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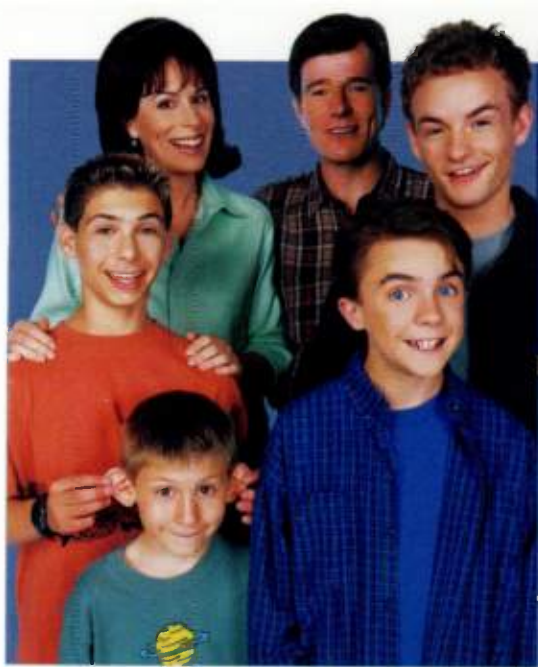
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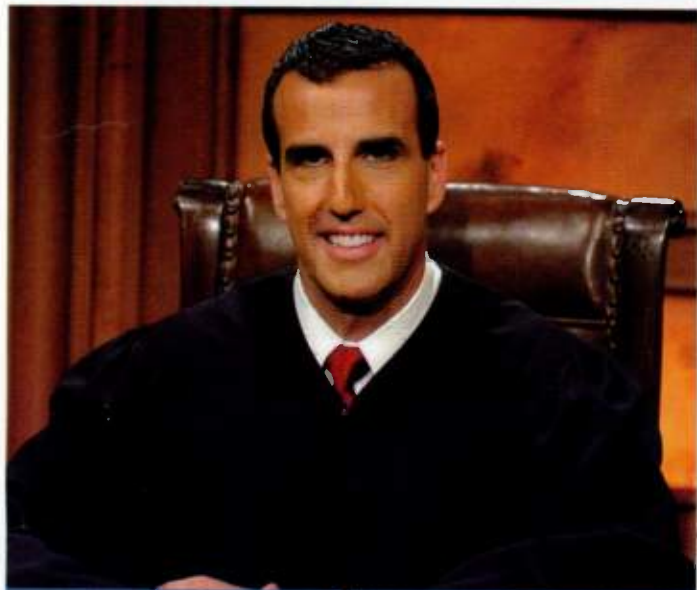
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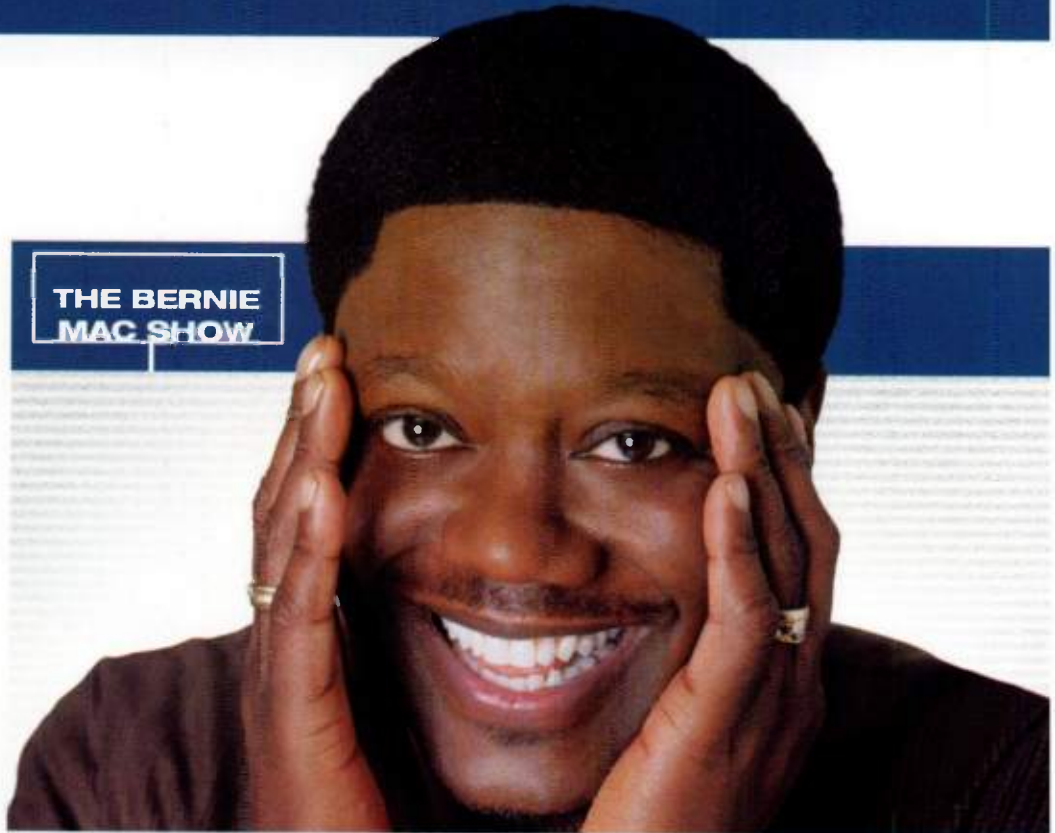
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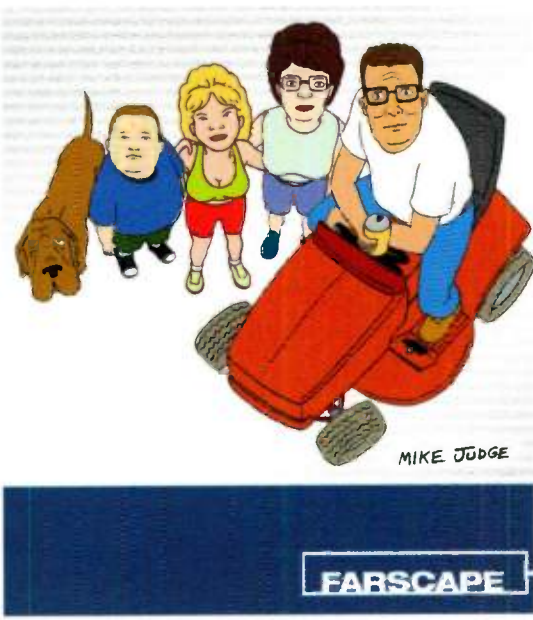
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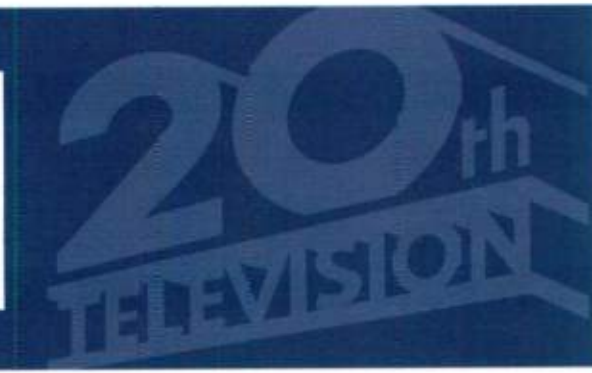
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'Idol' Curiosity
Fox's *American Idol* may have more to worry about than the perils of Paula.
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26,000

Prime time audience for CNBC's *Topic A With Tina Brown*

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COMING SOON

Cable's New Lineup

Cable networks trumpeted original series during the upfronts. That's what excites audiences and advertisers. Some early favorites for the summer: TNT unveils a cop drama, *The Closer* with

Kyra Sedgewick, in June, and FX premieres a bold Iraq-war drama, *Over There* from Steven Bochco/Chris Gerolmo, in July. Check out our big list.



Over There Page 22



Cable vs. Telco: What Happens When Competition Outpaces Washington Rules

As the war to capture subscribers for TV, phone and Internet services heats up, cable and phone companies say they need special rules. The major telcos, after committing more than \$20 billion to launch TV services, say their biggest obstacle isn't the money: They must first win approvals from

thousands of municipalities. Cable operators await a Supreme Court ruling to decide if they must share their wires with Internet foes.

BY BILL MCCONNELL

The 1996 Telecom Act was supposed to pave the way for competition, but the battles are outpacing regulators. Unless Washington acts soon, consumers may lose. **Page 14**

Photo: Business Wire/Getty Images, Kung

B&C WEEK

Where to be and what to watch...

Monday, May 9

Did you miss last night's premiere of CBS' four-hour *Elvis* mini-series? Not to worry! Viacom has declared this "Elvis Week." And, besides, you know how the Presley story turns out: His posthumously acquired former son-in-law is on trial in California for young-skewing predilections even creepier



1960s Elvis

than the Memphis cradlerobber's CBS' Presley promotional campaign ranges from an insert in the *People* mag out today (an audio chip plays a no-doubt-annoying bit of "Blue Suede Shoes" and an ad for CBS' King-related programming) to an "Elvis" category on Friday's *Jeopardy!* (Alex, what is: A grilled banana and peanut butter sandwich?)

Tuesday, May 10

It might be Elvis Week on CBS, but that doesn't mean they've lost their heads and cancelled the *Amazing Race 7* season finale (9 p.m. ET). This may be the only reality TV show where almost everyone in the audience briefly kicks around the idea of trying out. You wouldn't want to make an ass of yourself singing on TV, you couldn't stomach toadying to Donald Trump, you don't see the attraction of enduring weeks of island homelessness, and you can't be sure that the makeover maniacs wouldn't turn you or your house into a monstrosity. But zip around the world for days on end, butting heads with people except when you're trying to smile for the cameras, all for a shot at a million bucks—why not? After all, Condi Rice does it for a government salary.

Wednesday, May 11

When it comes to plundering the last-century vaults for programming topics, CBS ain't got nothin' on Court TV. While *Elvis* (with Jonathan Rhys Meyers as EP) winds up tonight (8 p.m. ET) with its second two-hour installment, Court TV reaches into the 1930s for the special *The Lindbergh*



Charles Lindbergh

The Real Threat to 'Idol'

By J. Max Robins

Talk about a media spectator sport. Little in recent memory has been more amusing than the spat between ABC and Fox over "Fallen Idol," an oh-so-special edition of ABC's *Primetime Live* that chronicled allegations of an affair between *American Idol* judge Paula Abdul and Corey Clark while he was competing on the show. In the wake of the overheated, overlong yet convincing "Fallen Idol," Fox issued a statement that attempted to spin the scandal on its head. They didn't really have any choice, no matter how riddled with holes the Fox defense is: *American Idol* is the franchise that's keeping the whole network afloat.

The Fox statement opened its counterattack by questioning "the motive" behind the heavily hyped investigation, referring to "Fallen Idol" as a "purported news special" that was "filled with rumor" from Clark, who during the course of the show "admitted to telling lies" in the past. But ABC had plenty of other evidence—including phone records and voicemail—that indicate a less than judicious relationship between Clark and Abdul. If a judge on a TV show has been getting horizontal with a contestant and giving him pillow-talk advice on how to get ahead, that's news. Every week, 3 million or 4 million kids watch *Idol*. Is this how they should think the game is played?

Sure, I get it—as the *Daily Show's* Jon Stewart said the night following the ABC exposé: It wasn't like this was a news special where someone finally found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Yeah, like most newsmagazine shows, *Primetime Live* took what should have been a solid 12-minute segment and turned it into an hour. And of course, it's fair to question if *Primetime* would have given the story the same treatment if *American Idol* was a mega-hit for ABC or that other Disney network, ESPN, instead of Fox. But the fact remains that something hardly kosher seems to have

gone on behind the scenes at the most popular show on television, and that's a story any newsmagazine would be foolish to ignore.

Yet Fox's statement did inadvertently point to an area where *Primetime* would have been wise to investigate. Hoping to downplay any effect Abdul's relationship with Clark might have had on the competition, the Fox statement pointed out that *Idol* judges don't determine the show's outcome. That's done by the voting public. To ensure that's the case, Fox said, the network has gone "to great lengths and great expense to create a voting system that is fair and reliable." So they say.

A year ago, *B&C* investigated *American Idol* voting and discovered a system that seemed about as reliable as Florida's in

the 2000 presidential election. Regional phone systems had nowhere near the technical capacity to handle the volume of calls that poured in during the final rounds of *Idol* voting, which meant that millions of potential votes never got through. Indeed, the way the system was set up left the door wide open to questions of vote manipulation through the use of computerized speed-dialing software, easily facilitated with a PC and a high-speed Internet connection. Postings on fan sites show there's still plenty of frustration among potential voters whose calls don't go through.

Let me get this straight: The network is conducting its own investigation into the allegations raised by *Primetime*, and yet it's still trumpeting *American Idol's* dubious voting system? It remains to be seen how responsive to outside criticism Fox truly is. My prediction: Justice Abdul will ride out the remainder of the May sweeps but will be gone when *American Idol* returns next season. Long term, however, the biggest threat to the show's phenomenal popularity won't be allegations of judicial misconduct, but ones of voter fraud. ■

E-mail comments to bcrobins@reedbusiness.com

THE ROBINS REPORT



American Idol finalist Corey Clark (left) on *Primetime Live*

Fox is investigating the 'Primetime' allegation but trumpets a dubious voting system.

Kidnapping Investigation Reopened (9 p.m. ET). "Forensic experts," says the flackmail, will "go on a painstaking investigative journey back in time." Pardon us while we contact those **Human Genome** people to see if the gene pool can be tweaked now to avoid the birth of the TV executive who would commission "The Robert Blake & Scott Peterson Investigations Reopened" in 2075.

Thursday, May 12

In the grand ballroom at the Waldorf tonight, they're serving masher salad: The "co-chairs" of the **International Radio & Television Society Foundation's** Gold Medal dinner in New York are **Jeff Bewkes** (chairman, **Time Warner Entertainment & Networks** group, **Peter Chernin** (News Corp. president and COO), **Tom Freston** and **Leslie Moonves** (Viacom co-presidents and co-COOs).

Anne Sweeney (co-chairman, **Disney Media Networks**), and **Bob Wright** (NBC Universal chairman and CEO). The theme "Saluting Top Media Agencies." How much tables cost: \$12,500 to \$25,000. Note to attendees: See the Money Talks column by *B&C's* **John Higgins** on page 8, then check out the Freston-Moonves body language tonight.

Disney's Anne Sweeney

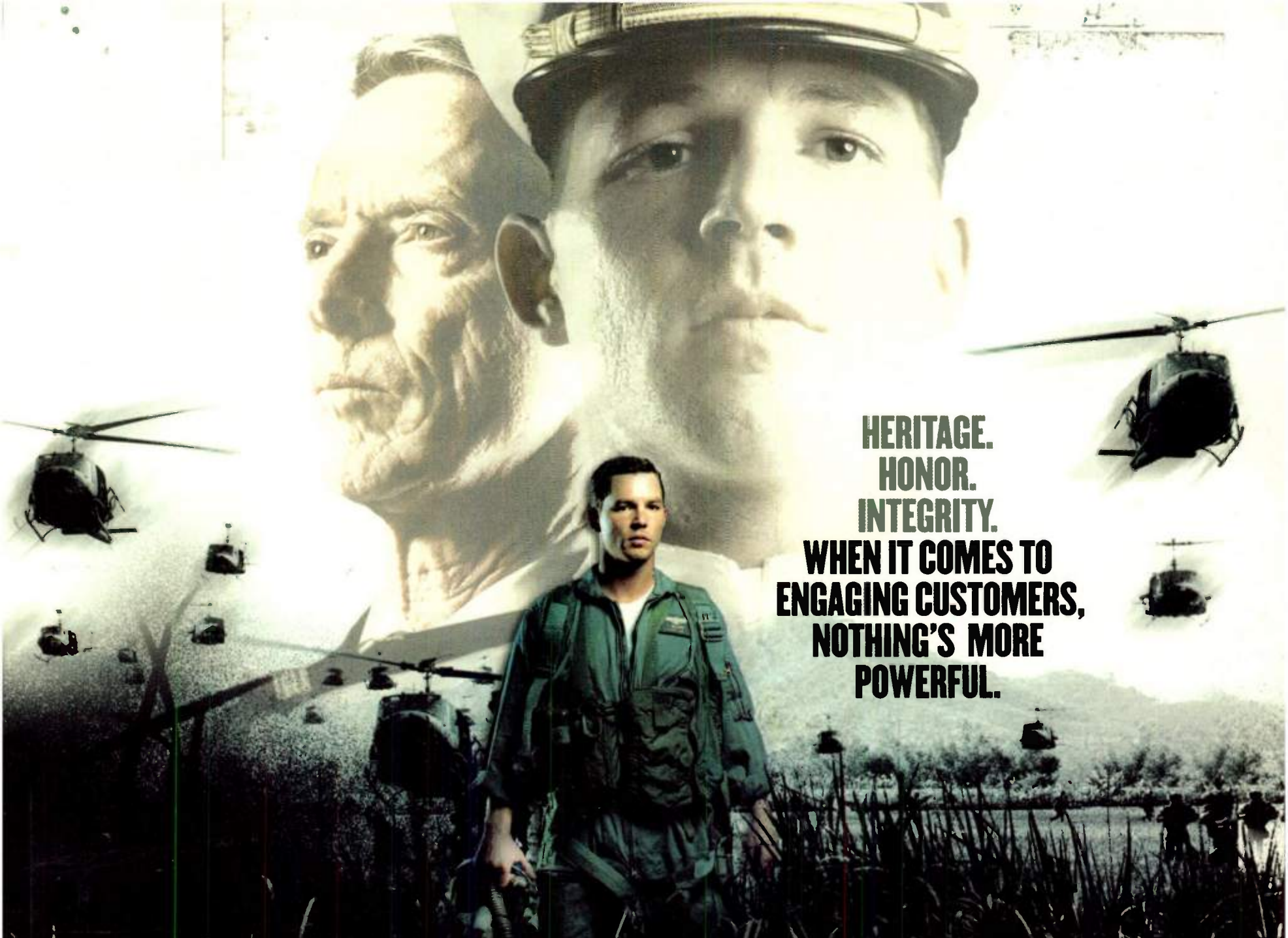
Friday, May 13

Mr. Moonves' network keeps clinging to **The King** with the docutainment *Elvis by the Presleys* (CBS, 8

p.m. ET), featuring family movies and interviews with Priscilla'n'Lisa Marie. Also tonight, **Star Trek: Enterprise** (UPN, 7 p.m. ET) finishes its run, which means

that for the first time in 18 years there will be no descendants of Kirk, Spock & Co. putting new shows on the air. In other words, *Elvis* is still performing on TV, but *Star Trek* has left the building.—*Mark Lasswell*

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FAST TRACK

Court Strikes Broadcast Flag

Federal judges Friday struck down FCC rules aimed at preventing broadcast-TV programming from being illegally duplicated over the Internet and other computer networks.

The U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington ruled that the FCC overstepped its authority when it required manufacturers of digital TVs to include "broadcast-flag" technology to protect programming content from piracy.

Broadcasters and Hollywood, who must now plead their case in Congress, say a strong safeguard against illegal copying must be in place if TV stations are going to be allowed to air digital versions of the latest movies and other valuable programming.

The court agreed with petitions from the American Library Association, Public Knowledge and others that the flag rules are not authorized by the FCC's right to regulate interstate radio communications.

The FCC has the right to govern how TV signals are received but not what is done with them after reception of the signal is complete.

The flag is a code embedded in broadcast programming that signals the receiver to block the illegal retransmission of the broadcast over computer networks and other devices. Broadcasters argue that, without that protection, the switch to digital is fraught with dangers from digital pirates.

The court said there is "no statutory foundation for the broadcast-flag rules." Saying the commission acted outside its scope of authority, the court found that "Congress never conferred authority on the FCC to regulate consumers' use of television-received apparatus after the completion of broadcast transmissions."

Fox News Wants To Double Fees

Cable operators are already bracing for tough negotiations to renew Fox News Channel, but News Corp. is signaling just how tough.

The network is looking to at least double the license fee it charges DBS and cable systems to carry the network. Currently, Fox News' fee averages around 25¢ per month per subscriber.

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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On News Corp.'s earnings conference call May 3, President Peter Chernin said he is looking at another 25¢ per month, at least. "Trust me, we think we're worth a hell of a lot more than that," he said.

Since Fox News reaches more than 80 million subscribers, that increase "its worth \$250 million to the bottom line."

Fox News launched in 1996, so its 10-year carriage deals start expiring next September.

The network's average license fee is 37% less than the 40¢ that rival CNN has managed to secure for its two networks (CNN and **Headline News**), growing the price gradually over 25 years.

But Fox has eclipsed CNN in the Nielsen ratings and wants to leapfrog the network's license fees as well. "We invested a lot of money and worked really hard to achieve this over the 10 years," Chernin says, "and we believe we should get an appropriate payback."

He has a tough road ahead. Cable and DBS operators are



Peter Chernin

already fiercely fighting increases in programming costs. Moreover, a major reason Fox News' fees are even as high as 25¢ is the massive upfront payments the

network offered operators to launch the channel. They exceeded \$300 million, including payments of about \$12 per subscriber to then-top operator, **Tele-Communications Inc.**—J.M.H.

Sony, Tribune Team On First-Run

Tribune Co.'s 26 TV stations, its syndication arm **Tribune Entertainment**, and **Sony Pictures Television (SPT)** have agreed to develop and produce a first-run syndicated program, with the joint venture working on a daytime program for the Tribune group starting in fall 2006.

The announcement failed to mention specific projects. It appears likely that a talk show with **Howard Stern** sidekick **Robin Quivers**, which failed to gain traction for this September, will be among those that Sony and Tribune consider for fall 2006.—J.B.

Apollo Panel To Launch

Arbitron and Nielsen parent **VNU** are creating a panel of 6,000-plus households to test

Continued on page 46

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A "Crucial" Rural Cable Subsidy Nobody Wants

Never underestimate Washington's ability to conjure up pressing national problems that can be solved only by the heroic application of taxpayers' dollars, funneled through expensive government programs. The latest example (OK, maybe not the latest—something worse probably happened three minutes ago) can be found in a new **Government Accountability Office** report on a bill passed by Congress in 2000 authorizing \$1.25 billion in loan guarantees to help local communities finance satellite carriage of local TV stations or to build cable systems.

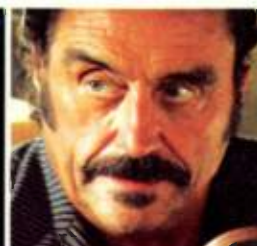
Oh, it was a dire situation back then. Congress was rushing to protect consumers in remote locales where broadcast reception is lousy and cable's not available. Though in retrospect this sounds like a solution in search of a complaint, the GAO itself warned at the time that the "financially and technically risky" program could cost \$365 million during its first five years. Congress approved it anyway, at the urging of Montana's Sen. Conrad Burns and Virginia Reps. Bob Goodlatte and Rich Boucher.



Rep. Bob Goodlatte: rural cable subsidy champion



Tina Brown is "under a very tight deadline and will be required to travel frequently to London," CNBC explains.



Ian McShane plays *Deadwood's* f-wordsmith.

FLASH!

"This bill is crucial for Americans in rural and smaller markets who rely on their local television stations for news, politics, weather, sports and emergency information," Goodlatte pleaded on the House floor shortly before the bill was approved.

Now five years has passed, and GAO is still trying to kill the program—but not because it's too expensive. The GAO's

new report urges a shutdown because *not a single penny* has been loaned and only one application has been received. (It was turned down.)

It seems that the good old unsubsidized free market is bringing local channels to the TV-deprived at a rapid pace. The latest numbers available show that just 600,000 U.S. households couldn't get local stations via cable or satellite as of September 2004. That's down from 2.9 million the year before.

Happily, administering the unspent funds and fielding nonexistent requests has kept several bureaucrats occupied. The program has cost \$1.2 million in salaries and overhead for staffers provided by the **Agriculture, Commerce and Treasury** Departments.

And Goodlatte is not disappointed. The lawmaker believes the program served its purpose, says an aide: "Satellite decided to provide more local signals than they would have, had Congress not spoken on the issue."

Brown Out

CNBC announced late Friday that Tina Brown was giving up her talk show *Topic A With Tina Brown* in order to work on a book about the legacy of Princess Diana. But alarm bells had been ringing all week at NBC Universal after the performance of the May 1 show. The former editor of

Vanity Fair, the *New Yorker* and *Talk* magazines was able to attract just 4,000 souls in the 25-54 news demographic that night. The total audience was 26,000, with 22,000 viewers 55 years and older—which means the number of under-25s watching was essentially zero. (Brown's season average is 75,000 viewers, with 22,000 in the 25-54 demo.) The guests on this *Topic A* included documentary filmmaker Simone Duarte and *Kingdom of Heaven* director Sir Ridley Scott. The last episode of the show will run on May 29.

'Deadwood' F-Tally Stalls

Deadwood fans and admirers of the flamboyant use of the f-word were bereft last week: Jeff Kay went camping. That meant Kay's episode-by-episode tally of the number of f-words used in HBO's

Old West cuss-a-thon was suspended, pending Kay's return from a trip to Myrtle Beach, S.C., from his home outside Scranton, Pa. (Or at least that's what we gleaned from the **West Virginia Surf Report**, the blog where he's listed as the proprietor and where the *Deadwood* f-count can be found).

Disproving the widely held theory that *Deadwood* characters use the f-word so effing much that no one could ever keep track, Kay is not content just to track each utterance; he also crunches the numbers. Kay vowed to update the totals once he crawls out of his tent, but here are a few intriguing numerical morsels he has uncovered so far:

The f-word per-episode frequency has *increased* from the first season, when many folks were agog at all the cursing. In its rookie year, *Deadwood* achieved a 69.3 F's-per-episode rate; this season, it has improved to 96.4 FPE. The F's per minute are up as well, of course—from 1.23 to 2.10. Indeed, the show recently reached the high-water mark so far in the FPM category, rattling off 51 F's in the last 10 minutes of episode 19.

Yes, that's quite a gaudy score, perhaps unbeatable, but those *Deadwood* boys need something to aim at other than each other.

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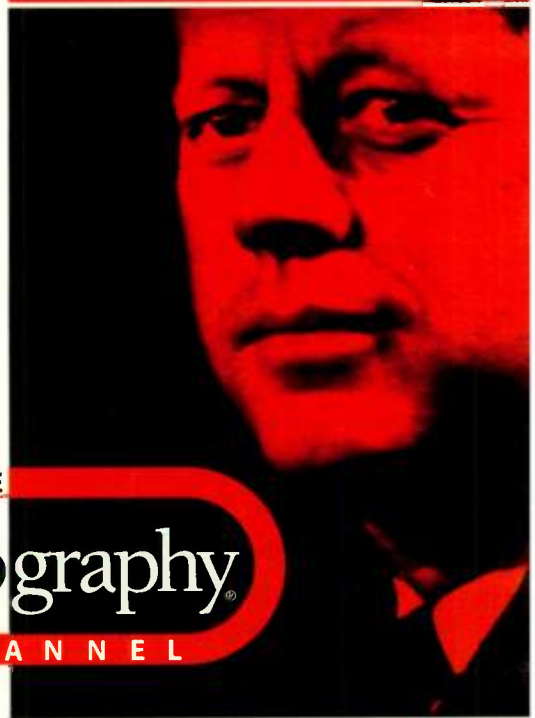
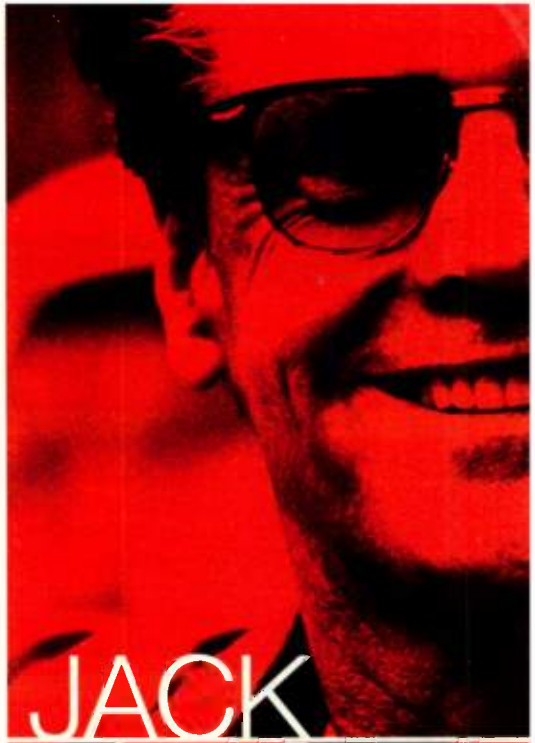
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World Radio History

ViaSlow vs. ViaGrow

Sumner Redstone fine-tunes his plan to split Viacom

As Viacom divvies up its assets into two companies, a single piece has turned up as foster child: Showtime Networks Inc.

Why is Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone taking billion-dollar cable network Showtime from cable czar Tom Freston and handing it over to Les Moonves, whose broadcast and radio operations don't have very much to do with the pay-movie network's?

The answer reveals a lot about Viacom's grand plan to split into two and the challenge Moonves faces as Redstone loads him up with the slowest-growing parts of the company.

In the next several weeks, Viacom's board is scheduled to finalize the details of the split, which calls for spinning off the company's relatively spry divisions—cable and movies—in order to free the new entity from its sluggish siblings, namely broadcast TV, radio and outdoor advertising.

One analyst dubs the two companies "ViaSlow" and "ViaGrow."

Redstone hopes that two stocks are better than one. Some investors are interested in companies that are growing quickly; other investors are interested in "value" companies, which grow slowly but pay dividends.

Neither investor has been particularly interested in Viacom lately. So the split will supposedly lift the overall value by giving investors the kind of company they want.

When Viacom revealed the split plan in March, company executives said it would be along the lines set a year ago after frustrated President Mel Karmazin left and Redstone anointed two co-presidents: longtime MTV Chairman Freston and CBS Chairman Moonves. Both have worked minor miracles in their respective divisions.

differently. As Viacom is "modeling" the new company today, Freston will keep only Viacom's basic-cable networks and the DVD-fueled Paramount Pictures. Moonves is getting all the slow movers, which include books, Paramount's theme parks (which are for sale) and Showtime.

Sounds crazy, right? You'd think that, as a pay-cable network, Showtime would remain tied to cable powerhouse MTV and certainly to its major supplier of theatrical movies, Paramount. But that would be an attempt at synergy, that quaint notion that companies make more money when different divisions collaborate.

The folks at NBC Universal believe in it, but Viacom seems to have made synergy less of a priority. This split is almost entirely a financial move. The 10 pieces of Moonves Inc. are slow growers, generally expected to post revenue

and operating-cash-flow gains ranging from just 2% to 7% next year.

ton is left free to expand and acquire new businesses. The positioning of the deal annoys Moonves and his team, according to Viacom insiders. They hate investors' description of Moonves Inc. as a "value" stock, which makes it sound like a utility business, not showbiz.

Moonves has reason to be sore: not much growth at the divisions that are on track. Infinity's billboard business might be bouncing back, but the radio

business is in a terrible slump. Even CBS isn't growing all that quickly. Despite the network's power in topping NBC this season, Morgan Stanley estimates that CBS' revenues will grow just 3% to \$4.3 billion this year. CBS O&O stations are expected to be down 2% this year (no election spending) but up just 6% next year. Average: 4%. Yawn.

But un-sexy does not necessarily mean unexciting from a stock-market standpoint. Moonves' company will take on more debt than Freston's, with the aim of using that cash to pay a relatively rich dividend and regularly buy back stock. NBC Universal Chairman Bob Wright argues that the primary beneficiary of a big dividend is Viacom's biggest shareholder, the Redstone family.

But "returning capital to shareholders" is a cliché on Wall Street these days. And when things go right, leverage dramatically amplifies a company's return on capital. So Moonves' personal stock options may be more valuable under the new structure than under the current one.

"Slow growth doesn't imply that the 'Les side' is going to be a dog stock," says Merrill Lynch media analyst Jessica Reif Cohen. "It should pay a reasonably high dividend, which is rare in media."

One development to watch is whether Freston's and Moonves' groups really become separate companies or they act as Redstone companies. For example, Moonves' Showtime is dependent on Freston's Paramount for theatrical releases. But that deal expires in 2007. Will Paramount truly seek competitive bids from Showtime's rivals, HBO and Starz, or will those movies remain in the Redstone family?

Of course, Freston's units could encounter unexpected troubles and make Moonves' side the better stock. Sometimes slow and steady wins the race. ■

E-mail comments to jhiggins@reedbusiness.com

MONEY TALKS By John M. Higgins



Leslie Moonves (left) and Tom Freston

and operating-cash-flow gains ranging from just 2% to 7% next year.

Showtime, which has long trailed pay-movie giant HBO, had some decent years of growth as DBS services expanded the number of homes taking cable networks. But, according to the conventional industry wisdom, that has played out, and its \$1.2 billion in 2004 revenue is expected to grow only 3% in 2006.

Viacom executives note that suc-

cess in the pay-network game depends mostly on original productions, not theatricals. So it makes sense to team Showtime with CBS and Paramount Television, which are experts in developing hour-long series.

Perhaps. But the bottom line is that anything growing at Showtime's pace would slow Freston's new company down. The whole deal aims to shelter it from any drag on operating cash flow and, hence, its stock price. Freston

THE B&C

WEEK OF APRIL 29-MAY 5

THE B&C 10

WEEK YTD

2.2%

-4.5%

BROADCAST TV GROUPS

WEEK YTD

2.5%

6.6%

CABLE OPERATORS

WEEK YTD

1.4%

-2.5%

RADIO

WEEK YTD

-0.6%

-6.9%

	CLOSE	WEEK	YTD
Dow Jones	10340.38	2.7%	-4.1%
Nasdaq	1961.80	3.0%	-9.8%

THE B&C 10

CLOSE WEEK YTD

Cablevision	\$26.85	2.9%	7.8%
Clear Channel	\$31.60	-1.2%	-5.6%
Comcast Corp.	\$31.70	0.7%	-3.5%
Disney	\$26.71	3.1%	-3.9%
EchoStar	\$28.99	1.8%	-12.8%
Hearst-Argyle	\$25.18	1.3%	-4.5%
News Corp.	\$16.19	2.0%	-15.7%
Time Warner	\$17.12	1.5%	-11.9%
Tribune	\$38.92	3.8%	-7.6%
Viacom	\$35.72	2.1%	-3.7%

GOOD WEEK

Knology Inc.	\$2.29	28.7%	-41.3%
Sirius	\$5.32	12.5%	-30.2%
Besley Bcstg.	\$17.01	12.1%	-3.0%
Salem Comm.	\$20.37	8.9%	-18.4%
Mediacom	\$5.92	8.8%	-5.3%

BAD WEEK

ValueVision	\$8.92	-10.3%	-35.9%
Acme	\$3.81	-8.2%	-45.6%
Big City Radio	\$0.10	-4.5%	0.0%
Cumulus	\$12.55	-2.9%	-16.8%
TV Azteca	\$7.89	-2.8%	-23.2%

WATCH VALUEVISION

-10%

Hey, NBC's not the only network around 30 Rock with problems. Check ValueVision, of which NBC owns 38%. Its ShopNBC saw first-quarter sales slip 2% and negative cash flow double to \$7 million. One problem: watches. They're just not selling this season. ValueVision's stock fell 10% last week.

"Slow growth doesn't imply that the 'Les side' is going to be a dog stock. It should pay a reasonably high dividend, which is rare in media." JESSICA REIF COHEN, MERRILL LYNCH

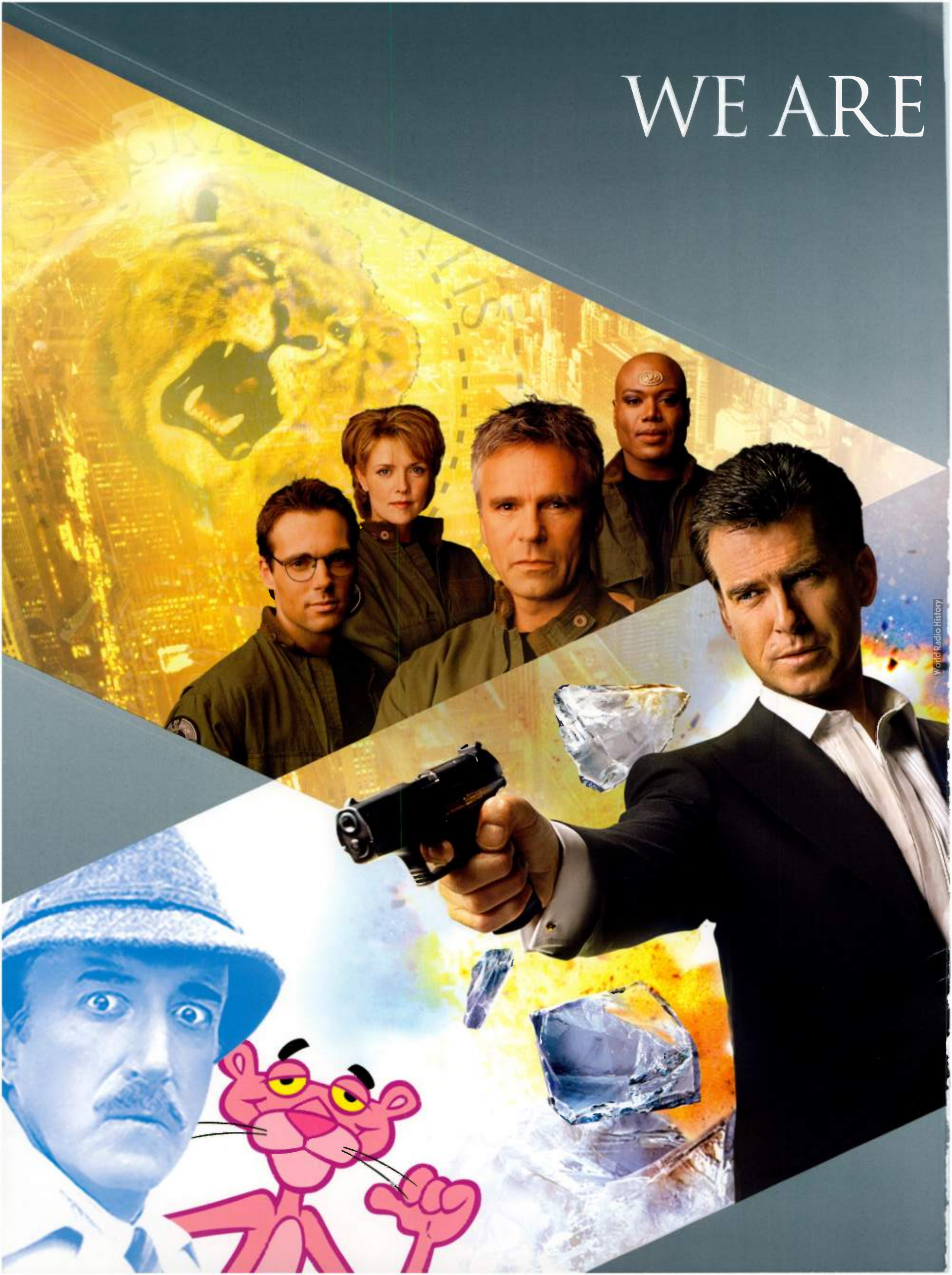
When Viacom initially disclosed the split, Freston's side of the company was to keep all the cable networks and Paramount; Moonves would run the CBS and UPN broadcast networks and stations, Infinity radio and outdoor advertising, and Paramount's TV production and syndication units. The one exception up in the air was book publisher Simon & Schuster, which currently reports to Freston.

The deal is shaping up much, much



WE ARE
CHANGING...

WE ARE



EXPANDING...



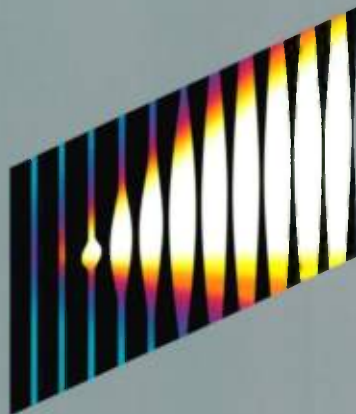
ES TELEVISION

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Networks Plot to Restore Summer's Sizzle

Tommy Lee, Ashton Kutcher and Paris Hilton's mom are recruited to the cause **By Jim Benson**

In rolling out their summer hopefuls starting next month, broadcast networks face the daunting task of dreaming up concepts that can reignite viewer interest in a season that was, for a short period, a TV hit-making machine.

It has been a half dozen years since the blockbuster premiere of ABC's *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire* rocked the networks out of their traditional summer-rerun doldrums. In the following years, summertime became a hotbed for unscripted tryouts, but the trend that produced such breakouts as CBS' *Survivor* and Fox's *American Idol* has begun to cool. Last summer was notable primarily for the sudden emergence of CBS' *The Amazing Race* as a bona fide hit after a few years of moderate success.

Broadcasters seeking to recapture the summer magic have enlisted a bevy of big names to work in front of the cameras or behind the scenes, from rocker Tommy

Lee and former TLC members T-Boz and Chilli, to comedian Steve Martin and producer David E. Kelley. Though heavily weighted toward reality shows, the summer fare will include some scripted programming—most significantly, ABC's *Empire* miniseries set in ancient Rome.

"NOT HEAVY LIFTING"

Regardless of how these new shows perform, the onslaught of programming for the summer season underscores how far television has moved from the low-energy approach that ruled the medium for decades. The upheaval began in August 1999, with the premiere of *Millionaire*, which looked like a promising solution for broadcast networks that had been getting hammered during the warm months by *Sex and the City* and other originals on cable. But ABC—and its competitors—were hardly prepared for *Millionaire*'s revelation that a huge potential audience for network pro-

gramming had been lying untapped every summer.

The upward arc for unscripted summer series that began with *Millionaire* was the catalyst for the networks' move to more original year-round programming in the battle to stem viewer erosion. But one consequence of the year-round approach may have been to diminish the very novelty that made new summer programming seem so fresh to many viewers. Then again, audiences also may have become inured to what Arthur Gruen, president of media research firm Wilkofsky Gruen Research, calls the "can you top this" nature of the reality programming launched during the summer months.

There will be plenty of familiar titles on the summer schedule—notably CBS' *Big Brother*, which the network has seen grow every summer since its July 2000 premiere and which CBS has no inclination to throw into the regular season against more-robust competition.

"It's perfect summer programming—not heavy lifting," says CBS and UPN scheduling czar, Senior Executive VP Kelly Kahl.

The networks are also sending into action some moderately successful shows (such as NBC's *Average Joe 4: The Joes Strike Back* and *The Biggest Loser* and ABC's *Wife Swap*), in the hope that an *Amazing Race*-like summer lightning will strike.

But the bulk of promotion and attention will focus on new projects attached to notable names, including:

■ Steve Martin is among a long list of executive producers for ABC's *The Scholar*, a competition series that will send "one of America's best and brightest" high school students to a top university, all expenses paid.

■ Ashton Kutcher, who cut his producing teeth on MTV's *Punk'd*, is behind The WB's *Beauty and the Geek*—described as part competition, part social experiment, but not a dating show.

■ T-Boz and Chilli, the two remaining members of the female group TLC (following the death of Lisa Lopes in a car wreck in 2002), seek a third performer to join them in an upcoming concert and record with them in the studio on UPN's *R U the Girl with T-Boz & Chilli*.

■ Kathy Hilton, who brought Paris and Nikki Hilton into the world, will pick one of "14 eccentric young contestants" vying for the "glamorous caviar-and-champagne lifestyle" on NBC's *I Want To Be a Hilton*.

■ David E. Kelley, prodigious producer of scripted legal drama (*Boston Legal*, *The Practice*, etc.), goes unscripted with NBC's *The Law Firm*. Kelley is executive-producing a show in which lawyers compete in front of judges and juries.



On *The Scholar*, students will compete for an all-expenses-paid college education.

■ Motley Crue's Tommy Lee, who along with ex-wife Pamela Anderson already had one notorious bout with unscripted programming, will return to college on NBC.

The overwhelming majority of this summer's shows are unscripted. Not only are they cheaper to produce than drama—beginners cost about half the average \$1.5 million-\$2 million per hour of scripted shows—but the odds for success are better.

Fox's *The O.C.*, which made its debut in August 2003, has been the only network drama to have really broken out of the warm months during the same six-year period that unscripted shows have prospered. That's not to say this summer will be entirely devoid of scripted shows. Fox, which struck out last year with its highly publicized move toward year-round programming, could still devote as much as half its summer schedule to scripted programs as it seeks to get some stability leading into the Major League Baseball post-season in the fall.

ABC has chosen to go with a mix of new product, including the *Empire* miniseries, says Jeff Bader, executive VP of the entertainment division and head of scheduling. A number of shows going onto ABC's schedule this summer—such as *Dancing With the Stars* and *Brat Camp*, which are fairly self-explanatory—actually were ready to go for March and April, "but because of our success, we did not need them," Bader explains.

But it's not as if, in the post-*Millionaire* era, summer reruns are history. CBS has done well with its recycled product. That was particularly the case last summer with *NCIS* and *Without a Trace*, both of which picked up new viewers who then bolstered the shows during the regular season.

Says CBS' Kohl, "I think we certainly feel the need to have some original content on during the summer, but I don't see the need not to run scripted."

Gruen acknowledges CBS' gains with its summer-rerun strategy but says the networks cannot be complacent in the face of increasing competition from cable networks, which have found success in the summers with originals like FX's *The Shield*, *Nip/Tuck* and *Rescue Me*.

Says Gruen, "Relying on reruns as a regular diet is over." ■

SLATED FOR SUMMER

Original series on broadcast networks' schedules*

SHOW	NEW/RETURNING	TYPE	NETWORK	PRODUCER	PREMIERE
<i>Dancing With the Stars</i>	new	unscripted	ABC	BBC Ent.	9-10 p.m. June 1
<i>The Scholar</i>	new	unscripted	ABC	Carsey Werner, Steve Martin, et al	8-9 p.m. June 6
<i>Empire</i>	new	limited drama series	ABC	Taranus, with Storyline, Touchstone	9-11 p.m. June 28
<i>Brat Camp</i>	new	unscripted	ABC	Shapiro/Grodner, Twenty Twenty	TBA (July)
<i>Welcome to the Neighborhood</i>	new	unscripted	ABC	MGM/New Screen Concepts	TBA (July)
<i>Wife Swap</i>	returning	unscripted	ABC	RDF Meida	TBA (July)
<i>The Cut</i>	new	unscripted with Tommy Hilfiger hosting	CBS	Lions Gate TV, with Pilgrim	TBA (June)
<i>Big Brother 6</i>	returning	unscripted	CBS	Arnold/Grodner, with Endemol USA	TBA (July)
<i>Rock Star: INXS</i>	new	unscripted	CBS	Mark Burnett Prods.	TBA (July)
<i>Hit Me Baby One More Time</i>	new	unscripted	NBC	Granada America	9-10 p.m. June 2
<i>I Want To Be a Hilton</i>	new	unscripted, featuring Kathy Hilton	NBC	Endemol USA	June 21
<i>Average Joe 4: The Joes Strike Back</i>	returning	unscripted	NBC	NBC Universal TV Studio (NUTS), Krasnow Prods.	8-9 June 28
<i>The Law Firm</i>	new	unscripted	NBC	Renegade 83, David E. Kelley Prods., 20th Century Fox TV	9-10 p.m. June 27
<i>Meet Mister Mom</i>	new	unscripted	NBC	Reveille, Full Circle, James Bruce Prods.	8-9 p.m. Aug. 3
<i>The Biggest Loser</i>	returning	unscripted	NBC	Reveille, 25/7 Prods., 3 Ball Prods., NUTS	8-9:30 Aug. 9
<i>Tommy Lee Goes to College</i>	new	unscripted	NBC	NBC Studios	9:30-10 Aug. 9
<i>R U the Girl With T-Boz & Chilli</i>	new	unscripted	UPN	Fox TV Studios	TBA
<i>Beauty and the Geek</i>	new	unscripted	WB	Katalyst/Films with 3 Ball Prods.	8-9 June 1
<i>Summerland</i>	returning	scripted	WB	Spelling TV	TBA
<i>Blue Collar TV</i>	returning	sketch comedy	WB	Bahr/Small Prods., Parallel Ent. with Riverside Prods.; Warner Bros. TV	TBA

* Fox schedule not available TBA= To be announced



WASHINGTON WATCH

Ex-FCC, NAB Counsels Build Media Practice For Wilmer Cutler

Powerhouse Washington law firm **Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr** has tapped two veteran media lawyers to build a media-policy practice.

The firm, which successfully defended the 2002 campaign-finance-reform law before the **Supreme Court**, is actually best-known for securities and white-collar defense and intellectual-property and antitrust work. Now the firm wants to lure broadcast, cable and other media clients.

Former FCC General Counsel **John Rogovin** and ex-NAB General



John Rogovin

Counsel **Jack Goodman** will specialize in media law within the firm's communications and e-commerce practice. Currently, the practice's main clients

are telephone companies.

Rogovin and Goodman's first assignment is to help the firm's Bell telephone clients **Verizon** and **SBC** navigate regulatory hurdles in front of their entry into the video-delivery business, but part of their charge is to recruit new broadcast and cable clients, too. "John and I hope to bring in more media-policy work," says Goodman, who joined the firm six weeks ago. He was an NAB lawyer for 14 years. Rogovin served as FCC deputy general counsel and then general counsel from 2001 to 2005.

Ferree Urges "Balance" In Media Diets

In his first public appearance since becoming acting president of the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)**, **Ken Ferree** took some swipes at commercial broadcasters for offering up the programming equivalent of "fried foods and desserts."

Non-profit broadcasters, he told a gathering of public-radio execs in Washington, offer a nutritious alternative.

"Profit-motivated, commercial media is very good at providing high-fat, low-nutrition programming [that] consumers rush to in their weaker moments," said Ferree, who is making an earnest effort to define himself and his goals for CPB amid doubts about his commitment to public broadcasting and concerns that CPB leadership is pushing its programming to the political right.

Big Three Fight Indecency

Networks form group to avert new rules **By John Eggerton**

Three of the Big Four broadcast networks—**NBC, Fox** and **CBS**—have funded a new coalition called **TV Watch** to promote parental content controls as preferable to a government crackdown on indecency.

The organized effort is significant because, like the broadcast industry as a whole, the networks have typically limited their defense of racy programming to the courts and the **FCC** rather than engaging parents and the general public. But the stakes are now high enough—**Viacom** paid \$3.5 million to settle a spate of indecency cases, and the industry even faces threats of license revocations—that they are willing to risk a possible backlash against their campaign from viewers who think government standards need to be strengthened.

The TV Watch coalition comprises some strange bedfellows: **American Conservative Union, Americans for Tax Reform, Center for Creative Voices in Media, The Creative Coalition, Media Freedom Project, The Media Institute, NBC Universal, News Corp., Viacom Inc., the U.S. Chamber of Commerce**, and Web site **SpeakSpeak.org**. ABC parent **Disney** is not currently a member of the coalition.

The group will advocate parental controls and personal responsibility over government regulation of broadcast or cable TV and suggests that it will also push against cable regulations like tiering or enforced à la carte, saying they are just another form of government control.

The three major media companies on the list provided the seed money for the effort, although Executive Director **Jim Dyke** would not give specific amounts.

On the other side of the battle is the **Parents Television Council (PTC)**, which has inundated the

FCC with complaints over **Janet Jackson** and others. PTC President **Brent Bozell** dismisses the coalition as a network-financed hired gun that he says includes groups—he singles out the **American Conservative Union** and **Americans for Tax Reform**—that have "never given a moment's thought to the suffocating sewage coming from the entertainment industry."

NBC just last week agreed to join the other networks in airing the content "descriptors" that work with the V-chip ratings, having fought against the descriptors for almost eight years.

Separately last week, the cable industry announced an effort to increase the size and frequency of content ratings and to better promote the availability of parental controls.

The group commissioned a poll that found that most people would rather occasionally see something that offends them than have the government "crowding out their personal responsibility and personal choices."

The poll of 1,002 respondents was conducted by **Peter D. Hart Research Associates** and the **Luntz Research Companies** and has a margin of error of $\pm 3\%$.

Among its findings:

- Eighty-six percent of Americans say more parental involvement is the best way to keep kids from seeing what they shouldn't see. Eleven percent say the government should increase control and enforcement of network-television programming.

- By nearly four to one, Americans say more government regulation is not the solution; personal responsibility is.

- Ninety-one percent of Americans say that "some people will always be able to find something on the television or radio that offends them. But the sensitivities of a few should not dictate the choices for everyone else." ■

Ferree, COO and acting president CPB since the departure of **Kathleen Cox** four weeks ago, denies there's an agenda to turn public stations into right-wing mouthpieces as has been suggested by **Common Cause, Consumers Union** and **Free Press**. Nevertheless, he defended a move to include more conservative voices on stations supported in part by taxpayer dollars. "I'd urge you to think seriously about diversity of opinion," he said. "CPB, funded as it is with taxpayer dollars and guided as

it is by statutory language, has special responsibilities to strive toward objectivity and balance. Our goal should be to expand and enlighten public discourse; offering a wide range of views is one way to do that."

Dummies Sort Out DTV Confusion

To alleviate Washington concerns that digital-TV buying is a nightmare,

RCA has teamed with the publisher of the **Dummies** how-to series. The goal is to help decipher options and technical jargon that many in the industry think is scaring set buyers away from digital-TV purchases.



HDTV Buying Tips for Dummies

The pocket-size **HDTV Buying Tips for Dummies** is designed to be an "easy-to-understand primer" on common DTV connections, how to receive programming, the various display formats, and display-technology options. The Dummies series already includes a book on HDTV, but the pocket guide will be distributed by consumer-electronics retailers.

The Dummies series already includes a book on HDTV, but the pocket guide will be distributed by consumer-electronics retailers.

Adelstein Skeptical of Cable Family Tier

FCC Commissioner **Jonathan Adelstein** isn't ready to join critics who want to make cable operators offer family-themed tiers or "à la carte" channels to protect children from inappropriate programming.

In a speech to cable-industry public-relations executives, he said cable should do more to explain how those options could drive up consumers' costs or eliminate choice by driving weaker channels out of business. "It's easy to say you shouldn't pay for channels you don't want, but the other side ... deserves consideration." Adelstein said he's not against either family tiers or à la carte but the impact on costs and viability of lower-rated channels "are counterweights that ought to be considered."

He made his comments before the annual Washington conference of the **Cable Television Public Affairs Association**. The cable industry's plan to spend \$250 million on a public-affairs campaign to educate parents about channel-blocking technology is "fantastic," Adelstein said.

Comcast Adds Lobbyist For State Governments

As cable rolls out telephone service to more local markets, the biggest operator has hired a lobbyist to handle state legislatures and regulators.

Comcast has hired **Richard Schollmann**, previously president of the **Virginia Cable Telecommunications Association**, to help the company win state approvals to roll out local telephone service and make the case against phone companies' bid for local franchise rules that would ease their entry into video service.

RATINGS 4/18-24/05

Nielsen Media Research

Top 25 Shows

ADULTS 18-49

PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Seinfeld	3.9	4.7
2 Seinfeld (wknd)	3.7	4.3
3 Everybody Loves Raymond	3.6	4.5
4 Friends	3.3	4.1
5 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	3.0	3.4
6 Oprah Winfrey Show	2.7	2.7
7 Everybody Loves Raymond (wknd)	2.3	2.4
8 That '70s Show	2.1	2.6
9 Wheel of Fortune	2.0	NA
10 Dr. Phil	1.9	1.9
10 Entertainment Tonight	1.9	1.9
12 King of Queens	1.8	2.2
12 King of the Hill	1.8	2.1
12 Malcolm in the Middle	1.8	2.1
15 Jeopardy!	1.7	NA
15 Judge Judy	1.7	2.5
15 Will & Grace	1.7	2.0
18 King of Queens (wknd)	1.6	2.0
19 Cops	1.4	1.6
19 Home Improvement	1.4	1.7
19 Maury	1.4	1.5
22 Divorce Court	1.3	1.8
22 That '70s Show (wknd)	1.3	1.6
24 Frasier	1.2	1.4
24 Friends (wknd)	1.2	1.2
24 Inside Edition	1.2	1.2
24 Judge Mathis	1.2	1.2
24 Live With Regis and Kelly	1.2	NA
24 Wheel of Fortune (wknd)	1.2	NA

Top Off-Net Dramas

ADULTS 18-49

PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	3.0	3.4
2 The Practice	0.9	0.9
2 The West Wing	0.9	1.1
2 The X-Files	0.9	1.0
5 ER	0.7	0.9

According to Nielsen Media Research Syndication Service Ranking Report April 18-24, 2005
 AA = Average Audience Rating
 GAA = Gross Average Audience
 One Nielsen rating point = 1,096,000 households, which represents 1% of the 109.6 million U.S. TV Households
 NA = not available

Unaligneds' Fall Lines

Sony, Warner Bros. gird for first-run battle

By Jim Benson

A month before anyone is supposed to officially care, first-run projects are cropping up for fall 2006. So will it be business as usual as the next selling season gets under way?

Well, that depends on your vantage point.

Since industry consolidation has left most major syndicators tied to big station groups, little will change for them. Stations belonging to top-tier groups will once again be able to dictate their programming needs to in-house suppliers (like Paramount, King World, Disney and Twentieth) when ill-performing shows open up holes in their schedules. The NBC O&Os have a project in the wings with NBC Universal's syndication arm, which plans a talk show with *Will & Grace* co-star Megan Mullally for next year.

But the issue will be whether major independents like Warner Bros. (including subsidiary Telepictures) and Sony Pictures Television can continue to afford to produce big-budget shows without partnering with the station groups belonging to ABC, CBS, NBC, Tribune and Fox.

Sony took the plunge last week, entering into a loose first-run alliance with the Tribune stations. Warner Bros., which has unofficially been tied to Tribune in the past, does business with a number of groups, including Fox.

With more and more distributors tied to broadcast groups, stations in the secondary markets and beyond will have even

less control over what goes on their air now. It has become rare that stations outside the top markets can see a pilot and offer input before a national roll-out.

Despite lacking group affiliations, Warner Bros. and Sony have buttressed their first-run ledgers, thanks to Warner's diversification and Sony's twin goldmines, *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy!* (Sony produces, King World distributes). Those shows minimize the damage from Sony failures like this season's *Pat Croce: Moving In* and *Life & Style* and the apparently failed attempt to launch a Robin Quivers talk show this fall.

Although Warner Bros. struck out with *Larry Elder* this season, the syndicator hit pay dirt with *Ellen DeGeneres*, which nimbly picked up the valuable affiliate CPM mantle of *Rosie O'Donnell*. Warner Bros. also has a spate of other shows, including *Extra* and *People's Court*, returning this fall.

Supermodel Tyra Banks' talk show from Telepictures got the Fox O&Os to break with their tradition of taking shows from outside studios only on a straight-barter basis. With many in-house failures dotting its schedule, Fox took the Banks show for fall on a cash-plus-barter basis, although industry sources speculate that its estimated \$450,000-\$500,000 weekly production costs far outweigh a paltry license fee the studio will get from the Fox O&Os. (Telepictures will likely try to make the costs up elsewhere.)

That is the sort of risk that unaligned studios like Warner Bros. and Sony have had to take to stay on the first-run playing field. ■



Tyra Banks

IN FOCUS

COOL SPRING DAYS

The reruns and weaker episodes that fill the syndicated landscape before the start of the May sweeps, combined with two days of preemptions for coverage of Pope Benedict XVI's election, resulted in lackluster ratings during the week ended April 24.



Alex Trebek of *Jeopardy!*

Nielsen national barter rankings show that, as usual, top off-net sitcoms airing in access time periods dominated first-run fare in adults 18-49.

Seinfeld led all week-day strips with a 3.7 rating in the key demo, compared with a 3.6 for *Everybody Loves Raymond* and a 3.3 for *Friends*. The weekend version of *Seinfeld* led all syndicated shows in adults 18-49, earning a 3.9.

Top-rated *Wheel of Fortune*, hitting a new season-low 8.1 household rating, nonetheless led all first-run access strips in adults 18-49. It earned a 2.0 rating in the demo, versus a 1.9 for *Entertainment Tonight*, 1.7 for *Jeopardy!* (which matched its season low with a 6.9 household rating), 1.1 for *Access Hollywood* and 1.0 for *Extra*.

In the household rankings, most magazines declined slightly for the week. Ironically, as testimony heated up in the Michael Jackson trial, ratings for *Celebrity Justice* dropped by the largest margin of any national magazine. It gave up 10% of its audience from the previous week, finishing down 31% year-to-year at a 0.9.

Daytime shows turned in a mixed week, with the top talkers *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Dr. Phil* and *Maury* all increasing from the previous week. *Maury*, however, dropped a bit year-to-year. *The Montel Williams Show* (2.2) outpaced *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* (1.7).

SMASH SEASON PREMIERE!



FOX SUNDAY 9-930PM, RTG

W18-34	TEENS	W18-49	M18-34	M18-49
+178%	+219%	+119%	+197%	+133%
6.4	8.6	4.6	9.8	7.0
2.3	2.7	2.1	3.3	3.0
FAMILY GUY	FAMILY GUY	FAMILY GUY	FAMILY GUY	FAMILY GUY
9/20-04/24 DEBUT 5/1	9/20-04/24 DEBUT 5/1	9/20-04/24 DEBUT 5/1	9/20-04/24 DEBUT 5/1	9/20-04/24 DEBUT 5/1

Source: NTI, Galaxy Explorer, % Increase 5/1/05 vs. 9/20/04-4/24/05 TP Avg (excludes sports), #1 = 5/1/05 FOX vs. TP all other networks, Rtg. (Subject to Qualifications Upon Request)



STATION TO STATION

Viacom Mulls L.A. 'Anchor Duopoly'

By Jim Benson

Dr. Phil, having aired since its inception on KNBC Los Angeles, moves to KCBS this fall and stands a good chance of bumping the station's 4 p.m. newscast to sister duopoly station KCAL. Market sources say the odds are 50-50 that KCBS newscast anchors Harold Greene and Ann Martin would move along with it.

If that should happen, Greene and Martin would become the first major anchor talents in a top-10 market to switch from a primary O&O outlet to a weaker station under the same ownership. The veteran anchors, both closely identified with KCBS after years of promotion, also anchor KCBS' 6 p.m. newscast.

KCBS would make the move in hope that *Dr. Phil*, which has generated strong ratings in Los Angeles, would boost its 5 and 6 p.m. newscasts, perennial third-place finishers in a three-way O&O news race.

With both stations now under the same roof, Greene and Martin—whose contract is coming up for renewal—wouldn't have far to go traveling from one set to another.

A former independent that was



Harold Greene and Ann Martin

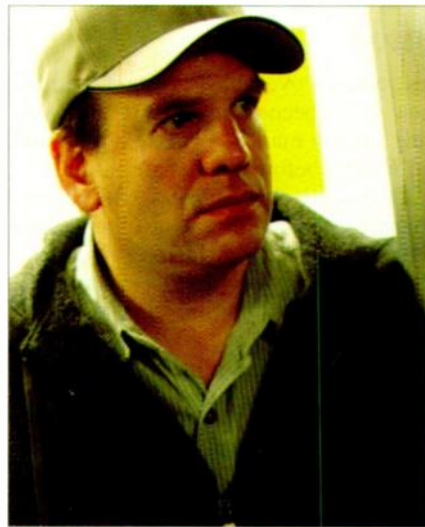
once owned by Disney, KCAL is heavily into news, with broadcasts at noon and 2, 3 and a three-hour block at 8 p.m. Even more newscasts may be on the way next season, further reducing the number of time slots open to syndicators in the nation's No. 2 market.

With the infrastructure already in place, the large volume of news has proved to be a financial boon to KCAL. Although the station pays limited production costs, it avoids dishing out steep license fees and giving up valuable advertising inventory for cash-plus-barter syndicated shows.

Over the past year, insiders say, the duopoly started handing out contracts requiring on-air talent to appear on both stations

The Accidental Success Story

David Simon, producer of *The Wire*, is not impressed with himself **By Stu Miller**



David Simon (top), Sonja Sohn, Clarke Peters and Dominic West of *The Wire*

It is an inspiring professional progression: A journalist becomes a writer, then a producer, on a broadcast-network series, then executive producer of a cable miniseries, then executive producer of a cable series. And with each project earning critical raves, it appears to be a dream career.

Not so, demurs the man in question, David Simon, creator of HBO's acclaimed series *The Wire*, one of the television's grittiest and most complex dramas, which deals with everything from the follies of the drug war to the plight of the working class—all in the guise of a cop show. "This is not a career ascendant," Simon says. "I think I've pretty well marginalized myself."

FINALLY, A RENEWAL

Simon's gloomy assessment seems a little over the top, particularly since he just got what he wanted: A renewal. But even that is a dark story. The fact is, while HBO execs profess to love *The Wire*, the network took from December, when the third season ended, until last month, to approve a fourth season. *The Wire* will go back into production soon

but won't air until sometime 2006. (The next installment will concentrate on the difficulty of inner-city public schools.) Still, his pessimism reflects both his belief that his uncompromising vision leaves few options on television and the fact that he views himself not as a producer but as someone who has been producing.

Indeed, his is an accidental career. Born in Washington, Simon graduated from the University of Maryland and became a police reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*. He thought so little about television that he nearly gave away the television rights to his first book, *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets*, for an extra \$5,000 advance. When Barry Levinson transformed *Homicide* into an NBC drama, Simon at first thought the show merely "a funny little stepchild."

THE FONTANA FACTOR

Simon was invited by Tom Fontana to write some scripts and was eventually offered jobs by both *Homicide* and *NYPD Blue*. He chose *Homicide* because Fontana said that, while he would pay less, he would teach him more. "He really kept that promise," Simon says.

Simon went from writing in his first season to set and local casting in his second season to working in the edit suites in his third ("with Tom undoing everything afterwards"), all the way to eventually shepherding an episode through in its entirety.

And when Simon, along with former police detective Ed Burns, co-wrote another Baltimore-based book, called *The*

Corner, he found that he actually wanted to return to the small screen. "I took the first job as a lark, thinking, when I was done, I'd go do another book, but by then I'd gotten hold of the crack pipe of television," he says.

Simon knew that only premium cable would dare do a miniseries like *The Corner*, which looked so frankly at drug addiction.

HBO was more nervous about leaving a relative novice in charge. "They said, 'You'll write the script, but you don't know jack-shit about producing,'" he recalls.

They teamed him with veteran film producer Bob Colesberry, an arranged marriage that yielded true bliss. "I didn't trust Bob at first. But Bob didn't

Continued on page 44

if required by management, which would alleviate any issues that might arise with their union, AFTRA.

To date, KCBS and KCAL reporters have routinely switched between stations, as does KCBS sportscaster Jim Hill on occasion. KCAL anchor Pat Harvey has also appeared on both outlets, but only for a limited time while filing reports from Rome during the selection of the new pope. Fox, which owns the other VHF duopoly in the market, has 10 p.m. KTTV sportscaster Rick Garcia handle the co-anchoring duties on KCOP's half-hour 11 p.m. week-day newscasts.

In Springfield, Mo., Cable's Not King

Springfield, Mo., doesn't often make TV history, but, in May, the market achieved an industry first. Satellite penetration in Springfield, Nielsen's 78th-largest market, surpassed cable. According to a Horizon Media study of Nielsen Media Research data, 39.6% of TV homes there opt for satellite, versus 39.2% hooked to cable. That's the first time satellite has outperformed cable in a local market. Mediacom is the major cable operator in the area.

DBS growth poses a challenge to cable operators as they try to grow local ad sales. Cable operators sell against local broadcast stations and need to constantly show their reach. If satellite poaches more subscribers, that reach decreases.

DirecTV and EchoStar Communications' Dish Network, the two largest DBS services, count a combined 25.4 million subscribers this year, up from 14.8 million in 2000. Many of those customers live in rural areas, which cable operators often deem too difficult and costly to wire.

The number of satellite devotees is booming in some spots. In Meridian, Miss., 40% of households buy satellite service, the first time DBS has crossed that mark in any market (cable there still has 47%).

Nationwide, DBS has infiltrated more than 35% of homes in 10 markets. But cable operators still dominate the largest cities. In New York, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia, fewer than 15% of TV homes subscribe to DBS. In more-sprawling markets, such as Los Angeles, Atlanta and Dallas-Ft. Worth, its penetration is closer to 25%.—Allison Romano



5/9/05



MARKET EYE

AT A GLANCE

The Market

DNA Rank	3
Population	9,570,000
TV homes	3,417,000
Income Per Capita	\$21,197
TV Revenue Rank	3
TV Revenue	\$880,000,000

Commercial TV Stations

Rank*	Ch.	Affil.	Owner
1	WLS	7 ABC	ABC/Disney
2	WBBM	2 CBS	CBS/Viacom
3	WMAQ	5 NBC	NBC/GE
4	WFLD	32 Fox	Fox
5	WGN	9 WB	Tribune
6	WCJH	26 Ind	Wiegel
7	WPWE	50 UPN	Fox
8	WGBD	66 Uni	Univision
9	WSNS	44 Tele	NBC/GE

March 2005, total households, Mon.-Sun., 6 a.m. to 2 a.m.

Cable/DBS

Cable subscribers (HH)	2,391,900
Major cable operator	Comcast
Cable penetration	70%
ADS subscribers (HH)**	78,380
ADS penetration	14%
DBS carriage of local TV†	Yes

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

What's No. 1

Syndicated Show	Rating/Share***
Wheel of Fortune (WLS)	10.7/19
Network Show	
Law & Order: Trial By Jury (WMAQ)	13.7/21
Evening Newscast	
WLS	9.1/18
Late Newscast	
WLS	11.2/19

***March 2005, total households

SOURCES: Nielsen Media Research, BIA Research

No Blues Here

Chicago's WLS is tough to beat **By Allison Romano**

WLS President/GM Emily Barr recalls that, when ABC's prime time was sinking in recent years, her station still managed to be Chicago's top local news. "I'd tell [lead anchor] Ron Magers, 'You levitate above ether,'" she says. Now the network is better off with hits like *Desperate Housewives*, *Lost* and *Grey's Anatomy*, ABC-owned WLS is flying higher. "It is a great promotional platform and underpinning," Barr says.

WLS claims top ratings in early evening and late news—not an easy feat in a tough news town like Chicago. Ten different Nielsen-rated English and Spanish-language broadcasters are vying for viewers and ad dollars in this lucrative market, the country's third-largest and Comcast's second-largest cable market. Last year, local TV stations raked in \$880 million in gross revenues, according to BIA Financial.

Consistency keeps WLS on top. Its secret is a deep talent pool. One example: When venerable 6 p.m. anchor John Daly retires on May 9 after 38 years, he'll be replaced by Alan Krashesky, a 23-year station vet. (The station's most famous alum, of course, is Oprah Winfrey.)

But WLS' rivals are working hard to chip away at its dominance. NBC-owned WBBM claims the No. 2 position in evening and late news, despite its own network's recent prime time woes. "The way we program, promote and perform off-the-air locally supports us during the down cycles," says President/GM Larry Wert.

WGN is third in late news with its 9 p.m. broadcast. Parent Tribune is part owner of The WB, but the station has a history as an independent. It airs lots of Chicago Bulls, White Sox and Cubs games (Tribune owns the Cubs) and 32 hours of news a week.

In late news, CBS-owned WBBM ranks fourth, followed closely by Fox's WFLD.

WBBM is making big changes. In fall 2003, the station poached WLS star Diann Burns to anchor late news and a new 6 p.m. newscast. WBBM became more aggressive locking up community sponsorships, such as the Chicago Marathon. "We're trying to get involved every possible way," says President/GM Joe Ahern. Another WBBM change happens this fall when the station adds *Dr. Phil* to its afternoon lineup.

Chicago stations are grappling with Nielsen's new electronic measurement system, the local people meter, which last June replaced the old paper-diary system. So far, it's registering lower viewership levels overall. Local broadcasters have seen ratings fall as much as 25%. Says WGN VP/GM Tom Ehlmann, "We're all learning to live with the new currency." ■



WLS 10 p.m. anchor team

NEXT: TOLEDO, OHIO

Now WBBM, WLS Get Street-Wise

Stations here are hitting the streets. Both WLS and WBBM recently announced plans for new street-side studios that will put their broadcasts on public display.

WMAQ, which already has a street-level studio, can attest to the attraction. In addition to housing its newscasts, the studio has hosted NBC's *Today* show and *Access Hollywood*. Dustin Hoffman's upcoming movie *Stranger Than Fiction* borrowed the space to shoot a few scenes. WGN radio has had a street-level studio for decades.

WBBM plans to move its entire broadcast operation from a downtown side street to a new 100,000-square-foot facility near Daley Plaza, right in the heart of The Loop (Chicago's business district) by 2007. "I like to think of our position as Chicago's Main and Main streets," says President/GM Joe Ahern.

WLS will use the new studio, also located downtown on State Street, for all its newscasts. "It brings us so much closer to the viewers," says President/GM Emily Barr.—A.R.

THE DEMOS

WHO	SHARE OF POPULATION	INDEX*
White	79%	96
Black	17%	141
Hispanic	15%	113
Asian	2%	84

*Index is a measurement of consumer likelihood. An index of 100 indicates that the market is on par with the average of the 75 local markets.

SOURCES: Nielsen Media Research, BIA Research

THE King REIGNS IN PROVIDENCE!

THE KING OF QUEENS scores big ratings on WLWC!

4.1 HH RTG! +52% OVER LEAD-IN! +46% OVER YEAR-AGO!



Source: NSI WRAP Dvornights+ 4/25-4/29/05 HH Rating: M-F 7PM Year ago = April '04 (4/8-4/28/04) TP: 1/2 hr lead-in: Everybody Loves Raymond.

www.sonypicturestelevision.com

With a barrage of ads running on broadcast stations across Texas, local phone company SBC informs viewers that the state's laws are "outdated" and "preventing consumers from making their own telecommunications decisions." Cable companies face "less competition, and they like it that way," says another ad.

These spots and others like them are part of a massive campaign by phone giants SBC and Verizon to persuade Texas citizens—read: legislators—to make it easier to sell TV service in the state.

In equally strong counterattacks in newspaper and TV ads, cable operators Time Warner, Comcast and Cox warn that phone companies have hired "hordes of influence peddlers" to push legislation. The accompanying spot shows a fatcat blowing smoke from a cigar.

As the cable-vs.-telco war to capture subscribers for bundled TV, phone and Internet services begins in earnest, the battles have spread beyond Texas. Across the country, the major phone companies have committed more than \$20 billion to launch subscription-TV services that will eat into cable's customer base. But their biggest obstacle isn't the money; it's Washington and thousands of local governments hanging on to decades-old rules written when the phone business was a government-protected monopoly.

Phone companies say that competition will sputter

House Commerce Committee Chairman Joe Barton (R-Texas) is preparing to do just that. "We need a federal policy with federal rules," he said at a recent hearing on Internet video. "We cannot expect new entrants to succeed if they have to comply with 52 different jurisdictions, not to mention if they have to comply with rules set by thousands of franchising authorities." Barton has said he wants the House to approve relief for the Bells as a component of telecommunications-overhaul legislation to be sent to the Senate before Aug. 1.

LEAPS IN TECHNOLOGY

Because of the leaps in digital technology that only a few years ago were unimaginable, Congress and regulators have struggled to update the rules fast enough. Because of that, a revolution in new services and competition is being held back, telephone-industry officials say. "Technology has just passed by our telecommunications laws," says Lincoln Hoewing, chief of Internet and TV policy for Verizon. "Nobody expected broadband Internet to grow as fast as it has."

The telephone companies are in a more precarious spot than cable operators because the video business they are trying to enter is highly regulated by more than 2,000 local governments. As for the cable industry's foray into Internet-based services—phone and data—the FCC has taken a hands-off approach, which

Cable vs. Telco: What Happens When Competition Outpaces Washington Rules

BY BILL MCCONNELL

unless Congress and regulators catch up with changing technology. Verizon plans to begin offering a 100-channel package for \$40 a month in late 2005 or early 2006, but it can't start building subscriber lists yet. First, it must obtain franchises from thousands of local communities—a process that could delay TV service for years. To dodge that roadblock, Verizon is asking Washington to streamline the rollout by writing Internet-TV rules that would apply nationwide.

has allowed operators to offer high-speed Internet service with virtually no hurdles, at least for now.

The lengthy negotiations with city councils and cable-franchise boards that telephone companies now encounter were no threat in the early days of slow growth and few competitors. "We're facing a very complex and delayed process to get into video," complains Hoewing. "We need a national policy that will encourage deployment of new technology as rapidly as possible."

Today, the telephone companies—which have been regulated primarily under federal and state rules—are

trying to get into video almost overnight. The business must be developed quickly to offset losses in their core landline phone business to cable-industry and other Internet carriers.

The phone companies face thousands of local governments determined to write a new set of ground rules governing franchise fees, public-access channels and construction of new plant.

Unless Washington frees the Bells from the obligation to obtain local franchise permits the way cable companies do, the telcos say, their rollouts could be slowed by years and tens of millions of dollars added to the cost. The cable industry hopes the current telecommunication laws remain intact—and in their favor.

The phone companies are so desperate for relief that they're begging local broadcasters to take up their cause. At the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Las Vegas last month, Verizon Chairman Ivan Seidenberg offered to carry digital multicast channels that TV stations can offer. His overture came only weeks after the cable industry persuaded the FCC to reject mandatory cable carriage for multicasting.

NO QUICK REMEDY

Leaders in Congress and the FCC are sympathetic to the Bells' dilemma and are considering measures to give them relief. But cable operators are likely to make deep inroads into the local-telephone business before the Bells' video-franchising obligations are spelled out.

Cable operators plan to press for the status quo. "We want everybody to follow rules that are already on the books," says Kyle McSlarrow, president of the National Cable and Telecommunications Association. More pressure is expected from local governments and consumer groups, which would prefer not to weaken municipalities' rights to grant pay-TV franchises.

Despite Washington's desire to bring new competitors to TV and telephone services, the regulatory morass isn't about to be cleared up quickly. Last week, the FCC turned down SBC's request for blanket exemption from "common-carrier," or telephone-style, rules that govern a wide range of broadband services, including video. SBC plans to spend \$7 billion over the next three years to upgrade its network called Project Lightspeed.

Congress isn't likely to act on such a controversial issue this year. The Supreme Court, however, is expected to rule as soon as next month on how much flexibility the FCC has in setting rules for Internet service. With direction from the court, the commission



Verizon Chairman Ivan Seidenberg (left), House Commerce Committee Chairman Rep. Joe Barton (center), NCTA President Kyle McSlarrow

panies can already offer, additional franchise authority is unnecessary until TV packages are actually being sold.

In the meantime, Verizon is lining up programming. Last week, the company proudly trumpeted a deal to carry the NFL Network. The company has also signed up NBC Universal Cable, Starz, Showtime, A&E and Discovery, and more deals are in the works. Verizon's buildout has angered the cable industry. The state cable association in New York managed to win a temporary work stoppage against the phone company, but work continued once local regulators verified that the proper construction permits had been obtained.

In Texas, the issue-advertising war has been raging over the state legislature's consideration of a bill to set up a statewide franchise plan that would eliminate the need to haggle with hundreds of local governments for local franchises. SBC and cable operator Time Warner have

charged each other with harming consumers' interests. The phone company also has complained that cable operators won't run TV ads giving the Bells' point of view.

CITIES DEMAND OVERSIGHT

SBC argues that current law already gives telephone companies the right to deliver Internet-based TV, and it has no plans to apply for new franchise rights. Instead, the company is waiting for the FCC to formally declare a video franchise unnecessary before moving forward. "We don't think franchise rules apply to Internet video," says SBC spokesman Michael Balmoris. "Policymakers are in the business of promoting competition. We need clarification from regulators."

The companies claim they aren't trying to escape obligations to serve poor neighborhoods or other local obligations, as critics allege. Says Verizon's Hoewing, "We're willing to pay franchise fees; we've got capacity to carry public-access channels. We're just trying to move the process forward while still serving concerns local governments have. Local franchising is an outmoded process that cable regulators developed over decades when companies had time to build out without worrying about competition."

Not surprisingly, industry analysts have generally endorsed the phone companies' view that they must be freed from oversight by thousands of local governments. "Competitive entry into the video market will be delayed if the Bells do not get relief," says UBS Investment Research's John Hodulik in a new report.

But local officials say obtaining franchise rights is relatively simple as long as the phone companies sign on to roughly the same terms as local cable incumbents. Verizon's and SBC's real aim is to enter the market with lower franchise fees and diminished obligations, says Ken Fellman, mayor of Arvada, Colo., and chairman of the National League of Cities' telecommunications committee, which lobbies for city governments in Washington.

"I have a hard time buying that corporations the size of Verizon or SBC don't have the wherewithal to get the job done," he says. "They would just prefer not to incur the expense." ■

REWRITING THE RULES

WHAT EACH SIDE WANTS

Telephone Companies:

A national, one-size-fits-all policy setting terms of phone companies' franchise fees and other local obligations that would eliminate the need to negotiate thousands of franchise agreements. Most would be willing to settle for statewide franchise agreements, but SBC insists that its Internet-TV business needs no new franchises. The FCC is considering a national policy, and Congress will take up the issue this summer.

Cable Operators:

A Supreme Court ruling upholding the FCC's policy to keep operators free of telephone-style rules that would require them to open their broadband platforms to rival Internet providers. A ruling is expected next month.

"TECHNOLOGY HAS JUST PASSED BY OUR TELECOMMUNICATIONS LAWS."

LINCOLN HOEWING, VERIZON

would probably need another year to decide whether to exempt Internet-delivered communications from most local regulation.

"The timing is just bad for the phone companies," says Laura Phillips, a telecom lawyer with Washington firm Drinker Biddle & Reath. "I don't see any momentum this year."

SBC and Verizon are taking different approaches to local regulation. Resigned to the possibility that it may never be relieved of heavy local oversight, Verizon has negotiations under way with more than 100 franchise authorities on launching TV service in their markets. It has also asked the California, Virginia and Texas legislatures to grant statewide franchises.

Verizon, which recently cleared the way to buy rival MCI Inc., isn't waiting for franchise approvals to begin constructing the \$15 billion fiber-optic network necessary for TV. The company argues that, because the network can also be used for standard Internet service phone com-

HOME INVASION

Cable operators and phone companies are stealing each other's customers

ESTIMATED GROWTH IN CABLE-TELEPHONE SUBSCRIBERS

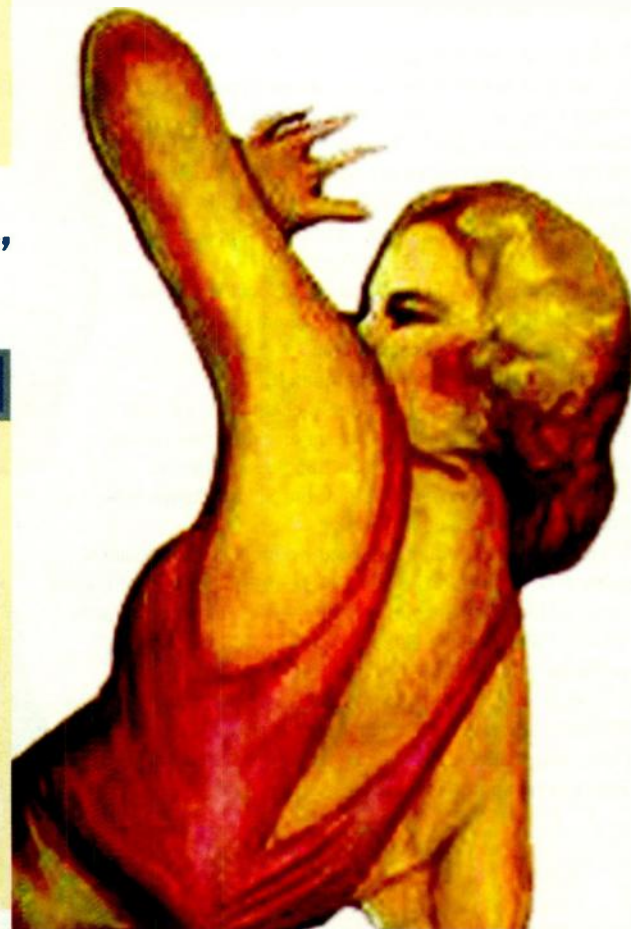
2005	5.3 million
2006	9.3 million
2007	13.7 million
2008	17.1 million

SOURCE: Kagan Research

ESTIMATED GROWTH IN SBC, VERIZON VIDEO SUBSCRIBERS

2005	90,000
2006	637,000
2007	1.75 million
2008	3.18 million

SOURCE: UBS Investment Research

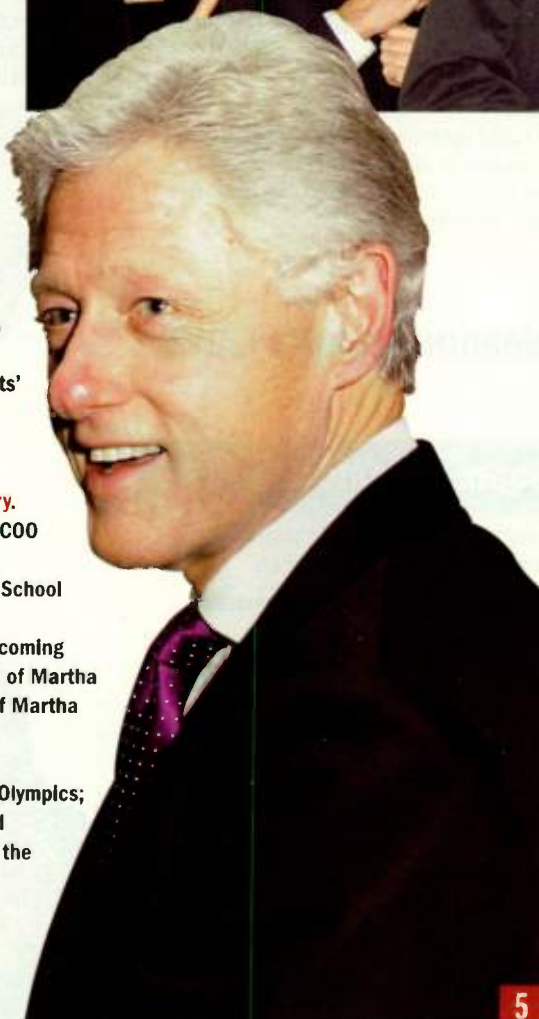


Spring Flings in New York

Industry heavyweights and friends turn out for upfronts and awards galas

Martha Stewart and company feted upfront guests on May 2 with a shrimp-salad lunch and an introduction to her syndicated show. MTV Networks told ad types it reaches everyone, everywhere, every way at its May 3 upfront at the Madison Square

Garden theater. Industry leaders got their props at the Sports Emmy Awards (May 2), the Gala Scholarship Benefit Dinner for Syracuse University's Newhouse School (May 3), and a Museum of the Moving Image benefit (May 4).



1 From left: Time Warner Chairman/CEO **Richard Parsons**; Chairman, Entertainment and Network Group, Time Warner **Jeffrey Bewkes**; Museum Director **Rochelle Slovin**; Viacom Co-President/Co-COO and CBS Chairman **Leslie Moonves**; Museum Board Chairman **Herbert Schlosser** attend the Museum of the Moving Image event honoring Bewkes and Moonves at the St. Regis Hotel.

2 NBC Sports/HBO Sports' **Bob Costas** and Fox Sports' **Joe Buck** at the 26th annual Sports Emmy Awards ceremony at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

3 From left: MTV Networks Chairman/CEO **Judy McGrath**, **Jon Stewart**, **Chris Rock** and **Halle Berry**.

4 **Mariah Carey** with **Tom Freston** co-president and co-COO of Viacom, at MTV upfront at Madison Square Garden.

5 Former President **Bill Clinton** at the S.I. Newhouse School Gala Scholarship Benefit Dinner.

6 From left: **Rob Dauber** co-executive producer of upcoming syndicated series *Martha*; **Susan Lyne** president/CEO of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia; **Martha Stewart** founder of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia; and **Mark Burnett** *Martha* executive producer.

7 From left: **Dick Ebersol** chairman, NBC Sports and Olympics; **Phil Knight** co-founder and chairman of Nike Inc., and **Peter Price** National Television Academy president, at the 26th annual Sports Emmy Awards.

Photo: 1 Patrick McMillan; 2 & 7 Marc Bryan Brown; 3 Michael Lecciano/FilmMagic.com; 4 Ken Mazer/WireImage.com; 5 Alex Oliveira/Startraksphoto.com; 6 Anders Kreuschberg/Martha Stewart Living Television

SONY

EVERYTHING
WE KNOW
ABOUT LIVE
PRODUCTION...



LIKE NO OTHER

any all the industry's revenues. Most cable and satellite operators currently focus on casual gamers, who have traditionally been much less willing to spend money on games. It is a question of fans versus fanatics.

Business models and regulatory issues also remain open to question. Internationally, most of the revenue from iTV functions has come from gambling applica-

operators are currently set up to allow people to play games on-demand for a small price, a model that accounts for about 90%-95% of game revenues in the U.K. Most operators have adopted a strategy of charging monthly subscription fees.

Gambling applications, which account for about 72% of BSkyB's iTV gaming revenues, are also much more

gin

limited in the U.S. In recent years, federal prosecutors have used the Wire Wager Act of 1961 to crack down on the \$6.5 billion global Internet casino gambling industry, and most legal experts believe iTV applications allowing users to bet on such casino games as blackjack, roulette and poker would also be illegal in the U.S.

PUTTING MONEY ON THE HORSES

The Interstate Horseracing Act of 1978, however, allowed individual states to pass legislation legalizing off-track betting on horseracing, and that exemption currently allows residents of at least 30 states to place bets on races through the Internet.

Currently, two channels—TVG, which is available in about 14 million homes, and HRTV, which has distribution in 12 million—allow horseracing fans to watch races and, in states where it is legal, place bets on Web sites run by sister companies. In March, TVG joined with Dish Network to launch an iTV application that allows viewers in 12 states to bet on races using their remote, says Scott Higgins, director of interactive TV for Dish Network.

HRTV plans to roll out iTV betting applications sometime in 2006. EchoStar is also taking the lead in other types of iTV games. Currently, it is the largest provider of iTV services in the U.S., offering 20 iTV channels with news, sports, weather and games on its Dish Network.

Interactive-TV gaming packages from Fantasy NASCAR, KidsWise from PixelPlay, the Buzztime Channel, PlayJam and others cost \$2.99-\$4.99 a month. The offerings are designed to appeal to a range of demographic groups and target the casual gamer.

"That doesn't mean the games have to be simple," Higgins says. "They just don't require the amount of time that it takes to master a console game."

The satellite operator doesn't provide any breakdowns of usage or revenues, but Higgins stresses that Dish has continued to expand its iTV services in recent years, launching the TVG betting service in March and even introducing a karaoke application in April. "We've been committed to interactive television for years," he says, "and wouldn't be expanding if it weren't successful."

CABLE VS. DBS

For the moment, DirecTV isn't commenting on its plans. DirecTV began rolling out interactive set-top boxes last year and added some iTV games earlier this year. Several sources predict that its major iTV push may not occur until late 2005 or early 2006. But when it does happen, outsiders expect its offerings will mirror the services offered by BSkyB.

That lag time is giving cable operators much needed time to improve on their relatively simple offerings.

Charter started rolling out iTV applications in 2003 and currently targets casual gamers in the 800,000 iTV-enabled homes with relatively simple, free games

Continued on page 18

Let the Games Begin

Continued from page 17

like solitaire and video poker.

"[Currently,] the set-top box can't compete with the kind of games you would play on a game console," says Jeff Jay, VP of corporate development at Charter.

Even so, the games have been well received. About 15% of the digital subscribers play the games, Jay says. "We know that they are interested," he adds, "and we believe there is an opportunity for premium services."

Cable's most advanced iTV games can now be found on Cablevision, which began offering free games several years ago. Last summer, it became the first U.S. cable operator to launch subscription games services, offering four separate packages, each with six to 10 games, for \$4.95 a month; at the NCTA Show, it launched a play-per-day option for \$1.95, another cable-industry first.

Patrick Donoghue, Cablevision's VP of interactive television development and operations, says about 20,000 subscribers play about 1 million games a month. "About 5,000 people play one of the demo games each day," he adds.

That success seems to have caught the attention of other operators. Cox plans to offer free games in five undisclosed markets this summer, and it will begin offering subscription games in 2006. Time Warner Cable is testing iTV games and is expected to launch them in some markets by year's end.



Patrick Donoghue

LOOKING FOR HARD-CORE GAMERS

Comcast is expected to follow with iTV rollouts in 2006. The operator is clearly bullish on the gaming area, both in programming—it owns the G4 games channel—and in online operations, which offers subscription and on-demand games.

Comcast's broadband service targets both casual and hard-core gamers, says Charlie Herrin, VP of Comcast Online, business development. It targets casual gamers, families and women with the Play Games service, which includes the Disney Blast, Toontown, Wild Games and Comcast Arcade subscription packages.

In contrast, hard-core gamers, generally men under 35, are served by Game Invasion. It offers on-demand games and a wide variety of news and programming from the G4 channel, as well as promotions for Game Fly, the online game, rental and purchasing service.

"We think of it as a multimedia experience where users can find games, information, news and television

clips from G4," Herrin says. He insists Comcast's on-demand games are as good as those available on consoles, and he predicts quality will continue to improve as broadband speeds increase. That should attract hard-core users and help Comcast's revenue pool.

This multimedia approach carries over to G4. The network has been working with local cable affiliates to promote broadband subscriptions with a "Games Go Better With Broadband" campaign. G4 is developing its own interactive applications.

"Roughly 60% of our audience [83% of those are males 12-34] are online while they are watching TV, which is more than double that of any other network," says Peter Green, senior VP of programming and production. "As we develop our programming, we are building more and more online components into it."

So are other cable networks. "A lot of people are looking for ways to expand their brands into the gaming area," says Albert Cheng, senior VP of business strategy and development at Disney and ESPN Affiliate Sales and Marketing.

Disney, for example, has created broadband subscription games packaged for kids and families, and it is developing iTV offerings. Last year, ESPN inked an exclusive 15-year deal with Electronic Arts (EA), giving the game company exclusive rights to create ESPN-branded games. EA, which also has exclusive rights to games featuring NFL teams, could incorporate ESPN footage into games or even develop iTV or cellphone games allowing users to play along with live sporting events.

Ultimately, says PlayJam's Kalifa, "there is no reason why operators can't offer console-quality games. That could be huge—as big as pay TV."

You might want to wager on that. ■

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY				
U.S. videogame revenue (in millions)				
	2000	2004	2008	CHANGE*
Console	\$4,102	\$5,890	\$8,040	+6.8%
PC games	\$1,998	\$1,251	\$1,046	-2.8%
Online	\$57	\$662	\$3,375	+51.7%
Wireless	0	\$301	\$2,837	+82.0%
Total	\$6,198	\$8,104	\$15,298	+15.1%

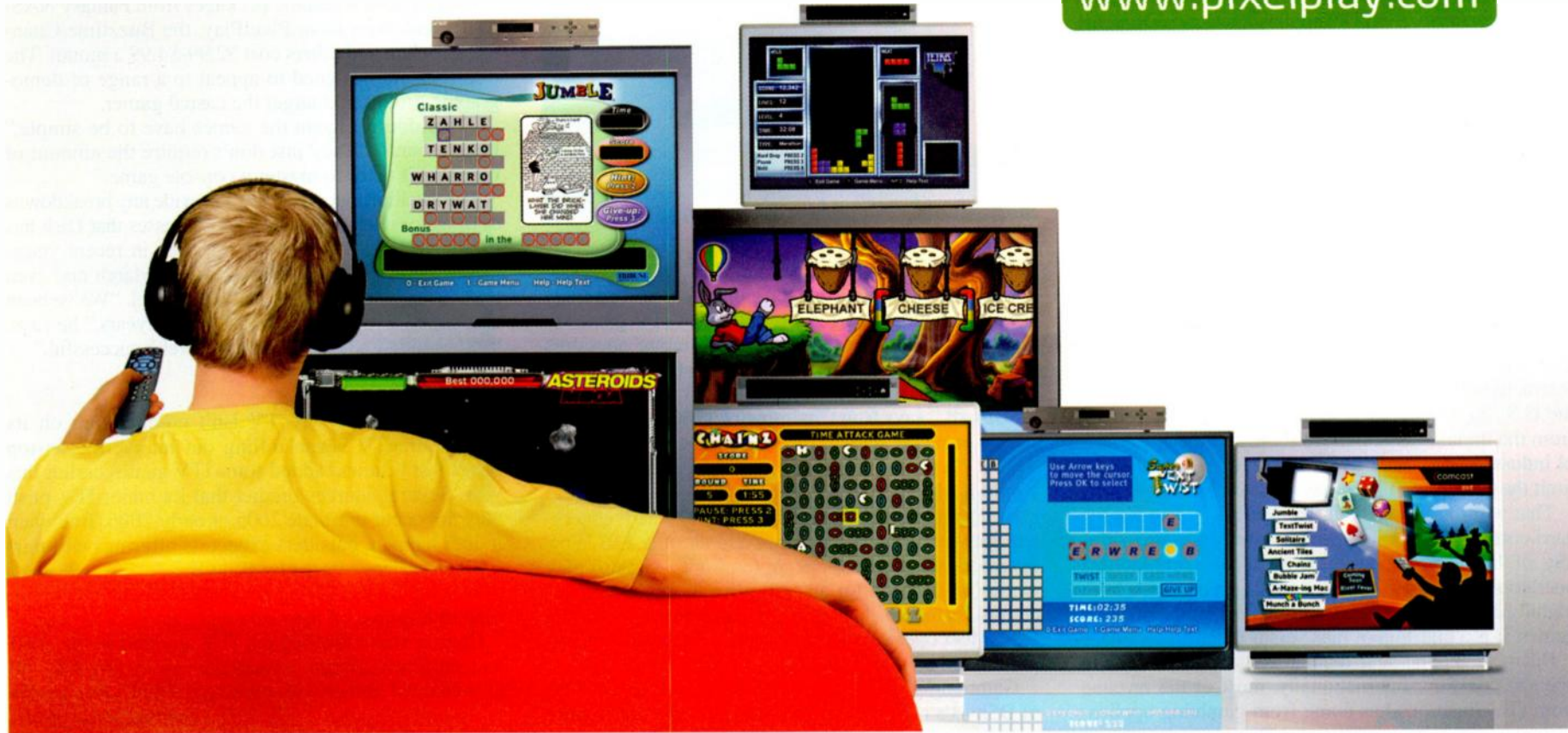
*Compounded average growth rate '04-'08
SOURCE: PricewaterhouseCoopers, Global Entertainment and Media Outlook, 2004-2008



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Online viewers can "play along" with *Celebrity Blackjack*.

Don't Touch That *Dial*, or That *TiVo*

GSN uses games and interactivity to lock in viewers

When Rich Cronin took the top job at the Game Show Network four years ago, he knew where the future was: in interactive-game playing. Quickly, he found John Roberts, a true interactive visionary, and gave him his VP stripes.

"People have always been interacting with game shows, shouting out the answers," says Roberts, who previously worked on pioneering interactive projects for Fox Family Worldwide and for Paul Allen's Vulcan Programming II. "We felt that, with our content, if we couldn't make interactivity work, you couldn't make interactivity work anywhere."

Since then, things have changed at the network, which was once programmed primarily with reruns of classic game shows.

Today, the network has a new name, GSN, and while it still beams classic game shows, GSN now offers a slew of new original programming during prime time, including a number of casino-themed shows with interactive hooks. This year, GSN will launch a dozen shows, including its first casino "awards show."

INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS IN ADVERTISING

That interactivity push meshes with GSN's two owners, Sony and Liberty Media, which have been making many investments in interactive entertainment.

Some of GSN's most interesting interactivity efforts aren't programs at all. The network created about 50 spots for advertisers, including General Motors and Burger King, that feature interactive elements designed to encourage online users—and discourage viewers from tuning out. Online players who can answer questions about the ad are given points that can eventually add up to discounts on merchandise.

"That gives them an incentive to watch the spots and helps make us about as TiVo-proof as possible," Cronin says.

GETTING VIEWERS INVOLVED

Roberts estimates that 80%-85% of those who are playing along online as they watch the show end up watching the whole commercial.

Advertisers have also been using the interactive elements to ask the users questions about their product. This gives advertisers another advantage: valuable marketing information.

GSN seems sincere about its interactive future. Just last month, at the NCTA Show, the network announced that it is expanding the amount of programming that has online interactive elements all the way—gradually expanding them from 12 hours a day to 19 hours this month.

During the development process of new shows, interactive elements are added early on so viewers of original fare like *Celebrity Blackjack* can play along

online, accumulating points that can be used for discounts on Sony merchandise and other rewards. Online games have even been developed for the classic game shows GSN has acquired from outside suppliers.

"It gives people a whole new reason to watch shows that have already aired," Roberts says.

Currently, GSN has about 2.7 million registered users at its Web site, with 3%-5% of its viewers playing GSN games online while watching its programming on TV, Roberts estimates.

Last year, the network also started GSNi, an iTV application on Time Warner Cable's system in Hawaii. It allows viewers to play games using their TV remote while watching the network, and that is clearly the broadband future GSN awaits.

"PERFECT FIT"

The experiment has dramatically increased both the number of viewers and their involvement. Roberts notes that viewership has increased more than 300% among cable homes in Hawaii since GSN began heavily promoting the feature earlier this year and that 10%-15% of viewers watching there are using their TV remotes to play along with GSN programming.

As operators deploy interactive-TV services more widely, Cronin argues, the GSNi interactive application will be a valuable application, especially as new-generation cable boxes make interactivity common. "It is a perfect fit for our programming."—G.W.

An Open Secret: Upfronts Make No Sense

Advertisers, agencies urge change but don't have a better idea **By Joe Mandese**

The broadcast-network upfront advertising marketplace is a lot like the hackneyed joke about the weather: Everyone likes to complain about it, but nobody seems to do anything about it.

Complaints about the upfront aren't new. They've risen periodically ever since the networks began selling advance time on their new prime time schedules during the 1960s. They got noisier in the 1990s, especially when a corresponding erosion of network audience share began to exacerbate the problem, causing advertisers to pay more for less.

And those complaints are back. In March, for example, DaimlerChrysler executives floated the idea of transforming the network upfront advertising marketplace into a Wall Street-like exchange, in which TV ad time is bought and sold at open-market rates for all to see.

"I would envision an electronic system where each trader is anonymous and has the ability to buy and sell spots every day—spots that would, at any given time, have a value established by the marketplace," Julie Roehm, director of communications at DaimlerChrysler, recommended during a keynote speech at the Association of National Advertisers' (ANA) Television Advertising Forum in New York.

"The question remains, how do you get real value out of the upfront when prices go up and audiences go down? It's the real value everyone is beginning to question." MIKE DREXLER, OPTIMEDIA

"The process would start with what would amount to an enormous IPO: the sale of all these spots to the market. After all shares have been parceled out, they would be traded between advertisers and networks."

That "IPO," Wall Street parlance for the initial public offering of a company's stock, would replace the current closed-market structure of the upfront, with the remaining TV ad time traded in an ongoing

exchange that would operate much like Wall Street's Nasdaq market, she suggested.

Roehm's idea caused a stir, but no one's taking it too seriously yet. In part, that's because the ad industry just isn't ready for reform. Last year, the industry went through a similar effort to fix the upfront sales process, and a summit of bigwigs made a ruling (drum roll, please!): Keep things exactly as they are.

CALL TO ACTION

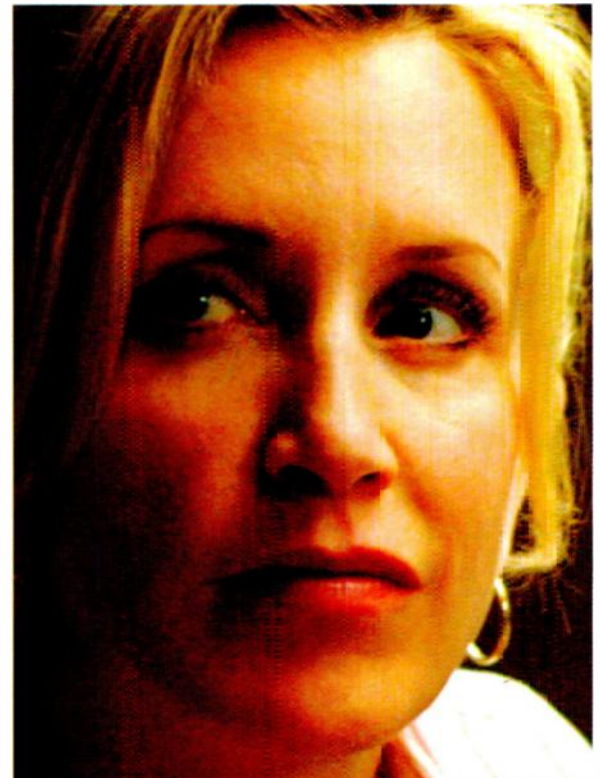
That effort was sparked during the ANA's 2004 Television Advertising Forum, when Carat CEO David Verklin issued a call to action, challenging big national marketers to change the system. The ANA formed a task force dubbed NUDG (Network Upfront Discussion Group), which posed a number of scenarios, including an "opening" and "closing" bell that would begin the upfront sales process each day the way Wall Street's stock markets do.

Last April, after five hours of discussion, the group decided to do...nothing: "While not a perfect process, the current processes in place were generally acceptable, were essentially optimal, and will continue as is," ANA president/CEO Robert Liodice said in a statement issued after the meeting.

That uneasy peace didn't last long. Within weeks of the NUDG meeting, marketers and agency executives were back to their usual complaining about the upfront during a series of conferences and news stories that led up to the 2004-05 upfront marketplace.

Unlike in years past, when requests for upfront marketplace reform coincided with strong seller's markets, DaimlerChrysler's call to action follows 2004-05's buyer's market and comes on the eve of the 2005-06 sales season, which many believe will favor media buyers once again.

"Julie Roehm's idea is refreshing and interesting, but I don't think the stock-market concept demonstrates true value for advertisers," says Mike Drexler, CEO of Optimedia, New York. "The question remains, how do



For the 2004-05 season, ABC's *Desperate Housewives* (above) was the hit the upfront process missed. NBC's *Father of the Pride* (below) was the dog advertisers got stuck with.



you get real value out of the upfront when prices go up and audiences go down? It's the real value everyone is beginning to question."

To Drexler, a veteran of numerous upfront markets and once the top media buyer at a Chrysler ad agency (Bozell), the trouble with the upfronts is that they aren't what they're cracked up to be. "We all say that the upfront gives us guarantees and the ability to pick specific shows, and that's why we buy it," he explains. "Theoretically, those are the real benefits of the upfront. But the reality is that most shows aren't around for the whole season and the networks are programming year-round, anyway. When you think about it, it mitigates any real benefit of an upfront in concept."

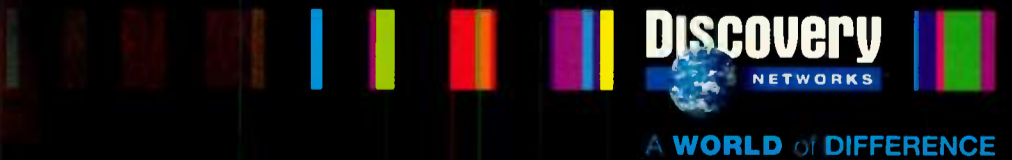
"INSANE"

Another buyer puts it more bluntly. "It makes me insane," says Shari Anne Brill, VP/director of programming at Carat USA, New York. The constant "tweaking" of the networks' prime time schedules—after they've been announced, in the period leading up to the upfront, following it, and even once the shows have

Continued on page 22

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DEALS

TVs

K58HQ ST GEORGE, UTAH

PRICE: \$4,000
BUYER: Brady Broadcasting (William G. Brady, owner)
SELLER: ESI Broadcasting Corp. (Mike Stocklin, president/director)
FACILITIES: Ch. 58, 8 kW, ant. 2,056 ft.

COMBOS

WMTN(AM) AND WMXK(FM) MORRISTOWN, TENN.

PRICE: \$1.1 million
BUYER: East Tennessee Radio

Group LP (Paul G Fink, president/GP); owns three other stations, none in this market
SELLER: Home Radio LLC (Nick W. Drewry, chief manager)
FACILITIES: WMTN(AM): 1300 kHz, 5 kW day/96 W night; WMXK(FM): 94.1 MHz, 920 W, ant. 771 ft.
FORMAT: WMTN(AM): Soft AC/Oldies; WMXK(FM): AC
BROKER: Todd Fowler of American Media Services LLC

KOZQ(AM) AND KFBD(FM) WAYNESVILLE, MO.

PRICE: \$450,000
BUYER: Viper Communications Inc. (Kenneth W. Kuenzie, president); owns three other

stations, none in this market
SELLER: Fidelity Broadcasting Inc. (John T. Davis, president/director)
FACILITIES: KOZQ(AM): 1270 kHz, 500 W; KFBD(FM): 97.9 MHz, 10 kW, ant. 515 ft.
FORMAT: KOZQ(AM): Talk; KFBD(FM): Country

FMs

KBRU(FM) FORT MORGAN, COLO.

PRICE: \$15.5 million
BUYER: Denver Radio Co. LLC (Luis G. Nogales, CEO); owns one other station, not in this market
SELLER: Hunt Broadcasting Inc.

(Janice Hunt, president)
FACILITIES: 101.5 MHz, 92 kW, ant. 2,038 ft.
FORMAT: AC

KSIR(FM) BENNETT (DENVER-BOULDER), COLO.

PRICE: \$14 million
BUYER: Denver Radio Co. LLC (Luis G. Nogales, CEO); owns one other station, not in this market
SELLER: KKDD(FM) Broadcasters (Robert D. Zellmer, general partner)
FACILITIES: 107.1 MHz, 97 kW, ant. 2,047 ft.
FORMAT: Dark

WHTF(FM) HAVANA, WEGT(FM) LAFAYETTE, WAIB(FM) AND WUTL(FM) TALLAHASSEE, FLA.

PRICE: \$12.5 million
BUYER: Opus Media Partners LLC (Richard Linhart, chairman); owns seven other stations, none in this market
SELLER: Triad Broadcasting Co. (David J. Benjamin, president)
FACILITIES: WHTF(FM): 104.9 MHz, 50 kW, ant. 492 ft.; WEGT(FM): 99.9 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 295 ft.; WAIB(FM): 103.1 MHz, 42 kW, ant. 541 ft.; WUTL(FM): 106.1 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 328 ft.
FORMAT: WHTF(FM): CHR; WEGT(FM): Oldies; WAIB(FM): Country; WUTL(FM): Classic Rock
BROKER: Media Venture Partners
COMMENT: Opus started operating the station under an LMA on May 1.

KABL(FM) WALNUT CREEK (SAN FRANCISCO), CALIF.

PRICE: \$7 million
BUYER: Coast Radio Co. Inc. (John Levitt, president); owns two other stations, KKIQ(FM) and KUIC(FM) San Francisco
SELLER: Chase Radio Partners (Van H. Archer III, operating manager)
FACILITIES: 92.1 MHz, 3 kW, ant. 79 ft.
FORMAT: Adult Standard
BROKER: Media Venture Partners and Jorgenson Broadcast Brokerage
COMMENT: Purchase price includes compensation for the cost to buy out the station's representation agreement with Katz.

WBEC(FM) PITTSFIELD, MASS.

PRICE: \$7 million
BUYER: Pamal Broadcasting Ltd (James Morrell, chairman/CEO); owns 25 other stations, none in this market
SELLER: Vox Media Corp. (Bruce G. Danziger, president)
FACILITIES: 105.5 MHz, 950 W, ant. 591 ft.
FORMAT: Hot AC
BROKER: Richard A. Foreman of Richard A. Foreman Associates Inc.

WMIO(FM) CABO ROJO (PUERTO RICO), P.R.

PRICE: \$3.25 million
BUYER: UNO Radio Group (Jesus M. Soto, CEO/owner); owns 13 other stations: WCMN(AM), WORA(AM), WPRP(AM), WLEO(AM), WUNO(AM), WNEL(AM) and (FM), WFDT(FM), WFID(FM), WIVA(FM), WPRM(FM), WRIO(FM) and WZAR(FM) Puerto Rico
SELLER: Bestov Broadcasting Inc. (Alan Mejia, president)
FACILITIES: 102.3 MHz, 3 kW, ant. 781 ft.
FORMAT: Spanish/Urban CHR

WSIG(FM) MOUNT JACKSON (HARRISONBURG), VA.

PRICE: \$2 million
BUYER: Vox Media Corp. (Bruce G. Danziger, president); owns 12 other stations, including WZXI(FM) Harrisonburg
SELLER: Force 5 Communications Inc. (Jeffrey D. Shapiro)
FACILITIES: 96.9 MHz, 4 kW, ant. 725 ft.
FORMAT: Country
BROKER: Richard A. Foreman of Richard A. Foreman Associates

WZXI(FM) BUFFALO GAP (HARRISONBURG), VA.

PRICE: \$900,000
BUYER: Vox Media Corp. (Bruce G. Danziger, president); owns 12 other stations, including WSIG(FM) Harrisonburg
SELLER: Easy Radio Inc. (Jason Cave, president)
FACILITIES: 95.5 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 308 ft.
FORMAT: News/Talk
BROKER: Zoph Potts of Snowden Associates

Continued on page 34

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D E A L S

Deals
Continued from page 32

WHTO(FM) IRON MOUNTAIN, MICH.

PRICE: \$650,000

BUYER: Results Broadcasting Inc. (Bruce Grassman, president); owns nine other stations, including WJNR(FM) Iron Mountain
SELLER: Great Lakes Radio Inc. (Todd S. Noordyk, president/director)

FACILITIES: 106.7 MHz, 2 kW, ant. 623 ft.
FORMAT: '80s Hits

WIXT(FM)(CP) BAY CITY, ORE.

PRICE: \$150,000
BUYER: Tom Hodgins; owns three other stations, none in this market
SELLER: Horizon Broadcasting Group LLC (Keith Shipman, CEO/president)
FACILITIES: 96.3 MHz, 430 W,

ant. 1,198 ft.
FORMAT: CP-NOA

AMs

KSON(AM) SAN DIEGO

PRICE: \$4.85 million
BUYER: Multicultural Radio Broadcasting Inc. (Arthur Liu, president); owns 44 other stations, none in this market
SELLER: Jefferson-Pilot Communications Co. (Clarke Brown Jr., president, radio division)
FACILITIES: 1240 kHz, 1 kW
FORMAT: Country
COMMENT: LMA payments to seller prior to closing will be subtracted from purchase price.

WMDB(AM) NASHVILLE, TENN.

PRICE: \$1.6 million
BUYER: Davidson Media Group LLC (Peter Davidson, president); owns 22 other stations, including WNSG(AM) Nashville
SELLER: Babb Broadcasting Co. (Morgan Babb, president)
FACILITIES: 880 kHz, 3 kW
FORMAT: Urban AC/Gospel
BROKER: John Pierce of John Pierce and Co.

WXNC(AM) MONROE (CHARLOTTE-GASTONIA), N.C.

PRICE: \$1.15 million
BUYER: Norsan Consulting and Management Inc. (Norberto Sanchez, president); owns five other stations, including WGSP(AM) Charlotte-Gastonia
SELLER: Geddings and Phillips Broadcasting Corp. (Kevin L. Geddings, president)
FACILITIES: 1060 kHz, 4 kW
FORMAT: Talk
BROKER: Stan Raymond of Stan Raymond and Associates Inc. and Terry Greenwood of TAG Media Consulting

WLYC(AM) WILLIAMSPORT, PA.

PRICE: \$75,000
BUYER: Sentry Communications License LLC (Jeffrey Andru-lonis, member/manager); owns no other stations.
SELLER: James R. McKowne
FACILITIES: 1050 kHz, 1 kW day/30 W night
FORMAT: Sports

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PEOPLE

Former Foe Turns Friendly

Wilson is the man cable networks want to know **By John M. Higgins**

As head of programming for cable giant Cox Communications, Bob Wilson has many friends in the industry—and many cable networks that want to be his friend.

As Cox is the fourth-largest cable operator, cable networks looking for carriage come to Wilson. But the company's senior VP of programming wasn't always such a pillar of the cable community. In fact, he was once the enemy.

Early in his career, Wilson headed up the operations of one of the great annoyances of any cable operator: an over-builder. Overbuilders dare to compete in the same markets as entrenched cable operators, despite expensive price wars. During the 1980s, Wilson was director of operations for ODC Communications, the TV subsidiary of the nation's fifth-largest apartment developer. ODC wired apartment complexes for video via satellite, trying to cut the local cable system out of a lucrative part of their markets.

Wilson acknowledges that this past job is a deep, dark professional secret. Working for ODC was a "very ill-informed decision on my part," he says, laughing. But colleagues at Cox "don't hold it against me."

Apparently not. Today, Wilson is the top executive in charge of perhaps the most important and expensive element of Cox's business: programming. As the chief negotiator with cable networks, he faces the task of securing the best possible terms for its 6 million cable subscribers. That means not simply whittling down per-subscriber license fees but also getting the flexibility to package networks into tiers or video-on-demand.

That can be tough. Cable networks thrive on license fees and carriage to the widest possible number of subscribers. And new networks—some of them from big conglomerates with clout—are always knocking on Wilson's door in search of slots on Cox's systems.

KEEPING CALM

But programming has already ballooned to account for 30% of Cox's operating expenses. DBS competition and subscriber resentment make it increasingly hard to raise bills each year, especially for programming that only a small slice of customers watch.

And for all the tension between operators and programmers, Wilson's approach is to keep things calm. "I don't think the senior vice president of programming gets any points for roughing up the programmers," says Ajit Dalvi, Wilson's former boss at Cox, who still consults for the operator. "Bob's

personality is perfect for this."

"It's about striking the right balance between what the customer wants and what the network needs," Wilson says. Cox strives to put programming into tiers that subscribers pay for only if they actually want to watch. Unfortunately, "the business model that works for all programmers is: All subscribers get all the programming."

Cox is adding virtually no basic networks. Channels willing to go on digital tiers have a shot, as do niche networks willing to live as pay or video-on-demand services. Cox recently signed deals with gay premium network Here TV and with a new service from World Wrestling Entertainment.



FIFTH ESTATER

ROBERT C. WILSON

Senior VP of programming, Cox Communications

B. Dec. 12, 1952

EDUCATION

B.S., finance, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.; M.B.A., Georgia State University, Atlanta

EMPLOYMENT

Hartford Insurance: bond underwriter, 1974-79; Cox Communications: assistant business manager, director of finance administration development division, 1979-86; ODC Communications: director of operations, finance and administration, 1986-89; Cox Communications: director of programming, 1989-97; VP of programming, 1997-2004; current position since 2004

PERSONAL

Married; two children

Network executives often complain that cable executives don't watch enough television, and Wilson admits he could watch more. "I just can't get into series," he says. "Don't have the time."

He doesn't TiVo any sitcoms or dramas, though he does occasionally record *Letterman* and *The Daily Show*. He confesses that he is amused by Spike TV's Japanese oddity, *Most Extreme Elimination Challenge*. And he watches *American Idol* and *Survivor* with his kids.

A CABLE NOVICE

Wilson knew nothing about cable when he joined Cox in 1979. Raised in Maryland, he went to grad school at Georgia State University in order to be with his college girlfriend. Wilson scheduled a meeting with a Cox recruiter looking for freshly minted MBAs, and he was hired.

Initially, Wilson was part of that small unit that figured out how to build new cable systems. The early 1980s were the go-go days for cable franchising. Cable had long been a rural business, but companies started rushing to build systems in cities and suburbs.

Wilson's group figured out what it would take to build the system. Wilson worked up plans for cities including New Orleans, Fort Wayne, Ind., and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Wilson learned so much that he was tapped by ODC to become director of operations, bringing him back home to Maryland. But the apartment-cable business—dubbed SMATV for "satellite master-antenna TV"—was difficult. And ODC's parent company, Oxford Development, got into other financial trouble and sold the 24,000-subscriber SMATV operation for \$20 million in 1989.

Fortunately, ODC didn't compete against any Cox systems, and Wilson's relations at Cox's Atlanta headquarters were still good. Dalvi, then head of both programming and marketing, took Wilson back in. He moved up and took charge when Dalvi left Cox in 1989.

Wilson's department administers existing contracts—for example, making sure networks get paid what they're owed and programmers are providing promised marketing support.

But the difficult part comes when a programmer's contract—typically running five years—comes up for renewal. Operators' push to control costs has led to unprecedented tension between networks and systems, particularly over high-priced sports networks.

Wilson notes that "you can count on one hand" the number of major fights Cox has gotten into with programmers over the past several years. Nevertheless, he says, "We hate that." ■

FATES & FORTUNES

BROADCAST TV

MICHAEL BURRELL, general sales manager, WXIA Atlanta, named VP/station manager, Viacom's West Palm Beach, Fla., triopoly: WTVX Fort Pierce, Fla., WWHB(CA) and WTCN(CA).

LILY STOLZBERG, field reporter, WLNY Riverhead, N.Y., promoted to assistant news director/co-anchor, *News 55 Live at 11*.

JENNIFER MITCHELL, senior Web writer/producer, KGO San Francisco, promoted to Web manager.

ANDREW W. TINGLEY, editor, Dove Communications, Marion, Ill., joins WAQP Saginaw, Mich., as production manager.

CABLE TV

HENRY SCHWAB, VP, network development, Pensacola, Fla., system, Cox Communications, appointed VP, network development, Cox Communications, Las Vegas.

TROY QUINCY, general manager, high-speed data services, Bright House Networks, Bakersfield, Calif., promoted to VP, broadband internet services.

DAVE SEIBOLD, corporate director, performance management, Charter Communications, St. Louis, appointed VP, customer experience, Insight Communications, Louisville, Ky.

PROGRAMMING

At *Good Morning America*, ABC News, New York: **KEN LITWIN**, executive director, production and operations, promoted to VP, production and operations, newsmagazines, longform productions; **TONY MANDILE**, associate director, production, promoted to director, production and operations, newsmagazines and longform programs; **ROB LEWIS**, operations producer, promoted to director, production and operations.

At NBC Universal: **DEBORAH REIF**, executive VP, financial structuring, New York, named president, digital media; **KATHY KELLY-BROWN**, VP, entertainment publicity, named senior VP, corporate communications and media relations, Burbank, Calif.

At MTV, New York: **RACHEL BAUMGARTEN**, senior director, integrated marketing, promoted to VP; **CATHERINE BALSAM-SCHWABER**, VP, integrated marketing and programming, Rock the Vote, becomes senior director, integrated marketing, Los Angeles; **CARRYL PIERRE**, director, integrated marketing, mtvU, named director, MTV business development;

Continued on page 38

in the public interest

TV and the people



Broadcast and cable networks, broadcast groups and cable operators use their powerful media platforms to serve the public interest in extraordinary ways - both on the local and national level.

In our June 27th issue, *Broadcasting & Cable* will explore in a Special Report how TV helps by taking a close look at the challenges and successes of the campaigns and promotions aired by the television industry to serve viewers.

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June 21, 2005

THE BUSINESS OF TELEVISION



BROADCASTING & CABLE



PEOPLE

Fates & Fortunes

Continued from page 36

SEAN PHILLIPS, manager, integrated marketing, MTV2 moves to director, mtvU.

LEE ROLONTZ, VP, original music production, VH1,

New York, promoted to senior VP, original music production.

MARIA KENNEDY, director, direct response, advertising sales, Discovery Networks U.S., New York, promoted to VP.

JOEL SPICOLA, account executive, Comcast, Denver, joins Turner Ad Group as director, sponsorships, Turner Media Group Inc., Denver.

LISA CHADER, director,

corporate communications, MTV Networks, Los Angeles, named VP, press, Country Music Channel, Nashville, Tenn.

POLA CHANGNON, VP, on-air production, Cartoon Network,

Atlanta, adds executive producer, program production.

VINCE ROBERTS, senior VP, technology and operations, Disney-ABC Cable Networks Group, promoted to executive VP, worldwide technology and operations, Disney-ABC Cable Networks Group and Walt Disney Television International, Burbank, Calif.

LENNY BART, senior VP, administration, Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution, Burbank, Calif., promoted to execu-



Troy Quincy
Bright House Networks

tive VP, administration.

PETER GREEN, VP, national sales, Weather.com, New York, named senior VP, national sales manager.

At Starz Entertainment Group, Englewood, Colo.: **BRIAN HUGGINS**, senior manager, market intelligence, to director, strategic planning; **JOE ZAMORA**, senior manager, strategic planning, to director, strategic planning; **DALE FLEDDERMANN**, director, human resources information systems/IT liaison, senior management/human resources, The Solae Co., St. Louis, joins as director, human resources systems and compliance.

BRUCE KOBLISH, executive VP, ministry development, The Worship Network, Clearwater, Fla., appointed president and CEO.

JOURNALISM

LISA CABRERA, weekend anchor, WBFS Miami, and reporter, WFOR Miami, joins WNYW New York as general assignment reporter; **GIOVANNA DRPIC**, reporter, WKMG Orlando, Fla., joins WWOR Secaucus, N.J., as general assignment reporter.

Continued on page 40

★ **WORLD CABLE-HEAVYWEIGHT CONFERENCE** ★

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JULY 24-26

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

SHELLY LAZARUS

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OGILVY & MATHER
WORLDWIDE**

— **AND** —

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B&C LIST

The Next Wave of Women

The B&C List is a recurring series of special reports spotlighting the best the television industry has to offer—the hottest programs, the most important people or the most exciting emerging technologies. We debut The B&C List in our **May 30th issue** with The Next Wave of Women, a look at 12 executives who are making their mark in a media world where doors are still sometimes closed to females.

KATHLEEN FINCH

Senior Vice President
Prime Time Development
The Food Network

GINA MAZZAFERRI

Vice President Strategy
and Administration
Tribune Broadcasting

TOBY GRAF

Vice President Public Affairs
Lifetime Television

TYRA BANKS

Host of Syndicated Talk Show
and Host and Executive
America's Top Model on UPN

LISA HACKNER

SVP of Development
Telepictures

SHONDA RIMES

Creator and Executive Producer
ABC's Gray's Anatomy

CHRISTY KREISBERG

VP
TBS Original Programming

LIZ CRAFT & SARAH FAIN

Co-Producers/writers
The Shield

LARA LOGAN

Correspondent
60 Minutes Wednesday

SAMI KIM

Vice President Comedy
Development
FOX

ANNE ZEHREN

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SPECIAL REPORT: B&C LIST - THE NEXT WAVE OF WOMEN

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THE BUSINESS OF TELEVISION



BROADCASTING & CABLE



Fates & Fortunes

Continued from page 38

RADIO

KEN WEST, assistant program director/music director, WROR Boston,



Maria Kennedy
Discovery Networks U.S.

promoted to program director.

KEVIN LAPP, account executive, Interep, Los Angeles named director, sales, Clear Channel Radio Sales Hispanic, Los Angeles.

At Sirius, New York: **MARK KALLEN**, VP, sales, Infinity Radio Sales, Los Angeles, joins as Western regional sales director; **STEPHEN SCHEU**, national sales manager, WCKG(FM) Elmwood Park, Ill., joins as Midwest regional sales director; **KEVIN ZOBACK**, account



Pola Chagnon
Cartoon Network

executive, Disney/ABC, New York, joins as New York account manager.

ADVERTISING/MARKETING/PR

At Clear Channel Katz Advantage: **BRIAN CALLAHAN**, senior VP, business development, New York, named VP/director, Boston; **MICHELLE EAGLEEYE**, senior account manager, Network Advantage, Chicago,

named senior director, marketing business development team.

RICHARD ALCOTT, executive VP, marketing, AudioAudit, Paramus, N.J., named executive VP/managing director, Western region client services, Initiative, Los Angeles.

TECHNOLOGY

DAVID NICHOLAS, VP, worldwide sales, N2 Broadband, Atlanta, named senior VP, strategic sales, Xtend Networks, Atlanta.

WHAT'S YOUR FATE?

Send it to Melanie M. Clarke, editorial assistant, B&C (e-mail: meclarke@reedbusiness.com; fax: 646-746-7028; mail: 360 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010)

OBITUARY

Emy Award-winning daytime-drama creator William Joseph Bell, 78, died in Los Angeles on April 29 from complications of Alzheimer's disease.

Bell began his television career as a writer on *Guiding Light* in 1956 and continued as a writer on *As the World Turns* from 1957 to 1966. In 1964, he co-created *Our Private World*, the first continuing serial drama in prime time, with mentor Irna Phillips. Bell and Phillips created *Another World* in 1965.

Bell became head writer for *Days of Our Lives* in 1966 and subsequently turned the failing drama around, making it one of the highest-rated shows in daytime. He co-created, with wife Lee Phillip Bell, *The Young and the Restless* in 1973 and *The Bold and the Beautiful* in 1987.

Bell received nine Emmy Awards and the Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

In 1992, CBS dedicated Studio 43 at CBS Television City in Los Angeles to both Bell and *The Young and the Restless*.

Bell is survived by Lee Phillip Bell, his wife of 50 years; sons Bill and Bradley; daughter Lauralee; and eight grandchildren. ■

DATEBOOK

THIS WEEK

MAY 10
HOROWITZ ASSOCIATES
THE FIFTH ANNUAL HOROWITZ ASSOCIATES BREAKFAST RESEARCH FORUM
Marriott Marquis, New York. Contact: Adriana Waterston 914-834-5999 or adrianaw@horowitzassociates.com

MAY 11-13
WOMEN IN CABLE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS WICT FORUM 2005
New York. Contact: Leslie Dorman 703-234-9818, ldorman@wict.org or www.wict.org

MAY 13
WOMEN IN FILM & VIDEO DC CHAPTER
12TH ANNUAL WOMEN OF VISION AWARDS GALA
Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center, Washington. Contact: 202-429-9438

MAY 14
ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS & SCIENCES
DAYTIME EMMY CREATIVE AWARDS
The Hollywood and Highland Complex, Hollywood, Calif. Contact: Academy of Television Arts & Sciences 818-754-2800 or www.emmys.com

MAY

MAY 15-17
BROADCAST CABLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION/BROADCAST CABLE CREDIT ASSOCIATION
45TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Hyatt Regency Superdome New Orleans. Contact: www.bcfm.com or www.bccacredit.com

MAY 16
THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO
ANNUAL UPFRONTS BREAKFAST
The Museum of Television & Radio, New York. Contact: 310-786-1077

MAY 16
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA GRADY COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION
64TH ANNUAL PEABODY AWARDS
Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Contact: Stephanie Baumel

212-983-9898 or stephanieb@ferencomm.com. Tickets: 212-889-6716

MAY 17
CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM
CABLE'S LEADERS IN LEARNING AWARDS
Washington. Contact: Tegan Firth 202-775-1054, tfirth@ciconline.org or www.leadersinlearningawards.org

MAY 17
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MULTI-ETHNICITY IN COMMUNICATIONS
25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
FEZ, New York. Contact: Spencer Casseus 212-962-3791 ext.208 or casseusmedia@hotmail.com; Ramona Collins 516-384-6760 or ramonadcollins@hotmail.com

MAY 18
THE CABLE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS HUMAN RESOURCES ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM
Atlanta. Contact: 630-416-1166 or www.cthra.com

MAY 19
CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION FOR MARKETING
THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL FORUM
Sheraton Premiere Tysons Corner, Vienna, Va. Contact: Seth Morrison 703-549-4200 or www.ctamconferences.com

MAY 20
ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS & SCIENCES
DAYTIME EMMY TELECAST
Radio City Music Hall, New York. Contact: Academy of Television Arts & Sciences 818-754-2800 or www.emmys.com

MAY 23
QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS
2005 FRED FRIENDLY FIRST AMENDMENT AWARD LUNCHEON
The Metropolitan Club, New York. Contact: 203-582-8655 or www.quinnipiac.edu

MAY 23 - 24
THE CABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND, DELAWARE AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ANNUAL AWARDS CELEBRATION AND GOLF TOURNAMENT
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Baltimore. Contact: Wayne O'Dell or

Jean Reilly 410-2666-9111 or ctaofmd-de-dc@msn.com

MAY 23-26
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS
SATELLITE UPLINK OPERATORS TRAINING SEMINAR
NAB Headquarters, Washington. Contact: Cheryl Coleridge 202-429-5346 or www.nab.org/scitech/satsem2005.asp

JUNE

JUNE 8
RADIO CREATIVE FUND
THE 2005 RADIO-MERCURY AWARDS
Cipriani, New York. Contact: www.radiomercuryawards.com

UPFRONTS 2005

ALL LOCATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY

MAY 16
NBC
Radio City Music Hall
4 p.m.

MAY 17
ABC
Lincoln Center
4 p.m.

MAY 17
THE WB
Madison Square Garden
10:30 a.m.

MAY 17
TELEMUNDO
Jazz at Lincoln Center
Frederick P. Rose Hall
7 p.m.

MAY 18
CBS
Carnegie Hall
3 p.m.

MAY 18
UNIVISION
Lincoln Center
Alice Tully Hall
10 a.m.

MAY 19
UPN
Theater at Madison Square Garden
11 a.m.

MAY 19
FOX
City Center
4 p.m.

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NIELSEN APRIL 25 - MAY 1 RATINGS

THE PRIME TIME RACE Top 10 Basic Cable Shows

April 25-May 1

Total Households (in millions)

PROGRAM	DATE	NET	HHS
1. WWE Raw 10p	4/25	SPIK	3.6
2. WWE Raw 9p	4/25	SPIK	3.5
3. SpongeBob SquarePants 9:30a	4/30	NICK	3.1
3. Fairly OddParents 10a	4/30	NICK	3.1
5. SpongeBob SquarePants 9:30a	5/1	NICK	3.0
5. Fairly OddParents 10a	5/1	NICK	3.0
5. SpongeBob SquarePants 9a	4/30	NICK	3.0
8. Fairly OddParents 10:30a	4/30	NICK	2.9
9. SpongeBob SquarePants 9a	5/1	NICK	2.8
10. SpongeBob SquarePants 5p	4/25	NICK	2.7
10. Fairly OddParents 10:30a	5/1	NICK	2.7

Adults 18-49 (in millions)

PROGRAM	DATE	NET	18-49
1. WWE Raw 10p	4/25	SPIK	2.6
2. WWE Raw 9p	4/25	SPIK	2.4
3. RW/RR Challenge Inferno	4/25	MTV	2.2
3. Sex and the City 9:35p	4/26	TBS	2.2
5. NBA: Mavericks vs. Rockets	4/28	TNT	1.8
5. Nashville Star	4/26	USA	1.8
5. The Shield	4/26	F/X	1.8
5. NBA: Spurs vs. Nuggets	4/30	ESPN	1.8
9. NBA: Rockets vs. Mavericks	4/25	TNT	1.7
9. Deadliest Catch	5/1	DISC	1.7
9. American Chopper	4/25	DISC	1.7
9. NBA: Pistons vs. 76ers	5/1	ESPN	1.7
9. NBA: Heat vs. Nets	4/28	TNT	1.7

SOURCE: Turner Entertainment Research, Nielsen Media Research

Broadcast Networks

April 25-May 1

Total Households (in millions)

	WEEK	STD
1. CBS	9.3	9.1
2. FOX	6.7	6.7
2. NBC	6.7	7.2
4. ABC	6.6	7.1
5. WB	2.7	2.4
6. UPN	2.4	2.5
7. PAX	0.5	0.5

Adults 18-49 (in millions)

	WEEK	STD
1. FOX	5.6	5.3
2. CBS	4.7	5.2
2. ABC	4.7	4.9
4. NBC	4.1	4.6
5. WB	2.0	1.8
6. UPN	1.8	1.8
7. PAX	0.2	0.2

Top 10 Broadcast Shows

Total Households (in millions)

	WEEK	STD
1. Desperate Housewives	ABC	17.3
2. American Idol Tue	FOX	16.7
3. CSI	CBS	16.5
4. American Idol Wed	FOX	16.2
5. Survivor: Palau	CBS	13.8
6. Grey's Anatomy	ABC	12.4
7. House	FOX	11.4
7. Everybody Loves Raymond	CBS	11.4
9. CSI: Miami	CBS	11.3
9. Cold Case	CBS	11.3

Adults 18-49 (in millions)

	WEEK	STD
1. Desperate Housewives	ABC	14.9
2. American Idol Tue	FOX	14.0
3. American Idol Wed	FOX	13.6
4. CSI	CBS	10.8
5. Grey's Anatomy	ABC	10.6
6. Survivor: Palau	CBS	10.1
7. ER	NBC	8.6
8. Extreme Makeover: Home Edition	ABC	8.5
9. House	FOX	7.9
10. Family Guy	FOX	7.5

SOURCE: Nielsen Media Research

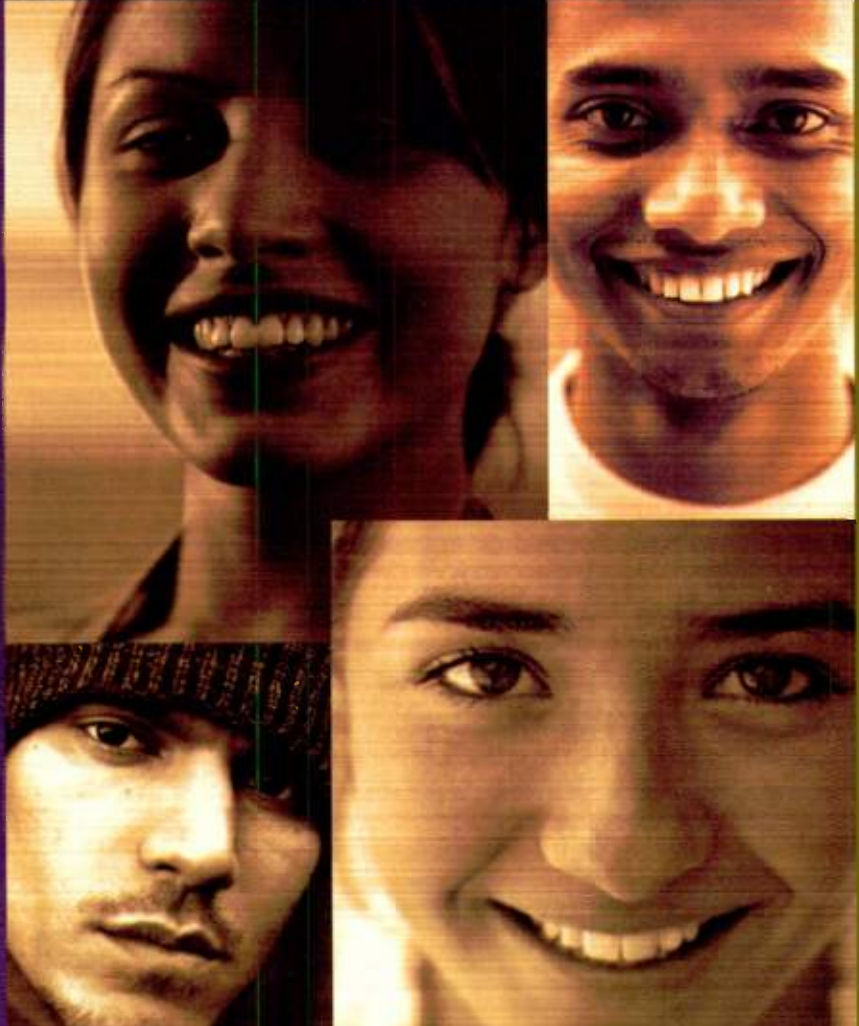
	abc	cbs	nbc	fox	pax	upn	wb	
Week 32	5.4/8	8.7/14	7.4/12	MONDAY	5.7/9	0.4/1	2.1/3	3.4/5
8:00	53. Extreme Makeover Home Ed: 5.4/8	45. Yes, Dear 5.7/9	43. Fear Factor 5.8/9	59. Nanny 911 4.7/7	129. Extreme Fakeovers 0.2/1	99. One on One 2.0/3	76. 7th Heaven 3.7/6	
8:30	How'd They Do That? 5.2/8	42. Listen Up 5.9/9				99. Cuts 2.0/3		
9:00		7. Everybody Lvs Raymond 10.4/15	27. Las Vegas 7.3/11	35. 24 6.7/10		95. Girlfriends 2.4/4	87. Everwood 3.0/4	
9:30	45. The Bachelor 5.7/8	14. Two and a Half Men 9.7/14			117. Monday Mystery Movie—Recipe for Murder 0.5/1	99. Half and Half 2.0/3		
10:00	53. Supernanny 5.2/8	9. CSI: Miami 10.3/16	16. Medium 9.1/15					
10:30				TUESDAY				
	4.7/8	8.4/13	5.0/8	12.8/20	0.3/1	1.9/3	3.2/5	
8:00	79. My Wife and Kids 3.6/6	18. NCIS 8.9/14	76. Most Outrageous Moments: Live TV 3.7/6	2. American Idol 15.2/24	126. Lie Detector 0.3/1	107. All of Us 1.7/3	81. Gilmore Girls 3.5/6	
8:30	85. George Lopez 3.2/5					103. Eye 1.9/3		
9:00	52. According to Jim 5.3/8	20. The Amazing Race 8.3/12	73. Scrubs 4.0/6	7. House 10.4/16	129. Cold Turkey 0.2/1	103. Veronica Mars 1.9/3	89. One Tree Hill 2.8/4	
9:30	53. Rodney 5.2/8		81. The Office 3.5/5					
10:00	57. Blind Justice 5.0/8	23. Judging Amy 7.9/13	25. Law & Order: Special Victims Unit 7.5/12		122. Diagnosis Murder 0.4/1			
10:30				WEDNESDAY				
	6.1/10	7.9/13	5.9/10	7.8/12	0.5/1	2.6/4	2.1/3	
8:00	19. Lost 8.5/14	40. 60 Minutes Wednesday 6.1/10	58. Dateline NBC 4.8/8	60. That '70s Show 4.6/8	115. Doc 0.6/1	84. America's Next Top Model 3.3/6	90. Smallville 2.7/5	
8:30				65. Life on a Stick 4.3/7				
9:00	49. Alias 5.4/8	24. CSI 7.8/12	37. Revelations 6.3/10	4. American Idol 14.8/23		117. Sue Thomas, F.B. Eye 0.5/1	103. Kevin Hill 1.9/3	
9:30				29. Stacked 7.2/11			111. Jack & Bobby 1.4/2	
10:00	64. Eyes 4.4/7	12. CSI: NY 9.8/16	31. Law & Order 6.8/11		122. Diagnosis Murder 0.4/1			
10:30				THURSDAY				
	4.6/7	13.9/21	9.1/14	2.5/4	0.5/1	3.2/5	2.5/4	
8:00	Presidential Press Conference				126. Young Blades 0.3/1	85. WWE Smackdown! 3.2/5	92. Blue Collar TV 2.6/4	
8:30							90. The Ron White Show 2.7/4	
9:00	Presidential Press Conference	5. Survivor: Palau 12.6/19	21. The Apprentice 8.2/12	93. The Simple Life 2.5/4			95. Mobile Home Disasters 2.4/4	
9:30				93. The Simple Life 2.5/4				
10:00	60. Primetime Live 4.6/7	3. CSI 15.1/23	11. ER 10.0/16		115. Diagnosis Murder 0.6/1			
10:30				FRIDAY				
	5.0/9	7.7/14	5.7/10	3.7/7	0.3/1	1.5/3	1.9/3	
8:00	66. America's Funniest Home Videos 4.2/8	31. CSI 6.8/13	49. Dateline NBC 5.4/10		117. America's Most Talented Kids 0.5/1	107. Enterprise 1.7/3	110. What I Like About You 1.5/3	
8:30				76. Fox Movie Friday—Spiderman 3.7/7			107. Reba 1.7/3	
9:00	70. Hope & Faith 4.1/7	17. JAG 9.0/15	48. Third Watch 5.5/9		122. MGM Night at the Movies—Criminal Law 0.4/1	112. America's Next Top Model 1.3/2	95. Reba 2.4/4	
9:30	70. Hope & Faith 4.1/7						99. Living With Fran 2.0/3	
10:00	35. 20/20 6.7/12	30. Numb3rs 7.1/12	37. Law & Order: Trial by Jury 6.3/11					
10:30				SATURDAY				
	3.6/6	4.8/9	4.6/8	4.2/8	0.4/1			
8:00		62. Without a Trace 4.5/8	88. Crossing Jordan 2.9/6	(nr) NASCAR Busch Series 3.3/7				
8:30	79. ABC Saturday Movie—Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone 3.6/6	43. Crimetime Saturday 5.8/10	66. Law & Order: Special Victims Unit 4.2/7	74. Cops 3.9/7	117. Universal Family Movie—Car Wash 0.5/1			
9:00				66. Cops 4.2/7				
9:30		66. 48 Hours Mystery 4.2/8	31. Law & Order 6.8/12	62. Cops 4.5/8				
10:00					129. Faith Under Fire 0.2/1			
10:30				SUNDAY				
	10.6/17	9.5/15	6.0/10	5.3/9	0.5/1		1.9/3	
7:00	47. Extreme Makeover: Home Edition 5.6/10	22. 60 Minutes 8.0/14	49. Dateline NBC 5.4/10	81. King of the Hill 3.5/7	126. America's Most Talented Kids 0.3/1		112. Charmed 1.3/2	
7:30				70. Malcolm in the Middle 4.1/7				
8:00	14. Extreme Makeover: Home Edition 9.7/15	9. Cold Case 10.3/16	74. The Contender 3.9/6	40. The Simpsons 6.1/10	122. Doc 0.4/1		85. Charmed 2.4/4	
8:30				31. The Simpsons 6.8/10				
9:00	1. Desperate Housewives 15.8/23	12. CBS Sunday Movie—Riding the Bus With My Sister 9.8/15	25. Law & Order: Criminal Intent 7.5/11	37. Family Guy 6.3/9	114. Sue Thomas, F.B. Eye 0.8/1		103. Steve Harvey Big Time 1.9/3	
9:30				53. American Dad 5.2/8				
10:00	6. Grey's Anatomy 11.3/18		27. Crossing Jordan 7.3/12		117. Diagnosis Murder 0.5/1			
10:30								
Averages								
Week	6.0/10	8.5/14	6.0/10	6.1/10	0.4/1	2.2/4	2.4/4	
S-T-D	6.5/11	8.3/13	6.6/11	6.1/10	0.4/1	2.3/4	2.2/3	

KEY: Each box in grid shows rank, program, total-household rating/share • Blue bar shows total-household rating/share for the day • Top 10 shows of the week are numbered in red • TV universe estimated at 109.6 million households; one rating point is equal to 1,096,000 U.S. TV homes • Tan tint is winner of time slot • (NR)=Not Ranked; rating/share estimated • *Premiere • Programs less than 15 minutes in length not shown • S-T-D = Season to date SOURCES: Nielsen Media Research, CBS Research • Compiled By Kenneth Ray

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The Accidental Success Story

Continued from page 12

try to grab hold of the project, and neither did I. We did it together.”

HBO executives, nervous about the rookie's getting six pages shot a day, asked for major—but seemingly arbitrary—last-minute cuts. “I knew enough to know this was horseshit,” Simon recalls. Confronting them—“I threw one of my patented tantrums”—he realized he was ready to take the helm.

FIRST-TIME BOSS

Nina Noble, whom Simon hired as producer for *The Corner* and who is also executive producer of *The Wire*, says Simon commanded more respect on-

set than another first-time boss might have, because he had spent a year on the streets researching the book. The show featured Charles Dutton as director and unknown actors like Lance Reddick and Clarke Peters, who would team up with Simon again in *The Wire*. *The Corner* won Emmys for best miniseries and best writing, and Simon felt ready for creative control over a full series. On *The Wire*, Simon grew even more confident as a producer, Noble says. She says he sets high standards “and requires everybody to be as thoughtful as he is in terms of details. But his passion is contagious.”

HBO Entertainment President Carolyn Strauss praises Simon for “really rolling

up his sleeves” and pushing hard, and being “very mindful of where he is fiscally.” What is more impressive, Noble adds, is that Simon can write big, without holding himself back, but then “compartmentalize” and become a pragmatic producer, willing to make tough decisions.

“It’s the ‘Fontana way’ meeting up with the ‘Colesberry way,’” Simon says, “Tom’s being the great sin is spending money that isn’t yours, and Bob’s was that you have only one chance to make this beautiful.”

Noble says that melding of paths is quintessential Simon, as he is still a reporter who likes to absorb and evaluate all sides. “He doesn’t hire only people who agree with him—he thinks a huge amount of creativity comes from discussion and debates,” Noble says.

A CHALLENGING YEAR

This past year has been Simon’s most challenging one as a producer. First, Colesberry died at age 57, from complications following surgery. Noble says she and Simon had “more confrontations” without the third part of their triangle to balance things out, but they learned in the third season how to pick up the slack.

The Wire cast (from left) Sonja Sohn, Dominic West, Clarke Peters, Deirdre Lovejoy, Corey Parker-Robinson, Jim True-Frost

Simon says they had to do more re-shoots, because they’d find mistakes after the fact that Colesberry would have fixed on the spot. (Simon says the biggest issue was personal: “It was emotionally debilitating. I just missed him.”)

“Bob’s death forced David to shoulder many of those producing duties,” Strauss says. “I was really worried, but he rose to the occasion.”

Simon had to rise to the occasion again after the season when HBO seemed ready to cancel the series. Strauss says it wasn’t the lack of ratings, necessarily—“it’s a high-prestige show for us”—but that, with gang leader Avon Barksdale heading to jail and his deputy Stringer Bell killed, “they’d tied up so much of the story so well, we wondered if we should go on.”

So Simon wrote a memo, detailing the stories for the fourth and, to some extent, a fifth season, which won over Strauss and HBO Chairman Chris Albrecht. Yet while Simon, who has also been developing a possible miniseries about the Iraq war for HBO, maintains that he knows he can produce television, he says, “I still don’t think of myself as a producer by trade.” In the long run, he wouldn’t be surprised to find himself writing nonfiction books again.

But if he does, watch out. That will take him right back to TV. ■



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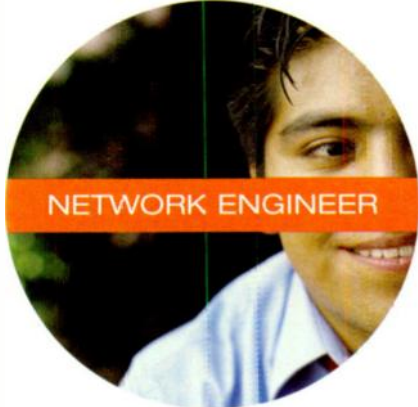
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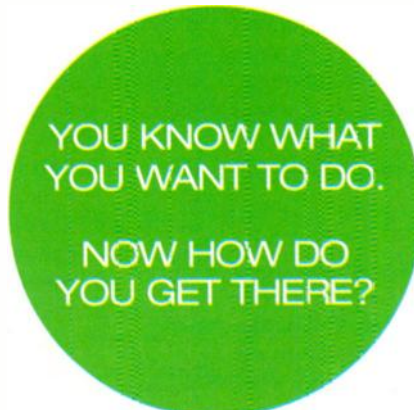
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Fast Track

Continued from page 4
Project Apollo, a new service to integrate viewership with product-purchasing information.

The service, which is based on Arbitron's portable people meters, is intended to give advertisers a better gauge of the effectiveness of their ads by relating exposures across multiple platforms to shopping behaviors. Each person will get a portable people meter, which records exposure to various media sources, broadcast and cable.—J.E.

Peacock Keeps Old Kentucky Home

NBC has finalized a deal to keep TV rights for two of the three jewels in horse racing's Triple Crown, the **Kentucky Derby** and **Preakness**, for another five years. The deal thwarts an attempt by ESPN to snag Preakness rights away and pair the race with ABC's carriage of the **Belmont Stakes**. NBC will carry the Derby and Preakness through 2010.—J.M.H.

'Grey's Anatomy' Healthy

ABC has officially picked up its new hit midseason medical drama, **Grey's Anatomy**, for next season with an order for 13 episodes.

The **Touchstone** series has been a surprise hit in its 10 p.m. Sunday time period after **Desperate Housewives**, retaining more of its powerhouse lead-in than **Boston Legal**, which it displaced.

Boston Legal is also coming back next season with a full, 22-episode season order (plus the five episodes left from this season).—J.B.

House Defeats VNR Disclosure Bill

The **House** last week voted down an amendment to a Vocational Ed bill that would have prevented use of funds for paid commentators or video news releases (VNRs) unless both clearly disclosed that they were provided by the government.

Rep. **George Miller** (D-Calif.), ranking Democrat on the education and workforce subcommittee and a leading congressional opponent of unsourced VNRs, had proposed the amendment, saying, "The Bush administration has refused to end the deceptive, wasteful and illegal practice of producing fake news." After its defeat, he said the House had "failed to adopt a common-sense measure to do something about it."

A spokesman for Miller says he will take every opportunity to reintroduce the measure on subsequent spending bills. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman

Comedy Central Halts 'Chappelle's Show' Production

In a terse, three-line statement, **Comedy Central** said it is "optimistic" that production will resume "in the near future" on the third season of **Chappelle's Show**, which was scheduled to premiere May 31.

No word on the reason for the abrupt move only one day after the channel buoyantly pitched its shows to advertisers.

Dave Chappelle re-upped for two more seasons (a total of four) last August, with a lucrative deal that has been pegged at \$30 mil-

lion-\$50 million and was based on projections of DVD and other backend sales through the end of the fourth season.

In 2004, when season two aired, the show averaged 3.1 million total viewers (2.2 million in 18-49s), which made it one of the channel's top-rated shows.

Season one DVD sales were 2.8 million units. In its most recent financial statement, **Viacom** pointed to a 30% increase in ancillary revenue, singling out **Chappelle's Show** for special mention.—A.B.



Belterra prepares for the Kentucky Derby.



Grey's Anatomy

Michael Armstrong

Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) has scheduled a May 12 hearing on a bill mandating disclosure of government VNRs.

The hearing had originally been scheduled for April 28 but was postponed when the bill had not been

introduced at least 48 hours before the scheduled hearing.—J.E.

FAST TRACK

CBS' Summer Reality Check

CBS will air three new reality series this summer. **Fire Me, Please**, airing Tuesdays at 9 starting June 7, is a seeming spoof on **The Apprentice**. It gives two contestants until 3 p.m. to get fired from a new job. First one out wins. On **The Cut**, beginning Thursday, June 9, designers vie to launch their own label for Tommy Hilfinger. The winner in **Rock Star: INXS** becomes the new lead singer in the group. Another hook: The contestants live together. It debuts July 11, with three airings a week. **Survivor** executive producer **Mark Burnett** cooked this one up, too. (See page 9.)

Murphy Leaves 'Nightline'

George Murphy is out at **ABC News' Nightline**, although it is not clear if he was fired or will be allowed to resign.

The **Nightline** senior director has not been at work for several weeks since ABC learned that he was endorsing the **Sony Vegas** editing system, including

during a planned appearance at the NAB convention in Las Vegas last month.

ABC had just signed a big deal for **Avid** editing equipment, which was announced at the convention. The network also has a written policy against product endorsements of any kind.

ABC had no comment.—J.E.

AT&T, Comcast Settle @Home

On the eve of trial, AT&T has agreed to settle several claims tied to its control of failed high-speed online service **Excite@Home**.

The telephone company says the settlement is a \$340 million payment to **Excite@Home** bondholders and a company pursuing a patent-infringement claim. **Comcast** says it will cover half the settlement because it bought AT&T's cable division two years ago. However, the settlement does not resolve all the claims directly against Comcast or against **Excite@Home's** other major shareholder, **Cox Communications**.

Excite@Home was formed to create a national data backbone and other services for most of the major cable operators in the late 1990s as the industry was beginning to offer high-speed Internet services.

Like many dotcoms of the era, **Excite@Home** got swamped in losses and shut down. Comcast and Cox managed to sell out to AT&T at a huge price \$3 billion before the fall.—J.M.H.

Armstrong To Head Johns Hopkins Medicine

Michael Armstrong, the former chairman of AT&T and **Comcast Corp.**, has been elected chairman of the board for Baltimore-based **Johns Hopkins Medicine**, effective July 1. Armstrong, 66, will head a board that oversees a \$3 billion clinical and medical research enterprise that includes the university's medical school and health system.

—J.E.

Brockman Promoted, Binford Out at ABC

Kevin Brockman, a seven-year veteran at ABC, has been named senior VP, communications, for the **Disney-ABC Television Group**; he had been senior VP of entertainment communications. The network also announced that **Sue Binford** resigned her position as senior VP, corporate communications.—P.J.B.

Bad 'Idol', Big Ratings

A new **American Idol** controversy hit the right note with viewers last week on two networks. **Fox's** reality powerhouse soared in the ratings last week despite a steamy exposé by **ABC** newsmagazine **Primetime Live** about an alleged affair between a former contestant and a judge and claims of preferential treatment.

The May 3 and 4 installments of **American Idol** collected 49.8 million viewers combined, and the show's **Nielsen** marks are up over last season. ABC's **Idol**-themed special, which came on an hour after the Fox show, nabbed 13.7 million viewers and a 6.1 rating/16 share among adults 18-49, more than double the newsmagazine's season average. In a rare ratings coup for ABC, the network beat out workhorse dramas **CSI: NY** and **Law & Order** in viewers and adults 18-49.

On the ABC special, former **Idol** wannabe **Corey Clark** alleges he and judge **Paula Abdul** carried on a secret affair two seasons ago and she aided him in the competition.

Abdul has denied the charges, and Fox says it will investigate any legitimate complaints of favoritism. Fox and **Idol** producers said the special was filled with "rumor, speculation and assertions from a disqualified contestant who admitted during the special to telling lies." Clark was removed from the show for not revealing charges he assaulted his sister and resisted arrest.—A.R.

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Fighting Back, at Last

Two and a half cheers for the broadcast networks for finally standing up to Washington on its ludicrous indecency crackdown. We have been waiting since Janet's flash seen 'round the world for the industry to step up and speak out in one voice. Last week, they came close.

The networks (with the exception of ABC) have put their money where their mouth is and launched TV Watch, a group that will lobby for "personal responsibility" over government regulation, though we prefer a term that doesn't smack of right-wing code for "family values." What it really amounts to is "fighting government censorship through education." It's high time.

We thought the National Association of Broadcasters was ready to flash some teeth back in February after having remained closed-mouthed on the subject, but the group's opposition to the crackdown proved instead to be a dual message of "Don't censor us, but if you do, kneecap everybody else so they won't get too far ahead of us." Wrong message.

Last week, we wrote in this space that NBC's decision to expand its TV ratings—by adding so-called descriptors, like "V" for violence and "L" for language, etc.—to match the other networks was an opportunity to start making the case for freedom for everybody.

The coalition is one of those "strange-bedfellows" aggregates thrown together by their dislike of government intrusion. It unites conservatives like Americans for Tax Reform, which doesn't want the government in citizen's TV rooms any more

than in their pocketbooks. And it includes groups like Hollywood's Creative Coalition, which doesn't want Washington in its editing suites.

The networks' message, the same one the cable industry sounded two weeks ago, is that the media need to do a better job of informing parents about available control over content through the V-chip and ratings and that viewers need to use those tools. TV Watch even provided a survey that concludes emphatically that Americans would much rather set their own standards than have the government do it for them.

The group's urgency is commendable. It's asking viewers to "contact everyone you know who loves TV and tell them to join before they lose their favorite programs." It is also wisely fighting fire with fire, using the activist tools of Web sites and online petitions—so often used against broadcasters—to make their voices heard.

One section of the Web site (www.televisionwatch.org) reads, "You may not know it, but the government has already changed your favorite programs." It notes, for example, that a scene showing South Africa's Nelson Mandela was deleted from a documentary because women in the background participating in a traditional dance were partially unclothed.

That's ridiculous. And it is about time the television industry began making that point forcefully to viewers. Media may be offensive sometimes by accident. Sometimes, it even might be offensive by design.

But there are safeguards, and there is common sense. From now on, the American public ought to use each a lot more. That's what TV Watch is saying, too.

EDITORIAL

Don't Talk So Fast to Baby Boomers

Infomercials. That ugly word conjures up half-hours of tacky, humdrum hucksterism. But it's the content that's clumsy, not the concept.

Throughout most of the last century, print was king, even during the age of radio and the early years of TV. Jingles, slogans, crisp copy, animation and clever visuals were still poor cousins of privileged print.

Beginning in the middle 1960s, dazzling cinema-like spots mixed with the succinct wit of print became the pinnacle of advertising mastery. An effective television campaign often did it all: customer awareness, imprinting, positioning, branding and messaging.

Not so today, at least for baby boomers. And it isn't simply because we're not being targeted. The real reason is that our attention spans are longer. We want to know more. We need to know more for a product or service to be imprinted. A 30-second salvo will miss us by a mile. We will subconsciously (oftentimes consciously) dismiss it.

If television advertising was once the poor cousin to print, nowadays, infomercials are the bedraggled outcasts of both. While there are exceptions,

infomercials are shoddy also-rans in the advertising world.

But there is hope. Some marketers are taking advantage of the Internet and cable TV. "On-demand" advertising is the new catch phrase.

The question is how to reach baby boomers. "You can impart a pretty cool image in 30 seconds, especially with digital effects," says Ron Koliha,

a creative director and copywriter for stereo-components manufacturer Harmon-Kardon. "But when it comes to hard goods—especially high-tech hard goods—the product is the brand. Ignore the product, and the brand just becomes a symbol. Most of us baby boomers have spent 40+ years digesting information and deciding what we want. The advertiser who is willing to tell us the story of a product has the advantage."

The cliché "thinking outside the box" applies here, but with a twist: Think outside the television box. If you are targeting baby boomers and you severely storyboard an infomercial (especially by committee), it will end up DOA. With the longform infomercial, a genuine relationship

between your product or service and target market is vital, and you have plenty of time to develop one.

There are many talented baby boomer film writers/directors, editors and cinematographers who haven't gotten their hands dirty in ages. Some are now producers. Some work in television. Some are sitting around doing nothing. Find them and hire them. And trust them.

At some point in the '60s, someone convinced somebody that one-minute commercials could be exciting, absorbing, mini-masterpieces and do their jobs. If you want to reach baby boomers, now is the time to persuade agencies and clients that this is likewise true for five- to 30-minute infomercials.

Nyren has been a consultant for agencies and companies with products for the 40+ market, including Boom magazine, Mary Furlong & Associates, Omnicom Group, and The Faith Popcorn BrainReserve. His new book Advertising to Baby Boomers (Paramount Market Publishing) will be published this month.

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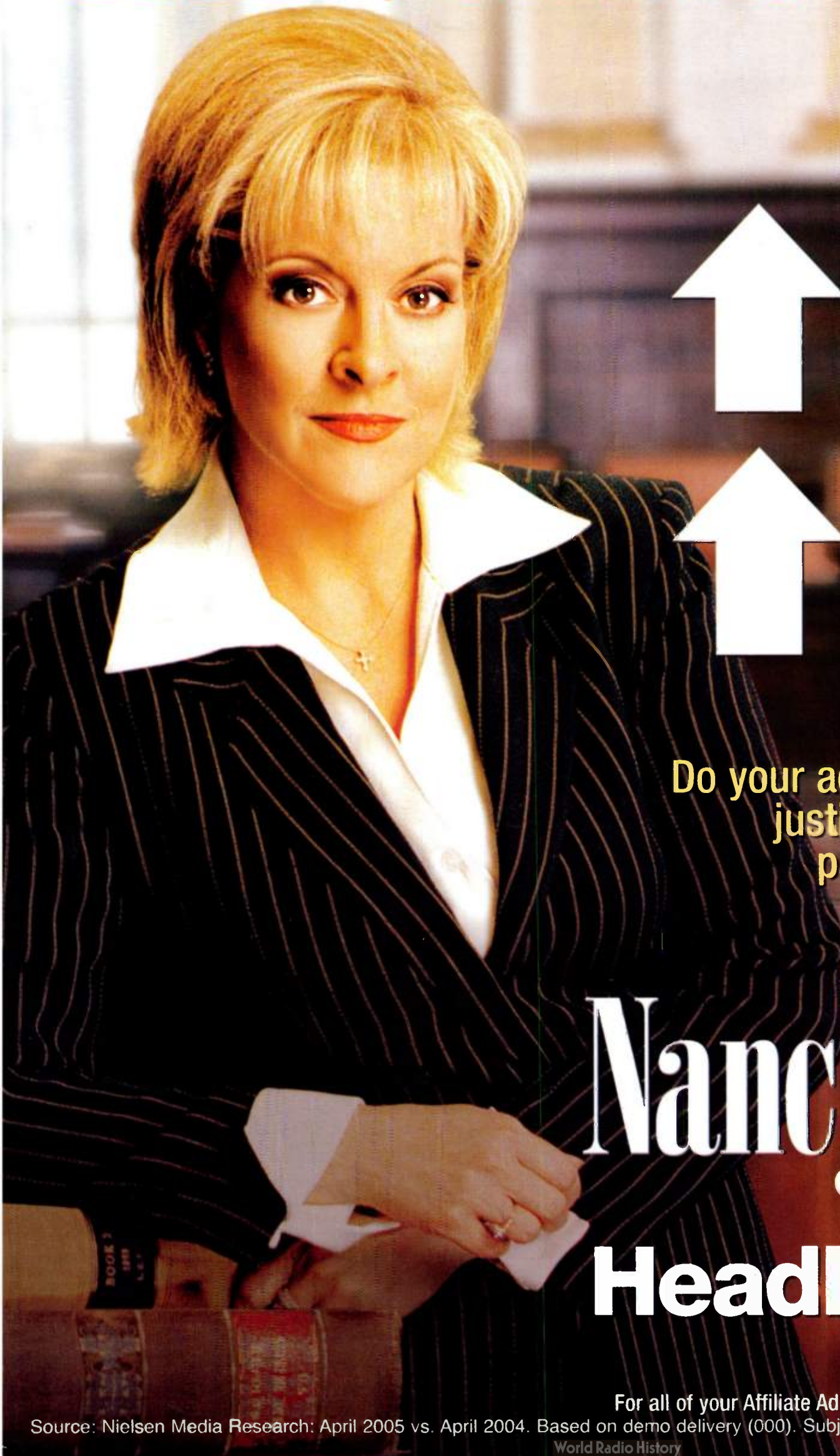
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