

## Cutting the Cord: Acorn TV bullish on British TV

 Mike Snider, USA TODAY 7:26 a.m. EDT May 17, 2014

*It's no mystery that Acorn TV has a growing audience online.*



*Stars of Agatha Christie's Poirot, from left, Pauline Moran as Miss Lemon, Philip Jackson as Inspector Japp, David Suchet as Hercule Poirot, Hugh Fraser as Capt. Hastings (Photo: Acorn TV)*

My little gray cells tell me that my wife will soon become a convert to Net TV.

Like many mystery TV lovers, she is devoted to *Agatha Christie's Poirot*, a U.K.-produced series shown here in the U.S. on PBS. In addition to watching the mysteries on TV, we have owned DVD editions and now have most of them on Blu-ray. Like kids rewatching *Dora the Explorer*, we constantly revisit episodes having forgotten the red herring or plot twist.

Here's a new twist: The final episodes of *Poirot*, already broadcast overseas, will initially only be available on Acorn TV, a well-stocked destination for

over-the-top content that's delivered on the Net, bypassing traditional video-on-demand services.

The final episodes of the long-running series, which began airing in the U.K. in 1989, will be shown in the U.S. this summer. The first two of five episodes, titled *The Big Four* and *Dead Man's Folly*, land on PBS' *Masterpiece Mystery!* on consecutive Sundays, July 27 and Aug. 3.

But the final three movies or episodes will premiere only on Acorn TV, which you can find on [www.Acorn.TV](http://www.Acorn.TV) and on the Net TV device [Roku](#), where Acorn TV has a channel. *Elephants Can Remember* hits the service on Aug. 11, followed by *Labours of Hercules* on Aug. 18 and *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case* on Aug. 25.

You could wait until much later this year when Acorn plans to make the final *Poirot* episodes available to individual public TV stations in November. But I know my wife and I won't want to.

For the record, our home is not a cord-cutting home or even a cord-shaving home. As a die-hard sports fan, I insist on having DirecTV on one TV.

We have Verizon FiOS TV programming on two other TVs — and FiOS broadband in our home. This set up helps me, as a tech geek, track the latest in Net TV offerings and over-the-air options, as well as the growing features on pay-TV services.

Whether you are a fan of British TV or quality programming, in general, I encourage you to explore Acorn TV. It's already stocked with complete series including *I, Claudius*, *Upstairs, Downstairs*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Prime Suspect* (Helen Mirren) and *The Forsyte Saga* (Damien Lewis of *Homeland*).



Ian McKellen (as Estragon) and Patrick Stewart (as Vladimir) in 'Waiting for Godot,' from the documentary, 'Theatreland.' (Photo: Photo by Sasha Gusov, courtesy of Acorn TV)

It's also the only streaming service with the latest seasons of *Foyle's War* and *George Gently*. Some new exclusives this month that caught my eye: the reality series *Theatreland*, a behind-the-scenes look at London's historic Haymarket Theatre where Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart performed *Waiting for Godot*, and the documentary series *Civil War: The Untold Story*, narrated by Elizabeth McGovern (*Downton Abbey*).

Using a Roku USB stick plugged into my Oppo Universal Disc player, I surfed over to the Acorn TV channel and watched portions of *Theatreland* and *Civil War* and quickly got sucked in. And the video was superb. (I do

connect my Oppo directly to my router via Ethernet.)

Launched in July 2011, the service costs \$4.99 monthly or \$49.99 annually after a free 30-day trial. "Acorn TV continues to provide a welcome alternative for viewers looking for highly entertaining international content that can't be found anywhere else," said Miguel Penella, CEO of RLJ Entertainment, which owns Acorn.

In addition to viewing on Roku devices, you can watch Acorn TV on various tablets and devices through a web browser, too. For more information see Acorn TV's FAQ.



A trailer previewing the upcoming 13th season of 'Agatha Christie's Poirot,' which is coming to Acorn TV this summer. Acorn TV

*"Cutting the Cord" is a new regular column covering Net TV and ways to get it.*

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/personal/2014/05/17/cutting-the-cord-acorn-tv/9184875/>