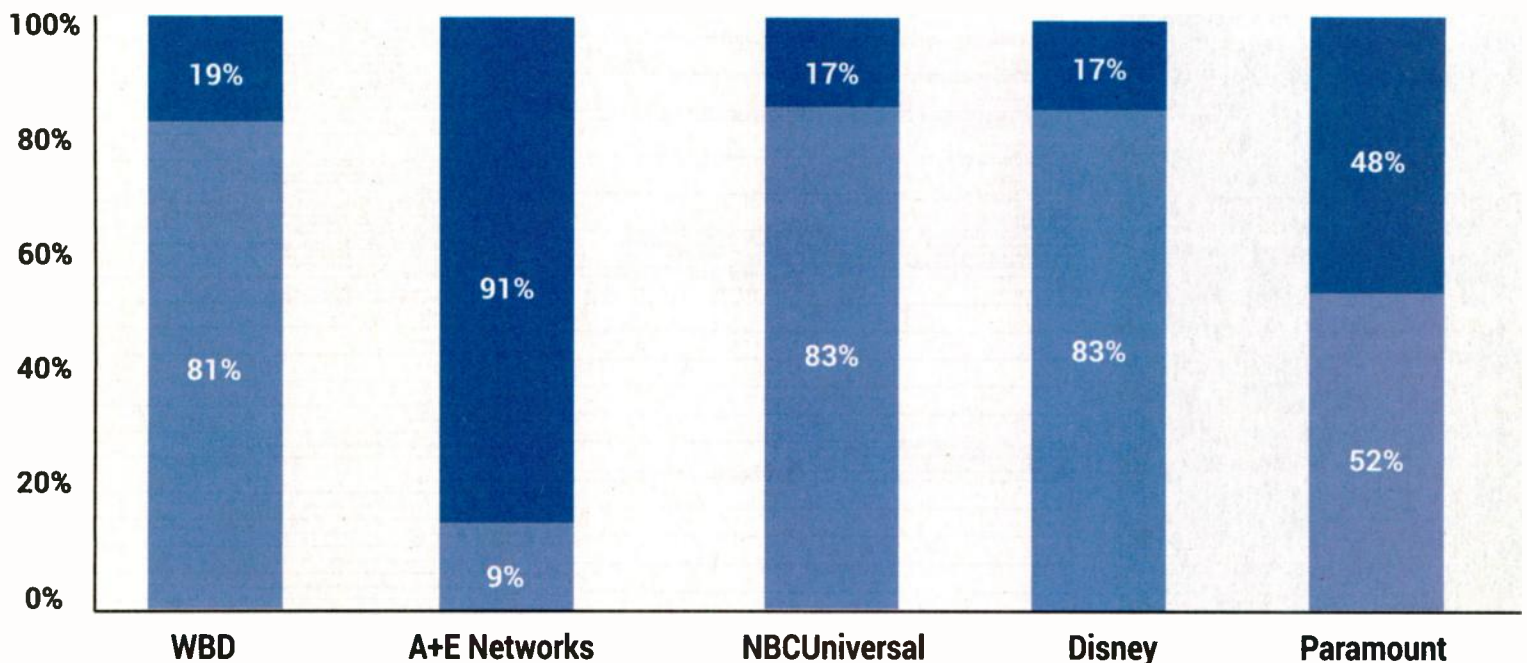


Source: One Touch Intelligence VODTRAK intelligence service

HOW MUCH NEWLY-AIRED CONTENT BECOMES AVAILABLE ON STREAMING?

New content that airs first on traditional linear TV often makes its way to streaming services, but some media companies are more generous than others when it comes to freeing up their content to live outside the traditional TV universe.

Available on streaming ● Not available on streaming ●



Source: One Touch Intelligence VODTRAK intelligence service

VIZIO

Fall's Most-Watched TV Programming

Of all the live, linear minutes watched on VIZIO smart TVs from Sept. 1 - Nov. 21, 5.99% was spent watching the NFL. Other sports programming like college football and MLB games were also among the most-watched by audiences.



Via VIZIO's Inscope, the TV data company with insights from a panel of 20 million active and opted-in smart TVs. Data is linear, live TV only and includes all episode types (new and reruns). Rankings are by percent share duration, defined as "of all the live, linear minutes watched from Sept. 1 - Nov. 21, 2022, X% of the time was spent on show Y."

NEXT TV'S MOST VIEWED

*Most viewed articles on
nexttv.com, Nov. 1-Dec. 1,
per Google Analytics*

1. **Syndication Ratings: 'Jennifer Hudson' Ties Its Season High and 'Sherri'**
2. **Mark Ronchetti, Former KRQE Chief Meteorologist, Has Lost N.M. Governor Race**
3. **Should John Malone and Warner Bros. Discovery Just Pull the Plug on Streaming and Go Full Arms Dealer?**
4. **Broadcast Nets Not Clamoring To Carry 'Big' Trump Announcement**
5. **Fred Hickman, Former CNN Anchor, Dies at 66**

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By Evan Swarztrauber
and Luke Hogg
@JoinLincoln

Congress Must Offer Clarity on America's Wireless Future

Reauthorization affords an opportunity to refine FCC's spectrum auction authority

Ever since the Titanic sank, the U.S. government has regulated the airwaves within its borders. After the Titanic's distress signal was drowned out by amateur radio operators, Congress passed the Radio Act of 1912, ending the era of a "cacophony of competing voices, none of which could be clearly and predictably heard," as the Supreme Court described it. Now that the Federal Communications Commission's spectrum-auction authority is set to expire, Congress must once again cut through the noise to find a path forward for America's wireless future.

Given the inherent scarcity of airwaves, federal intervention made sense to prevent a tragedy of the commons—or tragic shipwrecks. Since 1934, the FCC has governed commercial and other non-federal uses of spectrum, while the Department of Commerce has governed federal use. But it wasn't until 1993 that Congress gave the FCC the authority to auction spectrum licenses. Since 1994, the FCC has conducted over 100 spectrum auctions, raising more than \$200 billion.

Periodically, Congress must renew the FCC's authority to auction spectrum. One might think this should be a formality, but very little is simple in Washington.

In recent years, federal agencies and

private stakeholders unhappy with the FCC's decisions have resorted to hyperbolic rhetoric and circumvention of the proper interagency processes to air their grievances. They have peddled unfounded fears that FCC decisions would cripple our electric grid, increase car crashes, cause plane crashes, blind meteorologists to impending natural disasters, cripple GPS and more. A failure to reauthorize the FCC's spectrum authority would undermine the commission and embolden entities who seek to wrest control of the commercial airwaves from the regulator.

Congress will almost certainly reauthorize the FCC's spectrum auction authority in the coming months, but two questions remain. First, for how long should this authority be reauthorized? Second, should reauthorization be coupled with any directives to reallocate and/or auction certain spectrum bands?

On the first question, 10-year extensions have been the norm for reauthorization. But Congress is in the midst of critical debates about how to balance the interests of commercial and federal users. With little to no unused spectrum left, Congress and the FCC must find ways to make room for new use cases without disrupting critical government functions or causing interference to existing users.

Evan Swarztrauber is senior adviser to technology-focused public policy think tank Lincoln Network. Luke Hogg is policy manager at Lincoln Network.

A shorter reauthorization, such as two years, would afford time to hash out how best to create a pipeline of spectrum to meet the needs of various wireless technologies. However, this raises the second question: what auctions, if any, should happen during those 18 months?

This question is the sticking point of the current debate. The wireless industry has identified the lower 3-GHz band (3.1-3.45 GHz) as ideal for 5G. The problem is that this band is used by the Department of Defense for radar systems. While the industry would prefer exclusive access to all 350 MHz in the band, it is a tough sell in Congress when national security is involved.

Legislative Solution

If forcing the Pentagon to fully vacate the band is a nonstarter, then how should Congress proceed? The Spectrum Innovation Act, as it was originally introduced, could serve as a guide.

The initial version, introduced by Reps. Mike Doyle (D-Pa.) and Doris Matsui (D-Calif.), would make at least 200 MHz of the lower 3 GHz band available for non-federal use and provide incentive payments for the DoD to either share or vacate portions of the band. This approach not only provides flexibility to find the right mix of federal and commercial use, but it also gives stakeholders time to consider other arrangements for the remaining 150 MHz in the band.

In order for this structure to work, however, Congress would need to remove the provision of the act preventing the FCC from auctioning spectrum outside the designated 200-MHz band. With that provision removed, Congress could package the bill with reauthorization. This would send a clear message that the FCC's purview over commercial spectrum is here to stay and put valuable 5G spectrum in the pipeline.

At a time when countries are competing to dominate the next wave of innovation and federal agencies are increasingly looking to undermine the FCC's domain over commercial spectrum, Congress can ill afford to leave the agency without the auction authority it needs to continue doing its job. ●



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Chris McGurk

Chairman and CEO, Cinedigm

Business guy who loves movies is bullish on television's FAST future

Cinedigm chairman and CEO Chris McGurk says the call that brought him into the movie business came out of the blue. McGurk was happy with his job in accounting at Pepsi and Disney was looking for a chief financial officer for its studio. He interviewed with The Walt Disney Co. chairman and CEO Michael Eisner, who had just accomplished rebuilding the company. "I was a smartass. I asked him: 'Why would I want to come here? You've already won the World Series. The only way to go is down.'"

"I want to create a dynasty like the Yankees and the only way I'm going to do that is if I hire people like you, and you can have an impact on popular culture and impact people's lives," Eisner responded. "Of course, I took the job," McGurk recalled.

He helped Eisner buy Miramax. After Disney, McGurk helped run studios for Universal and MGM while focusing on independent films. Since 2011, McGurk has been CEO of Cinedigm, which has transformed from a technology company putting movies in theaters to one that streams content to consumers' homes.

McGurk spoke to B+C senior content producer, business Jon Lafayette from Italy, where he was celebrating his 40th wedding anniversary. An edited transcript follows.

Are you a business guy or a movie guy?
I consider myself a business guy, but I also consider myself to be a champion

and lover of independent film. We're hoping [streaming platform] Cineverse can become the Spotify for independent film and TV, and be a place where artists can come and know that their films — like *Terrifier 2* — are going to find eyeballs and not be prevented from distribution by, you know, all the Hollywood gatekeepers like I used to be.

Has the industry's shift to streaming come faster than you expected?

I think it came slower. It took a bit longer because of traditional Hollywood clinging to legacy businesses and people trying to save their jobs. The catalyst was the pandemic, which encouraged cord-cutting, and the transition accelerated by two or three years. But now we're here, and despite all the naysayers and all the B.S. you hear, streaming is the future of the business and ad-supported and FAST streaming is the best part of the streaming business. We transitioned into that in 2018 and we've had triple-digit growth for 10 straight quarters and we don't see anything stopping that.

How does new competition from Disney Plus and Netflix in the ad market affect you? We don't feel we compete with Netflix and the big streamers. We have our targeted enthusiasts. And now we have Cineverse, which is the independent content they're ignoring now because they're trying to improve their cash flow. We've got a pretty clear playing field right now and feel good about it.

BONUS FIVE

Favorite TV show?
Breaking Bad

What are you watching now? My wife and I watch *The Great British Baking Show*.

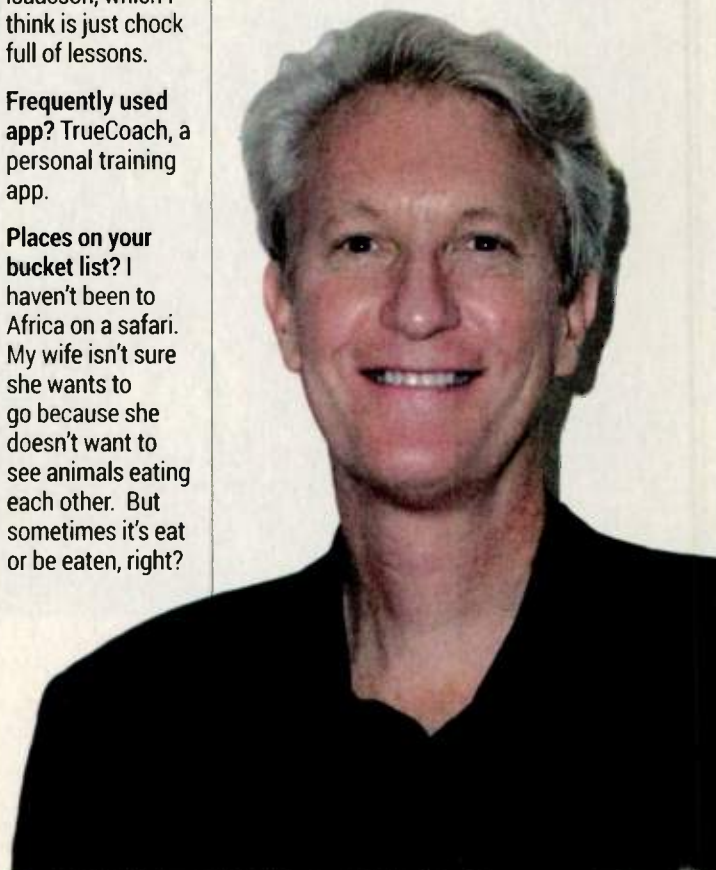
Books on your nightstand? *Final Patrol*, by Don Keith, about World War II submarines. I'm going to re-read the Steve Jobs book by Walter Isaacson, which I think is just chock full of lessons.

Frequently used app? TrueCoach, a personal training app.

Places on your bucket list? I haven't been to Africa on a safari. My wife isn't sure she wants to go because she doesn't want to see animals eating each other. But sometimes it's eat or be eaten, right?

The industry is consolidating and Warner Bros. Discovery is looking to get into the FAST business. Are those guys kicking your tires? What would you say if they did? We get our tires kicked all the time but our response generally is we love where we're at right now. Everything is great about our company, except the stock price like everybody else. So it's not good timing to do a deal. We're trying to get up to \$100, \$150 million in revenue and prove we're sustainably profitable. And at that point, we're in a better position to have conversations with anybody and everybody about anything.

You just signed a new employment contract to run Cinedigm for three more years. Why? I've spent 11 years at the company now. It took longer than I thought to get where we are right now, but we're in a really good spot. We're rocking and rolling and I think I've put a great team of people together. The future is ours and I want to be part of it for the next three years because I think we're going to do great things. ●



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