

# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — April 13, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

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## Day 1: ESPN+ Makes Its Highly Anticipated Debut

Thursday marked Day 1 of **ESPN+**, with the direct-to-consumer offering on various **Apple**, **Google** and **Amazon** products. It is not available through **Roku** at this time, though **ESPN** says it's working on carriage with additional platforms. With so much anticipation, you could understand some of the confusion we saw in the social media universe over how to actually get the subscription service. Instead of searching for it in the app store, consumers must download the **ESPN** app to access **ESPN+** content (Note that's different than downloading the **WatchESPN** app). We did, and things got a bit more confusing... Our editor was given the option to log in to the **ESPN** app or sign up later, choosing the latter. That immediately brought up the video rich **ESPN** app with **ESPN+** content interwoven. The subscription video was distinguishable by the yellow **E+** icon in the upper left-corner. Our assumption was we couldn't watch something like the "30 for 30" premiere of "The Last Days of Knight" without subscribing or at least agreeing to a trial, but lo and behold, we could view the whole documentary. Ditto for the Kobe Bryant-backed basketball show "Detail" as well as "ESPN Draft Academy." Did we accidentally click start free trial and not realize it? Selecting subscriptions under the settings option revealed the message: "We are still processing your purchase, please come back again later for updated subscription status." We then called **ESPN** support, selected the **ESPN+** prompt and was transferred to a live agent in a matter of seconds (impressive!). She wasn't completely sure what was going on either, but decided it must be going straight to the free trial. We hung up with the agreement that we'd call back if we were charged for the service. An **ESPN** spokesperson said the company is aware of the issue. "It impacts a small number of users and we're working to resolve it quickly," she said. Fans can also access **ESPN+** content via **ESPN.com**. When we tried to view **ESPN+** content through our PC, we were immediately greeted with a screen to start a 30-day free trial (sponsored by **American Express**). **ESPN+** features HD streaming, live pause/rewind/restart and limited advertising as well as a "Sports Marketplace," allowing fans to subscribe to additional premium services such as **MLB.TV** within the **ESPN** app environment. It has a slew of live content as well as original, but it does not duplicate the **ESPN** linear service.

**Sinclair Saga:** Remember how **FCC** chmn **Ajit Pai** was criticized by Dems for not immediately addressing re-

Cablefax

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- Marketer Of The Year, VP Level And Above
- Marketing Team Of The Year
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- Facebook Marketing Campaign
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- Snap Campaign/Use Of Discover Platform
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- Twitter Marketing Campaign
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#### SALES EXECUTIVE AWARDS

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- Affiliate Salesperson Of The Year (VP And Above)
- Best Dressed
- Digital Sales Leader Of The Year
- Frequent Flyer
- Rookie Of The Year - National
- Rookie Of The Year - Regional
- Sales Assistant Of The Year
- Sales Mentor Of The Year
- Sales Person Of The Year - National (Below The VP)
- Sales Person Of The Year - National (VP And Above)
- Sales Person Of The Year - Regional (Below The VP)
- Sales Person Of The Year - Regional (VP And Above)
- Sales Team Of The Year - National
- Sales Team Of The Year - Regional
- Most Creative Salesperson - National
- Most Creative Salesperson - Regional
- Cablefax Sales Hall Of Fame

**Submit by  
April 16!**

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marks by President *Trump* that suggested challenging NBC's broadcast license after his unhappiness with NBC News reporting? Well, Pai wasted no time responding to a letter by Senate Dems, who asked that the Commission investigate **Sinclair's** news activities to determine if the broadcaster is acting in the public interest. "Thank you for your letter requesting that the Commission investigate a broadcaster based on the content of its news coverage and promotion of that coverage. In light of my commitment to protecting the First Amendment and freedom of the press, I must respectfully decline," Pai wrote in a letter first reported by *Breitbart* and later obtained by **Cablefax**. "I understand that you disliked or disagreed with the content of particular broadcasts, but I can hardly think of an action more chilling of free speech than the federal government investigating a broadcast station because of disagreement with its news coverage or promotion of that coverage." The letter, sent Wednesday from Senators including *Elizabeth Warren* (D-MA) and *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT), questions whether Sinclair violated a policy against broadcast licensees "deliberately distorting news" through the scripts Sinclair news anchors have read warning of one-sided news stories. Dems have also pushed the Inspector General to investigate whether the FCC has acted in a way to help Sinclair achieve its acquisition of **Tribune**.

**Deal Ahead:** The **FTC** gave **Endeavor**, formerly **WME-IMG**, the green light for its \$250mln acquisition of streaming tech firm **NeuLion**. The agency granted early termination of the 30-day waiting for closing the deal on April 6. The companies announced the acquisition on March 26, with the deal to close this quarter.

**Powell on Facebook:** Following two days of *Mark Zuckerberg* hearings on the Hill, **NCTA** chief *Michael Powell* wrote a blog Thursday urging Congress to establish a consistent set of privacy protections. "Net neutrality rules and privacy protections, for example, should be advanced together to help maintain a free and open internet that benefits all consumers," he penned, stressing that these protections be applied across the board to ISPs, online services and social networks alike. "A technology-neutral, federal framework of online consumer protection is a first step to restoring America's faith in our digital future."

**CBS-Viacom:** The back and forth continues here, but **Moody's** is betting that a deal combining **CBS** and **Viacom** eventually happens. "We believe that scale, particularly content and intellectual property scale rather than the number of linear networks, will drive most companies within the media and entertainment ecosystem to consider combinations. This will be driven by fear of being without a dance partner to compete with the growing power of disruptive global OTT SVOD platforms, continuing advertising market share losses to digital ad platforms like Alphabet's Google and Facebook, and due to the dramatic changes in television consumption habits," *Moody's* svp *Neil Begley* says in a new report.

**Patent Fight: Quantum Stream** is trying again. Last month, a federal judge dismissed a patent infringement suit it had filed against Charter regarding addressable advertising patents. The Southern District of NY judge granted Charter's motion to dismiss the case, agreeing that they cover patent-ineligible subject matter. Quantum has filed an appeal to the US Appeals Court for the Federal Circuit.

**Programming: Comedy Central** unveiled a development deal with *Ilana Glazer* and *Abbi Jacobson* with a first look at content created and developed by the two together or independently. The two are the creators, stars, directors and showrunners of "Broad City," which returns for Season 5 early next year. -- **AT&T Audience Network** ordered up a new season of "Loudermilk" to premiere this fall. -- **FX** has set June 3 as the premiere date for "Pose," a dance musical series from co-creators *Ryan Murphy*, *Brad Falchuk* and *Steven Canals*.

**Outstanding Achievement:** We're tugging our ears today in honor of *Carol Burnett*, who will receive the first-ever **Peabody** Career Achievement award, bestowed on individuals whose work and commitment to broadcast media has left an indelible mark on the field. She'll be celebrated with fellow Peabody Awards recipients on May 19 in NYC. -- Kudos to the Alaska Chapter of **SCTE-ISBE**, which was named Chapter of the Year for the fifth consecutive time. *Patrick Campbell*, a field network technician III with **Cox** in Tulsa, was named Chapter Leader of the Year.

**FAXIES Deadline:** For those of you who have yet to enter the FAXIES, the industry's premiere recognition program for marketing, PR and sales, the deadline is April 16. Don't miss this chance to highlight the great work of your company and your team by nominating executives, campaigns and initiatives. Enter [today](#).

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## Fact, Fiction and the Story in Between

The best way to approach **Paramount Network's** "It Was Him" isn't as a crime documentary, but as a journey. That makes it much easier to digest the six-part documentary series, which on the surface looks at whether convicted serial killer *Ed Edwards* may have been responsible for murders ranging from the Black Dahlia to "Making a Murderer" victim *Teresa Halback*. Oh and also *JonBenet Ramsey*, *Laci Peterson*, the Atlanta Child Murders, the Zodiac killings and many more. While it may be a stretch to believe nearly every heavily publicized murder over the last 70 years was the work of one man, you don't have to suspend disbelief to be drawn into the journey of *Wayne Wolfe*, who recently learned that Edwards is his grandfather. Similarly, it's hard not to be mesmerized by former **FBI** Cold Case task force officer *John Cameron*, who has literally sacrificed his career to pursue these leads. *Chachi Senior*, svp, alternative series and development for Paramount Network, said he was sold five minutes into the pitch. "What I was interested in is following this sort of present tense journey of a detective who has hung his own career on these theories. And Wayne Wolfe, who found out six months prior to coming to the pitch who his grandfather was," Senior told **Cablefax**. Don't get me wrong—there is a crime story here. It seems highly likely Edwards killed more people. And there are enough eerie revelations to make you say 'hmmm.' For example, Edwards was living about 10 miles away from where Halback's body was found. "There is a lot of evidence, some of it circumstantial. Ed Edwards was definitely in the vicinity of many of these murders—most of them, I'd say—at the time they were committed," Senior said. "The detective (Cameron) gets into how and why... and it's convincing." It's not your average crime doc, for sure. It Was Him premieres Monday at 9pm on Paramount. — *Amy Maclean*

**Reviews:** "Paterno," **HBO** (on demand) Viewers who already know the basic story of legendary Penn State football coach *Joe Paterno's* fall are unlikely to learn much new from this short (140 minutes) film. Initially Paterno doesn't want to hear about former defensive coordinator *Jerry Sandusky's* sexual crimes against minors. When pressed, the 84-year-old coach, in an understated, finely nuanced portrayal by *Al Pacino*, says he told authorities what he knew. "That's it. End of story." While Pacino's Paterno seems a simple, tired old ball coach, he's also a national legend, endowed with moral responsibilities. The court of public opinion convicts him for doing too little about Sandusky. While the film falters at times, it's a terrific look at the news cycle's ability to destroy a stellar reputation in a few hours, with or without facts. -- "The Americans," 10pm, Wednesday, **FX**. A few weeks ago we promised to keep checking on this spy series, one of our favorites. The initial eps in this final season seemed slow, although ep 3 (last week) raised the stakes. We'd hoped for more this week. While a few new plot lines are offered, and they're good ones for sure, and historical accuracy remains high—we loved the reference to Rep. *Charles Bennett* (D-FL)—the series seems to be limping toward its May conclusion. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (04/02/18-04/08/18)		
Mon-Sun	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
TBS	0.98	2,971
FNC	0.66	2,014
MSNB	0.55	1,671
HGTV	0.49	1,506
USA	0.43	1,311
TNT	0.41	1,257
TLC	0.37	1,138
HIST	0.34	1,038
ID	0.34	1,038
A&E	0.33	1,000
ESPN	0.32	962
DISC	0.31	954
AMC	0.31	930
ADSM	0.30	908
NICK	0.29	897
CNN	0.29	883
DIS	0.28	841
HALL	0.27	835
FOOD	0.26	798
BRAV	0.24	730
FX	0.24	719
MTV	0.24	716
TVLD	0.22	670
CART	0.22	662
DISJ	0.21	630
LIFE	0.20	609
NAN	0.19	579
VH1	0.19	566
INSP	0.17	522
AP	0.17	513
TRAV	0.16	487
SYFY	0.16	478
GSN	0.16	473
NGEO	0.15	468
NKJR	0.15	460
WETV	0.15	456
HBO	0.15	454
HMOV	0.14	419
WGNA	0.13	390
FREE	0.13	387
COM	0.13	381

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

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