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#### TWC 2Q: Lots of Rollouts, Subs Down, OIBDA Up

Set aside the financials for a bit, and there were a lot of details on Time Warner Cable initiatives during Thurs' 2Q earnings call. The MSO's new set-top box guide, which has been deployed throughout the East region (including NYC) over the past 60 days (Cfax, 6/15), will continue to roll out across the West after the Olympics wrap. "Further navigation enhancements are in the works, including genre-based, national channel lineups scheduled for implementation later this year and a next-generation, cloud-based guide in development for deployment next year in conjunction with the rollout of IP set-top boxes and new video gateway devices," said pres/COO Rob Marcus. Fox News came up on the call, but TWC didn't provide any details on renewal talks (though we hear the 2 may be close to a deal). Internet Essentials—TWC's optional usage-based broadband service aimed at those who use less capacity—has launched in Austin and Dallas, with the MSO expecting deployment across most of its footprint in the 2nd half of the year. On the home monitoring front, TWC ended the Q with about 7K IntelligentHome customers. "We've only rolled out in a handful of markets," Marcus explained. "The game plan really is to refine our approach, both from a product perspective and also from a sales perspective, before we roll it out to other cities." It's somewhat of a different sales process (a little more dependent on direct sales reps), but TWC feels good about it and plans to add it in other markets in the coming guarters, he said. As for the Verizon Wireless iv, Marcus said "the number of actual sales is still small, but again, I think the opportunity there is big." By the Numbers: As for 2Q results, they were pretty good—except for those basic video subs... Bernstein Research's Craig Moffett likened basic sub losses to a gymnast who nailed the routine but had a hop on the landing. TWC's net basic sub loss of 169K fell short of analyst predictions and was worse than TWC's 128K loss a year ago. Residential HSD was better (59K vs 54K in 2Q11), but overall PSUs were down by 38K. Blame seasonality and customers hurting financially. "Some of them can't afford the video package even though they want it," said CEO Glenn Britt. "And that's why we keep having these heated negotiations with programmers. I think that is a much more serious issue than cord cutting, but we keep an eye on it." Revenue of \$5.4bln (+9.3% YOY) beat Street expectations, as did adjusted OIBDA (+10.3% to \$2bln). Other plusses: a small 3.7% increase in programming costs (guess those standoffs are paying off...).

DTV Earnings: DirecTV lost subs for the 1st time in 2Q, partly because of recent moves to focus on making more money

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from current subs rather than on recruiting new ones. The DBS provider lost 52K subs in the quarter, larger than analysts' consensus of about 36K. It ended the Q with 19.9mln subs in the US. Net income's a better story: The \$711mln income was 1.4% more than the year-ago quarter. The results came less than 2 weeks after the DBS provider, and **Viacom** ended a blackout of channels like **Nickelodeon** and **MTV** as the 2 negotiated over programming fees. CEO *Mike White* downplayed the rate fight during the firm's conference call Thurs. "We've had issues with several... Perhaps because of our size, we get picked on to reset the market," he said. The company looks to strike fair contracts, and "we made a fair deal in the end in the case of Viacom," he said. The process of setting fair rates is "more science than art," he said. Going forward, the company will continue to "stand up and represent the customers first," he said. He urged the programmers and distributors to spend more time with subs to understand their income and the economy in general. "The customer is the one getting squeezed and bearing the brunt of these exorbitant price demands." Despite the sub loss, analysts were generally pleased with the results. Strength in Latin America, where there were net adds of 645K, combined with better profitability profile of the overall company, indicates that DTV is "staying true to its message of carefully balancing growth in favor of profitability as the U.S. MVPD market becomes increasingly saturated," wrote *Vijay Jayant* of the **ISI Group**.

<u>On the Hill</u>: Maybe Congress will use its summer break to figure out a cybersecurity bill that will actually pass. On Thurs, the Sen failed to move forward on **Sen Commerce** chmn *Jay Rockefeller*'s (D-WV) Cybersecurity Act after falling short of the 60 votes needed to end a Republican-led filibuster (vote was 52-46). **Stifel Nicolaus** analysts believe the block is help-ful to telco and cable, which are concerned about the current bill. The firm believes that for a bill to make it through both chambers, it will likely have to include some sort of "critical infrastructure provisions—which could subject telcos, cable companies and other sectors to new mandates and burdens—but with modifications to make them less prescriptive."

Olympics Fever: With ratings for the big game outperforming even the most optimistic predictions, NBCU now thinks it could make a profit on the Olympics. "There's a small chance we could make a little bit of money," said NBC Sports Group chmn Mark Lazarus during a conference call Thurs, a day after NBCU pres/CEO Steve Burke predicted a breakeven (Cfax, 8/2). "We sold a lot more advertising than planned," he said, noting there had been an uptick in buying activities in the last few months leading up to the games. The broadcast net is now selling ads that had been held back in case ratings had been weak, and the net needed to compensate advertisers with "make-goods." The numbers tell it all: Each night of the games to date have drawn higher viewership and HH ratings than the first 6 nights of the Beijing games and the Athens games. Primetime ratings are up 10% over the Beijing Olympics while the 30mln audience size is 15% more than the Beijing games. Digitally, 64mln video streams have been delivered, a 182% increase over Beijing. Most of the online streaming comes from computers, with the rest being mobile and tablet devices. The Games are also creating new online users: 75% of those watching live streaming on tablets are doing so for the 1st time. NBC Sports research head Alan Wurtzel said. The number is 86% for mobile devices. Top live-stream events include the women's team gymnastics final Tues, which drew 1.4mln streams, followed by 1mln streams of Michael Phelps making history with his 19th Olympic medal on Tues. NBC is also attracting younger viewers, a trend that will do well for future Olympics coverage. "We are cultivating the next Olympics generation," Wurtzel said. There have been a few other good surprises from the Games. Now will the London Olympics become the most-watched TV event in the US history? "There has been a very strong showing so far. We are very confident it will be among the top five," Wurtzel said. "But the 215mln for Beijing remains a very high bar," he acknowledged. The net's digital streaming content is only available for its cable partners' subs. The net isn't ruling out the possibility of a streaming only package for non-cable subs, but it will have to discuss with its MVPD affiliates and analyze data first, Lazarus said. The duo also defended the net's tape delay strategy, which earned the net the **Twitter** hash tag #nbcfail. Viewers are much likely to watch primetime and watch it longer if they already know event results, Wurtzel said, citing research findings. The net has so far aired 2/3 of the events from London live, about 158.5 live hours out of the 274 total hours, Lazarus said.

**Deals:** AT&T never loses its appetite for spectrum. The telco agreed to acquire NextWave Wireless, holders of WCS and AWS bands, for about \$600mln. The company hopes to use the spectrum to feed "skyrocketing" demand for wireless data. It expects the deal, pending regulatory approval, by the end of the year. The telco also filed for FCC approval of 2 smaller WCS transactions from Comcast and Horizon. Stifel Nicolaus analysts expect the WCS deals to pass regulatory and antitrust muster. The telco will still have interest in other spectrum, including DISH Network's MSS/satellite licenses, which the FCC is looking to open to terrestrial purposes, and might be usable sooner than WCS, the analysts

said. Since the failure of the AT&T/**T-Mobile** deal, AT&T has worked to increase the LTE spectrum it controls, **UBS** analysts said. While a larger deal is still possible, the most recent moves will buy the company time and increase its leverage while lowering its dependence on any single source of spectrum in the future, they said.

<u>More Earnings</u>: Scripps Nets Interactive had plenty to crow about Thurs. Not only did 2Q mark an 84% increase in net income (\$142.4mln), but the programmer booked through the \$1bln threshold in the upfronts for the 1st time in company history. The flagship nets continue to pull in big ratings, while **Travel** is seeing good growth, said chmn/CEO *Ken Lowe*. Travel was down YOY in 2Q ratings, but Lowe pointed to time spent viewing increasing and a better July as good signs.

**Technology:** Streaming start-up **Aereo** is offering those in NYC a free trial of the controversial service (broadcasters are suing over it). Consumers get 1 hour of free streaming a day (no DVR). \$8/month gets you unlimited access and 20 hours of online DVR. \$12/month ups the DVR storage to 40 hours. There is even a \$1/day pricing plan (3 hours DVR storage). -- **Aspire** is using **Comcast Media Center**'s Content Services unit to provide channel origination and transmission services. -- **BlackArrow** announced the availability of a new Subscriber Information Service product that aims to let MVPDs deploy advanced advertising and marketing campaigns across any platform against addressable audience segments.

*Programing:* Following its popular "Untamed Americas" miniseries, **Nat Geo** is greenlighting an 8-part series showcasing the natural wonders and wildlife. "America's National Parks" (wt) is set to debut in '15.

*Editor's Note:* The rest of the issue is devoted to TCA. With the official cable portion now underway in L.A. and going smoothly (thanks, **CTAM**), it's a lot of material. But we consider it dessert. Bon appetit!

HBO/Cinemax at TCA: When Aaron Sorkin, writer of much loved and much maligned series "The Newsroom," sat before the packed audience, the flood gates opened and a wave of critiques gushed forward. Sorkin held his ground well, referencing scenes critics cited nearly verbatim. He said his process for writing for TV doesn't differ from when he writes for film. Essentially, he's writing a play, "that a very brilliant director... will come along and make it visually interesting." On whether he'd consider making any changes to the show in light of the tough reviews, he said both good and bad reviews are "good for television," and even if he wanted to change the writing, HBO locks in the entire season before airing the first episode. "Even if you are tempted to try to write a little bit differently to please the people or change someone's mind, you can't do it." Sorkin came under fire for his treatment of female characters, to which he replied, "I completely respect that opinion, but I a hundred percent disagree with it. I think that the female characters on the show are, first of all, every bit the equals of the men." He also took the opportunity to set the record straight regarding a recent "unsourced and untrue" article that claimed his writing staff was fired. "Just seeing that in print is scaring the hell out of the writing staff," he joked. "They are acting very strange. They are coming to work early. They are being I don't know like, polite to me, and I want the old gang back." Though he was hardly addressed during the panel, lead actor Jeff Daniels jumped in to defend Sorkin's writing: "One of the things I like about Aaron's writing - and then I'll shut up - is that all of his characters, men and women, have flaws." Later, Daniels was asked what he thought of critics' love/hate relationship with the show. "You don't do it for me, and you never have," he told the audience. "It took me a long time as an actor to stop reading you... That's kind of the approach you have to have just to survive as an actor." -- A couple of other interesting HBO projects include "The Girl" (premieres Oct), which tells the story of actress Tippi Hedren's difficulties dealing with iconic director Alfred Hitchcock while working on "The Birds" and "Marnie." Based on the clips shown to critics, the original movie will depict Hitchcock as somewhat sadistic, as well as sexually obsessed with Hedren. She didn't necessarily disagree. "I think he was an extremely sad character," Hedren told critics. "We are dealing with a brain here that is unusual, genius, and evil, deviant almost to the point of dangerous because of the effect that he can have on people that are totally unsuspecting." Sienna Miller plays Hedren in the film. Also intriguing is "Ethel" (premieres Oct), a documentary about Ethel Kennedy by her daughter Rory, who said it wasn't easy to get her mom to open up about the difficult events that included the assassination of both her husband Robert and brother-in-law John. "I think that the big reveal is just the fact that my mother is willing to talk about all of it, and that my siblings are, because I think, as a family, we generally don't both kind of dwell in the past and spend a lot of time reflecting on some of these events," she said. "As a family, we're not kind of a 'share all' family." They are now, apparently thanks to HBO. -- Pres, Cinemax programming and HBO miniseries Kary Antholis announced that the net will premiere 2 original songs from Bob Dylan's 35th studio album "Tempest" being released next month in conjunction with the 2nd season premiere of "Strike Back." The series will air Aug 17 and will include 2 of Dylan's original tracks. -- "Hunted," a Cinemax conspiracy thriller from "The X-Files" writer and producer Frank Spotnitz stars Melissa George, formerly of HBO's "In Treatment," as an operative for an elite intelligence firm and whose life may be threatened by members of her own team. As for what Spotnitz took from his experience with "The X Files": "Be ambitious, be as great as you can be, and trust in the intelligence of your audience." Interestingly, in her youth George was a roller skating

champion, traveling the world doing triples, spins and jumps—something that prepared her for the physicality required of her character in "Hunting." "I had a lot of stamina, a lot of stability. And so when I get these action roles, I feel like I learn routines faster because I'm used to learning a routine on skates."

Starz/Encore at TCA: Starz pres/CEO Chris Albrecht gave a glimpse into the future of original programming on the net, which now boasts 54mln subs when combined with sister net Encore. Production of highly anticipated Michael Bay project "Black Sails" continues in South Africa, with Albrecht promising nothing if not a spectacle on par with or greater than its hit "Spartacus" in terms of epic feel. "We're looking to put on these really big canvas shows, and Black Sails really fits into that," he said, noting financial advantages to South Africa related to the exchange rate and other factors. "Everything that we're trying to do is incredibly ambitious." That's also creating issues, including with "Marco Polo," a project that will delve into the life of the famous explorer and which Albrecht acknowledged has faced shooting challenges on location in China where conditions are "as formidable as we had feared... We are taking more time than I think the producers thought." On Spartacus, which has 1 season left, Albrecht said it has been a challenge to keep the show moving with characters now beyond the ludus and into the battlefield, but he seemed excited about Spartacus creator Steven DeKnight's new sci-fi series under development, "Incursion," which Albrecht described as a cross between "Band of Brothers" and "Halo." OK, we admit that sounds cool. -- The future's always uncertain for critically acclaimed Starz series "Boss" (S2 premieres Aug 17) in which Kelsey Grammer plays a corrupt Chicago mayor enduring a life-threatening illness. Many critics consider it the best work of Grammer's career, but the gritty drama has struggled to build a large audience. "I'm heartbroken," acknowledged creator/exec producer Farhad Safinia. "You want more people to see what you're doing... I think it deserves a larger audience." He also called it a "travesty" that Emmy voters didn't nominate Grammer. "The only explanation I can come up with is that perhaps people didn't get a chance to see it," he said. Starz Media managing dir Carmi Zlotnik said he's "not driven by the ratings," but "we love this show, and believe that it deserves a bigger audience, and that the audience will grow based on the work in season 2." Grammer said he just stays focused on the role. "You hope for numbers," he said. "I know people would like them to be higher." -- "The Crimson Petal and the White" (premieres Sept 11), part of Starz's miniseries showcase, is adapted from Michael Faber's novel set in the seedy underbelly of Victorian London. "The book is so complicated and so long, so you have to hold all of it in your head while you're writing," said screenwriter Lucinda Coxon. While she's worked on numerous adaptations throughout her career, Romola Garai (also starring in BBC America series "The Hour") noted that this was the first that hadn't been adapted previously—which added enormous pressure. That, and the fact that she was in love with the material. "I said to myself, if I mess this up I will feel a deep sense of personal failure."

GMC at TCA: GMC movie "Somebody's Child" (premieres Aug 25) reunites fraternal twin brothers separated at birth. Writer Siddeegah Powell, who received an honorable mention in the GMC Faith & Family Screenplay Competition for the script, said she wanted to write about a miracle, something that "a lot of people think isn't possible, but anything is." Production was fast and tight, which lead actress Lynn Whitfield said made performances "lean and mean. You get right to the part." The result was delivering something "with purity." "We don't have a lot of time to get fancy with it." Today's multichannel world and the expansion of cable networks bring additional acting roles to the table, the cast agreed. "It's added to my artistry," Whitfield said. "There are so many more opportunities." -- Reality series "Bulloch Family Ranch" is like the movie "The Blind Side," in that it follows a couple who welcomes young adults into their home. But Julie and Rusty Bulloch have taken the idea it to a whole new level, calling themselves proud parents of 25 kids—only 2 of which are biological. "I am a color blind redneck," said Rusty in a clip shown to critics. "I don't see color at all... I see their heart." So how can they afford it all, on a farrier and small business owner's salary? "All I can say is we've never missed a house payment," said Rusty. "We make a lot of trips to Sams." -- Della Reese, best known for her work on "Touched by an Angel," will take another angelic turn (sort of) in GMC movie "Christmas Angel" (premieres Dec) in which she plays a mysterious woman who neighborhood children start to believe is an angel. Of course, Reese said it's about more than that. "This has a lot of meat in it that has nothing to do with the title," she said. "This is much deeper than that." -- Joking that he still hasn't forgiven a couple critics for bad reviews, exec producer Arnold Shapiro said his show "I Forgive You" (premieres Nov) will follow people as they show up to forgive someone who wronged them in the past. Shapiro said he wasn't sure it would work. "I thought it sounded a little soft," he said. "But what I started to see pretty quickly is that this has all the drama of a Shakespearean play." Therapist Angie Richey is always on hand in case something gets off track. "It really is about bringing good out of bad, making something positive out of someone's pain," she said. "This forgiveness concept really is about a gift to yourself."

<u>**TV** One at TCA</u>: With its rebrand of logo and tagline—"Where Black Life Unfolds"—rolling out August 20, **TV One** plans to double its original programming. An example is "The Rickey Smiley Show" (premieres Sept '12), a comedy starring nationally syndicated radio personality *Rickey Smiley* and largely based on his own life and family. The show will feature about

### **BUSINESS & FINANCE**

10 guest appearances throughout the season, including Fred Hammond, Lisa Ray, Tommy Ford and Terri J. Vaughn. -- Premiering Sept '12 is "Save My Son," an unscripted series portraying African American families' struggles to save their sons from negative influences and circumstances. Education activist Dr Steve Perry works with the family and mentor and former NBA star Derek Anderson to get the boy on track. When first approached by TV One, Perry declined, saying he didn't want to do a reality show. But "Save My Son" turned out to be a conduit for real impact, to "create a blueprint" for others. Co-exec producer Rochelle Brown said the show is "very personal for me... All of my siblings have gone to college... except my little brother." On choosing Perry, she said, "We wanted a host that would not come in and talk down to people. It has been amazing, but the hardest thing we've ever done with our lives." -- "R&B Divas," premiering Aug 20, follows 4 top female R&B artists as they produce a charity album in honor of their friend Whitney Houston. "It's about real friendships, real career women ... Positive women who are not perfect and are interested in growing," said diva Nicci Gilbert. Where do they draw their strength? "Oprah Winfrey is the number 1 alpha female in my book," said Gilbert. So who's the biggest diva? No one could agree on that one. When asked, just about everyone on stage got a vote. The one point of consensus: "If Whitney was on the album, she'd be the biggest diva."

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#### PROGRAMMER'S PAGE Contrasts at TCA

The **Television Critics Assn** tour can be quite a spectacle. Celebrities. Cranky critics. And an insistence that both mix together in some kind of gleefully volatile science experiment conducted under constant risk of mutual annihilation. Disheveled, overworked and over-boozed, we trudge around with the full knowledge that the beautiful people are contractually obligated to tolerate us. With a smile. And it's that tolerance (perhaps on both sides) that keeps TCA going year after year. It's symbiosis. An equilibrium. A sometimes hazard-ridden, 2-way street. Of course, it's not perfect. It seems like each tour brings a few uncomfortable moments that threaten to erode the civility that balances occasionally rude questions with the more oft asked variation of: "You're amazing. Can you tell us how you amaze us so?" This tour, Aaron Sorkin was on the hot seat for his portrayal of women in HBO's "The Newsroom" (the feeling is that they come off dumber than the male characters). We'll ignore the fact that Sorkin's a proven, Oscar-winning, Beyondthe-A-List screenwriter. He sat. He listened. And he responded with composure and a considerable amount of politeness (see p4). It got a bit tense but never uncivil. Contrast his performance with that of showrunner Michael Patrick King, who sparred with critics in Jan over alleged racial stereotypes and heavy sexual innuendo in his **CBS** hit sit-com "2 Broke Girls." King took it personally, and it showed. And when it was all over, he pretty much stormed off stage. To be fair, King did get roughed up perhaps more than he deserved. But so did Sorkin-and he handled it as close to perfectly as one could possibly expect. He also gladly scrummed with reporters after the panel. Contrasts. They can make a big difference. - MG

Reviews: "Dallas," season finale, Wed, 9p, TNT. Against the odds, the "Dallas" reboot has triumphed, debuting at 6.9 mln viewers 6/20, besting broadcast shows. Last Wed (7/25), Dallas roped 3.3mln, maintaining its pace as cable's #1 new drama. A key to Dallas' success is that it's predictable, supreme camp. Viewers expect the worst from ol' J.R. (Larry Hagman), and he doesn't disappoint. Although in the finale, J.R. and his calico cat grin plead honestly and lovingly for the life of brother Bobby (Patrick Duffy). The big reveal? Aw, we should've seen it coming. -- "Shipping Wars," Tues, 9p, **A&E**. This reality series about people transporting unusual goods-rare statues, life-size replicas of The Simpsons, etc.--is good storytelling. Its opening, when drivers bid for work, is terrific TV. -- "Paranormal Witness," season II debut, Wed, 10p, Syfy. It's refreshing that we get an unfiltered look at real-life paranormal stories. Everyday people share experiences, instead of scientists and psychologists offering alternate explanations. But true stories on the science-fiction channel? - "Happily Never After," Sat, 10p, Investigation Discovery. The marriage is hurting when your spouse takes a walk at 11:30pm. On Xmas eve. -- TCM's "Summer Under the Stars" features 24 hrs of 1 star each day. Tues it's Sidney Poitier from 6a, including "To Sir, With Love" at 10p.

Basic Cable Rankings			
(6/25/12-7/29/12)			
	•	un Prin	,
1	USA	2.3	2250
2	TNT	2.0	1994
3	DSNY	1.8	1800
4	HIST	1.6	1599
5	FOXN	1.4	1364
6	TBSC	1.3	1325
6	A&E	1.3	1265
8	FX	1.2	1147
9	HGTV	1.0	986
9	SYFY	1.0	933
11	ADSM	0.9	940
11	ESPN	0.9	927
11	FOOD	0.9	906
11	LIFE	0.9	872
11	TRU	0.9	809
11	DSE	0.9	70
17	FAM	0.8	827
17	DISC	0.8	826
17	TLC	0.8	765
17	BRAV	0.8	716
17	BET	0.8	696
17	NKJR	0.8	579
23	AMC	0.7	694
23	ID	0.7	554
25	CMDY	0.6	600
25	MSNB	0.6	596
25	MTV	0.6	591
25	TVLD	0.6	572
25	EN	0.6	559
25	SPK	0.6	554
25	LMN	0.6	519
32	VH1	0.5	537
32	APL	0.5	489
32	NAN	0.5	488
32	HALL	0.5	460
36	CNN	0.4	414
36	NGC	0.4	372
36	DXD	0.4	321
36	OXYG	0.4	319
36	GSN	0.4	284
41	TRAV	0.3	331
41	ESP2	0.3	290
41	HLN	0.3	286
41	OWN	0.3	252
41	WGNA	0.3	223
41	SCI	0.3	214
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