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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

The Aftermath: Simington Speaks Out, News Nets Turn to Milwaukee

FCC Commissioner *Nathan Simington* is often a man of few words. While his Republican colleague *Brendan Carr* spent 33 minutes railing against the FCC's Title II order during its vote earlier this year, Simington uttered just nine words: "I dissent and I will publish my statement. Thanks." His quiet reputation makes his 449-word [statement](#) Monday on the attempted assassination of *Donald Trump* particularly notable.

"The world was shaken on July 13, 2024, when President Donald J. Trump avoided assassination by the slenderest of margins. The assassin's bullet struck his ear, and yet, within seconds, President Trump was on his feet, calling on the shocked crowd not to surrender, but to fight. The image of President Trump, blood streaming down his face, on his feet and shaking his fist in regal defiance, became an instant classic of American history," Simington began, before offering prayers for Trump, the family of victim *Corey Comperatore* and the two surviving victims, *David Dutch* and *James Copenhaver*.

The commissioner ended his remarks by denouncing "irresponsible rhetoric" and asking Americans to reject it. "The First Amendment is, thankfully, broad, and the Federal Communications Commission has few or no powers to compel or limit political speech. It is thus not as an officer of the US government, but as a concerned citizen in government service, that I call on Americans to renounce the abuse of the

vast reach of telecommunications to falsely describe political adversaries as threats to democracy, fascists, and by other false and hate-filled terms," he said. "In times like these, sincere and candid political speech is a patriotic duty; but malicious and dishonest political speech is not, in my view, in the public interest."

None of the other four FCC commissioners issued statements on the agency's website, although Carr posted on social media that "it is past time for politicians that know better to stop fanning the false flames of fear."

Amid the flurry of coverage of the shooting at Saturday's Trump rally, don't miss the uninterrupted [pool video](#) available in **C-SPAN's** video library that continues on for more than 20 minutes after shots are fired. It is a compelling look at the aftermath, including the clearing of the crowd, a Life Flight helicopter overhead and a number of "f-yous" and "this is your fault" shouts that are directed at media. Reporters can be overheard trying to determine whether Trump was shot or if the blood could have come from an injury when Secret Service surrounded him.

In addition to covering the developing story out of Pennsylvania, the media has now descended on Milwaukee for the Republican National Convention. Trump announced Republican Ohio Senator *J.D. Vance* as his running mate just before the RNC roll call. Vance has been a vocal proponent of reauthorizing the low-income broadband subsidy through the Affordable Connectivity Program. He's called for a repeal of Section 230



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legal protections for big tech platforms and sponsored a bill along with *Michael Cloud* (R-TX) that would eliminate all federal DEI programs and funding for federal agencies, contractors which receive federal funding, organizations which receive federal grants and educational accreditation agencies. **Fox News** said *Sean Hannity* will present the first interview with Trump's running mate tonight at 9pm ET.

A C-SPAN rep on the ground in Milwaukee told **CFX** that there is a very visible police presence, but the heightened security hadn't caused any changes to the network's coverage plans. **Comedy Central's** "The Daily Show" said it would not broadcast from the convention Monday due to "logistical issues and the evolving situation in Milwaukee," but said it would broadcast Tuesday through Thursday from its New York studio. "We need to reschedule our events on the ground in Wisconsin and will look to make those up in the coming weeks," the net said. An **MSNBC** spokesperson denied a **CNN** report that Monday's "Morning Joe" was pulled to avoid a guest making a potentially inappropriate comment. The network opted to stay in breaking news mode Monday with rolling coverage from NBC News, NBC News NOW and MSNBC. Morning Joe is scheduled to return Tuesday morning.

When it comes to ratings for coverage of Saturday's assassination attempt of Trump, Fox News led all other networks with 6.5 million viewers in Saturday primetime, according to early **Nielsen Media Research** data. **ABC** was second with 3 million viewers, followed by **CBS** (2.7 million), **CNN** (2.5 million) and **MSNBC** (1.4 million).

PARAMOUNT SHAREHOLDER WANTS MORE INFO ON MERGER

Of course, the new **Paramount-Skydance** merger [agreement](#) wasn't going to be smooth sailing. *Mario Gabelli*, a top Paramount shareholder and chairman/co-CEO of **GAMCO Investors**, said he and his firm [want more details](#) about the valuation of **National Amusements'** assets, according to *Reuters*. National Amusements owns a controlling share in Paramount, and GAMCO owns nearly 4.9 million Class-A voting shares in Paramount. Gabelli and GAMCO sent a letter to Paramount's general counsel on Friday seeking more clarity about the valuations. "Operation fish bowl... most likely starts today," Gabelli [wrote](#) on X on Friday. "No different than security analysts digging for data on industry/company."

VERIZON SLAMMED WITH COPYRIGHT SUIT BY MUSIC INDUSTRY

A group of record labels are coming after **Verizon**, filing a complaint in the Southern District of New York for copyright

infringements tied to the pirating of music by the ISP's subscribers. The labels are demanding a trial by jury and argue they are entitled to statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for each work infringed. Since early 2020, representation for the plaintiffs claim to have sent more than 340,000 infringement notices to Verizon. "Those notices clearly and unambiguously advised Verizon of its subscribers' blatant and systematic use of Verizon's Internet service to illegally download, copy and distribute Plaintiffs' copyrighted sound recordings through the P2P network known as BitTorrent," the complaint said. "Verizon acknowledged that it received these notices of infringement sent by Plaintiffs' representatives. Yet rather than taking any steps to address its customers' illegal use of its network, Verizon deliberately chose to ignore Plaintiffs' notices, willfully blinding itself to that information and prioritizing its own profits over its legal obligations." Verizon is far from the first ISP to be attacked by the music industry for pirating done over its network. In 2019, a U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia jury ordered **Cox** to pay \$1 billion to **Sony** and other music labels for the same reason. Cox appealed the case before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, and in February, it remanded for a new trial on the damages as Cox did not profit from the actions of its subscribers. The Fourth Circuit did affirm the jury's finding of willful contributory infringement.

NDIA RANKS AFFORDABLE INTERNET PLANS POST-ACP

The **National Digital Inclusion Alliance**, in response to the end of the **FCC's** Affordable Connectivity Program, introduced a [ranked list](#) of low-cost plans offered by ISPs. The Grading Internet for Good list on the organization's website assigns each plan a "Good," "Better" or "Best" score after considering cost, eligibility criteria, speeds, data caps, latency, throttling, technology type and more. Earning "Best" rankings were **Comcast's** Internet Essentials and Internet Essentials Plus plans and **Digital C's** Canopy offering. Those with a "Better" label include **AT&T** Access, **Cox's** Connect2Compete and **Mediacom's** Xtream Connect. "We're carefully reviewing more internet plans and publishing our findings on our website," NDIA Executive Director *Angela Siefer* said in a statement. "We are hopeful that, in the absence of an affordable broadband program like ACP, this guide can help digital inclusion practitioners navigate and understand what options are available."

HUB FINDS PRICE, EXCLUSIVITY KEY TO KEEP STREAMERS

With an abundance of streaming services to choose from, **Hub** found that movies and exclusive originals are just as important as low price points for consumers. Hub's annual Monetization of Video study showed the average respondent estimated they're spending \$82 per month on TV content, which is near the maximum amount they say they'd be willing to spend each month (\$87). Compare that to the \$85 and \$88, respectively, recorded in 2023 as inflation and other issues cause consumers to be more selective with their subscriptions. When it comes to consumers choosing which services to keep, Hub found that 85% either "definitely will" or "probably will" still use ad-free services they currently have a year from now whereas 74% share that sentiment regarding ad-supported services. But price still rules above all. When respondents prioritized 16 features based on how much value they add to a streaming or TV service, 12.7% put "lower price than other platforms with similar content" right at the top, followed by 9.1% of folks wanting "access to new movies that were recently in theaters." Approximately 8.8% said "all shows are ad-free," and 8.5% chose "choice of ad-free plan or less expensive tier with ads." Hub surveyed 1,600 U.S. TV consumers with broadband from ages 16-74.

MOFFETTNATHANSON RAISES NETFLIX PT, SUB EXPECTATIONS

MoffettNathanson raised its price target for **Netflix** by \$35 to \$565 after seeing the streamer's significant progress in its password-sharing crackdown. It has been able to chip away at the share of its users that are reporting accessing the platform through another household's account dropped to just 9% in the past quarter, by MoffettNathanson's measurement. "A promising sign for both Netflix's ability to get password-sharers to convert to paid subscribers (and for its ability to drive pricing and generate ad inventory) is the meaningful increase the platform saw in users reporting daily engagement," it said in its 2Q24 Quarterly SVOD Tracker. "Another promising sign is that UCAN subscribers are growing as Netflix is increasingly relying on more efficient 3rd party licensed vs. original content." The analysts also improved its Netflix global net paid subscriber addition estimate by 500,000 to 5.5 million driven by an improved UCAN subscriber addition estimate of 2 million.

ECHOSTAR OPENS DOORS OF OPEN RAN CENTER

Echostar launched a state-of-the-art Open RAN testing and evaluation lab at the company's Cheyenne, Wyoming, data center. The Open RAN Center for Integration and Development (ORCID) will give a variety of vendors the opportunity to test

and validate solutions using Echostar's live commercial-grade could-native O-RAN network. The lab, which features a real field test setup, is supported by a \$50 million grant from **NTIA's** Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund.

CARRIAGE

Spectrum News+ is now available on **Xumo Play** after only being available to Spectrum customers. The channel originally launched in 2023 and combines over 30 local news networks to offer a mix of localized reporting, national headlines and weather forecasts. Xumo Play is available on Xumo devices as well as major streaming platforms including **Apple, Samsung** and **Sony**.

RATINGS

UPtv's "Red, Mike and Blue Bloods" programming event reeled in more than 4 million viewers from July 4-7. Around 900,000 viewers watched "Hudson & Rex" on July 4, which tied the network's strongest-ever Fourth of July in household ratings. UP ranked No. 48 among ad-supported cable for both households and W25-64 for the week.

PROGRAMMING

The **NFL Media** series "Good Morning Football" is expanding as **Roku** inked a deal to bring "GMFB: Overtime" to the platform. It'll be a new two-hour daily show that'll be home to **The Roku Channel** starting July 29. GMFB: Overtime will air on weekdays from 10am-noon and cover daily NFL news along with interviews with players, coaches, front-office executives, celebrities and more. Good Morning Football will continue to air on **NFL Network** at 8am. – "Judy Justice" will return with new episodes on **Freevee** and **Prime Video** on Aug. 5 in the U.S., U.K. and Germany. New episodes will roll out every weekday until Oct. 25. – **Apple TV+'s** "Presumed Innocent" was renewed for a second season. The Season 1 finale is set to air July 24. – The "Rick and Morty" universe will officially grow next month as "Rick and Morty: The Anime" is set for an Aug. 15 premiere at midnight on **Adult Swim**. A subtitled version in Japanese will follow Aug. 17 at midnight.

STAMOS JOINS ZEAM MEDIA

Add Chief Innovation Officer at **Zeam Media** to the resume of multi-hyphenate **John Stamos**. The former "Full House" star joining the parent company of the streaming service Zeam to oversee the development of new content partnerships and act as Zeam's brand ambassador. First up on Stamos' list: starring in an eight-minute mockumentary "Going Full Jack," which follows Stamos playing the role of someone getting ready for an upcoming Zeam commercial. The move precedes Zeam's imminent NYC studio that'll open in Times Square later this summer.