



Programming

Jan 22, 2018 08:00 AM ET

Need a 6:30 Anchor? Send in the Clones

CBS's 'Evening News' choice had a similar look, but nets should think differently to gain younger viewers



By Ben Bogardus, Quinnipiac University

Facebook

Twitter

More

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, ABC News must be feeling very flattered at the choice of Jeff Glor to anchor the *CBS Evening News*. Glor and *ABC World News Tonight* anchor David Muir are so similar, they're almost clones.

Both men are in their early 40s and grew up in upstate New York. Muir is from Syracuse and Glor is from Tonawanda, near Buffalo. Both graduated from highly regarded upstate schools in the mid-1990s: Muir from Ithaca College, and Glor from Syracuse University. Both got their first TV jobs in the Syracuse market: Muir at CBS affiliate WTVH and Glor at NBC affiliate WSTM. Both left Syracuse in the early 2000s for their second TV jobs in Boston: Muir at ABC affiliate WCVB and Glor at then-NBC affiliate WHDH. After a few years in Boston, both landed network jobs in New York City.

Muir joined ABC News in 2003, anchoring overnight and weekend newscasts and traveling to war and disaster zones around the world, before replacing Diane Sawyer as anchor of *World News Tonight* in 2014.

Glor started his network career in 2007, reporting internationally for *The Early Show* and anchoring weekend editions of the *CBS Evening News*, before being named the permanent anchor of the *CBS Evening News* last week, replacing Scott Pelley and interim anchor Anthony Mason.

Going Young

So what is CBS trying to accomplish by following ABC's lead and replacing a well-respected but aging anchor with a relatively unknown younger one? It's trying to attract younger viewers. According to Nielsen ratings for mid-October, Muir's show was the only one of the three network newscasts to see overall ratings growth compared to this time last year. But more importantly, Muir's show stayed even with the all-important 25 to 54-year-old viewer demographic. These are the people advertisers want watching, because they buy a lot of stuff.

SEE ALSO:

#MeToo Influence Heard on TCA Stage

(/news/programming/metoo-influence-heard-tca-stage/171255)

CBS News, by contrast, fell 14% in this age group compared to last year, with then-59-year-old Scott Pelley on the anchor desk. *NBC Nightly News*, anchored by 58-year-old Lester Holt, didn't do much better, falling 12% among 25-to-54-year-olds, compared to mid-October 2016.

By replacing Pelley, CBS hopes younger viewers will start to take notice of the nightly news again, since it will now be anchored by a younger and, presumably, more relatable face. CBS president David Rhodes admitted as much, saying Glor "represents the best journalistic values and traditions that will carry the *Evening News* into a digital future." In other words — exactly what ABC News was thinking when it hired Muir.

The problem is, this may be a case of too little, too late for CBS. Younger viewers are turning off the nightly news not because the anchors are old, but instead because it doesn't fit their lifestyles. Two generations — millennials and Gen X — either grew up with, or quickly adopted, time-shifted viewing. They watch shows when they want to, thanks to DVRs and on-demand streaming. The idea of tuning into network news at 6:30 every night, for no other reason than "that's the way it's been done for years," doesn't make sense to them. And while these younger viewers could set their DVR to record the news, that defeats the purpose of having a live, up-to-the-minute broadcast.

The Answer Is Digital

If CBS wants to attract and keep younger viewers, the answer isn't to copy ABC's strategy and put a younger face in front of viewers. Instead, producers will have to meet younger viewers digitally, where they live.

NBCUniversal is trying this in a venture with Snap. *Stay Tuned*, its twice-daily Snapchat newscast, reportedly gained more than 29 million unique viewers in its first month online. NBC says 60% of those viewers are under age 25.

Returning to broadcast news's audio origins — via online "podcasting," rather than broadcast radio — affords another opportunity for news to reach a younger audience. A recent study by Edison Research showed that 44% of podcast listeners are between the age of 18 and 34, even though that group only makes up 28% of the population. It's therefore fertile and untapped ground for a daily newscast.

It's obvious from Glor's hiring that the days of the highly-rated "voice of God" anchors like Walter Cronkite, Dan Rather, Peter Jennings and Tom Brokaw have passed. But sending in the clones won't give CBS higher ratings. To survive, the network must rethink how it delivers the 6:30 news. *Ben Bogardus is assistant professor of journalism at Quinnipiac University.*

Facebook

Twitter

More

Tags: [Jeff Glor \(/articles-tagging/jeff-glor\)](#), [David Muir \(/articles-tagging/david-muir\)](#), [ABC News \(/articles-tagging/abc-news\)](#), [CBS News \(/articles-tagging/cbs-news\)](#), [NBC News \(/articles-tagging/nbc-news\)](#)

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE:

'The Handmaid's Tale' Among Favorites to Win SAG Awards

(<http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/fates-and-fortunes/handmaid-s-tale-among-favorites-win-sag-awards/171237>)

Netflix Tops GLAAD Media Awards Nominations

(<http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/fates-and-fortunes/netflix-tops-glaad-media-awards-nominations/171236>)

NEXT ARTICLE:

▪ [Groups Fire First Legal Shots At Net Rule Rollback](#)

(</news/washington/groups-fire-first-legal-shots-net-rule-rollback/171258>)



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name

Be the first to comment.

Inside the Current Issue



(/current-issue)

Going for the Gold in the Age of Streaming

(http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/currency/going-gold-age-streaming/171250)

New Fox, New Sinclair Will Mean New NATPE

(http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/distribution/new-fox-new-sinclair-will-mean-new-natpe/171256)

Net Neutrality CRA Gambit Likely DOA

(http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/washington/net-neutrality-cra-gambit-likely-doa/171257)

Groups Fire First Legal Shots At Net Rule Rollback

(http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/washington/groups-fire-first-legal-shots-net-rule-rollback/171258)

Need a 6:30 Anchor? Send in the Clones

(http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/currency/need-630-anchor-send-clones/171259)

Extra! Trump Dumps on Media, Again

(http://www.broadcastingcable.com/news/lead/extra-trump-dumps-media-again/171247)

Archive (/archive)

More (/current-issue)



(https://www.facebook.com/broadcastingandcable) (https://twitter.com/broadcastingandcable) (https://www.broadcastingandcable.com/rss.xml)

PR Wire

dotstudioPRO Offers Direct Connection (/thewire/dotstudiopro-offers-direct-connection-brands-reach-consumers-through-roku-platform/171274)

TOKU Premieres Ultra Series Titles in (/thewire/toku-premieres-ultra-series-titles-usa/171269)

More than 55 Sundance Films, Series and (/thewire/more-55-sundance-films-series-and-projects-created-using-blackmagic-design/171268)

SERIES MANIA'S EUROPEAN PROJECT AND (/thewire/series-mania-s-european-project-and-talent-forum-launches-series-mania-writers-campus-week-long-intensive-writing-workshop-20-emerging-tv-drama-writers-throughout-europe/171267)

LA Film School Relies on Soundly for (/thewire/la-film-school-relies-soundly-editing-and-cloud-based-sfx-library/171266)

Schmooze.

Photo galleries of celebrities, and industry leaders.



Headlines From Our Affiliates:

Multichannel SPEAK (<http://www.multichannel.com>)

- Dish Launches Downsized Hopper (<http://www.multichannel.com/news/content/dish-launches-downsized->
- CBS Renews Carriage Deal With Sony PlayStation Vue (<http://www.multichannel.com/news/content/cbs-renews-carriage-deal->
- Internet Association Ramps Up State Activities (<http://www.multichannel.com/news/policy/internet-association-ramps->

Radio THE RADIO TECHNOLOGY LEADER (<http://www.radiomagonline.com/>)

- Former iBiquity/DTS Lawyer Named FCC Audio Division Chief (<http://www.radiomagonline.com/fcc/0019/former-ibiquitydts-lawyer->
- Tieline Updates Bridge-IT Firmware (<http://www.radiomagonline.com/products/0002/tieline-updates-bridgeit->
- Lawo Names U.S. Senior Sales Manager (<http://www.radiomagonline.com/industry/0003/lawo-names-us-senior->