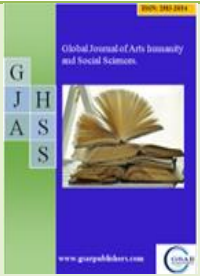
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**Policy communication through the entertainment industry and the Late Night Talk show in the United States
- When Political content becomes consumer’s entertainment content**

BY

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Abstract

This article explores the method of policy communication in America following the entertainment model, specifically late-night talk show. This article will introduce the content and influence of these programs in general and the hosts in particular. Its influence is massive not only on the entertainment industry but also on the awareness of the audience/people of the country, thereby becomes the official but informal discourse for the government's political and social policies and shaping the thinking of society. The article will also generalize how this model has gradually weakened and some difficulties of the American government in building the people’s trust toward the government and its agencies.

Keywords: policy communication, late-night talk show, talk show host, entertainment content

Introduction

One of the most difficult and delicate issues of policy communication is building a close relationship between the public and the discursive entity of the policy communication unit. In the history of modern media, developed countries have realized that the answer lies in popular culture and applied the principles of entertainment through popular culture formats and trends in mass consumption. For both public policy communication and mass media, nothing is more effective than entertainment content. The general conclusion is that the most effective means of conveying messages, whether from global sales brands or from the US government, will be to build sympathy, trust, and closeness between people and audiences through individual faces representing the values and policies chosen by the system behind them. One of the oldest and most successful media platforms for this function will be Hollywood cinema and Late-night Talk shows initiated by America and the reasons behind their success. The vehicle of prominent political topics and issues is turning policy communication into entertainment content and prioritizing building

a place for this content in the contemporary’s mass entertainment culture space.

1. Communication and effective communication

1.1. Effective communication and communication depends on the triad of beliefs, emotions, and reason. Among them, reason stands last

With all that technology has afforded us, until we are actually embedded with chips (which, no doubt, maybe on the horizon), we are still human, and our human instincts remain intact. When we’re hungry, our stomachs grumble. When we’re thirsty, our mouths get dry. When we’re lonesome, we crave company. Apps might swiftly deliver the food, drink, or perhaps a person of our liking, but they’ve yet to replace the instinct itself. (Brian Shapiro, 18/5/2016)

The same holds true for communication. Texts, emails, and social media have systemically transformed how we communicate, but not the human instincts that cause someone to pay attention to us or ignore us altogether. The three pillars of exceptional communication are Trust, emotions, and reason. And if we consider the people who we’ve had the ability to most influence,



our communication was probably all about them. They perceived us as trustworthy, they experienced more positive emotions than negative ones, and they found our communication came across as reasonable. And in today's ever-transforming landscape, being certain our communication continues to tap into these instincts, these three pillars of exceptional communication is as important as ever.

The main purpose of effective policy communication is to build public trust in the government, its policies, and orientations in all economic, political, and social aspects. The measure of effective mass communication is the increase and improvement of trust over time and the positive responses of the public in general and to specific issues of concern in particular. Policy communication is understood as part of government activities to bring information about policies to the people, convincing them to change their awareness and behavior in accordance with the law. Besides, this is also a reverse information channel for the government to get people's opinions when developing new policies or adjusting current policies, creating social consensus.

Trust is the foundation of effective communication

So how does our communication allow us to appear trustworthy? Trust is derived from the manner and style in which we present ourselves. If our communication appears trustworthy, it increase the chances that we will be perceived as so.

Trust: Keep in mind it's not how trustworthy we believe we appear, but how trustworthy we appear in someone else's eyes. And after we have our base of trust in order, we can focus on the slippery world of human emotions.

Emotion: Emotions influence everything, and the most powerful emotions are the ones we generate in other people. We've all communicated with people in a manner that has left someone feeling better or worse than before. How we "say" something, the words we use, and the tone will influence what emotions are generated. These emotions determine if and when our messages are received, as well as how people will respond to us.

People feel better when communication focuses more on them and less on us, and when it's adapted to their preferred medium or style. Once again, it's all about them. So after they trust us and feel good, we can make sure we appear reasonable, or all that might just disappear.

Reason: It's vitally important that *we frame our communication so that it can be digested easily*, and reason is what allows us to do just that. Reason grounds and contextualizes our communication so that the other person can derive a meaning that most matches what we desire. But it's not how reasonable we believe our communication is, but rather how reasonable it is to someone else. Are we providing them sufficient details? Are we making sure they understand us by asking them appropriate questions? We as communicators must also consistently ask ourselves, "How might this come across to them?" Again, *it's not about us, rather it's about the other aka the audience and their perceptions.*

Trust, emotions, and reason; unless our communication allows others to perceive us as trustworthy, unless it generates desired emotions, and unless it appears reasonable, our ability to garner attention is limited.

The US academic community and mainstream media have repeatedly failed to explain to themselves and to the government why the public loves a particular content, why this video goes "viral", why That Youtuber who makes videos alone in his bedroom has tens or even hundreds of thousands of times more viewers on social networks than professionally produced content from BBC, Fox New, etc. with dozens of media experts and a strong content writing and market research team with full qualifications? The short answer would be that the highly viral content has hit one or more of the curiosity and entertainment needs of a large number of online communities, that accidentally or intentionally they created the content. exactly the needs and tastes of the market.

1.2. The role of entertainment for people

Regardless of income, skin color, or nationality, people all have one common need: entertainment. The level of happiness or success of people in every society is partly shaped and valued by their daily and annual forms of entertainment. Entertainment is a vast industry. Depending on the classification used, globally the industry is worth trillions of US dollars each year. In many countries, the entertainment tourism market alone is larger than the education market. Even among groups of people who value education, when they visit cultural attractions and are surveyed about customer satisfaction, they consider entertainment 4 times more important than the educational element of the activity. What people consider entertaining depends on many factors, such as their values, beliefs, culture, and motivations.

Determining what content and activities are and are not entertaining is not easy. Is going to a restaurant something we do for fun or for food? Ask any restaurant owner and they will tell you how important the experience of being entertained is to their customers. For Spanish bullfighting fans, a trip to Plaza de Torres is an entertaining one. For those who view such practices as brutal and cruel, even the prospect of witnessing the prolonged torture of an animal is hauntingly traumatizing.

There is rarely any form of entertainment that is passive. For example, to be entertained by a stand-up comedian, listening attentively to what they say is necessary. When watching a movie, there are many things to pay attention to such as the actor's performance, the actor's appearance, the story, the plots being revealed, the way the dialogue is delivered, etc. And audiences watching the same movie will have different levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, for example, pure entertainment "leave your brain at home", challenge your imagination, be a worthy adaptation of the original work, be watched, the latest project from your current favorite idol etc.

If entertainment is so easy our society wouldn't have the need to recognize the entertainer as artist, star, and master of their craft.

Comedians, as with the creators of all other forms of entertainment, take the time necessary to learn and refine their entertainment skills; they learn how to engage audiences and then take them on an emotional journey.

Singers learn to use their voices to convey a story that evokes emotion in their audiences.

Film screenplay writers learn the craft of visual story-telling to keep us enthralled; on the edge of our seats.

Novelists learn the craft of the page-turner, how to create each sentence, paragraph, and section in such a way that we want to, even need to, find out what happens next.

1.3. The very Real value of “escapism” entertainment

Entertainment brings many benefits. It can and does release and distract from stress; it provides escapism from the problems in our lives. It protects and improves our mental health.

It will come as no surprise that people with no access to entertainment have poorer mental health than those with plentiful and affordable access. When workers take state-changing breaks induced by entertainment upon returning to work, their productivity is higher than those without entertainment breaks. The most successful organisations in the world know that and provide all sorts of entertainment for their staff such as swimming pool, gym, ball court, multi-style canteen, entertainment complex, sauna, etc to increase work performance as well as employee’s loyalty and dedication. Apple, Twitter, Google, Tesla (in America), and Vingroup (in Vietnam) all have reputations in their enviable work environment for both quality of life as well as the chance to learn from the brightest, most distinguish minds of their field.

Some theories claim that to understand entertainment, it is necessary to know what people do with any given entertainment. It is wise to understand the utility of any entertainment, but it is far from the whole picture. It is also necessary to understand the gratification people seek from any source of entertainment. Different sources provide different types of entertainment rewards. Some people would never watch a horror movie. They don’t find being scared entertaining. Others love horror movies because they want to be terrified and find that state exhilarating.

Then there is the gap between the gratification sought and that obtained from any given source. When people get what they want from a source, they tend to do it again. They become repeat consumers. That takes us to a place where it seems wise to seek to understand the goals; the gratification sought, the utility, and the actual rewards obtained by the entertainment seeker.

As a person becomes increasingly engaged with and dependent on an entertainment outlet, that source acquires more and more influence over the user.

Providers of entertainment know that and seek to develop increasing dependency. That leads to the reciprocal causation theory of entertainment. The entertainers seek to understand what the user wants. The user consumes when their needs are met and don’t when they aren’t met. In an ongoing interplay, each party is

influencing the other and cultivating the views of the other; audiences shape what entertainers do, and entertainers shape audiences. As stated by modern psychology, at first contact one possess an idea, once one become believer of promoter of an idea one then one become the vehicle of said idea and thus weaken independence thinking.

The interplay between entertainment and other aspects of life, too, is ubiquitous:

Politicians who entertain voters, and tell them what they want to hear, are more electable than those who tell the truth in sober tones. The audience in turn also spend money on and seek out the type of content that suit their needs most.

Marketers and advertisers have known, across the centuries, that engaged clients buy products and services, and they are acutely aware that among the best ways to engage potential customers is to entertain.

Educators who can entertain best are more likely to engage their students and, therefore, are more likely to spark passion and enthusiasm for their subject. That, in turn, has an impact on learning outcomes. Only the best education is even close to being as entertaining as the best entertainment. Children see the world’s best entertainers on all sorts of media and are regularly engaged to the point of being transfixed. They can contrast that with what they experience in school.

Many people spent years of enforced boredom in education because their teachers were not as skilled as they could be in making the lessons entertaining and inspirational. As an aside, we have known for centuries what makes education engaging, yet we seem reluctant to recruit, train, or assess teachers based on those skills. As a result, most members of the public associate education with boredom and unpleasantness. That association leads to a lifetime of disinclination to engage in education, at least in formal ways. This also show how the ‘ivory tower’ of academia in reality is closer to the Tower of Babel that doesn’t really benefit anyone.

2. Political communication through Late Night Games and Talk show

2.1. The US President is also a frequent guest on Late Night Talk show

2.1.1. About The late-night talk show

Late-night television in the United States is the block of television programming intended for broadcast after 11:00 p.m. and usually through 2:00 a.m. Eastern and Pacific Time (ET/PT), but which informally can include programs aired as late as the designated overnight graveyard slot.

A late-night talk show is a popular genre of talk show, originating in the United States. It is generally structured around humorous monologues about the day’s news, guest interviews, comedy sketches, and music performances. It is characterized by spontaneous conversation, and for an effect of immediacy and intimacy as if the host were speaking alone to each of the millions of audience members. Late-night talk shows are also

fundamentally shaped by the personality of the host, which constitutes the "trademark" of the show (Erler, Robert - 2010).

The late-night talk show format was popularized by Johnny Carson and sidekick Ed McMahon with The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson on NBC. Typically the show's host conducts interviews from behind a desk, while the guest is seated on a couch. Many late-night talk shows feature a house band which generally performs cover songs for the studio audience during commercial breaks and occasionally will back up a guest artist, with big names like Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift, Black Pink, Ariana Grande, Paul McCartney, David Bowie, Adele, Shakira, BTS etc.

Late-night talk shows are a popular format in the United States but are not as prominent in other parts of the world. Shows that loosely resemble the format air in other countries, but generally air weekly as opposed to the nightly airings of those in the United States. They also generally air in time slots considered to be prime time in the United States.

Popular shows in the late-night talk show genre include The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Late Night with Seth Meyers, and Jimmy Kimmel Live!. Famous past hosts include Johnny Carson of The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson; David Letterman of Late Night with David Letterman and Late Show with David Letterman; Conan O'Brien of Late Night with Conan O'Brien, The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien and Conan; Jay Leno of The Tonight Show with Jay Leno (who has taped more episodes than any other late-night host); James Corden of The Late Late Show with James Corden; Craig Ferguson of The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson; etc.

2.1.2. *Classic format: These programs usually follow the same standard format.*

- + A stand-up comedy segment, called a monologue in which the host satirizes current news;
- + Some comedy skits, skits or other comedy genres;
- + Interview one or two famous guests;
- + At the end of the show is a musical guest or a stand-up comedy act.

There have been standard deviations from this format. A notable example is Last Call with Carson Daly, which (except for a two-year period from 2007 to 2009) has traditionally avoided monologues and comedy, despite initially using most of the staples of the traditional late-night talk format;

Late-night talk shows often incorporate political satire segments, including some shows formatted around comedic themes that focus on politics and popular culture rather than repeats of talk shows, interviews, music, and stand-up comedy performances. Notable examples include The Daily Show (1999–present), The Colbert Report (2005–2014), Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (2014–present), Gutfeld! (2015–present) and Full Frontal with Samantha Bee (2016–present) (Knolle, Sharon 2023).

2.2. *Are leading academic experts not suitable to interact with public opinion or act as spokespersons for policy communication?*

2.2.1. *The role of Dr. Phil*

Ph.D. degree in clinical psychology in 1979 at North Texas State University, he began appearing weekly as a relationship and life strategy expert on Tuesdays starting in April 1998 on a Opra Winfrey Show. In September 2002, McGraw formed Peteski Productions and launched his own syndicated daily television show, Dr. Phil, produced by Winfrey's Harpo Studios. Dr. Phil is an advice show, in which McGraw tackles a different topic on each show, offering advice to his guests (Andreeva, Nellie 2018).

On May 21, 2007, Dr. Phil was ranked fourth by Nielsen Media Research, with 6.69 million viewers (Stanley, Alessandra, 2002). About one year later, on May 12, 2008, the show was ranked sixth with 5.69 million viewers.(Hernandez, Greg, 2004, pp. 56–63). In May 2008 the only talk show more popular than Dr. Phil was The Oprah Winfrey Show (Stillion, Judith M.; Attig, Thomas, 2014, p. 113). In 2007, McGraw was 30th on the Forbes Celebrity 100 list. On December 11, 2018, Dr. Phil was the top syndicated show with a "2.9 live-plus-same-day" national Nielsen rating, ranking first among talk shows for the 117th consecutive week.(Kisken, Tom, 2012). His ranking improved, and by 2020 he was in the 22nd spot on the same Forbes list with earnings of \$65.5 million (Forbes list 2020).

2.1.2. *Why are leading experts ineffective in persuading and attracting the attention and consensus of public opinion?*

It is easy to see that in cyberspace there are few exchange, discussion, and sharing of information by the public about the content or statements of experts and scientists of their field about scientific research activities, seminars, scientific publications or official statement of these experts, etc. The number of views, shares, tags, quotes, memes about both the experts and the events are not much, has no social permeability or longevity beyond the time frame that the event has been taking place and even on mainstream media space. Interactions on these contents will usually only occur within 'insiders' such as academics, businessmen, government officials, international experts, etc. directly or indirectly related to their industry and work agency, so it will be limited to a few dozen to more than 100 interactions for analysis, announcements, and promotion of current upcoming events or projects (Timberg B.M., Erler R.J. 2010, pp.3-4).

In the past decade, mainstream academic and publishing units have focused on investing more in attracting the attention and interaction of the masses, such as posting lecture videos on YouTube, live-streaming events, and meeting people offline, organizing competitions for the audience with gifts, etc. These are all practical and effective activities in building the brand of the organizer, attracting investors, increasing interaction with the mass and these activities opened the two-way door of the market: the organizer and the team of guest experts had to demonstrate their ability to attract audiences as an expert or veteran in the entertainment industry. Just being an expert in their field is not

enough in the age of fast content consumption and abundant choices.

2.1.3. *Expert's presentation is largely not entertaining enough*

In university lecture halls and event rooms of research institutes, the participation of experts, doctors, and professors will be 'sterile' and have a high level of control. Evaluations, feedback, and questions will mostly come from individuals or organizations that have been intending to have a long-term, multi-faceted relationship with these individual experts in the scientific ecosystem. So highly entertaining qualities such as tension, drama, surprise, awkwardness, confrontation between speakers, or intimacy, leading to an emotional connection between the speaker and the audience will be kept to a minimum to keep the event's 'professional' and have academic atmosphere. The experts' tone and presentation style will be calm and minimalist like university lecturers, with a preference for listening and taking notes continuously for several hours following the lecturer's pulse.

The content of scientific research will revolve around dissecting and introducing old and new theories (usually old and classic, or most prominent) with remote contexts in terms of geographical location, culture, or historical period, which is hard to grasp and relate to contemporary people, especially young people. Of course, the author does not claim that classical theories and studies such as the concept of 15th-century popular culture, John Fiske's (1989) study are not valuable for modern audiences and learners, but rather to point out that *gaps in generation, culture, background knowledge, expertise and non-experts lead to the need for common grounds and problem-posing to bridge the worldview and interests of the audience when spending time with the subjects*. This scientific and communication activity will thereby achieve effective communication, whether for teaching purposes or official policy communication (Toby Miller, 2010).

Traditional subjects, Indian classics such as the Mahabharata, reevaluating Hindu-centric historical text, discussion of current policy in the state, how to combat corruption in India, why India still use 'British influenced constitution', etc to PM Modi's promises are all being looked at through a modern lens and young Indians are being very active in it all. With freedom of speech and press the educator and experts in modern India have to face the challenge of giving out concise answers to very complex subjects with equally long history through the vast tapestry of the Indian continent's religions, culture, philosophy, dynasties, and so on. There is also an increasing demand for an Indian-centric approach toward explaining why such a rich a powerful continent was conquered by small England and why India had not taken centered stage in world science and world economy like in the past. Therefore with lingering ill-feeling toward Westerners, there are plenty of demand for 'mystics', gurus, experts, and 'nationalists' to ensure and reinforce the idea of India's innate potential to become a superpower without international linkage, that the answer lies in India's history and culture alone. This does happens to any nation and culture that try achieve a higher level of prosperity, technical mastery, and better law system to be fair.

2.1.4. *The discourses created as a by-product of diverse sources of information is even more relevant while everyone is more focused on mis-information.*

The public cares about what Trump says, whether he will expel immigrants from the United States, and how the US-China trade war will affect each country's economy, the wholesale and retail sectors instead of caring to find out which French economist's theory can explain or predict these things. *So the task of academia and the media is to find the content that people are interested in, who cares about it, package and present that information in a way that is eye-catching and suitable to the audience's tastes*. Thus effective policy communication can connect to the public about what the policy is, responses of the government, what official agencies require to make it happen, and what they will do about these issues. Discourses that are too dry and academic will only widen the gap between the people and political elites. Donald Trump's historic US presidential election victory and Prime Minister Modi's unprecedented 2014 General Election victory with 834 million voters, for the first time, ended the ruling empire of the Congress Party and Indira Gandhi's family, are two eloquent examples of effective use of social networks, that convincing and understanding the public will create power that even the mainstream media system cannot imagine.

2.1.5. *The ivory tower of academia and the mainstream media*

The language presented by leading experts in the field more often than not will be cold and heavily academic, using examples from domestic and foreign academic research that experts themselves do not necessarily know and researched. The nature of academic research also tends to affirm the value of the individual and the research direction being presented, interpretation is enough while the *value of the research is 'guaranteed' because it follows standard scientific models, convincing and permeating public opinion is not a factor*. America's public politics call this phenomenon "complimenting ourselves" or living in "echo chambers". If the host and presenter present themselves too liberally and naturally, they will most likely be judged as inappropriate or unprofessional according to the stereotypes and style of the mainstream media and the academic ecosystem.

Positive feedback from the scientific ecosystem is the focus and mainstream media will respond positively accordingly. The value and effectiveness of policy communication will also be assessed by these agencies, not based on audience and market feedback. Investment, salaries, and research licensing are mostly decided by government bodies, so the factor of attracting market share is further pushed aside. The entertainment nature of scientific research activities is of course not part of the final assessment criteria for the success or failure of scientific research and policy communication. Mainstream media units themselves have a responsibility not to create artificial tensions and conflicts, limit social unrest, and not affect the face of official representatives. This principle, of course, goes against the immutable principle of the entertainment industry, which is the bigger the messier the story the better. And if there isn't one, you have to create a story to attract and shape public opinion.



However, with the mass popularization of global social networks, the era of Elite Knowledge (Pareto, V., 2004) has become the era of Communal Knowledge or Access for all (Payne, K. A., & Zeichner, K. 2017) for both developed and developing countries, with or without strong censorship. Young people can now comfortably search for information online, exchange with groups of similar interests, read books and listen to online lectures, learn skills, participate in distance learning courses, etc. outside the lecture hall and it is free. Prestigious universities themselves now have to integrate multimedia in teaching and research because whether residing in the countryside or developed countries, social networks and multimedia is an indispensable part of modern society and will affect direct interests if left out or left too far behind. Talk shows for students on startups, young people on climate change, community responsibility, etc. is also gradually becoming a widely applied model for extracurricular and extracurricular activities for young people.

The entertainment value as well as the level of circulation of a communication activity will be determined by the online community through posts, memes, humorous quotes, criticism, praise, clickbait, etc. Public opinion chooses which aspect of this media content to interact with and how to interact with it will be decided by individuals and the market. The party that organizes and produces this content will only be able to respond based on the specific situations to maintain a temporarily fixed atmosphere and emotions. Or there are some rare cases of successfully remaining silent or ignoring public opinion, allowing public opinion to calm down and be easily identifiable again. However, this is also a double-edged sword because once the audience realizes that their feedback is not received, the need to connect with the program and the content creator will also disappear, unless the level and value of the content is resolved. Unless the position or relevance of this media content is very high and difficult to replace. An ironic example is how American mainstream media was 'outraged' daily with Donald Trump throughout his Presidency, wanted to censored him all the time but in Biden era they had to brought up Trump once again because mainstream media can hardly get views like before.

One of the factors that determine the audience's ability and willingness to receive information will be the closeness and familiarity of the words, the emotions, and value systems that are close to the audience's worldview (Toby Miller 2010). The speaker must show emotions so that the audience can attach themselves to the flow of the show. In short, the audience's experience is the focus and their positive feedback is the goal of the activity. American media and Hollywood are masters at identifying reliable emotional manipulation tools through decades of dominating the global entertainment industry with reality TV shows, movies, series, documentaries, game shows, etc., and teams of actors, singers, comedians, athletes, and professional hosts of all ages and tastes. They are trained to become idols who shape America's social and political discourse in particular and comment about the world situation in general.

There are two solutions that have been tested by American Presidents to bridge the gap between academic elites and politicians and the audience's entertainment-oriented content consumption (Baum Matthew 2005): 1) Applying the principles of entertainment media for important political events such as the debate between two candidates running for President of the United States to attract attention and shape public opinion. 2) Building multi-faceted entertainment platforms such as Late Night Talk show, reality TV science series, etc. with a light, humorous tone. The topics and guests that change each episode such as politicians, movie stars, scientists may appear to inform scientific, political, social discourse. while building their influence in contemporary popular culture.

3. Late night Talk shows are both effective in policy communication and effective entertainment

3.1. The hosts are all veterans of the entertainment industry

Here, we will review the education background, experience in television and late-night talk shows of some of the most famous MCs in the United States:

Psychologist Dr. Phil McGraw or Dr Phil with the show of the same name. Earning a doctorate in clinical psychology in 1979 from North Texas State University, he began appearing weekly as a life strategy expert and relationship coach on Thursdays. Ba started in April 1998 on Opra Winfrey's show. In September 2002, McGraw founded Peteski Productions and launched his own syndicated daily television show, Dr. Phil, produced by Winfrey's Harpo Studios. Dr. Phil is an advice show in which McGraw covers a different topic on each show, then gives advice to his guests.

On May 21, 2007, Dr. Phil was ranked fourth by Nielsen Media Research, with 6.69 million viewers. In May 2008, the only talk show more popular than Dr. Phil is The Oprah Winfrey Show. In 2007, McGraw ranked 30th on the Forbes Celebrity 100 list. On December 11, 2018, Dr. Phil was the top syndicated program, topping talk shows for the 117th consecutive week. His ratings continued to improve, and by 2020, host Phil McGraw was in first place. 22nd place on the same Forbes list with income of \$65.5 million.

Host Conan O'Brien has hosted the late-night talk show for nearly 28 years. Before being chosen by NBC as the successor to the legendary David Letterman, he worked as a comedy scriptwriter for NBC, for Saturday Night Live and graduated with honors with a Bachelor of History & Literature from Harvard. O'Brien and the Late Night show grew to critical acclaim, winning the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Syndicated Series. He hosted Late Night for 16 years and as of 2023 became the franchise's longest-serving host.

David Michael Letterman (born April 12, 1947) is an American television host, comedian, writer and producer. He hosted late-night television talk shows for 33 years, beginning with the February 1, 1982, debut of Late Night with David Letterman on

NBC and ending with the May 20, 2015, broadcast of Late Show with David Letterman on CBS. In total, Letterman hosted 6,080 episodes of Late Night and Late Show, surpassing his friend and mentor Johnny Carson as the longest-serving late-night talk show host in American television history (Lacey Rose October 4, 2013).

He is also a television and film producer. His company, Worldwide Pants, produced his shows as well as The Late Late Show and several primetime comedies, the most successful of which was the CBS sitcom Everybody Loves Raymond. Several late-night hosts have cited Letterman's influence, including Conan O'Brien (his successor on Late Night), Stephen Colbert (his successor on The Late Show), Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, Jon Stewart, and Seth Meyers. Late Night with David Letterman debuted February 1, 1982; the first guest was Bill Murray. It was seen as edgy and unpredictable, and soon developed a cult following (particularly among college students). Letterman's reputation as an acerbic interviewer was borne out in verbal sparring matches with Cher (who even called him an "asshole" on the show), Shirley MacLaine, Charles Grodin, and Madonna. The show also featured comedy segments and running characters, in a style heavily influenced by the 1950s and 1960s programs of Steve Allen.

John William Carson was an American television host, comedian, writer, and producer. He is best known as the host of The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson (1962–1992). Carson received six Primetime Emmy Awards, the Television Academy's 1980 Governor's Award, and a 1985 Peabody Award. He was inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame in 1987. Carson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1992 and received a Kennedy Center Honor in 1993 (Johnny Carson. Encyclopædia Britannica Online; 2009).

During World War II, Carson served in the Navy. After the war, Carson started a career in radio. He moved from radio to TV and took over as host of the late-night talk show Tonight from Jack Paar in 1962. He remained an American icon even after his retirement in 1992. He adopted a casual, conversational approach with extensive interaction with guests, an approach pioneered by Arthur Godfrey and previous Tonight Show hosts Steve Allen and Jack Paar but enhanced by Carson's lightning-quick wit. Former late-night host and friend David Letterman, as well as many others, have cited Carson's influence. Carson is a cultural icon and widely regarded as the king of late-night television (*Johnny Carson. Encyclopædia Britannica Online; 2009*).

Before Bill Nye was the face of the children's science program Bill Nye the Science Guy, he "started his career" as a mechanical engineer for Boeing Corporation and invented a hydraulic resonance suppression tube used on Boeing 747 aircraft. The Bill Nye the Science Guy show is critically acclaimed and has been nominated for 23 Emmy Awards and won nineteen times.

Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson graduated with a bachelor's degree in physics from Harvard in 1980, an MSc in Astronomy from Austin College in 1983, and a PhD in Astrophysics from Columbia University in 1991. Tyson served on the 2001 government commission on the future of the U.S. aerospace

industry established by U.S. President George W. Bush and the U.S. Congress in 2001. He also served on the commission The Moon, Mars, and Beyond in 2004. He was awarded the NASA Distinguished Public Service Medal in the same year. From 2006 to 2011, he hosted the television show NOVA ScienceNow on PBS. Since 2009, Tyson has hosted the weekly podcast StarTalk. In 2014, he hosted the television series Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey, a sequel to Carl Sagan's 1980 series Cosmos: A Personal Voyage. The US National Academy of Sciences awarded Tyson the Public Welfare Medal in 2015 for "his extraordinary role in igniting public excitement about the wonders of science" (Molly Galvin, February 26, 2015). Dr. Neil dGrasse Tyson is one of most prominent figure in science on social media in current time.

These hosts are all very successful figures in the entertainment industry and have become prominent brands in American popular culture in particular and global culture in general, each for an average of two decades. They became the representative face and official 'source' of information for academic science and mainstream US media, and even became living symbols of humanistic, scientific values, success, and continuous improvement that the "American dream" represents.

The successful Late Night Talk and talk show series themselves have become a corner of the history of American popular culture, windows into the cultural and spiritual life of contemporary and popular. What's hot online, domestically, and in the world, artists releasing new music albums, who can dethrone Brad Pitt as the sexiest man on the planet, will President Obama run for another term, etc. will all become topics of discussion between familiar hosts and a team of famous and talented guests, become lessons learned for effective communication and communication.

3.2. Talk shows and Late Night Talks are an important part of the Entertainment Ecosystem and are not a mainstream media outlet that stands outside or above the entertainment industry.

3.2.1. Accompanying and keeping up with contemporary popular culture

Highlights of contemporary American and world popular culture will all have the presence of familiar talk show host faces. These programs focus on updating, catching up, predicting, explaining, and shaping contemporary popular culture instead of standing outside and above popular culture. This is a very rare point with entertainment or academic content in developing countries. There are at least two decades if artists, comedians, and singers dream of being guests on Johnny Carson or David Letterman's show because that means huge viewership and prime social standing of the shows. This process in the spiritual and cultural life of American society will give them the opportunity to become a famous phenomenon overnight.

For example: Vietnam's "Jealousy Co Vy" handwashing dance aired on Last Week Tonight with John Oliver to share the spirit of optimism against the Covid epidemic in Vietnam and the world. General election Trump vs Hilary 2016 Donald Trump caused great sympathy with television audiences and voters nationwide when he appeared on The Tonight show and let host Jimmy Fallon



play with his infamous ‘orange-mop’ hair. Kpop phenomenon Twice, when touring the US, performed the hit "I Can't Stop Me" on A Late Show with Stephen Colbert. The famous cast of the global film phenomenon Marvel Cinematic Universe are often guests on Late Night Talk shows before and after the premiere of their blockbuster movies. Taylor Swift's global tour, Black Pink's, etc.

3.2.2. Taking on the role of a bridge and an impartial "third party"

Late Night Talk shows are the "outsider", "public side" and "third party" to act as a bridge, when mediating when being fair, when acting as a representative to interact, ask questions, joke, listen to politicians, celebrities, academic elites, etc. Normally, it is difficult for the public to have the opportunity to meet, converse from an intimate perspective, and take the initiative like through such talk shows.

3.2.3. No distinction between policy media and entertainment media

Painful and prominent issues of contemporary society such as spiritual belief fraud, disguised loan sharking, the US-China trade war, Trump wants to build a wall on the US-Mexico border, etc. are all featured on talk shows and Late Night Talk shows in the US. These programs have since then functioned as ‘official’ discourse for US politics but are not considered a mouthpiece for the mainstream media and government.

For example: This is a list of some topics and episode names of the first season of HBO's Weekend News with John Oliver. Some episodes are copyrighted and shown exclusively on HBO. If you just look at this list of topics without knowing about the program, it is difficult for anyone to imagine that this is a Late Night Talk show with musical performances and high entertainment.

Theme/Episode Original premiere date	Original premiere date	U.S. viewers (millions)
Death penalty	May 4, 2014	1.19
Climate Change Denial	May 11, 2014	1.01
Right to be forgotten (Google Spain v AEPD and Mario Costeja González)	May 18, 2014	1.03
Net Neutrality	June 1, 2014	0,99
FIFA (discuss allegations of corruption, human rights violations, bribery, etc. of FIFA before the World Cup and the downsides of the host country)	June 8, 2014	0,95

Immigration reform in the United States	June 15, 2014	0,91
Dr. Oz's June 2014 Senate hearing	June 22, 2014	0,89
Income inequality and wealth inequality	July 13, 2014	0,84
Incarceration in the United States	July 20, 2014	0,92
Nuclear weapons and the United States	July 27, 2014	1,00
Payday loans	August 10, 2014	0,94
Shooting of Michael Brown and police militarization	August 17, 2014	1.03
Student debt	September 7, 2014	0,66

Source: Wikipedia English, List of Last Week Tonight with John Oliver episodes, 17/9/2023)

3.2.4. Professional production

Serious topic, investigated information, images used, quotes from leaders are all from public sources and there is a unit in charge of the program's copyright. The content is presented in easy-to-understand terms, old concepts are explained, how it affects society and consumers of all ages, etc., and are all presented with a satirical, subtle, and intimate perspective, thus still retaining entertainment, educational value, and some level of journalism. Each episode of these Late Night Talk shows usually has an average of 5-10 content writers, guest experts, 2-3 producers, and a content censorship board to work end-to-end and limit the hosts from overstepping boundary. Topics/questions which are sensitive, off-limits, and cannot be mentioned live are tested in front of audience, there is professional performance studio for live performances, etc. From there, the episodes of Talk show or News-of-the-week, ‘This Weekend’ have a high potential to spread. they can be watched for entertainment as well as to educate audience about new issues that even the audience themselves are not interested in prior or had no intention of learning from the beginning.

Humor and satire not only have the effect of attracting audiences because humorous content is the group of content that has the most ability to spread and be shared in cyberspace. It is also an effective intermediary stepping stone for the program and its guests when facing serious and sensitive questions so that both sides can move forward and backward, avoiding being forced into a dilemma to give an official answer or information. Controversial political and social opinions can also be easier to receive and listen to if the way of posing and explaining the issue is gentle, without being harsh or forcing others to agree with you. President Obama was a master at speaking in a confident and smart manner can win over the public even before making point.



3.2.5. Diversity of content

A diverse media ecosystem allows different representatives and discourses on the same topic, thereby allowing television channels with different audience groups to maintain or change the direction of their content: For example, interviews and updates about artists and celebrities with Stephen Colbert; Thoroughly researched short reports dedicated to prominent news topics or events such as Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, Late Night with Jimmy Fallon are more about skits and comedy acts, celebrity interviews, music, and video games; Jimmy Kimmel Live specializes in political satire and more.

Many countries have also made efforts to bring the talk show format, Late Night Talk into the domestic media ecosystem but often have not achieved the desired effect. Many people believe that strict censorship makes these formats unsuitable, but the real key lies in two things: 1) *Not balancing the boundary between purely light-hearted entertainment and pure seriousness.* For example, in Vietnam Tonight's Talk with Thanh with Southern entertainment biggest name Tran Thanh soon faced opposition from both the mass audience and the mainstream media because it was too indulgent in dramas and digging into his private life. create stories about artists and the entertainment industry that public opinion is all too familiar with. 2) *The aspect of profound, sophisticated, and educational social discourse or popular culture pulse has not been properly explored or taken seriously in the mainstream media.* What domestic public opinion is concerned about or what is new in the world is rarely noticed. From there, the inevitable result is that it is too diluted, not genuine enough then it cannot attract adult audiences; if It's too bland, not trendy enough, it won't attract a young audience. Many Indian Youtubers and social influencers are quick to catch up to this, in-tune with the golden age of social media in India when everything is fresh and exciting.

3.3. Collect data effectively for policy communication and social investigation using data from the entertainment industry - the field with the largest traffic in the lives of modern people

One of the biggest difficulties in working in the media in general and policy communication in particular is quantifying the level of media influence and increasing the mass audience's response to political and social issues that the government is interested in to push. On the other hand, statistical studies based on interviews and market research have difficulty with sample size, the effectiveness of questions, and the honesty of respondents. Cyberspace in general, consumer data in particular, and consumer interactions in entertainment areas often have a high level of stimulating immediate feedback and unfiltered thoughts and aspirations of the audience due to the 'anonymous' nature of the internet and the highly emotional evocative nature of the entertainment industry.

There were two big tests of the effectiveness of policy communication in the United States in particular and the world in general in our time: the Covid pandemic and Donald Trump's election campaign. In both of these events, from the efforts to manipulate public opinion, emotions, and behavior of the masses to

the US media's predictions about Donald Trump's victory and the evolution of the Covid epidemic, the mainstream media all failed to a significant degree.

You can easily observe the number of views, number of followers, and audience comments for mainstream media compared to entertainment programs. Which content will have a stronger spread and gain more attention from public opinion and thereby have a stronger influence in shaping the thinking of the masses.

4. The Sunset of the Mainstream American Press Media and the Rise of Independent Entertainment Media

4.1. The Decline of Local News

Technological and economic assaults have destroyed the for-profit business model that sustained local journalism in this country for two centuries. While the advertising-based model for local news has been under threat for many years, the COVID-19 pandemic and recession have created what some describe as an "extinction-level" threat for local newspapers and other struggling news outlets. More than one-fourth of the country's newspapers have disappeared, leaving residents in thousands of communities living in vast news deserts.

The latest report by Penny Abernathy, Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics at the UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media, titled News Deserts and Ghost Newspaper: Will Local News Survive? reveals an increasingly dire situation for local news. The economic fallout from the coronavirus has accelerated the decline in local newspapers – at least 30 newspapers closed or merged in April and May 2020, dozens of newspapers switched to online-only delivery, and thousands of journalists at legacy and digital news operations have been furloughed or laid off. All of this raises fears of the collapse of the country's local news ecosystem. (Ardia D., Ringel E., Ekstrand V.S., Fox A., 2023)

The issues facing the local news ecosystem are systemic. The newspaper industry enjoyed prolonged success due to a stable business model, but the industry's inability to evolve in the face of financial adversity and technological change has rendered that model largely obsolete. Online platforms capture a significant portion of overall advertising spending by leveraging user data. Local news organizations cannot offer the same level of targeting and have been unable to attract the advertising revenue necessary to remain financially sustainable. Many local news sources have been forced to scale back their reporting efforts or rely on third-party content.

77% of US journalists interviewed would still choose a career in journalism, although 57% are very concerned about future restrictions on freedom of press.

Based on Pew Research Center's new 2022 survey of nearly 12,000 journalists working in the United States, journalists identify serious challenges in the news media with a broader perspective. Indeed, when asked to describe their industry in a single word, almost three-quarters of journalists surveyed (72%) used a word with

negative connotations, with the most common response being words related to “struggle” and “chaos.” Other less common negative adjectives include “biased” and “partisan,” as well as “difficult” and “stressful.” (Gottfried Jeffrey, Mitchell Amy, Jurkowitz Mark, June 14, 2022).

The survey of 11,889 US journalists, conducted from February 16 to March 17, 2022 (Blazina Carrie, 14.6.2022), identified several specific areas of concern for journalists, including the future of press freedom propaganda, the spread of misinformation, political polarization, and the impact of social media.

More than half of the journalists surveyed (57%) said they were “extremely” or “very” concerned about the possibility of press restrictions being imposed in the United States. And about 7 in 10 journalists (71%) say fake news and information is a huge problem for the country, higher than the 50% of U.S. adults who say the same thing. At the same time, four in 10 journalists say news organizations are generally doing a poor job of managing or correcting misinformation.

Even when journalists recognize audience bias, they still express deep concern about the political classification of their news reading habits, with three-quarters of those surveyed saying it is a big problem when people with similar political views get their news from the same news organizations. However, the American public seems much less worried: About 4 in 10 American adults (39%) say this is a serious problem. To be able to compare journalists' views and public views on certain important issues, PEW Research Center conducted two separate surveys at the same time as the journalists' survey, posed some of the same questions to about 10,000 American adults in the Center's American Movement Department.

Maintaining widespread journalistic credibility in a polarized environment can seem like an impossible task – and many journalists seem to be aware of this. While three-quarters of journalists say journalists largely agree on the basics of the news – even if they report it in different ways – about half of the journalists surveyed (52%) say it is impossible to report news that “nearly everyone finds accurate.” An even larger share of the general U.S. public (62%) say it is impossible to report news accurately and still be accepted by a majority (Blazina Carrie, 14.6.2022).

4.1.1. The gap between mass media and the public is increasing.

The survey results show that journalists admit that the public views them and their products with deep skepticism. When asked what words they thought the public would use to describe today's news industry, journalists overwhelmingly gave negative answers, with many predicting that the public would describe the media as “inaccurate,” “unreliable,” “biased,” or “partisan.” (See PEW's research methodology for more details. Blazina Carrie, 14.6.2022)

Furthermore, only 14% of journalists surveyed said they think the U.S. public has a great deal or a fair amount of confidence in the information they receive from news organizations today. Most

believe that Americans in general have little to no faith (44%) or no faith (42%) in mainstream news. When a similar question was posed to the public, 29% of U.S. adults said they had some trust in the information they received from news outlets, while 27% said they had some trust, and 44% have little or no trust at all (Blazina Carrie, 14.6.2022).

The disconnect between journalists and the public also emerged when each group was asked about the product news organizations were doing with the five core functions of journalism: reporting the most important stories in the news, report accurate news, serve as a monitor agency for elected leaders, give voice to the disadvantaged and manage or correct misinformation. In all five areas, journalists were much more positive than the public when it came to evaluating the output of news organizations. And on four out of five items, Americans overall are more likely to say the media is doing a bad job than a good job. For example, while 65% of journalists say news organizations are doing a very good or somewhat good job with accurate reporting, 35% of the public agrees, while 43% of U.S. adults say Journalists perform this function very poorly (Blazina Carrie, 14.6.2022).

4.1.2. The sunset of Late Night Talk in the American entertainment industry

Now the Late Night Talk shows themselves are at a crossroads between keeping the old motif to compete with the independent entertainment industry or having a stronger policy media voice to attract support from the United States government before the era of independent entertainment took over. The average viewership of these programs has decreased by 30% to more than half after the Covid epidemic period when they tried to create content with strong censorship, reducing entertainment and making it more “traditional”, polarizing political opinion in the U.S, promoting political partisanship and avoid positions that stray too far from official government information.

If there were two things Americans never could have predicted 10 years ago, they would be the political rise of Donald Trump and the cultural demise of late-night comedy (Joseph A. Wulfsohn, 7.10. 2022).

The concept of a late-night comedian remaining apolitical or provocative to both sides is a thing of the past as hosts now often use their opening monologues to relentlessly criticize Trump and Republicans in general. An early sign of this dramatic turn in comedy came in May 2017 when “The Late Show” host Stephen Colbert told Trump, “The only thing your mouth is good at is being became Vladimir Putin's c*** holster.” Colbert retracted the comments days later after public backlash and accusations of homophobia but did not issue any apology. The veteran CBS anchor did not suffer any consequences. Colbert is the king of Late Night TV as “The Late Show” became the most-watched late-night show of the Trump era, averaging about 3 million viewers from 2017-2019 (Joseph A. Wulfsohn, 7.10. 2022).

“His show, like many other late-night shows, has become a platform to promote support for DNC candidates and talking points, without challenging them to answer any of the difficult



questions of today's society." Political satirist Tim Young told Fox News Digital.

"The more big-name Democrats Colbert flirts with, the better because he is a political activist first and a comedian second," comedian and Fox Nation host Jimmy Failla told Fox News Digital. "The whole value of his existence is to help the Democratic Party gain moral superiority for its viewers because that's what the direction of the Democratic Party is about" (Joseph A. Wulfsohn, 7.10. 2022).

But with Trump out of office, Colbert's Democratic audience dropped to an average of 2.1 million viewers in 2022, a 27% loss from his peak, and he lost his title as Night King, late in recent months.

Perhaps one of Late Night Talk's biggest falls was that of "Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon, who remained largely apolitical compared to his direct competitors. In 2016, the NBC show dominated late-night programming with 3.3 million viewers, but by 2022, the show only averaged 1.4 million viewers, a loss of nearly 60% of its audience (Joseph A. Wulfsohn, 7.10. 2022).

4.2. *Difficulty of the US government arms in building amicable public trust*

"People actively hate us," one recently retired U.S. Border Patrol agent complains in a New York Times piece on morale and recruitment problems at the federal agency. In El Paso, an active duty agent admitted he and his colleagues avoid many restaurants because "there's always the possibility of them spitting in your food" (Tuccille J.D. 19.9.2019).

What's remarkable about the piece isn't the poor treatment directed at many Border Patrol agents; it's that you could replace "Border Patrol" with the name of any one of several other federal agencies and find a similar news story from recent years. Many arms of government are unpopular with large swathes of the American population, and people are not shy about expressing their contempt.

"Americans' opinions about Immigration and Customs Enforcement are deeply polarized: 72% of Republicans view ICE favorably, while an identical share of Democrats view it unfavorably," Pew Research Center reported last year on opinions about Border Patrol's sister agency. With specific regard to Border Patrol, "Among Republican voters, 65% believe the enforcement is too lenient while just 12% say it is too harsh. Democrats are more divided but lean in the opposite direction: 40% say too harsh and 22% too lenient," according to pollster Scott Rasmussen. The heated debate between the two legacy parties over immigration is reflected in their attitudes toward and treatment of, government agencies tasked with enforcing immigration laws (Hout Michael; Maggio Christopher, 2021).

It's the same for the FBI. "The 23-percentage-point gap in views of the FBI among Republicans and Democrats is among the widest of the 10 agencies and departments asked in the survey," Pew noted about the beleaguered law enforcement agency (Pew Research Center, 14.2.2018).

Americans don't agree about which federal agencies they hate, but the fact that significant numbers of them do openly despise government workers plays havoc with morale. That, in turn, slams employee retention and recruitment. Border Patrol is about 1,800 agents short of its hiring targets, IRS workers are heading for the exits, and even the fabled FBI saw a drop in applications,

4.3. *Content creators are more influential than politicians and celebrities*

Asking for a smartphone or accessing any social network account of people in all professions, we can easily observe the number of subscribers, interactions, and followers. Most will be celebrities, artists, gamers, streamers or politicians, mainstream journalists, and leading industry experts. On the contrary, US politicians now have to find opportunities to collaborate, appear or sponsor social media stars to gain the sympathy of these large and far-reaching fan communities. Except for exceptions like Donald Trump, who is always sought after by the media and the public, it is difficult for government officials or mainstream media agencies to have a large and stable viewership like social media stars.

For example: As of July 2023, the most followed channel on the Twitch platform belongs to Ninja with more than 18.6 million followers. The female streamer with the most followers is Pokimane with more than half of Ninja's followers at 9.4 million. MrBeast's Youtube channel has 180 million subscribers, PewDiePie has 111 million subscribers, Black Pink's channel has 91.2 million subscribers, etc (Stanton Rich, 4 June 2024).

Another example, member of the US House of Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez often collaborates with famous Streamers and plays online games with them. Trump and Hilary Clinton have both been guests on Late Night Talk shows many times before and after their presidential runs to gain sympathy from public opinion and gauge public reaction. Leading infectious disease expert and former Chief Medical Advisor to U.S. President Anthony Fauci sat next to Colbert to receive his extra COVID shot on TV, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., appeared at least four times on "The Late Show" to promote the Democratic agenda ahead of the midterm elections. In 2019, "The Late Show" became a must-have for Democratic presidential candidates running in the 2020 primaries. Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg, and Cory Booker both stopped by the Ed Sullivan Theater, and Kirsten Gillibrand and Eric Swalwell announced their candidacies on Colbert's Late Night Talk show, something previously unheard of in US presidential politics (Flegenheimer Matt, April 13, 2019).

Conclusion

Talk shows involve a host responsible for furthering the agenda of the show by mediating, instigating, and directing the conversation to ensure the purpose is fulfilled. The purpose of talk shows is to either address or bring awareness to conflicts, to provide information, or to entertain.

However, it is time for the rise of "outsider" experts and amateur social and political commentators. When people spend most of

their free time on Youtube and social networks, it is not difficult to imagine that almost all important information, knowledge, opinions, and personal relationships are built. and search these cyberspaces, along with personalities and computer bots in the chat and interactions of audiences consuming the same content as them. From there, it inevitably leads to the fact that in addition to the original content of the video or post, the viewing audience will also bring with them all concerns and concerns such as climate change, price storms, the Ukraine war, the Covid epidemic, etc. gender discrimination etc. and their personal socio-political views into cyberspace; causing the channel owner, account owner and representative face of these social network accounts to become subjects to ask, seek advice, complain, criticize or argue when off-topic discussions break out. Or if the owner actively chooses this sensitive, controversial content to attract audiences and build their brand.

Social network channel owners themselves will inevitably become idols, role models, fulcrums, sources of information, or advice givers on private, prominent issues that fans find difficult to deal with or to share with people outside this fandom community, including family, relatives, and workplace.

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