The results of the 25-year experiment in 24/7 cable "news" are now in.

What cable news is really good at: Michael Jackson, runaway brides, missing blondes, Christmas Eve murders, Princess Di, hurricanes, tsunamis, propaganda, whiz-bang graphics, scary theme music, polls, hair, gotcha, HeadOn, “Thanks for having me,” people who begin every answer to an antagonistic questions with, “Look,” people who say, "I didn't interrupt you when you were talking," and “We'll have to leave it there.”

Here’s what cable news is not so good at: insight, context, reflection, proportion,perspective, humility, information, analysis, news,

I’ll spot you an exception or two on each of the networks. Personally, I can't live without Olbermann, and I've recently developed a soft spot for Cafferty.

But over all, the cable news performance we’re witnessing this last crucial week before the election is a case study in hysteria, onanism and pomposity that would make the authors of the First Amendment cry.

I know, I know: Don’t watch. No one else does. After all, compared to broadcast programs, cable shows barely register. I just wish I felt more confident that in this era of allegedly unprecedented media abundance, the quality of information reaching citizens — not just available to them, but actually taken in by them — were equal to the gravity of our terrible times.

Follow Marty Kaplan on Twitter: www.twitter.com/martykaplan