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What the Industry Reads First

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25 Years: Jennifer Dorian on TCM's Silver Anniversary

Sunday marked **TCM's 25th anniversary**, with the network incorporating the milestone into its 10th annual Classic Film Fest and kicking things off with a sit-down interview with founder Ted Turner. It was especially poignant given recent changes, including the expectation that **AT&T** will phase out the **Turner Networks** name. We caught up with TCM chief Jennifer Dorian to chat about the net's silver anniversary and its new owner. **How did the decision to feature Ted Turner come about?** I think it was over a year ago we started thinking about to honor our 25th anniversary and how special it would be to include Ted. Then we realized it was a great opportunity to salute his founder's vision and the insight he had that classic films were so valuable. The fact that TCM is still in the original incarnation that Ted had I'm sure makes it extra special for him. TCM has stayed true to its mission since 1994, presenting the classic films uncut and commercial free. We've never deviated from the mission of keeping the flame burning for classic films. And Ted I know really appreciates the thoughtful programming and celebration of key stars and libraries that he valued. We're thrilled we're one of the legacies of Ted Turner, both in fact and his name, Turner Classic Movies. **And no plans to change that name?** No plans. It's such a great name. It has earned a lot of equity through goodwill. **AT&T moved TCM under Warner Bros from Turner Networks. It's early, but what do you think can be some of the fruits of that positioning?** It's an ideal pairing. TCM is a film brand first and foremost. To work in a culture that values film and the history of film is really exciting. Warner Bros is home to so many iconic classic stars, and they own the rights to the **MGM** and **RKO** titles as well as the Warner Bros titles that are so important to our curation. This is going to allow so much good planning together. For instance, we can help influence the restoration calendar more than ever before. We can work on TCM around the world. **As TCM celebrates 25 years, does that mean the definition of classic film changes at all?** Since the very beginning, we did not establish a cutoff date. We present all our films in context and theme. If we were doing a retrospective on a film star, we reserve the right to include all their classic work and their contemporary work on our air. We've learned our sweet spot though is films from the 1930s-1960s. The more we show films from those decades, the more unique our offering is. They absolutely appreciate and allow us to sprinkle in movies from 1980s and 1990s. Being unique is really important. You can watch "Princess Bride" so many places. It should be on TCM sometimes, but not all the time. **There**

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are some great films that share your birth year, like “Shawshank Redemption.” You’re doing something with Fathom Events in movie theaters for that? Yes, for 12-13 titles per year, we do “TCM Big Screen Classics” in conjunction with Fathom. We’ve been doing that for about four years, and in that, we’ve done more modern classics like “Big Lebowski” and “Die Hard.” Shawshank is going to be in theaters in September. We try to make sure there’s a mix of musicals, modern classics, cult classics—a fun lineup. **Any lessons from discontinued SVOD FilmStruck?** It wasn’t the right time to support it, but I know WarnerMedia has a strong focus on streaming. The classic strategy is still unfolding. Our FilmStruck experience will help us with curating classic library eventually.

No More Hulu: AT&T has sold its minority stake in Hulu back to the streamer. The deal valued Hulu at \$15bln, making AT&T’s 9.5% interest worth \$1.43bln at the close of the deal. AT&T will use the proceeds from the sale to reduce its debt, a plan first publicly proposed by CFO John Stephens at the company’s Investor Day in December. According to Stephens, the company was reviewing the balance sheet ahead of the launch of the WarnerMedia SVOD service and “looking for opportunities to monetize assets that are nonessential” to its current plans. That included minority investments in Sky México and Hulu. Disney remains the majority owner of Hulu with a 60% stake while Comcast NBCU holds a 30% stake.

ARF Notebook: AT&T’s Xandr Media pres Rick Welday said he’s focused on managing “frequency across different advertising platforms, not just television. Sequencing is going to be a lot of fun... The capability for us to partner with brands and to look at which creative worked the best on which platforms and in which order is exciting for us.” And as 5G rolls out, he said Xandr will create “engagement between brands and clients... Look for augmented reality, mixed reality, all kinds of new formats that are going to be driven by broadband connectivity between clients.” Finally, the DTC and OTT experiences will become even more important in the landscape. “Obviously there’s a lot of news out there about that. Disney+ last week, WarnerMedia has made announcements about what our intentions are. At the end of the day, it’s never been better to be a consumer of content,” Welday said. -- The relationship between advertising buyers and sellers hinges on trust and accurate metrics, said Megan Clarken, chief content officer, Nielsen, at the Advertising Research Foundation’s AUDIENCExSCIENCE2019 conference in Jersey City, NJ Monday. “The biggest problem that I hear when I speak to marketers is a problem of trust,” she explained. “It’s a problem of trying to work out what it means to advertisers, and do they trust it?... Our job is to make sure there is a consistent, cross-platform measurement that marketers can trust and avoid waste.” Clarken also believes that SVODs may begin to enter the space. “I think as that environment becomes more competitive and licensors of content are demanding more measurement, I think you’ll see them

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leaning in to participate more of the time.” -- **TVision's** vp, client solutions *Tristan Webster* discussed the growing importance of measuring OTT impressions, pointing out that co-viewing and attention rates are higher on OTT platforms relative to linear television. “What we see is attention is 48% higher per second of commercials in OTT. This makes sense, it's content that you chose. OTT is premium in that you selected it and you chose when you're going to watching. It's harder to change the channel, it's a more captive environment, and in most cases the commercials can't be skipped,” he said. *Dan Robbins*, director, head of ad & programming research, **Roku**, concurred. “OTT is television, and co-viewing by daypart is relatively consistent across the daypart and the OTT platform,” Robbins said. “As we think about how OTT fits into a linear daypart model, perhaps it doesn't. We see fundamental differences in visibility and attention.”

A Song of Leaks and Spoilers: Even with the countless numbers of fan theories and rumors surrounding the Season 8 premiere of **HBO's** “Game of Thrones,” no one was expecting the highly-anticipated episode to leak. According to **Twitter** users, the season premiere was available on **DirecTV Now** at around 5pm, four hours ahead of the episode's scheduled timeslot. Subscribers were able to watch the episode in its entirety. “Apparently our system was as excited as we were for Game of Thrones last night and gave a few DirecTV Now customers early access to the episode by mistake,” an **AT&T** spokesperson told **CFX**. “When we became aware of the error, we immediately fixed it.” HBO offered no additional comment. The premiere reached a new series viewership high, drawing 17.4mln viewers across linear, **HBO Go** and **HBO Now**, with 11.8mln watching on the linear channel Sunday night. In comparison, the Season 7 premiere in July 2017 averaged 16.1mln total viewers, 10.1mln of whom watched on the linear channel.

Top of the Heap: **The Weather Channel** has been named the 2019 **Harris Poll** Equitrend TV News Brand of the Year for the ninth year in a row. The annual tracking study measures the brand health of nearly 2K brands across more than 150 categories. Other winners included **USA Network** (General Entertainment), **Disney Channel** (Kids TV), **HBO** (Pay Cable TV Network), **YouTube** (Social Networking Site), **Amazon Fire TV** (Media Streaming Device) and **Google Fiber** (TV & Internet Provider). **Discovery Channel** and **National Geographic** tied for the Factual Entertainment title.

Done Deal: 4K UHD broadcaster **Insight TV** has reached an agreement with **NCTC**, allowing NCTC member companies to opt in under the terms of that deal. New York-based **MTC** was the first NCTC member to launch Insight TV, adding it to its 4K channel tier.

Bill of Rights: *Sen Edward Markey* (D-MA) on Friday introduced the Privacy Bill of Rights Act designed to protect American consumers' personal information. The bill would establish rules for both online and offline companies and ban the use of personal information for harmful or discriminatory purposes. The bill also includes cybersecurity standards and would give the **FTC** rulemaking authority. “Senator Markey's Privacy Bill of Rights Act sets a strong, rights-based standard for consumer privacy protection under federal law that goes beyond mere notice and choice,” said *Dylan Gilbert*, **Public Knowledge**, policy fellow. “The Act provides many good proposals that should be added to any comprehensive vehicle. In particular, Public Knowledge applauds the Act's data minimization requirements, data use restrictions -- including prohibitions on uses that lead to unfair discrimination -- and private right of action so that consumers can have their day in court both individually and as a class for violations of their privacy rights.”

Gavel Drop: **Court TV** will be back in session on May 8. The network will kick off its weekday coverage at 9am with *Yodit Tewolde* manning the news desk from 9am-12pm, followed by *Julie Grant* from 12-3pm and *Seema Iyer* from 3-6pm. Former prosecutor and original Court TV anchor *Vinnie Politan* will hold the weekday 6-9pm slot with “Closing Arguments with Vinnie Politan.” He'll be joined by other Court TV anchors to analyze the key moments of each day's cases. **Katz Networks** has not yet revealed which trial will be covered first on the revamped 24/7 network. Court TV's current distribution deals will make it available in more than 50% of US TV households at launch, with cable reach to 25% of homes.

Programming: **BET** placed an eight-episode order for *Lena Waithe's* “Twenties.” The comedy has been in the works since 2014, being put into development at BET before receiving a pilot order from **TBS** in Feb 2018.

People: **Entertainment Studios** has upped *Nora Zimmet* to **The Weather Channel** chief content officer/evp. Zimmet will continue driving the editorial and creative direction of the network while also adding the development of **The Weather Channel en Español** to her portfolio. Zimmet joined Weather in 2014 from **CNN**, where she served as co-creator/executive producer of “New Day Weekend” and “Smerconish.” -- *Noah Levine* and *Caroline Horner* are joining the 605 leadership team as CRO and svp, product management, respectively. Levine most recently led the audience-based selling and programmatic ad business across linear and digital for **Fox Networks Group** TV properties while Horner headed TV and cross-platform product innovation for **Rentrak**, **comScore's** advanced measurement and optimization services business.