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-John F. Kennedy

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COURT 

Top of the Week September 24, 2001



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Photo: Kim Kulish / Corbis Saba

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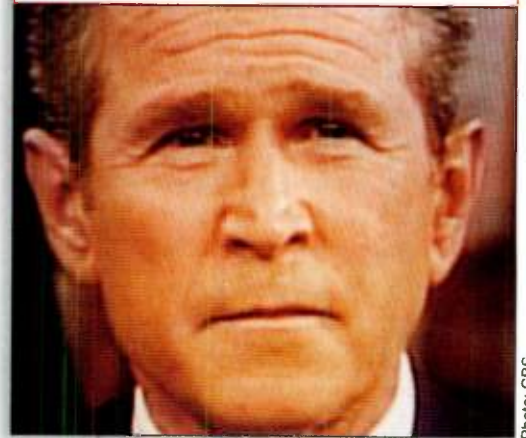


Photo: CBS

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The new economics of terror

Attacks on U.S., concerns about war push ad-market recovery further into the future

By John M. Higgins and Allison Romano

Three weeks ago, the big question in the TV and radio business was “When’s the recovery?” Now that station and network executives feel the shock waves the terrorist attacks delivered to advertisers, the new question is “Where’s the bottom?”

The attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon promises to rock the media business, crushing what was already a weak ad market. Executives and analysts last week went back to their existing gloomy models to see how much worse they could get. Investors didn’t wait and slammed most media companies’ shares.

There are three concerns. First, major broadcast and cable networks not only went several days without advertising but have unexpected costs of covering the attacks. A second, broader concern is the economic aftershocks created just by the single day of attacks.

The third, broadest concern—and unanswerable question—is what kind of war the United States might be headed for and what kind of long-term economic disruption it might create.

“It was bad before, and now the bottom has disappeared,” said Alan Frank, president of Post-Newsweek Stations.

“I think everybody is in a state of shock,” said Jeff Smulyan, chairman of Emmis Broadcasting. “Advertisers aren’t sure what they want to do. Nobody is.”



A sculpture near Wall Street tells the story.

AP Photo / Charles Dharapak

To put it another way: “What had stabilized in the advertising environment has been shattered,” said UBS Warburg media analyst Leland Westerfield. “We could see an unprecedented two-year downswell in advertising spending.” He and Sanford Bernstein analyst Tom Wolzien said that has never happened in the history of the television business.

The first-week losses are the easiest to take a stab at. Ad tracker Competitive Media Reports estimates that \$320 million in advertising sales disappeared during that period. Wolzien estimates that losses at each of the major broadcast networks totaled \$35 million to \$55 million, with the absence of revenue partly offset by savings from not airing prime time sitcoms and dramas, which can be aired later. CNN incurred \$24 million to \$36 million in loss-

es, partly because it remained free of advertising longer.

A major-market TV station would have lost \$2.5 million to \$3 million a day.

Before the terrorist attacks, analysts and ad-buying execs were predicting that the ad market might rebound as soon as first quarter 2002. Now ad-buying execs are looking further into next year for a recovery.

“We’re going to see conservative fiscal management taken to a higher power,” Marc Goldstein, president of media buying firm Mindshare, said Thursday at an industry luncheon in New York.

Top executives from MediaVest, Mindshare, Zenith Media and Magna Global said it’s going to take two or three weeks to assess any new economic damage.

“There’s no certainty what will transpire in the coming days or months,” said

MediaVest President Mel Berning.

The executives said clients intend to honor their upfront agreements, but, in the current market, they have leverage to pull their ads with little consequence.

Another unanswered question: Where will clients want to put their money? If the reality-TV trend fizzles, advertising dollars will race to follow the next trends. That's always true, of course, but how to read what a stunned and shell-shocked public wants? "The current environment will determine what we want to watch," said Zenith Media Executive Vice President Peggy Green. "Will it be sweet, non-confrontational movies? Dramas that make you think?"

Some companies had answers, and they weren't positive. Viacom had been projecting to finish 2001 with a double-digit percentage gain in cash flow, to around \$5.6 billion. President Mel Karmazin now says that cash flow will be only "slightly higher" than last year. That would be \$450 million to \$500 million less than projected.

"As a result of the attacks," he said, "we incurred a considerable increase in costs at CBS News, our local television-station news operations, especially in New York, and at our major-market all-news and talk radio stations." Karmazin also said in a statement that he expects "significant loss of revenue" from Viacom's cable networks and radio and TV stations.

Station group Hearst-Argyle said Friday that, because its stations went ad-free for four days, third-quarter results should be even worse than the 14% drop predicted two weeks ago. Now revenues should come in 18%-20% lower.

USA Network also forecast problems from a sour ad market and slower sales at its Home Shopping Network unit.

But many companies were holding back on detailed revisions. Expectations that AOL Time Warner and News Corp. would issue new forecasts didn't materialize. Disney sent out a bulletin headlined "Cast Member Commitment, Brand Value And Fundamental Business Strength Cornerstones Of The Walt Disney Company's Long-Term Outlook"(Disney refers to its

employees as cast members). Not surprisingly, the announcement was devoid of a single number that investors might find helpful in figuring out where the company was going.

Before the stock market reopened Monday, some politicians and talk-show hosts exhorted investors to show some financial patriotism—a sort of "terrorist-bet damned" act of defiance in which investors wouldn't sell and might even buy. By the closing bell, the market had suffered its largest point drop (though not percentage drop) ever. Some kind of patriotism: The worst media stock was one called USA—that is, USA Networks.

That set the tone for the week. The Walt Disney Co. was the weakest of the major media stocks, dropping 30%, in part because major shareholders, the Bass brothers, had to dump \$2 billion worth of shares into the market (they were worth \$4 billion in July). USA was down 22%, Viacom dropped 21%, Charter Communications fell 16%, AOL Time

Warner fell 13%. The Dow Industrial Average fell about 13%. Travel stocks dropped 25%-30% while defense and mining stocks rose 15%-20%.

The attacks have clearly spoiled the strategy of Viacom's Karmazin, media's top bull. Unhappy that CBS wasn't getting enough action in the upfront market, he withheld inventory from the market, betting that he could get better prices in the scatter market in the fall and winter.

"That blew up," said one media analyst. "He bet that he could outlast the advertisers."

A Viacom executive said that was unfair, because no one could

have predicted a terrorist attack that crippled the economy.

But the stock downdraft could suck some deals down. After diddling around on a deal to sell Hughes Electronics and its DirecTV division for 18 months, General Motors is now watching the DBS division get hammered, from \$20 a few weeks ago to \$12.50. That complicates plans to sell the unit to News Corp.'s SkyGlobal unit, because valuations have to be carefully

matched to keep the deal tax-free.

News Corp. said talks with Hughes are continuing.

The same goes for AT&T's efforts to find a buyer or partner, other than hostile bidder Comcast, for its AT&T Broadband unit.

The company's board was to meet Friday to ponder the sale, although analysts said they had difficulty believing that Cox Communications or Disney would make a multibillion-dollar acquisition—no, not now. ■

It was bad before, and now the bottom has disappeared.

—Alan Frank, Post-Newsweek Stations

Harder times		
Investors hammered media stocks out of fear that the terrorist attacks will exacerbate the downturn		
Company	Price*	Week's change
Disney	\$16.58	-30%
Univision	\$18.98	-27%
Fox	\$17.64	-24%
Hughes	\$12.50	-23%
USA Network	\$17.95	-22%
News Corp.	\$24.25	-21%
Viacom	\$30.00	-21%
EchoStar	\$20.63	-17%
Charter	\$16.57	-16%
Adelphia	\$27.03	-16%
AOL	\$30.04	-13%
Comcast	\$33.51	-3%
Cox Communications	\$38.50	-1%
AT&T	\$17.99	+2%

* As of close of day Sept. 20



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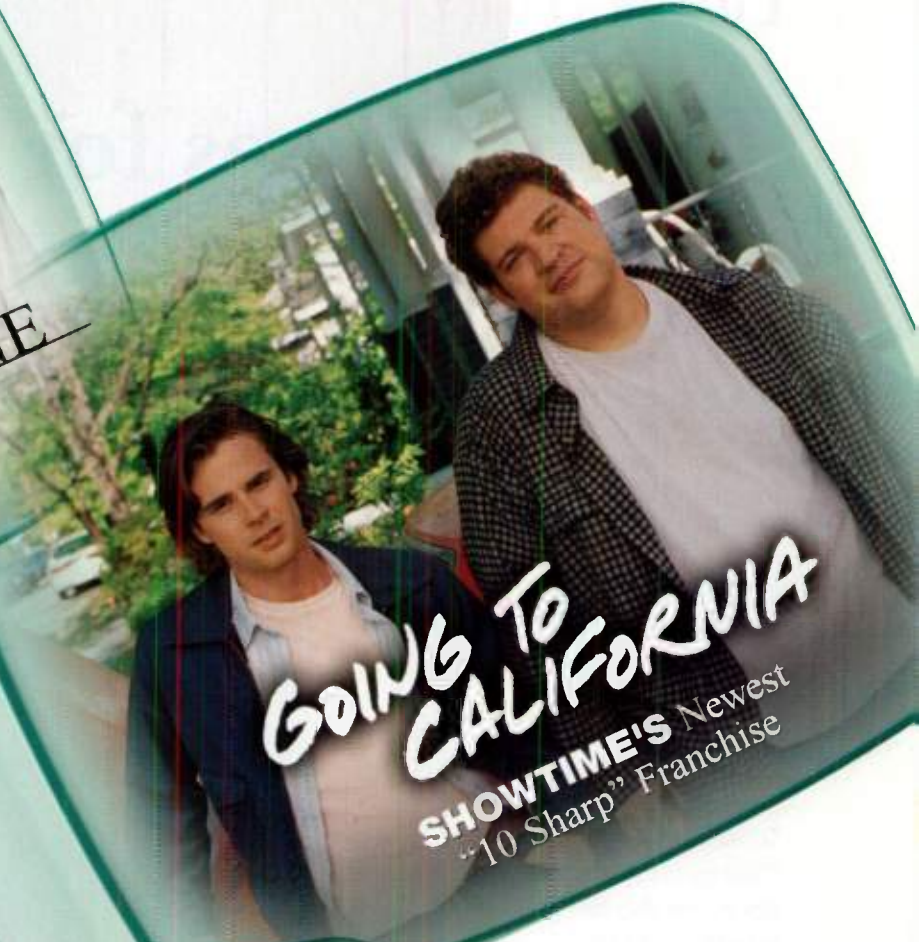
Weekly Comedy
coming 2002 to **FX**

Source: NHI Explorer, AA%
Strong Medicine-7/15/01-9/16/01, W18-34
Ripley's Believe It Or Not-1/10/01-9/16/01, A18-49



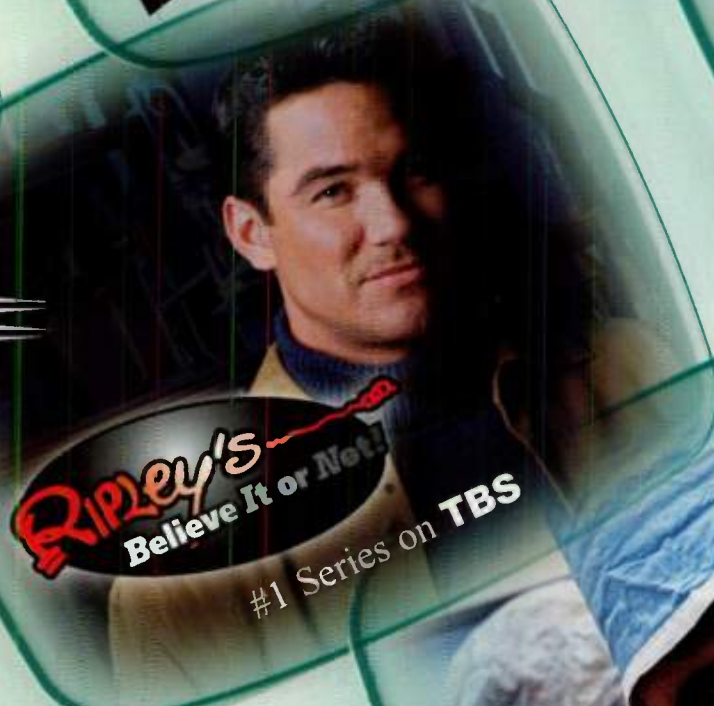
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TV mobilizes for 'global war'

Networks send reporters, crews to Central Asia, not sure they're in the right place

By Steve McClellan

Still struggling with the terrorist attacks and their aftermath in New York and Washington, TV news managers everywhere are now getting ready for what may be an even bigger challenge: what President Bush calls the "global war on terrorism."

The executives say it is tough to prepare for because they don't know where the flash points will be or what form America's military action will take.

"The planning never stops," says Paul Friedman, executive vice president of ABC News and executive producer of *ABC World News Tonight With Peter Jennings*. "You try to pre-position people in logical places, and they may or may not turn out to be the right calls."

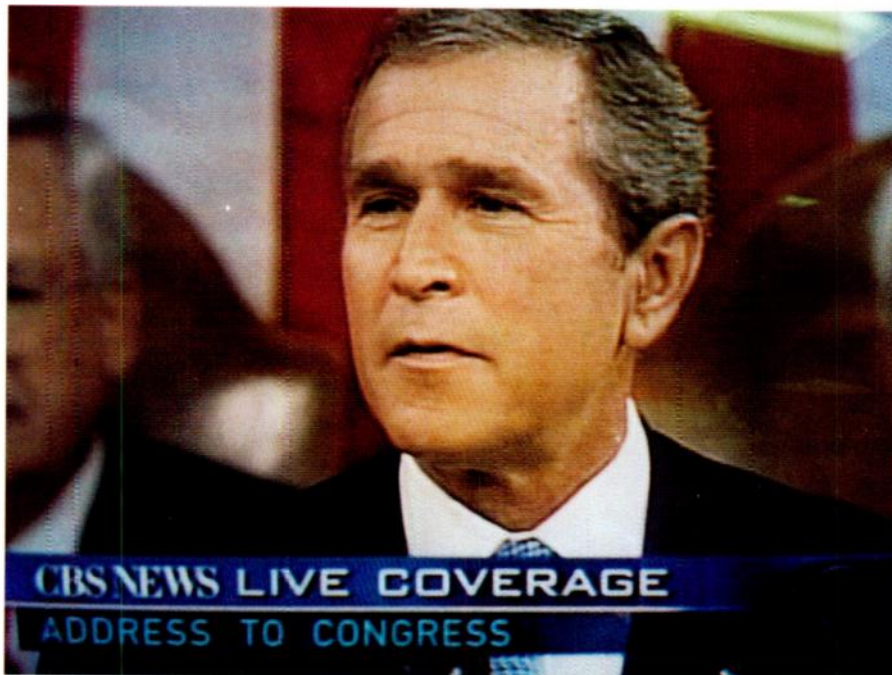
Indeed, it's not like journalists are invited to the war rooms at the Pentagon. "I think there is going to be a series of unforeseen events just like there were a series of unforeseen events on Sept. 11," says John Stack, vice president, news coverage, Fox News.

Says Bill Wheatley, senior vice president, NBC News: "It looks like this war ... is going to be fought on multiple fronts."

ABC and CBS say they're positioning dozens of reporters and crews in Central Asia, where a U.S. military strike is highly anticipated. NBC is deploying a hundred or more people to the region, but it services three networks, including MSNBC and CNBC. CNN has more than 60 people in the area, many of whom were there before the terrorist attack, says Eason Jordan, president of newsgathering for the network. Late last week, Fox News had two coverage teams in Pakistan and another on route.

All say they will add more people as conditions warrant.

As of last Thursday, the main "staging



'Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes visible on TV and covert operations, secret even in success.'

area" for TV news in the region was Islamabad, Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan on the south. U.S. officials say the Taliban-controlled government in Afghanistan is harboring Osama bin Laden, who is accused of masterminding the terrorist attack.

All the major news organizations were trying to get people across the Pakistan border into northern Afghanistan, where anti-Taliban forces have welcomed Western journalists.

CNN had been the only TV network to have a correspondent in Kabul, the Afghan capital. But the correspondent, Nic Robertson, was kicked out of the city last Thursday. Jordan says Robertson was told he would be "dismembered" if the Taliban

found him in the country after bombs started falling. "We obviously take such threats very seriously," says Jordan.

Other TV news organizations consider the capital and other parts of Taliban-controlled Afghanistan too dangerous to send in reporters.

But the Western media haven't been shut out entirely. "We're getting good coverage in Kabul," says Brad Kalbfeld, deputy director and managing editor of AP Broadcast.

Given the security issues, Kalbfeld was reluctant to detail just how or by whom AP was getting its video and commentary. "But we are very happy with the coverage we're getting out of there, in terms of words, pictures and video." The coverage has been

picked up by all the major network news outlets, he says.

News budgets, of course, pretty much got torn up after the terrorist attack. Although news executives have been paying strict attention to costs and the bottom line for years now, their corporate bosses aren't imposing spending limits on the story, they say.

"This is the biggest thing that's ever hit," says Marcy McGinnis, vice president, news coverage, CBS News. "There have been no discussions of money. There will never be enough money to cover something like this. ... You just do it, and nobody is going to tell you not to."

Tom Wolzien, media analyst at Sanford Bernstein, estimates that the Big Four news networks are spending between \$1 million and \$2 million more a day than usual to cover the story. Generally, he says, annual network news budgets are in the \$400 million to \$500 million range. Given the magnitude of the story, he believes the news departments may have to spend another 25% to 35% over the next several years. That, of course, would represent a reverse of the trend at the broadcast networks to trim costs, bureaus and news personnel over the past decade or so.

But some news executives don't believe they have to ramp up their costs to the degree that Wolzien suggests. ABC's Friedman is among them. The networks, he says, "have done a superb job of covering this story, so far, after going through a lot of budget cutbacks."

What the networks have done, and what they need to continue to do, Friedman says, is "bulk up on the story," by hiring additional free-lance crews and producers. "We're all spending a ton of money on the story, but it's not the kind of infrastructure that we used to maintain."

CNN's Jordan says that, while the story is "exceptionally challenging to cover," the network has all the resources it needs. Since the Gulf War, it has twice the number of people (now about 3,800) and twice as many bureaus outside the U.S. (30 staffed by about 300 journalists). "We're well-positioned." ■

Rules of engagement

Executives worry that Pentagon may place more restrictions on coverage, say they are aware of heavy responsibility

By Paige Albiniaik and Steve McClellan

Although it is too early to tell, news executives are concerned that the principles for war coverage agreed to by major news organizations and the Pentagon after the Gulf War will not apply in the coming war against terrorism. That could leave news organizations with stricter rules than ever before.

"I think there are going to be guidelines unfolding on this one that none of us have thought about yet," says John Stack, VP of news coverage for Fox News.

The 1991 war-coverage rules say "open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. operations." They discourage media pools, but recognize their occasional necessity. They also say military public-affairs officers "should act as liaisons but should not interfere with the reporting process." And journalists at the scene of battles are required to carry military credentials and heed a "clear set of military-security ground rules that protect U.S. forces and their operations."

Thus far, the principles still govern, Washington news executives say. But they could be modified. Marcy McGinnis, vice president of news coverage for CBS News, says Washington bureau chiefs are talking with White House officials and each other

about coverage guidelines. The Pentagon plans to meet with news organizations in Washington this week.

Barbara Cochran, president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association, plans to send a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld urging the military to "honor the nine principles."

"While we understand the need for national security," Cochran says, "the public has a right to as much information as possible."

So far, the Pentagon has set forth some informal guidelines.

"We're not going to talk about operational details or intelligence. We will acknowledge that a deployment has been given. We will not acknowledge where they are going or what they are doing," says the Defense Department's Torie Clarke.

Reporters may be able to go out with military operations, but it is unlikely they will be accompanying special forces.

The Pentagon will put limits on what can be aired live, Clarke notes.

While no one wants censorship, news organizations say they understand that there is a need to protect national security, particularly

in the first time since the War of 1812 that the U.S. mainland has been attacked.

"We don't want to be the one telling the enemy exactly what we're doing before we do it," McGinnis says.

'While we understand the need for national security, the public has a right to as much information as possible.'

—Barbara Cochran,
Radio-Television News Directors
Association



Christiane Amanpour and other CNN reporters are willing to abide by "reasonable" coverage rules, says CNN's Eason Jordan.

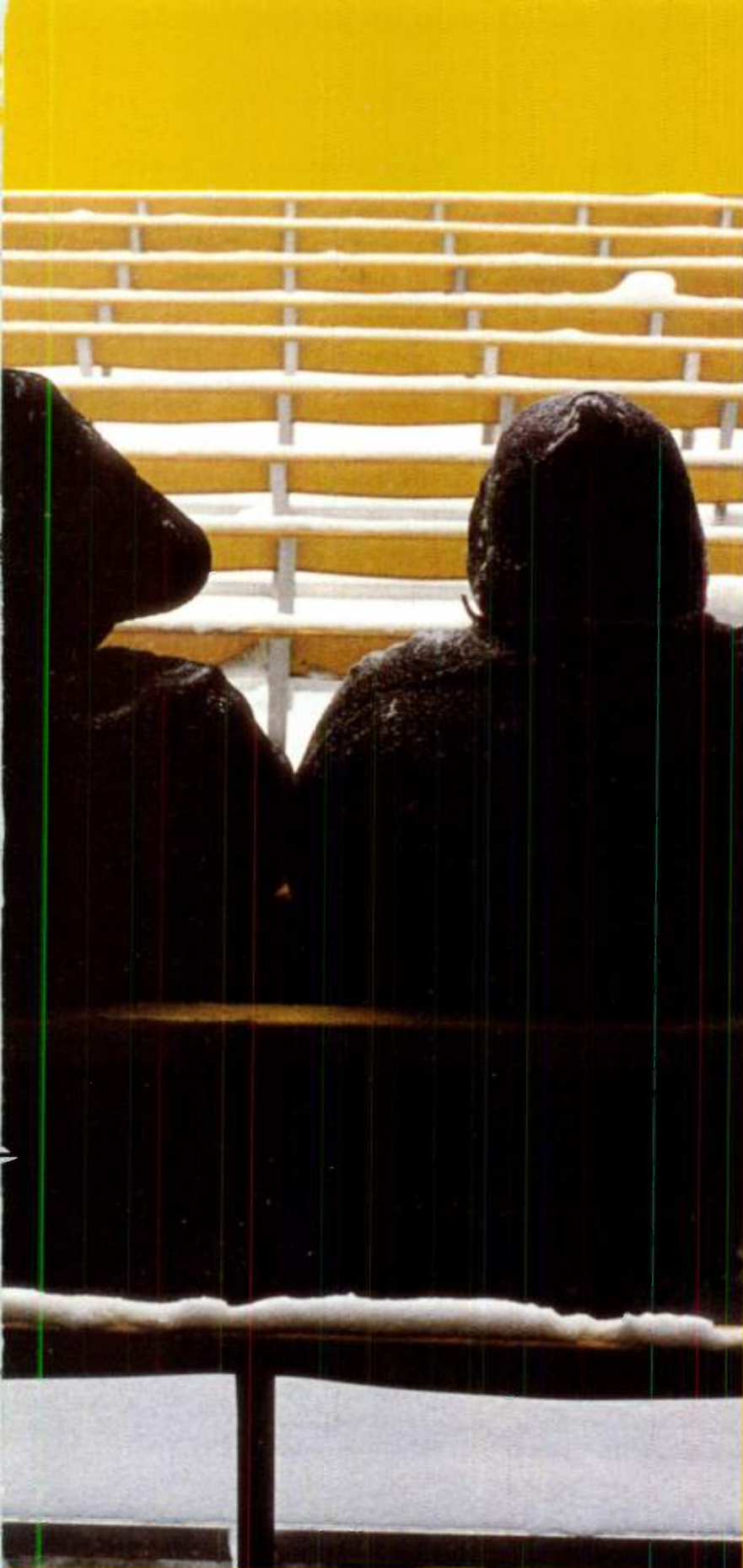
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ESPN Classic

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NFL Yearbooks

ESPN GamePlan

NFL Films Presents

ESPN Bowl Week

NFL 2Night

Heisman Award Presentation

ESPN Deportes

Rites of Autumn

NFL Match-Up

College Football Thursday

“By nature, journalists chafe at restriction, but we have to understand that the U.S. is in a war that is truly unprecedented,” says Eason Jordan, president of newsgathering for CNN’s newsgroups. “The fewer rules the better as far as we’re concerned. CNN wouldn’t say ‘that’s just

fine’ to every rule ... but we are understanding about reasonable rules of restriction.”

NBC News Vice President Bill Wheatley reminded staffers in a memo last week of the World War II saying “Loose lips sink ships.”

He urged news teams to take “great care to make sure that our broadcasts don’t inadvertently pass along information that could prove helpful to those who would do harm to our citizens, our officials and our military.” ■

—Additional reporting by Dan Trigoboff

CNN’s man at the Afghan front

Nic Robertson makes early mark with reports from Taliban-controlled portion of country

By John M. Higgins

Nic Robertson isn’t just shaping up to be CNN’s next Peter Arnett. He’s one reason Peter Arnett is Peter Arnett.

The conflict following terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon promises to push Robertson to the kind of prominence that Arnett found during the Gulf War. When the terrorists attacked, Robertson was the only Western journalist reporting from the southern portion of the country, the part controlled by the ruling Taliban force. The Taliban harbors U.S. officials’ prime suspect in the attacks, Osama bin Laden, and, hence, has made Afghanistan the prime target of American retaliation.

Before being expelled from the country last Wednesday, Robertson scored a major scoop by delivering, via videophone, the first feed out of Afghanistan on the day of the terrorist attack. He has been a steady presence on CNN.

Robertson said in an interview that, after 20 years of war in their country, the Afghans are well drilled when they think an attack is imminent. “Most of the men are still around, but the women and children are gone,” he said from Taliban stronghold Kandahar last week. “The government has prepared them for the possibility of war. Threats from the outside have a unifying effect.”

The heat of action is familiar territory for



Robertson was the only Westerner reporting from Taliban territory at the time of the terrorist attack in the U.S.

Robertson. In 1991, he was a CNN engineer, covering the early days of the Gulf War. He was sitting in a Baghdad hotel with Arnett and anchor Bernie Shaw on the first night of the United States’ attack on Iraq, the night that made Arnett famous.

“He was instrumental in getting our coverage going,” Arnett said, noting that among Robertson’s coups was smuggling a bulky satellite telephone into Iraq by breaking it into pieces, which he convinced Iraqi customs officers were less interesting video equipment.

Robertson graduated from technician to producer, tapped by CNN star Christiane Amanpour to work with her around the world, most notably covering the brutal conflict in Bosnia. For four years, Robertson’s job was on both sides of the camera—sometimes producer, sometimes reporter.

Based in London with his wife, fellow CNN correspondent Margaret Lowrie, he has covered the peace process in Northern Ireland, a coup in Pakistan, conflict in Kosovo and waves of events in Afghanistan.

When the Taliban expelled foreigners last Sunday, he continued reporting and struggled through the government bureaucracy, pushing to remain behind. He and CNN colleagues argued that the Taliban was better off allowing CNN to remain to communicate its messages to the rest of the world, particularly in the event of an American attack. “Otherwise, their side of the story won’t get out,” Robertson said.

But government officials finally sent Robertson and his crew out, contending that they couldn’t guarantee their safety either from a U.S. attack or from Afghan mobs that might come looking for even a British employee of a U.S. TV network. Robertson was reporting from the Pakistani border Thursday.

“It’s very disappointing for him,” said Lowrie of Robertson’s expulsion from Afghanistan. “On a personal note, my children and I thank God.”

But, after three years of frequent trips to cover Afghanistan—and the holder of an active visa into the country—Robertson thinks he could go back in. With the Taliban is searching for a diplomatic solution, it would be to their benefit to have CNN around, he said. “I’m still hopeful.” ■

Prime time intros: Who cares?

Delayed debuts have ad executives struggling to call attention to their fall lineups

By Joe Schlosser and Susanne Ault

Faced with wall-to-wall news coverage, a delayed start to the season and little or no advertising to hype it, television marketing and promotions executives have reason to worry about premiere week, which starts tonight at the major networks.

There are 25 new shows, but most viewers probably can't name more than a handful. Normally, in the week before the new season, the networks are wall-to-wall promos. For the week of the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, though, Nielsen didn't even issue a ratings report.

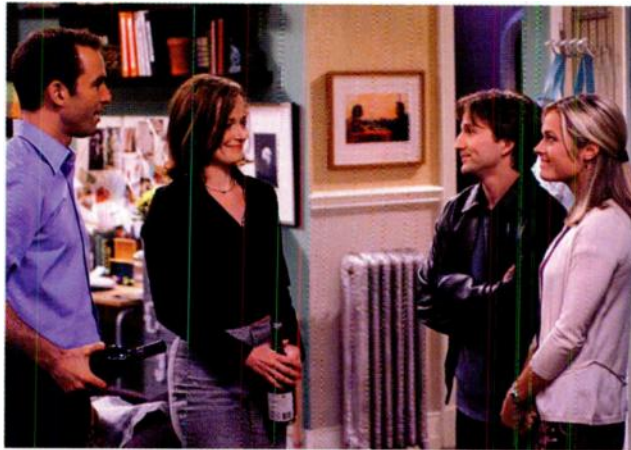
In many cases, \$20 million advertising campaigns at broadcast networks have been severely diluted. Syndicated shows with rollout budgets in the \$5 million to \$10 million range have suffered as well. King World is extending its advertising campaign for the syndicated *Ananda Lewis Show* through the end of September, hoping that, by October, viewers will finally get a chance to find it. (The show aired once before the attack.)

Most syndicated shows aren't so lucky.

Cable networks like FX, which is launching an entirely new prime time lineup this week, are keeping their fingers crossed, hoping not to get lost in the clutter or forgotten among the news bulletins.

"First of all, the tragic events supersede anything that we do here, but a lot of promotional things have just gone wrong in light of what has happened in New York and Washington," says Vince Manze, co-president of the NBC Agency, the network's in-house advertising/promotion division. "Money has been wasted, and people have been scrambling at all of the networks. We had all aimed at this one date and suddenly that date was no longer valid."

Print and outdoor campaigns, which require long lead-times, have been the areas hardest hit. Multiple-page ads in *People* magazine, *Entertainment Weekly*, and TV



NBC promoted debuting *Inside Schwartz* (above) and *Crossing Jordan* in a summer campaign.



Guide and billboards and other outdoor efforts, were in motion well before the attacks. Most radio and on-air promotion has just been rescheduled.

Networks that are part of larger media entities, such as ABC and CBS, are taking advantage of synergies in rescheduling.

"The good news for us, at least at CBS, is that we have a lot of flexibility because of radio and cable, which is part of the Viacom family," says George Schweitzer, CBS executive vice president of marketing. "We were able to call upon our cable and radio cousins, and they were very accommodating and flexible. The real matter was just communicating what the changes would be."

At NBC, which has six new shows—*Crossing Jordan*, *Emeril*, *Scrubs*, *Inside Schwartz*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* and *UC: Undercover*—Manze says the network was able to achieve strong awareness for its fall programs during summer reality series like *Fear Factor*. He also points out that

NBC was the first network to delay its season start. That gave marketing executives enough lead-time to change most radio and on-air campaigns.

UPN is offering a contest to coax affiliates to boost awareness of its fall launch. Affiliate general managers and promotion managers whose stations post the strongest premiere ratings win their choice of prizes, including Caribbean and European vacations.

But, with money already tight, most network and studio executives say they don't have the funds for new campaigns.

"You've just got to stay the course and be smart about what you message is, and, hopefully, you'll get a little lucky," says FX President Peter Liguori. "We are a cable network with limited marketing funds, and any idea of trying to shout louder, in what has now become a more crowded environment, means we are going to shout louder through higher levels of creativity, not higher levels of spending. We just can't afford it."

Neither can syndicators or stations. "There's just not enough money right now," says one top-station-group executive. "Stations are going to be forced to carry new shows longer than they may want to in an effort to get any kind of real feedback on them. They're going to have to invest in what they've chosen this season and take their chances with them." ■

THE WEEK THAT WAS

L.A. BOMB THREATS

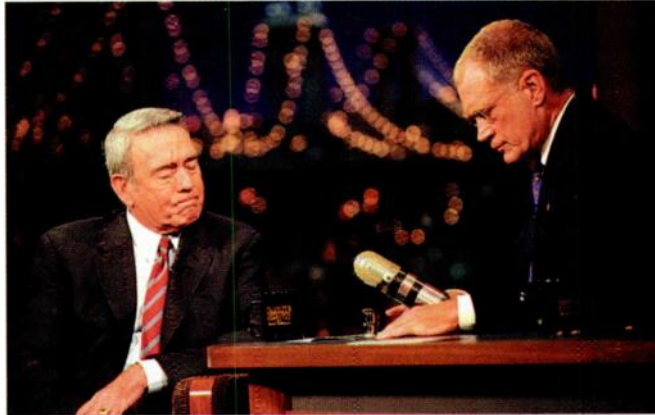
As film and TV stars prepared for a telethon last Friday to raise funds for victims of the terrorist attacks, Hollywood studios and networks took extra security measures to guard against any violence there. An NBC memo said the company "learned the FBI notified specific film studios ... of potential bomb threats." Motion Picture Association of America President Jack Valenti was briefed by Attorney General John Ashcroft's office last Thursday; Valenti then briefed studio heads on the potential terrorist activity.

The upcoming *53rd Annual Primetime Emmy Awards*, originally scheduled to take place Sept. 16, have been rescheduled for Oct. 7, and that date still holds.

HARD TO LAUGH

David Letterman, Jay Leno, Conan O'Brien, Bill Maher and Jon Stewart all resumed their late-night talk and comedy shows last week, but there wasn't much funny about them. Comments by Maher and a guest on his *Politically Incorrect* show on ABC actually prompted one station chain to cancel and two advertisers to pull spots.

On *Late Night With David Letterman* on CBS last Monday, anchorman and guest Dan Rather began crying when describing his feelings about the attacks. On *The*



A distraught Dan Rather (l) sobbed discussing the World Trade Center tragedy on David Letterman's first *Late Night* telecast since the attack.

Tonight Show With Jay Leno, the comedian said Americans had been "sucker-punched" by the terrorists. O'Brien said resuming his show was "the hardest thing I've ever done."

On Comedy Central's *Daily Show*, which resumed last Thursday, host Jon Stewart quipped, "Subliminal' is not a punch line anymore," referring to the oft-repeated jab at President Bush's pronunciation. "One day, it will become that again, Lord willing, because it will mean we've ridden out the storm."

Immediately after the attacks, Comedy Central execs met to decide whether the channel should switch to alternative programming, but Executive Vice President of Programming Bill Hilary voted to stick with the schedule. "You need some refuge," he said.

However, *Daily Show* and *Saturday Night Live* reruns poking fun at Bush have been shelved.

During *Politically Incorrect* last Monday, panelist Dinesh D'Souza disagreed with President Bush's reference to the suicide bombers as "cowards," arguing that the terrorists gave their lives for a cause.

Maher responded, "We have been the cowards, lobbying cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away. That's cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building, say what you want about it, it's not cowardly." Sears and FedEx lifted ads the next day, and, later, Citadel Communications, which runs ABC affiliates in Des Moines and Sioux City, Iowa, and Lincoln, Neb. pulled Maher's show until further notice. Maher, in public statements, conceded he'd been insensitive.

MORE FALLOUT

Canceling the Radio-Television News Directors Association convention the week of the terrorist attacks cost RTNDA \$2 million, or half its annual revenue, and a

shortfall of \$400,000 to \$800,000, but the organization hopes to avoid layoffs. There's a movement to have would-be attendees forfeit their refunds to cushion the blow to the organization. ...

ABC News decided last Monday to no longer air the video of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Saying that gratuitous use of the footage is inappropriate, ABC News management said that still pictures should be used unless the video is "critical" to the piece. ...

Not surprisingly, Dick Wolf and NBC have opted to pull the plug on their planned *Law & Order* miniseries titled *Terror*, which features a phony biological terrorist attack in New York City. ...

WSJV(TV) Elkhart, Ind., last week apologized for airing the 1986 film *Delta Force*, a film about a plane hijacking and Middle East terrorism, five days after the attacks on New York and Washington. The station called it a "terrible mistake."

HOLLYWOOD EXITS

Citing the need to cut costs, Universal on Friday became the fifth syndicator to announce it is leaving the NATPE floor in Las Vegas this January. It will take a suite in the Venetian Hotel. ...

After less than a year on the job, Brian Mulligan resigned as chairman of Fox Television, citing personal reasons.

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World Radio History

It's not just for broadcast any more

SYNDICATORS TURN TO CABLE AS THEY LOOK TO DIVERSIFY OUTLETS

BY SUSANNE AUIT

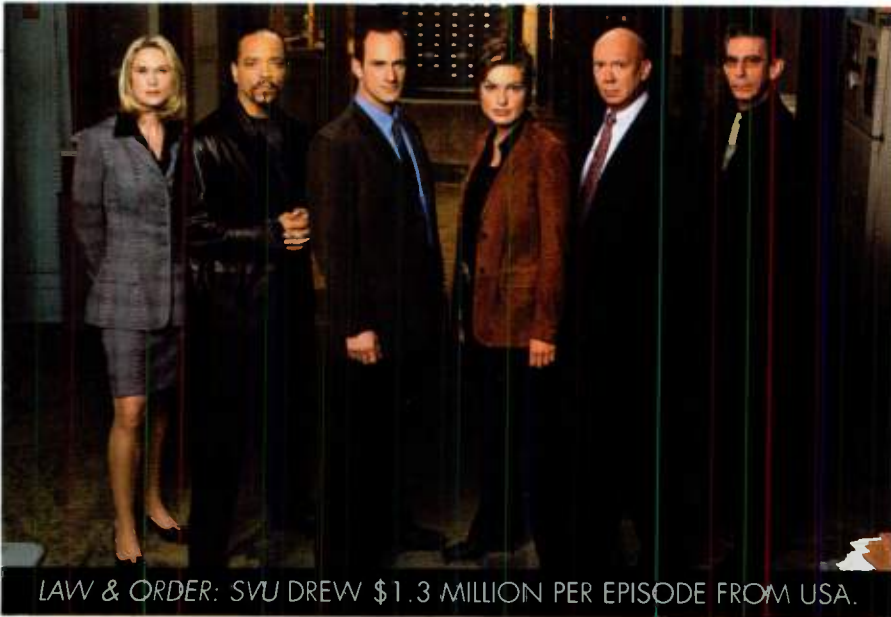
King World, the studio that is home to *Jeopardy* and *Wheel of Fortune*, is preparing a new game show for next year. But don't yawn, this isn't business as usual for the syndicator. *On the Cover*, on which players answer questions based on magazine and CD covers, is earmarked for TNN, not broadcast stations.

And it's not just King World that's starting to sidestep its bread-and-butter broadcast business for other programming outlets. Paramount Domestic Television, Twentieth Television, Fremantle Media (formerly Pearson Television) and Tribune Entertainment are just some of the studios that have deals in the works with cable networks for next year.

Paramount, for example, is looking for a cable network to launch reality show *The Bar*, where people try to manage a *Cheers*-like restaurant. MTV, sources say, has optioned Fremantle's *Looks Are Everything*. And Tribune's *MechWarriors*, based on Microsoft computer game *Battletech*, could land on cable as easily as on broadcast.

When added to the few distributors that are already active in cable, like Columbia TriStar Television Distribution with Lifetime's





Strong Medicine, it appears that every studio is looking to cable. And for good reason.

Nielsen Media Research reports that cable audiences have doubled during the past 10 years. And Lifetime is believed to be shelling out about \$900,000 in per-episode license fees for *Strong Medicine*. In contrast, broadcast viewership has fallen about 30% over that same period, depressing syndication license fees so much that stations often don't want to pay anything for a show's first couple years.

Bob Cook, president of Twentieth, puts it this way: "When the market gets tough, that's when the mother of invention steps in. This is when you come up with a new mousetrap." Cook notes that, in bringing a few pilots to cable networks this year, Twentieth, now best-known for such court strips as *Divorce Court*, has spread its wings into original cable production.

The motivating factor for all the syndicators is diversification. Several years ago, you could really make money solely in straight first-run syndication. *Judge Judy*, it has been said, at least broke even in its first couple years, keeping production costs between \$200,000 to \$250,000 for one week's worth of shows. But, in 1999, when *Judge Judy* had skyrocketed in the ratings, New York's

WNBC(TV) alone, agreed to pay \$200,000 in per-week license fees. *Judge Judy's* per-week fees now total \$1 million, sources say.

Fremantle Entertainment President David Lyle says, "It's like if you had all of your investments in blue-chip industrials. That wouldn't be as good as if you had spread your investments across a whole range of markets."

As distributors continue to make shows for little money, weaker daytime ratings are killing a lot of shows' chances to become the type of hit necessary to rake in *Judge Judy*-type profits. Given upfront promotional dollars, plus low fees and slim ratings, which hurt barter advertising dollars, it's not unusual now for a

first-run strip to lose \$10 million to \$12 million in its first year, insiders say.

In comparison, things are a lot merrier over at the cable networks. There's an exploding cable landscape, with channels like FX, TNN, USA, TBS and TNT racing to distinguish themselves with original programming. That competition is boosting prices higher and higher. TBS apparently pays well north of \$500,000 per episode for Columbia TriStar's *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. And, believe it or not, sources say *Ripley* was making the studio money right off the bat.

"Remember in the old days, when we

'There's going to be more need for [shows] and fewer in the pipeline.'

—Bob Cesa, Twentieth Television

LEADER OF THE PACK

Columbia TriStar Television Distribution seems to be producing everything but the kitchen sink these days. It has six cable and six syndicated series in production, which includes such distinct programming as the sitcom *Bad News*, *Mr. Swanson* for FX, reality show *Ripley's Believe It or Not* on TBS, and court effort *Judge Hatchett* for syndication.

As for "how and why" the studio has been able to offer such diversity, "I don't want to give away all of our trade secrets," says Steve Mosko, the distributor's president.

However, he credits Russ Krasnoff, president of the studio's programming division, with leading Columbia TriStar to do a little of this and a little of that.

A varied content strategy is different from what a lot of the other distributors are doing. But having produced such non-syndication-type shows as *Mad About You* and *The Nanny* while previously stationed at Columbia TriStar's network division, Krasnoff couldn't picture himself not branching out.

"This gives you the opportunity where, if something doesn't work [in syndication], you're covered," he explains. "But also, candidly, this makes it fun."

To split up projects between cable and broadcast, Krasnoff often determines whether a project would make a successful strip, steering it toward stations. For example, the studio's 2002 plan to turn the online auction site eBay into a TV show is likely to include delivering the show the day it's taped, à la *Entertainment Tonight's* first-run model.

But if a show would make a better weekly effort, which often means that it fits a scripted comedy or drama format, that one will be directed toward a cable network. Doing a relatively more expensive weekly for a station is "a tougher market," with increased network programming eating into stations' ratings-attractive, prime time slots, Krasnoff explains. At the same time, however, 12 cable networks, almost twice the number of just two years ago, are hungry for original programming in prime time.

These first-run series often become the centerpiece of a cable channel's programming. Krasnoff loves how TBS has branded itself with *Ripley's*: "You can't turn on a Braves baseball game without seeing a sign for it behind home plate."—S.A.

PRIME TIME HITS...

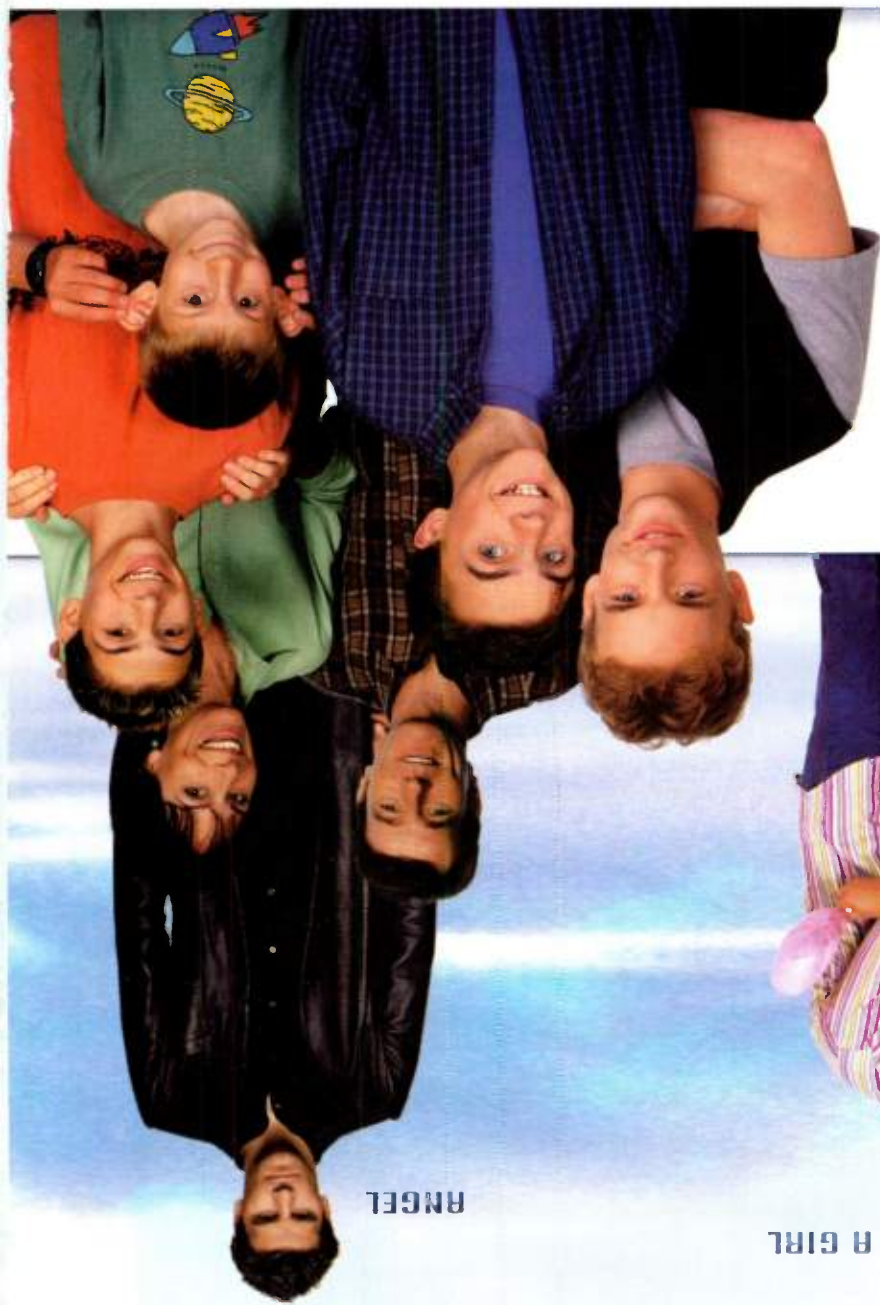
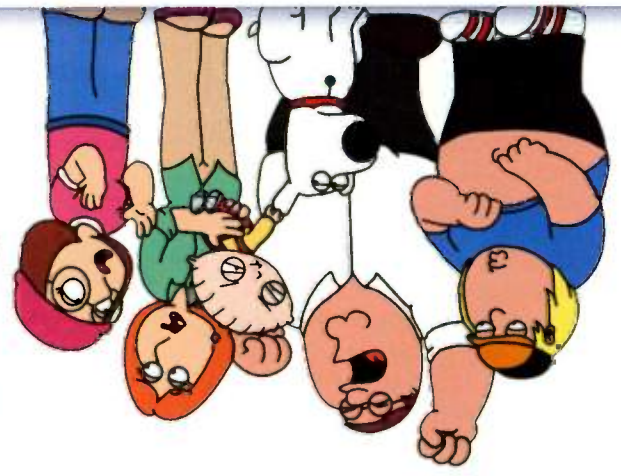
BOSTON
PUBLIC

TWO GUYS AND A GIRL

ANGEL

FAMILY GUY

MALCOLM IN THE MIDDLE



NOW, CABLE READY



DARK ANGEL



THE HUGHLEYS



ROSWELL



JUDGING AMY



TITUS



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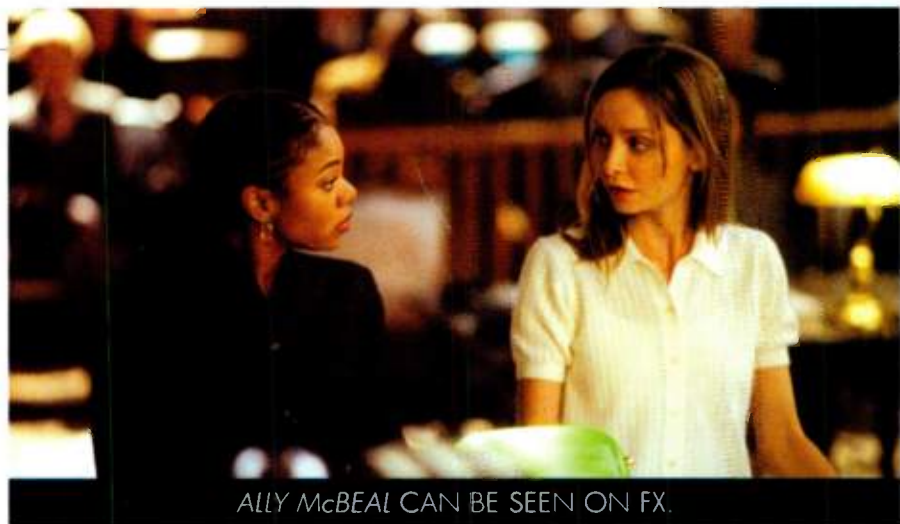
called all of this ancillary activities?" asks Warner Bros. cable distribution head Eric Frankel. "The reality is everything is part of the puzzle. We need cable."

King World studio head Roger King got such a taste for cable after selling the off-net episodes of *CSI* for a record-breaking \$1.6 million per episode that, when programming chief Nalevansky joined the company several months ago, King told him, "You want to do a show in cable? Then go do it." That led Nalevansky "to get his feet wet" with TNN with *On the Cover*. "That's the mandate that we've got from Roger. In many ways, it's a new King World."

It's true that off-net broadcast syndication dollars, on the other hand, aren't slipping away. Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution is expected to bag \$100 million (license fees plus barter) over the course of *Will & Grace's* syndication run, which starts next year.

But, with network reality shows supplanting future scripted offerings and the cable-channel universe expanding at the same time, cable networks will be in the hunt for programming. "There's going to be more of a need for [shows] and fewer and fewer in the pipeline," says Bob Cesa, executive vice president, advertiser and cable sales, at Twentieth.

Cable license fees will likely continue to climb, whereas consolidation of the broadcast-station industry (for example, the recent



ALLY McBEAL CAN BE SEEN ON FX.

Fox/Chris-Craft merger) might ultimately hurt price tags in off-net broadcast syndication with fewer people angling for the shows.

It seems like cable networks are starting to glom onto the syndicators as well. With shows such as *Entertainment Tonight*, *Oprah* and *Judge Judy* under their belts, syndicators are considered the early leaders in cheap-but-quality reality content.

"Yeah, talk shows are reality programming," agrees Bill Cox, TBS senior vice president of programming, suggesting that it wasn't a stretch to hook up with Columbia TriStar of *Ricki Lake* fame on *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. "They've done that so effectively, we had confidence in them."

But being courted by cable outlets has not stopped some from staying fiercely loyal to the broadcast syndication model for off-net and first-run properties. It is the case that, so far, no one has been able to

persuade the cable networks to give up a significant amount of ad inventory in deals, which is why "you can still make more money in syndication," observes Joel Berman, Paramount's studio chief.

However, Berman is hoping to distribute a show both on cable and in syndication, figuring he can get the best of both worlds. Paramount hopes to strip *The Bar* on cable, plugging in a weekend run in syndication. That way, ratings can be cumed, leading to better revenues from the syndication side's barter component. And, using this logic, most cable off-net deals now include a secondary, weekend broadcast window in syndication.

Studios USA Domestic Television is eyeing *Crossing Over With John Edward*, concurrently aired this season on Sci Fi and in syndication, as a popular, ongoing model. This is how the syndicator plans to navigate "the sea of 2-rated products in syndication," says President Steve Rosenberg. "This can be another revenue source."

Another benefit: Syndicators can expect to save promotional costs by placing their shows on cable networks. The cable nets will do the syndicators' marketing work, shaving millions off studios' overall production costs.

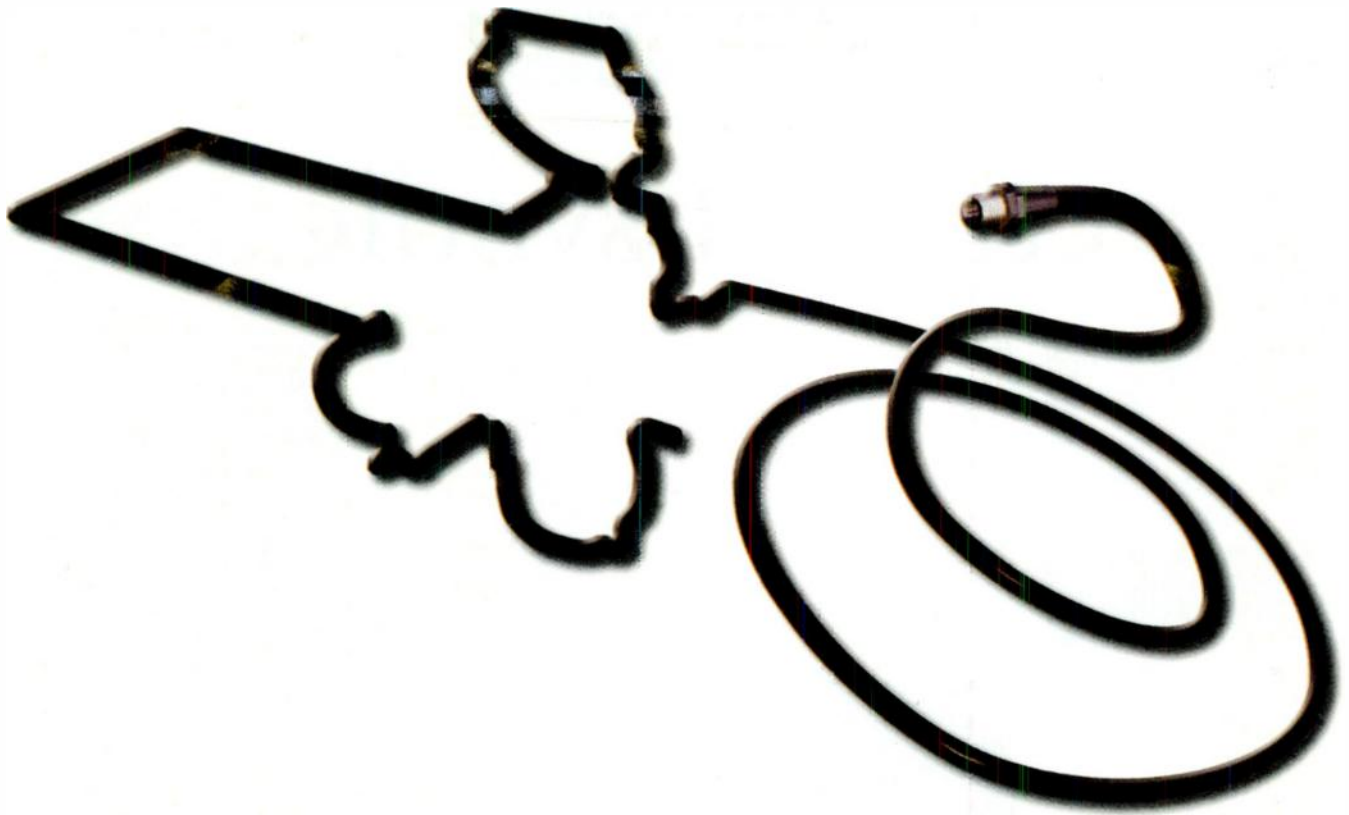
FX programming head Chuck Saftler says that, with FX plastering cities last month with billboards shouting, "Ally McBeal: five nights a week at 9 p.m.!", there's a very consistent message.

Clearly, with syndicators turning increasingly to cable, the term *syndication* is taking on a whole new meaning. ■

The top deals in off-net

Show	Studio	Network	License Fee	Year
CSI	King World	TNN	\$1.6 million	2001
L&O: Special Victims Unit	Studios USA	USA	\$1.3 million	2001
The West Wing	Warner Bros.	Bravo	\$1.2 million	2001
Seinfeld	Columbia TriStar	TBS	\$1 million	1998
Star Trek: Next Generation	Paramount	TNN	\$1 million	2000
The Practice	Twentieth	FX	\$825,000	1999
NYPD Blue	Twentieth	TNT/Court TV	\$825,000	2001
ER	Warner Bros.	TNT	\$800,000	1996
JAG	Paramount	USA	\$750,000	1998
Walker, Texas Ranger	Columbia TriStar	USA	\$725,000	1996

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Directory of syndicators



Win Ben Stein's Money

BUENA VISTA TELEVISION

500 S. Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91521
818-560-1000

Head of Studio: Janice Marinelli, president
Head of Cable Sales: Tom Cerio, executive VP, sales
First-run: *Win Ben Stein's Money* (Comedy Central)
Pilots/Development: N/A
Off-net Properties: *Home Improvement*, *Ellen*, *Boy Meets World*
Evergreen: *Golden Girls* (LIFE), *Blossom*, *Empty Nest*



CARSEY-WERNER DOMESTIC TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION

4024 Radford Ave.
Studio City, CA 91604
818-655-5598

Head of Studio: Bob Raleigh, president
Head of Cable Sales: Jim Kraus, executive VP, general sales manager

N/A=None available

First-run: N/A
Pilots/Development: *Grounded for Life*, *Grace Under Fire*
Off-net properties: *Cosby* (TBS), *Roseanne* (TBS, Nick/Oxygen in 2003), *That '70s Show* (FX, 2005), *3rd Rock From the Sun* (Fox Family, 2004)
Evergreen: *The Cosby Show* (TBS, Nick in 2002)



Strong Medicine

COLUMBIA TRISTAR TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION

Sony Pictures Plaza
10202 W. Washington Blvd.
Culver City, CA 9023
310-244-4000

Head of Studio: Steve Mosko, president
Head of Cable Sales: John Rohrs, executive VP
First-run: *Strong Medicine* (Lifetime), *Ripley's Believe It or Not* (TBS), *Bad News*, *Mr. Swanson* (FX), *Going to California* (Showtime)
Pilots/Development: *Odyssey V* (Showtime), *Street Time* (Showtime), *Dope* (FX), *Dawson's Creek*
Off-net Properties: *Seinfeld* (TBS), *Married With Children* (FX), *V.I.P.* (TNN), *Larry Sanders Show* (Bravo)
Evergreen: *The Jeffersons* (NICK), *Sanford & Son*



Baywatch

FREMANTLE MEDIA

(Formerly Pearson TV)
1330 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
212-541-2800

Head of Studio: Catherine Mackay, Deputy CEO North America
Head of Cable Sales: Jane Rimer, senior VP sales and programming
First-run: N/A
Pilots/Development: *Body of Evidence* (working title with Court TV)
Off-net Properties: *Baywatch*
Evergreen: *Baywatch* (USA), *Family Feud*, *Beat the Clock*



Everybody Loves Raymond

KING WORLD

10877 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-446-6000

Head of Studio: Roger King, chairman & CEO, CBS Enterprises and King World Productions
Head of Cable Sales: J. Stuart

Stringfellow, president, Domestic Television Sales

First-run: N/A
Pilots/Development: *On the Cover* (TNN)
Off-net Properties: *CSI* (TNN), *Early Edition* (Fox Family), *Everybody Loves Raymond* (TBS, 2002), *Caroline in the City* (Lifetime, 2002)
Evergreen: N/A

LITTON INC.

2213 Middle St., 2nd Floor
Sullivan's Island, SC 29482
843-883-5060

Head of Studio/Cable Sales: Dave Morgan, president/CEO
First-run: *Toughman* (FX), *P. Allen Smith* (The Weather Channel)
Pilots/Development: *Thunderbox* (BET)
Off-net Properties: N/A
Evergreen: N/A

MGM WORLDWIDE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

200 Broadway St.
Santa Monica, CA 90404
310-499-3000

Head of Studio: Jim Griffiths and Hank Cohen, co-presidents
Head of Cable Sales: Bruce Tuchman, executive VP, MGM Networks
First-run: *The Outer Limits* (Sci Fi), *Stargate SG-1* (Showtime), *Leap Years*, *Jeremiah* (Showtime)
Pilots/Development: *Twisted Justice*, *Spartacus*
Off-net Properties: N/A
Evergreen: *In the Heat of the Night*, *The Magnificent Seven* (TBS), various movie packages

NBC ENTERPRISES

3500 West Olive Ave., 15th Floor
Burbank, CA 91505
818-526-6900

Head of Studio: Ed Wilson, president
Head of Cable Sales: Frances



Profiler

Manfredi, VP, cable sales
First-run: N/A
Pilots/Development: N/A
Off-net Properties: *Profiler* (Court TV), *Providence* (Fox Fam), *Homicide* (CourtTV), *SNL*
Evergreen: *Saved by the Bell*, *SNL*



Star Trek: Voyager

PARAMOUNT DOMESTIC TELEVISION
 5555 Melrose Ave.
 Los Angeles, CA 90038
 323-956-5000
Head of Studio: Joel Berman, president
Head of Cable Sales: Robert H.

Friedman, sr. VP cable sales
First-run: N/A
Off-net Properties: *7th Heaven* (Fox Family), *Charmed* (Turner Networks), *Star Trek: Next Generation* (TNN), *Clueless* (MTV Networks)
Pilots/Development: *The Bar*
Evergreen: *I Love Lucy* (NICK)

STUDIOS USA DOMESTIC TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION

1325 Avenue of the Americas
 New York, NY 10019
 212-373-7600
Head of Studio: Steve Rosenberg, president
Head of Cable Sales: Bill Vrbanic, senior VP, distribution and operations
First-run: *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* (USA/BC), *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* (USA/NBC), *Crossing Over With John Edward* (Sci Fi/syndication), *The Invisible Man* (Sci Fi/syndication)
Off-net Properties: *Law & Order* (TNT/A&E), *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* (USA)
Pilots/Development: N/A
Evergreen: *McHale's Navy* (TVLAND), *Coach* (TBS)

TRIBUNE
 5800 Sunset Blvd., TEC Building
 Los Angeles, CA 90028
 323-460-3858
Head of Studio: Dick Askin, president and CEO
Head of Cable Sales: Steve Mulderrig, senior VP, general sales manager

First-run: N/A
Off-net Properties: *Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict* (Sci Fi)
Pilots/Development: N/A
Evergreen: N/A

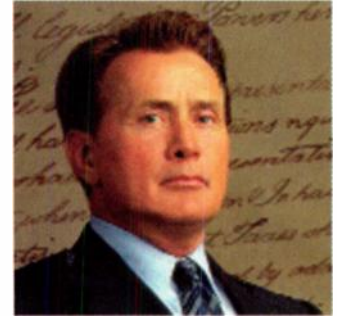


Futurama

TWENTIETH TELEVISION
 2121 Avenue of the Stars
 Los Angeles, CA 90067
 310-369-3924
Head of Studio: Bob Cook, president, COO
Head of Cable Sales: Bob Cesa, executive VP, advertiser and cable sales
First-run: N/A
Off-net: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (FX), *The Practice* (FX), *Ally McBeal* (FX), *King of the Hill* (FX)
Pilots/Development: *Judging Amy*, *Malcolm in the Middle*, *Roswell*, *Boston Public*, *Futurama*
Evergreen: *M*A*S*H*, *Newhart*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS TV DISTRIBUTION
 100 Universal City Plaza

Universal City, CA 91608
 818-777-1300
Head of Studio: Phil Schuman and Belinda Menendez, co-presidents
Head of Cable Sales: Marc Grayson, VP basic cable sales
First-run: N/A
Pilots/Development: N/A
Off-net Properties: Films
Evergreen: Films including *Jurassic Park*, *The Mummy*



The West Wing

WARNER BROS. DOMESTIC CABLE DISTRIBUTION
 4000 Warner Blvd.
 Burbank, CA 91522
 818-977-4340
Head of Studio/Cable Sales: Eric Frankel, president, Warner Bros. domestic cable distribution
First-run: *Witchblade* (TNT)
Pilots/Development: N/A
Off-net: *Friends* (TBS), *Third Watch* (A&E), *West Wing* (Bravo), *ER* (TNT), *Drew Carey* (TBS)
Evergreen: *Gilligan's Island* (NICK); *The Waltons* (TNN), *Dukes of Hazzard* (TNN)

AZCAR extends condolences to the families and associates of broadcast technicians missing in the attack on the WTC :

WCBS - ISAIS RIVERA AND BOB PATTISON
 WABC - DON DiFRANCO
 WNET - ROD COPPOLA
 WNBC - BILL STEKMAN
 WPIX - STEVE JACOBSON

AZCAR TECHNOLOGIES
 Toronto, New York, Pittsburgh

Programming

Top row (l-r): CBS's Ghen Maynard, NBC's Jeff Gaspin.
Bottom row (l-r): Fox's Mike Darnell, The WB's Carolyn
Bernstein, ABC's Andrea Wong and UPN's Danielle Greene.



Photo: Kim Kullish / Corbis Saba

Meet the execs who shape

REALITY

A Q&A about 'unscripted' prime time series--the troubles, the deceptions, the future and how reality will work with audiences if the United States goes to war

Reality television debuted with *Survivor* last summer on CBS, after ABC rediscovered the prime time game show with *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* Now, reality (somehow game shows have been lumped into the genre) is everywhere. As the 2001-02 TV season begins this week, 11 "unscripted" reality or game shows will dot prime time on six networks. All of the networks have reality series in development for midseason as well, and NBC is coming off a successful summer reality run led by *Fear Factor*, *Spy TV* and *Weakest Link*. There have also been failures, lawsuits and allegations of chicanery.

Earlier this month, BROADCASTING & CABLE's Los Angeles Bureau Chief Joe Schlosser organized a roundtable discussion with the top reality executives at ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, The WB and UPN. Constituting the panel were Andrea Wong, ABC's senior vice president of alternative series and specials; Ghen Maynard, CBS's vice president of alternative programming; Jeff Gaspin, NBC's executive vice president of alternative series, long-form and program strategy; Danielle Greene, UPN's vice president of alternative development and current programming; Mike Darnell, Fox executive vice president of specials and alternative programming; and Carolyn Bernstein, The WB's newly named senior vice president of drama development.

The roundtable took place prior to the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, but the executives were asked several questions in the week after the tragedy.

The following is an edited transcript:

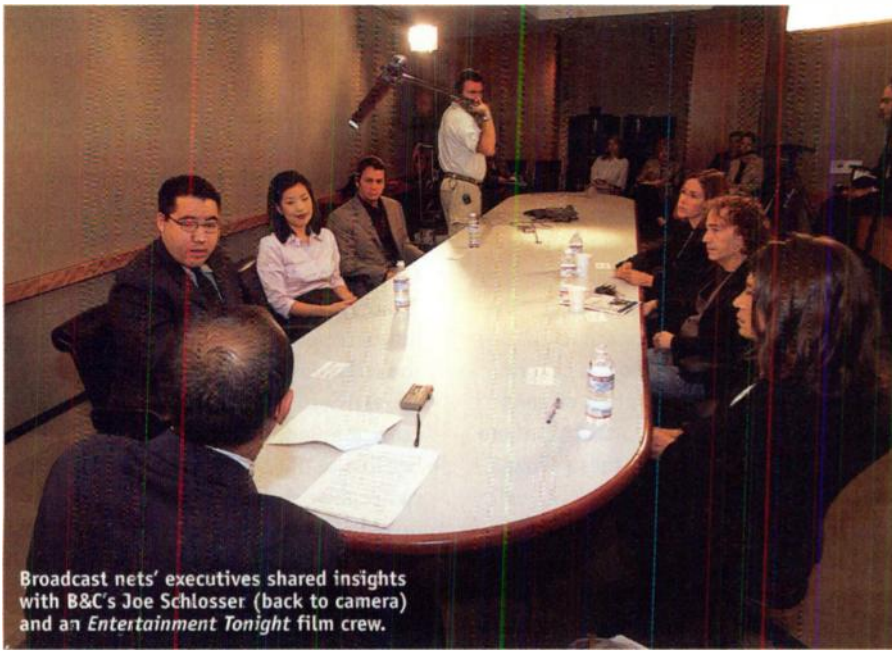


Photo: Kim Kulligh / Corbis Saba

Broadcast nets' executives shared insights with B&C's Joe Schlosser (back to camera) and an *Entertainment Tonight* film crew.

In light of the terrorist attacks, will reality TV change at your network?

Wong: I think we are evaluating that now. I think it may be too early to tell because we are just fresh from this. At the same time, we are evaluating all of our shows and everything we have in development in terms of creative content, to sort of assess ... the appropriateness of each of them.

Darnell: It's a much broader question, [concerning] all entertainment. I think to specify reality is weird. I don't think there is any difference between reality shows and fictional shows in the sense of sensitivity. I don't know how things are going to be affected. I don't know what the differences are going to be. I think the whole world has changed, but especially this country. Now it's really a question of where people's minds are going to be in two weeks, five months or two years from now. I think if you asked the drama or comedy department or anybody else, it would be the same answer: We just don't know yet.

Bernstein: Our approach at The WB has always been to embrace themes like wish fulfillment, positivism and optimism in all of our reality programming, so I think we are in a fortunate position in that we don't need to really change direction because we have always been trying to embrace those themes as opposed to the kind of negativity or mean-spiritedness that some of my counterparts have embraced.

Gaspin: Everything we are doing is not reality TV; what we witnessed in New York and Washington, that's reality TV. What we do is unscripted drama or comedy, and there is a big distinction because, in everything we do in what we used to call "reality TV"—and I don't think that we should call it 'reality TV' anymore, it's produced, it is manipulated, there are games—the only things that are real are people's reactions.

Greene: We haven't had any conversations since the attacks happened. I think we are fortunate that the one big show we are shooting, it doesn't have a name, but it's an Endemol project, and it's a family reality show. It's certainly much more uplifting.

Do you think there will be less interest in reality programming after what happened at the World Trade Center?

Gaspin: I think unscripted TV is going to be just as desired as scripted television the same way it was beforehand. When you go back to your viewing, I don't think it makes a difference. When you want to go back to be entertained, that's what you are going to look for. Whether people will want the more humorous vs. the more dramatic, I don't know the answer to that, but

I think it will affect unscripted the same way it does scripted.

Bernstein: I'm not good at playing Nostradamus, but I know just as a viewer that we all are going to need an escape from the news events that are going on 24 hours a day right now. I don't know what the audience is going to have an appetite for.

At CBS, has there been any talk of renaming *Survivor*, given all that has happened?

Maynard: It's something that a lot of us have thought about. If *Survivor* were being pitched right now as a brand-new show, I think absolutely it's something that you would have to think about, because it would seem a little bizarre and unfortunate. The reality is, however, it is a show that is a very established franchise and everybody knows what it means, so I don't think it's a name that has to change.

Is there anything that would now seem inappropriate?

Wong: We are going through that process right now and trying to figure that out. I would assume all of the networks are doing this right now, looking at their development, figuring out ... what makes sense and what is appropriate in light of last week's events. Also waiting, a little bit, to see how this unfolds.

'I don't think that we should call it "reality TV" anymore, it's produced, it is manipulated ... the only things that are real are people's reactions. —Jeff Gaspin, NBC

Gaspin: At the moment, no. Not that we had anything in development, but there were a bunch of pitches for a lot for spy-type reality shows, simulated war games and stuff I wasn't interested in before, and I'm still not interested. There are no plans to really change *Spy TV* either. I will tell you there were a couple of stunts in *Spy TV* that we changed or canceled for episodes being done right now. They just didn't seem appropriate. ... There was one with a car that has to take an off-road route and it turns out to be a fake minefield. It was going to be simulated bombs going off, and we chose not to do that.

How many reality projects have you been pitched since *Survivor* hit a year ago, and how many reality projects do you have in development? If you can, pass on the craziest idea you have heard.

Maynard: It's hard to say how many reality shows I have been pitched. I'd say probably, for a while, there was an average of 15 or 20 pitches a week. A number of them were very imaginative, but the problem was that, a lot of times, they are by people who have never executed anything similar to those concepts.

Wong: I've had hundreds, probably thousands of pitches, many of them derivative. **Greene:** We probably have six to 10 projects in some form of development. I think the hoax stuff [*Candid Camera*-style prank programming] is the craziest stuff you hear. I think people like coming in and trying to shock us. We laugh and sometimes enjoy it, but then most of the time we say, "We really can't broadcast that."

Gaspin: In the four months since I joined the network, I'd say I have had over 200 pitches, but that's because many people come in with multiple ideas. It's amazing: If I have several people coming in on one day, everybody who comes in has the same pitch. They don't come in different weeks. ... Someone will come in thinking they have something you've never heard before, and you actually heard it 10 minutes earlier.

As for the craziest idea, I was pitched—via email, and I'm glad it came this way—for a show called *Convict Island*: Basically, convicts are put on an island and have to go through *Survivor*-like challenges—all for charity. So it had some redeeming qualities. We have about a dozen reality series currently in development.

Darnell: As far as shocking stuff goes, I've heard some stuff I wouldn't do, but, generally, the stuff we've created is worse than the stuff that is pitched.

How did the international market get so far ahead of Hollywood in reality, and what does that say about U.S. networks?

Darnell: I think it does say something about us. I've been saying that for years. I think what happened was, when there was *That's Incredible* and *Real People* and you had other stuff in the late '70s and early '80s, there was a lot more variety on net-

work TV. Sometime in the late '80s and early '90s, when cable was sort of doing its own things, doing reality and cheaper stuff, the networks, I think subconsciously, went to dramas and comedies and decided that that's the more expensive programming, that's what people are coming to us for, and that's what we are concentrated on.

A recent *Boston Herald* article said, "The reality trend is going to continue unabated this fall, much to the chagrin of anyone with even a scintilla of good taste." Is there anything to that? Is there anything redeeming about these shows?

Gaspin: Look, I've been a fan of reality television for a long time, so I don't hold that belief. Certainly, when you look at the younger demographic, anything under 30, that's what they grew up on, reality shows.

Look at MTV or even Nickelodeon, there is so much more reality programming out there. As they grow up, they are not growing up with sitcoms and dramas. My kids don't watch the networks. They watch cable. They start with Nick and Cartoon Network, and they are going to graduate probably to some networks geared towards teen-agers like an MTV. At some point, they will hit the broadcasters, but they are not growing up with sitcoms and dramas.

In terms of redeeming value, I don't know. Is there anything redeeming about dramas or comedies? It's to pass the time, and, hopefully, it provides a reflection of

what you do and who you are and give you some insight to some things. I think reality television actually does that better than scripted television.

At first, reality series were billed as cheap, alternative programming to high-priced comedies and dramas. Still true?

Greene: With the quality of shows and elaborate stuff we are getting pitched, it is hitting a point where it's not cheaper than some dramas and comedies we are doing.

Wong: Certainly, costs are going up. The economic incentive is lessening over time because of the demand for producers who can do these shows and their prices are going up. Also, we looked at *Survivor* a lot, and it has sort of established a certain benchmark in terms of production values.

We've seen how failed background checks have come back to bite a few networks, with Justin on *Big Brother* and Rick Rockwell on *Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire*?. How have background checks changed in the past year, and how does your network handle the task?

Darnell: It's funny because we were the first to have the issue come up with Rick Rockwell and, in hindsight, it seems relatively minor to what has sort of happened since then. It has now become a major cost factor for us in producing shows. We are incredibly elaborate with it. We have an outside company that does everything for us, then there are lawyers involved, and there are just 50 billion things going on now to do this. ...

You will never perfect it. In the last couple of years, the FBI has had two people who turned out to be spies for over 20 years, the CIA has had spies, and it took until George Bush was running for president of the United States to find a DUI on him. Even government organizations, where security is everything, can't find everything. **Maynard:** We have been very lucky on *Survivor* that we haven't had surprises. But, on *Big Brother*, the Justin situation does exemplify some of the challenges. In that case, one of the administrators in the court system from his home town considered the information that he had been arrested (charges were dismissed) to be information that the public wasn't entitled to and therefore did not tell us. Yet that same person

Set for TV, really

Here are the new season programs that fall under each broadcast network's reality/alternative division:

Show	Network
<i>Weakest Link</i>	NBC
<i>Ripley's Believe It or Not</i>	The WB
<i>Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?</i>	ABC
<i>The Amazing Race</i>	CBS
<i>Whose Line Is It Anyway?</i>	ABC
<i>Survivor: Africa</i>	CBS
<i>Temptation Island 2</i>	Fox
<i>WWF Smackdown!</i>	UPN
<i>Popstars 2</i>	WB
<i>Eliminate Deluxe</i>	WB
<i>The Mole II</i>	ABC



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felt that *The New York Times* had a right to know about it.

In the wake of the *Manhunt* revelations, in which a producer claimed he was urged to manipulate parts of the show, should reality shows be put under the same guidelines that game shows were placed under after the 1950s quiz-show scandals?

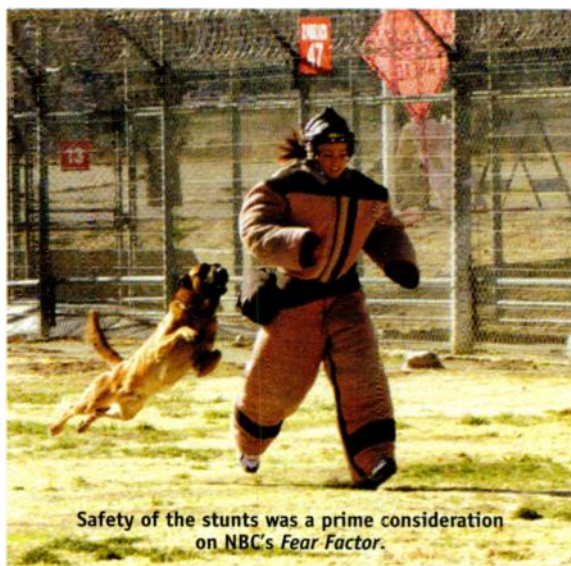
Bernstein: We have not had to deal with the same kind of problems. I think some of it's luck. I can't say that that kind of problem is not going to come up. I think it's a constant struggle, not so much on the programming side but at broadcast standards and practices, which is sent to almost all of our shoots. I think we try to be really, really diligent in trying to present a fair, clean game to the audience, but, unless we have someone on location for every second of shooting, we have to work with producers we can trust.

Gaspin: It's really two separate issues. You've got the fairness issue: With game shows, you've got to make sure that the game is fair and that the contestants all have an equal chance at winning. ... Then there is the other issue, which is how it is presented to the audience. When you are taping 600 or 700 hours of tape and culling it down to a few hours, there is a lot of manipulation going on. You are trying to create the best story that you can.

So I really think it's two separate issues. We have not presented to the audience that everything we are doing is as it happened in the order that it happened. We are saying these are unscripted dramas. The press is saying what they want to say, but we have not presented it that way.

Producers on *Survivor*, *Manhunt* and others have admitted to staging certain scenes and/or adding "beauty" shots after the fact. Sort this out for me.

Maynard: A so-called beauty shot is OK if it's just that, a beauty shot. When it's not OK is when you are actually saying that something happened and it never did. Or if you are taking the actual contestants and directing them to do something in a certain

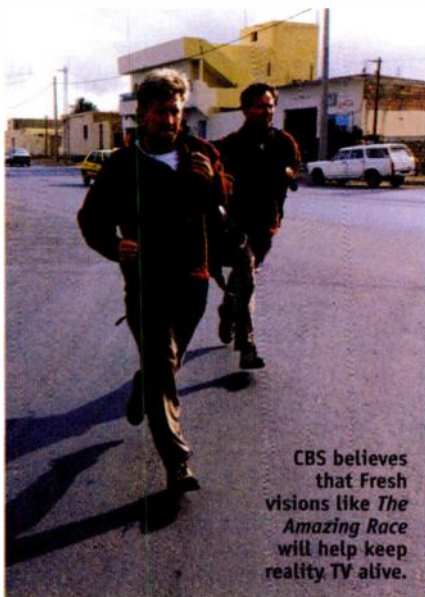


Safety of the stunts was a prime consideration on NBC's *Fear Factor*.

way, that's not OK. But getting a beauty shot from a helicopter way up high of people running does not change the reality of what happened; it just gives it a bigger feel for the epic-like quality of what it is you are trying to visually communicate.

Gaspin: I'm not a huge fan of staging a situation, but I have been very comfortable with stealing a shot from another time and placing it in a particular show to cover a hole that I might have. We are not recreating anything, but we are taking something out of context.

Are you afraid someone might die on a reality show? Will it kill off the genre, so to speak?



CBS believes that fresh visions like *The Amazing Race* will help keep reality TV alive.

Gaspin: In terms of shows like *Fear Factor*, I think the illusion of danger is much greater than the actual danger. That is the point of shows; I think that is the point of *Fear Factor*. It's all produced by the same stuntmen that produce all of the stunts in all Hollywood movies and television, and we triple- and quadruple-check the safety on all of the stunts that we do on our shows.

In the end, you're probably more likely to get killed in your car on the way to one of these shows than you are on the actual show. ... I think the likelihood of someone dying of a heart attack because they won a million dollars is greater than getting hurt on *Survivor* or *Fear Factor*.

Bernstein: I'm sort of laughing, because the only injury that we have had, at least that I can think of, was on the most recent *Popstars* audition: One of the contestant was so thrilled to have gotten a call-back that he jumped up the air and twisted his ankle. That's probably the biggest issue that we have had so far.

On *No Boundaries*, we had more safety personnel on-location than we had contestants. Literally. I think there were two people assigned to every contestant for safety precautions.

What is the next trend in the alternative area?

Greene: We are getting pitched a lot of fantasy things. I don't know if it's because of the coming *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*, but I do think there are a lot of fantasy elements to the stuff that we are getting pitched. Role-playing is a key thing in some of these potential shows.

Where will reality TV be in five years in terms of its importance to your schedule?

Maynard: The economics will always be somewhat of an incentive to try to keep this form of TV alive. I think for us, with *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race*, it wasn't about "Hey, this is going to cost a little less than dramas, that's why we are going to air it." It was because, competitively, it could stand up with dramas and comedies. I think that, as long as we get fresh visions and people who excite us with good visions, the genre has a good chance of staying alive five years from now. ■

SyndicationWatch

SEPT. 3-9 *Syndicated programming ratings according to Nielsen Media Research*

TOP 20 SHOWS

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Wheel of Fortune	8.3	8.3
2	Jeopardy	6.9	6.9
3	Seinfeld (wknd)	5.6	6.4
4	Entertainment Tonight	5.4	5.5
5	Judge Judy	5.1	7.3
5	Oprah Winfrey Show	5.1	5.2
7	Friends	4.8	5.4
8	Frasier	4.6	5.0
8	Wheel of Fortune (wknd)	4.6	4.6
10	Seinfeld	4.3	4.3
11	Live With Regis and Kelly	3.6	3.6
12	Jerry Springer	3.3	3.7
13	Judge Joe Brown	3.2	4.0
13	The X-Files	3.2	3.6
13	Drew Carey	3.2	3.5
16	Friends (wknd)	3.0	3.3
16	Entertainment Tonight (wknd)	3.0	3.1
18	3rd Rock From the Sun	2.9	3.1
18	Hollywood Squares	2.9	2.9
20	Maury	2.8	3.0

TOP OFF-NET SITCOMS

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Friends	4.8	5.4
2	Frasier	4.6	5.0
3	Seinfeld	4.3	4.3
4	Drew Carey	3.2	3.5
5	3rd Rock From the Sun	2.9	3.1

According to Nielsen Media Research Syndication Service Ranking Report Sept. 3-9, 2001

HH/AA = Average Audience Rating (households)

HH/GAA = Gross Aggregate Average

One Nielsen Rating = 1,055,000 households, which represents 1% of the 105.5 million TV Households in the United States

NA = Not Available

Lowered expectations for *Friends*

For several months, Warner Bros. has been seeking *Seinfeld*-sized license fees for *Friends*' second cycle. By last week, though, the distributor had sold the second off-net syndication cycle to the majority of the Tribune stations, reportedly for less than what it sought and less than what Tribune had paid for the show's first cycle.

Warner Bros. did have ammunition to work with in its negotiations. *Friends* consistently ranks No. 1 among off-net sitcoms. And, since there are few A-level comedies in the syndication pipeline, retaining *Friends* had to be appealing to stations.

However, "if [Tribune stations] were going to pay what they paid last time, this would have been done a long time ago," says a source, referring to the fact that Warner Bros. has been pitching *Friends* since March.

Apparently, Warner Bros. had been aiming for \$300,000-plus in per-week license fees for top markets New York and Los Angeles—on par with the \$600 million (license fees plus barter revenue) of *Seinfeld*'s second cycle.

But, several weeks ago, Hearst-Argyle's KQCA-TV Stockton, Calif., apparently paid 15% to 20% less for *Friends* than for its initial cycle. And, in May, Fox affiliate XETV-TV Tijuana, Mexico, outbid Tribune-owned KSWB-TV San Diego, reportedly paying \$25,000 a week in license fees, about half what the studio sought.

The pricing was likely affected by today's economic climate and worries that *Friends*' added TBS run, premiering Oct. 1, will devalue the property by the time of the show's second off-net cycle.

In the latest Tribune deal, stations that currently air *Friends*, including KSWB-TV and KQCA-TV, were able to keep their double runs through next season. The double-run option has reportedly been bundled into the second-cycle deal. The next cycle could be delayed until 2005 if *Friends* extends its network run past this season.

—Susanne Ault

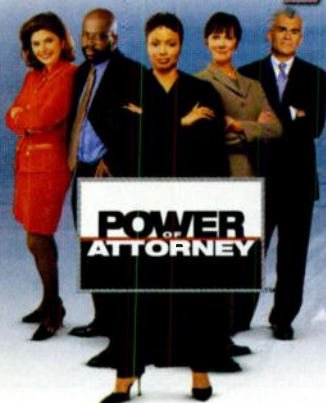


Tribune stations have reportedly paid less for *Friends*' second cycle than they paid for its first.

NEW #1 IN TIME PERIOD FOR MIAMI

NEW SEASON, NEW JUDGE, NEW STATION

WPLG/ABC 10:30-11:00AM



POWER ATTORNEY

+17% Rtg

+25% Shr

2.4/8

Judge J. Brown

July '01

2.8/10

POWER ATTORNEY

8/27-9/7/01

THE NEW COURT LEADER

20th ANNIVERSARY

Source: All Week Overnight, T.P. Competition: Today 2, Florida, Goodford Place, Jenny Jones, John Edward. Households.

Station Break

BY DAN TRIGBOFF

PATRIOTIC DISPLAYS, YES

A plan by Sinclair Broadcasting for its stations to offer messages of support for government efforts against terrorism brought objections from some Baltimore talent, who were required to read the notices.

Station sources confirmed dissent among WBFF(TV) talent, who felt that they might compromise their objectivity and credibility by sounding as though they supported specific people or actions. The proposed message, from which Sinclair said stations could deviate, said that the station “wants you to know that we stand 100% behind our President and his vow that terrorism must be stopped” and suggested that messages be left at supportour-nation.com for “President Bush, and we will send it on to our nations leaders.” Baltimore staffers informed viewers that the opinions expressed were those of management. Sinclair Vice President Mark Hyman said other stations in the group had received the idea enthusiastically.

On-air staffers indicated

that it would be a no-win situation for them since they risked looking unpatriotic if they refused to read the messages. In fact, one staffer, who was not a fan of the messages, noted that the only negative comments received by the station early last week were critical of the station talent—whose complaints first aired in the *Baltimore Sun*—for not getting on board with the rest of the country.

PATRIOTIC DISPLAYS, NO

On the other hand, at least two news directors, WKBD-TV Buffalo, N.Y., and WFLA-TV Tampa, Fla., ran the risk of negative public opinion with their dictates that station talent not wear patriotic ribbons on the air. “I’m kind of a traditionalist,” said WKBD-TV News Director Bob Yuna. “Our competition’s split on this subject. I think it looks cleaner and more straightforward without the ribbons. We have an outdoor weather set that has a flag on it. If somebody felt strongly about it, I would talk to them.”

WFLA-TV News Director

Forrest Carr jumped deeper into the thicket. “That type of patriotic display is appropriate for many people,” he said, “but not for our role as journalists.” Carr said he had mixed feelings and consulted the Poynter Institute before issuing his memo to staff. “Of course we’re patriotic. But if terrorists have created a society where your patriotism is questioned because you haven’t wrapped yourself in a ribbon, haven’t they already succeeded?”

OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS

It was a bittersweet moment for Lou Prato. The Radio-Television News Directors Association had planned to honor the veteran journalist and well-known educator for his long service to the organization—including 20 years as treasurer—with a reception at the beginning of the conference and a scholarship in his name.

Although the attacks on New York and Washington led to the conference’s cancellation and members scrambled for rental cars to return to their newsrooms, the remaining staff

and membership went ahead with the reception.

Though touched, Prato acknowledged that the national tragedy that morning made the reception “like a wake. I felt very uneasy accepting this honor—even though it is one of the highlights of my life.” Ironically, the cancellation of the conference meant a delay in its elections, which means Prato hasn’t actually retired and remains treasurer.

ENOUGH

KRQE News Director Dan Salamone was an early voice in the discussion of whether stations or networks should continue to use the now-familiar but nonetheless devastating video from the day of the attacks on New York and Washington. “I feel that, at this point,” Salamone said, “we have all seen the horrific images and that viewers feel it is exploitative to keep using these images unless there is a legitimate journalistic reason. Too often, these pictures end up on the air because an editor is looking for pictures to fill in the reporter’s story.”

Salamone distributed a memo to his staff last Monday, about the same time ABC was deciding to curtail its use of the video, informing employees that use of those images would be made on a case-by-case basis.

All news is local. Contact Dan Trigoboff at 301-260-0923, e-mail dtrig@erols.com or fax 413-254-4133.



Bin Laden kin owns Fla. estate

In a follow-up story on the terrorist attacks, WESH-TV Orlando, Fla., reported finding a large estate that is owned and occupied by one of Osama bin Laden’s brothers. The station would not reveal the location of the property.

Focus Cedar Rapids-Waterloo

THE MARKET

DMA rank	89
Population	809,000
TV homes	308,000
Income per capita	\$16,764
TV revenue rank	93
TV revenue	\$43,500,000

COMMERCIAL TV STATIONS

Rank*	Ch.	Affil.	Owner
1	KCRG-TV 9	ABC	Cedar Rapids
2	KWWL (tie) 7	NBC	Raycom
3	KGAN 2	CBS	Sinclair
4	KFXA 28	Fox	Second Gen.
5	KWKB 20	WB	KM Comm
6	KWWF 22	UPN	Will. Smith

*May 2001, total households, 6 a.m.-2 a.m., Sun.-Sat.

CABLE/DBS

Cable Subscribers (HH)	203,280
Penetration	66%
ADS Subscribers**	55,440
ADS Penetration	18%
DBS carriage of local TV	No

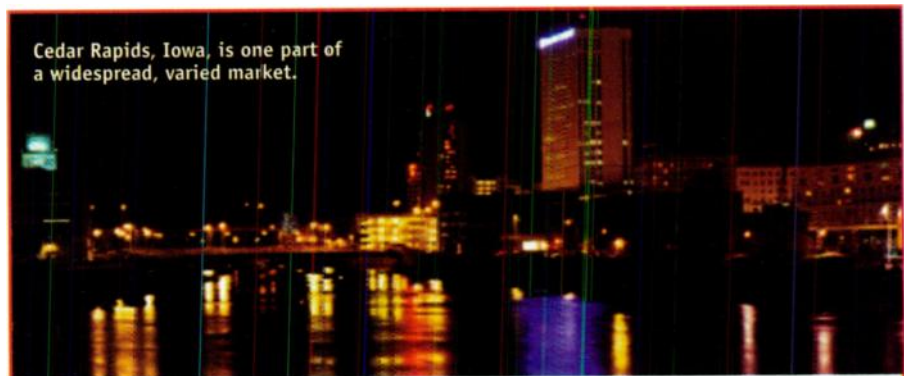
**Alternative Delivery Systems, includes DBS and other non-cable services, according to Nielsen Media Research

WHAT'S NO. 1

Syndicated show	Rating/Share***
<i>Wheel of Fortune</i> (KWWL)	7/36
Network show	
<i>ER</i> (KWWL)	23/39
6 p.m. newscast	
KWWL	14/30
10 p.m. newscast	
KWWL	14/30

***May 2001, total households

Sources: Nielsen Media Research, BIA Research



Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is one part of a widespread, varied market.

Talk about the weather

Stations in the diverse Cedar Rapids-Waterloo-Dubuque-Iowa City, Iowa, market find that providing comprehensive weather information is one way to reach the largest audience.

"You want to try to appeal to as many people as possible," says Rick Lipps, general manager of NBC affiliate KWWL-TV. "Our home city is Waterloo, so we want to make sure we provide our residents with Waterloo news. But we don't want to turn off anybody else."

Since the market is largely agricultural, the weather is particularly important—and becomes vital during tornado season.

Even so, "you can't make everyone happy," Lipps readily concedes. "There may be a tornado in the northern part of the DMA, and it could be sunny in the southern part."

KWWL-TV has built a strong brand, which is helpful in today's tight market. Right now, the station is going after companies that don't traditionally advertise on TV, such as the local auto dealers, which tend to use classified ads.

Mark Culbertson, general manager of one of the area's start-up outlets, WB affiliate KWKB-TV, finds that the "disjointed market" makes it "extremely hard" to attract advertisers. Many "have two locations in Dubuque but nothing in Waterloo," he points out. "Or they have Waterloo and don't have Cedar Rapids," which means it can be tricky to convince them that it's worth while to spend money on viewers that might not be their target consumers.

Still, the market has plenty of upside.

Just two outlets, CBS affiliate KGAN-TV and KWWL-TV, belong to big station groups: Sinclair and Raycom, respectively. That makes it easier for a station to win such high-profile programming as the upcoming *Will & Grace* and *That '70s Show*, which will air on the independent KWKB-TV in fall 2002.

—Susanne Ault



"Brilliantly Funny..."

-TV Guide

THE Larry Sanders SHOW



Available Fall 2002

The Leader in Young Adult Programming.®

cttd.com

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Changing Hands

Combos

WMIQ(AM), WIMK(FM) Iron Mountain; WIAN(AM), WJPD(FM) Ishpeming; WDMJ(AM), WUPK(FM) Marquette; WNGE(FM) Negaunee; WIHC(FM) Newberry; WZNL(FM) Norway; WKNW(AM) and WYSS(FM) Sault Sainte Marie, Mich.

Price: \$7.95 million

Buyer: Northern Star Broadcasting LLC (Palmer Pyle, president); owns eight other stations, none in this market

Seller: Marathon Media Group LLC (Chris Devine, president)

Facilities: WMIQ(AM): 1450 kHz, 1kW; WIMK(FM): 93.1 MHz, 100kW, ant. 591 ft.; WIAN(AM): 1240 kHz, 1kW day; WJPD(FM): 92.3 MHz, 100kW, ant. 469 ft.; WDMJ(AM): 1320 kHz, 5kW d, 1kW n; WUPK(FM): 94.1 MHz, 5kW, ant. 377 ft.; WNGE(FM): 99.5 MHz, 2 kW, ant. 597 ft.; WIHC(FM): 97.9 MHz, 50 kW, ant. 492 ft.; WZNL(FM): 94.3 MHz, 2 kW, ant. 650 ft.; WKNW(AM): 1400 kHz, 1kW d, 950 W n; WYSS(FM): 99.5 MHz,

27 kW, ant. 276 ft.

Format: WMIQ(AM): news/sports/talk; WIMK(FM): classic rock; WIAN(AM): news/talk/sports; WJPD(FM): country; WDMJ(AM): news/talk/sports; WUPK(FM): classic rock; WNGE(FM): news/talk/sports; WIHC(FM): country; WZNL(FM): WKNW(AM): AC; WKNW(AM): talk; WYSS(FM): top 40

FMs

KBZR(FM) Arizona City, KDDJ(FM) Globe, KEDJ(FM) Sun City and KSSL(FM) Wickenburg (Phoenix), Ariz.

Price: \$34 million

Buyer: Hispanic Broadcasting Corp. (McHenry Tichenor Jr., president/CEO); owns 49 other stations, including KHOT-FM Phoenix

Seller: Big City Radio (Charles Fernandez, president/CEO)

Facilities: KBZR(FM): 106.5 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 292 ft.; KDDJ(FM): 100.3 MHz, 90 kW, ant. 2,047 ft.; KEDJ(FM): 106.3

MHz, 23 kW, ant. 725 ft.; KSSL(FM): 105.3 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 1,365 ft.

Format: KBZR(FM): classic hits; KDDJ(FM): alternative; KEDJ(FM): alternative; KSSL(FM): top 40/Spanish

KCUA(FM) Coalville, Utah

Price: \$2.26 million

Buyer: Millcreek Broadcasting LLC (Bruce Buzil, president); owns seven other stations, none in this market

Seller: Community Wireless (Blair Feulner, president)

Facilities: 92.5 MHz, 300 W, ant. 138 ft.

Format: AAA

Brokers: Greg Merrill, Media Services Group; Andrew P. McClure, Exline Co.

KHME(FM) Winona, Minn.

Price: \$1 million

Buyer: Result Radio Group (Jerry Papenfuss, president); owns 13 other stations, none in this market

Seller: Mid-West Family Broadcast Group (Thomas A. Walker, COO/director)

Facilities: 101.1 MHz, 5 kW, ant. 742 ft.

Format: Lite AC

KXIO(FM) Clarksville, Ark.

Price: \$400,000

Buyer: Barnett Broadcasting (Gary Barnett, president); no other broadcast interests

Seller: River Valley Radio Group (Fran Harp, president)

Facilities: 106.9 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 112 ft.

Format: Country

AMs

WMJH(AM) Rockford and WMFN(AM) Zeeland (Grand Rapids), Mich.

Price: \$1.9 million

Buyer: Birach Broadcasting Corp. (Sima Birach, president); owns eight other stations, none in this market

Seller: Cook-Media II LLC (Mike Marshall, president)

Facilities: WMJH(AM): 810 kHz, 4kW; WMFN(AM): 640 kHz, 1kW d, 230 W n

Format: WMJH(AM) adult standard; WMFN(AM) sports

KIKN(AM) Port Angeles, Wash.

Price: \$525,000

Buyer: Salem Communications Corp. (Edward G. Atsinger III, president/CEO); owns 82 other stations, none in this market

Seller: Radio Pacific Inc. (Terry MacDonald, president)

Facilities: 1290 kHz, 1 kW d, 149 W n

Format: Country

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Payday for Paxson

Millions seen as FCC paves way for buyouts of ch. 60-69

By Bill McConnell

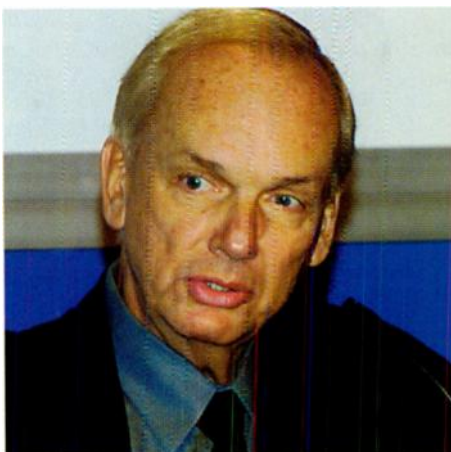
Paxson Communications and several other broadcasters are starting negotiations with wireless companies that could lead to billions of dollars in payouts to companies with TV stations on channels 60-69 following an FCC ruling last week.

Under the new dictum, owners that relinquish their right to broadcast on the 60-69 band prior to the completion of the digital TV transition can delay the switch to DTV on their remaining allotment until Dec. 31, 2005. They also have the right to request additional extensions after that if U.S. DTV household penetration is less than 70%. Generally, broadcasters had to provide a DTV signal by May 2002.

The government's decision is predicted to bring a financial windfall to the holders of the 142 channels and allotments on the band. Some analysts predict Paxson's 18 channels on that part of the dial could fetch hundreds of millions or even a billion dollars. Auctions two summers ago in Germany and the UK, which fetched as much as \$35 billion, have been pointed to as indicators of the TV spectrum's worth, but many analysts believe that the European buyers overpaid and that values will drop in the tanking U.S. economy.

Negotiations between broadcasters on the band and prospective buyers will be conducted by investment bank Allen & Co. and Greenbelt, Md., consulting company Spectrum Exchange Group.

By relaxing the deadline, the FCC aims to make sure viewers continue to receive conventional analog television if those broadcasters turn one of the two channels they currently control over to wireless companies. Those



Lowell "Budd" Paxson has 18 channels on the strategic part of the dial.

companies previously had been given FCC approval to negotiate early buyouts for Paxson and other broadcasters with frequencies on the 700 MHz spectrum band.

The decision was the last media-related vote of former Commissioner Gloria Tristani. Although she opposed the earlier ruling allowing quick evacuation of free-TV broadcasters for what are expected to be expensive new products, she grudgingly approved the delay in DTV transitions because it ensures the availability of conventional TV service.

FCC officials say the buyouts are necessary to speed the introduction of new "third-generation" mobile Internet services because broadcasters aren't obligated to relinquish spectrum before 2006. The government plans to auction the 700 MHz on a date yet to be set, and many officials worried that uncertainty over wireless companies' ability to utilize the spectrum quickly would diminish the government's revenue from the bidding. ■

By relaxing the deadline, the FCC aims to make sure viewers continue to receive conventional analog television.

IN BRIEF

FCC OKS REPEATERS

The FCC last week gave XM Satellite Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio temporary permission to build repeaters to back up their satellite radio system. XM also rescheduled the date of its Dallas and San Diego launches to Sept. 25. The National Association of Broadcasters had protested the satellite radio companies' requests for fear they would use them to enter the local radio business, but NAB expressed satisfaction with safeguards in the FCC's decision. "We're pleased the FCC has explicitly barred satellite radio companies from using their extensive high-powered terrestrial repeater network from originating local programming. We expect the final FCC rules authorizing this service will keep this prohibition," said NAB President Eddie Fritts. The FCC last week said, "It would be unfair to penalize XM [and Sirius] for complying with our required milestone schedule on the one hand, but on the other hand force it to seriously delay initiation of service because there are no final repeater rules." The FCC is expected to have final rules out by March.

TEST CANCELED

Broadcast stations and cable systems are being asked to halt routine tests of emergency alert systems to avoid public confusion and panic. In light of a request by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the FCC said it would not sanction broadcasters and cable operators for not conducting tests through Oct. 2. The FCC said the moratorium might be extended.

Interactive Media

CNN phones in from hot spots

Videophones help get live feeds from inaccessible sites, including Afghanistan

By Michael Grotticelli

Although the video images have been jittery and the audio sometimes drops off, CNN's use of a videophone is proving that content is the most important element in news.

In an effort to scoop the competition, reporters at the cable news network are using the Talking Head videophone system from England's 7E Communications Ltd. connected to a satellite telephone to transmit exclusive live feeds out of Afghanistan.

"Some information is better than no information," said Eason Jordan, CNN's chief news executive. "I think people are very understanding of the difficulties in getting news out of Afghanistan, and we've had nothing but compliments from viewers."

The Talking Head videophone is about the size of a laptop computer, though twice as deep, and costs roughly \$20,000. It can be used with any telephone line, ISDN connection or satellite phone. For reporting out of Afghanistan, CNN is using the worldwide INMARSAT satellite service, which requires a dedicated phone and dish, also about the size of a briefcase.

Because the INMARSAT phone can handle transmissions at only about 64 kb/s, video images are sent and displayed at 15



frames per second, instead of the normal 30, resulting in the low video and audio quality. The frame rate can be improved to 30 f/s (or 128 kb/s) by linking two satellite phones together, but, CNN is not doing it that way, saving time and money.

According to Robert Tait, an engineer at 7E Communications, the manufacturer has received "hundreds of calls" since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. ABC has ordered several for its foreign bureaus, he said, although a spokesman at the network would not confirm this.

"We're working 20-hour days to satisfy orders," he said, noting that requests have come from a broad spectrum of users.

"Demand has gone up five-fold since this started. Everyone wants it yesterday, and we're having problems keeping up."

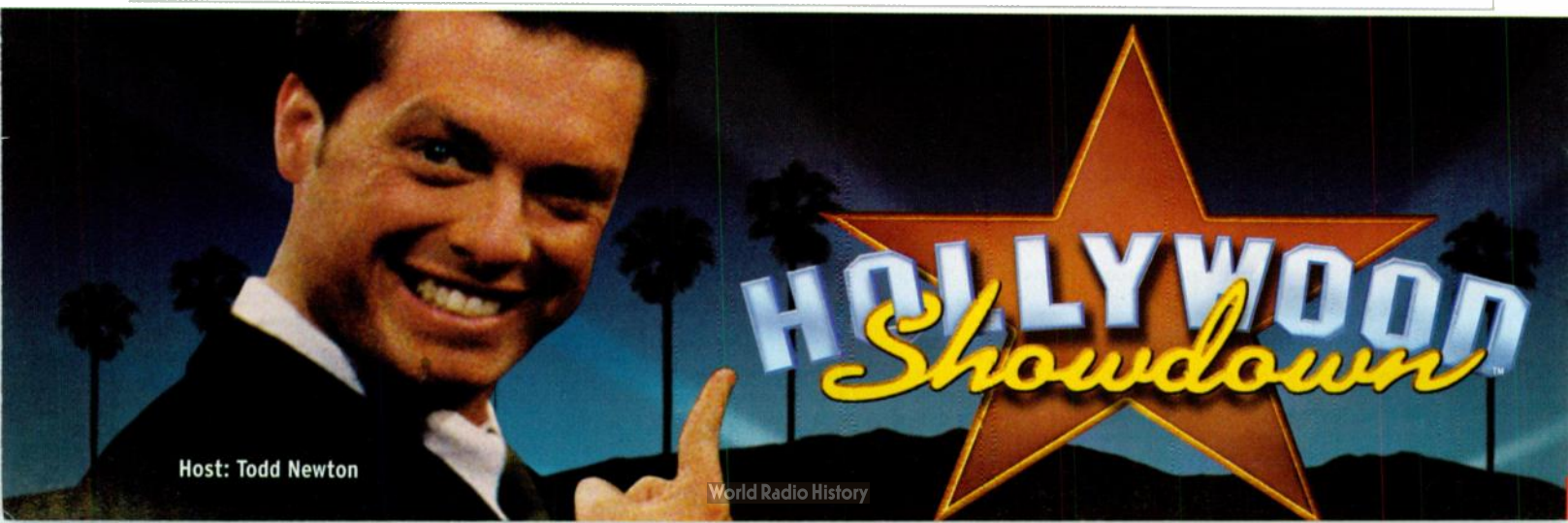
The manufacturer's exclusive U.S. distributor (Rich Tech, Ocala, Fla.) has placed an order for 50 units, Tait said.

CNN currently uses about 15 Talking Head systems and plans to outfit all 30 of its international bureaus, according to Parisa Khosravi, senior vice president of international newsgathering.

The network has used videophones since December 1999, when correspondent Nic Robertson used an earlier model to broadcast exclusive pictures and sound of a hijacking in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The videophone also gave CNN the first live pictures of the 24 crew members released from the U.S. Navy spy plane held in China when they landed on the Pacific island of Guam.

Robertson, currently the only Western reporter in the Taliban-ruled section of Afghanistan, is using the latest Talking Head system. The units are "remarkably easy to use," according to CNN's Jordan,



who said several hundred news personnel have received training in Atlanta. They like its portability, which allows a reporter in the field to "broadcast live TV in a matter of seconds," he said.

Although the system was initially used as a backup to CNN's more-traditional satellite trucks, it has stepped to the forefront in the past weeks as getting live pictures out of Afghanistan has become problematic. ■

Simplify streaming

New RealOne interface is designed to clear the clutter

By Ken Kerschbaumer

RealNetworks today is expected to unveil RealOne, a streaming-media player, platform and service that the company says will afford new opportunities for streaming-content providers and improved performance to consumers.

The most noticeable change to consumers is that the interface is less crowded than that of the Jukebox or even RealPlayer 8.

"There was this mindset in terms of user-interface design that, if it weren't at the top level of the interface, it wouldn't be used, and no one would see it," says General Manager, Consumer Products, Steve Banfield. "The problem is, if everything is top priority, nothing is top priority."

From a design standpoint, the goal of RealOne is to give the content provider greater control of the interface. For example, under the current RealPlayer 8 interface, the

window is surrounded by buttons that access content unrelated to the content displayed.

RealOne, on the other hand, offers a platform on which the viewer can watch the video and have HTML-based content related to it located next to the window. An Internet-browser window is located below the window, offering content providers the opportunity to create a Web environment optimized for the new platform. Or users can access current Web pages.

New authoring capabilities include RN SMIL extensions for the context window, Javascript extension for the media browser and ActiveX, SMIL 2.0 support, and nested Metafiles.

Another improvement to the platform is that the new player requires less memory on the consumer's PC. As a result, it can be used more easily by a PC user who wants to access video and audio content while word processing or using other programs.

"If we want media to be a primary part of someone's computing experience, it can't be the singular experience they're having on the PC while they're using it," says Banfield. "PCs are designed to be multiuse devices, so we spent a lot of time making sure we provided enough horsepower."

The new system also offers improved video and audio performance, he says. ■

WebWatch

NEWS SITES

Week ended 9/16/01
Ranked by unique visitors
Source: Jupiter Media Metrix
Weekly Flash Report

Site	Unique visitors (000)	Chg. vs. 9/7
1 CNN.COM	4,601	264%
2 MSNBC.COM	4,205	182%
3 ABC NEWS*	1,257	362%
4 NYTIMES.COM	1,127	71%
5 CBS.COM SITES*	1,045	174%
6 WASHINGTONPOST.COM	872	124%
7 TIME.COM	753	578%
8 USATODAY.COM	715	54%
9 SLATE.COM	678	565%
10 FOXNEWS.COM	506	506%
11 BBC.CO.UK	526	260%
12 DRUGGEREPORT.COM	374	76%
13 LA TIMES*	295	95%
14 AP.ORG	229	176%
15 BOSTON.COM	212	123%
16 NYPOST.COM	190	124%
17 DISCOVERY.COM	174	0%
18 MIAMI.COM	155	297%
19 NPR.ORG	152	223%
19 SFGATE*	152	6%
21 PHILLY.COM	139	276%
21 CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM	139	117%
23 WSJ.COM	125	51%
24 USNEWS.COM	124	57%
25 STARTRIBUNE.COM	120	56%
All digital media	46,494	-1%
News/information	13,719	61%
General news	11,695	97%

Average daily unique visitors: The estimated seven-day average (expressed in thousands) of different individuals that accessed the Web content of a specific site in a single day among the total number of projected individuals using the Web during the past 30 days

* Represents an aggregation of commonly owned/branded domain names

Chg.: Change from previous week

—Statistically insignificant traffic

NA: Comparison with previous week not available

Sample size: More than 60,000 individuals nationwide

Play Hollywood Showdown on



and screen test your entertainment knowledge.



G A M E
S H O W
network

Technology

New York stations are back

Cut off the air Sept. 11, they find new homes, but most see limited coverage

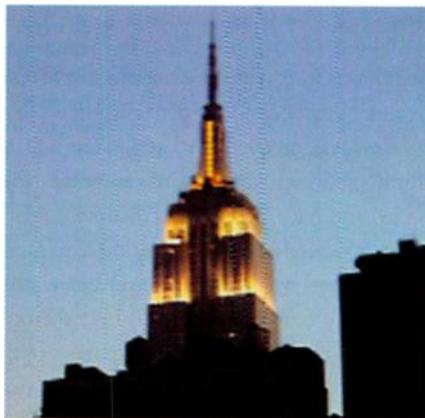
By Michael Grotticelli

The nine New York TV stations that lost their transmission facilities on Tower 1 of the World Trade Center were all back on the air last week. But, with the exception of WCBS-TV, they were making do with less power and less over-the-air coverage.

WCBS-TV was in the best shape. Shortly after the attack on the WTC, the station switched to a backup transmitter at the Empire State Building and has maintained continual service on ch. 2 since then.

Last week, CBS engineers were at work, transforming the Empire State facilities into a new broadcasting home. They began replacing the 40-year old Harris tube transmitter with a Harris Platinum solid-state model, which had been slated to go into the WTC. They will also install a Harris Sigma digital transmitter for the digital TV station, whose service was also uninterrupted.

Fox's WNYW-TV and WWOR-TV are also now broadcasting from the Empire State Building, using space that had been set aside for their planned digital TV stations. Fox is negotiating with building



WCBS-TV and Fox's WNYW and WWOR-TV are now broadcasting from the Empire State Building. Others may join them.

owner Helmsley-Spear to make the building the permanent home for its analog and digital stations.

Meanwhile, WABC-TV, WNBC(TV), noncommercial WNET(TV), Tribune's WPIX(TV), and Telemundo's WNJU-TV are broadcasting at low power from a tower in Alpine, N.J. Located 15 miles southeast of midtown Manhattan, the tower rises 920 feet above sea level and has a line of sight to the New York skyline.

Engineers concede that the low-power Alpine signals are not reaching the entire market. WABC-TV, which broadcast over two independent UHF stations in the days immediately after the attack, switched to Alpine on Sept. 15. According to Chief

Engineer Kurt Hansen, viewers in Connecticut; Westchester County, N.Y.; and the northern half of New Jersey are getting a good signal, but coverage has been spotty elsewhere.

"Some people are getting it; some aren't," Hansen said. "Eastern Long Island can be tough."

It's "undetermined" when the station will be able to improve coverage by increasing power, Hansen said. And he declined to talk about any plans for moving elsewhere.

A spokesman for WNBC, which also borrowed other stations' facilities the week of the attack, turned on its Alpine signal on Friday, Sept. 14. Last week, the spokesman said, the station was operating at 6 kW but expects to crank the power up to 20 kW in 60 to 90 days. At the WTC, the station was broadcasting at about 25 kW.

WPIX lit up its Alpine transmitter on Sept. 17, with engineers working 18- to 20-hour days to get on the air. It is also broadcasting from a backup transmitter on the Empire State Building (ch. 64), which enables it to reach Brooklyn and eastern Long Island.

WNJU-TV, another Alpine resident, hopes to go to full power in the next two months, said Ramon Pineda, vice president and general manager at the Spanish-language

LIKE
STRAVINSKY, WRAPPED IN
14-GAUGE STEEL.



Forced to relocate

Nine New York City stations lost their transmission facilities at the World Trade Center and had to move to new or temporary sites

Station	Owner	Affiliation	Transmitting from
WABC-TV	Disney/ABC	ABC	Temporary site at Alpine, N.J.
WCBS-TV	CBS	CBS	Permanent site at Empire State Bldg.
WNBC	NBC	NBC	Temporary site at Alpine, N.J.
WNET	Educational Bcst.	PBS	Temporary site at Alpine, N.J.
WNJU-TV	Telemundo	Telemundo	Temporary site at Alpine, N.J.
WNYW	Fox	Fox	Temporary site at Empire State Bldg.
WPIX	Tribune	The WB	Temp. sites at Alpine and Empire State
WPXN-TV	Paxson	Pax	Temporary site at East Orange, N.J.
WWOR-TV	Fox	UPN	Temporary site at Empire State Bldg.

station. That is, once a new Harris transmitter and other equipment are in place.

WNET was on the air from Alpine by Sept. 15, using a new Larcen transmitter, according to Director of Engineering Ken Devine.

Paxson's WPXN-TV plans to move to Alpine in a month. Right now, it is broadcasting from low-power facilities in East Orange, N.J., and Amityville, N.Y.

The Alpine site is the former Armstrong Tower, built by FM radio pioneer Edwin H. Armstrong in 1937. It is now owned by Alpine Tower Co., Montvale, N.J.

Thanks to a direct fiber feed from the stations, most New York-area cable operators have been able to continuously carry the stations that had been on Tower 1.

That's good news for the stations, since the cable systems serve 75.7% of New York's 7.3 million TV homes, according to Nielsen. (Satellite TV reaches another 5.3% of the homes but carries only a handful of the most popular stations.)

Time Warner Cable's 1.2 million subscribers in Manhattan experienced little or no service disruption, except for those in the immediate vicinity of the WTC, a spokesman said. Late last week, he said, about 5,500 homes near Ground Zero were without service.

Cablevision says it maintained service to its 3 million subs in The Bronx, Brooklyn, lower Hudson Valley, Long Island and New Jersey.

RCN, which would not reveal exact sub

numbers, said it provides service to 1,000 buildings in Manhattan and Queens and only those in Battery Park City, across the street from the WTC, lost service.

Univision's WXTV-TV, whose primary transmitter is at the Empire State Building, was unaffected by the attack.

Broadcasters at the Alpine tower don't consider it a permanent solution. Victor Tawill, of the Association for Maximum Service Television, said they have considered other sites for a common tower, including Staten Island and Manhattan's Chrysler and CitiCorp buildings.

"There's a lot of options being talked about," said WWOR-TV's Al Shjarback. "We're taking this one step at a time. Everyone's in the design-and-build-as-you-go mode." ■

To honor the missing

The Society of Broadcast Engineers has set up a fund through its Ennes Trust to help the families of the six broadcast engineers listed as missing in the wake of the attack on the World Trade Center:

Rod Coppola WNET
 Don DiFranco WABC-TV
 Steven Jacobson WPIX-TV
 Bob Pattison WCBS-TV
 Isaias Rivera WCBS-TV
 Bill Steckman WNBC

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Indianapolis, IN 46260
Attn: BE Relief Fund



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People

F A T E S & F O R T U N E S

Broadcast TV

Phillip D. Cox, VP/GM, WNCN(TV) Montgomery, Ala., named GM, WXXV-TV Gulfport, Miss.

Andrew Stewart, director sales, KGUN(TV) Tucson, Ariz., adds the responsibilities of station manager to his duties.

Tori Grant Wellhouse, national sales manager, WGBA(TV) Green Bay, Wis./WACY-TV Appleton, Wis., joins WLUK-TV Green Bay as general sales manager.

Cable TV

Robert Sullivan, executive VP, Rainbow Advertising Sales Corp., New York, named senior VP, consumer sales, Cablevision, Bethpage, New York.

Keith Crossley, director, operations, Cox Communications Inc., Bakersfield, Calif., appointed GM, Humboldt, Calif., system.

Caterina McIntyre, senior director, Net2Phone, Newark, N.J., named regional director, marketing, Northeast Region, Comcast, Eatontown, N.J.

Programming

David Snyder, senior VP, programming and creative department, Walt Disney Television International, London, joins Gullane Entertainment, New York, as senior VP, entertainment.

Appointments at Columbia TriStar Television

Distribution: **Dennis J.**

Dunphy, VP, sales and marketing, Central region, Chicago, named senior VP, sales, Central/Western regions; **Susan Law**, director, merchandising and marketing, Los Angeles, named VP, advertiser sales, marketing and promotions. **Kimi Serrano**, general sales manager, KOCO-TV Oklahoma City, joins as division manager, Southwest region, Dallas.

Joseph LaPolla, VP, scheduling, acquisitions, digital programming, The History Channel, New York, joins A&E Network, New York, as VP, program planning and acquisitions.

Radio

Tracie Savage, morning

Obituaries

Heywood Hale Broun, TV commentator, actor, writer and sportscaster for CBS for 19 years, died Sept. 5 in Kingston, N.Y., at 83. Broun's wry wit and colorful commentary were evidenced on all three major TV networks and on National Public Radio, where he was a commentator on *All Things Considered*. Among his acting credits: *The Doctors*, in which he had a running role, and *Robert Montgomery Presents*, a distinguished NBC anthology. His father, Heywood Broun, founded the Newspaper Guild, and Broun himself was subjected to the blacklisting of the '50s.

Director-producer **Fred De Cordova**, 90, died Sept. 15 in Los Angeles.

Although his career began in the theater—where he directed Milton Berle in *Ziegfeld Follies*—and moved to movies—where he directed Ronald Reagan in *Bedtime for Bonzo*—his greatest triumphs were in television. *The Tonight Show*, which he produced for 22 years, won Emmys in 1976, '77, '78, '79 and '92, at which time he retired, along with Johnny Carson, the show's star, who had made Cordova a national name by bouncing one-liners off him. Among his other series were *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show*, *The Jack Benny Program* and *December Bride*.

Actress Janet Thomas, whom he married in 1963, survives him.

—Beatrice Williams-Rude

anchor/general-assignment reporter, KNBC(TV) Los Angeles, named evening-drive news anchor, KFWB(AM) Los Angeles.

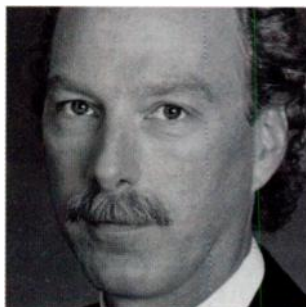
Changes at KDKA(AM) Pittsburgh: **John Cigna**, host, morning news, is scheduled to

retire at the end of the year; **Larry Richert**, main weather anchor, named morning news host.

—P. Llanor Alleyne
palleyn@cabnrs.com
212-337-7141



Phillip D. Cox



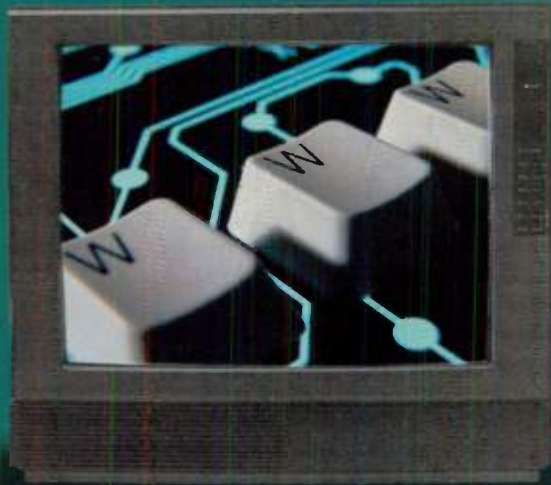
Robert Sullivan



David Snyder



Dennis J. Dunphy



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the industry's
hottest couple!*

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T H E F I F T H E S T A T E R

Disruptive thinking

Lego likes technology that challenges traditional ideas

For as long as he can remember, Paul Lego has had an affinity for technology that changes the way people do things. As a boy of 8 or 9, he built robots and his own short-wave radio because he wasn't satisfied with traditional toys.

Today, as president and CEO of San Mateo, Calif.-based Virage Inc., he's doing much the same thing.

The company, as he sees it, is "disrupting" traditional thinking in the area of digital-media editing and distribution. Virage develops asset-management software, which is used to maintain a database of video and audio files. On Major League Baseball's Web site, for example, it allows users to search for and access clips of a particular player or even entire games.

Surprisingly, given his youthful interests, Lego gravitated to the management side of technology. "You'd think engineering would be my eventual goal, but I soon found out that a lot of engineering is not that fun tinkering that I still love to this day; it's a lot more rig-

orous discipline," he explains. "I tend to do more tinkering as a business man now than when I worked in an engineering capacity."

Lego moved into technology management in 1988, about the time the desktop computer began to have a significant impact on professional audio and video production. He met Peter Dogger, founder of Digidesign, a small, four-year-old audio editing/mixing company with annual sales of about \$800,000.

After several meetings, Lego recalls, Dogger told him, "I am going to make it possible for the average garage musician to be able to record and mix music on a computer, with no concession in quality to what

the major recording studios were doing."

Lego soon joined Digidesign as chief operating officer. The company's approach to audio editing was disruptive for the time, he says, adding that it is a way of thinking he still finds appealing.

"I love it when a certain technology completely changes the traditional thinking," he says, citing the combustion engine and the first television as other examples. "Up to that point, everybody was recording and mixing audio in the analog world on tape. The disruptive change happened when disk drives got fast enough to record digital audio data."

Although recording on disk was promising, Lego says, it



Paul Gregory Lego
President/Chairman/CEO,
Virage Inc.

B. Sept. 7, 1958, Pittsburgh; BS, electrical engineering, Cornell University, 1980; MBA, Harvard Business School, 1984; graduate, General Electric Manufacturing Management Program, 1980-82; marketing and sales, Pyramid Technology Corp., 1984-88; executive vice president, chief operating officer, and board member, Digidesign, 1988-95; associate, Sutter Hill Ventures, 1995-96; current position since 1996; member, Leadership Circle, Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose, Calif.; m., Catherine, 1996; son: Paul Henry (4)

was years before audio professionals fully embraced it. But they did. In the seven years that he ran the business, the company's market share rose from less than 5% to 90%, and revenue grew to more than \$30 million.

Lego left soon after Digi-

design was sold to Avid Technology in January 1995. Looking back, he's "really proud" to see Digidesign's progress (it maintains about 80% market share in high-end audio postproduction) but laments Avid's corporate influence, which he believes has tended to stymie innovation. "Both those companies started out as innovators of disruptive technology, but I don't think they innovate any more."

Lego joined Sutter Hill Ventures in 1995, with the idea that, within a year, he would either become a venture capitalist or sign on with one of the companies in which the firm had invested. It was while overseeing "a large stack" of business proposals for technology ventures that he began working with Virage, which he joined as interim CEO in 1996.

He has been there ever since and today oversees 200 people and nearly \$20 million in annual revenue.

"The image-management technology that Virage was developing and its view of the future of the media industry really interested me," he recalls, adding that "broadband in most consumers' homes is two to three years away, but, when it gets here, the streaming industry will explode, and we plan to be in the middle of it. Having a video experience that's a personalized, two-way communication with the user, that's what we're working [for] at Virage."

—Michael Grotticelli

Classifieds

Television

NEWSCAREERS

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WSPA-TV, a Media General Station and CBS affiliate market 36 Greenville/Spartanburg, SC currently has an opening for a full-time director. Candidate responsible for directing, TD fast paced morning newscasts and other projects. Non-linear, shooting, lighting, writing, producing experience preferred. College degree preferred, two years directing experience. Work flexible hours.

Resume, tape to WSPA-TV Human Resources
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fax 864-595-4600. dkirby@wspa.com. eoe

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BANKRUPTCY AUCTION

Direct 2 U Network, Inc. ("Direct") (Bankr. No. 01-19268 (DWS) E.D. PA) is conducting a sale of all of its assets pursuant to authorization of the Bankruptcy Court. Direct produces and sells infomercials to over 30 million households nationwide via its own shopping network, and owns and operates a fully operational network and production facility with state of the art network and production equipment consisting of 5,000 sq. ft. of television studio, master control room and digital satellite broadcast equipment, and broadcasts 24 hours a day through its extensive network of cable systems. A sale by auction will be conducted at the law offices of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, One Penn Center, 19th Floor, 1617 JFK Blvd., Philadelphia, PA on October 1, 2001 at 9:30 a.m. Parties interested in information on bidding should contact Edmond M. George, Esquire, at (215) 665-3140 for a bid package.

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Television

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Letter, Resume and Three References To: Heather Dew, Director of Finance and Personnel Ohio University Telecommunications Center, 9 South College Street, Athens, Ohio 45701

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Editorials

COMMITTED TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Minefield

Two things are clear: Legitimate security concerns will require the news media to exercise some restraint in how they cover the U.S. response to the terrorist attacks; and the First Amendment could be threatened if we fail to distinguish between information that discomfits the government and that which threatens national security. As we have seen with the classification of too many documents as "confidential," the government cannot always be counted on to distinguish between the two.

That discomfiting speech may include voices of dissent. The degree to which such voices are silenced, either officially or by industry pressure, will be the measure of how far down the road to unwarranted censorship we have gone. Those who conduct or condone attacks on dissent are in lockstep with anybody who attacks people simply because they wear a turban. Both are born of ignorance and nurtured by a crisis mentality.

On the issue of restraint, NBC News executive Bill Wheatley last week warned his troops not to "inadvertently pass along information that could prove helpful to those who would do harm to our citizens, our officials and our military." Soon after, one of our unofficial correspondents in the field called to point out that a network was showing a real-time, electronic map with the position of all the planes in the air, illustrating how much air traffic had decreased. Two weeks ago, that might have been OK.

At times, revealing the President's whereabouts may not be a good idea. But reporting on where he stands on issues, or on his job performance, or where his policies could lead us—that's a journalist's job. Now more than ever, how well the President is perceived as doing his job is key information for a populace whose future may well hinge on his success.

Good journalism has always been about making tough calls. Some of those calls just got a lot tougher.

Good for them

In the Lassie-eat-Rin Tin Tin world of syndicated TV distribution, success is measured in cold, hard cash. They are a hard-nosed, hardball-playing lot, these syndicators, none more so than Warner Bros. That's why we were impressed when it was the first to decide, or at least to announce, that it would not seek make-goods from stations for the barter-ad time (translation: dollars) the distributor lost when its syndicated shows were shelved for coverage of the terrorist attack.

Warner Bros. was soon joined by others, including NBC, Twentieth, Tribune and Paramount, with more to follow we expect. A few drops in the bucket? Perhaps, but they will have helped broadcasters in their duty to keep the nation informed.

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