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From: Morning Media
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Subject: Morning Media: The very political Emmys -- Trump Trusts TV more than the polls? -- 'Rolling Stone' is for sale

By Alex Weprin | 09/18/2017 05:39 AM EDT

THE VERY POLITICAL EMMY AWARDS: Popular culture often reflects the national mood, and that could not have been clearer during last night's broadcast of the 69th Primetime Emmy Awards. CBS "Late show" host Stephen Colbert hosted--fitting for a year dominated by news filled with politics and absurdity--and the show immediately struck a political tone.

-The opening song was all about how "everything is better on TV," as opposed to the real world, with climate change and the specter of nuclear war with North Korea. At one point, Colbert hopped into a car with Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys from the Cold War spy drama "The Americans," as a clip of President Trump shaking hands with Vladimir Putin played on screen "even treason is better on TV!" Colbert sang.

-The opening monologue, which included an extended bit about Trump's obsession with the Emmy Awards and his fruitless desire to win one (The New York Times has video and a transcript). Seth Meyers played along, filling his mouth with marbles in a reference to an old Trump tweet, while former White House press secretary Sean Spicer made a surprise appearance, coming out on a rolling podium and mocking his first White House press briefing, declaring "this will be the largest audience to witness an Emmys, period. Both in person and around the world." As Spicer rolled offstage, Colbert said: "Melissa McCarthy everyone!"

-It is not unusual for the winner's speeches to get political, but this year felt different, with almost every winner making light of the political climate. From the first winner, John Lithgow (who won for his portrayal of Winston Churchill), saying that Churchill showed what leadership really looked like, to Alec Baldwin (accepting an Emmy for his portrayal of Trump on "Saturday Night Live"): "At long last, Mr. President, here is your Emmy!" From Kate McKinnon, who played Hillary Clinton on the late night program, saying of her win, "Being part of this season of SNL was the most meaningful thing I'll ever do," to "Veep"'s Julia Louis-Dreyfus, who quipped, "We did have a storyline about an impeachment, but we abandoned it because we were worried someone else might get to it first."

-Speaking of "Saturday Night Live," the 41-year-old late night comedy show had a renaissance, taking home nine Emmys (the most of any one show), including wins for outstanding sketch series, McKinnon and for Alec Baldwin's portrayal of Trump, among others. Other winners shared that political undertone, from "The Handmaid's Tale" to "Last Week Tonight" to "Veep." Politics was all over last night's awards, from the first frame to the last.

Good morning and welcome to Morning Media. I always want to improve Morning Media and make it more useful to you, so please send me tips, ideas and feedback! I'm on Twitter @alexweprin and on email at alexweprin@gmail.com. Morning Media is produced with help from **Cristiano Lima** (clima@politico.com / @ludacristiano). Archives. Subscribe.

'ROLLING STONE' IS FOR SALE: The magazine world continues to be rocked by major news. The latest? Counterculture icon Rolling Stone will be put up for sale by owner Jann Wenner. From The New York Times : "Both Jann and Gus Wenner, the president and chief operating officer of Wenner Media, said they intended to stay on at Rolling Stone. But they said they also recognized that the decision could ultimately be up to the new owner... "There's a level of ambition that we can't achieve alone," Gus Wenner said last week in an interview at the magazine's headquarters in Midtown Manhattan. "So we are being proactive and want to get ahead of the curve."

TRUMP TRUSTS TV MORE THAN THE POLLS? Fox News host Tucker Carlson gave an interview to "The Jamie Weinstein Show," and there was quite a bit of newsworthy material covered. For starters, Carlson said President Trump believes that TV is a more accurate reflection of public opinion than polling.

- "I know that he watches a lot of television. I know because I've talked to him about it at length, that he's really interested in television, both the mechanics of it - he knows a lot about ratings and lighting, and producing and guest booking... He believes that television producers, especially of highly rated shows, understand what the public is interested in - what it fears, what it wants, what it loves. And so TV programming in some ways is a more accurate reflection of the public mood than polling... That's his view, he said it to me. And that's one of the reasons he watches a lot of television. Whether that's true or not is an entirely debatable point, but he believes if you want to know where the country is, watch TV."

-While just about every pollster will disagree with that statement, I think it's fair to say that TV can reflect the national mood (See: The Emmys), and looking at what viewers tune in to can probably give you some clues into how many people are thinking. It is an interesting insight from Carlson, and one I haven't heard before about Trump. One quick question I have: Trump quite famously had Nielsen TV ratings delivered to his office before he ran for president. Does he still get the TV ratings?

-Carlson said he turned down two of the most-sought-after interviews in TV, in Syrian strongman Bashar Al-Assad and Russian president Vladimir Putin. Why? "It just wasn't worth the criticism." Carlson might be the only TV news host actively turning down huge gets others would knife each other to get.

UNTOLD TALES OF ROGER AILES: This story from Eliana Johnson is a must-read. It profiles Joe Lindsley, a man who Fox News founder Roger Ailes once viewed as a protege, and who edited Ailes' upstate New York newspapers. They had a falling out, and now, Lindsley has written a book, one that he was unable to find a publisher for. It is a pseudo-memoir, filled with anecdotes about Ailes. "In reality, Lindsley says he had come to feel increasingly suffocated by Ailes' paranoia. ('Paranoia was his great comfort,' he says.) Ailes was convinced, for example, that President Barack Obama was working an operative inside Fox News, and he hounded staff members in an effort to out the mole, according to one Fox News executive. 'He couldn't rest easy at all in life. Peace was a phantom. He was always raging,' Lindsley says of Ailes."

MUCH ADO ABOUT MEGYN KELLY: Megyn Kelly's new NBC morning show is just one week away, and the gossip mill continues to churn. The latest comes from Vanity Fair's Sarah Ellison. Kelly's morning show will be a very different than her Sunday evening program, which debuted over the summer to lackluster ratings. The morning show will be broader, with a live audience. It will be part of the "Today" franchise, which is the most lucrative part of NBC News. How will Kelly make the transition from primetime cable news host to morning talk show host? We'll find out soon.

ESPN, AGAIN: There have been some updates to the ESPN/Jemele Hill/President Trump story since Friday's newsletter, so it is worth including them here:

-Trump attacked ESPN on Twitter. ESPN public editor Jim Brady weighed in : "ESPN, like all media companies, is grappling with new issues: Objectivity seems to be a dying ideal, and, in a crowded media environment, keeping your editorial volume at a moderate level isn't always good for business. And, as I've written before, media companies are simultaneously asking many of their personalities to be active and engaging on social media but not partisan or opinionated. It's a line that is, at best, blurry and, at worst, nonexistent."

-The New York Times and Sports Illustrated questioned whether ESPN could fire Hill for her tweets, even if the channel decided to.

-Columns and thoughts on the dust-up poured into my inbox. This one, in Cosmopolitan, by Brittney Cooper, stood out to me and is worth a read. "Jemele Hill told the truth. But we live in a post-truth, post-facts era, where anything that makes us uncomfortable is a lie. If this moment of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and the destruction they have wrought should teach us anything, it is about never-ending perils of building houses on sand."

MUST READ:

-What a wild story this is. A Queens bodega owner by day, an Egyptian TV pundit by night, broadcasting from his makeshift studio in the back room, sitting on a toilet seat as he talks politics and world affairs to thousands of viewers in Egypt.

-This story by the Times' Peter Baker and Ken Vogel is a great one. Even better: Vogel happened to be sitting at a nearby table at a D.C. steakhouse, which is where he overheard lawyer Ty Cobb.

REVOLVING DOOR:

-RealClearPolitics laid off 20 out of its 70 staffers, with editorial hit particularly hard.

-There were also layoffs at the Gannett-owned New Jersey newspaper The Record last week. One source says 11 people were let go. It isn't clear whether the layoffs were part of the one percent workforce reduction Gannett announced last week.

-The Washington Examiner has hired Tim Young as a video journalist. He'll also be bringing his

comedy show "No Things considered" to the Examiner.

-Two pieces of news about the news were released on Friday: First, NBC News confirmed that it had hired The New York Post's Claire Atkinson to lead a new media unit. Also joining the unit as contributors: BuzzFeed News editor-in-chief Ben Smith, Recode's Kara Swisher and Peter Kafka and Vanity Fair's Gabriel Sherman. CNN, meanwhile announced a new vertical, "Pacific," to cover the intersection of media and technology to be led by former POLITICO reporter Dylan Byers.

EXTRAS:

-The FCC stopped the clock on its review of the Sinclair-Tribune merger, telling Sinclair it needs to answer more questions before it can make a proper decision on the mega-deal.

-Really fascinating interview with NBCUniversal CEO Steve Burke, from The Information's Jessica Lessin. He hints that NBC has thought of making a digital acquisition (Vox? BuzzFeed) and says this of Facebook and Snap: "Snap treats professional content with respect, unlike Facebook, just to give a real pointed example. We are making real money on Snap."

-Government agencies are increasingly filing lawsuits against individuals or groups seeking public records.

-Following the Facebook news from last week: The Hive examines whether Jared Kushner's data operation may have helped select targets for the Russians.

-Fox News is relaunching its website today, with an emphasis on getting people to log in using their cable TV credentials.

-Snapchat removed Al Jazeera's Discover channel in Saudi Arabia, after a request from the Saudi government.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/tipsheets/morning-media/2017/09/18/the-very-political-emmys-trump-trusts-tv-more-than-the-polls-untold-ales-of-roger-ailes-001350>

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