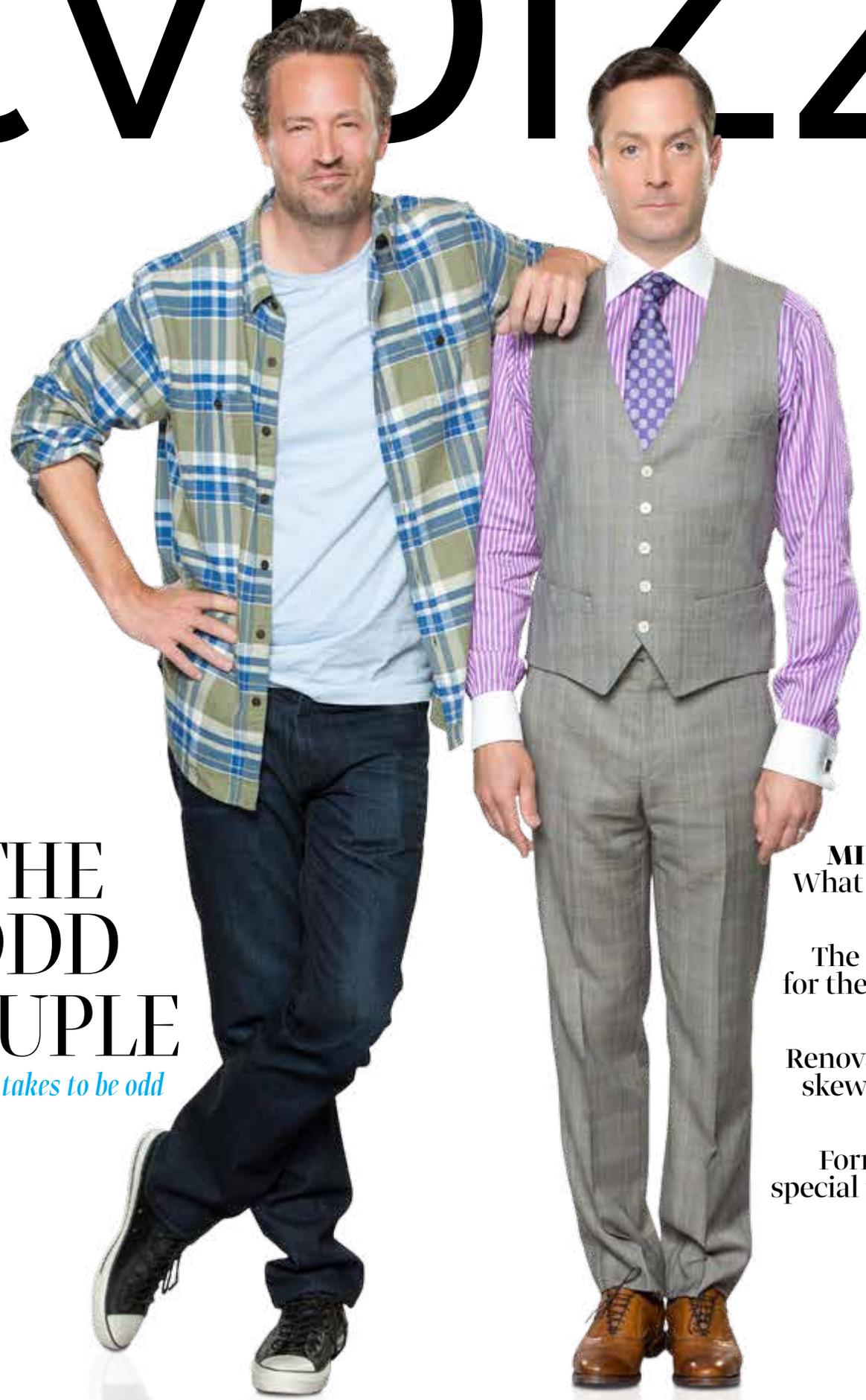


tvbizz

MIPTV 2015



THE ODD COUPLE

What it takes to be odd

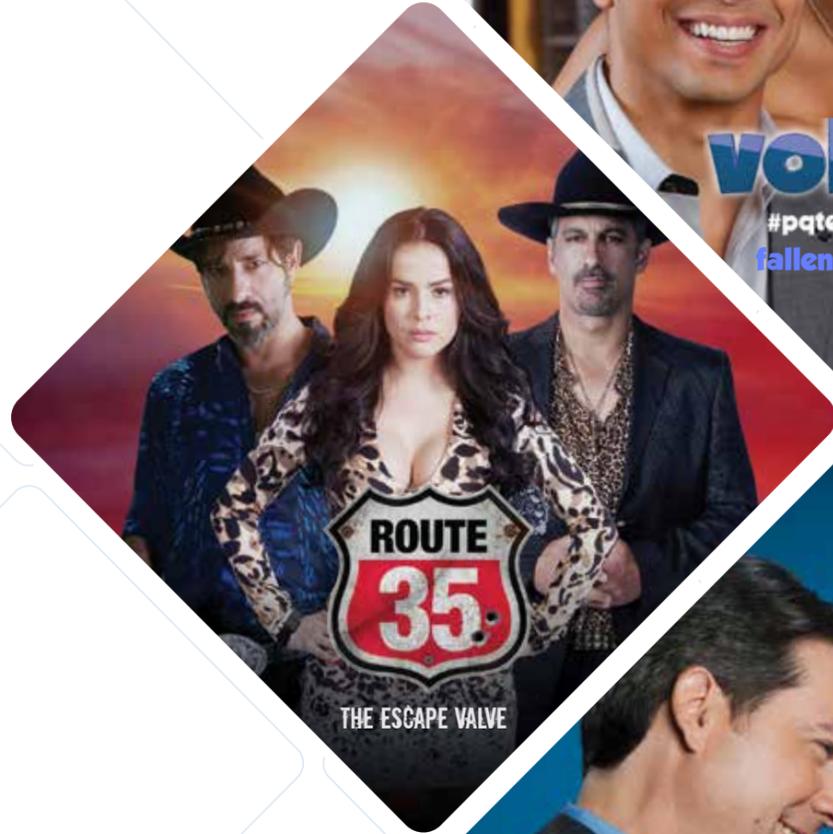
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- The Battle for the Nordics
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Georgi R. Chakarov / Editor-in-chief

Rebooting... Please wait

WHAT DO YOU DO when a computer crashes? Correct, reboot! Restarting is the best way to solve a system problem like lack of capacity, bugs or overloading. The process takes patience and time. But users often lose their nerves and look for better and trendier options.

Our TV system is now overloaded. Competition and development of digital technology have led to oversupply of content available anywhere, at any time. The user is driven to overconsumption and uber-demand for "the latest, coolest, best". The result is a malfunctioning system as it lacks the capacity to produce enough product to satisfy the superconsumer and generate profit. Suppliers start looking for faster and cheaper solutions to keep up the pace in the fierce competition. Bugs start popping up: more new shows means a bigger number of flops and failed investments. Eventually, the resources are exhausted and rebooting is the only solution.

This is what we see happening to TV in 2015. Broadcasters are looking to catch their breath, win some time, as they are not able to adapt fast enough to the changing market. Rebooting old shows with cult status becomes the most logical solution - refreshed well-known stories, old favorite TV heroes and creators who have done this before.

Reboot is the key word of the year: *Twin Peaks*, *The X-Files*, *The Odd Couple*, *The Saint*, *Thunderbirds Are Go*, *The Muppets*, *Powerpuff Girls*, and on and on and on. One might argue that this is mainly the problem of traditional broadcasters. But look at what Netflix (the main global driver of oversupply and overconsumption) is doing...a reboot of *Full House*! So what's



going on? They can't handle the situation as well? Despite multi-billion investments?

House of Cards, *The Walking Dead* and *Game of Thrones* are getting old and they won't be around forever. Marvel and DC Comics are also running out of superheroes. We have yet to see a new global blockbuster hit series. No one knows when this will happen. So why not go back in time and remember those days... The days of Mulder and Scully and Agent Cooper. Nostalgia and wishful thinking for the good old analog times; rebooting as a remedy for ailing TV.

Will viewers remain patient while the system reboots? ■

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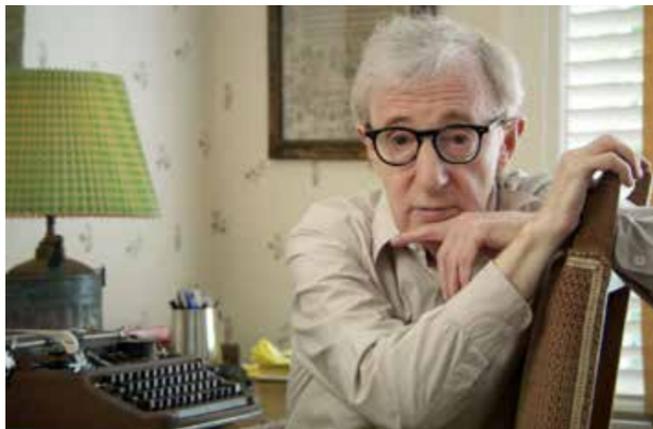
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Woody Allen makes his first TV series

Cult director Woody Allen could not resist the temptation and accepted Amazon's offer to write and produce his first ever TV series. The untitled project is expected to premiere in 2016. Allen started his career as comedy writer for television and moved to writing and directing films for the big screen in the mid-60's. His prolific career counts over 70 films and a number of theater plays. He has won 4 Oscars.



BBC shoots sitcom with transgender actor

The BBC is about to break new boundaries launching its first sitcom starring a transgender actor. *Boy Meets Girl* was commissioned after the script, by Elliott Kerrigan, won the Trans Comedy Award in 2013, and will be the first BBC comedy to feature transgender issues prominently, as it follows the developing relationship between 26-year-old Leo and 40-year-old Judy, who is a transgender woman.



Wolf Hall's all-time record

BBC Two's critically acclaimed *Wolf Hall* became the channel's highest-rating drama series in at least 13 years (since records began) - receiving a consolidated average audience of 4.4 million viewers and 15.8 per cent share across the six episodes.



Afghanistan breaks taboos with feminist drama

Filming has started on a remarkable TV drama that challenges taboos about women in conservative Afghanistan. *Shereen's Law*, due to be aired before the end of the year, tells the story of a 36-year-old woman who brings up three children on her own while forging a career as a clerk at a court in Kabul. Shereen fights corruption, harassment, and rape, and tries to divorce her husband, whom she wed in a forced marriage.



Digital takes half of UK advertising

The UK is set to become the first country in the world where half of all advertising spend goes on digital media. The total market is expected to reach just over £16.2bn. Digital will grow 12% to £8.1bn to take half of all adspend in 2015.



Atkinson is back

Rowan Atkinson is coming back to British television. He will play the role of Jules Maigret in two new films for ITV. Atkinson's last regular television appearance was in Ben Elton's short-lived BBC police comedy *The Thin Blue Line*. Before that he enjoyed international success with *Mr Bean* and *Blackadder*.



NRK takes four teens to the North Pole

NRK has selected four teenagers for its new project *Oppdrag Nansen* (Mission Nansen). They will be the youngest Norwegians to ever reach the North Pole. The expedition will be headed by Aleksander Gamme who will also help the kids learn more about how the climate is changing. Fridtjof Nansen will become the scientific guiding star of the expedition and people will learn more about his achievements a hundred years ago.



ATV loses broadcasting license

On April 1, the government of Hong Kong decided not to renew the broadcasting license of Asia Television (ATV). That was no April Fool's joke as the cash-strapped broadcaster is facing shutdown with its license expiring in 12 months. ATV launched in 1957 under the name Rediffusion Television and was the first Chinese language television in the world and the first TV station in Hong Kong.



Kardashians' shocking new deal

The Kardashians reportedly signed a \$100 million deal with E! Their show has been airing on the entertainment network since 2007 and will stay on air for at least four more. The deal is the highest in TV history for a reality show. The 10th season of *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* launched last month with 4.8 million viewers.



Game of Thrones sets another global record

In an unprecedented move, *Game of Thrones* premiered in over 170 countries and territories across the globe simultaneously with HBO's U.S. airing on Sunday, April 12. The entire fifth season of the Emmy, Golden Globe and Peabody-winning series will be simulcast to HBO branded networks and broadcast partners across the world, creating a global television event week after week throughout the season's 10-episode run.



Adam Levine and Dave Stewart in NBC's Songland

Adam Levine and Dave Stewart are the big music names behind NBC's new project *Songland*. The US network has commissioned a pilot from *The Voice* executive producer Audrey Morissey. The show will focus on the concept of songwriters as the real kings of the music industry, giving the average American the chance to pitch their compositions to the music industry's top artists and producers in hopes of producing the next worldwide hit.



Spain watches less TV for better health

The Spanish pubcaster RTVE shortened its primetime in order to help people rationalize their family, labor and everyday life and thus to improve their health condition. On March 2, TVE1 started airing its most attractive content no later than 22.15.

Following this measure, the Spanish Health Ministry advised the private television and radio broadcasters to end their primetime shows before midnight for the same health reasons.



WHAT IT TAKES TO BE
ODDD

Thomas Lennon of *The Odd Couple*

Thomas Lennon co-stars alongside Matthew Perry in *The Odd Couple*, America's biggest sitcom premiere of the year. **Georgi R. Chakarov** tries to find out what makes him so weirdly special in his role as audience favorite Felix Unger.



THOMAS LENNON (Felix Unger in THE ODD COUPLE)

Thomas Lennon is a writer, comedian and co-founder of the influential sketch comedy group *The State*, which had its own series on MTV for three seasons. Lennon co-created *Reno 911!*, in which he played Lieutenant Jim Dangle, and *Viva Variety*. He is currently an Executive Producer on Comedy Central's late night show *@midnight*.

Lennon's feature film credits include *We're The Millers*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Le Divorce*, *Memento*, *17 Again*, *I Love You, Man*, etc. He starred alongside Cameron Diaz in *Bad Teacher* and *What to Expect When You're Expecting* and was seen opposite Chris Evans and Anna Faris in *What's Your Number*. In 2013, Lennon made his co-directorial

debut with the independent film *Hell Baby*. Currently, he is in production on the action/animation film *Monster Trucks*, which releases next year.

Lennon currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife, actress Jenny Robertson, and their son, Oliver. His birthday is August 9.

Follow him on Twitter @thomaslennon

Thomas, how does it feel to play the 'odd one' in *The Odd Couple*?

It's a dream come true. Up until this point, my annoying idiosyncrasies have been for the benefit of my wife and 5 year-old son — so it's nice to share them with 13 million people every week.

This story is quite popular with the American public. How big was the challenge to take on the role of Felix Unger who has been previously played by Tony Randall, Jack Lemmon, Dean Martin and Art Carney?

I lost a lot of sleep over the idea of taking it on. At times I felt like it was an insurmountable task to try to step into the shoes filled by my predecessors. I was regularly glued to the Tony Randall version as a boy, and feel like his performance is looming over me all the time. But I'm not trying to re-create what he did, I'm trying to continue the story of the Neil Simon character of Felix. When I looked at it from that point of view, I knew I had

new things to bring to my performance, and a lot of the new Felix is very much me, with some homage to Tony Randall. However it's worked out, I'm spending a lot of time in yoga pants in this version.

There are numerous hit projects, revolving around the roommate concept like *Friends*, *Two and a Half Men*, *The Big Bang Theory*; etc. Do you think that *The Odd Couple* is the perfect replacement for *Two and a Half Men*?

I think it's fun for audiences to pick who they side with in shows like *The Odd Couple*, and *Two and a Half Men*. I think in most cases, they're relating to the Oscar, or the Charlie, and it's the Alan or the Felix that's driving them nuts. Most of us have lived with someone they wanted to see jettisoned into space at certain moments. So far it feels like a nice fit, and audiences have been big, and responsive.

How would you describe your relationship with Matthew Perry in the show? It seems that you really try to make him feel good but he just doesn't seem to get it: playing porn on a cello was a good one, indeed.

I am basically his "Jiminy Cricket" — the adorable little conscience that's perched on his shoulder, reminding him to go to school, instead of smoking cigars and eating ice cream all day on *Pleasure Island*.

You also played together in *17 Again*. Are you friends

in life?

We are. We have a surprising amount of things in common. And we drive the same car. I am 90% positive that he loves spending time with me. The other 10% of the time he wants to shoot me away like a mosquito. It's the ideal dynamic for the show.

Felix Unger is a cleaning and cooking fanatic. He is into yoga, photography and psychology. What about Thomas Lennon?

Any similarities

between the two?

The yoga and the cleanliness are also traits of mine. And the respect for the laws of pantomime. And the enthusiasm for the cello. When I got the call that Matthew was looking for a Felix to go with his Oscar, I took a long look in the mirror and realized: yes, I am precisely that amount of annoying, and I have the perfect posture to go with it.

What was your wife's comment when she saw the pilot?

She was excited to see me expressing any emotion whatsoever, as I am rather stoic at home, apparently. (I only know this answer just now, as I asked her one moment ago and this is what she told me.)

Let's dig in? What do you do when someone locks you into the emotional support tent?

Brew up some "truth coffee," with a side of "reality biscuits." And "turkey bacon," which has fifty percent less fat than regular bacon.

You like to play the guitar and mention musical inspirations like Morrissey and Joy Division. If you had not chosen comedy, would you have become a musician? Any other unfulfilled dreams from childhood?

I am a major Morrissey fan. Earlier this year I filled in on guitar with The Sweet and Tender Hooligans (LA's best tribute band) at the House of Blues. If comedy hadn't worked out, trying to be a Johnny Marr-level guitarist probably would have been the path. Learning the guitar part of Smiths songs is a long, involved hobby of mine.

You appear on various type of shows: cooking, comedy, talk, morning block. But what do you like to watch at home?

The original *Batman* TV series with Adam West. It's the one thing everyone in our family can agree is absolute perfection.

I took a long look in the mirror and realized: yes, I am precisely that amount of annoying.



Executive Producer **Bob Daily** was also happy to share his thoughts on the hard task of adapting *The Odd Couple* for modern audiences. The original play debuted on Broadway in 1965 and since then has seen six screen adaptations, becoming one of America's most favorite stories.

How risky is it to produce a story which is so popular with the American viewers?

We were definitely nervous about living up to people's expectations. However, it's been 45 years since the original "Odd Couple" debuted on network TV, so there's a whole generation out there - actually, two or three generations - that hasn't seen the show and so has no standard of comparison. Also, we've felt much calmer having Garry Marshall, the original creator of the series, on board as a consulting producer. Getting his seal of approval meant everything to us.

The series has received mixed reviews by the critics but became the most-watched new sitcom of the season. What makes it so popular with viewers but not as popular with critics in your opinion. Have you read any of the bad reviews?

I think sometimes critics, because they have to watch every single series that comes out - hundreds of hours of TV a year - they respond to novelty, to ideas that are shocking or have never been tried before. Whereas viewers just want to be entertained. They want a show that's funny, well-written, well-cast, that doesn't pander to their intelligence and that has genuine warmth between the characters. That's what we're aiming for. (And no, I try not to read the bad reviews!)

What changes did you make in the original scripts in order to modernize the story?

We're actually not using any of the original scripts. All the stories are new, including the pilot, which is closer to the Neil Simon play than the series. Probably the biggest change we've made is to turn the show into more of an ensemble. We have a great supporting cast - Wendell Pierce, Lindsay Sloane, and Yvette Nicole Brown - and we're using them to fill out Oscar and Felix's world.

Do you think viewers compare the show to *Two and a Half Men*?

First, we should be so lucky to be com-

pared to a show that ran 12 seasons! Second, I think there are so many shows that share the DNA of the original "Odd Couple" - not just *Two and a Half Men*, but *2 Broke Girls*, *Frasier* (that one had two Felixes), even *Sesame Street* (Bert and Ernie). We're hoping that people will appreciate that we're returning to the original source material.

Will the success of *The Odd Couple* tempt the US networks to shoot more remakes of classic sitcoms?

It will be interesting to see. The key, as always, is casting - we consider ourselves very lucky to have found two actors, Matthew Perry and Thomas Lennon, who can fill such large and iconic shoes. ■



BOB DAILY
(EXECUTIVE PRODUCER,
THE ODD COUPLE)

From 2006 to 2012, Daily served as Executive Producer, and eventually showrunner, on *Desperate Housewives*, for which he received a Golden Globe nomination in 2007. Prior to that, Daily was a writer and co-executive producer on *Frasier*. During his five year tenure on the show, he won two Writers Guild of America Awards in the category of Outstanding Script - Television Comedy. He was also nominated for an Emmy Award for his work on the series.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHAEL VAPISH/CBS

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MIPTV: What to buy?

The TVBIZZ team has hand picked some of the **most interesting formats** which made the headlines over the past six months and which we see as potential global hits. Here's our shopping list!

SCRIPTED



Hiding
Playmaker Media/
Sony Pictures Television

→ A huge hit for ABC in Australia. After a botched drug deal, Troy must take his family into Witness Protection in exchange for giving evidence against vicious crime boss Nils Vandenberg. With new names and fresh identities, the Quigg family is ripped from their home on the sun-drenched Gold Coast and dumped in a safe house in Western Sydney. But dislocation puts immense pressure on everyone.



Aquí Paz y Después Gloria
La Mandarin

→ Spanish comedy is definitely on the rise and *Aquí Paz y Después Gloria* proves it. The series took three years to make it to the air this March on Telecinco, telling the story of the dysfunctional relationship of two twin brothers - Paco and Angel. Paco takes over the role of his brother as priest in a small village after Angel falls in a coma.



Les Temoins (Witnesses)
Newen Distribution

→ French crime is the new Nordic noir! The story of French-Belgian productions *Les Temoins* revolves around a mysterious tomb desecration, investigated by a young police officer and a retired detective. It ranked first in French prime-time with its premiere on France 2 in mid-March.



Angry Mom
MBC Global Media

→ MBC's drama *Angry Mom*, aims to open a discussion on violence and bullying in schools to show how such matters are ultimately connected to the wider society. After discovering that her daughter is a victim of school violence, a mother decides to take matters into her own hands by putting on a high school uniform and enrolling in the school as a student.



At Any Price
DRG

→ The dark comedy series produced by Mosquito Television tells the cases of a company whose goal is to eliminate the problems of its clients and make them happy at any price. The show premiered on MTV3 in March.



Acquitted
FremantleMedia

→ Undoubtedly, the most talked about new Nordic crime drama this season. *Acquitted* is now officially the most successful local series premiere in the history of TV 2 Norway.



Gym Tony
La Competencia

→ The comedy series following the daily life and adventures in a local gym club launched on Cuatro in Spain in December and is already in its second season with constantly improving ratings.



Chefs
CALT/France Televisions

→ Le Chef, the head of restaurant Le Paris, each year takes one young delinquent on probation in his team. It turns out that Romain who has just come out of prison is quite handy in the kitchen despite his difficult integration.

NON-SCRIPTED



Extreme Love
FremantleMedia

→ This paper format created by Studio Glam is among the top titles in Fremantle's catalog. The show invites 10 would-be woo-ers to a remote location where they have two tasks: to compete for the affections of a modern-day maiden and to survive harsh living conditions.



The Puppet Show
Talpa

→ The head of RTL4 laughed at John de Mol when he presented him the idea for this talent show for puppet masters. SBS6 took a chance and the show is currently scoring good results in the Netherlands, hoping to set sails to other markets as well.



Babushka
Armoza Formats

→ Armoza continue to impress with their new concepts. This time, new gameshow *Babushka* is developed in cooperation with NBC which will surely attract many eye-balls to this new spectacular show.



Date Me
Banijay International

→ DR3 took a two-month long challenge to find a partner for two 30-something singles by offering anyone willing to date the two to contact them via the social nets. Besides the good and bad dates, the main characters shoot diaries presenting their life to the viewers.



Push the Red Button
Warner Bros.

→ Produced by Eyeworks for RTL4, this show revolves around a red button which is placed in various locations with the sign Push the Button to... change your life, for nice weather, etc. and then the unsuspecting victims become the center of big adventures.



It's Showtime
Global Agency

→ Global Agency tries to prove that talent formats can work as daily shows as well. The concept sees a daily competition of five singers who rate each other based on voice and performance qualities.



Take Care of My Dad
SBS Content Hub

→ *Take Care of My Dad* was the best rated show out of all Lunar New Year pilot programs shown this year in Korea. The reality show is about celebrity fathers in their 50's who look to recover their relationship with their daughters through the program.



The Big Surprise
Red Arrow International

→ Another grand show from ProSieben! The format sees friends and family plot the worst day ever for a hapless contestant. And just when they are pushed to their limits and want out, an amazing surprise is revealed.



King
Rabbit Films

→ *King* (Kingi) was the biggest Saturday night hit for MTV3 this spring. The Finnish format combines the scripted reality genre with music and comedy as the nation's most talented actors compete in a fictional talent competition.



Lip Sync Battle
Viacom

→ Jimmy Fallon is behind this hilarious format which premiered on Spike TV with record ratings. Lip Sync Battle fronted by LL Cool J has that universal formula which will work anywhere in the world. Expect this show to travel a lot!



You're Back in the Room
BBC Worldwide

→ Finally a breakthrough for hypnotism formats? This one comes from Tuesday's Child and BBC Worldwide with solid ratings on ITV and TV3 in Ireland. Fun time with this game-show filled with wrong-doing contestants is guaranteed!



So Not OK
Elk Entertainment

→ The sketch show was among the hit projects for TV3 in Sweden during the fall season. Using practical experiments, statistical surveys and expert commentary the hosts set out to reveal the everyday unwritten rules once and for all - finally determining what is OK and what is So Not OK! ■

Reformed Rai 1 skews older

In January 2012 **Giancarlo Leone**, former General Deputy Director of Content at Rai, was appointed as the new Channel Director of Rai 1. During his term, Italy completed the transition to digital broadcasting which led to increased competition on the market with the launch of numerous free and pay TV channels. Though its market share has been reduced, Rai 1 remains the leading net in the core demos. In March 2015 the Italian broadcasting reform was approved by Rai's Administrative Council starting with the creation of two newsrooms. It is expected to save at least 80-100 million euros from this move. In an exclusive interview with **Maria Chiara Duranti**, Rai 1's chief talks about the recent changes in strategy and organization at the Italian public broadcaster and what goals they are looking to achieve this year.

M

From this point of view, the relationship with external suppliers is great collaboration in production, because Rai provides all workers below the lines, engineers and the studio, while we share the production and editorial part. I would say that 60% of the process is Rai and 40% from others. In our strategic vision we are not afraid of formats bought abroad, because even when it comes to produced shows conceived in an international market, we are able to localize them and adapt them according to our culture and tradition. Our formats are always the result of a fruitful collaboration between internal and external forces.

You recently changed the commercial demo, and now target much older audiences. What was the reason for the change?

Yes, this year the commercial target age has been changed from 25-54 to 35-54 as Rai Pubblicità (Rai's advertising agency) changed the audience target group of the public channels. This was a step that we had to take, as the buying capability of older people in Italy has changed. According to Rai Pubblicità, the older target group is able to influence the commercial product and this is a general Italian trend that we have considered in making the change. It was a key decision to make

Mr. Leone, Rai has started its biggest reform in terms of organization of structure. Could you tell us what are the main pillars of the new strategy?

We had an in-house reformation of the business divisions: with a clear division between the channel directors and production groups that are both internal and external. In-house we entirely produce sports, news and infotainment content for the daytime and Sunday slots. Regarding light entertainment, both scripted and unscripted, we share the production with external independent producers in different ways. Sometimes it's format acquisitions with international brands from abroad (*Dancing with the Stars*, *Skating with Celebrities*, *I Can Do That!*), or we produce original ideas created in-house. In both cases we develop formats together with independent producers.

Rai 1

Rai 1 is the flagship channel of RAI and also the most watched TV station in the country. It has been on air since 1954 and has always been the market leader with an average of about 5 million viewers in primetime. It is a general interest and family oriented channel, offering a range of genres from fiction to light entertainment.

Giancarlo Leone: "I think that big events make scheduling shine."



Giovane Montalbano (The Young Montalbano)

Ti Lascio una Canzone
(Leaving You A Song)

Sanremo Music Festival

La Prova del Cuoco
(Ready, Steady, Cook)

Braccialetti Rossi (The Red Band Society)

in order to follow the commercial trend of the core target group (35-54), which is crucial for Rai 1.

Your new strategy also includes the international roll-out of Italian fiction.

The Italian market is changing and the presence of fiction on the international markets has been at the forefront of our television organization for several years now. Although models and stories are different when it comes number of episodes and duration, we think that it is important not only to acquire international programs but also to be part of the system with co-productions and partnerships. We don't want to be considered as "inferior" and we're working in this direction through collaborative efforts in international co-productions. Furthermore, Rai Cinema has already taken this direction, developing a greater presence in the international market. Despite the language difficulties, as we are used to dubbing everything, we are focused on buying good series from abroad and at the same time ready to develop new original products.

Tell us more about the new initiatives for cooperation of Rai Fiction with independent producers?

We are always looking at international co-productions in order to bolster budgets. We already have a new generation of bilingual Italian actors which allows us

to shoot in English and Italian. Also, the recent introduction of tax incentives that offer Italian prodcos a 20% rebate and foreign firms a 25% tax credit is an incentive to produce internationally.

You have also made your commissioning policy more transparent by offering producers to submit projects online and receive your response within 90 days. Did this measure lead to bigger and better cooperation with independent prodcos?

In 2014 we introduced a more transparent policy offering producers the possibility to submit projects with the guarantee of a quick response within 90 days. We really want to ensure a rapid feedback. This measure will provide efficiency and transparency to an old system in which projects were neglected for a long time. We seriously think that this is a commitment that we have made to improve our work and get fast answers to Italian producers.

What will be the key drama titles for Rai 1 in 2015?

We have already successfully broadcast *Braccialetti Rossi* (2nd season), the Italian adaptation of Spanish drama *Polseres Vermelles* with more than 6 million viewers. It is already in production for the summer with season 3. Lux Vide drama *Un passo dal Cielo* (3rd season) with more than 7.6 million viewers. In March we premiered the

12-part series of *La Dama Velata* (The Lady with the Black Veil) and *Una Grande Famiglia* (3rd season). In spring we launch *La Catturandi* (6x100'), *Baciato dal Sole* (6x100') and *Grand Hotel*, a local adaptation of the Spanish series produced by Cattleya.

In fall we will also launch a second season of the cop drama *Il Giovane Montalbano* (The Young Montalbano), the successful spin-off of series *Inspector Montalbano* based on Camilleri's books featuring the Sicilian detective Salvo Montalbano (broadcast also by BBC in the UK). Also returning will be *Provaci Ancora Prof* (6th season).

What will be the key non-scripted titles?

In daytime programming we confirmed our icon Antonella Clerici with her proven cooking show *La Prova del Cuoco* based on the BBC format *Ready, Steady, Cook* on air since 2000; a new edition of our court show with *Torto o Ragione? Verdetto Finale* with the introduction of the lie detector test. Our daily quiz show *L'Eredità (El Legado)* and proven successful game show *Affari Tuoi (Deal or no Deal)* will continue airing in access primetime. Regarding this slot, I just want to underline that in this slot from 8.40 to 9.15 pm we are the absolute leader.

Returning to the primetime slot will be talent show *I Can Do That!* (2nd season). In May we will launch a new original emertainment show produced by Ambra/Banjay with Antonella Clerici, entitled

“
We will not stop launching new shows despite the big risks of a flop.”

Senza Parole (Without Words). Coming back this Spring is *Così Lontani Così Vicini* (3rd season), the local adaptation of *Find My Family*; this will be the first time we have a show without a studio and for us this is really big news.

Returning in September (Saturday night slot) will be *Ballandi Multimedia* kids talent show *Ti Lascio Una Canzone* (8th season), also returning on Friday night will be *Tale e Quale Show* (4th season) based on Endemol format *Your Face Sounds Familiar*. We also love big events such as Benigni's *Ten Commandments* shown last December. The two part live special about *The Bible* recorded a record breaking audience of almost 10 million viewers with

an average share of 35.85%. Also, the Pope made a private call to congratulate the Italian actor. I think that big events make scheduling shine.

You had huge success with Sanremo this year and a number of proven fiction hits but your weekend entertainment programming is losing to Canale 5. How do you plan to take back your leadership on Friday and Saturday nights?

Last February the 65th edition of our world renowned singing show *Sanremo Music Festival* was the most watched program with almost 11 million viewers and an audience share of 48.36%. This year the show recorded the highest audience in the past ten years. I think it's impossible to find a show that can achieve these figures for five days in a row, from Tuesday to Saturday.

It's impossible to keep a lead forever. It's true that we had some problems with the Friday and Saturday night slots, but only because we are trying out new productions and we are taking some risks. In the past it was common to broadcast a pilot or a new series in June or July out of our "guaranteed time" (a term used for the high season in Italy), now for economic reasons we need to try new formats in other periods as well.

For this reason, we wanted to present a pure genre of talent show such as *Forte*

Forte Forte. The show had a very high production quality value but didn't reach the figures we wanted and we had to cancel some episodes, reducing it from 10 to 8. That was an experiment, but we believe that it's important to experiment with new shows and new original ideas. We have different primetime shows with a proven track record of success so we are able to try new programs. We will not stop launching new shows despite the big risks of a flop.

You also decided to sell Rai Way, while Sky is reportedly planning an offensive on the FTA market. Are you concerned over increasing competition on the DTT market? Are you planning to launch new thematic channels?

The recent news about El Towers's offer to rival Rai Way set up a lively debate in Italy and abroad. This means that Rai has value. I only see positive impacts in this bid because it creates an internal movement with important effects on the business.

I don't think that Sky is a competitor on the FTA market as we are the leader in producing big events, big variety shows and they are not able to reach our figures in terms of audience share. I think we are not competitors, rather we complement each other with our own strengths.

We already have 14 channels and we would like to amplify and specialize them further. ■



Albert Einstein once said that space contracts and time dilates. How does that all affect the thinking and creativity of **Tom Forman**, one of the creators of modern reality television and CEO of Relativity Television? **Iliyan Stoychev** is the observer of “the science of things” in this TVBIZZ spacetime.

Forman feels terrific, bright future ahead

Mr. Forman, you have been the CEO of Relativity Television for 7 years now. How has the company evolved over this period?

The better question is how haven't we evolved. Seven years ago we were, literally, four executives in a shared office creating a reality television development slate. Today there are more than 2,000 people working for Relativity Television, across 44 series for 27 networks. We're producing for broadcast, cable, and the internet. We've created and sold not just reality series, but comedies and dramas. Having said all that, we still function like a very small company in some critically important ways. We're flexible and aggressive and not particularly beholden to tradition. When you've only been around 7 years, you don't do anything the way it's always been done. Every day brings change.

You have been actively expanding your international presence. Tell us more about your plans. Which markets do you consider most attractive?

In 2014 we opened offices in Europe, transitioned a longtime EVP of Development into a purely international role, and committed ourselves to thinking way beyond our own territory. In addition to distributing our produced series around the world, we're moving quickly to become both a buyer and seller of groundbreaking formats in the UK, Europe, Asia and Latin America.

On the buy side, we're establishing alliances with likeminded production companies, partnering to bring both their produced series and paper formats to the USA. On the sell side, we're actively pitching and producing with partners from London to Beijing.

What is your opinion about the growing demand for VOD, OTT and streaming video services? Will traditional TV survive? If yes, what would save it?

I think television in 2015 is a lot like music in 2000. Our viewers expect to watch what they want, when they want it, on the device of

their choice. And if we don't offer them that choice, frankly, they're just going to go elsewhere (or as the music industry learned, steal everything). We can either create models to meet viewer demand, or — like the music industry in 2000 — we can cover our eyes and plug our ears and watch the whole thing implode around us. Remains to be seen which way we'll go.

All that said, for content creators like me, the future looks pretty bright. People are consuming more content than in any time in history, so it's a great time to be somebody who actually makes stuff. I'd be nervous right now if I owned the copper wire running into your home or the satellite dish on your roof. Those are tricky businesses in the 21st century. The same is true for cable and broadcast channels that once had a monopoly on content delivery. Tough times for those guys. But for those of us who make things people want to watch? It's a terrific time to be a content creator.



Kitchen Inferno is a big hit on Food Network

TOM FORMAN

Tom Forman has served as Chief Executive Officer of Relativity Television since its launch in 2008. He received NATPE's 2011 Innovator Award for the company's series *Coming Home*. Before joining Relativity, Forman ran Tom Forman Productions, an independent television production company within CBS Television Studios. Forman previously worked with international television producer Endemol. During this time, Forman created and produced the hit ABC show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. He won two Emmy Awards® and two People's Choice awards for the show.

RELATIVITY TELEVISION

Relativity Television, led by CEO Tom Forman, is one of the largest suppliers of television programming in the United States. Since its inception in 2008, Relativity Television has produced more than 750 hours of programming for more than 40 networks, including NBC, MTV, Showtime, A&E, Discovery Channel, Food Network and Disney Channel. In 2013, Relativity Television produced 36 series including *Catfish: The TV Show* (MTV), *The Great Food Truck Race* (Food Network) and *The American Bible Challenge* (GSN).

BUSINESS CARD



Young & Hungry



Kim of Queens



Catfish, produced for MTV, has been adapted in numerous territories including UK and Latin America

can happen. We're producing without a script and that's like working without a net. There's nothing more fun.

Can reality still push boundaries and surprise when people are fed with so many personal snapshots and stories about other people's lives every day online?

Social media has certainly raised the bar. There was a time, just a few years ago, when you could turn a camera on "7 strangers picked to live in a house and have their lives taped" and immediately have a hit reality franchise like *The Real World*. Now you can go online and follow millions of strangers. So we have to up our game and tell better stories. For the record, that doesn't mean louder stories or crazier stories or sexier stories. It means using our skills as producers to make real life more entertaining, more mysterious, more exciting than Twitter or Instagram or Tumblr. We have to take the same raw material and turn it into something bigger and better. I think we're pretty good at that.

How do you know if there is potential in an idea? How much of this process is experience and how much is gut feeling, or is it something else?

I typically evaluate an idea according to three criteria. And I'm sort of proud of the first two, and slightly depressed by the third. First, I ask if an idea is fresh. I'm slightly allergic to pitching or producing derivative shows, so I'm always drawn to truly original ideas. And I think viewers are, too. Second, I decide if I would watch it. Honestly, life is too short to

make shows you don't like. So I try to decide if I can get excited about a project not just as a producer, but as a viewer. Last — and this is the one that's sort of embarrassing — I ask myself if we can sell it. I wish that wasn't the case, but it's ultimately a business. We know what buyers are looking for, and what they're not. We gather marketplace intel and talk to programmers and commissioners every single day. I've gotten pretty mercenary about show ideas, including my own. If we don't think we can sell it, I'll typically let it go. Sad but true.

What are the advantages or disadvantages of producing an original idea versus producing an adaptation of an acquired format?

Original ideas are always big swings, the hardest to sell but the most lucrative in the end. To sell a fresh concept, you've got to devote time and effort to development, invest money in pitch materials. And then you've got to convince a network to take a chance on an unproven idea. The stars really need to align to get an original format off the ground, especially in a territory like the US. But when you pull it off, you own something that can be sold around the world. Plus, there's the satisfaction of actually having created something from scratch. There's no other feeling like watching your original creation come to life.

Produced formats come with a production roadmap for nervous execs, and ratings history for risk-averse buyers. Compared to shopping a truly original idea, going out with a hit format (and the accompanying press clip-

You are one of the big names in reality TV. What do you love most about unscripted projects?

Three things, really. First, I love the speed at which an unscripted idea can become a hit series. Reality TV is really the only corner of the entertainment industry where you can have an idea on Monday, sell it Tuesday, and be in production by Friday. Not to mention airing just a few weeks later. Second, I feel like we're still making up the model as we go along — and that's incredibly exciting. There's no pilot season, no standard deal, no rules. I feel like a pirate and love it. Third, well, anything

“
We're flexible and aggressive and not particularly beholden to tradition.
 ”

pings, bible, numbers, and snazzy sizzle reel) is a piece of cake. Less profitable and less fun, for sure. But certainly low hanging fruit that's worth picking.

Which are your most favorite TV shows?

Right now on the unscripted front, I watch the first episode of absolutely everything just to keep up with trends. But for fun? I try not to miss *Bourdain*, *Shark Tank*, or *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*. Three very different shows, I know. On the scripted side, *The Walking Dead*, *Blacklist*, *Episodes*. Even more different, I know. What can I say, I've got weird taste. ■

Now Streaming: The Battle for the Nordics

by Georgi R. Chakarov



Paradise Hotel is MTG's biggest web hit; it gets 30% of its total audience online in Norway



After getting over a million views online Swedish DJ duo Fiona & Rebecca enjoyed a sold tour in Sweden



Ruutu's campaign for their first ever web series Napamiehet (Napa Men)



Rita is the first series which Netflix co-produced in Denmark

Small markets, huge competition and constant demand for the best quality. Those are just a few of the key market characteristics of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, also known as the Nordic region.

I

If you are looking for global trends, this is where things happen faster than in anywhere else in Europe. Here, you can make it big overnight but also quickly disappear from the scene.

People from the Nordics readily embrace the latest technologies, gadgets, fashion and lifestyle trends. These four countries counting just over 26 million people are among the world's leaders in terms of digital advancement and purchasing power index. This is what makes leadership in the Nordics a key to success in any other market in the world.

Netflix probably had the same notions when they launched their services in the region in October 2012, just months after they started operating in the UK. The market conditions were perfect: great IT infrastructure, cheap broadband connections, and lack of any serious competition in the OTT sector. In less than two years Netflix became the undisputed SVOD leader. In Denmark its penetration in 2014 reached 25% of the households; In Finland it counted 400,000 subscribers in the third quarter of last year; in Norway it reached 30% of the households (highest on any Netflix market) and close to 1.6 million users in Sweden (over 60% of the total number of SVOD users in the country).

Netflix became a 'household property' in the Nordics in no time but is now facing the challenge of keeping its status as the market has been evolving extremely fast and the users have developed taste for more putting the streaming giant under pressure.

This February a YouGov report showed that nearly 4 out of 10 Netflix users in Denmark are ready to drop the service due to lack of new content. For comparison, the Danish service offers 1,700 titles and the American one - 7,500. In Norway, the

growth rate also remained flat for the past two quarters. Similar news was reported in Sweden in August last year. As a result, HBO Nordic became the fastest growing SVOD service there, marking a shift in subscriber preferences.

Having said that, HBO Nordic (which is basically the prototype of recently announced HBO Now) was launched in the Nordic region just a few months after Netflix and had a much slower start due to higher subscription fees and binding long-term contracts. It took them about two years to figure out the model and move exclusive HBO content to the service after ending contracts with local broadcasters. As a result, HBO Nordic grew more than three times last year in Sweden to reach 198,000 users, according to MMS. In Norway, it had 7% share on the SVOD market, versus Netflix's 36%. In Denmark it also managed to double its share reaching 4-5% at the end of 2014.

Meanwhile, MTG's Viaplay has also been evolving fast in the last couple of years: thanks to deals with Disney and Nickelodeon the viewership of kids content grew five times last year. Overall, in Sweden it grew 45% in 2014 to 931,000 users, according to MMS. In Norway, Viaplay competes with TV 2 Sumo for the second position on the market, and in Denmark it ranked second with 5-6% share.

The streaming effect has been felt on the traditional TV market as well. Denmark was the record holder with 17% of the total viewing time (173 minutes) going to streaming. Danes spent an average of 15 minutes per day watching Netflix in 2014, according to DR. Web watching in Norway reached 21 minutes (174 minutes for traditional TV). In Finland the number of video starts increased to 41 million per month (27 million in 2013) and in Sweden the number grew by a million to reach 50 million web streams per month.

This is what drives the leaders on the linear TV market to strengthen their offers for online, VOD and SVOD viewing, as well. Looking at the general web TV market, the Nordic broadcasters have the leading edge in Finland, Norway and Sweden, while DR in Denmark is competing for the second position with Viaplay and TV 2 Play (TV 2 is also considered a public broadcaster, btw).

Finland's Yle was first to launch a dedicated online service called Yle Arena. It got more than 25 million video starts per month in 2014 easily beating similar free services like Katsomo (MTV Media, about 10 million) and Ruutu (Nelonen Media, 9 million).

SVT launched SVT Flow at the start of 2014 with a dedicated effort to produce exclusive web content. Last year the Swedish pubcaster got nearly 92 million hours of streamed content. It was followed by TV4 with 33.4 million (21.4 million in 2013) and MTC TV - 26.5 million (13.4 million in 2013). Even if we add the third major commercial broadcaster to this equation, their combined numbers would still not be able to beat SVT's results. That's how strong the public web TV service is!

In Norway, NRK is just behind VGTV in terms of total reach: 240.000 vs. 170.000 web TV viewers, TV 2 ranks fourth with 135.000. NRK leads in terms of viewing time with an average of 36 minutes per day, followed by TV 2 with 22 minutes.

We could continue with the stats for a few more pages and this only goes to show how complex and competitive is the Nordic web TV market and how hard it is for the players to keep their viewers. Only in the last two months, several new services were announced - most notably Bonnier's effort to merge the platforms of TV4 Group and C More into one, which will create a new giant on the market in 2015.

The ring is open and anyone can jump in the fight for online and SVOD viewers with a very peculiar taste: from slow-TV to US sitcoms, from sports and MMA fights to high-quality documentaries; and from trash reality to high-end drama and crime. There is a niche for just about anything. For example, Nordisk Film recently launched an SVOD service with classic Danish films targeting elder viewers who are also very active streaming viewers.

But who can win this fight? Many experts would point to Twitter. After all latest research has shown that active Twitter users are much more active in watching both live and on-demand TV content. However, the Nordic viewers are one big exception in this case. Daily Twitter usage in the four countries is about 4-5% and the total reach is not higher than 15%. It turns out Netflix has higher penetration and influence in the region.

In any case, a big bag of money will be needed to win the streaming battle for the Nordics. Since the arrival of Netflix content rights in the region have doubled in value! And viewers are demanding more local content to add to their US favorites!

So, the ultimate question is not who will win but who will have enough cash to endure these merciless markets? ■

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Pinto makes his next big move at MIPTV

Izzet Pinto, CEO of Global Agency, is one of the most remarkable top executives in the industry. He is not just the head of the company but also its face. Last year the Istanbul-based company became the leading independent distributor and intends to keep this title, as Pinto tells **Yako Molhov**.

Mr. Pinto, what does Global Agency have up its sleeve for MIPTV 2015?

Our MIPTV slate includes a strong line-up of fantastic and original new programs in genres that continue to inspire audiences. There are 10 new formats and 2 re-launches; some of the best titles are *Stairway To Fame*, *It's Showtime*, *The Big Steal*, *Joker* and *The Remix*. In terms of series, we are quite sure about the success of *Maral*, *My Destiny* and *Never Let Go* as the new hit dramas.

What are the latest deals for Global Agency?

Broken Pieces and *A Part Of Me* are selling very well as drama series. In terms of formats, *Shopping Monsters*, *Blind Taste* and *Keep Your Light Shining* have been the best sellers ever. We have really big hopes for our new line-up.

You have just made it big in Latin America. What are the next potential markets

for expansion?

Our next target is Asia and Europe. With over 3,000 hours of Turkish dramas and successful formats in almost 100 countries in primetime, we became the "Leading Independent Distributor". We'd like to keep this title as Global Agency.

Why do you think there has not been a new hit global format in the last year?

Almost every idea has been tried; so most of the new ones are just twist added shows of the existing formats. There needs to be really "original" and "unique" ones which have never been tried before, like our new hit *Stairway To Fame*. It will be the next global hit show, I can bet on it!

This year Reed MIDEM pay special tribute to Turkey as Country of Honor. How much has Turkish drama evolved ever since its boom?

I really like creating formats and watching them on TV.

STAIRWAY TO FAME



The boom started 7 years ago and every year, it got bigger and bigger. The evolution of Turkish drama proves its unquestionable success. So Turkey has been selected as the Country of Honor at MIPCOM 2015.

What is the current value of Turkish drama exports? Can you make a forecast for the coming years?

Last year, it was 180 million dollars and we are expecting 200-230 million dollars for the coming years.

People mainly recognize Turkey as an exporter of fiction content but you also have strong non-scripted brands. When should we expect a global hit in this genre?

Definitely this year! *Stairway To Fame* will be the one show that everybody talks about. But we shouldn't forget *Shopping Monsters*

and *Keep Your Light Shining* which have been very successful worldwide.

The Turkish TV market is evolving fast with literally 8 channels fighting for first spot every single night. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these market conditions for content producers?

I don't see many advantages with this very tough competition. Due to this tight market, many series have been cancelled almost every week and this is damaging the industry.

You like to create formats on you own. How do you come up with the ideas?

Sometimes I get influenced by a music video or get inspired by real life stories. And this has become one of my biggest hobbies, I really like creating formats and watching them on TV. ■



Sex Every Day in Belgium



First Lesbian kiss on Korean TV



Sex Box on WE tv



Block B on RTL



Playa Desnuda, Italian Survivor



Couples, Happy TV



Bacillakuten, SVT

50 Shades of Sex on Television

Shocking sex-themed moments from the small screen

by Georgi R. Chakarov

If you have missed out on the biggest event of the year so far – the release of the first film based on the 50 Shades of Grey trilogy – you must be a very rare bird! The movie's premiere overshadowed this year's Valentine's Day and President's Day weekend in the US breaking domestic and international records for pre-sales and box office. Year-to-date it is the highest grossing film in 2015 with close to \$559 million in revenues worldwide.

We all knew that sex sells but we had no idea how much! 50 Shades of Grey is a global "sex & violence" phenomenon – in the bookstore, in cinema theaters and in the convenience store across the street.

Let's see if Christian and Anastasia can sell you this story as well? Presenting a brand new 50 Shades experience – a live and uncensored recount of this year's most shocking sex-themed shows and moments on TV around the globe – with direct references and quotes from the blockbuster!

Anastasia feels curious and inquisitive about this new experience. She wants to learn and she wants Christian to teach her. "Enlighten me!" she says and her master starts zapping the channels. He doesn't want to waste time and addresses the issue directly with Dutch show *Sex Every Day*. Neverminding the title, this "social project" actually aims to show how people's lives would change if they were making out every day.

Shy Anastasia is not convinced by Christian's direct approach. An expert advice is more than welcome. It's time to talk seriously about what a girl really wants! A new weekly talkshow on HTV in Pakistan does just that, with a doctor explaining topics like sexuality,

fertility, and issues with husbands with multiple wives to local housewives. (Bet he never got a question on BDSM!) As Anastasia finds out many women in Pakistan don't even have a basic education, let alone a working knowledge of sex, like her.

Luckily Christian is around, with a whip! "I'm going to hit you six times and you're going to count with me." In the same style, just across the border, India's Comedy Central had to count six days to resume broadcasting after it was ordered off air over simulated sex scenes and "vulgar language" in two of its shows. According to the authorities, the scenes "depicted women as a commodity of sex" and posed a threat to "public morality or morals."

"Oh, baby. Welcome to my world," Christian exclaims, remembering how hard it is for him to keep the skeletons in the closet; all the contracts and stuff. But what other choice does he have but to show her the "playroom"? Anastasia is feeling playful already: "Like your Xbox and stuff?"

Well, she nearly gets it right missing the first two letters of WE tv's show *Sex Box* – a local version of the UK format where sex is made in a box in front of a live audience. Everything looks clean and tidy, with experts in the studio. Mom will also be watching, so it must be alright, or not... Moments later, having experienced the S&M reality of Christian's life, Anastasia ends up in hospital where a team of Discovery Channel's *Sex Sent Me to the Slammer* is making a showcase of her bruises.

While his lover recovers, Christian tries to entertain himself in the cooler with a new series from Germany – *Block B*, a local adaptation of Australian hit prison drama *Wentworth*. The

opening scene with hot oral sex in the woman's prison grabs his attention for a minute or two but soon, just like RTL's viewers, he loses interest. Lesbians are just not his thing!

Koreans would very much agree with him, as their TV was only recently scandalized by JTBC which aired an "unprecedented lesbian kiss" between two high-school students in the drama *Seonam Girls High School Investigators*. Homosexuality is not illegal in Korea, but carries a significant social stigma, with a handful of openly gay public figures. So far, a few dramas had experimented with gay characters, which led to the first kissing scene between two male actors in the drama *Kill Me, Heal Me* but that didn't cause that much worries in Korean society. Seeing two schoolgirls kiss outraged the Koreans, and complaints rained on the media regulator. Poor souls would feel better if they knew that in Brazil Globo tormented viewers with a lesbo smooch between two grannies in primetime. Bet they still have nightmares! Yikes!

In any case, Christian is not that much into kissing either, and is preparing to do his mojo on Anastasia again: "You have a beautiful body, Anastasia. I want you unashamed of your nakedness. Do you understand?" and just as he bares her back he sees himself as the host of the *Dr. Feridun Kunak Show* in Turkey who has just received a huge fine from the media watchdog over harming the privacy of a veiled woman by massaging her back live on air.

No more nightmares! Time for a clean break. Christian and Anastasia stroll down the "playa desnuda" in this year's edition of *Survivor* in Italy – the only beach in the show where man and woman turn into Adam and Eve,

just as naked but not as innocent! Romance is short-lived and our lovebirds have to face life as a couple among other celebrity pairs in what is probably Serbia's dirtiest reality show ever – *Couples*. 'Tits and ass' are a must in this production and sex in front of the camera is well-paid, the local press claims.

However, Christian feels he is far too cultured for the unbridled Serbs. He has more than enough money, anyway. So, the heli flies them to civilized Germany where ZDFneo is about to show the docu series *Sexchange - Im anderen Geschlecht* (*Sexchange - Being the other gender*.) The experiment will follow how two women and three men live for two weeks as members of the opposite gender. They will be accompanied by a gender studies professor who will check if they can experience the presumed differences between biological genders, society-shaped behavioral patterns and sexuality.

Christian is simply not ready for this. Is he supposed to act like Anastasia and let her beat him up, or what? Better skip these thoughts and do some trivia Q&A in the new Danish show *The Porn Quiz*. After all, it's easier to talk about other people's sexual habits. Anastasia is shocked to find out that 7 out of 10 Danes aged 20-40 watch porn and that Swedish publicist SVT had penises and vaginas dancing and singing in the animated show *Bacillakuten* in order to educate kids on the issues of sex.

Anastasia can't take any more of this! Exhausted and upset, she readily agrees to give up sex for a year to keep her internet access, just like 47% of the female respondents in a recent survey by Google Israel.

Will Christian ever touch Anastasia again? TBC. ■

'Tits and ass' are a must in *Couples* and sex in front of the camera is well-paid, the local press claims.



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TV moments that shook the world

X-Files 2.0

X-Files 2.0 are in the works as Fox announced that the cult show will be back as a limited series of 6 episodes next year. Mulder and Scully were last seen together on the big screen in 2008 film installment *The X-Files: I Want to Believe*.



India's Daughter

NDTV made a blatant protest over the government's ban on showing the BBC documentary about a 2012 Delhi bus gang rape on the grounds of "objectionable content" and instead broadcast a black screen. The documentary *India's Daughter* features an interview with Delhi gang rapist Mukesh Singh, one of five men convicted of brutally raping and murdering a 23-year-old Indian student on a bus in Delhi in December 2012.



Central news break

Dutch pubcaster NOS was forced to interrupt its central news after a man armed with a gun entered their studios and demanded to make an important statement to the people. NPO1 was forced to stop broadcasts for nearly 2 hours showing the sign Even geduld a.u.b. (One Moment Please) while cameras continued to shoot the hostage drama. Police came and arrested the 19-year old whose gun was fake.

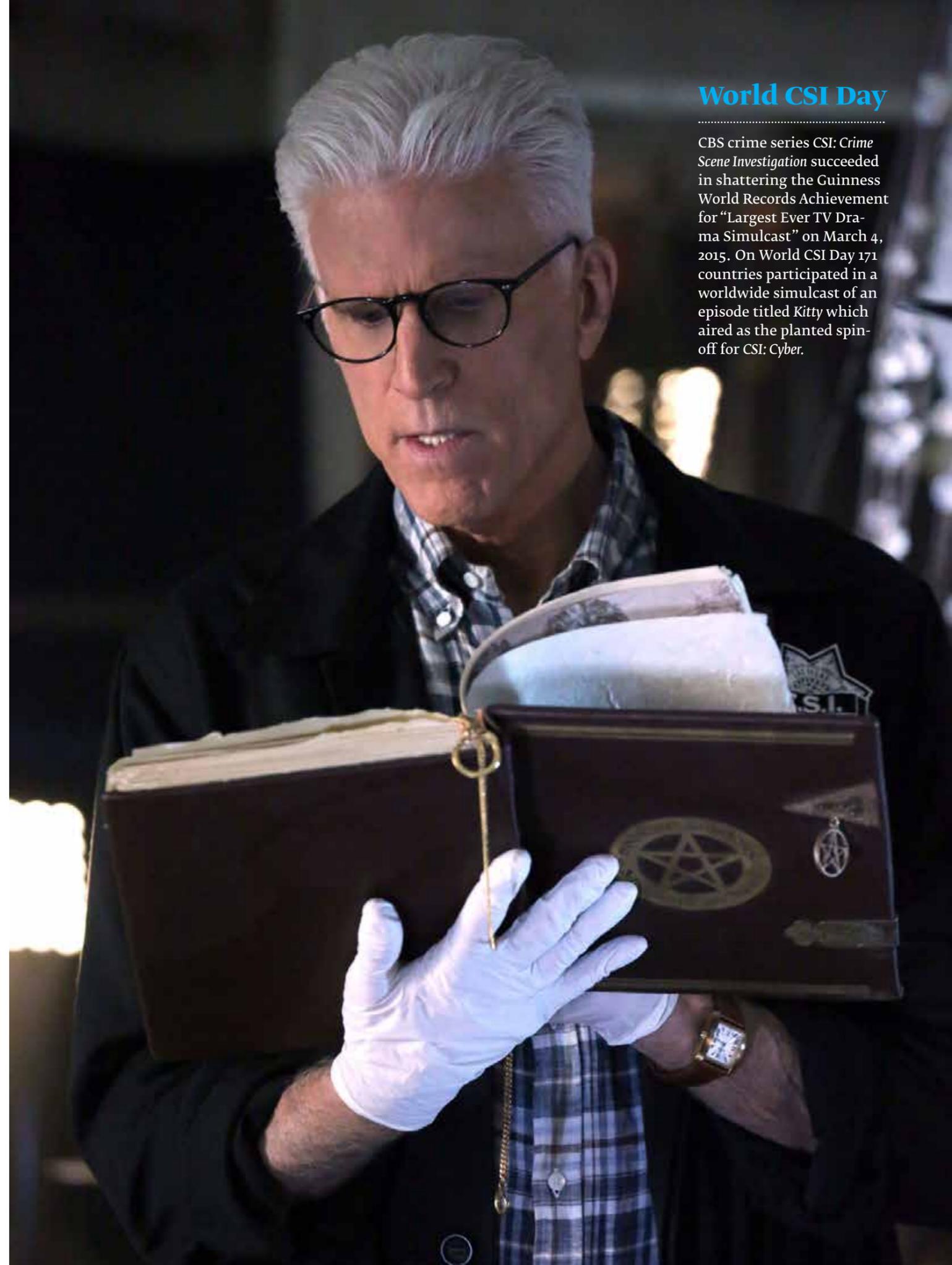


Babilonia boycott

MP and Pastor Marco Feliciano proposed Brazilians to boycott the sponsor of Globo telenovela *Babilonia* which “slaps the Brazilian family with a subliminal anti-Christian message”. Earlier, Catholic and Evangelic organizations boycotted the “vulgar” story penned by Gilberto Braga which featured a kiss between two elderly women in its opening episode.

World CSI Day

CBS crime series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* succeeded in shattering the Guinness World Records Achievement for “Largest Ever TV Drama Simulcast” on March 4, 2015. On World CSI Day 171 countries participated in a worldwide simulcast of an episode titled *Kitty* which aired as the planted spin-off for *CSI: Cyber*.





Clarkson fired

Hunger and anger don't mix well! Jeremy Clarkson was fired by the BBC after engaging in a "fracas" with one of the producers of *Top Gear* over food.



Reina Viña 2015

The Viña del Mar International Song Festival is considered the best and biggest music and entertainment event in Latin America. Traditionally it commences with the naming of the Queen (Reina) of the Festival. This year Jhendelyn Núñez became the symbol of the festival. For her live coronation on TV she wore nothing but crystals.



Eurovision winner quits

Andreas Kummert won Germany's song competition but refused to represent the country in the upcoming Eurovision Song Contest 2015 seconds after he was pronounced winner. Runner-up Ann Sophie will sing in Vienna next month.

Jon Stewart drops Daily Show

Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* is losing Jon Stewart. He announced live on air that he will not renew his contract after hosting the show for 16 years now. The shock was followed by the decision to give the job to controversial Trevor Noah.



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What's Cooking in Africa?

Interview with Russell Southwood

Russell Southwood is CEO of Balancing Act, a consultancy and research company, focusing on the internet and broadcasting business in Africa. In an interview with **Iliyan Stoychev**, Mr. Southwood talks about the current developments and challenges on the market, making some predictions about its future evolution.



RUSSELL SOUTHWOOD is the CEO of Balancing Act, a consultancy and research company focused on telecoms, Internet and broadcast in Africa. He has worked for a number of different media companies, broadcasters and production companies in a variety of feasibility, strategy and business development assignments.

Mr. Southwood, what is the big picture in Africa today? How would you describe the TV landscape in the region?

Enormous changes have taken place over the last ten years and in the leading countries there is a growing confidence and professionalism. One of the spurs to growth has been the relatively high level of mobile advertising in this period which has helped in terms of three things: bought advertising time on channels; sponsorship of programs; and for some mobile companies, a much closer involvement in both sponsoring and helping produce programs.

However, there remains a gap between the best and the worst. The very

best can hold their head up with their global peers but the very worst is truly very bad. There are in some countries TV stations that simply sell their programming slots and/or rely on pirated content. But hopefully over the next ten years, the number of these types of stations will continue to get smaller.

Africa is such a diverse continent with so many countries, languages, ethnicities and cultures. Are we talking about common trends and features in only North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa or should we separate in other groups of countries or regions in similarity?

There are several thousand languages in Africa but three main languages that

came from the colonial period: English, French and Portuguese. For the urban middle classes or elites, these last three languages are the dominant languages of television. But there are increasingly what are known as vernacular stations, both for TV and radio.

TV rights sales are very different in the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone areas. In value terms, the revenues from each of these three language groupings reflects the number of people speaking them.

To make generalisations about Africa is enormously difficult as it is a landmass much larger than Europe with over 50 countries. North Africa is treated as part of the Middle East region in terms of program rights so it is slightly to one side.

What are the key similarities and differences between the numerous African TV markets?

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the major TV markets tend to have two things in common: countries which have the highest GDP per capita and have liberalized their TV markets. These countries include South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana. Outside of these liberalized markets, you still have a significant number of African countries that have only one TV station, something that might be called "Mr. President TV."

On average only a third of households in Africa own a TV set. How fast can this percentage grow in the coming years? And how will digital affect that? With Africa's very young population is it possible for the Internet to become more appealing than TV soon?

TV ownership more or less follows the footprint of access to electricity. It looks like it will prove harder to provide battery powered TVs with external digital set-top boxes so this reinforces this trend. The roll-out of electricity is largely carried out by state utilities and these are slow-moving. That said, it is not hard to imagine that an average of 40-50% of all Sub-Saharan Africans households will have a TV in the next 5-10 years.

Africa has been very slow to tackle the digital transition in broadcasting. Only a handful of countries will meet the deadline they signed up to with the ITU of June this year and those not meeting the deadline include Nigeria and South Africa. However, it will happen and in some countries it has led to a greater focus on



The telenovela Jikulumessu recently became the first Angolan telenovela to air in Portuguese primetime

rolling out TV transmission coverage to larger numbers of people.

Countries in Africa have different levels of technological development – we see the full spectrum: analog, DVB-T, pay TV, DTH, IPTV, VoD. Which technology will be adopted the most in the next 5 years?

The choice of technology in Africa will not be an either/or because the key divide is wealth. A number of African countries are making some progress with rolling out Fiber-To-The-Home (with Kenya as a pioneer several years ago), motivated in part by a desire to deliver content bundles. The younger, slightly less wealthy African will use his or her mobile (or in some cases tablets) to watch film and TV content, particularly as 4G/LTE becomes more prevalent. YouTube is already one of the highest rated sites in the countries tracked by Alexa. At the bottom of the wealth gap, Africans watch TV in bars, sometimes being charged to watch things like films and football matches.

At the mass level, there may be a shift occurring between terrestrial and satellite transmission. African countries carrying out the digital transition have tended to assume that they needed to simply replicate or increase their terrestrial coverage. However, with some exceptions, Sub-Saharan Africa has a relatively low level of urbanization. Furthermore, the populations outside the cities are much less dense in the rural areas than say in India.

As a result, several countries are looking either at using as combination of terrestrial with satellite to provide "in-fill" coverage where terrestrial doesn't reach or to provide only satellite coverage which can reach all parts of the country.

In addition, there are an increasing number of satellite TV platforms from Eutelsat, Amos Spacecom and SES. Working with SES, Africable in Mali has just launched one covering Francophone Africa and Multi TV in Ghana has reached 1.7 million households with a similar satellite TV platform.

How is your research and consultancy company Balancing Act helping broadcast, internet and telecom businesses?

Balancing Act is a consultancy and research company focused on telecoms, Internet and broadcast in Africa. On the consultancy side, we have carried separate feasibility studies looking at an African news channel and a learning channel and done M&A work for a media company. On the research side, we have checked the actual advertising spend in one of the West African markets. We also publish reports, most recently on the progress of the digital transition in Africa and on Video On Demand Platforms in Africa.

We have free weekly and fortnightly e-letters that cover broadcasting in Africa (in French and English www.balancingact-africa.com) and one called Digital Content Africa and a web TV channel that provides 10-15 video clip interviews,

often with TV and film people in Africa (www.smartmonkeytv.com).

Do you expect any major changes in the media industry in Africa in 2015? I think there are three particular trends worth watching:

The transition to digital broadcasting will introduce significant changes to the way television is programmed as it has done elsewhere. There will be a shift from time-based programming based around news and primetime to theme-based channels like sports, film and news.

In addition, as bandwidth increasingly improves in Africa's cities, you will also see current impact of social media and streaming grow more significant. There are already over 100 Video On Demand channels that have been launched. iTunes has a presence in South Africa. Obviously, this number of platforms will not succeed but they have come about because there is a moment where it is technically fairly easy to launch and those doing so often have access to local content. VoD platforms to watch for are iROKO, Buni TV, Wabona and Reel Africa.

Regional and international companies are increasingly buying into African TV stations or opening new stations on the continent. MTC opened free to air Viasat and has opened in Tanzania. It also bought music and sports TV channel Trace TV which is now based in Johannesburg. South African companies have bought into stations in Namibia, Ghana and Kenya.

Let's talk about local content. We all know the power of Nollywood (Nigerian cinema) but what are the trends in local TV production, how is it evolving? Is local content or acquired content dominant in the region in prime-time?

In terms of local content production, Nigeria is the largest single producer of low-budget films, many of which are like one-off telenovelas. Known as Nollywood, it can be found in every country in Africa and obtained in pirated form on DVDs from street sellers or local markets. Its stars and stories also are known throughout the continent and it is almost certainly the most popular local content.

Other countries that produce significant amounts of local content are Kenya and Ghana, the latter also having a reputation for content that travels well. The



South Africa's Ultimate Braai Master is distributed internationally by All3Media Internal

“**An average of 40-50% of all Sub-Saharan Africans households will have a TV in the next 5-10 years.**”

Francophone countries have a long tradition of receiving French cultural support but although they produce very professional films, they tend not to be seen widely outside of film festivals and Pay TV channels.

All of the Sub-Saharan African TV markets buy both African content from other countries and international content. As elsewhere in the world, local content is more popular but few TV stations have the budgets to commission it.

Nigeria and South Africa stand out as the two largest TV markets. Nigeria has the highest population on the continent and there are regional TV markets within the country. South Africa is a much wealthier country and has a large, publicly funded broadcaster, the SABC.

How would you rate the chances of original African content to be sold outside the continent?

There are occasionally successful films that play relatively well internationally like *Jerusalema* but the most recent successful TV program has been Wananchi's *Tales from the Bush Larder* – a cooking

program – which has gone into co-production with Fox and is now in its second season. As the African TV industry professionalizes, these isolated examples will turn into a steady trickle.

What role does television play in African societies today?

Television in Sub-Saharan Africa plays a very similar role to elsewhere in the world. At its very best, it acts as a mirror for people to see themselves and entertains them. Every football fan believes that they are the most passionate about their side but it is a very African experience to hear the roar of football fans watching publicly accessible TVs during a Premier League match.

At a more profound level, one African TV executive told me that he was convinced TV is a developmental force – as more than radio – it makes visually real very different aspirations. Along with mobile advertising, TV has often carried a very different narrative about what Africa might become. Also it sounds banal to say it but because it has pictures, it has a greater capacity to show and explain things.

Sadly, in those countries that still have only a state TV station its news coverage offers a continuous stream of Government Minister's speeches and openings of events. In some of those countries, it has also returned to being the place where the military announce that they have taken power, although in most countries where this happens, it has been transitional.

Most people in the Sub-Saharan African TV industry believe that the greater diversity of information bought about by a combination of democracy (however contested it is), TV, radio and the Internet, will mean that Africa has a greater chance of flourishing in the next ten years. ■



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Did Frank Underwood order Netflix to enter Cuba?

Iliyan Stoychev tries to find the reason and logics behind Netflix's recent launch in Cuba. His investigation leads to some shocking clues.

On January 15th this year the US announced it will ease sanctions against Cuba. A truly historical moment as it seems this might be the beginning of a new diplomatic and economic relationship between the two nations since the embargo was introduced back in 1960. Three weeks later, on February 9, Netflix announced the launch of its streaming service in Cuba.

Could the news get any better? Well, the devil is in the details, they say. There is an obvious problem here. What are the three vital prerequisites to be a subscriber to Netflix? Compatible device, proper internet connection for streaming and a credit card to pay for your monthly subscription.

Yes, Cubans are allowed to buy electronic equipment for several years now. So let's just say we have prerequisite number 1 covered.

But what about the other two? If you live in Cuba currently there is no legal way to open a Netflix account and subscribe to the streaming video service. Well, actually there is – if you are an expat living in Cuba with a foreign bank account and credit card. Major credit card companies are yet to consider operations in the country. But ok, let's say you are a hot sexy Cuban who succeeds to hook up in a rum bar with an expat living in the country and for your first non-significant anniversary as a couple he or she gifts you with a Netflix account bought with



"Cubans. Smuggled in. I thought you might appreciate the irony." —Frank Underwood, *House of Cards*, Season 3, Episode 3

an international credit card. I would say lucky you and good job hooking up with the most romantic person in the world who can really make a great present.

Still, Cuba has a very slow internet – the most popular internet access analysis website Speedtest.net by OOKLA rated it 193 out of 198 countries with an average download speed of 1.86 Mbps. In order to understand how (not) fast that is: 1.5 Mbps is about 25 times faster than dial-up internet speed. Do you remember what dial-up internet is? Here is a hint: that was what the internet was like when you had only a Hotmail account and Netflix was in the business with DVDs. With such an average speed smuggling will be much easier than streaming video. But there is hope! In mid-March Cuban artist Kcho announced that he was allowed to create the country's first public Wi-Fi hotspot in his center. Its available bandwidth? 2 Mbps. Still, this is a good start and kudos to Kcho.

Last but not least, Netflix's monthly subscription fee is almost one third of the average salary in Cuba. According to latest data, the average monthly pay in Cuba is 20 bucks. Ok, there is no country in the world where Netflix is available and all its population is subscribed to it, but after all this the question remains – Why did Netflix launch in Cuba?

It all leads to one logical answer. It was the deeds of Frank Underwood (the US president played by Kevin Spacey in Netflix's acclaimed original series *House of Cards*) [attention, spoilers ahead if you have not watched season 3]. Mischievous that he is, the idea for entering Cuba was his as Commander in Chief. Probably he was really pissed that his always supporting wife and partner in crime Claire

Underwood (played by Robin Wright) said she will leave him in the end of season 3 right before he was about to make his speech as Democratic Nominee. Who knows, maybe Netflix executives are too afraid to say NO to the powerful monster their own Frank Underwood is.

Ok, there are other possible answers to the question: Netflix did this as a strategic PR move to strengthen the message about its goal of international expansion and dominance; they have some political insight and agenda about Cuba and ex-

pect there will be business there very very soon for them and other American companies; it was a simple mistake – they wanted to enter China instead, not Cuba; or it was just the easiest thing to do – to step into the closest neighbor market to the HQ. If the latter is true, maybe we can expect the next expansion to include The Bahamas, The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Haiti, and Puerto Rico. To hell with Australia and New Zealand, now that it is clear that Netflix will not commission local content there.

I guess it is not very easy to be Netflix – the French were afraid it will 'erode the French cultural exception' through American propaganda; the Aussies insist on having local content produced as if this is a quid pro quo deal; and in general you have to spend big money on producing enough own content so that you don't have to pay endlessly for royalties for popular content that people want to watch and it is not yours.

I guess it is really not that easy. Well, unless you are one hot Cuban. ■

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Oscar nominated actors Terrence Howard and Taraji P. Henson are Empire's major weapons.

Empire: the hip-hop saga that changed TV

by Yako Molhov

Every once in a while US television produces hits that turn into phenomena. *Empire*, the break-out hit of 2015, managed to grow its viewership for ten consecutive weeks – something unheard of – and ended its debut season as the top series demowise on the Big 4 networks and just behind AMC's *The Walking Dead* on all of US television.

Notably, *Empire* is one of the few predominantly African-American cast dramas that turned into a huge hit. Yes, there are the so-called "Black Sitcoms" but no "Black Dramas" that topped the charts in recent years. It's true that on-screen diversity has become popular and two of this season's new hits have diverse casts, like *How to Get Away with Murder* and *Black-ish*. *Empire*, however, focuses on almost entirely African-American cast. It's not a surprise that the show clicked with Black audiences. Nielsen data indicates that the Fox hit was more popular with black viewers than *Super Bowl* while African-Americans make up 62% of its primary audience.

But *Empire* did not just draw African-American viewers, it was the No.1 new series and broadcast drama among Adults 18-49, Adults 18-34 and Adults 25-54 this season.

No one expected the success of the series to be so

huge but what are the key ingredients for these ratings and critical acclaim success story, alongside tackling race, homophobia, ALS?

Empire managed to claim a genre niche no one seems to have thought of – music soap opera. Probably most program executives would have frowned to such a pitch a year ago. Even today this term sounds like something from the 90s. But *Empire* turned out to be a very convincing mixture of a soap opera drama and an extended hip-hop video. It has all the important elements of a hip hop music video – music, bling-bling, girls, rides, rich life, night clubs. All this is intertwined with the best elements from a soap opera – family drama, secrets, power struggles and revenge. The key, however, is that everything in *Empire* happens fast – nothing takes too long, there are no extensive dramatic scenes in which characters exchange stares, no long pauses, no repetitions, i.e. all the pillars of the classic soap opera with a thousand episodes. And the music in it is just the right amount without turning the show into a musical. In fact, a 42-minute long *Empire* episode is so action packed that it can easily be cut into numerous short webisodes and put online without damaging the show and the viewers' experience.

Empire has a solid storyline and great and believable characters played by great actors and performers. The show's cast boasts Oscar nominated actors Terrence Howard and Taraji P. Henson and features celebrity guest stars like Courtney Love, Naomi Campbell, Gabourey Sidibe, cameos from the likes of Mary J Blige, Jennifer Hudson, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Snoop Dogg, Patti LaBelle and new stars with now a bright future thanks to their great performances in the series: Jussie Smollett, Yazz and Trai Byers. It was no surprise that the show's soundtrack debuted at No.1 on the Billboard 200 charts, outperforming Madonna's new album.

Accolades for the amazing success of the series go to the creative team behind it as well. *Empire* is created and produced by Oscar nominated director Lee Daniels (*Precious*, *The Butler*, producer *Monster's Ball*) and co-created by Danny Strong (*The Butler*, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1* and *Part 2*), with star producer Timbaland overseeing the music part of this musical drama. Also, The Wall-street Journal came to the conclusion that *Empire* turned to be the bittersweet success of departed Fox executive Kevin Reilly who used to be Fox's network chief and who ordered the series but moved to Turner Broadcasting. "We had nothing to lose," Mr. Reilly said of the big bet

he placed on a soap opera about a family-run record label featuring a predominantly African-American cast. Mr. Reilly described *Empire* as "glamour and glitz and Suge Knight" for WSJ. A series that was pitched the week after Daniels' and Strong's *The Butler* was the No. 1 movie in the country. And as Strong notes: "people just felt open to something that felt new and original." "There's nothing out there like this, and it came out at the perfect time" – those are Timbaland's words when replying to Vanity Fair's question how he got involved in the show.

The series has also interested foreign broadcasters, following its huge ratings success. Fox International's TV chief Marion Edwards commented for The Hollywood Reporter that three broadcasters in the UK were interested in the series. Before its premiere, none of the UK broadcasters showed interest for the show.

Empire's conquest of viewers is already a fact and it's not surprising the series has already been renewed for a second season. Now Fox has a new, very difficult task ahead – how to handle its hip-hop soap opera in season 2 and will the show's tremendous success in the ratings continue. Will people be still that excited about *Empire* a year from now? Because, as we know from history, empires rise but empires also fall... ■

Empire managed to claim a genre niche no one seems to have thought of – music soap opera.



Q1'S HOTTEST

These are the most trending news stories on the TVBIZZ platform from January until March.

January



New entertainment formats on ZDF

ZDF announced the start of two new entertainment formats on Saturday night in the spring.

Das Spiel beginnt! - *Die große Show von 3-99* (Game On - the Great 3-99 show) will launch on March 7. In the three-hour long show a team of celebrities will play different types of games - sport, tactical, luck draw, mind games - against a team of children. For the premiere host Johannes B. Kerner will be joined by a special guest host. *One in a Thousand*, co-developed with BBC Worldwide, will also launch in the spring. Thousand players play mind and physical games in ten knock-out rounds.



New sales executive at Armoza Formats

Armoza Formats has recruited Yael Shaoulian as Sales Executive, placing her in a newly created role where she will be heading up all deals for the UK, Ireland, France, the Netherlands and Belgium. This move comes as Armoza continues to expand following strong growth over the last few years, and points to the company's planned increase in focus on more territories. Yael joins the Armoza Formats Sales team from TVF International, where she worked as Acquisitions Executive for the US, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa.



MTG TV cuts staff

Resume reports that MTG TV Sweden is about to start cutting staff as part of a new restructuring process. MD Anders Jensen said that it is still unclear how many jobs will be cut and details will be announced later this week. According to Dagens Media, the cuts may affect 40 of the 140 employees of the broadcaster. Last week, the company was left by marketing chief Stephanie Smitt Lindberg and press director Max Lagerbäck, replaced by Susanne Nylén.

February



Finnish producer accuses DR3 of stealing his idea for naked format

The Finnish producer Petri Luukkainen has accused DR3 and Metronome Denmark of stealing his concept for a naked reality show for the production of the channel's program *Klædt af* (Undressed). Luukkainen claimed he developed a concept for a documentary film which was turned down by DR Denmark in 2011 and was released with other funding during the CPH:DOX Festival in November 2013. The producer said that DR3's show is an exact copy of his concept which he presented to DR's Kim Christiansen in 2011.



SBS6 plans new music show

SBS6 has announced that Nick & Simon will cooperate with music and cabaret duo Jurkl on a new music project for the channel. *Lekker Nederlands heten* (Nice Dutch Hits) will see well-known hits re-written and performed by famous guest singers. It is still unclear when the show will premiere.



Backstrom is a big hit in Sweden

TV3 Sweden premiered the new US series *Backstrom* with excellent results. The Fox show based on the works of Swedish best-selling author GW Persson, premiered on Sunday night with 460,000 viewers. The channel posted 4.6 rating in the target demo 15-49 and 7.0 rating in the 30-59 demo in the 21.00 slot.

March



Shine France to revive a classic gameshow?

According to rtl.fr, Shine France will be working on the remake of the popular gameshow from 1982 *L'Academie des 9*. The show was aired until 1987 on Antenne 2.



Endemol Shine preps Cook Off show

Endemol Shine Iberia is working on a new format for RTP1. *Cook Off - Duelo de Sabores* (Cook Off - Duel of Tastes) will premiere in May, replacing *Cot Talent*. Season 1 will consist of 13 episodes and will see chefs Cordeiro and Kiko preparing dishes typical for each region of the country, with the goal to find the best national taste. The show will be hosted by Catarina Furtado.



FremantleMedia brings Extreme Love to Cannes

Extreme Love - a fresh new dating format being brought to MIPTV by FremantleMedia - challenges a group of modern-day Prince Charmings to prove their survival skills in order to win the hand of their princess. Created by Israel's Studio Glam, *Extreme Love* invites 10 would-be woo-ers from all walks of life to a remote but breathtaking location where they have to compete for the affections of a modern-day maiden and survive the forces of nature.

Programming



RTL4 boss laughed at De Mol over new format The Puppet Show

John de Mol announced that RTL4 chief Erland Galjaard laughed at him over new format *The Puppet Show*. De Mol said the channel exec had thought he was a part of a hidden camera show. The show creator himself is full of hope and believes that this could become the next big format for Talpa. The show airs on SBS6.



Telefe preps new talent reality

The Argentinean broadcaster Telefe is working on the local version talent reality show *Rising Star* (Elegidos). The new production is promising the audience a show never seen before, which is expected in March.



W9 to launch two new talent shows

The M6 Group owned digital broadcaster W9 will launch two new talent realities. The first will be *Mon Voisin est un Chanteur* (Beat My Guest), a show that will oppose neighbors in a singing contest. The other singing proposition of the channel will be *Las Vegas Academy*, which will gather participants from old shows in one competition.

Ratings



Utopia starts excellent

Newtopia (Utopia) started on Sat.1 on February 23 with spectacular results. 2.80 million watched the premiere of the Talpa format, leading to a good 10.0% share. In the 14-49 demo there were 1.61 million viewers for a market share of 17.0%. These numbers made Newtopia a market leader. With Newtopia Sat.1 scores one of the best format launches in several years.



Joker premiered well on France 2

The new gameshow from Global Agency, *Joker*, premiered on France 2. In it, each contestant must answer 15 questions to move higher up a money tree. The afternoon quiz gathered 1.06 million viewers on the start and the channel posted 6.9% share.



Talpa happy with start of The Big Picture

Talpa issued a press release informing of the good start of *The Big Picture* on RTL4 in the Netherlands. The show launched with over a million viewers. Talpa adds that it won its timeslot increasing the market share in the 20-49 demo by 50% and adding 600,000 viewers. No data on the real-time interactivity was revealed.

M&A/Financials



De Mol tired of meetings, wants to focus on creativity

In a press conference John de Mol revealed that a part of his decision to sell Talpa to ITV was the fact that he was tired of meetings and numbers. Instead, he wants to focus on creativity and spending time in the editing room. He said that the strategies and philosophy of ITV and Talpa match one on one. He added that SBS Netherlands will only gain from this partnership while he expects that Talpa will grow even more following the deal with ITV.

Cancellation of X Factor, lower revenues from American Idol hurt Fremantle

RTL Group announced the results for the financial year 2014 of Fremantle-Media. According to the report, the production and distribution giant was hurt by the cancellation of *The X Factor* and lower revenues from *American Idol* in the US. Revenue dropped from 1.525 billion euros in 2013 to 1.486 billion in 2014. The EBITA was reduced from 136 to 113 million. In 2015 the company plans to continue its expansion through digital acquisitions and growth in emerging markets, new distribution partners like Netflix and new IP (28% more drama was produced in 2014).



Sweden's biggest prodcos

The Top 5 Sweden's biggest production companies based on their revenues in 2013 as published by Dagens Media:

1. **Strix** - 424 million SEK / 45 million EUR
2. **Meter Television** - 316.1 million SEK / 33.5 million EUR
3. **Eyeworks Sweden** - 152 million SEK / 16 million EUR
4. **Mastiff Sweden** - 145.2 million SEK / 15 million EUR
5. **Titan Television** - 120.7 million SEK / 12.8 million EUR

Appointments



Strix MD leaves

Henrik Stenlund is leaving the post as MD of Strix Television which he held for the past seven years. He will be temporarily replaced by current COO Tesso Akander. Stenlund spent a total of 13 years working at MTG.



MTG Appoints new EVP of Programming & Content Development

Jakob Mejlhede Andersen has been appointed as Executive Vice President of MTG Programming & Content Development and joins the MTG Executive Management Team with immediate effect. Jakob will be responsible for content acquisition, programming and development for MTG's Nordic on and offline pay-TV businesses, and group-wide online free-TV businesses. The role also includes format sourcing and co-productions. Jakob Mejlhede Andersen joined MTG in 2005 and has been SVP of Acquisitions & Programming for the last six years. He also became Chief Content Officer of MTGx a year ago.



Three moving from Eyeworks to Nordisk Film TV

Nordisk Film TV Denmark is strengthening its factual, lifestyle and documentary profile with the hiring of Nikolaj Daugberg as new producer. Together with him, he brings his two fixed video editors from Eyeworks Denmark: Steffen Senenwaldt and Niels Lyster. Meanwhile, Eyeworks announced the appointment of Steffen Kampp as new producer, effective June 1. He joins from Mastiff Denmark.

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Distribution



Founder Geneste attacks Nordic World over Absolutely Independent shutdown

In an interview for De Telegraaf, Patty Geneste, founder of Absolutely Independent, has criticized Nordic World over the decision to shut down the company in the Netherlands. She commented that the takeover of the Dutch distributor was not really aimed at developing it, rather to take over the distribution contracts and revenue streams. She added that her consultancy contract was ended in November due to "disloyalty to the CEO" and according to her the insolvency procedure is a "panic reaction" to the lawsuit she filed against Nordic World in Oslo.



Global Agency announces new format Stairway To Fame

Global Agency will launch the new entertainment format *Stairway To Fame* at MIPTV 2015, as one of the key titles in its line-up. *Stairway To Fame* is a studio based, 14 week long marathon to find the next big vocal star. The concept was created and developed by Rafet El Roman, one of Turkey's most popular singers, to discover and support new talents. The format's key distinguishing point from other singing talent shows is that the contestants appear behind a frosted panel in the first stage. They get their first votes from the judges according to their singing performance alone.



Two Flemish formats sold in China

Inside TV Belgium reports that Flemish formats *Vroeger of Later* (Sooner or Later) and *De Generatieshow* (The Generation Show) will be adapted in China and aired on Shenzhen TV.

Advertising

Dutch ad market up 5.1% in 2014

Nielsen reports that the Dutch ad market grew by 5.1% in 2014 to reach total investments of 6.7 billion euros. TV got the lion share with 3.65 billion.

Rai changes commercial target, aims at older viewers

Rai Pubblicita is changing the target audience of the public channels for the year 2015. The core audience has been changed from 25-54 to 35-64. According to the agency, this is the demo with the highest buying capability in Italy. In 2014 Rai led the 35-64 demo with 35.0% share. Mediaset had 33.9%; Sky Italy - 9.2%; La7 - 3.5% and Discovery - 6.1%.

TV4 hikes ad rates

Resume reports that TV4 Group is currently discussing its annual contracts with advertisers and their offers start from a 25% price increase following the change of the target group from 12-59 to 15-64. Michael Grimborg, TV Sales Director at TV4, said that so far they are satisfied with the negotiations. He said that they are not afraid of losing customers due to the price increase stressing that only TV4 Group can offer such a reach.

Digital

Endemol launches online reality show on YouTube

Endemol Netherlands is launching a new online reality show on YouTube. *World of Cinemates* will follow the life of Kelvin Boerma (18) and Peter de Harder (21), aka Cinemates. This is the first project for Endemol Beyond in the Netherlands.

ProSiebenSat.1 to produce new online exclusive series

ProSiebenSat.1 Media produces a new comedy series exclusively for VOD service Myvideo. The series is titled *Der Lack ist ab* (All The Glamor is Gone) and it will start in the middle of April. The episodes will be 10 minutes long. Kai Wiesinger and Bettina Zimmermann play a married couple with two children. Kai Wiesinger also makes a director's debut with the series.

European Commission to ban geoblocking in the EU

The European Commission is looking to create a pan-European internet market including banning geo-blocking of TV content in the EU, the Danish Finans writes. The goal is to allow European viewers to watch programs from Netflix, BBC or any other EU-based broadcaster regardless of their location. The changes will redefine and liberate the internet market in the EU will be proposed in May. ■



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