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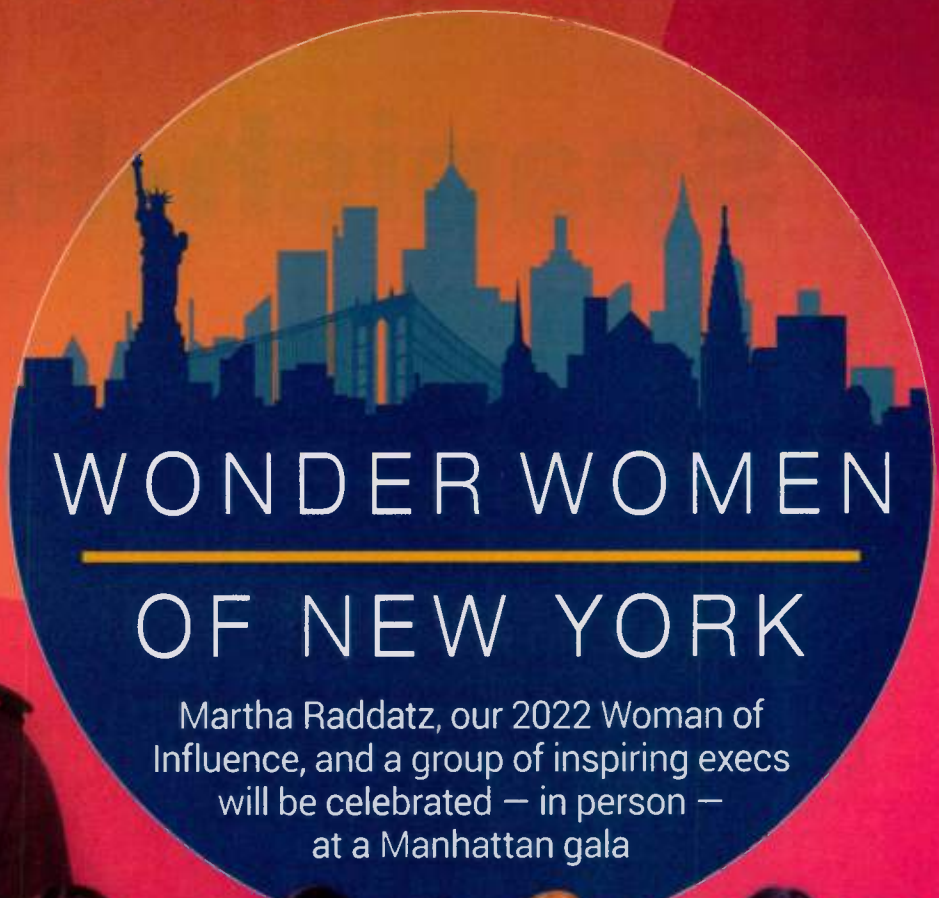
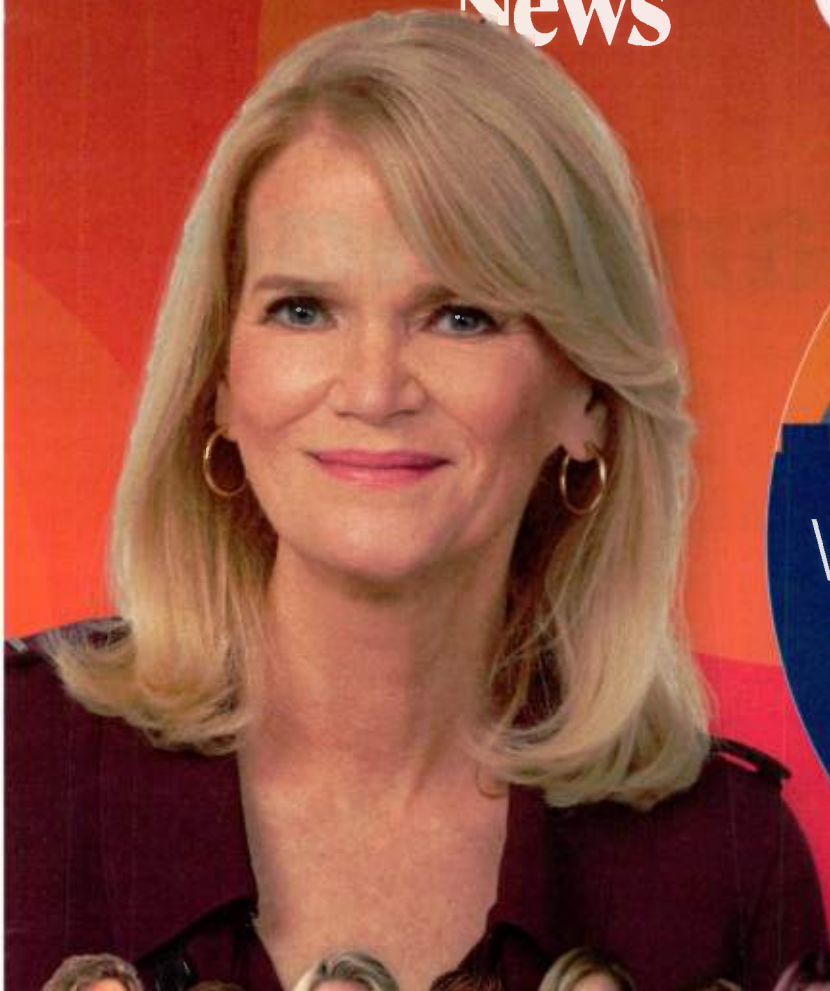
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Broadcasting Multichannel News + Cable

2022 NAB
SHOW PREVIEW:
ROLLING BACK INTO VEGAS



WONDER WOMEN OF NEW YORK

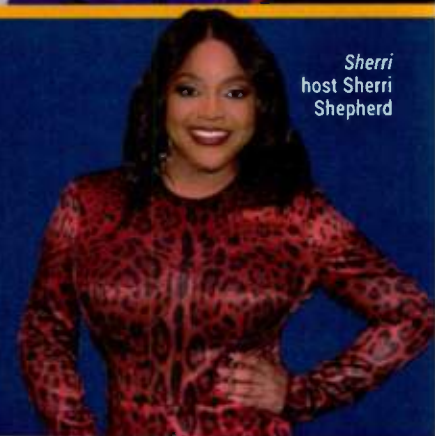
Martha Raddatz, our 2022 Woman of Influence, and a group of inspiring execs will be celebrated — in person — at a Manhattan gala



BBCA'S 'KILLING EVE'
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OUT WITH A BANG

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• AN AUDIENCE, HOPES
MONEY WILL FOLLOW

SYNDICATION'S
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10 SPECIAL REPORT

FEATURES

4 LEAD-IN

NAB Show is primed for its return as a live event in Las Vegas, and there's plenty for broadcasters and exhibitors to catch up on.

By Mike Farrell

10 SPECIAL REPORT:

WONDER WOMEN OF NEW YORK

Meet the class of remarkable women in television being honored by B+C Multichannel News as our New York gala event resumes.

PLUS: ABC News's battle-tested Martha Raddatz is the 2022 Woman of Influence.

45 SYNDICATION

With the announcement of two new talkers featuring Jennifer Hudson and Sherri Shepherd, the fall season is starting to shape up for syndicators.

By Paige Albiniak



4 LEAD-IN

DEPARTMENTS

- 42 PROGRAMMING
- 46 LOCAL NEWS
- 48 CURRENCY
- 50 BUSINESS
- 52 FATES & FORTUNES
- 54 DATA MINE
- 55 VIEWPOINT
- 56 THE FIVE SPOT



45 SYNDICATION

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FUTURE

Connectors
Creators
Experience
Makers



Live NAB Show Rolls Back Into Las Vegas

'Create, Connect and Capitalize' are pillars of in-person gathering



By Mike Farrell
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After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, broadcasters will finally be able to return to the National Association of Broadcasters' NAB Show in person April 23-27 in Las Vegas. The organization has been working hard over the past several months to make it one to remember, splitting the event into three pillars — Create, Connect and Capitalize — along with the usual roundup of compelling keynote speakers and seminars.

The NAB Show was canceled in 2020 and went virtual in 2021 because of COVID-19. The return to an in-person event comes months after another big industry conference in Las Vegas, CES, did the same in January and hosted perhaps 45,000 attendees. While that was considerably lower than previous CES shows that boasted attendance of more than 100,000, NAB president and CEO Curtis LeGeyt is optimistic that the NAB Show can do better for two reasons: the omicron variant, still rising at the time of CES, appears to have peaked; and the new structure for the show is geared to optimize the time of virtually every attendee. (Future US Inc., parent

Above, attendees check out show-floor exhibits during the last in-person NAB Show held in 2019. NAB president and CEO Curtis LeGeyt (r.) says the show's attendance trajectory is strong.

company of B+C Multichannel News, publishes the NAB Show Daily under contract with NAB.)

LeGeyt said that as of mid-February, attendance for the show was looking strong.

"There's nothing that quite replicates face-to-face business interaction," LeGeyt said. "Ours is a commerce-driven show, it's a B2B event. For those who are looking to do commerce, which is primarily what our show is driven by, there is a real want for what the NAB Show offers."

Other industry executives said they're equally excited.

Graham Media Group president and CEO Emily Barr said she is sending a full complement to the show, including general managers, Graham Media's director of technology, IT directors and several attorneys. The number of attendees from Graham Media is about the same as it was pre-COVID-19, she said.

"We've always sent a pretty good-sized contingent of people to NAB, because we've always believed it was a great venue for us not only to attend and see what's going on in the industry, in terms of equipment and other things going on, but it's also great for us to get together there," Barr said.

Hearst Television president Jordan Wertlieb said that his company is sending its biggest contingent ever to this year's NAB Show. "We're going to be bolting group meetings onto the back side of the show, but we are going to bring all of our chief engineers to the show," he said.

The biggest benefit is being able to meet again in person, Barr added. After two years of COVID-19-induced quarantines, it will be good to get to see old and new colleagues again.

Zoned for Experiences

The new event design is built around real-world applications and workflows that, according to NAB Show senior VP of business development Eric Trabb, allows attendees to easily navigate the show floor and visit experience zones that bring products and technologies to life.

The zones, focusing on the concepts of inspiration, innovation and implementation, are designed to give attendees a clearer sense of the larger picture, new directions and opportunities in broadcasting, as well as the tools and technologies to get ahead.

Inspiration, Innovation and Experience zones are contained within each of the three pillars of the content life cycle — Create, Connect and Capitalize — with complementary activities and resources aligned with each pillar, to make it easier for attendees to learn more about specific areas of interest, network with like-minded people and find products.

For example, within the Create pillar, attendees will see that the focus no longer is on broadcast, film or radio, nor on any other narrow category like podcasting or webcasting. Instead, the Create pillar will function as a single place where attendees can find all the tools needed to do their work, whether they are broadcasters, videographers, streamers or other industry professionals. If, for example, an attendee is more focused on content distribution and delivery, those tools can be found in Connect. For a focus on content monetization, Capitalize is the place to be.

Barr said the new structure is a sign of the changing times in the broadcast business.

"In the old days, it was really about going to see the trucks and the antennas — that's all still there to some extent — but now we're really looking at content development, we're looking at a lot of digital technology and we're understanding how different parts of the industry can work together," she said.

Content Takes the Floor

Content is being produced for the show by NAB as well as by curated sponsors, featuring industry leaders and other individuals making their marks on the media landscape. But rather than

having to look for this content in a meeting or conference room, NAB said attendees will see it come to life on the show floor, although there will be conference programs for those seeking more depth or technical content.

LeGeyt also pointed out that the show's intelligent content area, which is focused on data and analytics, should be a place of interest to attendees.

"When you think about the companies involved — AWS, Microsoft, MediaKind, Veritone — I think that's going to be really interesting to see how our attendees respond to those offerings," he said.

Actor and TV host Nick Cannon officially kicks off the conference on Sunday, April 24, with a conversation about his career and his thoughts on how the industry has evolved over the past two tumultuous years. On Monday, LeGeyt officially welcomes attendees to the conference, later presenting former NAB president and CEO Gordon Smith with the NAB Distinguished Service Award, followed by entertainment from nationally-known comedian Jim Gaffigan.

On Tuesday, TikTok global head of B2B marketing Carly Zipp will participate in a Q&A with the NAB's Jonathan Toomey, discussing the social media phenomenon's history as well as sharing tips on how to connect with audiences on a deeper level.

LeGeyt said although there are many factors outside of the NAB's control, he firmly believes that the April event is "going to be a compelling, well-attended show."

"We feel the pent-up demand from the exhibitor side," he continued. "The companies who are really our flagships are all back in the fold for this April show. We just feel like the right ingredients are there for a really successful show both on the attendee and exhibitor side come April." ●

BYRON ALLEN: BROADCASTERS CAN LEAD THE WAY

MEDIA MOGUL BYRON ALLEN said he's excited about the NAB Show's return to Las Vegas, about broadcasting and digital media and about the 40th anniversary of Allen Media Group-owned The Weather Channel.

Allen's company owns 27 TV stations along with pay TV channels including The Weather Channel, which is launching a Spanish-language outlet as a free streaming channel later this year. Climate change awareness makes the service important, he said. "The Weather Channel is leading the charge and leading the conversation in 'let's work together and let's combat climate change and global warming,'" he said in a recent interview.

Allen, an NAB Television Board member, will be appearing at a fireside chat with outgoing NAB president and CEO Gordon H. Smith on April 27. He's also on an April 26 panel about new technology enhancing storytelling on The Weather Channel. "It's great. I mean, I love it. I'm looking forward to it."

Allen was reportedly interested in buying Tegna, which recently agreed to be sold to private equity-backed Standard General for \$8.6 billion including \$3.2 billion in assumed debt. Allen said he could not comment on Tegna but that he remains interested in buying TV stations, especially affiliates of Big Four networks. "We're on the hunt, big time," he said.

AMG has been launching free ad-supported streaming services, including Sports.TV, TheGrio.TV and HBCUGO.TV, along with Local Now and The Weather Channel en Español, launching in the second or third quarter. Broadcasting and cable outlets including his Entertainment Studios Networks still interest AMG's founder, chairman and CEO, though.

"And also, I have to tell you, the industry is appreciating Black-owned media," Allen said. "I would say 95% of them want to lean in. There's that 5% that tries to minimize, which is why I sued McDonald's for \$10 billion." That suit, claiming McDonald's has discriminated against Black-owned media companies (including The Weather Channel and ES Networks) in ad buying, is working its way through federal courts.

"Listen," Allen said. "I think that this industry has a huge opportunity to be the leader, make an example and show the rest of corporate America how to do it and how to help us all be better and achieve something that really is long overdue. It's something we need to put behind us and do the right way and make us all better and really lean in to make sure every American is successful, and I do mean every American, young, old, Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, everybody." — Kent Gibbons



Mediacom Logs 100 Consecutive Quarters of Growth

Chairman and CEO Rocco Commisso says even after 27 years, there's more to do



By Mike Farrell
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@MikeFCable

More than a quarter century after risking his life savings to start a cable company specifically focused on secondary and rural markets, and months after logging 100 straight quarters of revenue growth, Mediacom Communications chairman and CEO Rocco Commisso said he isn't done yet.

Mediacom finished the fourth quarter with \$561.9 million in total revenue, a 2.2% increase over the prior year and the 100th consecutive quarter of positive year-over-year growth for the company Commisso started in 1995, an accomplishment it said only a handful of companies can claim.

Mediacom was first envisioned in an eight-page paper Commisso wrote in March 1995 after leaving CableVision Industries — where he served as chief financial officer for about a decade — titled “A Window of Opportunity.” In it, he mapped out a vision for bringing cable to small markets. At the time, the chairman believed it was a venture that would last at least a couple of years.

“We never expected to be at this level,” Commisso said. “We were going to get out after five years. But things evolved. The things that helped me the most were, one; the support I always had from the debt community, and two; that I turned a lot of things down so I could

keep control of the company.”

Commisso bought his first cable system in Ridgecrest, California, in 1996 and today Mediacom has 2.6 million voice, video and data customers in 22 states. The mix of customers has changed dramatically, as most are broadband subscribers instead of video customers. But the idea is still to provide good service at a reasonable price and continue to invest in the business.

Along the way, Mediacom went public, at \$19 per share, in 2000; spent \$2.125 billion in 2001 on systems mainly in Iowa formerly owned by AT&T; and went private again in 2010, after the markets lost faith in the cable business.

“Twenty-five straight years of growth is a remarkable achievement for any business,” MoffettNathanson senior analyst Craig Moffett said. “It's true that Rocco has been a brilliant financial engineer. But that sells him short. The real story is that he has also been a terrific operator. They've put up really nice numbers quarter after quarter. It's a testament to a very well-run business.”

The largest acquisition was the one in 2001 from AT&T of systems in Iowa and three other states. That deal more than doubled Mediacom's size, providing the clout to begin offering high-speed data in areas that hadn't had it before and positioning it for an unprecedented period of growth. Since 2001, Mediacom has grown annual revenue from \$885 million to more than \$2.22 billion and annual adjusted

Rocco Commisso,
Mediacom
Communications
chairman and CEO



operating income before depreciation and amortization (OIBDA) to more than \$1 billion from \$335 million.

But that was 20 years ago, and since then the industry has been turned on its ear. Commisso noted that in 2001, Mediacom had about 1.7 million primary service units (a combination of voice, video and data customers), including 1.5 million video customers and 100,000 high-speed internet subscribers. Today, broadband accounts for about 1.5 million subscribers and video customers number around 600,000, while total PSUs have grown to 2.6 million.

“Since 2001 we've lost over 1 million video customers,” Commisso said. “To lose all these customers and be able to triple your cash flow and grow your revenue every single quarter that we've been alive at Mediacom, in our opinion, is quite an accomplishment.”

At the same time, Mediacom continues to invest in the business — about \$13 billion to fund acquisitions and to build and upgrade a national network that spans 600,000 fiber miles, Commisso said.

Still More to Do

“I am sure it will come as no surprise to anyone who knows me well that I am not about to stop pushing forward,” Commisso said in a chairman's letter issued shortly after the Q4 results.

Commisso is most proud of his ability to keep Mediacom's debt low. Today, the company's leverage ratio stands at 1.2 times cash flow, among the lowest in the entire media and telecom sector. In February, Standard & Poor's raised Mediacom's investment grade credit rating to BBB-plus, higher than much larger telecom rivals like AT&T and a feat that would have been unheard of in the sector when the company began. But he stressed that Mediacom will continue to invest — capex is averaging around \$350 million per year — even as it moves to reduce debt.

“We're investing in our business, in our community, in our people, in our infrastructure to stay in front of the competitive threats that are coming around,” Commisso said. ●

THE WATCHMAN

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



By Michael Malone
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Better Than a Golden Ticket on 'Idol'

A new season of *American Idol* is on ABC. The season introduces platinum tickets, where one singer in each audition city is awarded the grand prize. They get a trip to Hollywood and to observe auditions from box seats in the theater, which lets them rest their voice and pick out a duet partner.

"Some people just walk out and they are stars," judge Lionel Richie said during a TCA Winter Press Tour session. "They have all the boxes ticked. Stage presence, delivery, their sound, what's their style, they have it all there. So when they open their mouths, you know exactly who they are."

Executive producer Megan Wolflick said the goal is to have fans in the studio amidst pandemic challenges. "Having had this be our third year in the pandemic, we are ready to pivot on a dime at a moment's notice," she added. "We are ready to be innovative, to push the envelope, to do anything we can to make this show move forward into 2022."

Added host Ryan Seacrest, "Nothing can replace being up close and personal with an artist in a moment when they've gone through a tough break or when they've gone through a big break."



'Outlander' Sets Up Stateside

Season six of *Outlander* is on Starz March 6, with Claire and Jamie navigating life in North Carolina as the nation divides between crown loyalists and rebels. "We're gonna turn the world upside down a little bit," teased Matthew B. Roberts, executive producer. "Season six is revolution time."

The show is shot in Scotland, which stands in for North Carolina in the new season. "We consider [Scotland] a character," executive producer Maril Davis said. "She now plays the part of North Carolina and she does a fabulous job."

Caitriona Balfe and Sam Heughan play Claire and Jamie. The show is built on their chemistry as they travel through time. Balfe and Heughan hit it off from the beginning, Davis said. "There's a trust and respect there, and a great friendship," she said.

The series is based on the book franchise by Diana Gabaldon. The new season comes from *A Breath of Snow and Ashes*. Davis called it "the book that keeps on giving," with some of its stories extending into season seven.

The books provide "a ton of source material," Davis added. "You get amazing characters, and at the heart of it, an amazing couple. It's a great love story for the ages."

They will keep the *Outlander* gang busy for the foreseeable future. "As long as there is story to be told, ostensibly, we could keep going," Roberts said. "We're working on season seven and, knock on wood, it keeps going from there." ●

WATCH THIS ...



Upload

Season two of sci-fi comedy *Upload* started on Amazon Prime Video March 11. Greg Daniels created the show, set in the future, where humans can choose to be "uploaded" into a virtual afterlife. Robbie Amell stars. ■ *Welcome to Flatch* debuts on Fox March 17. *Flatch* sees a mockumentary crew set up in a small Midwestern town and get to know the locals. Jenny Bicks and Paul Feig are behind it. ■ Speaking of Feig, he executive-produces *Minx*, which begins on HBO Max March 17. Set in Los



Welcome to Flatch

Angeles in the '70s, the show sees a feminist and a scuzzy publisher team up to create an erotic women's magazine. ■ On March 18, *Life and Beth* premieres on Hulu. Amy Schumer executive produces and stars in the comedy about a woman who is forced to engage with her past. ■ Season two of *Sanditon*, based on Jane Austen's final, unfinished novel, begins on PBS March 20.



Sanditon



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Iconic Network Award

'Wonder Women' Luncheon Returns

On March 24, the in-person *Multichannel News* Wonder Women of New York awards event returns in its luncheon format to Manhattan's Ziegfeld Ballroom. Now in its 23rd year, Wonder Women acknowledges the achievement and commitment of some of the most remarkable women in television, who continually show up to innovate, inspire, speak up for equality and lead their team and organization from the front. For more on the live program, go to MCNWonderWomen.com.

Woman of Influence Martha Raddatz

Chief Global Affairs Correspondent
ABC News



By Paige Albinia
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When the Biden administration was withdrawing troops from Afghanistan

last summer, ABC chief global affairs correspondent Martha Raddatz remained until the very end. She'd been shadowing U.S. Army Gen. Austin "Scott" Miller in those final days, and she hitched a ride out with him on the last helicopter out of Kabul.

Just because Raddatz has risen to high heights in the ABC News organization — she also co-anchors *This Week* with George Stephanopoulos on Sundays — doesn't mean she's interested in spending any less time reporting the news from field assignments, even dangerous ones. If anything, her perch at the organization gives her more freedom to do the in-depth, complex stories about which she's so passionate.

"I love what I do, I love it. I love it today as much as I loved it when I first started doing it," said Raddatz, who has done everything at ABC News from covering the Middle East to

moderating presidential debates to interviewing voters at a Trump rally. "It's a disciplined curiosity — if you don't remain curious, you aren't going to love your job. That's part of who I am. I love seeing the world and I have just met such fascinating, interesting people. It's a gift. My job is a gift."

Dax Tejera, executive producer of ABC's *This Week*, called Raddatz "relentless in all the best ways. She's a partner to a producer like myself. She's constantly bringing ideas to the table. For someone at her level with her level of experience, her desire to go out and tell the story wherever that may be — whether that's wearing her global affairs hat or going out into the country to talk to voters — she never tires of it, she loves it. That's a unique trait for someone who wears so many different hats."

Learned on the Job

Raddatz earned her journalism education on the job while working at a local TV station. She was one of the only local correspondents in the country to cover a global beat, traveling overseas to cover wars and conflicts. It was while she was working as chief correspondent at WCVB Boston that she began what became career-long coverage of the Middle East, with a particular focus on Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I dropped out of college because I got a job at a local TV station, I had no idea what I wanted to do," Raddatz said. "I've never been a person who was going to do this, that and the other. I wanted to succeed in my field and be a good journalist — journalism was always first



(Clockwise from t.): Martha Raddatz interviewing then-President George W. Bush, with panelists covering the 2020 election and on the set of *This Week*.



for me, and TV was second. I always remembered that I was here to be a journalist and not just to be on TV.”

Outside of work, Raddatz has been married three times (her husband of 24 years is former NPR correspondent Tom Gjelten) and has raised two children, covering the news up to the very day she had her daughter, Greta Bradlee, in 1980. “I did two stories that day running around in a news van,” she said.

Her boss and coworkers told her she would not want to come back after she had kids, but she knew they were wrong. In fact, she returned to work just two weeks later.

As with all women who have engrossing careers and also have families, balance wasn’t really on the table. It was more about managing risk and staying in close communication with her kids about what she was doing.

“My family, without question, my children and my husband, are of primary importance to me and what I can contribute is an understanding of conflict,” she said. “Maybe the balance

is letting your kids know why you do what you do. I don’t cover wars because it’s a cool thing to do or to say, ‘Aren’t I brave?’ I cover wars so I can let people know what the cost is, so people will understand it more. The more my kids understood it, the more they accepted it.”

Raddatz was raised by a single mom after her father passed away just shy of her third birthday.

“My mother always said she was born 20 years too early,” Raddatz said. “She worked as a secretary and she raised two little girls by herself with zero help.

“I don’t cover wars because it’s a cool thing to do or to say, ‘Aren’t I brave?’ I cover wars so I can let people know what the cost is, so people will understand it more.”

Martha Raddatz

Seeing what my mom did and knowing that my mom felt held back because she was a woman — we talked about it all the time, probably a little too much. Somehow that seeped into me. I thought, ‘By God, I’m doing to do whatever I want and never let being a woman stop me.’”

Setting No Limits

That work ethos has framed Raddatz’s career as she’s covered fields of conflict all over the world. From WCVB, Raddatz went to NPR, where she was the Pentagon correspondent from 1993-98. She joined ABC News as the State Department correspondent in 1999 and moved to national security correspondent in 2003. She also served as the network’s chief White House correspondent during the Bush

administration. She was named senior foreign affairs correspondent after President Barack Obama was elected in 2008.

"If there's a major story in the world, she gets to go first if she wants to go and to stay longer if she wants to," Byron Pitts, coanchor of *Nightline* and chief national correspondent for ABC News, said. The two have worked together on and off since they were both correspondents at WCVB in 1989.

"When January 6 happened, Martha raised her hand like anybody in the D.C. bureau," Pitts said. "One could make the argument that with her stature at this stage in her career, she could have offered context about that important story from her studio. But she wanted to be there in the mix-up. Some people in our business build their professional tan from studio lights. Others build their professional tan from the sun that shines around the world."

Today, Raddatz says that while there are more women on the global-affairs beat, it can still be a challenging place for women, especially in countries where equality for women is not a priority.

"I still find myself in corridors of power where there are not a lot of



women," she said. "I'm not talking about my business or ABC, I'm talking about the places I cover. While there are many incredibly talented war correspondents out there, they are still largely men. And early on, when I went in with ground troops, there weren't a lot of women with me."

As a result, Raddatz has served as an inspiration for many up-and-coming female journalists.

"Martha is someone I have always

Above, Martha Raddatz interviews Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the then-Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, at the Pentagon. Left, Raddatz reports from Yemen.

looked up to," Rachel Scott, ABC News congressional correspondent, said. "I looked up to her long before I had an opportunity to meet her. I remember watching her press world leaders in some of the world's most dangerous areas and provide context and analysis.

"When I first moved down to D.C., I had a big lump in my stomach about meeting her," Scott said. "It made me so nervous. When I finally did meet her, she stopped me in the hallway and said, 'Rachel, it's so good to have you here in the newsroom, you're doing great work.' Since then, I have no idea why I was so nervous about meeting her. She is one of the kindest people I have ever met.

"She's a mentor to so many young women coming up behind her," she added. "No matter how high she climbs, she never forgets to reach back and pull others up with her."

Committed to the News

The current challenges Raddatz and her cohorts face are the constant attacks on journalists by those who would prefer them to relay a different narrative.

"The whole idea of fake news and the idea that the press is the enemy of the people is horrifying," Raddatz said. "We as journalists continue to do our jobs and tell the truth and call out lies. It's at the heart of what we do. It's not opinion, it's trying to find the truth and calling out those who are not."

In the end, Raddatz feels hopeful about the role of journalism and its place in American democracy.

"I am optimistic about the news," she said. "I think in so many ways that the charges of fake news and that the press is the enemy of the people has just made journalists that much more hard-core. Do-or-die journalists are just doubling down and saying 'this is what I was born to do and I'm going to do it better than I ever have.'"

Those hard-core journalists have Raddatz to thank for paving the way. ●





PROUDLY CONGRATULATES



MARTHA RADDATZ

MULTICHANNEL NEWS
WOMAN OF INFLUENCE

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
ALL WONDER WOMEN AWARD
RECIPIENTS!**

Karen Bailey

Executive VP of Original Programming
Starz



By Michael Malone
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Starz has increased its subscriber base by enticing viewers of all stripes, representing a range of races, genders and orientations. Overseeing this effort to connect with a vast array of tastes is Karen Bailey. A year ago, she was promoted to executive VP, giving Bailey a stronger voice in Starz's inclusion initiatives.

"I focus on what we want as a company, what we look for and what everybody else is seeing," she said. "I get that vision out so we can be the best executives we can."

Originals include those within the so-called Power-verse, including *Power Book II: Ghost*, *Power Book III: Raising Kanan* and *Power Book IV: Force*; time-travel drama *Outlander*; *P-Valley*; and *High Town*.

Seeking Underserved Audiences

Efforts to expand the Starz aperture have been in the works for years. Bailey came on board in 2006 as an executive producer, and mentioned the network seeing space in premium cable for more women's voices. "Women want more stories about women, and told through the female lens," she said.

Period drama *The White Queen*, a coproduction with the BBC that launched in 2013, portrayed England in the war-torn 1400s through the eyes of three different women scheming for power. Female viewership tripled from the first episode to the last.

"It just resonated with the audience," Bailey said. "They were like, more, more, more!" The next focused on bringing

“Women want more stories about women, and told through the female lens.”

Karen Bailey

in Black and Latinx voices. *Power*, a Courtney A. Kemp/Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson collaboration that Bailey described as "soapy, sexy and urban," premiered in 2014. That found an underserved audience as well. "It was very obvious that Black and Latino audiences were also saying, 'Hey, I want programming — something that resonates with me,'" Bailey said.

Power lasted for six seasons. *Power Book II: Ghost* premiered in 2020, *Power Book III: Raising Kanan* in 2021, and *Power Book IV: Force* debuted February 6.

There is also 50 Cent drama *BMF*, short for Black Mafia Family. Bailey described 50 (who portrayed Kanan in *Power*) as a hands-on producer: "It's not a vanity credit at all — he's not someone who takes a producer credit and says, 'Let me know when it's finished.' He's very involved."

P-Valley, about women working in a Mississippi Delta strip club, won over critics and viewers alike. The *New York Times* described the series as "a noir melodrama about struggle and secrets, family strife and business machinations. But above all, it's a confident and

lyrical story with an intimate understanding of the sort of characters who are too often used as decoration in the Bada Bings of antihero drama. Here these women, most of them Black, get to be subjects, not objects."

Playwright Katori Hall created the show. "It turned a lot of standard tropes about women working in the sex industry on its ear," Bailey said.

Outlander debuts season six March 6. Bailey summed up the new season thusly: "What is heart, what is home, what is family? Is home a place or the people you're around? Is America their new home now?"

Starz's efforts to reach a broader audience have been profound. A 2021 report from UCLA's Center for Scholars & Storytellers showed that 63% of series leads on Starz's original series are people of color, way above the industry's average, and 58% of its leads are women, with the industry at 45%. Starz showrunners, meanwhile, are 55% women and 46% people of color.

Starz is happy to share best practices with other networks. The network's #TakeTheLead campaign creates a template for representation, while Starz's "Transparency Talks" feature thought leaders sharing on diversity.

An Eye for Authenticity

Alison Hoffman, Starz president, domestic networks, gives Bailey high marks for sussing out unique series. "She continues to bring a sharp creative lens that has delivered some of our best programming in the network's history," Hoffman said. "Her passion for authentic and relatable yet impactful and bold storytelling has brought to life shows like *Outlander* and the highly anticipated upcoming series *Gaslit*, a new season of cult hit *Party Down* and the second season of the critically acclaimed *P-Valley*."

Bailey said it's a great time to produce edgy programming. "It's an exciting time to be in this industry and have more access than ever to present audiences with content that is provocative, thoughtful, relevant and, most of all, entertaining," she said. "We feel like we can do all of those things." ●



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Tonya Cornileus

VP, Development, Inclusion & Wellness
ESPN



By Stuart Miller
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@sfmsfm5186

The calls kept coming and Tonya Cornileus kept ignoring them. After all, why deal with an executive recruiter when she was happy as director of executive development and organizational effectiveness for Turner Broadcasting System in Atlanta?

"I ignored the calls for a few weeks and then during lunch one day, I picked up the phone and it was the recruiter," Cornileus recalled. He persuaded her to look at the job description if only to help recommend other potential candidates. "I'm reading the job description and it doesn't give the company's name but then it said, 'the worldwide leader in sports.' I said, 'Oh my god.'"

Too Good to Pass Up

For Cornileus, who had grown up in Eustis, Florida, competing in everything from track and field to basketball to girls' powderpuff football, the notion of working for ESPN was a game-changer. Despite hesitation over moving to Connecticut, the offer was one she couldn't refuse. "I consider that one of the best decisions I've made," she said.

Twelve years later, Cornileus is VP, development, inclusion and wellness at ESPN. She serves as a key part of the human resources senior leadership team, advising senior management on such issues as learning, organization development, talent management, diversity, inclusion and wellness.

"Tonya is a dynamic leader who has helped drive diversity into the fabric of ESPN culture," said Paul Richardson,

“It's always about tapping into people's potential, their goals and dreams.”

Tonya Cornileus

senior executive VP and chief human resources officer for The Walt Disney Co. "Her efforts in enhancing the leadership capabilities of our staff—and commitment to employee development at all levels—have been critical to ESPN's ongoing success."

Cornileus had studied broadcast journalism and telecommunications at the University of Florida. While she was job-hunting after college, a friend suggested she go to Miami and try teaching. It was a natural fit, as both of her parents had been educators.

"It was one of the poorest communities, but I fell in love with the idea of education as a change agent for young people's lives," Cornileus said. She stayed with teaching for much of the next 11 years, even as she got married and moved around due to her husband's military career. (Her daughter now teaches middle school science.)

Teaching middle-school students who were at a huge transition point in their lives helped prepare her for the corporate life at ESPN. "I oversee all of our company's learning and development from young professionals just beginning their careers all the way up to C-suite executives," she said. "But it's always about tapping into people's potential, their goals and dreams."

As with teaching, she initially ventured into the

corporate space just to try something different—and learned that she loved that, too.

While working as VP, training and organizational development for Aegis Communications Group, she earned a master's degree in HR and organizational development from the University of Georgia. Then she got a job at Turner, which let her travel less while raising her two children and earning a Ph.D.

"I went to graduate school because I noticed that getting everyone working at their best was not just about gaining skills, there were cultural aspects that impact how a person experiences the workplace and how they're going to perform," Cornileus said. "You can't just do training. There has to be learning and organizational development."

More Employee Engagement

At ESPN, she is proud of having influenced and facilitated tremendous employee engagement. The company now has nine employee resource groups and three affinity groups, with about 2,700 employees actively engaged in one or more. Hundreds are involved in ESPN's mentoring circles.

For the past two years, she has helped guide ESPN toward becoming a more inclusive, diverse and equitable workplace. There has been a shift from training employees in an array of workshops and programs about unconscious bias to a focus on inclusion, she said, as the company sought to move beyond awareness to action.

Cornileus is still juggling, giving back by mentoring younger people (from high school age up), serving on foundation boards and creating a scholarship in journalism at her alma mater and another in her late mother's name in her hometown.

"I don't see any of it as work," she said. "I really love being helpful to other people on their journeys. My life mantra is, I want the world to know that I'm here and that I care." ●



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ESPN proudly congratulates our own Wonder Woman, Tonya Cornileus,
for her leadership, excellence, and commitment to equality.
Thank you for being a woman moving the world forward.**

Katrina Cukaj

Executive VP of Ad Sales and Client Partnerships WarnerMedia



By Jon Lafayette
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@jilafayette

In an evolving industry, Katrina Cukaj, WarnerMedia executive VP of ad sales and client partnerships, has been a constant, building relationships and businesses.

Those who've worked with Cukaj over the course of her career praise her for being authentic, empathetic and eager to solve problems selflessly.

After AT&T acquired Time Warner, JP Colaco was named head of ad sales for WarnerMedia and became Cukaj's boss. "My first impressions were that she was incredibly smart and very strategic about the business," Colaco said. "She was also very warm. She's the kind of person that everyone gravitates towards and she has a lot of charisma."

In 2021, Cukaj was promoted to head up ad sales and client partnerships under Colaco. She had been putting together WarnerMedia's upfront presentation, so she had to manage negotiations with agencies and advertisers while also running a major theatrical event in the middle of a pandemic. "She was juggling multiple balls and did them all flawlessly," Colaco said.

The AT&T acquisition also brought Cukaj together with AT&T's advanced advertising company Xandr (recently sold to Microsoft). Kirk McDonald was chief business officer at Xandr and said Cukaj was one of the WarnerMedia execs who helped find ways for the two units to collaborate. "She understood there was a lot of strength we could bring to the market," he said.

McDonald is now CEO at media buyer GroupM and one of Cukaj's clients.

“Probably one of my best qualities is being able to adjust and manage through change.”

Katrina Cukaj

Beyond the upfront, GroupM worked with Cukaj on Ally Bank's sponsorship of The Milestone Initiative, a program aimed at supporting diverse writers and artists in the comic book industry.

A Creative Collaborator

"She has an intimate understanding for the Warner business, its moving parts, and that allows us to get very creative around clients' needs and building those together," McDonald said. "We look forward to doing more interesting projects with her."

She's been doing that throughout her career, said Dani Benowitz, president of Magna Global U.S., who remembers arranging for her client Johnson & Johnson to sponsor a CNN program encouraging people to go into nursing 20 years ago.

"She's approachable," Benowitz said. "This isn't used cars. She truly looks to partner in the most innovative way possible to get what you need done."

Having Cukaj as a constant has helped WarnerMedia in a relationship business. "You trust that she has our clients' best interests at heart," she said.

AT&T wasn't Cukaj's first merger. She joined Time Warner's Turner unit back in 1999. The company was promptly

bought by AOL. "Probably one of my best qualities is being able to adjust and manage through change," Cukaj said.

Former CNN chief operating officer Greg D'Alba put Cukaj in charge of the news network's upfront after another exec moved to Turner Sports. "She rolls up her sleeves and people relate to her at all levels," D'Alba said. "Her leadership comes from her ability to have empathy. That's not something you learn. That's something you grow up with."

Cukaj grew up in the Bronx and planned to be a teacher. But after watching her immigrant parents—dad was a dishwasher; mom worked in the Stella D'Oro cookie factory right off the Major Deegan Expressway—she decided to pursue a more lucrative career.

Grew Up a TV Fan

She loved TV and was drawn to the people and energy of the advertising business. She got jobs working for legends like Peggy Green at Saatchi & Saatchi and Lou LaTorre at FX before getting an offer from Turner, where her husband already worked.

She told him she didn't think she should take it. "My husband said, 'Are you out of your mind? What a great opportunity,'" Cukaj said. "So we made it work and it worked out pretty well."

Cukaj and her husband have two sons in college. One plans to be a teacher, the other will likely get into the business, she said. In her spare time, she likes being outdoors and hiking near Lake George, New York, where they have a house. She also makes the most of her vacations. "I live for that next adventure," she said.

With WarnerMedia about to merge with Discovery, what's next at work is a tough question to answer. "Back in the day your path was very clear," Cukaj said. "Now this crazy business we all love has opened up so much that I don't know. I could be anything is the answer. That's the exciting part of what's going on right now." ●



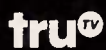
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WONDER WOMAN:
KATRINA CUKAJ.

Thank you, Kat. Your fearless leadership and strength of character are an inspiration to us all. Thank you for blazing a trail for future generations of female leaders.

WarnerMedia



[adult swim]



HBOMAX



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Sarah Kate Ellis

President & CEO
GLAAD



By Holly Stuart Hughes
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Since Sarah Kate Ellis became president and CEO of GLAAD in 2014, the LGBTQ advocacy organization has become a trusted collaborator in the creation of LGBTQ-centered stories. Founded as a media watchdog responding to homophobic coverage, GLAAD now consults on casting, script development, hiring and recruitment of LGBTQ employees.

"We have many more companies coming to us because they want to do the right thing," Ellis said. "We are embedded with a dozen productions on any given day."

The GLAAD Media Institute, launched in 2018, provides training and resources to help producers, journalists and advocates around the world tell their stories and bring attention to issues facing the LGBTQ community.

Ellis's first achievement was shifting GLAAD's focus to address new media forms. GLAAD has addressed social-media safety and online harassment, for example, and worked with video-game makers on inclusive content and hiring.

An Advocate with Influence

The influence of GLAAD's advocacy is reflected in the GLAAD Media Awards, which honor fair, accurate and inclusive representation of LGBTQ people. For many years, the program "didn't even have enough nominees to fill out some of our categories," Ellis said. It has recently added categories for video games, graphic novels, comics and children's and family programs.

Among this year's nominees, people of color outnumber white performers, and 18 of the nominated TV shows feature characters who are transgender and/or nonbinary. That

"You can't legislate acceptance. Unless you create education and take away the fear, you aren't building a safe society."

Sarah Kate Ellis

diversity "is something we've been advocating for a long time," Ellis said.

Streaming services have led in nonbinary representation, but Ellis added, "We still have zero trans representation on the big screen," meaning major studio movies.

Driving all of Ellis's work is her conviction that media is a powerful force for cultural change. "Media shapes the decisions that are made in courtrooms, playgrounds, offices, living rooms," she said. "You can't legislate acceptance. Unless you create education and take away the fear, you aren't building a safe society."

Before GLAAD, Ellis had worked at Condé Nast, where she helped relaunch *House & Garden*. At Time Inc., she oversaw several lifestyle titles. She helped launch the Real Simple brand, including its magazine, website, international editions and its partnership with retailer Bed Bath & Beyond. "Some people like running things," she said. "I like building things."

Entertainment lawyer Stephen Warren, the co-creator and executive producer of the HBO show *We're*

Here, was co-chair of GLAAD's board when Ellis was hired. "She has brought a level of professionalism and functionality to an organization that has had its ups and downs," he said. "She's fearless. She'll ask anyone for anything, which is a huge asset in a nonprofit."

Ellis has increased GLAAD's corporate sponsorships and fundraising, and used research to measure performance and guide strategy. In her first year, she launched the annual Accelerating Acceptance survey.

"I wanted to look at where acceptance of the LGBTQ community was in America and measure it on an annual basis to understand if we're moving the needle forward," Ellis explained. Four years ago, a survey GLAAD undertook with Procter & Gamble found that non-LGBTQ Americans respond favorably to ads featuring LGBTQ people. "They think the brand treats its employees better, and they're more likely to buy from the brand," Ellis said. The research persuaded several marketers to pledge to increase their LGBTQ representation. "If I can't convince you it's the right thing to do, I can convince you it's the right thing to do for your business," she said.

Empowering Leader

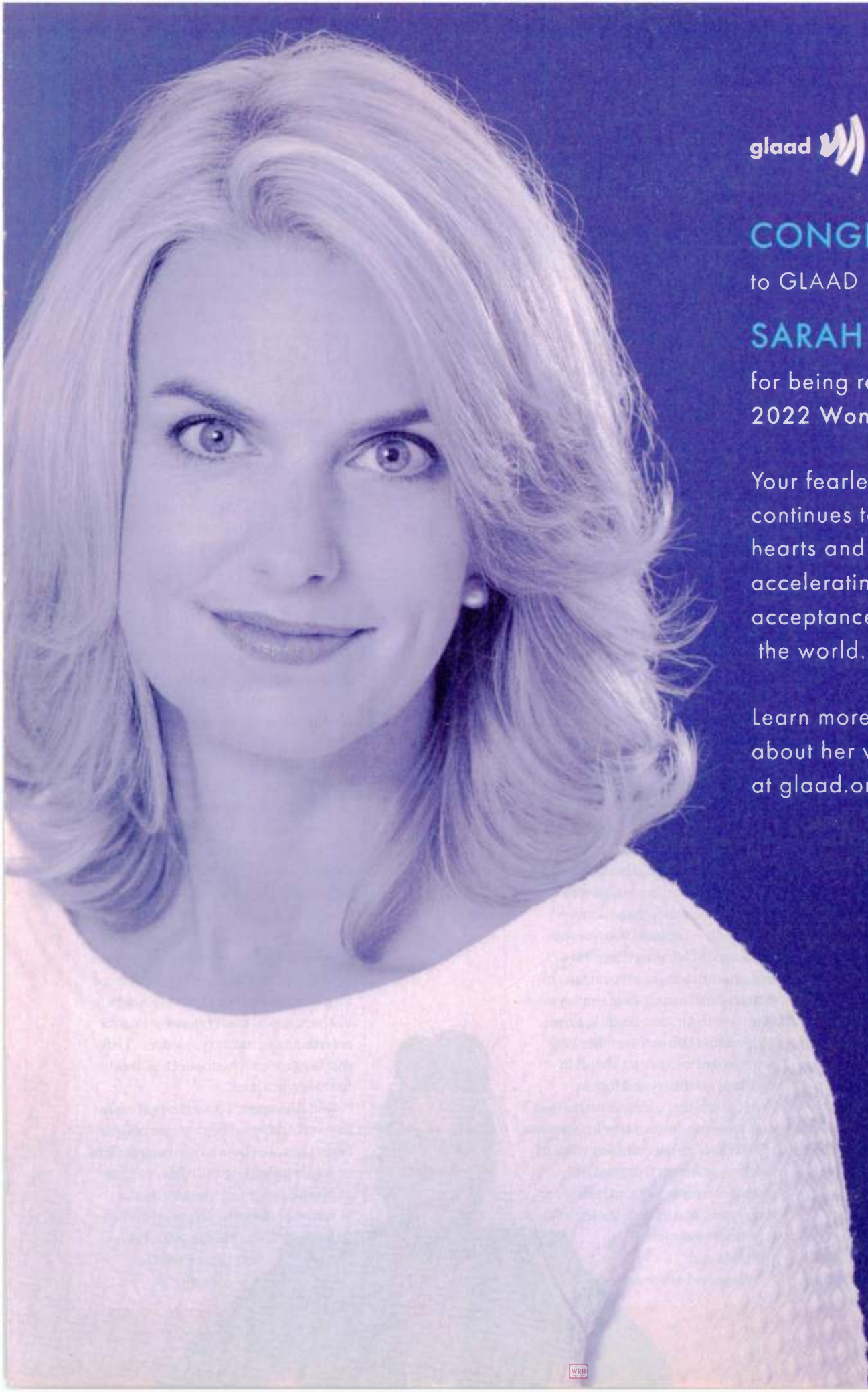
Warren praised Ellis for empowering leaders within GLAAD. In 2021, Ellis took a three-month sabbatical, turning off email and letting go of day-to-day operations. "Letting the right people do their jobs freed me up to think about the bigger things we have on the horizon — as an organization and as a movement," she said. She noted that 40% of Generation Z identify as LGBTQ, including a high percentage who identify as trans, gender nonconforming or gender nonbinary. "We need to be paving the way for them, because otherwise the world isn't safe for them," Ellis said.

Her advice for producers and media executives who want to be a part of the change: "Pick up the phone and call me.

"We want to help you tell our stories in fair and accurate ways," she said.

"Any way that we can do that, we're available." ●





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Latasha Gillespie

Executive Head, Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Amazon Studios



By Paige Albiniak
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For Latasha Gillespie, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts are about achieving measurable results, not necessarily changing individuals' hearts.

"I can't change hearts — I'm not God — but I can change what you do between 9 and 5," Gillespie said. "What people have to keep in mind, in our line of work, is that we don't do DEI for the sake of DEI. You have to understand that the goal of doing DEI is about changing and driving business outcomes."

Aaron Walton, founder and CEO of multicultural agency Walton Isaacson, said of Gillespie: "That's one of the reasons I think we really connected — obviously, through the important work of what DEI can do internally in terms of making team members feel welcome, respected and included in decisions that are made at an organization. What I love about Latasha is she also understands how it can help drive revenue and profitability and how more inclusivity can help a brand reach a larger target."

Non-Traditional Rise

Gillespie's journey to the center of an up-and-coming Hollywood studio is not an obvious one. She got her bachelor's degree in finance from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and spent 20 years working in corporate at equipment giant Caterpillar. In 2015, she was asked to lead the company's human resources across Africa, the Middle East, Commonwealth of Independent States/Russia and Asia-Pacific and thus

“I can't change hearts — I'm not God — but I can change what you do between 9 and 5.”

Latasha Gillespie

relocated her family to Singapore.

When Amazon called in 2016, she wasn't prepared to decamp to Seattle, but the opportunity — to set DEI culture and policy for a giant, growing tech leader — was ultimately too appealing to refuse. So Gillespie, her husband and teenage son moved again in January 2017. (Her older son was at Howard University in Washington, D.C.)

"My role was to set strategy for the corporation, accruing it to something that actually moved the needle for the corporation," she said. "There had been a lot of activity [in the DEI space] without a lot of measurable results."

While the jump from Caterpillar to Amazon Inc. was somewhat overwhelming — because Gillespie was tasked with changing culture at a dispersed and disparate company of hundreds of thousands of employees — the move to Amazon Studios, Prime Video and IMDb in November 2018 represented another total shift in Gillespie's industry and focus.

At Caterpillar, Gillespie had helped employees understand the importance of DEI through the company value of safety — asserting that good DEI practices create emotional safety for employees. At Amazon, the top value is customer obsession, Gillespie said.

"We move heaven and

earth to get a package to you in two days, we read your comments and we have an easy return policy," she said.

In order to make DEI initiatives work, you have to tie them to the business results and you have to make it organic."

At Amazon Studios, Gillespie and her team have instituted an inclusion policy and playbook. Any Amazon-branded production has to meet the goal of "30-30-20-20" — no more than 30% of department heads and second can be white men or women, and at least 20% have to be men of color and 20% have to be women of color. As a result of Gillespie's work, the company also has set goals around religious faiths, LGBTQIA and differently-abled people.

Greenlighting Equity

Gillespie and her team also were instrumental in changing Amazon Studios's greenlight process to make sure it is developing and producing inclusive and representational content using diverse talent above and below the line and in front of and behind the camera. Once per quarter, Gillespie and her team meet with Amazon Studios head Jennifer Salke and senior business leaders to go over the data.

"I love her infectious enthusiasm for the business and for building culture," Salke said. "She's a real superstar in how she interacts with people and talent. She's a very dynamic, passionate, creative, thoughtful and incredibly smart executive — that was very apparent to me from the first time I met her. It's almost like because she wasn't raised within the entertainment industry, she doesn't have that baggage and she doesn't feel like she has to stay in a lane."

Said Gillespie: "I have the best job in the world. My goal is customer delight. I don't have to chase advertising dollars or subscriptions, but I do have to chase customer delight. ... I want to make sure that our entire team is committed to creating entertaining, binge-worthy content." ●



AMAZON STUDIOS & PRIME VIDEO
PROUDLY CONGRATULATE



Latasha Gillespie

Global Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Amazon Studios, Prime Video and IMDb

AND ALL OF THE MULTICHANNEL
NEWS 2022 WONDER WOMEN
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AMAZON | prime video
STUDIOS

Amy Israel

Executive VP, Scripted Programming Showtime Networks



By Michael Malone
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@BCMikMalone

Showtime has a ton of momentum and is well-poised to keep the mojo rolling as the new year progresses. *Dexter: New Blood* started in November, giving fans of the original series a look at what Dexter Morgan is up to these days, and bringing in new viewers as well. A week later, *Yellowjackets*, about a girls' soccer team involved in a plane crash, premiered. The first season wrapped in mid-January and was by all accounts a smash.

Overseeing original programming is Amy Israel. She manages the development and production of all scripted series at Showtime, and anticipates the network retaining its hot hand throughout 2022, thanks to the likes of *Billions*, *Three Women*, *Super Pumped* and other bold originals.

Swinging for the Fences

"With every project, we look for shows that feel in some way like they are taking a big swing," Israel said. "There is a voice and a vision that is undeniable and singular and deeply entertaining."

That description certainly applies to *Yellowjackets*, already renewed for a second season. Created and executive produced by Ashley Lyle and Bart Nickerson, the dark drama details both the teen girls, getting by in the woods after the horrific crash, and the characters as adults, dealing with the steps they took to survive years after they are reintegrated into society. Lyle and Nickerson came in with a crystal-clear vision, Israel said, and delivered

“With every project, we look for shows that feel in some way like they are taking a big swing.”

Amy Israel

on a ceaselessly propulsive story.

"It's a tremendously overwhelming and gratifying experience to see the resounding response," Israel said. "You love all your babies the same, but it's really gratifying when one makes that big of an impact."

It's a busy time for Showtime, which has seven new scripted shows on the schedule for 2022, up from three last year. Among the veteran series, *Ray Donovan* wrapped with a movie January 14. Season six of *Billions* began January 23, and Israel said it will make a mark. "There are new characters and new allegiances that will keep everyone on their toes," she said. "It's a tremendously exciting season that will continue to be a deeply entertaining, zeitgeisty show that reflects our times."

Israel comes from the film world, working at New Regency, where she was executive VP, and Paramount Vantage, where she was head of production and acquisition. Before that, she was at Miramax Films and was a film producer.

She recalled seeing movies getting more dependent on intellectual property, and less so on the audacious visions of auteurs. Television, meanwhile, was heading into its peak period. "I was looking for new challenges," Israel said, "and felt

the film world had lost a little bit of its sparkle."

Jana Winograde, Showtime president of entertainment, said Israel plays a key role in attracting elite producers, directors and performers to the network, where they know they'll get full support in realizing their vision. "One of our calling cards is being a place for top talent, and I give Amy a lot of credit for that," she said.

Persistence Pays Off

Winograde noted Israel's "persistence," whether it's acquiring the rights to a book, luring a producer with a passion project or helping a director get their project to full fruition. "When there's an artist she wants to work with, or a voice she wants to get out of the artist, she is relentless," Winograde said.

Winograde mentioned Israel's dogged pursuit of the rights to Lisa Taddeo's *Three Women* novel, and her work with Brian Koppelman and David Levien on *Super Pumped*.

Three Women, which Showtime calls an "intimate, haunting portrayal of American female desire," has Shailene Woodley in the cast. *Super Pumped* is an anthology series, each season exploring a story that rocked the business world. *Super Pumped: The Battle for Uber* features Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Kyle Chandler and Uma Thurman, and premiered February 27.

Israel, raised in Brooklyn, enjoys time with family, travel and photography when she's not building Showtime series. She's an active mentor in the workplace and stays in touch with former assistants, continuing to teach them a few things and answer their questions. "It's really important to me to help them grow," she said.

Israel is hopeful a few of the Showtime rookies she has helped grow will break out the way *Yellowjackets* has.

"With every new show," she said, "we try to make something that goes into new territories that viewers haven't seen before." ●





SHOWTIME PROUDLY
HONORS OUR REAL-LIFE
WONDER WOMAN, AMY ISRAEL.

Her achievements are as inspiring as her commitment to change.



Kim Kelleher

President, Commercial Revenue & Partnerships

AMC Networks



By Cathy Applefeld Olson
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Like clockwork, at 9 a.m. every workday, Kim Kelleher settles in for a video call with her direct reports.

It's a routine that has been in place for two years, since the pandemic largely sidelined in-person meetings, and Kelleher quickly envisioned a new, even more cohesive way for her team to connect. Her French bulldog may or may not be on-screen, depending on the mood.

"We start our day together," she said. "The meeting could be three minutes or a half-hour. I'm proud of how we've come together and knocked down every obstacle, one by one, as a team. It's an incredibly supportive and nurturing environment. I've always felt a strong connection to my teams, but there's nothing like what this particular time has done for this particular team and myself."

Expanding Empathy

Under Kelleher's guidance, the team has not only escalated the empathy scale within AMC Networks — which this past year hired diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) head Aisha Thomas-Petit, recently elevated to chief people and diversity officer, with whom Kelleher works closely — but expanded the empathy lens to optimize external business relationships.

"Kim understands that DEI work isn't just a box to tick, but deeply ingrained in all aspects of our business," Thomas-Petit said.

In just the past year, Kelleher led the charge to hold earlier, expansive conversations with brands; created new, net-positive ways to adapt to advertisers' continuing supply-side

“There's nothing like what this particular time has done for this particular team and myself.”

Kim Kelleher

challenges; and made more inventory available for household-level targeting — including the first programmatic buys with household-level targeting on linear networks. Advertising revenue at the company, which owns AMC, IFC and SundanceTV as well as niche streaming services like Shudder and ALLBLK, jumped 22% during Q3 2021.

"The industry has come together in pretty incredible ways in the past two years," she said. "It's a much more supportive environment. That doesn't mean anyone has taken their eye off the ball of business goals or performance goals, but it does mean we're going to get there faster because we are working together more so than we ever have."

It also means Kelleher and her team now come from a place of unprecedented flexibility.

"There's a real-time nature to the way information is flowing that has allowed us to lean into the nimbleness," she said. "We can start and stop something in 24 hours if it's not working or if it is working, put even more resources and emphasis into it in 24 hours."

Kim Granito,

executive VP of Content Room, the branded content studio the company launched in spring 2020, noted Kelleher "embodies a unique combination of endless vision and depth of heart. She fosters a culture of collaboration and creativity where her team feels supported and enabled to do their best work."

The learning curve of the past year, Kelleher said, is greater than it has been in the past 20 years. In an environment of accelerated nimbleness, she's simply trying more things.

"Not everything's working, but more is working than we actually anticipated," she said. "A lot of it is tied to core principles we hold dear. We take a very agnostic approach to how our partners buy with us. You can buy directly. You can buy programmatically. We are ready to meet our partners wherever they are, and a lot of that comes with the real flexibility of our organization not being heavy and thick with layers. We're able to adjust in a bespoke way."

Looking ahead, she's excited to accelerate her team's work stitching together a national footprint for AMC Networks' linear business. That way, "we can more precisely target our advertisers' audiences and help them meet their performance goals with the advanced advertising measures we're putting a lot of energy and time and resourcing into," she said.

A Passion for Media

If all this all sounds stressful, rest assured Kelleher — who can often be found reading the trades during her down time — is enjoying the ride.

"I love media. It's my passion, it's my profession and it's my hobby. And it has been for a very long time," she said.

"It's an insatiable business. It keeps evolving and changing, and it's never dull. As Pollyanna as it might sound, I just really love what I do every day, and now the pleasure of working with a big team ... we just feed off each other's energy and have a lot of fun doing it." ●



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KELLEHER**

**PRESIDENT, COMMERCIAL REVENUE
& PARTNERSHIPS**

AND THE 2022
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Jo Kinsella

President TVSquared by Innovid



By Kent Gibbons
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TVSquared president Jo Kinsella has had a Wonder Women-level business career, culminating in helping to engineer the recent sale of the company to Innovid, another firm in the TV-measurement arena, for \$160 million.

Kinsella, who will lead Innovid's measurement business after the sale closes, has been an outspoken leader in helping advertisers accurately gauge who has seen their ads and what they do after seeing them.

Calum Smeaton, the founder and CEO of TVSquared by Innovid, who has worked with Kinsella at three companies, said: "Jo has not only been a tremendous leader for TVSquared, but also for the advertising industry as a whole. She has made it her mission to bring much-needed transparency, accountability and proof of performance to the forefront and, as a result, she's been instrumental in creating the TV measurement and attribution space we know today."

Zvika Netter, the CEO and cofounder of Innovid, who worked closely with Kinsella on the acquisition, said Kinsella "has been core to TVSquared's success in linear and digital TV measurement. We look forward to working with her to shape the future of TV advertising, establishing a new currency-grade standard that delivers transparency and accountability."

While her appearances at numerous ad-industry conferences demonstrate her command of the subject matter and skill in communicating, hearing her own backstory is even more entertaining.

"Oh God, I still think I'm 23, so the fact that I'm 47 is just downright annoying," Kinsella said. "It means that my book is much longer than I believe it to be. I'm like, how can I already be 47?"

Born in a town called Boston in Lincolnshire,

"I went traveling, had a great time and then came back and I was like, 'How can I make as much money in the shortest possible time frame?' And it was to become a Microsoft certified systems engineer. I mean, why would you not?"

Jo Kinsella

England, Kinsella remembers telling her mom at an early age that she wanted to do people's hair and nails for a living, "and she was like, don't be ridiculous. If you think I've burnt my bra for you and you're gonna go and do that, forget it, darling."

From Traveling to Tech

After graduating university in Leeds, she lived in France and Barcelona before selling everything to go backpacking in Asia and Australia. "I went traveling, had a great time and then came back and I was like, 'How can I make as much money in the shortest possible time frame?' And it was to become a Microsoft certified systems engineer. I mean, why would you not?"

She worked at a company called Radiance in London, which was acquired by British Telecom, and then at an Internet bank called Egg, establishing herself in male-dominated environments. "I

continued to break ceilings, I guess."

The year she turned 40, she got married and moved to America. She had her beloved daughter, Molly, but the marriage broke up (she is good friends with her ex-husband). She completed an Ironman Triathlon in Lake Placid, New York. After she then needed surgeries to repair a heart condition, she took up yoga and got certified as an instructor. "I did a ton of things to get myself as healthy as I could possibly be."

TVSquared by Innovid became like her second child. The 10-year-old company's software measures ad impressions across platforms (including linear and streamed TV) and what actions are taken after the ads are viewed. "The software works in 75 countries, so we've done really well," Kinsella said.

Breakthroughs, she said, came from deals with brands such as Expedia and then with distributors such as Comcast and Charter Communications, and with support from key industry figures including Sean Cunningham, president and CEO of the Video Advertising Bureau, and Kelly Abcarian, executive VP of measurement and impact at NBCUniversal's Advertising and Partnerships division.

Won't Settle for Second Best

Cunningham said: "She is driven, determined, tireless, insightful, incredibly articulate and has a very quick mind, but as you get to know Jo well, you also see this DNA-level fire she has that blasts through barriers like status quo, excuses, compromise, inertia, patriarchy, hierarchy, deference and any notion of settling for second-best in anything."

Abcarian said: "Jo embodies everything a Wonder Woman should be — strong, incredibly smart, humble, innovative and kind. Every day she chooses to be brave, to lead, and to pursue battle with her unapologetic and passionate push for the industry to change, and it is this passion and purpose that enables her to bring out the best in herself and others." ●



Mina Lefevre

Head of Development and Programming Meta



By Stuart Miller
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As the daughter of immigrants, Mina Lefevre was expected to follow a very narrow career path: doctor, lawyer or engineer. Lefevre was duly obedient, double-majoring in economics and integrative biology at the University of California, Berkeley and studying for the MCATs when she suddenly took a sharp and lasting swerve.

"I remember having this moment thinking I really want to pursue my dream," said Lefevre, head of development and programming at Meta, where she oversees the development and production of original series for Facebook's video platform and spearheads funded original content that lives across Facebook, Messenger and Instagram.

That dream, spurred by the film theory courses she'd loved in college, involved pursuing entertainment in some form. "That was literally the last thing my parents wanted me to do," Lefevre said of venturing into the wildly unstable fields of independent feature films in San Francisco, and then temp jobs in television in Los Angeles. "My parents were mortified."

Rising Through TV Ranks

Eventually, she found steady work, climbing the ladder at places like ABC Family (where she became VP, development and programming, helping launch the channel while developing shows like *Pretty Little Liars*) and then MTV (where she was head of scripted, doubling the number of such projects with shows like *Faking It*, *Scream* and *Finding Carter*).

Her Iran-born parents were mollified, though, when she first held a job title of director. "My mom kept telling everyone I was a director," Lefevre said. "It's very hard

“Content and creative are really at the core of what I do. What's changing is the way you're telling the story and giving it to the consumer.”

Mina Lefevre

to describe what an executive actually does.”

Lefevre said all that studying in college did pay off, as her economics courses gave her a deeper understanding of budgeting. "I probably stick my head too much into budgets for my head of production," she said with a laugh.

While she has shifted from linear to streaming and has largely moved away from scripted, Lefevre said her past stops also provided the necessary skill sets. "Content and creative are really at the core of what I do," she said. "What's changing is the way you're telling the story and giving it to the consumer. It's exciting to work at a place able to figure out new ways to communicate that and work with talent to reach their fan base even more directly."

Since guiding Facebook Watch to its debut back in 2017, Lefevre has steered to screens of various sizes programming like the Daytime Emmy Award-nominated series *Red Table Talk* with Jada Pinkett Smith, Willow Smith and Adrienne Banfield-Norris and a spinoff with Gloria Estefan and her family. The lineup cuts across genres to include talk shows, reality, sports and

docuseries. High-profile talent has come on board, such as Steve Harvey (*STEVE*), Taraji P. Henson (*Piece of Mind* with Taraji), Courteney Cox (*9 Months with Courteney Cox*) and Stephen Curry (*Stephen vs. The Game*). She has also developed youth-oriented programming for Messenger's Watch Together with the likes of Cardi B and Post Malone.

Ricky Van Veen, head of global creative strategy for media partnerships at Meta, said Lefevre has made the shift seamlessly. "Mina's ability to adapt her strong creative instincts from linear to digital and now even the metaverse is truly impressive," he noted, adding, "She's beloved by internal colleagues and industry peers alike for her honest yet warm 'get things done' attitude."

Lefevre said adapting comes with the territory and not just because traditional notions like half-hour and hour formats fall away at Meta. When the company started Facebook Watch, the challenge was to explain what it was trying to do in creating programming that would have a uniquely intimate relationship with an audience and build a community, a social-media water-cooler conversation.

Then, of course, the field got more crowded. "It's incredibly competitive out there now," she said. "The piece of the pie is getting smaller."

Setting a New Path at Meta

Still, Lefevre is confident the company has found a "unique" new path that they'll be pushing: "A big point of difference for us is that we're looking toward a One Meta approach — to find content for all the surfaces, from Facebook to Instagram to Messenger to the richer and more immersive experiences in VR and AR, so the audience can have whatever experience they want."

The new approach is a win-win-win, she said, benefiting not just audiences and Meta but also the talent who will achieve much broader distribution.

"We'll be serving so many surfaces and finding the best ways for consumers to watch content and form a community around it," she said. "That, to me, is exciting." ●



Wonya Lucas

President & CEO

Crown Media Family Networks



By R. Thomas Umstead
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Wonya Lucas has successfully led a number of entertainment brands, from The Weather Channel to TV One to Hallmark Channel. Some might say her Wonder Women recognition is overdue, but it adds yet another block to the continued build of her impressive personal brand.

"I am continually impressed and inspired by how thoughtful, transparent and authentic Wonya is as a leader," said Mike Perry, president and CEO of Hallmark Cards, owner of Hallmark Channel parent Crown Media Family Networks. "She cares deeply about people and leads as much from her heart as she does from her incredibly sharp mind, making her the perfect person to helm Crown Media, a company fundamentally rooted in care and love."

That's high praise for Lucas, who as a child set her sights on being a teacher like her mother, Rubye. Watching her mom work impressed upon her the impact teachers can have, Lucas said. Television further broadened her horizons.

"Growing up we never left the South, so television took me to places that I couldn't go to physically and introduced me to people that I didn't see every day," she said.

After graduating from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, Lucas had her mind set on a career in media. A job interview at consumer product company Clorox changed her perspective. "They had a position on the entertainment side, but they said to

“I wanted to be a general manager like my dad and run a business.”

Wonya Lucas

me that while you can always go into the entertainment business, you could never come into the packaged goods business without a marketing background," she said. "Come learn the nuts and bolts of marketing and then decide what you want to do. It was the best decision I ever made."

Moving Into Media

She became a brand manager at Clorox and Coca-Cola, learning important operational and leadership skills. In 1994, she had the chance to enter the media business at Turner Broadcasting System, where her mother was. "She was working in community affairs, so I worked there to see if I really wanted to go into the media industry and I loved it," Lucas said.

Lucas — whose Turner family ties also include her uncle, baseball icon Hank Aaron, who played for the Turner-owned Atlanta Braves — would remain there through 2002, ascending to VP of business operations and network development for TNT and TBS and senior VP of strategic marketing for CNN.

Her father, Bill Lucas, was also in baseball and was a career role model. He was VP of player personnel for the Braves from 1976 until his death in 1979, becoming the first African-American executive to

run a Major League Baseball team.

"I wanted to be a general manager like my dad and run a business," Lucas said.

Lucas would get that opportunity in 2002 as executive VP and general manager of The Weather Channel. "The Weather Channel was when I really shifted into a general manager's role," she said. "I loved The Weather Channel and I really learned how to lead."

Learning How To Lead

She fine-tuned her leadership skills over the next 12 years, in such roles as Discovery Communications chief marketing officer, president and CEO of TV One and president and CEO of Public Broadcasting Atlanta.

In 2020 came the opportunity to run Crown Media, home to one of the most well-known brands in the country, Hallmark Channel. At the time, it was dealing with a very public brand controversy around the lack of diversity and inclusion both on- and off-screen, but Lucas said she was not afraid to meet the challenge head on.

"My whole career has been working on great brands, and I saw the potential in the brand to be more," she said. "I watched the Hallmark Hall of Fame movies and I remember seeing Black actors in prominent roles — they were inclusive before I even knew what that word was. It was just a matter of mirroring the brand with initial intent and purpose to be inclusive, whether you're talking about the [Hallmark] card brand or the media brand. So I saw it as a great opportunity and I felt like there was a lot of room to grow."

Lucas said the best job title she's ever had is mom to her two daughters. "I have also been fortunate to have had bosses who understood that [motherhood] is my No. 1 job," she added.

As for career advice, Lucas said try to work at something that you love, and then position yourself to leverage your best skills within that company. You see, she has never lost the desire to be a teacher. ●





WE

Salute

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WONYA LUCAS

and congratulate all of this year's
Wonder Women

CrownMedia



Laura Molen

President, Advertising & Partnerships
NBCUniversal



By Cathy Applefeld Olson
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The media sales landscape is noisy. But whether it's launching NBCUniversal's One Platform streamlined transaction model, evolving the ways brands connect with audiences on Peacock or reorganizing her team for optimal success, Laura Molen leads by listening and collaborating.

"Really getting into the weeds, taking feedback from our customers and our teams — to me that is really critically important so we can continue to evolve," Molen said.

The nine-year company veteran, who has been in her current post since 2018, also helped kick-start NBCUnified, the company's holistic, first-party identity platform that hit the field during the Super Bowl and Olympic Games. And she continues to elevate brand integrations — including binge, pod and spotlight slots — for Peacock, which snagged \$500 million of NBCU's record \$7 billion 2021 upfront.

All of these moves are the result of Molen's meticulous attention to integrating the needs and desires of all stakeholders involved. She recently stepped up that commitment, launching feedback mechanisms including customer surveys, open forums and individual meetings with teams organized around the company's evolving strategy.

"Laura [has] always impressed me with her out-of-the-box thinking, positive attitude, ability to drive sales and deliver for clients," said NBCU vice chairman Bonnie Hammer.

Driving a Ratings Rethink

Molen is putting the same collaborative spirit to work as she champions a re-examination of data and measurement at NBCU — and the industry at large. "We're not looking at measurement as just one thing," said Molen,

“We're not looking at measurement as just one thing.... We're making tremendous progress bringing alternatives into the marketplace.”

Laura Molen

who was instrumental in the establishment of the company's Measurement Forum through which executives from NBCU, brands, agencies and organizations share learnings.

"We're making tremendous progress bringing alternatives into the marketplace," she said. "It's a lot of education. We've had to go in and talk agency by agency, client by client, about how we can work together to test and learn with new partners."

Molen's passion for inclusiveness parallels her work ethic, said Linda Yaccarino, NBCU's chairman, global advertising and partnerships.

"Laura completely inspires everyone around her to be more courageous," Yaccarino said. "Her team continues to drive NBCU and specifically Peacock's growth nationwide; she's helped us build a new market-leading business strategy and on top of that all, she's an advocate for women and people of color in every part of the industry."

This past year, Molen reorganized her division to best optimize the One Platform, layering additional flexibility into what others might consider an already challenging remote work landscape.

"Whether it's hiring

working mothers who took a break to raise their families, job shares, days from home, whatever, Linda and myself have been open to these things for years," said the mother of two and early backer of the Association of National Advertisers' #SeeHer movement.

"I've always been an advocate for flexibility and as a working woman, diversity and inclusion are huge things I've leaned into naturally," Molen said. "There are so many women in media today, but in leadership as you climb up there's less and less women having a seat at the table."

Elevating Fresh Voices

To help partners tell informed, inspiring stories about women and people of color, Molen recently announced the creation of NBCU Advertising and Partnerships' Empowerment and Inclusion Council.

"What we were hearing was that marketers wanted purpose-led marketing. But they are also in the business of making money," she said. "So how do we bring them opportunities and platforms that focus on things viewers care about? The council is a collaborative space of people at all levels that focuses on elevating new diverse voices."

Case in point: Molen partnered with maternal health company Frida Mom to help deliver its first TV commercial about the trials of breastfeeding — a spot that had been turned down by other media players. After the initial ad ran on NBC during the 2021 Golden Globe Awards, Frida Mom came in with another integration, this time with Telemundo.

"On every initiative, in every meeting and during every deal — Laura leads with passion and fearlessness," said Krishan Bhatia, NBCU president and chief business officer, advertising and partnerships. "She advocates for her business partners and champions her teams to be the best in the business."

No matter the task at hand, Molen's North Star is a constant.

"What motivates me most is the people, particularly the future generations and the future of our business," she said. "That's what keeps me going." ●



IT'S *WONDERFUL* TO HAVE
SUPERHEROES
IN THE FAMILY.



CONGRATULATIONS
LAURA MOLEN

– COMCAST NBCUNIVERSAL'S **WONDER WOMEN!**

COMCAST  NBCUNIVERSAL

Roxanna Sherwood

Senior Executive Producer, Original Longform Content **ABC News**



By Jon Lafayette
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Peter Jennings, former ABC World News Tonight anchor, was the speaker when Roxanna Sherwood, senior executive producer of original longform content at ABC News, graduated from prep school Choate Rosemary Hall.

Sherwood was class president and her speech, like Jennings's, was about coming up from nothing and achieving dreams. She always felt compelled to tell human stories and wanted to be a writer, a journalist. "I didn't envision myself in television," Sherwood said, but Jennings reached out and they stayed in touch.

After an internship at NBC News, she followed up with Jennings and got an interview to be a desk assistant at ABC News. She started her career there, running through the building dropping off scripts.

Sherwood later joined ABC News's longform group, which was doing groundbreaking work with you-are-there specials like Hopkins 24/7. She eventually coproduced NYPD 24/7.

Helped Revamp 'Nightline'

After Ted Koppel left ABC, Sherwood was part of the team that reimaged signature late-night news program Nightline. Nightline anchor Juju Chang remembers Sherwood hanging off the back of a Jeep with a camera as they traveled across Mozambique to cover infant mortality in Africa.

Sherwood would become executive producer of Nightline. "I would say she is fearless. She is unafraid to ask tough

“Do we have the ability to make a cultural impact with the story? ... If the answer to that is yes, I'm going to throw myself into it.”

Roxanna Sherwood

questions, unafraid to take on tough assignments and unafraid to swing for the fences," Chang said. "She's a producer's producer. Even though she's an executive, she's still so hands-on. We know we can drill as deeply as we want into any subject and know she has our back."

Anchor Michael Strahan remembered when Sherwood became executive producer of Good Morning America. "It takes a lot to run a busy and crazy show like GMA," he said. "I learned so much from her simply taking the time to let me know why and how things work."

She also helped the former pro football star find his voice on the show. "She was great when it came to doing interviews that were outside of my comfort zone," Strahan said. "Knowing that the boss trusted me to do things that I didn't necessarily see myself doing gave me a whole different level of confidence."

Sherwood and Karin Weinberg were producers together at Nightline. Sherwood soon became Weinberg's boss and a mentor. "She really helped me become a senior producer," Weinberg recalled. "She just kept pushing me. 'I think you can do that,' she would say. I learned so much from her. I think a lot of

women would say the same thing."

Under Sherwood, Nightline had more women senior producers than it ever had before. Sherwood said promoting women happened naturally on her watch. "There were so many talented women," she said. "We've had a lot of conversations about being seen and heard and making sure everybody's getting a fair shake."

Now Sherwood is spearheading ABC News efforts to support The Walt Disney Co.'s streaming business, providing longform content for Hulu. That's where Sherwood's series Mike Tyson: The Knockout and 24 Hours: Assault on the Capitol can be found.

An Impactful Storyteller

"Not everyone is cinematic in their thinking," said Alan Ives, senior VP of marketing at ABC News. "Rox would never serve vanilla ice cream." Sherwood still rolls up her sleeves and pulls all-nighters to get shows like Assault on the Capitol on the air, Ives said.

"Do we have the ability to make a cultural impact with the story? Move this conversation forward?" Sherwood said. "If the answer to that is yes, I'm going to throw myself into it."

Sherwood's colleagues say her drive is all the more remarkable as a single mother. Of course, that's a great story. Sherwood married a man from Costa Rica. She returned from their honeymoon, but he had been in the U.S. on an expired visa and was held by immigration. She discovered she was pregnant and he didn't get a new visa for eight years. She had to raise their son on her own.

How did she manage? "I'm a producer. I set things up. I EPed our life," Sherwood said. She worked long hours. "I think my son definitely suffered for that," she said. But he also got to watch her set an example of succeeding through hard work. "He can say, 'Look at my mom. She's the boss.'" ●





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MULTICHANNEL NEWS
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**CONGRATULATIONS TO
ALL WONDER WOMEN AWARD
RECIPIENTS!**

Courtney White

President, Food Network & Streaming
Food Content **Discovery Inc.**



By R. Thomas Umstead
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Cooking is Courtney White's favorite at-home pastime. That's not surprising, since at work she's heating up the fortunes of Food Network.

As president of the Discovery Inc.-owned network, White last year led Food to a second-place finish among the most-watched cable networks in total day among women 18-49, its target demographic, per Nielsen. She accomplished the feat by stirring up a mix of shows such as *Chopped* and *Kids' Baking Championship*, and expert cuisine ideas from well-known chefs and celebrities like Guy Fieri, Bobby Flay, Valerie Bertinelli and Trisha Yearwood.

White's interest in the entertainment industry began when she was 9 years old, growing up in Albany, New York, and her family invested in a video camera. "My parents bought it to record recitals and school plays and then kept it in what to me was a deliciously untouchable golden case," she said. "One day, I asked them if I could start making movies, and to my surprise they said yes. So I started making movies with the local neighborhood kids."

Early Movie Ambitions

She grew up to attend New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, hoping to become a film producer. "The first person in the media industry who really stood out to me was Steven Spielberg, even though I had never met him," she said. "He was just a phenomenon and he was the

“I had actually never watched a frame of HGTV before the job posting came so I crammed HGTV [content], and that's how I got into lifestyle TV.”

Courtney White

first filmmaker that I ever saw on the cover of *Newsweek* or whatever magazine was on my parents' coffee table.”

Despite her love for movies, her first internship at NYU was on the small screen with PBS's *The Martha Stewart Show*. It was there where she began to cultivate an affinity for the TV industry, and for cooking. "Once I interned there and other TV places in college, I really decided TV was for me," she said. "I loved the storytelling of it as well as the pace and volume of it."

White graduated NYU in 1997, just as the cable industry was beginning to blossom. She would work at HBO under the tutelage of legendary producer Sheila Nevins, as well as for Working Dog Productions, before taking a programming development job at HGTV in 2005. "I had actually never watched a frame of HGTV before the job posting came so I crammed HGTV [content], and that's how I got into lifestyle TV," she said.

At the time, HGTV was looking to build a brand beyond informational television by cultivating new talent. White said she was in the midst of the network's expansion. "The Property Brothers [Jonathan and Drew Scott] were probably the

first ones that our team identified and put on the air who really helped change the course of that network, and opened the doors for others like Chip and Joanna Gaines," she said. "It just became a real personality-based network."

After developing iconic shows including *Beachfront Bargain Hunt* and *Hawaii Life* for HGTV, White became VP of program development and production for that network, along with DIY Network and GAC. She took her talents to Travel Channel in 2015 as senior VP of programming, then became executive VP and general manager of HGTV and Food Network in 2017. A year later she was named Food Network president.

White said Scripps Networks Interactive, which owned HGTV, Food, Travel, DIY and GAC before Discovery's purchase in 2018, was a nurturing place for women executives.

"I feel very fortunate to have been in that particular environment because everywhere I looked there were other women who were role models," she said, pointing to such executives as current Discovery Inc. chief lifestyle brands officer Kathleen Finch and former Food Network president Brooke Johnson.

Multifaceted Leadership

Finch said White has an uncanny ability to step into multiple roles and be successful from both a business perspective and as a leader. "Courtney White possesses an energy, creative instinct and passion for developing outstanding content that would make her an invaluable executive anywhere and our portfolio of brands have been fortunate to have Courtney spearheading so many of the consumer and commercial successes our viewers devour, first at HGTV, then at Travel Channel and ultimately leading Food Network," she said.

Looking ahead, White said she's primed for the challenge of maintaining and continuing to build Food Network's brand while fending off competitors in the genre. ●



CONGRATULATIONS

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Dalila Wilson-Scott

Executive VP and Chief Diversity Officer
Comcast Corp.



By Kent Gibbons
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Dalila Wilson-Scott came to media conglomerate Comcast in 2016, after 16-plus years at JPMorgan Chase & Co., to head up the NBCUniversal Foundation and community impact activities as a senior VP. In October 2020 she was promoted, adding on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives as executive VP and chief diversity officer.

She still oversees all philanthropic strategy for the company, with a focus on advancing digital equity through Project UP, Comcast's enterprise-wide initiative to advance digital equity, connect people to the Internet, advance economic mobility and open doors for future innovators, entrepreneurs, storytellers and creators, backed by a \$1 billion commitment to reach tens of millions of people through programs and community partnerships.

Coworkers and industry colleagues say she is the ideal person to handle those disparate and important tasks.

"When I think about Dalila, the following words come to mind: She's sophisticated, savvy and passionate," Lynn Charytan, Comcast's executive VP and general counsel, said. "She's really passionate about what she does. She's really savvy about how to get it done and how to work with people and how to work the issues. She's just a class player."

A Leader Inside and Out

Since adding the DE&I role, Charytan said, Wilson-Scott has "really just upped our game in the space," providing thoughtful leadership,

"I think we all know that striving for racial equity is a long-term fight."

Dalila Wilson-Scott

bringing in inspiring speakers and forging important partnerships. "She's a great face outward for the company but also a great leader inside the company."

Wilson-Scott's boss, Comcast chairman and CEO Brian Roberts, said: "Dalila's passion for social justice and equality and the impact she is having is remarkable. She has built relationships with wonderful partners who we work with every day to make a difference — whether that's advancing digital equity through Project UP, or our ongoing commitment to DE&I. Dalila is driving change both within Comcast and across the communities we serve and I am thrilled to see her recognized in this way."

Wilson-Scott said Comcast's more recent efforts to promote digital equity — including Comcast RISE, a multiyear initiative to help Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned small businesses by providing marketing and technology upgrades — builds on a track record encouraged by Roberts's leadership.

"What's incredible is, unlike a lot of newly named CDOs, I'm here at a company that has taken this seriously for over a decade," she said. "That says a lot about the data

we've disclosed, how we think about our own hiring, programming on our networks. That's a great place to be.

"That said, I think we all know that striving for racial equity is a long-term fight."

The pandemic raised awareness of inequities in people's access to health care, access to the internet and effective use of technology and how they impact careers and lives, she said.

"When companies are choosing the issues that they impact directly, obviously for us, it's a lot about connectivity and how we think about narrative and storytelling," Wilson-Scott said. "It makes sense for who we are as a brand, but also that's the place where we can have the most impact. It is about economic justice at the end of the day."

Wilson-Scott said she grew up in a mostly African-American neighborhood in Chicago "but we actually moved around a lot." Her father, an Air Force veteran, is African-American and her mother is Vietnamese; they met during the Vietnam War.

She went to New York University as an undergraduate and then graduate school so "a lot of people link me to New York City, but it's interesting being in different parts of the country and having different perspectives."

A Force for Inclusion

Maria E. Brennan, the president and CEO of The WICT Network, observed that "Dalila brings a wealth of experience to her vital role at Comcast NBCU. As a staunch supporter of women and diversity, equity and inclusion for all people, her leadership style inspires others to take action and make a difference. She is a force for any industry, and we are fortunate Dalila chose ours."

Wilson-Scott, whose non-work activities revolve around her 16-year-old, 13-year-old and 10-year-old children, said she was looking forward to in-person industry events again, including the one saluting her fellow Wonder Women.

"I will say it's the women that have helped me figure out what are the differences in media, what do you need to know and what do you need to watch out for, and that's been great," she said. "You know, I spent 17 years in financial services. That's a whole different ball game." ●



IT'S *WONDERFUL* TO HAVE
SUPERHEROES
IN THE FAMILY.



CONGRATULATIONS
DALILA WILSON-SCOTT
– COMCAST NBCUNIVERSAL'S **WONDER WOMEN!**

COMCAST  NBCUNIVERSAL

Joella Wind

Group VP, Sales Operations
Spectrum Enterprise



By Mike Farrell
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Growing up in Little Falls, New York, Joella Wind may not have always dreamed about becoming a telecom executive. But a love of science, a keen analytical mind and parents who encouraged her to follow her interests wherever they might lead took her on a path that placed her in the top echelon of cable telecommunications managers.

Now group VP, sales operations for Charter Communications's large business telecom unit, Spectrum Enterprise, Wind oversees a 350-member team that encompasses sales operations, sales enablement, sales analytics, sales planning and field marketing. A 25-year veteran of the telecom industry, Wind has routinely broken ground in new territory throughout her career by leveraging her versatility, deep knowledge of complex products and services, data-driven decision making and the ability to motivate teams to bring new products to market.

But it wasn't just a love of technology that first set her on her career path. Wind said what drew her first to the University of Rochester — where she received a bachelor of science in optical engineering in 1990 — was the university's sports teams.

"I wanted to play field hockey in college and UR had a good field hockey team," Wind said, adding that it offered an optical engineering major, which also caught her eye. "I always wanted to do something different, something unique, and I was a physics,

“I always wanted to do something different, something unique, and I was a physics, math, science-oriented person.”

Joella Wind

math, science-oriented person. I thought, this is something different, challenging. I can probably get a job with this without going to graduate school and I get to play field hockey.”

Bitten by the Research Bug

Although she later did go to graduate school (obtaining an MBA in corporate finance from Drexel University's LeBow College of Business) it was while she was working at UR's prestigious Laboratory for Laser Energetics as a student that Wind got her first experience with major research. The lab, renowned for its work in high-energy physics, also inadvertently influenced her career path.

"It [research] drove me a little crazy, because of all the starts and stops and I thought, 'Wow, I'd like to manage this lab, not necessarily do this,'" she said.

Wind said her tech background has been invaluable on the management side of the business because it gave her the skills to synthesize information, understand the underlying technology and be inquisitive.

"I would start new jobs and have tons of questions I would write down in meetings so I could ask someone afterwards," she

said. "I think that bent really helps me because everything, no matter what function you're in, has some bent to the analytic and the quantitative."

That inquisitive nature has helped her colleagues as well, said her manager, Spectrum Enterprise senior VP of enterprise sales and marketing Jeff Painting, who praised her for her hard work, dedication and competitive acumen.

"Her competitive orientation is impressive and inspires her team to perform at the highest levels," Painting said. "There isn't a challenge she isn't willing to face with a positive determination to succeed."

Wind's career in the telecom business has been a diverse one, with stints at Bell Atlantic (later Verizon Communications); Philips Broadband Networks (where she said she learned the cable business); a Dublin, Ireland-based startup; Time Warner Cable, where she created its Business Services team; and Charter, which purchased TWC in 2016. In her current position, she oversees all the sales operations and enablement functions for the unit.

Seeking Out Supporters

Although she never had a formal "mentor," Wind says that most of her managers have been exceptionally supportive and helped her during her career. "I do feel when you do really good work, your leaders become supportive of you and what you want to do in your career," Wind said. "I had that quite a bit."

And while she occasionally reaches out to past bosses "when I need someone to set me straight," she also is very active in advising young women through mentoring programs at Spectrum as well as the University of Rochester. Part of that comes from her mother, she said, who was the principal of a vocational school that Wind has periodically visited to talk to female students in the welding and carpentry programs about nontraditional roles. ●



Congratulations
to Joella Wind for
being recognized as
one of our industry's
Wonder Women by
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everything you are, and all
that you do.

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How 'Killing Eve' Aims To Stick the Landing

AMC Networks eyes the next show that can make a similarly lasting mark on pop culture



Sandra Oh as M15 agent Eve Polastri in *Killing Eve*.



By Michael Malone
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The fourth and final season of *Killing Eve* is under way on BBC America. Critics have long adored the edgy spy drama about a bored M15 agent, a ruthless assassin and the peculiar attraction they have to one another.

All eyes are now on *Eve* to see if it can pull off a fittingly stylish finale.

Dan McDermott, AMC Networks president of entertainment and AMC Studios, called the final season “a real thrill ride.” The hard part of successfully wrapping, he said, “is really figuring out how to appropriately service both the roles and the actresses and the narratives, to finish with the gigantic

thunderclap the show deserves.”

“I feel really positive that the show does it,” McDermott added.

It’s been an eventful lifespan for *Killing Eve*. The show was created by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, and has two female characters as the heart of the series — Sandra Oh’s Eve, an intelligence agent, bored behind a desk, and Jodie Comer’s Villanelle, a mercurial assassin.

An odd thing happened in season one. The premiere on BBC America drew 669,000 total viewers in Nielsen live-plus-three-day ratings and 240,000 viewers in the 25-54 demo. The show grew each week with the finale tallying 1.2 million total viewers, 545,000 in the demo.

Killing Eve took several bold leaps. For starters, it was created by a woman, run by women and had two female characters sharing center stage. It was a spy drama with a pair of unforgettable characters. “It really flipped the

script on suspense-thriller shows and spy shows,” said McDermott, who came on board at AMC Networks in 2020. “It’s such a strong, character-centric approach to telling these stories. So many shows like this are really plot-heavy.”

McDermott describes both Eve and Villanelle as “lightning-in-a-bottle characters.”

The show also cast an Asian actor, Oh, as Eve. Linda Ong, founder and CEO of consultancy Cultique, called it “a maverick move,” as the Eve in the Luke Jennings novellas that inspired the show is not Asian.

The maverick move went beyond casting. “Eve was presented as an equal opponent to the white Villanelle, rather than the meek, subservient Asian trope we’ve seen for — literally — centuries, juxtaposing their enmity with all of the drama and intrigue of a traditional romantic relationship,” Ong said.

The *Eve* buzz continued in the second season. Airing on AMC in addition to BBC America, season two averaged 1.7 million total viewers and 675,000 in the 25-54 demo. Season three averaged 1.5 million and 573,000.

Finding the Show’s Voice

Killing Eve also made its mark by featuring a new lead writer each season, and a female one to boot. Season one had Waller-Bridge in that role. Emerald Fennell and Suzanne Heathcote followed, and Laura Neal has the key role for season four.

The quirky lead-writer approach came to be because Waller-Bridge had to focus on a new season of *Fleabag* after *Killing Eve* premiered. “Rather foolishly, we decided to go with a different lead writer every season,” executive producer and showrunner Sally Woodward Gentle said. That amounted to “holding dear the DNA of the show,” she said, “while bringing a slightly different perspective on it.”

The approach has been “refreshing” for the series, Woodward Gentle said.

Unlike her predecessors, Neal worked on the previous season of *Killing Eve* and knows the series intimately. “She’s very invested in where we’d left those characters and very excited about where we are moving them off to,” Woodward Gentle said. “She’s brilliant, very bold, takes no prisoners, and understands the particular humor of the show.”

As season four begins, Eve seeks revenge and

Villanelle has found a new community to break from her killer past. Woodward Gentle said both are “really trying to take stock of what their lives mean and what they want to do with them.”

So why end the hit show after four seasons? The critical raves have subsided a bit — season one posted a 96% critics’ score on Rotten Tomatoes, season two a 92% and season three an 80% — but the reviews have remained mostly positive. McDermott said AMC Networks would love to keep it going, but the storylines in season four bring it to what he called “a fitting conclusion.”

“You kind of know when you know,” he said.

Woodward Gentle said a “continual cat-and-mouse game,” even a clever one, loses its allure over time.

Making a Killing

Killing *Eve*’s value to BBC America is hard to quantify. A hit show brings eyeballs to the network’s other programs, elicits honors and awards and entices top-shelf producers and their projects. McDermott said *Eve* and Villanelle have earned their spot in the AMC Networks hall of fame, alongside the likes of Don Draper and Walter White.

Breakout shows have those lightning-in-a-bottle characters who take audiences into unique subcultures, McDermott said. They say something about the world we live in. “Killing *Eve* checks all three boxes,” he said.

What from AMC Networks has a chance to be the next show to shake up popular culture? McDermott mentioned *Dark Winds*, about a pair of Navajo police officers on the hunt in 1971, and *Moonhaven*, about a utopian community on the moon, along with the Anne Rice projects *Interview with the Vampire* and *Mayfair Witches*. “In the next 12-18 months, those can put us in the awards conversation all over again,” he said.

In the meantime, viewers have unseen *Eve* episodes to enjoy. There are eight in season four, which run on BBC America, AMC and AMC Plus. Ong described the show as “one of the first highly stylized thrillers that defied traditional gender and racial norms.” On top of that, she added, “infusing the male-led spy genre with female and queer desire and sexuality lent a deliciously exoticized take on the ‘cat and mouse’ plot.” ●

THE THING ABOUT NBC’S NEW CRIME DRAMA

THE THING ABOUT PAM, representing a unique symbiosis between NBC’s news and entertainment divisions, premiered on the network March 8. The series is based on the 2011 murder of Betsy Faria in Missouri. Her husband was convicted but a diabolical scheme involving Betsy’s friend Pam Hupp soon materialized.

The case was examined in several episodes of *Dateline NBC*, which spawned a podcast, also called *The Thing About Pam*.

Showrunner/executive producer Jenny Klein said the folks at Blumhouse Television brought the podcast to her attention. “They said, Jenny, this is the craziest story we’ve ever heard — we think you’d love it,” she said. “I did.”

Klein grew up in Illinois, in a place not all that different from Troy, Missouri, where Faria is killed. “It’s such a weird Midwest story that I was

immediately drawn to it,” she said.

Renée Zellweger plays Pam Hupp. She too became obsessed with the podcast, Klein said, and was eager to bring the project to screen.

Klein called Zellweger “the hardest working, toughest person I’ve ever met,” and a deft enough actor to make Pam’s many quirks, including the Midwest accent and talking with her hands, feel authentic.

“Renée got every detail down to a T,” Klein said, “in a way that brought Pam to life so accurately.”

Dateline anchor Keith Morrison hosts the podcast and is the narrator on the series. Klein called him “an omniscient, almost philosophical narrator.”

The limited series has six episodes. *The Thing About Pam* was shot outside New Orleans, so August in Louisiana had to stand in for December in Missouri. “A truck was shooting snow onto the street as everyone was standing around, sweating through their tank tops,” Klein said. “It was environmentally incongruous.” — MM



BOB ODENKIRK MEMOIR DEPICTS SHIFT FROM COMEDY TO DRAMA

BOB ODENKIRK’S *Comedy Comedy Drama* details the performer growing up obsessed with sketch comedy, and making a name for himself in that world before shifting to the more serious realm of drama.

He writes about coming up in the Chicago comedy scene, including *Second City*. “There was no obvious route to fame, or even a ‘career’ ... Every day was just, write something funny today, then see what happens.”

Odenkirk made his way to New York for *Saturday Night Live*. His time in the writers’

room was not particularly happy, but he does offer intriguing looks at Lorne Michaels, Chris Farley and other key comedy figures.

Adam Sandler, he said, “made me see the show, and comedy, in a new and better way, because Adam was having a good time.”

Odenkirk then headed to Los Angeles, where he worked on *The Ben Stiller Show* and *Mr. Show*. He also describes what he calls “development

heck” — loads of projects and few seeing the light of day. When *The Office* was being cast, the Michael Scott role was between Odenkirk and Steve Carell. Development heck continued.

Breaking Bad is not mentioned until page 200, but Odenkirk offers entertaining and enlightening details about it and spinoff *Better Call Saul*, which saw him master his dramatic chops in playing Saul Goodman.

Comedy Comedy Comedy Drama is a lively narrative. There are quips on every page, many of them quite funny. — MM



Scripted Sports Series In Play for Networks, Streaming Services

Broad appeal of live events offers shows a built-in audience



By R. Thomas Umstead
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Networks and streaming services are looking to capitalize on the appeal of athletic competition with a roster of scripted comedies and dramas set in the world of sports.

The CW's February launch of football-themed *All-American* spinoff *All-American: Homecoming* and HBO's March 6 premiere of *Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty*, about the NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers teams of the 1980s, add to a lineup of sports-themed shows already competing for viewers.

"When you have a show that features the NBA or other sports leagues, you're bringing in a built-in audience that already knows your product," TV sports analyst Lee Berke said. "That allows you to then build around viewers that already are familiar with the product."

Sports-based shows are nothing new — programs like NBC's *Friday Night Lights*, HBO's *Ballers*, IFC's *Brockmire* and BET Plus's *The Game* have been around for years.

But the viewer migration to streaming services has amplified the value of live sports events on the traditional television platform, with such programming garnering some of linear TV's biggest audiences. NBC's February 13 telecast of Super Bowl LVI drew more than 100 million viewers according to Nielsen. The NBA All-Star Game drew some 6.3 million viewers to



TNT and TBS on February 20, up 6% from 2021, according to Nielsen.

Cutting Through the Clutter

With more than 559 scripted shows on TV and streaming services in 2021, according to FX Networks, networks see sports-themed programming as a way to break through the clutter.

Disney Plus last year renewed two freshman sports-centric shows: *Big Shot*, starring John Stamos as an ousted men's college basketball coach offered a chance for redemption by coaching a high school girls' basketball team; and *The Mighty Ducks: Game Changers*, a series loosely based on the 1990s film *The Mighty Ducks* about a wayward youth hockey team.

No recent sports-themed show has enjoyed the success of Apple TV's *Ted Lasso*, which stars Jason Sudeikis as an American college football coach who is hired to manage a top-flight English professional soccer team. The series drew a record 20 Primetime Emmy Award nominations in its freshman year, with the series winning the 2021 Emmy for outstanding comedy series.

(From l.): John C. Reilly as Dr. Jerry Buss, Quincy Isaiah as Magic Johnson and Jason Clarke as Jerry West in HBO's *Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty*.

"Apple TV Plus caught lightning in a bottle with *Ted Lasso*," Berke said. "The show is well-written and funny but the backdrop of sports and soccer resonates with a lot of viewers and has helped the show find an audience."

Executives say successful sports-themed shows have to balance the dynamics and influence of sports both on and off the field, which isn't always a slam dunk for producers.

Sports and Life Stories

The CW's *All-American: Homecoming* follows a tennis player and a baseball prospect during their first year at a historically Black university. Series executive producer Nkechi Okoro Carroll said the show uses sports as a backdrop to highlight the pressures young elite athletes face dealing with both college life and athletic excellence.

"The series brings this issue of this pressure on athletes and especially athletes of color," Carroll said at January's TCA Winter Press Tour. "How do you deal with it, and how do you rise above and still get out there and play the game and you have to play? It is something that you will see across the series."

Shows like HBO's *Winning Time* face the even more difficult prospect of effectively portraying real-life athletes both on and off the court, the series' producer and stars said during the show's recent TCA press session.

"It's a basketball show, so I'm just trying to make sure that any basketball is on point," said Quincy Isaiah, who stars as Lakers great Magic Johnson. "I wanted to make sure that that's something I could look back on and [say] ... I looked like him on the court."

Added *Winning Time* executive producer Rick Barnes: "We don't just show them as basketball players — we show them as human beings. Being able to get to the other side of who they are as people takes up just as much real estate."

Berke expects more networks to take a swing at sports-themed shows in an effort to score with viewers through appealing and recognizable programming. ●

Pieces Falling Into Place For 2022-23 TV Season

Fox will launch two talk shows this fall, with Sherri Shepherd and Jennifer Hudson



By Paige Albiniak
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The picture is becoming clear for the 2022-23 syndicated TV season. Fox and Hearst Television have picked up *The Jennifer Hudson Show* from Warner Bros. and Debmar-Mercury's Sherri, starring Sherri Shepherd, will take the time slots of *Wendy Williams*, the host of which is battling medical problems.

"As the syndication business continues to go through a major sea change, we need power players to reenergize talk shows and *Jennifer Hudson* is just that," said Frank Cicha, executive VP, programming, Fox Television Stations, in a statement.

Debmar-Mercury also decided to cancel rookie talker *Nick Cannon*, which has hovered between a 0.4 and a 0.5 live-plus-same-day national household rating since it launched in September, per Nielsen.

"It's never easy to cancel a production with clear potential but, after a great deal of deliberation and examining various options, we have made the difficult business decision to end production on *Nick Cannon*," Debmar-Mercury co-presidents Mort Marcus and Ira Bernstein said in a statement provided to B+C Multichannel News. "We plan to offer viewers original episodes of the daytime talk show through the remainder of this season."

Whether *Wendy Williams* returns to television remains in question. Williams has been sidelined all season as she deals with medical issues. Debmar-Mercury made clear when it announced Sherri that it would be willing to work with Williams

again should she return to health. *Wendy Williams* executive producer David Perler will also executive produce and be the showrunner of Sherri.

Shepherd will also continue to host *Dish Nation*, which airs on Fox stations and others in syndication.

"This is also a bittersweet moment for us and our partners at Fox," Marcus and Ira Bernstein said in a statement. "We all have a great love and affinity for *Wendy*, who grew into a true icon during her 12 incredible seasons as the solo host of a live, daily talk show dishing on 'Hot Topics' and interviewing celebrities.

"Since *Wendy* is still not available to host the show as she continues on her road to recovery, we believe it is best for our fans, stations and advertising partners to start making this transition now. We hope to be able to work with *Wendy* again in the future, and continue to wish her a speedy and full recovery."

Another new series that's coming on the scene is NBCUniversal's *Karamo Brown*, starring one of the hosts of Netflix's *Queer Eye*. Brown — who has guest-hosted NBCU's uber-conflict talker *Maury* — is expected to start airing on The CW affiliates and other stations this fall. *Maury*, hosted by 83-year-old *Maury Povich*, is going out of original production this spring but will continue to air on stations in repeats, just as *Jerry Springer* does. NBCUniversal hasn't yet made any announcements about pick-ups of *Karamo Brown*, but that show is expected to go forward with *Maury* EP Paul Faulhaber behind the producing wheel.

Dish Nation host Sherri Shepherd's new talker will take the Fox timeslots filled by Wendy Williams in 2022-23.

NBCU has been trying to change up its lineup of conflict talkers for years, with Tribune Broadcasting — before it was acquired by Nexstar Media Group — also trying its hand at a few shows, starring the likes of Ohio talk radio host Bill Cunningham and *Restaurant: Impossible*'s Robert Irvine. *Maury* ran for a total of 30 seasons, *Jerry Springer* for 28 and is headed into its fifth season in repeats, and *Steve Wilkos* is in season 15. NBCU hopes *Karamo Brown* will refresh the conflict genre and appeal to younger viewers.

Meanwhile, NBCU will end *Judge Jerry*, starring Springer, after this season, the show's third in syndication. *Judge Jerry* is executive-produced by Kerry Shannon.

No Second Helping for 'Dish'

Sony had been working to renew *The Good Dish* — hosted by Dr. Mehmet Oz's daughter Daphne, *Top Chef*'s Gail Simmons and Food Network's *Jamika Pessoa* — but the show will not go forward into next year. When the show launched on January 17 as a replacement for Oz, it was only guaranteed to run through this season. In the food-focused panel talker's favor was advertiser-friendly content and a lack of other new product in the market. Working against it was that after a little more than a month on the air, it has turned in lower household ratings than its predecessor.

Coming back for season three is CBS Media Ventures' *Drew Barrymore*, averaging a 0.6 in households in its second season.

Next year, the show will be split into two half-hours, which stations can run back to back or separately. CBS-owned stations will pair *Drew* with local news in top markets and air the second half-hour on its duopoly stations, sources said.

Good bets for going away are CBS's *The Doctors*, hosted by Dr. Andrew Ordon, and Warner Bros.'s *The Real*, hosted by Garcelle Beauvais, Adrienne Houghton, Loni Love and Jeannie Mai Jenkins.

The Doctors has been stuck at a 0.2 in households for the past year, while *The Real* turns in around a 0.4. ●



WRN

Debmar-Mercury



Houston Heats Up

Lots of diversity, tons of news in Top 10 market



By Michael Malone
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The Big Freeze, as it is known, took over in Texas just over a year ago. Severe storms caused a massive grid failure, knocking out power for millions of homes. The temps got downright cold again in early February 2022 in Houston, and many lost power.

But things were nowhere near as frightful as they were a year ago.

"Everybody's sensitivity level is so high," Wendy Granato, KTRK president and general manager, said. "Folks have been through so much. Add it to the list — hurricanes, tornadoes, crazy crime and now we get freezes."

To be sure, Houston is in a good place these days. The oil industry that fuels the local economy is on solid footing

and the region for years has worked to diversify its business portfolio, with the likes of health care, aerospace and the legal profession growing. "There's such an influx of companies coming into Houston," John Hannon, KXLN president and general manager, said. "Oil and gas used to drive 100% of the economy, and now it's a smaller percentage."

ABC owns KTRK and Graham Media Group has NBC affiliate KPRC. Fox owns KRIV-KTXH, and Tegna has CBS outlet KHOU. Univision owns KXLN and Telemundo holds KTMD.

Comcast is the primary pay TV operator in DMA No. 8.

Robust Competition

KTRK, which uses an Eyewitness News branding, rules the English-language stations and KXLN does so on the Spanish-language side — often

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

winning the overall ratings races. Everyone competes; one GM notes how the ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC stations all occupied the top spot at 10 p.m. for a period last year.

In January, KTRK won 6-7 a.m. in households, and it and KRIV took the viewers 25-54 derby. At 5 and 6 p.m., it was KTRK again in households and KXLN in the demo. (KXLN offers network news at 5:30 and network entertainment programming at 6.) At 10 p.m. in January, KXLN posted a 3.2 in households, and KTRK got a 3.1. KPRC got a 2.8 and KHOU a 2.7, while KRIV scored a 1.8 and KTMD a 1.5. In the late-news demo in January, KXLN ran away with it, posting a 2.7, with KTMD at 0.8, KPRC, KTRK and KRIV at 0.7 and KHOU at 0.5.

KTRK is a power thanks to a bullish digital strategy, signature long-form reporting and its own helicopter, among other attributes, with the competition sharing a chopper. The station is ramping up Spanish-speaking personnel on both sides of the camera. "If you don't serve the Hispanic audience in the Houston area, you will not be Houston's news leader for very long," Granato said.

KXLN knows all about serving the Hispanic audience, with morning news, an 11:30 newscast, and news at 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. KXLN introduced a new news set in early February. Its 11:30 a.m. news, Edicion Digital, has a digital focus, as the name suggests. "It's not your hard and fast like you see at 5 and 11," Hannon said. "It's shorter clips and stories where you want to go online and explore it deeper."

Fully 45% of the city population is Hispanic, according to Census.gov. Asked what they like about Houston, every general manager who responded for this story mentioned the diversity. As one put it, in other multicultural cities, one goes out to a restaurant and sees a variety of ethnicities around them. In Houston, the range of ethnicities is in your dinner party.

"The sheer diversity of the city is such an asset," Robert Springer, KHOU president and general manager, said. "There's a real sense of community, and

people are proud to be from Houston.”

Houston gained nearly 240,000 homes from 2020 to 2021, per Nielsen, and the stations are working hard to turn the new arrivals into viewers. Morning news is a giant business, with plenty of shift workers in the health care and energy fields. KHOU revamped its a.m. program amidst the pandemic, slowing things down a bit. “Not everybody is trying to race out the door first thing in the morning,” Springer said. “We’re not in as much of a rush as we were before, so we added more context.”

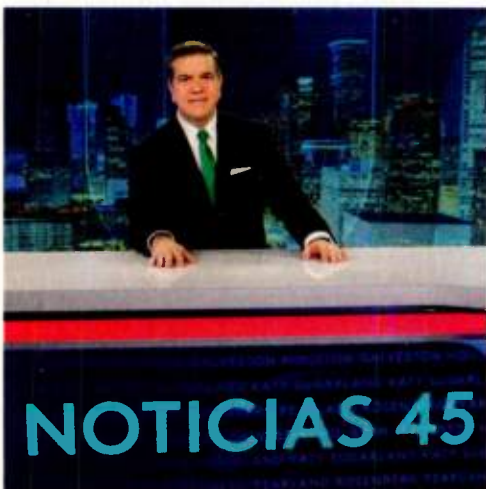
KPRC has an Insider program, where users sign up to receive exclusive content and giveaways. The real membership push began late summer, said Jerry Martin, KPRC VP/general manager, and numbers are over 100,000. “It’s in the beginning stages, and we keep tailoring it,” he said.

Lots of Local Innovations

KPRC has *Houston Life* at 3 p.m. Martin calls it a “nontraditional lifestyle show” with “very, very few sales elements.” The plan is to expand the program to two hours next year. “It won’t be news, but it won’t be all cooking, recipes and restaurant openings either,” he said. “It’s information that can make your life better.”

KRIV, known as Fox 26, has signature news segments such as “Breaking Bond,” about felons released on their own recognizance who commit violent crimes after their release, and “The Missing,” about missing persons in the area.

“We don’t just shine a light on the issue, we cause people to take action,” D’Artagnan Bebel, senior VP and general manager, said.



KXLN anchor Raul Peimbert



It takes a lot of resilience to work in Houston. The pace here is just so intense.

— **Robert Springer**,
president and general manager,
KHOU

Fox 26 offerings include Sunday political show *What’s Your Point*, which Bebel said is “not your father’s political show,” and the livestreamed *Lunch for the Soul*, hosted by anchor Melissa Wilson. “People are hungry for stories of faith and personal success and how do you create an environment of hope and happiness,” Susan Schiller, KRIV VP and news director, said.

KTRK introduced a live 24/7 streaming channel, along with the rest of the ABC group, on the last day of January. It adds 17 hours a week of live news on the platform, streaming from 4:30 to 9 a.m. weekdays, with the premiere of *Eyewitness News* at 8:00 A.M. with Jonathan Bruce. “It won’t be long before we launch a 9 a.m., a 10 a.m.,” said Granato.

Univision has a substantial stash of media in Houston. Besides KXLN, there’s a UniMas station and five radio outlets. (See sidebar, this page.)

Keaton Fuchs became KTRK news director in July following roles as digital producer, investigative producer and head of content and data strategy for the station. “He’s done just about everything you can do in the newsroom,” Granato said. “Keaton is a data geek who’s obsessed with what the data can tell us about what the audience wants.”

Two years ago, Tegna acquired KTBU Houston, and airs its *Quest* programming.

The station execs in Houston mention a big-city market full of worthy news outlets covering local stories that often go national. “It’s just a go-go market,” Springer said. “It takes a lot of resilience to work in Houston. The pace here is just so intense.”

Bring your A-game every day, they say, or you’ll lose your perch. “Let your guard down for one day in Houston, and you’ll get your butt beat,” Granato said. “I love that and would not have it any other way.” ●

ALL SPANISH-LANGUAGE SPORTS TALK, ALL THE TIME

UNIVISION’S FIVE RADIO stations in Houston include music, talk and a new sports-talk station. In the fall of 2021, Univision launched TUDN 93.3—Your Station of Champions. John Hannon, Univision’s president/general manager in Houston, believes KQBU, formerly a music station, may be the only Spanish-language FM sports-talk station in the nation.

When he arrived in the market in 2019, he mentioned going after every single Spanish-language sports contract in Houston. The station has Astros, Rockets and Dynamo (MLS) games. KQBU did not land the Houston Texans, but did ink an NFL contract that gives the station weekly NFL games, including *Monday Night Football* and *Thursday Night Football*, the playoffs and the Super Bowl.

Hispanic consumers adore soccer, of course, but their sporting taste has moved well beyond that. “Everyone knows soccer and expects soccer, but all these sports cross all the different languages,” said Hannon.

TUDN 93.3, a mix of network and local programming, offers college action too, such as Texas A&M football.

Hannon calls the Cesar Procel-hosted program *Encanchados* “a foundational piece of local programming to build the station around.” The show airs Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon. “It’s not just soccer; it’s a blend of everything,” Hannon said.

Your Station of Champions also features programs from Univision’s TUDN sports network, including *Buenos Dias America* and *Contacto Deportivo*.

Listeners can also access it via the Uforia app.

The station is off to a strong start, Hannon said, with a couple of rights deals close to being announced. “It’s doing better than we ever could’ve expected,” he noted. — MM



Fox Soul's James DuBose Eyes Profit After Expanding Viewership

Two-year-old streaming service is a prolific programmer on the rise



By Jon Lafayette
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After growing its audience in 2021, Fox Soul has ambitious plans to expand its programming and generate revenue.

The two-year-old, ad-supported streaming service operates under the wing of the Fox Television Stations group. Fox Soul said its viewership climbed 131%

to 61 million viewers and minutes viewed jumped 191% to 700 million in 2021.

"We're still here, so we must be doing something right," Fox Soul general manager and head of programming James DuBose said.

Fox Soul is in the process of bringing in a chief revenue officer. "My goal is to make sure we become a profitable business," DuBose said. While not profitable yet, he said "we're headed in the right direction."

DuBose said Fox Soul plans to add its first music competition show in the

Viewers streamed some 700 million minutes of Fox Soul programming in 2021, the company said.

spring. It will be looking to find a group — rather than an individual performer — and show viewers how writers, producers and artists work together to come up with hits, said DuBose, who played football at Wake Forest and once ran Sean (Diddy) Combs' TV-production company.

DuBose also has a travel series in the works to show viewers the world that lies beyond their community, as well as an animated show for kids on Saturday morning.

It recently ordered six episodes of *Turnt Out with TS Madison*, featuring the first Black trans woman to star in and executive-produce her own reality series, and picked up 13 more episodes of *The House*, a talk show focused on the Black LGBTQIA+ experience.

Fox Soul is also relaunching its programming partnership with Black Enterprise.

Entertaining, Inspiring Shows

As the head of programming, DuBose said his goal is not just to entertain viewers but to educate and inspire as well.

"We want to tell the stories behind the stories and really give people an opportunity to talk about things that they normally only discuss in the privacy of their own homes," DuBose said. The formula seems to work. Fox Soul's audience is 85% to 90% Black.

"We're unapologetically Black, but consumable by all," DuBose said. "We want our stories, and our voice, to be heard, but we want to be respected and well-received by everybody across the board."

Fox Soul also aims to be interactive with its viewers. but that got sidetracked during the pandemic. "I would anticipate by summertime we will be back to having that technology and that ability. That's very important to our success," DuBose said.

To some, Fox is an odd place for a network for Black people, given the shadow cast by Fox News Channel.

"There's no hiding from the fact that the Black community sees it in one way," DuBose said. "A lot of the community, friends and so forth, were a little skeptical, as was expected." He said he didn't want to

be the Black face of a network where the people behind the scenes were not interested in the community.

"They had no interest in doing that either, and they've been very, very true to that word," he said.

With cord-cutting and more viewers streaming, Fox Television Stations wanted to get into streaming, and did research to see what audiences it could attract. Stephen Brown, executive VP, programming and development for the station group, noted that a Fox First Run show like *Divorce Court* already generates more revenue from streaming than it does from broadcast.

With shows like *Living Single*, *Martin* and *Empire*, "Fox traditionally has served the African-American population, in the network and in our daily syndicated programming, *Divorce Court*, *Dish Nation* and *Wendy Williams*," Brown said.

Fox owns TV stations in eight of the top 10 Black markets. "This is the population that we should serve because we already serve them," Brown said. "Why not hyper-serve them?"

DuBose was producing *Dish Nation* for Fox. "We brought James in and said, 'We want to create a channel for the African-American audience, but we don't want to do the traditional thing. We needed to create an authentic experience.' And James and his team came up with *Our Voice. Our Truth*," Brown said.

DuBose said he wanted to be in entertainment from childhood, shooting music videos as a teenager. He went to Wake Forest University to play football because it has a great communications department.

He now says he's "inspired by people who have experienced great failure and come out of that." He has his own story to tell.

DuBose started his own business in 2005 and was creating reality shows for BET and other networks. Some of his hits were *Keyshia Cole: The Way It Is*, *Tiny and Toya* and *The Michael Vick Project*.

"I had great success until about 2013-14," he said. "It was like I couldn't miss. Everything I was touching was working. I was



Fox Television Stations executive VP, programming and development Stephen Brown (above) saw a Black-targeted streaming service as a natural fit. James DuBose (below) says his goal was to create a network that is "unapologetically Black."

the guy who everyone was coming to. But I was miserable at my highest, financially, career-wise and everything. Inside I was dying." He suffered a deep depression.

He said then-BET Networks president of original programming Loretha Jones called him into her office. She said, "I'm going to pay for you to get help because I'm not there for your funeral," DuBose recalled.

"I damn near lost everything," DuBose said. "It took me a long, long time to come back from that. I lost a lot, but by the grace of God, I was able to get myself together and continue."

Ri-Karlo Handy, CEO of Sunwise Media and founder of the Handy Foundation, which is dedicated to providing job placement into hard-to-access Hollywood jobs, said DuBose gave him his first opportunity as an executive producer, and that many of the top Black reality show producers worked for DuBose at some point in their career.

"If Fox Soul gives James a chance to reinvent himself while giving Black folks an opportunity in this business, I hope he's successful," Handy said.

The community is watching to see what comes out of Fox Soul, Handy said. "I think that supporting content that employs people of color is important, so we wish him all the best," he said.

Brown said he and Jack Abernethy, CEO of Fox Television Stations, "step way back" when it comes to Fox Soul's programming. That's one reason it rings true, he said. Fox Soul also manages to produce programming on a budget, or by working with partners.

"We produce the way Fox First Run produces our syndicated programs," Brown said. "We're incredibly cost-conscious. We don't spend stupid amounts of money on things that really ultimately don't matter. We pay good salaries for our staff and for our infrastructure. But we

don't pay inordinate salaries to stars that ultimately are kind of flashes, and then people will go away."

Fox Soul's lineup includes Fox First Run

shows including *Divorce Court* and *Dish Nation*. It also runs shows produced by individual Fox stations, such as *The Isiah Factor Uncensored* from KRIV Houston and *The Feed at Night* from WTXF Philadelphia.

Over the Christmas break, Fox Soul aired the Fox broadcast network series *Our Kind of People*.

In Sync with Fox Stations

It's a symbiotic relationship between the Fox operations. "We incubate programming on Fox Soul that can be widely distributed across our owned and operated stations," Brown said. Fox Soul programs *Business of Being Black With Tammi Mac*, *The Book of Seann*, *The Black Report* and *Cocktails With Queens* are broadcast by Fox stations.

The arrangement provides fresh programming for the stations and promotion for Fox Soul, Brown said.

Fox Television Stations is providing additional distribution for Fox Soul. Fox's station in Atlanta, WAGA (Fox 5), also streams Fox Soul on its website.

Fox Soul also offered an original holiday movie with *Where Hearts Lie*. Watch time for Fox Soul on Vizio rose 107% when it premiered on December 18.

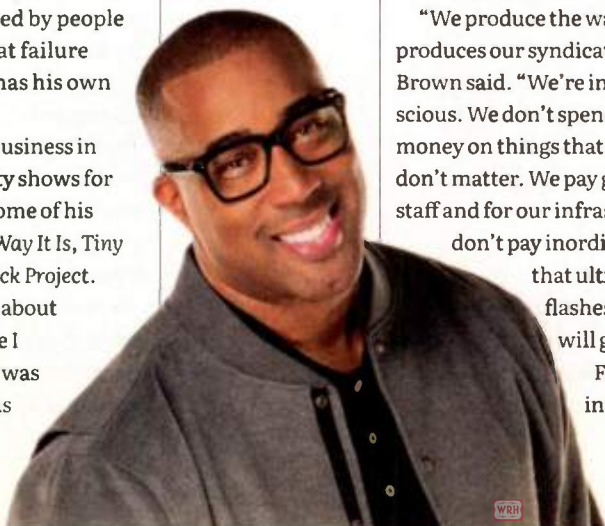
"The next step after distribution and getting our work out there is to monetize it," Brown said. "We're hiring a chief revenue officer to really push that forward." The new CRO will report to Abernethy.

Fox Soul is getting more aggressive in getting advertisers. It recently did an integration deal for Nissan that involved a series of vignettes for Black History Month.

Brown doesn't expect Fox Soul to turn a profit this year, but he sees it breaking even next year and making money after that.

"We're not in the business to have a hobby," Brown said. "We're in the business to be a business."

That means DuBose is learning to be an executive as well as a producer. "I'm learning every day about things that I never thought I would do," he said. "I would like to consider myself an executive/producer, but mostly a person who is still learning and enjoying what he's doing." ●





For Cable Operators, Wireless Gets Real

Q4 performance shows product becoming legitimate revenue, profit center



By Mike Farrell
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Cable wireless service, initially believed to be a retention tool for broadband, is quickly becoming a revenue and profit center in its own right.

Some analysts see it as an important part of the overall cable revenue mix, especially as traffic from telco partners is unloaded onto the network.

Since launching their respective wireless offerings in 2017 and 2018, both Comcast and Charter Communications have amassed a collective 7.6 million wireless customers, and growth rates keep rising. In Q4, both Comcast and Charter reported their best quarterly subscriber growth ever. As expansion continues into more rural areas through edge-outs, fiber extensions and federal programs, that pace isn't expected to slow anytime soon. This should come as good news for investors, who have seen the companies' respective stock prices slip amid fears of slowing broadband growth.

In a research report, MoffettNathanson senior analyst Craig Moffett wrote that wireless is quickly becoming a profitable

business for cable operators and before long the business will be a meaningful profit center.

According to Charter, the mobile business had negative earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of \$92 million in Q4. For the year, EBITDA was negative \$311 million. The deficits are getting better, though — EBITDA was negative \$401 million in 2020 and negative \$520 million in 2019. According to Moffett, Charter could reach EBITDA break-even this year.

That would be on a profitability path akin to its mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) partner and the largest cable operator in the country, Comcast, which already has reported four straight quarters of positive wireless EBITDA growth.

Moffett doesn't expect wireless to replace broadband in investors' hearts: high-speed internet remains a better business. But he does believe that investors have to stop thinking of cable as "only" a broadband provider.

A Second Stream

"Cable isn't a broadband-only business," Moffett wrote. "It is, as we have repeated so often over the past two decades, an infrastructure business with multiple

Charter's Spectrum Wireless service could reach EBITDA break-even this year, analyst Craig Moffett says.

revenue streams — residential and commercial, wired and, yes, wireless — riding on that infrastructure."

All this is happening as the Big Three wireless companies — AT&T, Verizon Communications and T-Mobile — aggressively price their offerings to drive subscriber growth. Cable, which has avoided pricing wars in the past, has been equally aggressive, with \$30 per month, per line promotions from both Comcast and Charter (for a minimum of four lines and two lines, respectively) plus device discounts.

But as cable is looking toward growth, AT&T and Verizon are anticipating a slowdown in what has been a strong past two years. AT&T said in January that it expects wireless revenue to grow about 3% in 2022, down from 5% last year. Wireless EBITDA is expected to be in the low single digits in 2022, compared to 3.2% in 2021.

For Verizon, the forecast is for postpaid phone additions to slow to 1.585 million in 2022 (down 25% from 2021 additions of 2.115 million) and 1.46 million in 2023, according to Evercore ISI Group media and telecom analyst Vijay Jayant.

"While the company continues to execute well, pressure from 5G leader T-Mobile, combined with increasingly aggressive cable wireless pricing, keep us on the sidelines," Jayant wrote.

T-Mobile postpaid phone net additions will be down about 6% in 2022 at 2.75 million, Jayant estimated, rising by 4% to 2.85 million in 2023.

While Comcast and Charter have experienced explosive growth on the wireless front, one major publicly traded operator, Altice USA, has had worse luck with mobile. But that could change soon.

Altice USA added just 5,000 wireless customers in Q4, and ended the year with about 186,000 mobile subscribers.

Altice introduced its wireless product — now branded Optimum Mobile — in 2019 at a very low price point (\$20 per month) and it has lagged well behind its peers in terms of subscriber growth, revenue and profitability. After several attempts to right the ship, which stumbled in part because of its original mobile virtual

network operator (MVNO) agreement with Sprint (now T-Mobile), Altice says it is back on track with wireless.

On a February 16 conference call with analysts to discuss Q4 results, Altice USA CEO Dexter Goei said churn rates have leveled off to the 30% range from previous highs of 60% to 70% and are declining monthly. And the company is close to forging a new MVNO agreement with T-Mobile, which should also help the service.

"I think we've been clear that wireless is very important to our strategy," Goei said.

Altice is currently concentrating on building out its fiber network: It expects to pass about 6.5 million homes, or 60% of its footprint, with its fiber-to-the-home platform by 2025. Though broadband expansion is inherently a catalyst for mobile growth — mobile customers need to subscribe to broadband in order to get wireless service — the fiber buildout could mean Altice continues to lag behind its peers for the foreseeable future.

In a February 18 research note, Moffett reversed his outlook on Altice, downgrading the stock to "neutral" and slashing his 12-month price target on shares by more than half to \$15 from \$33. The primary reason for the downgrade was Moffett's belief that Altice's broadband turnaround is going to take at least three years. He predicted Altice would add just 9,000 subscribers in 2022 and 34,000 in 2023 and wouldn't approach 2019 levels until 2025.

While Altice moves to turn around its broadband business, other cable operators are focusing on expanding the service into more rural areas.

Rural Opportunities

At Comcast, which has about 4 million mobile customers and nearly 32 million broadband subscribers, rural expansion is ongoing. During its fourth-quarter earnings call with analysts, Comcast Cable CEO Dave Watson said mobile and broadband growth go hand in hand.

"Our mobile is key for us, and in and of itself is a great growth opportunity, but it's also very important to broadband," Watson said. "We talked a lot about

LIVE WIRE(LESS)

Analysts are expecting cable operators to add about the same number of wireless subscribers over the next two years, while telcos could see sharp declines.

Postpaid Phone Net Additions (in thousands)

	2021	2022E	2023E
COMCAST	1,155	1,237	1,113
CHARTER	1,189	1,400	1,260
ALTICE USA	16	30	45
VERIZON	1,084	750	565
AT&T	3,196	2,100	900
T-MOBILE	2,917	2,750	2,850

SOURCE: Company reports; MoffettNathanson and Evercore ISI estimates

HIGH-SPEED HIATUS

After record broadband growth during the height of the pandemic, cable operators are expected to see slower broadband subscriber growth, while telco fiber growth should offset legacy DSL declines.

Broadband Subscribers (in thousands)

	2020	2021E	2022E	2023E	CAGR
CABLE	73,418	76,239	78,012	79,670	2.76%
TELCO-FIBER	14,149	17,039	18,819	21,468	15.23%
TELCO-LEGACY	18,600	15,583	13,190	11,176	-15.62%

CAGR: Compound Annual Growth Rate

SOURCE: Company reports; FactSet, SNL Kagan, Wells Fargo Securities estimates

broadband churn benefits. That continues, but we want to bring mobile value to every segment in every offer."

As Comcast builds out more homes to broadband, there are more opportunities to sell mobile service. "The way we look at it, every single broadband home is an opportunity," Watson said. "And every single broadband home should have at least a couple of lines."

Charter was one of the big winners in the federal Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auction, snagging about \$1.2 billion in funding to help bring broadband to underserved and unserved markets.

That funding will be part of the \$5 billion commitment the company has made to bring broadband service to more than 1 million customer locations in unserved areas of the country over the next five years. Charter has already earmarked some early markets for the expansion. In the past two months it has launched service to nearly 3,000 unserved homes and businesses in areas of rural Kentucky, South Carolina, Michigan, Missouri and Texas. And more are to come.

Broadband expansion can only help mobile growth as customers need high-speed data service to be mobile customers. At least for now, as the pandemic has caused more and more consumers to stay put and stick with existing providers, much of Charter's mobile growth is coming from existing broadband customers upgrading to mobile service and existing mobile customers adding lines.

Offloading Key to Growth

Charter chairman and CEO Tom Rutledge said the MSO is also making inroads at offloading mobile traffic from the MVNO to its own WiFi network, making the operation more cost-efficient. Charter also has a large block of CBRS spectrum which Rutledge said could be used to transfer as much as 30% of its mobile traffic.

"We also are already offloading enormous amounts of traffic on WiFi," Rutledge said. "And I think that we have the ability to take that up significantly, too."

That could be key. According to Moffett, the biggest goal for both Comcast and Charter in cable wireless is to offload as much traffic as they can onto their own networks to become both a mobile network operator (MNO) and an MVNO.

"A hybrid MNO/MVNO combines the best of all outcomes," Moffett wrote. "They will be facilities-based where the returns are high and an MVNO in the places where the returns on building would be low. Margins will likely grow over time, but the real appeal of the strategy isn't EBITDA margin but instead return on invested capital." ●

People

Notable executives on the move



A. SMITH & CO.

Eli Baldrige was promoted to senior VP of development at A. Smith & Co. Productions. He had been VP of development at the studio, responsible for such shows as *Welcome to Plathville* (TLC), *Pharrell Williams' Voices of Fire* (Netflix) and *Canine Intervention* (Netflix).



CABLE CENTER

The Cable Center in Denver has named **Diane Christman** as its president and CEO, succeeding the retiring Jana Henthorn. With the organization since 2006, Christman had been the center's senior VP, development, and chief program officer since 2019.



CBS NEWS

CBS News has named **Anthony Galloway** as senior VP of CBS News Streaming, overseeing day-to-day programming and production of the news division's streaming service. He was chief content officer, editorial video, audio and voice programming at *The Wall Street Journal*.



CHARTER

Charter Communications has elevated **Tony Guevara** to senior VP, sales call centers, adding oversight of inbound call centers for small and midsize business clients, digital sales and outbound telemarketing to his duties. He had been group VP, retention.



C2HR

The Content & Connectivity Human Resources (C2HR) association has promoted **Parthavi Das** to executive director, succeeding the retired Pamela Williams. Das had been senior director of the industry group representing HR professionals in technology, media and telecommunications.



CROWN MEDIA

Hallmark Channel parent Crown Media Family Networks has hired **Judi Lopez** as executive VP, distribution and content strategy. Lopez was head of content distribution, advocacy and government affairs and partnership marketing at Fuse Media.



FIRSTLIGHT MEDIA

Tina Tuli has joined Firstlight Media as VP, global marketing, tasked with evangelizing the company's cloud-native OTT video platforms. She most recently served as chief marketing officer at Samdesk and was VP, marketing strategy and operations at MagicLeap.



FOX NEWS

Fox News has named **Jessica Loker** VP of politics and senior executive producer of *Fox News Sunday*. Loker, who has been executive producer of *Fox News Sunday*, will now oversee all political news and logistics as well as manage the hour-long public affairs show.



GRAHAM MEDIA GROUP

Catherine Badalamente was named president and CEO of Graham Media Group, succeeding Emily Barr atop the station group when she retires later this year. Badalamente had been VP and chief innovation officer.



HEARST

Hearst Television has tapped **Shannon Coggins** as New York-based VP, programming, set to succeed retiring senior VP, programming Emerson Coleman this summer. She comes from NBCUniversal, where she was VP, syndication sales.

**INSP**

Indian Land, South Carolina-based INSP has advanced **Doug Butts** to executive VP of programming of the network. Formerly senior VP of programming, Butts joined the programmer in 1994 and has served as an editor, producer and director.

**SCRIPPS**

Scripps Networks has elevated **Cheryle Harrison** to head of Bounce, its African American-focused TV network. Formerly general manager, Harrison will be responsible for brand strategy, programming, marketing, social media, digital and community relations.

**TEGNA**

Tegna has named **Rebecca Cantu** as president and general manager of KIII Corpus Christi, Texas, an ABC affiliate, succeeding the retiring Bruce Cummings. She comes from KHOU Houston, where she was business development manager and community marketing specialist.

**TELEMUNDO**

Gabriela Tristán has joined Telemundo as senior VP, news, overseeing flagship newscast Noticias Telemundo and morning news show hoyDía. She had been VP and director of news production at Univision, where she served on the launch team for *Al Punto con Jorge Ramos*.

**TELEMUNDO**

Telemundo promoted **Gemma Garcia** to senior VP, digital news, responsible for leading and growing Noticias Telemundo's digital news initiatives. She had been executive producer of Noticias Telemundo and VP for network and digital news.

**TELEMUNDO**

Vanessa Pombo was upped to senior VP, business operations, news at Telemundo's news division. She had been the division's VP of production management and business operations, previously serving as senior director, production management at Telemundo Studios.

**TELSTRA**

Vish Vishwanathan has joined satellite services firm Telstra as VP of its wholesale group for the Americas. Previously leader of global IP network sales for NTT, he has also held senior sales and market development roles at CenturyLink, MCI and Motorola.

**UNIVISION**

Michael Schwimmer has joined Univision Communications as president, global platform strategy and revenue, leading global distribution for the combined Univision-Televisa libraries. He had been group president of Sling TV and executive VP of Dish Media.

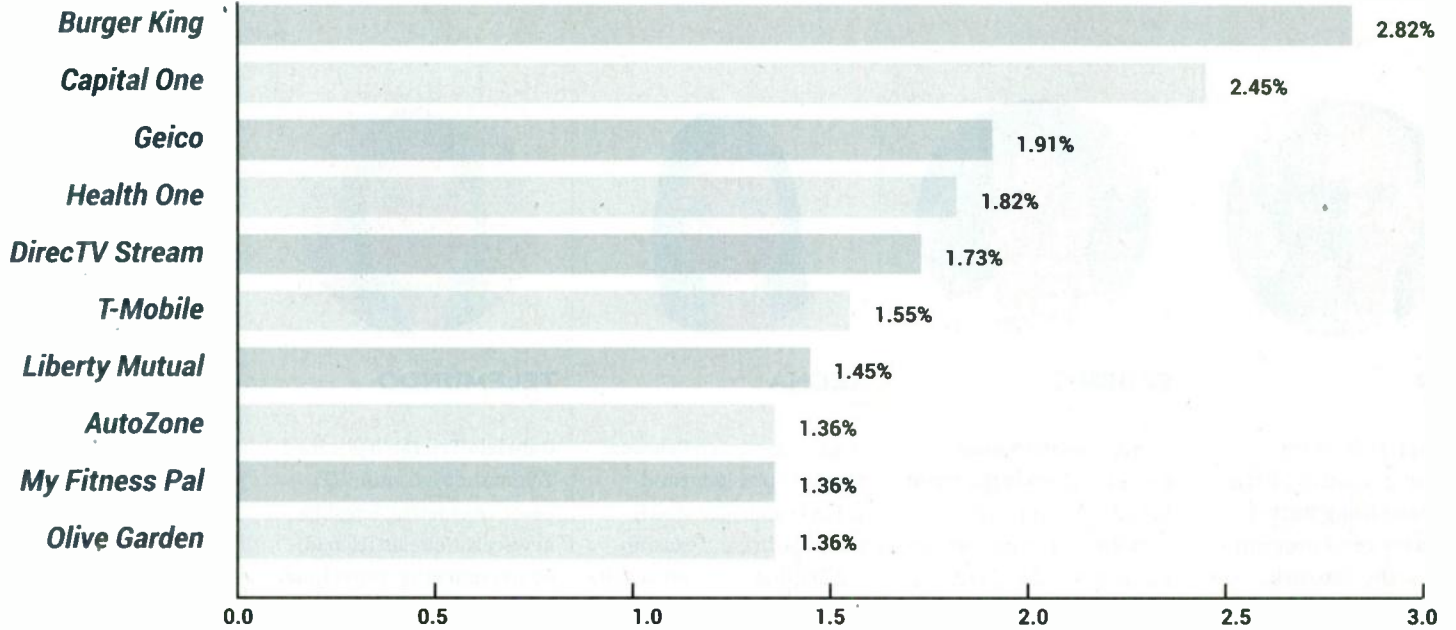
BRIEFLY NOTED

Other industry execs making moves

Beachfront Media has named **Katie Long** as head of demand and **Amit Nigam** as VP of product. Long had been senior director, platform sales at Yahoo and Nigam had been senior VP, product and partnerships at Eyeview. ... CBS News promoted **Kaci Sokoloff** to VP, bookings. She had been senior producer and head of the bookings department at *CBS Mornings*. Also at CBS News, **David Reiter** was named executive producer of special events. He had been ABC News executive producer of special events from 2017 to 2021. ... Crown Media Family networks also promoted three members of its distribution team: **Lisa Barroso** to senior VP, content distribution and strategy; **Holly Henderson** to senior VP, distribution; and **Raquel Williams** to VP, distribution. ... NewsNation has added two members to its news team: **Bartley Price** as New York-based senior field producer and **Robert Sherman** as Austin, Texas-based correspondent.

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SOURCE: One Touch Intelligence's ADTRAKER intelligence service

VIZIO Most-Watched Shows on TV in January



Of all the live, linear minutes of content watched on Vizio smart TVs in January, 9.33% of watch time was spent viewing NFL football.



Via Vizio's Inscape, the TV data company with insights from a panel of 19 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 in January, X% of the time was spent on show Y"



By Karen Babcock
@ComcastAdvertising

Pandemic-Professional-Parent Skills

A reflection on lessons learned from a mom in the media industry

In May of 2020, I had my second son in the throes of a global pandemic and my career in the fast-paced advertising industry. With it came joy and laughter, but it also brought stress and doubt.

Looking back, I realize I have learned many things that will help me succeed in my personal and professional lives. Managing a four-person household during a pandemic is oddly similar to leading a 120-person planning and monetization team at a Fortune 50 media company. I jokingly refer to these learnings as “pandemic-professional-parent skills,” which I’d like to share with you.

Set Realistic Expectations

Every day brings surprises, good and bad, and the pandemic seemed to bring more than usual. But if you expect perfection, that your 4-year-old will actually listen or your marketing campaign will go without a hitch, you’ll be disappointed.

Instead, set realistic expectations. Know that downs may happen. But so will ups. You may lose your star employee, or your baby may cry for what seems like forever, but if you are mentally prepared then these will be just bumps in the road.

So how do you do this? Find a way at the start of your day to center your mind. Whether it’s over coffee, while you are feeding your child or when you first sit

down, take a deep breath and determine what your mark is for a good day. It could be one of those days where your toddler was up at night and you have meetings all day, so your mark could be surviving until your head hits the pillow. Or maybe you just gained a new client and your house is finally in order, so your mark is checking off three-quarters of your to-do list.

Overall, be honest with yourself, because your expectations are not influenced by anyone but you. Perfection is fiction; don’t hold yourself (or others) to that bar.

It is amazing what we have lived through since the start of COVID-19. Pandemic life seems to keep on going, bringing new strains and worries. Plus, fragmentation of our marketplace has never been more prevalent.

Yet we are continuously evolving and learning, soaring and falling, and it’s important to acknowledge it all rather than shove it under the rug.

During quarantine, I felt guilty about how hard it was to have two kids at home while working at home. The daily feeling of “failure everywhere” was at an all-time high. I didn’t finish my strategic plan. We skipped baths. The presentation didn’t go as planned. I forgot about a deliverable. I didn’t spend enough time with my family.

But when you tell yourself your feelings are unwarranted it makes the fall worse. What we should take away is how to

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rebound. The fall doesn’t make you unworthy, unable; it makes you human. So, concentrate on how you recover. Allow yourself, as well as your family, colleagues and friends, the space for adjustment. Allow yourself, and them, to rebound. And then celebrate it—you picked yourself up. You rock.

Fill Up Your Cup

How many times have you heard “you can’t pour from an empty cup?” This feels impossible and even selfish. Many times this past year, I dug into my bone-dry cup and turned it into positive energy for an unhappy team member, a needy kid or a frustrated client.

Sometimes it feels like every single moment, someone, somewhere needs something from you. Feedback on a report. A snack. A response to an email. I think often of the analogy of a pot that’s boiling over. You can either take the pot off the burner or turn down the heat. A five-minute walk may cool things down, but they will get hot quickly when it goes back to the high heat.

Find sustainable ways to “turn down the heat.” I think many of us forgot who we were throughout this pandemic; I am just getting the glimmers back now. Laughing with my husband at the kids, chatting with a coworker about a new show, setting up dinner with my friends, signing up for a leadership course.

Whether it’s running, reading or just staring at the wall, we need time to fill up our cup. Make time for it. Block out even 10 minutes a day. Make it happen. You are your most important fan.

We Are Doing It

We should write “managed a global pandemic” on our résumés—and understand the hidden skills and tactics we employed so this wasn’t all for naught.

Everyone was hit hard by COVID-19. Hopefully these “pandemic-professional-parent skills” will help us, so we can grow, balance and appreciate our professional and personal lives that much more. Approach each day with room for reflection, empathy and time for ourselves. ●

Steve White

President, Special Counsel to the
CEO, Comcast Cable

Exec talks of 'creating a table of prosperity'
in new book on life, career

Steve White has had a storied career in the cable industry, including 11 years as president of Comcast's West Division, where he managed 30,000 employees and drove annual revenue past \$18 billion. But he cites helping his single mother clean hotel rooms as a young boy as the turning point in his life and business philosophy. White said his mom's fierce determination to provide for her family (he has three brothers) drove him to excel in a business career that has spanned three decades. Currently president, special counsel to Comcast Cable CEO Dave Watson, White has written a book about that philosophy — *Uncompromising* — that was released on February 22. He spoke recently with B+C Multichannel News senior content producer — finance Mike Farrell. An edited transcript follows.

Your book, *Uncompromising: How an Unwavering Commitment to Your Why Leads to an Impactful Life and a Lasting Legacy*, came out February 22. What made you decide to write it? I'm inspired by the quote often attributed to Mark Twain. 'The two most important days in your life are the day you're born, and the second is when you find out why.' Through hardship, I was able to answer the second question. My why is to create a table of prosperity for as many people as possible. Sharing my life's lessons — my successes and failures — is in service of my purpose.

You obviously had a great role model in your mother, but have there been other mentors that helped you realize your potential in other parts of your career? Certainly, my wife Barbita should be included. I have more mentors than most people, but my 'trick' is that most of these folks don't know that they're mentoring me. I identify leaders that I admire from afar and I study them. If I get an opportunity to meet them, I ask them all the questions time will allow. I believe you can learn from everyone, so don't limit yourself.

You also say that learning from mistakes is as important as learning from successes. What do you consider to be your biggest mistake and what did you learn from it? My biggest mistake was putting myself ahead of my team, and I was fired as a result early in my career. My why became clearer to me while I reflected on that life event. If I wanted to enjoy any level of success, I had to become a servant leader. When I'm faced with fear around a decision or direction, I always ask the question, 'If I knew I couldn't fail, what would I do?' The decision becomes very clear, and I go with it.

One of the things under your purview as president, special counsel to the CEO at Comcast Cable is diversity, equality and inclusion. What do you think the industry's top priorities should be on that front? We have a terrific team leading our efforts. From my perspective, the

BONUS FIVE

What's your all-time favorite TV show? *The Cosby Show*

What shows are you binge-watching? *Yellowstone*

Books on your nightstand? *The Bible*

Bucket-list travel destination? South of France

Memorable recent meal? What was it and where did you have it? Spago's Four Seasons in Maui. December 18, 2021. My son Stevie and I share the same birthday. My wife, Stevie, and I celebrated our birthday over Christmas vacation. My meal was a beautiful New York strip steak that I shared with my son who loves steak.

priorities around DE&I are as follows:

Engaged leadership: Commit to these initiatives from the highest levels of the organization.

Investment and empowerment: Provide a 'hand up' rather than a 'hand out.'

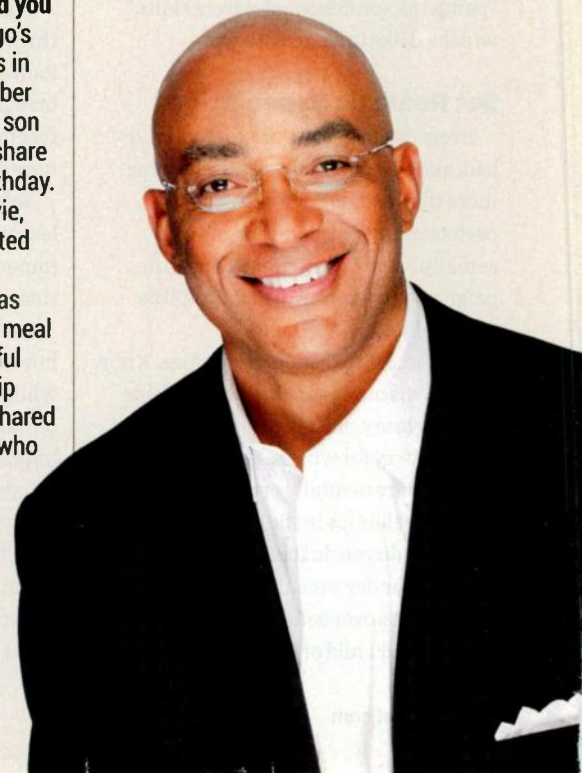
Accountability: There should be rewards and consequences for creating an inclusive culture with increased representation of people of color.

Impatience: As an example, this industry created broadband. When we commit, there is nothing that will stop us.

Vulnerability: Recognize and admit we can do better. Ask for help and start with your employees.

The pandemic has caused a lot of people, particularly younger people, to re-evaluate their career priorities. Is this good or bad? It is good. And one correction: it isn't just younger people.

All leaders are re-evaluating their career priorities. The winning companies will have a clear purpose for existing. I go back to the earlier quote: 'The two most important days in a company's life is the day it is born, and the second is when they know why.' If your company can answer that second question with clarity, then your chances of surviving for years to come increase dramatically. ●





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