

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Investigation Discovery: Fifteen Years on the Case

Earlier this year, **ID** sailed past its 15th anniversary, and just as armchair detecting has changed during that time, so has the network. When Discovery Times was relaunched as Investigation Discovery in 2008, online forum Websleuths was arguably the most prominent internet site for amateur detectives. These days, every social media platform, from TikTok to Reddit, has a dedicated true crime fanbase.

“I think for us what TikTok and Instagram and all of these platforms have done is expose that armchair detectives come in all ages, and the obsession they have is so real,” Jason Sarlanis, **Warner Bros. Discovery’s** President of Turner Networks, ID and HLN, Linear & Streaming told **CFX**. “These new platforms allow us to communicate directly with that viewer to understand what are the stories that are catching their attention so that we can make sure that as the best-in-class portrayer of all things true crime, we’re telling the stories that they want to hear more of.”

ID may have been the first cable network solely devoted to true crime, but it’s certainly not alone these days. **Oxygen** rebranded as true crime in 2017, **Netflix** seems to add new crime titles almost weekly and virtually every streamer and network has some programming in the genre. And don’t forget all the true crime podcasts. “We were first and now we’re striving every day to constantly also be best because a great deal of imitators and innovators have come into the field and

so we’ve got to reinvent the true crime genre every single time we’re launching a new show,” said Sarlanis. “What we’re always trying to do is put out great true crime content, but also find within that genre the great new subgenres to make sure that the field is more dynamic and more interesting to the viewer than ever.”

That was on display with January’s “The Price of Glee,” a limited three-part series that chronicled what happened behind the scenes of **Fox’s** “Glee.” It made ID the No. 1 non-sports cable network of the night on Jan 16 from 9pm-midnight among P25-54 and W25-54. The Glee special as well as last year’s “Playboy Murders” and Monday’s upcoming “Jared from Subway: Catching a Monster” have Sarlanis’ fingerprints all over them. Having developed and provided creative oversight for series such as “Keeping Up with the Kardashians,” “Battlebots” and “The Girls Next Door,” he’s not afraid to blur pop culture with true crime.

“We’re really actively pursuing a more diverse, young audience who we can share that incredible true crime genre with because these stories are at the intersection of great true crime storytelling, but also zeitgeisty stories that are connected to both pop culture and the media,” said Sarlanis, who was named President of Crime and Investigative content in September 2021. He took over a network that veteran programming exec and former **Court TV** President *Henry Schleiff* is credited with building and turning into a ratings juggernaut. Schleiff as well as longtime ID GM *Kevin Bennett* stepped down in 2021 ahead of the **Warner**

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Cablefax 2023 Award Submission Deadlines

#### The FAXIES Awards

Deadline: March 24  
Final Deadline: March 31

#### Top Ops Nominations

Deadline: April 21

#### The Diversity List Nominations

Deadline: May 12  
Final Deadline: May 19

#### Most Powerful Women Nominations

Deadline: August 11  
Final Deadline: August 18

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**Media-Discovery** merger, with Sarlanis, then SVP Development for **TLC**, stepping in to guide the brand to its next chapter.

Sarlanis referred to Schleiff and Bennett as “icons of true crime.” “I have to honor what has come before me and part of that honoring is to honor the innovation that they had, and see where I can bring my own stamp to innovate in the space,” he said. And while he acknowledges his mark often has a pop culture twist to it, that legacy ID programming also remains and makes an impact.

Last Friday, *Jeff Titus*, the subject of ID docuseries “Killer in Question,” was exonerated and released from prison after 21 years behind bars following multiple Brady violations that were uncovered by **Red Marble Media** during the filming of the ID series. “This is a perfect example of the power and purpose of what we can do as a leader in the true crime genre,” said Sarlanis. “At our best, Investigation Discovery’s content can right injustices in the world and allow for actual impact on our justice system.”

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## THE GROWING NEED FOR THE U.S. TO LEAD IN TECH POLICY

Nations around the world have been troubleshooting tech regulation and data policies for some time now, but when the U.S. will adopt its own framework is still anyone’s guess. During a panel at the **Center for American Progress** Thursday, some well-known names around Washington expressed fears that Congress will soon just decide to adopt something like GDPR rather than create something that’s tailor-made for the U.S. and the companies that call it home. “We’re about to become second stringers on establishing a policy for all of this brave new world that we pioneered,” former **FCC** Chair *Tom Wheeler* said. “My concern is that the Congress of the United States is going to get around to doing something eventually, and by the time they get around to doing something, the companies will be realizing the importance of accepting that rather than fighting it. And the quick and easy answer will be hey, they’re doing this over there. Let’s just make that a rule here too.” **Public Knowledge** SVP *Harold Feld* also said that whatever move the federal government makes, it needs to include the establishment of a group of experts that can watch the space as it develops and ensure this wait-and-see approach doesn’t happen again. Rather than worry about whether we should focus on the metaverse this week or ChatGPT the next, those individuals should be watching the short- and long-term effects of those technologies on the nation. “You need a standing regulatory agency that can acquire the expertise that’s necessary. They can be there as the expert, can look over the shoulder of the industry and say yeah, that’s fine,” Feld said. “A one-off law, some of the improvements to the antitrust

laws, those are great for solving a specific problem. But for the complicated, the difficult, the long-standing, you need an expert agency that’s going to be able to stay on top of things.” Wheeler fought back against arguments from Big Tech firms and other digital platforms that more regulation will lead to less innovation and investment across the sector as a whole. Instead, he argued that companies will continue to innovate so long as it leads to great profit margins. “The reality is that you innovate for competitive purposes,” he said. “What you do with the fiduciary responsibility of somebody in that situation is to maintain their position, not to develop something threatening. And investment? You invest for returns, and where does return come from? Return comes from innovation.”

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## DIRECTV DEFENDS DECISION TO DROP NEWSMAX YET AGAIN

**DirecTV** isn’t done telling its side of its carriage dispute with **Newsmax**, sending a follow-up response to Senate Republicans with what it believes is evidence that there’s nothing political at play here. Included in the supplemental [letter](#) was a retelling of a previous carriage dispute between Newsmax and the satellite provider that DirecTV claims is nearly identical to this moment. In 2014, the two struck a carriage deal that saw Newsmax pay DirecTV for carriage. When that deal expired in 2016, Newsmax asked for the terms to change so it paid no fee, and as a result, the network went dark on DirecTV for eight months. In June 2017, the pair struck their most recent deal which expired last month. “Notably, we are not aware of any Member of Congress or conservative activist at that time accusing DirecTV of censoring or deplatforming Newsmax. It was clearly understood then for what it is now: a business negotiation,” DirecTV said in the letter. “Except now, Newsmax is trying to inject an unfounded political argument into a business dispute.” It also brought up Newsmax’s carriage agreements with **DISH**, **Verizon** and **NCTC** that include commitments to start paying subscription fees to Newsmax once its content is fully locked behind a pay TV wall. Those commitments are subject to [most favored nations clauses](#), the letter said, that will not see those operators pay until and unless DirecTV decides to do so. “If DirecTV is unable to reach an agreement to carry Newsmax again, what will Newsmax be paid by these other companies, and starting when?” the letter said. “At the end of the day, these are all commercial issues, as we have been reiterating. And DirecTV’s responsibility is to its own customers.” Newsmax said that it strongly disagrees with the characterizations made about the network and the value it offers to cable operators in the letter, but it is also pleased to hear that DirecTV is open to bringing it back. “We hope both parties can come to a mutually agreeable solution to have that happen,” it said in a statement.

## FUSE MEDIA READY FOR UPFRONT

**Fuse Media** may be small, but it's looking to make a big splash with advertisers at its upcoming upfront. The Latino-owned company has plans for new and returning programming this year, highlighted by the series premieres of "Like a Girl" on March 29 at 10pm and "Big Freedia Means Business" on June 7 at 9pm. Returning series include "We Need to Talk About America" on May 10 at 10pm, "Sex Sells" in September and "Made From Scratch," which hasn't set a premiere date yet. Fuse also has its hands in the FAST market, growing its channels by 55% in 2022.

## ALL CLEAR FOR ALL WEST

**Atlas Digital Group**, a digital commerce company focused on the broadband industry, launched its CORE platform with **All West Communications** to help improve the provider's sales channels and support its growth strategy. All West is based in Utah and provides broadband in Wyoming as well. Atlas provides a cloud-based sales platform that comes with capabilities like online buyflow generation, intelligence serviceability, marketing optimization and ongoing performance management.

## DIRECTV, USA BASEBALL PARTNER FOR WBC

With the 2023 World Baseball Classic starting Tuesday, **DirecTV** is sponsoring the U.S. Baseball Team. A DirecTV patch will be on the team uniform's left sleeve throughout the tournament, and the provider will have in-stadium signage as well. All WBC games will be aired on **Fox** and **FS1**, with the U.S. beginning its journey March 11 against Great Britain.

## ESPN'S RATINGS

**ESPN's** late-night edition of "SportsCenter" with *Scott Van Pelt* isn't too late for viewers. So far in 2023, the show is averaging 903,000 total viewers, good for a 45% increase compared to the same time period in 2022. That helped it solidify itself as the most-watched studio show during the NFL season, and at the end of February, the show ranked first in P18-49, M18-49, P18-34 and M18-34. ESPN also saw "NBA Today" enjoy its most-watched February in four years. The show averaged 326,000 viewers, up 4% YOY.

## PROGRAMMING

Formula 1 returns to the fray this weekend, and **ESPN** is bringing new and expanded content options for the upcoming season. All telecasts will continue to be televised commercial-free, starting with the Bahrain Grand Prix on Sunday at 9:55am on ESPN. An F1 event will air on **ABC** for the first time on May 28 at 9am, with other races in Miami, Canada, Mexico and the U.S. also set to air on the broadcast network. Additionally, ESPN will expand

production of its pre- and post-race review shows that will be distributed across social media and digital channels. – **USA Network** is bringing back the celebrity game show "Barnageddon" for a sophomore season. The Season 1 premiere became the top-rated unscripted series premiere for USA in seven-day delayed viewing. – **Feld Motor Sports** and the motorsports network **MAVTV** penned a multi-year deal with Monster Jam. The agreement will have 86 new episodes of its 2023 schedule: 26 one-hour event episodes, 20 episodes of Arenas in 30 events and 40 episodes of "Inside Monster Jam." Additionally, over 100 hours of classic Monster Jam episodes will air. Monster Jam events take place on Saturdays at 8pm, which will be followed by Inside Monster Jam at 9pm. – **ChimeTV** began production on its unscripted docuseries "My Desert Shangri-La," which follows journalist *Yoonj Kim* in her journey to build a Korean-inspired day spa in Joshua Tree, California. – **Hallmark Channel** renewed "The Way Home" for a second season. The show currently airs on Sundays at 9pm, and since its Jan. 15 premiere, it's been the most-watched program on Sundays among P2+, W18+ and P18+ on a L+SD basis. – **Starz** picked up the 10-episode series "Three Women," a drama based on *Lisa Taddeo's* novel with the same name.

## PEOPLE

The **MLB** made a trio of additions to its local media department as it looks to recalibrate its game distribution strategy amid the unclear future of RSNs. *Doug Johnson* was named SVP and Executive Producer, Local Media, after spending time at **AT&T SportsNet Pittsburgh**. He'll manage the league's locally produced games. *Greg Pennell*, who previously oversaw day-to-day operations at **Bally Sports**, will become SVP, Local Media. Lastly, *Kendall Burgess* will take the role of VP, Local Media Technical Operations. She was with Bally Sports for more than 23 years in various technical positions. – *Eli Velazquez*, EVP, Sports for **NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises**, will take over leadership of **Telemundo Deportes**. He'll oversee sports production, programming, acquisitions, operations and content, while also guiding the management and execution of major Spanish-language event coverage such as the FIFA World Cup, NFL Sunday Night Football or the Olympics. Velazquez has been with the company for 24 years, leading production of numerous high-profile sporting events. Reporting to him will be *Ivel Alfaro-Calvo*, VP, Programming & Production, Sports; *Eliseo Cano Fernandez*, VP, Business Operations & Finance, Sports; *Roberto Pardo*, SVP, Sports Content and *Christopher Suarez-Meyers*, SVP, Sports Content Operations.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Your next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will arrive Monday. Cablefax's parent company Access Intelligence is celebrating Employee Appreciation Day on March 3 with the gift of time off. Tweet us at [@Cablefax](https://twitter.com/Cablefax) with how your workplace is celebrating employees and visit [Cablefax.com](https://www.cablefaxdaily.com) for breaking news.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## The Rise & Fall of Subway's Jared

I'm not sure how many people remember the exact instant they became aware of *Jared Fogel*, but I do. I was sitting in traffic on I-75 in Atlanta listening to the morning show on 99X when the hosts (which included *Leslie Fram*, now SVP of Music Strategy for **CMT**) began to interview a college student who had shed 245 pounds in less than a year by eating a Subway 6-inch turkey sub for lunch and a 12-inch vegetable sub for dinner every day. It was such a strange and surprising diet that I found myself as fascinated as the radio DJs. When Subway made him its pitchman shortly thereafter, it was a no-brainer. What didn't make sense was his arrest in 2015 and subsequent guilty plea to possession or distribution of child pornography and traveling across state lines to have commercial sex with a minor. Helping fill in the blanks is ID's new documentary "Jared from Subway: Catching a Monster," with all three parts premiering Monday at 9pm on ID and streaming the same day on **discovery+**. Part of what drew me to Fogel's initial story was that it was first reported by his college student newspaper. A former editor of my own college paper, I appreciated that it was a student journalist who had the scoop. ID's documentary tells the story of another journalist, Florida reporter *Rochelle Herman*, who ended up working with the FBI to help bring him down. It's uncomfortable hearing the audio of her trying to get confessions out of Fogle, especially as her own children become part of the conversations. "I don't think most of us knew how he was taken down. Her methods were unconventional to say the slightest, but I think what was also so interesting about hearing Rochelle's story is it made it so personal to hear of a mother who put her entire family on the line in order to be able to see the mission—and she really saw this as a mission—through," **Jason Sarlanis**, **Warner Bros. Discovery's** President of Crime & Investigative Content told **CFX**. Part of ID's mission Sarlanis believes is to "expose the darkness" behind a very public persona. "There was a survey that was done that at the peak of his popularity, Jared was as famous as the sitting president," he said. "That's insane to think of power and influence he had in the American media." – *Amy Maclean*

### REVIEWS

"Murdaugh Murders: A Southern Scandal," streaming, **Netflix**. Many viewers are at least familiar with SC's *Murdaugh* family, whose patriarch, *Alex*, is facing double homicide charges for allegedly shooting his wife, *Maggie*, and younger son *Paul*. At our press time, the jury was deliberating. Yet the Murdaugh saga is far larger than this trial. Released late last month, not long after Alex's trials began, a 3-part Netflix doc provides ample background. Sadly, additional deaths arrive quickly. First up, an intoxicated Paul, then 19, allegedly crashes his boat in 2019. 4 teen friends aboard were hospitalized and Mallory Beach, also 19, is flung into Archers Creek. Days later she's found dead. The crash's survivors and their parents sit for the doc's painful interviews. They're the best part of what seems like hastily compiled storytelling. It's alleged authorities treated Paul with kid gloves. Ep. 2 continues with the crash and introduces the mysterious 2018 death of *Gloria Satterfield*, Paul's nanny. Another death, of *Stephen Smith*, a friend of Paul's brother, in 2015, like those of Satterfield and Beach, has not yielded a conviction. Will Alex change that? – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (02/20/23-02/26/23)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.662</b>	<b>2065</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.340</b>	<b>1060</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.338</b>	<b>1054</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.302</b>	<b>944</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.245</b>	<b>763</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.240</b>	<b>749</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.236</b>	<b>738</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.213</b>	<b>665</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.213</b>	<b>664</b>
<b>TBSC</b>	<b>0.191</b>	<b>595</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.188</b>	<b>587</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.185</b>	<b>577</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.167</b>	<b>521</b>
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.166</b>	<b>520</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>514</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.151</b>	<b>472</b>
<b>TVLAND</b>	<b>0.147</b>	<b>459</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.127</b>	<b>396</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.126</b>	<b>394</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.116</b>	<b>361</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.114</b>	<b>357</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.114</b>	<b>356</b>
<b>REELZ</b>	<b>0.111</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.108</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>NATGEO</b>	<b>0.106</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>ESPN2</b>	<b>0.105</b>	<b>328</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.104</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>OXY</b>	<b>0.094</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>PRMNT</b>	<b>0.092</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>COM</b>	<b>0.090</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>APL</b>	<b>0.086</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>HMM</b>	<b>0.085</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.084</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>HLN</b>	<b>0.079</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>FETV</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>239</b>

\*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.



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