

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Programming Grief: A Look at 9/11 Content, 20 Years Later

Every year, people across the U.S. remember how the events of September 11, 2001 impacted us as individuals and communities. Programmers have been vital to the grieving process throughout the past two decades, but how do they keep it fresh after 20 years of content on the same tragedy, the same day?

History Channel holds a double-edged sword of having to ask this question most often, but being an expert in the subject, as well. *Eli Lehrer*, evp and head of programming at the net, said it's one of the core anniversaries History acknowledges and his audience has come to recognize the network for it.

"Really, how we approach it in a new way that we think will be resonant for the viewer is a question we ask ourselves every year, and I don't think the 20th anniversary was significantly different in that respect...and on a year like the 20th anniversary, you also recognize that there's going to be many of these documentaries in the marketplace, as opposed to the 17th anniversary or 18th anniversary," Lehrer said.

History will answer a question that took the whole of the two decades to fully understand—how were the children of 9/11 impacted? Lehrer said this felt like an appropriate year for the network to take on the stories of the kids of 9/11. "9/11: The Legacy," will premiere Friday at 7pm, featuring the students who attended the High School for Leadership and Public Service in Manhattan that day. The special also shares

the perspective of the school's principal *Ada Rosario Dolch* and English teacher *Heather Ordober* as well as twin brothers who started a charity in honor of their father who never came home.

National Geographic examined the day from survivors' perspectives rather than a historical approach in "9/11: One Day in America," a six-episode docuseries that premiered Aug 29 and aired its last episode Sept 1. It is now available to stream on **Nat Geo TV** and **Hulu**.

"We really gave the survivors, the first responders, people that escaped from the Towers, a great amount of time to tell their stories. I think what's different about this project is not new information, but the depth we go into and the amount of time we give for these people to tell their extraordinary stories," executive producer *Carolyn Payne* said.

What most surprised Payne, and what she hopes viewers will see, is a juxtaposition of the pain the attacks caused and the human spirit that shone through in the following days. She talked about her 19-year-old daughter and how Payne wants her to be able to understand 9/11.

"I hope that she will watch this insight into how devastating that day was, but also how amazing it was, because the people...who responded on that day looked after each other. Those stories are so incredible, the sacrifice and bravery," she said.

Sports, too, have a role to play this year in commemorating the 20th anniversary of 9/11, with **MLB Network's** "Remembering the Game for New York," debuting Thursday at 10pm, followed

**HELP CABLEFAX
RECOGNIZE THE MOST
POWERFUL WOMEN
IN THE INDUSTRY**



**Cablefax
MOST POWERFUL WOMEN**

2021 CATEGORIES

In addition to spotlighting the industry's biggest leaders, Cablefax is promoting the power of one-to-one relationships. This year, we are looking for executives to sponsor a female candidate to be included in The Rising Tide and will be featured along with their sponsor in a special section of the Most Powerful Women edition of Cablefax: The Magazine.

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, SEPT. 10

www.CablefaxWomen.com



by an airing of the September 21, 2001 matchup between the New York Mets and the Atlanta Braves at Shea Stadium.

The game was the first major sporting event following the terrorist attack, with MLB holding the game in New York. The program features former Braves players Mark DeRosa, Steve Karsay, Dave Martinez and Jason Marquis as well as former Mets players John Franco and Al Leiter. The players commemorate the anniversary by talking about growing up in the New York area and their connections to September 11, 2001 including where they were when the first plane struck the North Tower, returning to New York after the attacks, their memories of Mike Piazza's winning home run and more.

"Personally, I grew up watching that game. There was just so much behind that night and then the Piazza home run, and what it kind of meant to the city at that moment in time. I think that game just sort of stood alone as just a natural thing that we wanted to relive, just because it had so much significance, it had so much emotion," Andrew Brenner, MLB Network senior producer, told CFX.

MLB isn't alone in remembering 9/11 from a sports vantage point. ESPN has planned content across its platforms, including a special recognition of how college football reacted to the attacks during Saturday's "College GameDay" broadcast. Tonight's "E60" (9pm ET, ESPN2) looks at the role sports played in the wake of the attacks. FOX Sports promises to focus on remembrance and the unifying power of sports when it covers Saturday's Yankees game against the Mets at Citi Field (7:30pm ET on FOX).

Of course, the news nets have wall-to-wall coverage lined up,

including programming throughout Saturday of live events happening in NYC, Pennsylvania and DC. Peppered throughout their coverage are specials such as CNN's Jake Tapper-hosted "Shine A Light," Fox News' "Lost Calls of 9/11" and MSNBC's "Memory Box: Echoes of 9/11."

Viewers will have dozens of programming choices to commemorate the day. And that's how it should be. "People want to reflect back and honor the memories of the people we lost on 9/11, regardless of what's going on in the world in a given year, or given September, it doesn't matter if it's a presidential election year or a global pandemic," said History's Lehrer.

MEREDITH OBJECTS TO MR. ANTENNA COMPLAINT

Mr. Antenna recently told the FCC that Meredith Corp. had informed the company it would no longer accept advertising from vendors whose products presented a 'cord-cutting' alternative to cable service, such as outdoor antenna business. Now, the broadcaster is blaming the policy on an internal miscommunication. Mr. Antenna cited the ad blocking at Meredith's KVVU as a reason for why it believes the FCC should not grant a transfer of the station to Gray TV. Gray has a pending \$2.285 billion deal to acquire Meredith's broadcast stations. "Despite Mr. Antenna's claims, Meredith does not have and never has had a corporate policy against accepting advertisements for over-the-air antennas or their installation. Indeed, Mr. Antenna advertised with KVVU-TV from 2017-2021 and was only briefly told the station could not take his advertisements due to an internal miscommunication," Meredith told the FCC this week. Meredith said Mr. Antenna's owner Karlo Maalouf contacted the broadcaster

Corporate Licenses

Cablefax Daily

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST.

Get reduced subscription rates for multiple readers in your organization.

Find out more! Contact Client Services at ClientServices@accessintel.com

www.cablefax.com

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC | www.cablefax.com | 301.354.2101 | Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com | VP/Group Publisher, Cablefax and Synopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com | Managing Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com | Assoc Editor: Theresa Maher, 301.354.1704, tmaher@accessintel.com | Director of Business Development, Cablefax: Ellen Kamhi, 917.626.5574, ekamhi@accessintel.com | Dir of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com | Production Manager: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com | Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com | Group Subs/Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com | Annual subscription price: \$1,799.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

about the policy on July 14, with KVVU's GM reaching out to him later that same day to let him know the station was more than willing to accept his ads. Meredith said the fact he left that detail out as well as info on another Meredith station positively responding to his query about advertising "further undermined the already baseless informal complaint." Gray concurred in its own FCC response, complaining that Mr. Antenna engaged in "wild speculation" that Gray had urged Meredith to adopt the purported ad policy.

T. HOWARD GOES VIRTUAL

Another industry event has decided to scrap an in-person gathering, with the **T. Howard Foundation** making the decision to take its annual Diversity Awards Dinner virtual. The new date of the gathering is still being decided. It was slated to be held in NYC on Sept 28, with vaccinations required. The group, which supports diversity in media and entertainment, had planned to use the CrowdPass app to verify vaccination status. T. Howard joins the **Mid-America Cable Show** and **ACA Connects** and **NCTC's Independent Show** in making the switch to virtual in recent weeks. **NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association** is continuing on with its Fall Conference in Nashville Sept 19-22, but has opted to allow attendees to sign up for an All-Access pass, giving them the option to attend online. **SCTE** continues to bill **Cable-Tec Expo** as a hybrid event, with opportunities to attend online or in person in Atlanta Oct 11-14. **The Cable TV Pioneers** Banquet is also slated to be an in-person event at the Ritz-Carlton Atlanta on Oct 11.

CARRIAGE

Philo is introducing the "Movies & More" add-on package featuring **Sony Movies**, **Reelz**, **HDNet Movies**, **MGM HD** and **Cinmoi** for an additional \$3 per month. The virtual MVPD also is adding four FAST channels to its free section, which already includes channels such as **Bloomberg TV** and **Revry**. The new FAST entrants are **Pocket.watch**, **Ryan and Friends**, **Players TV** and **Gusto TV**. – **DISH** is offering a free preview of

Outdoor Channel and **Sportsman Channel** now through Sept 30. Both are part of the satellite provider's Outdoor Package. The sneak peek comes in time for #DeerWeek, which will take over both networks Sept 13-19. – **beIN SPORTS** and **beIN SPORTS XTRA** are now available on **YouTube TV** as part of the optional Sports Plus add-on package. The package, priced at \$10.99/month, includes more than 20 networks.

PROGRAMMING

GAC Family revealed its first three original films, debuting this fall. "An Autumn Romance," starring *Chad Michael Murray* and *Jessica Lowndes*, kicks things off Oct 23, followed by Christmas movies "Much Ado About Christmas" (Oct 30) and "Christmas time is Here" (Nov 13). GAC Family is set to launch Sept 27 under the tagline "Stories Well Told," evolving from the existing **Great American Country** network.

EX PATRIOT TOUTS COX CONNECT2COMPETE

Cox Communications tapped Super Bowl champ and Share the Magic Foundation founder *Malcom Mitchell* to help promote its Connect2Compete program, which provides low-cost broadband to low-income families. Mitchell was with the New England Patriots until 2019. It's a pretty good matchup, with Cox's digital literacy focus joining Mitchell's goal of unlocking student potential through reading literacy with his foundation. "We are proud to join forces with Malcolm Mitchell and the Share the Magic Foundation to ensure children have the opportunity to succeed in the classroom and in life," Cox president/CEO *Pat Esser* said in a statement.

PEOPLE

Scripps named *Ethan Nelson* and *Christina Hartman* as head of program development and head of news standards, respectively. Nelson comes from **ABC News**, where he most recently worked as ep for "What Would You Do?." Hartman was elevated from her role as vp of Scripps's **Newsy**. – **C2HR** appointed **Cox's** *Kia Painter*, svp, business partnerships, to its board. Painter has been working in HR at Cox for 23 years.

2021 CYNOPSIS RESOURCE CENTER

An online asset for media execs looking for the latest in tech, streaming, network offerings, & tools to support their business initiatives.

ACCESS NOW

<http://www.cynopsis.com/resource-center>

Think about that for a minute...

Transparent Vocal Smudge

Commentary by Steve Effros

I was originally just going to title this column “smudge redux,” but decided the real issue was not the smudge, but the underlying intent of transparency, so I mashed it all together. Let me explain.

Many years ago I wrote a column entitled “smudge.” I was referring to newspaper ads I had seen at the time for a new thing called direct broadcast satellite service. DBS, or in that case DirecTV or DISH. They had these big headlined ads about how their new digital service was much better than cable, much cheaper, easily available and all those other promises.

Well, some of it was accurate. Certainly the delivery of video via a digital feed resulted in darn good pictures, assuming you could aim a satellite dish through the trees around your house. And, oh, assuming it wasn't raining heavily or your dish wasn't filled with snow. And, oh, the price was not going to stay at the “introductory offer” level, and it didn't, at the beginning, include local broadcast signals so it wasn't really comparable to “cable” service to begin with.

Now, as we all know, the FCC and the FTC are a bit sensitive about the accuracy of what's being claimed in those ads, so the legal beagles had to do something. The solution: the tiny black print at the bottom of the ad. It usually ran four to six lines all the way across the page. It had all the caveats, explanations, asterisks, apologies, conditions and the rest. And it was unreadable. It was a smudge.

At the time I commented on the fact that the clear intent of the “transparency” rules that government folks keep writing is simple. Consumers should know what the real price is they are going to be expected to pay, and they should know what the reasonable expectations are regarding the service they are receiving. That's just as true today as it was back then.

Please note, I don't mean to say the satellite folks were the only ones who obfuscated. Cable folks, telephone folks, car sales folks and just about everyone else who has a “market-

ing department” are often guilty as well! All you have to do is look at the new “streaming services” which compare their posted price with “cable,” and “smudge” the fact that the price doesn't include the cost of delivery, which cable does include, to see what I mean.

But I was reminded of all this the other day when I was listening to the radio and heard an advertisement for a mortgage company; the best deal you could possibly get, will happen almost instantly, good for 30 years, lowest possible interest rate, and so on. But then came the verbal “smudge.” It was hilarious, even though it was absolutely impossible to decipher. The extended explanation of all the conditions and caveats was played at twice the normal speed. The pitch of the announcer was the same (ain't technology wonderful!) but the blur of words was clearly not intended to be understood. It was the ultimate “verbal smudge,” and it reminded me once again of how easy it is to be transparent about the information or purpose being required or proposed, and how often that is intentionally ignored.

Many “marketed” items tend to employ this gambit way too easily. Printing in big letters how much your service “costs” is very different from letting the buyer know what they are actually going to pay. I know the marketers and lawyers may say they are complying with the “letter of the law,” but certainly not the intent! That's also true of a lot of the laws and regulations written today, too, what they say, and what they actually intend are often very different. But that's a story for another day.



Steve

T:202-630-2099
steve@effros.com

(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

NAMIC



NETWORKING ACCESS MENTORING INVOLVEMENT COMMUNITY

Embrace Diversity. Embrace Success.

FOLLOW THE CONVERSATION



namic.com