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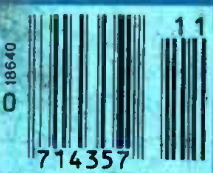
'Tinker, Tailor...' Is Coming —
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By Roger Kahn

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CONTENTS

OCTOBER 1980

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 9

ARTICLES

34 Behind TV's Angelgate Mess: How Dirty Deals Work and Why Hollywood Loves Them



A report from the inside
By Arthur Wellesley

40 The Case of the Scared Spy Novelist and the Skeptical Actor

Adapting "Tinker, Tailor . . ." for
TV proved to be a formidable task
By John le Carré

42 The Viewers' Verdict—So Far—on Cable TV

Here are the results of a special
PANORAMA survey
By Stanley Marcus

46 Coming to You Live . . . from Potholes and Trash Baskets

Ratings madness sometimes
blinds local newscasters to
substance and fact
By Ginnia Wood and Ernest
Volkman

50 Flash! Youthin-Asia Wins the Gold for Knocking Out Balloons

The first Electronic Olympic
Games featured feverish knob-
twisting, yawning spectators and
sore losers
By Merrill Shindler

52 Finally—More Sound and Less Fury

After much to-do, TV audio has
come of age
By David Lachenbruch

58 "The Danger Is to Walk Through Life Without Seeing Anything"



Carl Sagan and his "Cosmos"
team have spent \$8 million
creating visions of the universe
By Paul Preuss

62 What's Missing from TV's Presidential Debates

These confrontations—in the eyes
of a famed writer—are usually as
spontaneous as arson
By Roger Kahn

64 A Star Is Born



Mare Winningham's success will
depend largely on some
calculated business decisions
By Alan Carnal

68 Is Pay-Cable More Exciting than Network TV?

A careful observer explores the
differences
By Ron Powers

72 Video Makes New Waves

Today's trendy discos feature
more than music and dancing
By Howard Polskin

76 The Lady or the Pirates?

A TV sports fan faces a
scheduling conflict—his wedding
or his ball games
By Dick Friedman

78 So Tell Us, Mr. Wooten, Don't You Feel a Little Dirty Now, Being in Television?

What happened when a respected
print journalist switched to video
By James Wooten

DEPARTMENTS

4 Letters

6 Perspective

By Richard Reeves

8 Impressions

By Cyra McFadden

11 Cable and Pay-TV

By Seth Goldstein

13 This Month

18 Q&A: Garry Marshall

Interview by David Frost

26 Panoramic View

104 Sports

By John Schulian

106 Videocassettes and Discs

By David Lachenbruch

108 Home Computers

By Ted Nelson

110 Yesterdays

112 Rear View

By Harry Stein

Cover. *Charlie's Angels*. Art by
Aerographics. Other picture
credits on page 108.

PANORAMA MAGAZINE (ISSN 0191-8591) IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY TRIANGLE COMMUNICATIONS INC., 850 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022. PLEASE ADDRESS ALL EDITORIAL MAIL TO PANORAMA MAGAZINE, P. O. BOX 950, WAYNE, PENNSYLVANIA 19087. ADDRESS ADVERTISING MAIL TO PANORAMA MAGAZINE, 850 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022. SUBSCRIPTIONS: UNITED STATES, ONE YEAR \$15.00. CANADA AND MEXICO, ONE YEAR U.S. \$21.00. ALL OTHER COUNTRIES, U.S. \$30.00. REMIT BY CHECK OR POSTAL MONEY ORDER. CURRENCY SENT AT SUBSCRIBER'S RISK. SEND NO STAMPS. SUBSCRIPTIONS WILL START WITHIN SIXTY DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF ORDER. SEND SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE TO PANORAMA, SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT, RAD-

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LETTERS



Take That, Quincy!

Regarding "Another Day, Another Tantrum" (July), I wish that Jack Klugman would realize that *Quincy* needs better acting just as desperately as it needs better scripts.

Jack's comedic technique on *The Odd Couple* was virtually flawless, and I still enjoy the reruns the fifth time around. But as Quincy he chews up the scenery like a scavenging hyena mad with hunger. In his moments of high drama, his propensity for overkill leaves one wondering if he's for real or is simply camping it up for his own amusement.

Somewhere between sleepwalking and sheer frenzy there must be a happy medium. But then, I don't even like Walter Cronkite—so what do I know?

William L. Bennett
Muskegon, Mich.

As a professional TV writer with ambitions to write for network TV, I found your article on Jack Klugman and his war over scripts interesting. Knowing of *Quincy's* script problems, I submitted a script to the series last year. What happened to that script illustrates one of the major problems facing *Quincy*.

April 24, 1979, I mailed "Charity Begins at Home"; the script dealt with the serious problems of dishonest charities. On April 30, I received confirmation that they had received my script; in a personal letter I was told that *Quincy's* story editors were looking at it. For nine months that was all I heard. Finally, March 4, 1980, I received word . . . in all of the production company changes [*Quincy* had gone through], my script had gotten lost. And to add to that, I was told that the new story editor, Mr. Sam Egan, had decided to no longer accept unsolicited material.

I must question the wisdom of a script-hungry series shutting its door to all us writers who are without the benefit of an agent. If there is a moral in my experience, it must be that any

series that is unstable in the creative side can never expect to produce quality entertainment.

Michael Shonk
Gonzales, La.

A Woman's Role

Hooray! Finally an article about women reporters ("Don't Look Back, Barbara Walters," July). I think that it's about time this world found out the importance of women reporters who work behind and on the scene to report the news. They deserve lots of credit from television viewers. After all, why replace Cronkite with a man? Women are equally as good as men. You did a great job, Ms. Hirshey! God bless all female reporters:

Yuki Fujimoto
New York City

After reading Gerri Hirshey's article, I was appalled at her exclusion of Third World women who also play a very important role in daily television news-gathering. For example, Carole Simpson, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Connie Chung, Royal Kennedy and, to a lesser degree, Jayne Kennedy. Please, next time, parity for Third World women in the television news industry.

Ricardo Trujillo
Producer, KNME-TV
Albuquerque, N.M.

"Don't Look Back, Barbara Walters" lists eight new-breed newswomen. Here is a suggestion for a ninth: NBC News' Carol Marin of Chicago.

Every American TV viewer is missing half of TV if they do not subscribe to PANORAMA. Every American TV viewer is missing half of TV without Carol Marin filling the now too-long-empty shoes of Barbara Walters as a regular news anchorwoman.

Frank Haile
Knoxville, Tenn.

Who's Laughing?

In your article on, pardon the expression, "canned laughter" in the July issue ("Those Devilish Machines Get the Last Laugh"), the author spent too much effort in defense of these brainwashing devices (laughter machines) and not enough in covering the real issue. It is only in the last sentence of the three-page article that Shindler gets to the meat of the matter. "The only real problem with them (laugh tracks) is that, sometimes, it's hard to tell whether it's the audience or the

show that needs them the most." This thought might best be used as a topic sentence rather than a summation, steering the article in the direction it should have gone: i.e., what is wrong with the quality of the shows that they need the aid of a laugh track to evoke laughter?

What the shows need are some writers and actors who know their craft and know how to entertain people. I find it hard to believe that, with the incredible amounts of money being taken in during each commercial minute, the producers cannot afford to hire the cream of the crop. If a show needs the crutch of a laugh track to coax laughter from the audience, then it probably was not worth the effort, or lack of same, to produce.

Jerold Goldstein
Fairfield, Conn.

Being probably one of the biggest fans of *Diff'rent Strokes*, I could not believe the implication [in "Those Devilish Machines"] that the show is not funny. It is funny; however, Southern California audiences can't appreciate the humor of New York City (where the show takes place). It's sad that the rest of the country can't appreciate the local color of *Diff'rent Strokes* as they do, say, *The Dukes of Hazzard* or *Dallas*. That, I feel, is the reason that *Diff'rent Strokes* is sweetened—we don't all live on Park Avenue.

David Alan Mackey
Oakhurst, N.J.

Merrill Shindler's piece on laugh tracks—sorry, "audio postproduction"—was rather amusing. Both style and content serve to justify PANORAMA's claim to fame as a magazine about "Television Today and Tomorrow." Quite the opposite was the Q&A piece with Sylvester "Pat" Weaver that ran in the same issue. The contrast was startling. While Mr. Shindler's article on a lighter side of television production was informative and altogether interesting, Mr. Weaver's boorish answers to questions posed cast a dark cloud over the entire industry.

If television is as bad as Mr. Weaver says it has become since he left the industry, perhaps PANORAMA might do well to pick a new subject to cover.

Anthony S. Ricci
Utica, N.Y.

Is This the Same Pat Weaver?

Thank you for a fine magazine—and especially for the Q&A with Sylvester

Weaver in the July issue. The name Weaver is, of course, a household word, but until I read this article I knew little about his views, which are very refreshing. One particular comment of his interested me especially: "... go right around the world and talk about the major news stories in England and France ... so that people would have the feeling they were part of a planetary society. ..." I like that very much.

*Mrs. Sam Percy
Pelham, N. Y.*

Readers' Roundup

I'd really like to say how much I enjoyed the July issue of PANORAMA. I especially liked the article by Frazier Moore on *Breaking Away* ("Breaking Away Tries Out a Faster Track"). It's the first decent publicity I've seen so far. The article was excellently written and the photos were even better. Thanks for the inside info, Frazier—you really outdid yourself! Not only from myself, but from many Cassidy fans ... we say, a job well done!

*Ava Allen
Newark, N.J.*

It's hardly surprising that Charles Lloyd Mallory is disillusioned with the broadcasting program at his college (Letters, June). After all, the vast majority of professors in that field are people who couldn't cut it in the broadcasting industry. A great many aren't much interested in new technology or how to utilize it. There is a tendency to teach the idea of the broadcaster as a great savior to the poor, wretched, uninformed masses; that broadcasting is a divine calling instead of a business (at least in the U.S.).

My advice to Charles Lloyd Mallory would be to leave the loons and dimbulbs of academe behind and go knocking on doors at stations in small markets (and there are plenty of those in Missouri). The only way to learn about broadcasting is to *do* it.

*Orin O'Neill
Bellevue, Wash.*

Correspondence for this column should be addressed to: Letters Department, PANORAMA, P.O. Box 950, Wayne, Pa. 19087. No anonymous correspondence will be published. Letters may be abridged because of space limitations. We regret that it will not be possible for us to reply individually to letter writers.



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PERSPECTIVE

By RICHARD REEVES

TV Forces the Issues— and That Can Be Dangerous

The image many of us will carry out of the 1980 Presidential campaign will be of Walter Cronkite dropping his face into his hands as an excited Lesley Stahl screamed: "It's Bush, Walter! It's Bush!" Oh, dear. Less than two hours before, Cronkite had been telling millions watching CBS that the Republican Vice Presidential nominee was going to be Gerald Ford.

We all make mistakes—particularly in journalism. Some newspapers went to press with headlines proclaiming that Republican candidate Ronald Reagan had selected Ford as his running mate—usually because editors at home believed Cronkite instead of their own reporters in Detroit. At the moment of CBS's embarrassment, I was in the press gallery, standing behind Don Campbell of the Gannett News Service. Campbell was sitting calmly at a video-display terminal connected to editors' desks around the country, writing, "Detroit—Ronald Reagan picked George Bush to be his

running mate. . . ." The words that appeared on the screen before him replaced, letter by letter, his earlier lead, "Detroit—Ronald Reagan, in the political coup of the year, persuaded Gerald Ford. . . ."

The difference between print and electronic journalism at Detroit was that networks, reporting live, have instantaneous deadlines. So their mistakes are more likely to be public. In their manic drive to make news interesting and to be first with each shard of it, CBS and ABC and NBC blew it—which is no big deal.

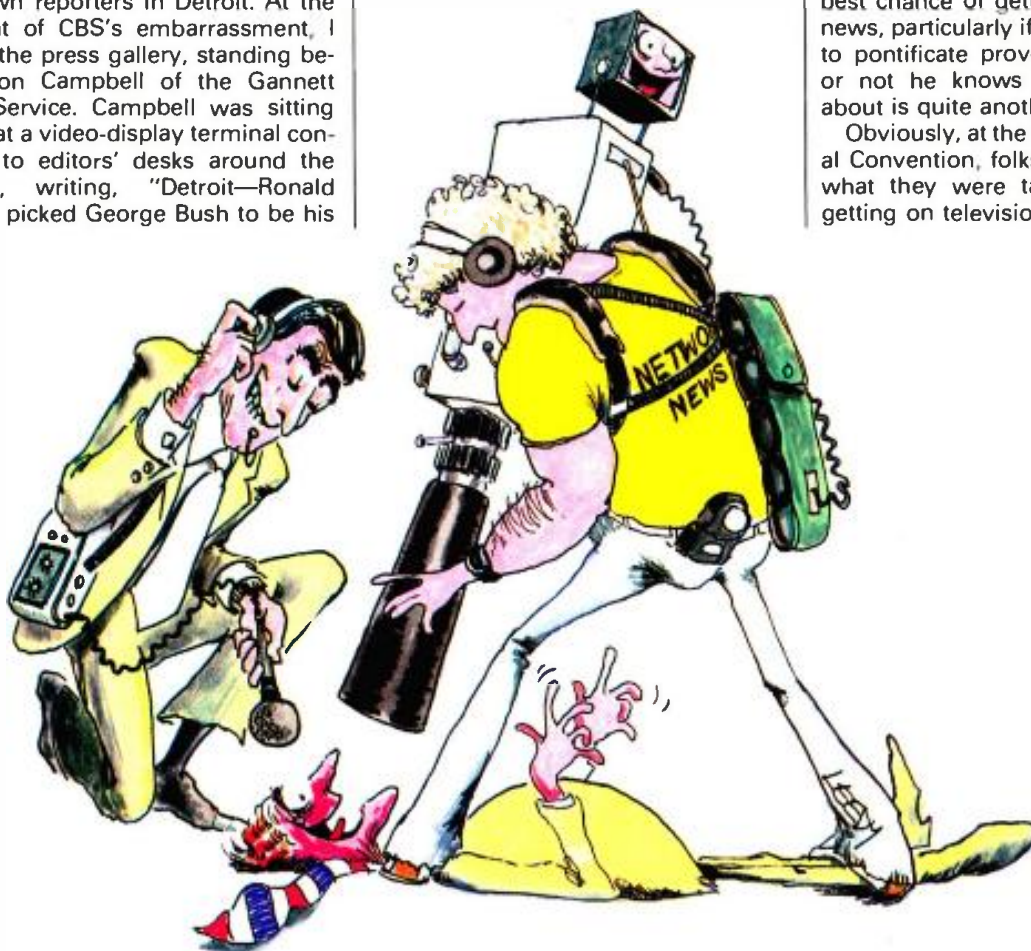
What was important about the disappearing Ford candidacy, it seems to me, was what it showed, quite dramatically, about political decision-making in modern America—about

government and leadership in media-land.

Television changes what we know and when we know it. That is equally true whether we are sitting home or are a candidate for President, or are the President. Television demands instant response. If you are a politician and ABC's Sam Donaldson sticks a microphone in your face and asks you what you think of the Russian invasion of Nova Scotia, you are not inclined to answer: "What invasion? I don't know anything about that."

Politicians are rarely inclined to admit ignorance. They are also not inclined to miss a chance to get on television. That's why you see senators and congressmen trotting toward cameras and correspondents in the Capitol after hearings on welfare or nuclear war or whatever. The first one there has the best chance of getting on the nightly news, particularly if he's quick enough to pontificate provocatively. Whether or not he knows what he's talking about is quite another matter.

Obviously, at the Republican National Convention, folks who didn't know what they were talking about were getting on television. Lesley Stahl got



excited when she heard a Reagan floor operative telling delegates that Bush was the man. There was some luck involved in the fact that this time he happened to be right.

The process feeds on itself—particularly in the closed universe of a political convention. The delegates on the floor of the Joe Louis Sports Arena in Detroit—just about the only people in America who couldn't get to television sets—had but the vaguest idea of what was going on that frenzied Wednesday night in July. Bands of delegates would follow television correspondents through the aisles and when they picked up a few overheard words—usually, "It looks like Ford, Walter"—they would run back to their delegations to report on what was happening. Or, at least, they would repeat what Dan Rather said was happening.

The "official" communications in Detroit—and at every convention I've ever been at—were an elaborate joke. All those red, white and blue telephones are more decorative than operative. Rep. Robert Michel of Illinois, who was Reagan's floor leader, tried to use the telephones to check out one of television's mistakes—"the Rather rumor," as it came to be known—a CBS report that Reagan and Ford were on their way to the convention hall. He tried to call Reagan and the lines to the nominee's hotel rang busy. He tried to call Republican national chairman Bill Brock and no one answered the phone on the podium.

Both CBS and NBC caught Michel, on-camera, banging around his telephones and talking about a Reagan-Ford motorcade. That scene was used to effectively confirm that the Rather rumor was true. Things get kind of circular when television is the main line of internal communication. In Detroit, television would drop a story into the convention hall and the thing would spread like neighborhood gossip, being exaggerated as it traveled. Sooner or later, usually sooner, another correspondent would pick up the expanded version and the spreading would start anew.

No real harm was done in Detroit—except to a few network egos. In fact, the performance was not as bad as a

similar network panic at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. That time, in Chicago, the networks—particularly NBC—had run wild with escalating stories of a "Draft Kennedy" (Edward Kennedy) movement. Delegations were running off the floor then to caucus on the question of whether to switch to Kennedy. With luck—and by not coming forth to debunk the rumors—Kennedy might have become the first candidate nominated by bad network reporting.

Someday, with bad luck, the whole country—or perhaps the whole world—might be as misdirected as that convention hall in Detroit. It's not hard, at least for me, to imagine a domestic crisis (a race riot, for instance) or an international one (a reported invasion somewhere) being escalated into something far worse by overeager reporting.

Part of the problem is that politicians—and those are the men and women who become local and national leaders—are not people who like to communicate directly with each other. It was no accident that when former President Ford wanted to get a message across to Reagan that July night, he decided to go on television with Cronkite and transmit his demands in what could later be dismissed as a sloppy interview. The politician's goal is to avoid committing himself. They prefer not to speak directly—physically or morally. If communication goes through staffs—or through the press—the guy on top can usually disassociate himself from anything that's said.

But the major problem in a television era—and the one that was dramatized that exciting night in Detroit—is that television inevitably tends to speed up the processes of decision-making. Sometimes too much. There could come a time when Dan Rather is with President X and Barbara Walters with Premier Y. Both correspondents, of course, would be asking questions that began "We understand . . ." and "What if. . ."

The answers, instantaneous, could be "Oh, yeah, tough guy?" followed by, "I'll show you. . . ." And then real hell could break loose . . . from just a misunderstanding. ■

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A Happy Marriage of Science and Show Biz

By CYRA McFADDEN

The 13-part BBC series *The Body in Question* sounds like another Lord Peter Wimsey murder mystery, but is instead a riveting thriller about what host and writer Jonathan Miller calls "the furnishings and fittings" of the human body. Having begun on public television here in late September, the series will intrigue anyone even a little curious about what he's got rattling around in there.

Miller, a tall, pleasant-faced man with a large nose, looks like a particularly intelligent horse. Known to American audiences as co-writer and performer in the popular revue "Beyond the Fringe," he is not only an accomplished actor, writer and director, but also a doctor. No one could be better suited to explain the workings of the human organism, and no one else could be as entertaining on the subject. Can you imagine Johnny Carson doing a funny, five-minute monologue on the pancreas?

The Body in Question illustrates Miller's lively lectures on anatomy, the history of medicine and the philosophy of science with demonstrations, minidramas and films from locations around the world. The first episode, "Naming of Parts," opens with an affecting look at the forms of men, women and children preserved in the lava of Pompeii. Later, it moves to a mortuary and a display of human organs; laid out neatly on a dissection table, they look unnervingly like what one sees in the super-market meat case.

In between, Miller reveals our all-but-universal ignorance about what goes on beneath our own skin. "Where's your heart?" he asks, stopping people at random on a London street. Where do you think your spleen is, and what does it do?"

The answers recall the skit from "Beyond the Fringe" in which a min-

er takes a quiz. "They ask you, 'Who are you?'" he says. "I got 75 percent on that one."

A middle-aged woman locates her heart in her chest but is not sure which side it's on. Asked where her liver is, she indicates it is somewhere north of her kneecap and makes a thumb-and-finger circle to show how big. "Mine's not as big as his," she tells Miller, pointing to a companion. "I'm a small woman, so I've got small instruments."

In response to "What would happen to you if your kidneys failed?" a young man with styled hair stares at Miller intently. "I'd die," he says.

"How?"

"I guess I'd explode."

Go ahead. Laugh. Then let's see you shut your eyes, rub your nose and pat your pancreas.

In succeeding episodes, Miller takes us through the entire process of a diagnosis; uses action-painting to show how the mind insists on imposing patterns; breathes into a machine that causes oxygen deprivation until he passes out. "I hope to see you next episode," he says, moments before he slumps unconscious.

Whatever his topic in a given program, he punctuates his discussion with striking pronouncements: "Swallowing is like crossing the Rubicon, the moment when conscious judgment is superseded by the automatic conveyor belt."

"The violence and atrocity of the 20th century is something peculiar to our own times. The normal behavior of primitive people is nowhere as savage as the abnormal behavior of the civilized."

Sometimes he throws out too much information, and too many ideas, too fast. One's brain overloads and sends up a wisp of smoke.



In *The Body in Question*, Miller uses the lava-encased victims of Mount Vesuvius as visual aids.

"What is this?" I thought grumpily, lost in a discussion of respiration. "Med. school in the privacy of your own home?" I cannot complain straight-faced, however, about being made to think too hard by a television program; not when the experience is as rare as the waiter who insists you've tipped too much.

The Body in Question is in the tradition of such programs as *The Ascent of Man* and *Nova*, series that attempt to demystify science and make it accessible to nonscientists. An unlikely marriage of science and show biz, these programs must strike a careful balance. Too much information, and they overwhelm; too little, presented too simplistically, and one wonders if he's accidentally tuned in a rerun of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

Less of a showboat than Jacob Bronowski, more impassioned about his subject than is often the case on *Nova*, Miller strikes just the right note. He has a relaxed we're-all-adults-here manner—which got me through a post-mortem without whimpering—and a self-deflating wit. Expounding on the liver, he stops himself with "I'm afraid I'm carried away with a sort of hepatic rhapsody."

If you don't go anywhere else this fall, don't miss his "tour of some of the darker corners of the gastrointestinal tract"; or Miller and Dudley Moore discussing the "neurological implications of piano playing"; or even that post-mortem. Juxtaposed with a film clip from Miller's own production of the opera "Orfeo," in a final episode called "Perishable Goods," it is oddly moving.

Besides, when that BBC film crew stops you on the street, you'll want to be more knowledgeable about the body than "the hip bone connecta to the thigh bone." ■

Our newest Video Director gives you 14 day programming, remote control with stop action and Speed Search* (fast forward and reverse with picture), 5 hour tape time, audio dubbing, electronic tuning, automatic indexing and superb picture quality.

The Video Director.

The 14 day Programmable Video Director

Just
what you'd expect
from Zenith.



*Beta III mode

The quality goes in before the name goes on.

ONE OF THE GREATEST INFLUENCES IN OUR LIVES IS THE LEAST UNDERSTOOD: TECHNOLOGY.

Watch "Connections" this Fall.
The 10-part series that
shows how technology
developed through the ages
and changed our lives today.
Presented by the Bell System.

When "Connections" appeared in the United States over PBS stations last year, the critics acclaimed the program.

As Peter Schuyten of The New York Times wrote: "...the series is an important undertaking for a society of viewers that on the one hand has been lulled by the time-saving, life-enriching, work-enhancing virtues of technology and has, on the other, felt the sting of technology run rampant."

Filmed in 19 countries and narrated by author James Burke, "Connections" traces the evolution of technology across 4,000 years of history.

Here's a summary of each episode. Don't miss any of them:

1. The Trigger Effect. Man's dependence on complex technologies, the New York City power blackout of 1965, and its beginning on the Nile River.

2. Death in the Morning. Precious metals, magnetism, atomic energy and the effect of Hiroshima, 1945.

3. Distant Voices. Global telecommunications that begin with the Battle of Hastings.

4. Faith in Numbers. Systems—political, economic, mechanical and electronic—and how some of them began with a prayer.

5. The Wheel of Fortune. Computers, our link to the future, and their ancestor: astrology.

6. Thunder in the Skies. The 13th century freeze that changed the course of history.

7. The Long Chain. Materials that were discovered through little accidents but triggered big changes.

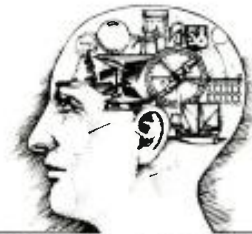
8. Eat, Drink and Be Merry. Switzerland, 1476, and the first steps that led to landing on the moon.

9. Countdown. The incredible events that led to Thomas Edison's remarkable inventions.

10. Yesterday, Tomorrow and You. Moments from the previous programs and then a challenging look at the future.

Check local listings for time and channel.

In this complex world, you'll want all the connections you can get.



CONNECTIONS

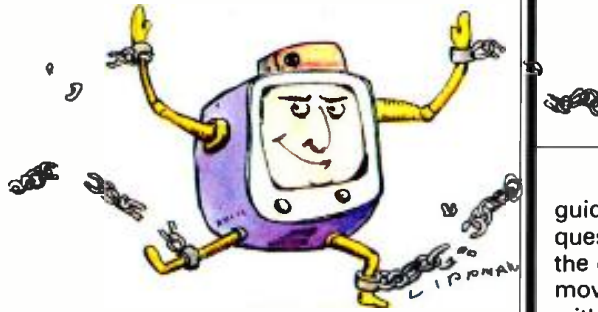
An alternative view of change

This program will be closed-captioned for the hearing impaired.



Bell System

Cable Lib



By SETH GOLDSTEIN

Cable television is free at last. This summer, the Federal Communications Commission lifted two major restrictions on the programming that can be offered by cable-system operators. No longer will they be limited in the number of out-of-town broadcast channels they can offer their subscribers, and no longer will they be debarred from showing syndicated programs, such as reruns of prime-time series, that are also available on local broadcast channels. In theory, at least, cablecasters now have the green light to fill their channels with just about any programming they can find.

But before viewers enter the Promised Land of cable abundance, there are a few small obstacles to be surmounted. First of all, the FCC's act of deregulation must withstand the rigors of a court test, since broadcasters intend to challenge it.

Secondly, the supply of satellite transponders (transmitting terminals) will need to increase considerably if there is to be a massive growth of programming. And thirdly, cable systems will have to find ways of expanding their channel capacity. About half of the 4200 systems currently in operation offer just 6-to-12 channels and would be unable to accommodate a large influx of signals from faraway places.

So though subscribers may consider that the news is good, it's a little too soon to throw a party.

Sleeping Giant?

Three men in Santa Rosa, Cal., think they have solved a problem that's overshadowing the new video and audio technologies. The problem is this: if you're a movie producer or program-maker, how do you collect royalties from all the people who are quietly taping your shows from tele-

vision on their home videocassette recorders? And furthermore, what's the point of selling your product on prerecorded cassettes if many of those same people, out for a fast buck, can pirate your movie or program and hawk it at half the price?

It was this kind of anxiety that lay behind the abortive attempt by two Hollywood companies, Universal City Studios and Walt Disney Productions, to have Sony's Betamax VCR declared illegal by the courts.

Now Alan Strachan, Charles Yarbrough and Joe Weisman, inventors of a system called Codart, are claiming that cable television, in conjunction with sophisticated electronics, is capable of plugging the software leaks.

Early next year, they and their partner, Bob Heyer, will set up a new service for local cable subscribers that will keep an exact record of who is taping what, and they will guarantee that programming suppliers will always get their dues.

Basically, Codart is a pay-per-view system, but with a difference. Rather than paying to *watch* a program at a predetermined time, Codart's customers will pay for the privilege of *taping* it—and the taping will take place in the middle of the night, when the cable channels are not being used for regular programming. A special microprocessor sold by Codart for \$95 will turn VCRs on and off, and will enable them to respond to the encoded signals of the programs being transmitted. As an additional security device, programs will be sent out in discontinuous segments throughout the night; by breakfast time, they will exist as complete tapes ready for viewing.

Subscribers will choose what they want to record from a varied mix of programming listed in a Codart

guide, and they will put in their requests by telephone. They will have the choice of paying, say, \$3 for a movie or getting it for nothing, but with the addition of commercials.

One might ask: why should a viewer go to all this trouble when movies are already available in profusion on the networks and on pay-TV, and it's so simple to record them?

Alan Strachan's answer is that Codart is not so much an additional service as the beginning of an entirely new TV environment, in which moviemakers will no longer sell their products for wholesale viewing, but instead will consign them to the Codart system, which ensures that, whenever a movie is taped, a percentage of the fee goes back to the producer. Of course, before this can happen, every VCR in the country will have to be fitted with the Codart microchip to prevent unauthorized duplication of tapes.

The optimistic Strachan thinks he can eventually persuade VCR manufacturers to incorporate the chip in their models, because he plans to give *them* a share of the taping fee, too. He sees benefits for everyone from Codart: the program-makers, whose copyrights will be protected; the hardware manufacturers, who will share in a new source of revenue; and not least the viewer, who will have a vast library of video material to choose from, at prices that will be a fraction of those currently charged for prerecorded cassettes. "We are moving," says Strachan, "from a live broadcast medium to a tape-based medium, and control will pass from the producer to the consumer."

The Codart millennium won't dawn until a lot of Hollywood executives are convinced that they should shift their allegiances from current TV outlets, thus forcing viewers into the new system. While waiting for that to happen, the infant Codart will have to cut its teeth on more modest fare, such as university video libraries. But will all those educational films be a match for "The Deer Hunter" on HBO? ■

Rich Lights from Viceroy



There's never been a low 'tar' with richer taste.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Kings, 9 mg. "tar", 0.7 mg. nicotine; 100's, 10 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Jan. '80.

THIS MONTH

OCTOBER 1980

Carson's Primal Dream . . . Hodding Probes the Press
. . . Does Kidvid Deceive? . . . From Python to Petruchio

WHAT'S HAPPENING

HOLLYWOOD

Don Shirley reporting

Points of view. Every year there are a few particularly trendy topics for TV-movies. Among the subjects in vogue this season are:

Rape. The rapist is no longer depicted as a scum-of-the-earth villain in this year's films; more attention is paid to his motivations. NBC's "Rage" will follow a rapist through a therapy program inside a prison, with the man's victim never seen. On CBS, "Rape and Marriage—The Rideout Case" will examine the Oregon incident in which a husband was accused—and acquitted—of raping his wife.

Divorce from the children's point of view. Such TV-movies as "Breaking Up" and "Once upon a Family" have shown how the wife and husband cope, respectively; now it's the kiddies' turn. A group of youngsters—from three different homes—will have their say in NBC's "Children of Divorce," while ABC's "The Day the Loving Stopped" will follow one child of divorce into adulthood.

The terminally ill. Linda Lavin will star as one of the first nurses to work in a hospice in CBS's "A Matter of Life and Death." The patients at a hospice take the spotlight in ABC's "The Shadow Box."

Prisons, the atomic bomb

and Nazis are also popular subjects this year. But not all of the trends are full of gloom and doom. The value of female camaraderie is another current favorite. This year we'll see women join the feminist movement ("The Women's Room," with Lee Remick) and the Army ("Army Woman"), play football ("The Oklahoma City Dolls"), fly airplanes ("D-Day Darlings") and get even ("Revenge of the Stepford Wives").

Johnny-come-early. Johnny Carson is finally ready for prime time.

The king of late-night TV won't actually be appearing on-screen, but his presence will make itself felt all the same—the result of a whopping production deal with NBC that guarantees Carson's company a new TV series on the air every year for the next three seasons, starting in fall 1981. The agreement pays for a minimum of 10 pilot scripts and three completed pilots each season. NBC will select the successful Carson series from the three pilots or from an untested concept that the Carson company may submit. A TV-movie each season is also part of the package.

Carson hired John J. McMahon (no relation to Ed), a former NBC executive, to run his company. But Carson himself will take an active role

in the creative decisions. The company will concentrate on the lucrative half-hour comedy form—which also happens to be NBC's most desperate need. Carson and McMahon are instant moguls—"No one has ever had this kind of commitment," notes McMahon, "especially no one who was starting from scratch."

Should anyone who is "starting from scratch" have such a commitment? Producer Grant Tinker, whose shows may compete with Carson's for time slots, says Carson deserves his clout and did the right thing by hiring McMahon. But he fears that other powerful performers who wring such deals out of networks might not be as smart: "I see a danger in the proliferation of that sort of thing. Everything on TV could become a matter of commitment to stars rather than choice."

Of course, NBC already had very little choice in the matter. The Carson deal was part of the bait that kept NBC's biggest star at the network.

NEW YORK

Doug Hill reporting

After midnight. Good news for insomniacs: you may no longer be stuck with all those reruns of *Kojak* and *The Love Boat* and Carson after the late-evening news, because



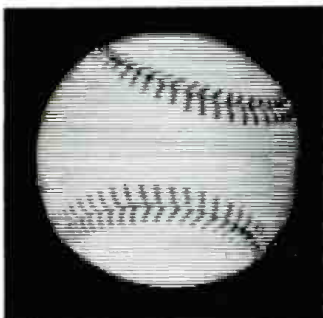
Linda Lavin: Joins the terminals in "A Matter of Life and Death."



Lee Remick: The feminist movement occupies "The Women's Room."



Johnny Carson: Vulnerable to a late-night strike.



The World Series: The summer game's fall climax.

original production for the late-night time period is on the rise at all three networks.

Prominent examples of the trend include NBC's new version of the *Tomorrow* show; ABC's late-night fledgling *Fridays*, which has been given until this January to prove itself in the ratings; and CBS's *No Holds Barred*, which may soon be joined on that network's late-night schedule by a gothic soap opera called *Castle Rock*.

A principal reason behind the activity is the shortening of *The Tonight Show* from 90 minutes to an hour, plus the evidence provided by such shows as ABC's *Nightline* that viewers will indeed watch something other than Carson if given the opportunity.

"In the past, Carson was so far ahead we didn't even try," says Herman Keld, CBS's vice president in charge of late-night development. "Now we're in striking distance, and we have to go after him with original programming. There are a lot of rating points to be gained between 12:30 and 1 A.M."

Another reason is that the same types of rerun series ABC and CBS have been broadcasting in late night are going up for sale to local stations in the syndication market. So if the networks don't offer original late-night programs, affiliate stations may be tempted to increase their profits by putting on their own reruns instead of the networks'.

Finally, producing for late night is cheaper than producing for prime time—generally more than 50 percent cheaper. "Producers and actors won't ask for the same money they ask for in prime time," says Keld.

New hat for Hodding. A familiar personality from in front of the TV cameras—Hodding Carter III, press spokesman for the U.S. State Department until last July—will soon be

taking a close look at what goes on *behind* the cameras if a proposed PBS series about the news media comes off as planned.

Tentatively titled *Inside Story*, the 13-week, half-hour program would begin early next year and would feature Carter as chief anchorman and correspondent. Each week, the producers hope to examine news coverage—by TV, radio, news magazines and newspapers—of one major event or issue, briefly pass judgment on jobs well or poorly done on other stories, and add a pointedly humorous touch at the end, what Carter calls "our own little editorial cartoon."

Says Carter, "After 18 years on one side of the business [as a newspaper reporter, editor and associate publisher in Mississippi] and three-and-a-half years on the other side, I am totally convinced that the institution of the press is one of the great power centers, and that it needs all the examination it can get."

Aware that journalists are notoriously thin-skinned when it comes to accusations that they manipulate the news, Carter stresses that *Inside Story* will not be out to "get" the press, but he insists, "the damn institution is way too big to be the only one to cloak itself with arguments of objectivity and the First Amendment."

He laughs heartily when asked if his program will discuss how spokesmen for the Government manipulate the news. "That's something that I have some interest in," he says. And what about his own talents as a TV host? "I have all the potential in the world for falling on my face."

WASHINGTON

Steve Weinberg reporting

All is not lost. When the Federal Trade Commission, in 1978, launched an inquiry

that could have banned TV commercials aimed at young children, it provoked a fierce counteroffensive from broadcasters and advertisers, who determined to see the agency emasculated. Earlier this year, the emasculation took place: Congress cut back the FTC's authority to protect consumers, and the children's advertising proceeding seemed to be among the casualties.

But it turns out the last gasp hasn't been heard from the "kidvid" inquiry. The FTC is expecting a report this month from its staff on whether the agency should try again to regulate ads such as those for highly sugared foods. Under its old authority, the FTC could move against ads if it considered them "unfair"; now it has the rather harder task of proving deception. The staff report will consider whether there might be a case to be made under the new law.

Broadcast and industry lobbyists who worked to kill the original inquiry are waiting warily for the FTC's decision. Charles Adams, American Association of Advertising Agencies' Washington representative, said: "Our hope is that the suspended hearings will remain indefinitely suspended. . . . What the FTC was doing threatened a major sector of American business, and it will continue to be a flash point for advertisers."

Under wraps. Detailed information on 7620 TV-related accidents (reported in this column in April) will remain locked in the files of a Federal agency as a result of a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission collected the data in 1974 as part of an investigation of TV-set dangers. The agency was about to release the material under a Freedom of Information Act request by two consumer

continued on page 16

WHAT'S ON

Some of the noteworthy programs and events that are scheduled for television this month.
(Check local listings for dates and times in your area.)

MUSIC

Live from Lincoln Center. Verdi's Requiem is performed by the New York Philharmonic, with Montserrat Caballe. PBS.

Standing Room Only: Glen and Tanya. Glen Campbell and Tanya Tucker in concert. Home Box Office (cable).

From Jumpstreet. Oscar Brown Jr. is the host of this 13-part series tracing black music's roots. (See page 28.) PBS.

Dionne Warwick in Concert: A Soundstage Special. Her greatest and latest hits, performed in concert in Chicago. PBS.

NEWS AND DOCUMENTARIES

Cosmos. Carl Sagan's 13-part exploration of the universe, which premiered last month, continues (see page 58). PBS.

ABC News Closeup. A look at America's mobile missile system. ABC.

The Vikings. A 10-part series on the Norse heritage. PBS.

Monsters, Madmen and Machines: 80 Years of Science Fiction. Clips from some of sci-fi's greatest films. Gil (Buck Rogers) Gerard is the host. Home Box Office (cable).

Arthur Miller on Home Ground. A portrait of the playwright, including scenes from his works. PBS.

The Body in Question. Jonathan Miller's 13-part exploration of the human body, which premiered last month, continues (see page 8). PBS.

DRAMA AND MOVIES

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy. Alec Guinness plays George Smiley in this six-part adaptation, which began last month, of John le Carré's novel (see page 40). PBS.

Sophia. A made-for-TV version of Sophia Loren's autobiography, starring Sophia as both herself and her mother. NBC.

Marilyn: The Untold Story. Norman Mailer's best seller about Marilyn Monroe becomes a made-for-TV movie, with Catherine (*The Bad News Bears*) Hicks in the title role. ABC.

The Diary of Anne Frank. The classic story of a Jewish girl hiding in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam, with Melissa (*Little House on the Prairie*) Gilbert in the title role. NBC.

North Dallas Forty. Nick Nolte is a burnt-out receiver rebelling against football's system in this 1979 film adaptation of former Dallas Cowboy Peter Gent's novel. Showtime (cable).

Julia. Jane Fonda plays Lillian Hellman and Vanessa Redgrave her friend Julia, an underground fighter against the Nazis in the 1930s, in this 1978 film based on Hellman's book. NBC.

Time After Time. H.G. Wells (Malcolm McDowell) enters the present by means of a time machine, chasing Jack the Ripper (David Warner) and romancing a bank clerk (Mary Steenburgen) in this 1979 science-fiction thriller. Home Box Office (cable).

Acts of Love. Ron Howard and Robert Foxworth star in this TV-movie about euthanasia. NBC.

Every Which Way but Loose. Trucker Clint Eastwood, traveling with his partner—an orangutan—pursues singer Sonda Locke in this 1978 comedy. Home Box Office (cable).

Magic. A 1978 film about a ventriloquist (Anthony Hopkins) whose dummy becomes a murderer. Ann-Margret also stars. NBC.

Beulah Land. Lesley Ann Warren is the mistress of a Southern plantation in this six-hour miniseries, billed as television's answer to "Gone with the Wind." NBC.

Rage. David Soul plays a convicted rapist undergoing treatment in this TV-movie. NBC.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Once upon a Classic. Charles Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities" is told, in eight episodes. PBS.

SPORTS

National League and American League Championship Series and the World Series. This year, ABC will telecast the league championships beginning Oct. 7. NBC takes over for the World Series, with Game 1 slated for Oct. 14 in the park of the National League champion.

NBA Basketball. The television opener has Los Angeles taking on Seattle. CBS.

COMEDY AND VARIETY

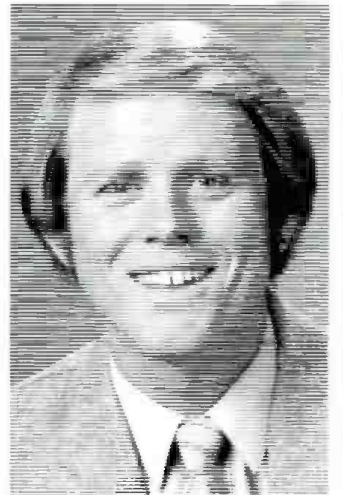
Steve Martin Special. The wild and crazy guy takes aim at commercials. NBC.

Bizarre. A new comedy series, hosted by John Byner, in the tradition (or maybe in the wake) of *Saturday Night Live* and *Laugh-In*. Showtime (cable).

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the White House. Steve Allen, Bob & Ray, Jayne Meadows and Kenneth Mars lampoon the Presidential campaign. Home Box Office (cable). ■



Vanessa Redgrave: Lillian Hellman's number-one best friend goes underground in "Julia."



Ron Howard: Explores deadly favors in "Acts of Love."

THE RATINGS RACE

THE AWAKENING OF AMERICA

By MICHAEL DANN

Viewing patterns in the past five years have shown a fascinating trend. I'm not talking about prime time—which actually seems to have reached a plateau—but about those first two hours in the day when we emerge from our commercial-free dream state into the hazy reality of shaving cream and orange juice. Those hours of 7 to 9 A.M. have become one of television's great boom areas, with an astonishing 62 percent more people watching the early-morning shows now than were doing so in 1975.

What's the reason for this dramatic change in our national habits? Have we given

up talking to our spouses and children? Or lost interest in newspapers?

I don't think the explanation lies in any profound sociological shift. The plain fact is that since 1975, *Good Morning America* has been building up a loyal audience of people who formerly never watched breakfast-time TV. And it has done this by offering a blend of news and entertainment that simply wasn't available before. The millions who now watch the program can be considered a totally new audience. If *Good Morning America* were to disappear from the screens, these viewers would disappear

from the ratings.

While *GMA* has been winning new recruits to breakfast viewing, its chief competitor, NBC's *Today* show, has held on to its own loyal audience. Though it slipped into second place during the first half of this year, it remains one of the network's most successful programs.

We have certainly come a long way from the early 1950s, when the *Today* show was launched. As a charter member of the NBC program team, I can remember the director of research for NBC saying it was absolute madness to consider putting on a television program from 7 to 9 A.M.

He showed detailed graphs and charts to prove why people would listen to radio as

they were getting up in the morning, but never would have time to look as well as listen. He went so far as to say that there had even been some tests in various cities that showed how clearly people would reject early-morning television. One example was *Three to Get Ready*, with Ernie Kovacs, which was on from 7 to 9 A.M. on WPTZ, Philadelphia. The research showed very few people bothered to turn on their sets.

In retrospect, Ernie Kovacs, who later became one of our truly great television comics, particularly in the late-night period, simply was scheduled in the wrong place. If he were alive and performing today, I think he would fail in the 7-to-9 A.M. slot just as he did then.

It wasn't just the NBC research department that fought the scheduling of the *Today* show. Some of NBC's own affiliates were so pessimistic about the program's chances that they refused to carry it, while other affiliates just grumbled that they would lose money by having to open their television stations earlier.

Within 10 years, not only was the *Today* show a fixture on the American television scene, but *Today* and *The Tonight Show* were the biggest moneymakers in all of network broadcasting.

The chart at left shows in detail what has happened to the habits of the American viewer in a time period that was once considered a part of the day when nobody would watch television. ■

EARLY MORNING RATINGS (7-9 A.M.) MONDAY-FRIDAY

YEAR	ABC	%	CBS	%	NBC	%
1970	LOCAL PROGRAMMING	—	NEWS/ CAPTAIN KANGAROO	3.3	Host: Downs	4.7
1971		—		3.3	Hosts:	4.7
1972		—		3.1	McGee/ Walters	5.1
1973		—		3.0		5.4
1974		—		2.7		5.4
1975	A.M. AMERICA	1.4		2.7	Hosts: Hartz/Walters	4.8
1976	GOOD MORNING AMERICA	2.3		2.9	Host: Brokaw	4.2
1977		2.8		2.9		4.2
1978		3.2		2.1		4.5
1979		4.1		2.7		4.6
1980*		5.4		2.8		5.0

* January-June 1980

WHAT'S HAPPENING

continued from page 14

groups, but a dozen TV manufacturers went to court to halt the disclosure, and the Supreme Court upheld their petition.

The Court said the CPSC must take steps to ensure that the TV accident data are accurate and that disclosing the information would be fair to the manufacturers. Those steps were required by the law that had created the agency, the court said. The CPSC

had believed that Freedom of Information Act disclosures weren't governed by such procedures.

According to CPSC lawyer Alan Schoem, the court's ruling will make it extremely difficult for the Commission to name the manufacturers im-

plicated in accidents. But one of the consumer groups involved in the lawsuit states that, unless the makers' names are released, the nine file cabinets of data on fires, electric shocks and other mishaps will be almost useless.

continued on page 97

"Panasonic Color TV. So life-like, they play as brilliantly as I do."

Reggie Jackson

"When it comes to watching me, nothing makes me look better than a Panasonic color TV. Every Panasonic, from our 7" (meas diag) battery-operated portable to our big projection TVs, creates a picture that's so bright, so sharp, so colorful, it's really life-like. So life-like, you'll feel you're at the ballpark with me. And what's better than that?

"I'll tell you: The two Panasonic CinemaVision projection TVs give you a picture that's not only life-like, but life-size. Our new rear projection CinemaVision (CT-4500 shown below) puts a 45" screen (meas diag) in a slim, trim body. Now you won't have to fill your room to get a roomful of picture. And you can control your CinemaVision from anywhere in the room. Because it has a

16-button synthesizer remote control. Synthesizer tuning, found in many Panasonic color TVs, uses computer technology. So you can go directly from the channel you're on to the channel you want, without having to go through all the channels in between.

"Panasonic CinemaVision and our other 30 color TVs make me look great. Whether it's a 7", 10", 12", 13", 19", 25", 45" or 5-foot Panasonic TV (all meas diag), you'll get a picture that's so life-like, you'll feel like you're part of the picture.

"That's why I say Panasonic color TVs play as brilliantly as I do."

TV picture simulated. Cabinetry is simulated woodgrain.



Panasonic.
just slightly ahead of our time.





Marshall

Frost

If there is a joke about the Midas touch, you can be sure that Garry Marshall knows it; he either wrote it himself or copied it out of 1000 Jokes magazine when he was a kid in the Bronx. It probably continues to amuse him as he moves among the sets of his three money-minting creations, *Happy Days*, *Laverne & Shirley* and *Mork & Mindy*.

Marshall, at 45 one of the most successful writer/producers in television comedy today, grew up on the periphery of show business. His father, Tony Marshall (originally Marscharelli) was a producer of radio programs and industrial films, and his mother was a dance teacher. But young Garry's ambitions lay in other directions: he saw himself as a future baseball pro. The only thing that stood between him and a career in sports was a body that harbored 129 allergic reactions. So, instead, he collected a degree in journalism from Northwestern University, and after two years in Korea, earned his first salary as a copy boy on the New York Daily News.

In the evenings, he would play the drums in assorted clubs, and that's where he began to think seriously about humor; he listened to the routines of the stand-up comics and started to offer them material. Phil Foster, among others, bought his one-liners and asked Marshall to write more for his radio program. Foster also introduced him to Jack Paar, who signed him up as a gag writer for *The Tonight Show*.

In 1961 he was invited to Hollywood by Joey Bishop and soon found himself writing for *The Lucy Show* and *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.

"I Wish Everyone Would Stop Putting TV Down So Much"

The creator of "Laverne & Shirley" and "Mork & Mindy" defends the medium—and provides an inside look at the creative process, the key decision-makers and the hostility over profit sharing

He also teamed up with another young writer, Jerry Belson, with whom he was to enjoy a prolific collaboration over the next eight years; the two men wrote more than 100 half-hour comedies for *The Lucy Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *The Danny Thomas Show* and *Love, American Style*. And in 1969 they wrote the pilot for the TV adaptation of *The Odd Couple*, a series for which Marshall became executive producer.

In 1974, success was followed by megasuccess with *Happy Days*, a nostalgic re-creation of Fifties youth. In its first season, 1973-74, the series ranked 16th in the ratings; three years later it was number one—and by that time it had sired its own challenger, *Laverne & Shirley*. In 1977-78, the two shows traded positions at the top of the charts, *Laverne & Shirley* taking the

trophy. Then came *Mork & Mindy*, which shot to fourth position in its opening season, 1978-79.

All three shows seem now to have passed their peak, and none are in the top 10, but the Midas touch has performed its miracle and syndication revenues from *Happy Days* and *Laverne & Shirley* alone are expected to be well in excess of \$200 million.

Set against these staggering digits, Marshall's less fortunate ventures pale into insignificance. *Blansky's Beauties*, for example, was quickly forgotten after its 1977 takeoff failure. And this year's Broadway fiasco, a comedy called "The Roast"—which Marshall wrote with Jerry Belson and which played for exactly four nights—will likewise be no more than a footnote to the Marshall legend.

So where does he go from here? That's one of the things that David Frost asked him in the course of an interview in Marshall's office at Paramount Studios. This is the second in a special series of Frost interviews for PANORAMA.

DAVID FROST: *Do you think television in general is getting better or worse as you look at this season?*

GARRY MARSHALL: I don't think it's really getting worse; it's just getting a little repetitious. I guess the competition's so stiff now that it's hard to gamble.

FROST: *Do you find the three networks different to deal with, or all the same?*

MARSHALL: No, I think they are a little different in their way. I haven't dealt

with all of them on a day-to-day basis in a number of years. Right now I work mostly with ABC, which, when I first started with them [1969] was the network to take a chance on everything. There wasn't much to lose. It was very exciting to work with ABC then. Now they've gotten a little conservative, but they still aim for the bust-out show, something that will get a large audience right away. That's one of the negative aspects of ABC. They want a show to bust out in the first three weeks and that's very difficult—very difficult. But it has been done, and I guess I have hurt myself and others by doing it a couple of times. But it was luck. I mean, *Laverne & Shirley* debuted number one in the ratings. That's a phenomenon, not really something that is ordinary. *Mork & Mindy* did reach number one in about five or six weeks, but we had an exceptional actor there, and you don't come by them very often.

I think the CBS philosophy—which has been to take a show they really believe in and let it grow over a period of time—is a better philosophy. But even they got nervous the last couple of years and have pulled shows a little early. I think CBS is still the most conservative to work with; the meetings there are a little more dignified—everybody sits very politely. And ABC is a more enthusiastic, energetic bunch of people. Everybody pitching ideas and everybody getting involved.

At NBC they weren't that interested in comedy. They were interested in drama and long forms. Then the last couple of years, they got very nervous, and now it's finally calming down. Mr. [Fred] Silverman has calmed it down a little bit. Of the three networks right now, NBC is the one that might be willing to take a chance.

FROST: *Are there certain qualities that network executives in general share? Are there certain qualities of playing safe that they all share?*

MARSHALL: Well, they share these basic rules that were passed down to them like the Talmud. Like you have to have likability in all your supporting cast. If you were putting on the Last Supper, they would come back to you and say, "Judas didn't test very well and maybe you could get him a dog

and you could make him more likable."

Many times the supporting cast takes a while to grow, as on *Happy Days*, with Tom Bosley as the father. He started out rather slowly for the first couple of years. Now, when they test ratings of performers, he's one of the highest in television.

FROST: *You've got a fascinating new problem this season in the sense of really renewing, of breathing new life into Laverne & Shirley, Happy Days and Mork & Mindy. You've got to try to get the ratings back to where they were. How do you breathe new life into a show?*

“All the creative people were caught in the middle of this strange war. ‘What? Silverman’s got cleavage? We’ll have bellybuttons!’”

MARSHALL: We are bringing in new characters in all our shows. Another way is to change the settings.

Laverne and Shirley are now moving out of their basement apartment in Milwaukee to a different kind of apartment in Burbank, Cal., and they're getting involved in new things. *Mork & Mindy* is going back to what it was.

FROST: *What was the wrong change in Mork & Mindy?*

MARSHALL: You have to be in television with a sense of humor or you could go crazy altogether. We had a show on Thursday night that had a supporting cast, other than Mindy, with two older people. We had a father and a grandmother, very nice. And they said it needed more young people in the supporting cast. The network research came up with all this.

So we put some young people into the supporting cast, and then they immediately moved the show to Sunday night, which requires older people in the supporting cast to compete with Archie Bunker and all the demographics. So now they put it back on

Thursday night and we're stuck with a supporting cast from all over the place. But we're slowly working it out.

FROST: *Have you made any changes, after research, on Happy Days?*

MARSHALL: We had an offstage character on *Happy Days* for seven years—Janey Piccolo, Joanie's crazy girlfriend. We're bringing this girlfriend onto the show. Now we're forced into another change on *Happy Days* because Ronnie Howard has left the show for NBC. We're replacing him with [dismissed NBC chairwoman] Jane Pfeiffer on our show. We thought she might like the job and she might play Richie. I don't know, it's in negotiation, but—

FROST: *You're not . . .*

MARSHALL: No, at this time I can't say any more. One of the things that people can delight in about *Happy Days* is that the actors are growing each year. They went through high school; they're in college now. Fonzie is now teaching auto mechanics in high school. They're all growing, and I think that has kept the show going.

And on *Laverne* we brought two new characters in. On *Mork & Mindy* we've just got to get back to a little of the interesting zainness that people like.

We got *Mork* a little too sophisticated the second year, so we're going back to the naive character. He played almost Chaplin; that's what people loved. Then along came the famous T&A war. Everybody threw on a lot of girls in skimpy costumes.

All three networks got crazy, and all the creative people were caught in the middle of this strange war. "What? Silverman's got cleavage? We'll have bellybuttons!" So we end up with Raquel Welch [as a guest star], a lovely girl, but I don't know if she understands English—and thank God that passed after a few months. It was really terrible. Smutville all over the place.

FROST: *Are the best shows necessarily the hits?*

MARSHALL: Well, not necessarily. I think some shows are very good and, because of a bad time slot, just don't get looked at. *continued*

I think there is a snobbery that goes with television. A show that is a hit right away has to be a bad show, and I don't believe that. I think a lot of the hit shows deserve to be hit shows. There are shows, too, that I wish would have stayed on and become hits.

FROST: *What's an example of a show that deserved to last longer?*

MARSHALL: I did *The Odd Couple* for five years. It had won awards but never did anything in the ratings. They left it on anyway. We were on for five years; we had a wonderful time. I think in this



so they are not heralded. Years from now, there'll be a whole thing, a Laverne and Shirley—

FROST: *—Hall of Fame?*

MARSHALL: Yes. But when they were going well they were called junk. It's just too easy to put the shows down.

FROST: *When the public votes somebody President, everybody accepts the decision. But logically, when those same people vote a television show number one, well . . . if their decision is accepted in one area, it's illogical to*

“I think it's just up to the situation comedy to come up with some innovative ways of doing things, or else it will disappear.”

day and age it would have been canceled very early. And there are some other shows. I think *WKRP in Cincinnati* started off very slowly and I admire CBS for moving it and sticking with it, because I think that it is a good show.

There are some that were just good shows, but had limited appeal. I mean there's this big fuss about *Paper Chase*, which I thought was an excellent show. But it was a limited-appeal show in a business where you can't have that limited an appeal. But there should be a place for that kind of show.

So much time is spent rapping the popular shows. And I don't think that's particularly good for our society. I think that shows that have that much appeal should be encouraged to do some meaningful episodes and get across some good things to the public rather than be condemned.

To me, the funniest show on television has been *Laverne & Shirley*. They're the two funniest people and pure funny. But pure funny is not the most important thing in life right now,

dismiss their decision in another area as moronic.

MARSHALL: I think it is. I think they should say, "All right, let's put some good in that." And I must say just lately the Government is getting it together in that area. I know they've talked to me about trying to explain certain things to the public through my shows.

And the solar-energy people have come out and said, "We can't seem to explain what solar energy is to the public; would you have Mork do it, please, because we can't get through." And we are going to try to do some things for the public interest.

I think good shows fall into three categories: There are some good shows that will never get mass appeal—there should be a place for them. Then there are good shows that will have a mass appeal if they let them on a little bit. And there are very popular shows that could be good shows if everybody got behind them and used them for good instead of putting them down.

FROST: *Do you know where situation comedy is going next?*

MARSHALL: I think it's not going anyplace right now. Now there's situation life, where they have *That's Incredible!* and *Real People*—catching bullets in their mouth, etc.; those situations are very popular now. There's a whole bunch of them coming out, docucomedies or whatever you might call them, and they'll be popular for a while, and then I think it's just up to the situation comedy to come up with some innovative ways of doing things, or else it will take the path of variety shows and disappear.

I think it won't do that. I feel situation comedy will survive.

FROST: *Does the thought of doing something for cassettes or discs interest you—perhaps something you couldn't do for mass television?*

MARSHALL: Yes, it interests me a lot. I've been very interested in the world of the handicapped; it's a whole area I've been working in. I've used handicapped actors in my shows. I like to take a person in a wheelchair and teach him how to act. So I've been doing that in various ways on my shows. And I wanted to do a show where there were handicapped actors involved, not all handicapped but at least half. I have had some resistance to that because they felt it had limited appeal. I would like to do a show like that in an arena where I wouldn't have to get a number-two rating. Shows like that are special and can't compete in the big marketplace with *All in the Family* or *Laverne & Shirley*, but they still have a place.

What's hurting us now is that the performers are getting so big that they're running the industry. I think we'll find a way to do sitcom on a lower budget, where you don't have to pay stars ridiculous amounts of money and then have them quit.

FROST: *Can you work out where ideas come from? Do they come as you sit at this desk?*

MARSHALL: No.

FROST: *Or as you drive along the road?*

MARSHALL: I find many of the ideas have to come from life. What we really

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do is sit around and tell about personal experiences that were painful or funny. Most of the time they're painful and then we turn them into humor. I've become good at examining my own life for ideas, but I've become even better at picking it off from other people's lives. I would say I get most of my ideas from that.

FROST: *What's on your agenda of things to be achieved? Or ambitions to be fulfilled?*

MARSHALL: I want to do another play; I'm involved with movies; but I love television so much that right now my job is to get my shows back into better shape.

I don't want to do another television show, but I'm very vulnerable to talent. Somebody will appear on one of my shows who just knocks me out, and I'll say I've got to do something for him or her because they should be seen.

FROST: *And are there people who you feel have the potential to be stars but have never found the right vehicle?*

MARSHALL: There are very few people in this world funnier than Don Rickles or Shecky Greene or Tim Conway. They never got the box to really put them across on television. Probably the best comedy mind right now is Richard Pryor, who may never find the form to get him on television, because he's so special.

FROST: *Were you surprised by all the headlines about what they laughingly call Angelgate?*

MARSHALL: Angel—?

FROST: *The Charlie's Angels accounting saga. Do you think accounting is just a natural area of creativity in Hollywood?*

MARSHALL: I may be one of the more unique types of producers in that I work with the studio. I always felt that I was basically a creative force and I found it just too hard for me to go in to an actor and tell him how to do the scene and at the same time argue with him about whether he has a nice dressing room. So I butted out of the dressing-room business and I just work in the creative sense. I don't have the accounting-problems overview.

I do have an opinion on it because I've been around the business. Most of

these arguments occur over ownership and profits. Take, say, an actor who is making \$50,000 a week. This actor comes to you every day and drives you crazy—he wants a better lamp; he wants a better dressing room; he wants a better part; he demands that you fire all the writers. Every day this human being gives you a headache. Now the profits come in and maybe you're supposed to give him another \$50,000. There is a tendency to say, "I'm mad at this man;



“Probably the best comedy mind right now is Richard Pryor, who may never find the form to get him on television, because he's so special.”

maybe I won't look at the books or something." I mean there is a psychological thing not to reach from your heart and run to this man and say, "Guess what—here's more profit for you, sir." Now I am totally not involved in that, and I am a believer in the law, but there are some other factors going on that might cause people to do strange things. I'm not saying who's right or wrong, but it's a vulnerable situation for temptation and evil.

FROST: *But no one's ever done it to you.*

MARSHALL: Not in this situation.

Working with the studio, each year I must send in an auditor to see if they're cheating me, of course. That seems to be traditional in the business and we do that and sometimes we find money that they forgot. But from my side, that's what we do and that seems to be acceptable. Why they do it, I don't know.

If you believe in what you're doing, things will always come out. For example, I wrote some little vignettes in a popular television show, *Love, American Style*, in which I felt they had really undercut me. I had done the work already, it was in, and they gave me really a minimal sum. It was like \$500 for all of them and I wrote like 150 of them. And I was very hurt. But what was I going to do? I wasn't going to make a fuss and hate the man. I just let it go. I said, well, OK, there'll be another day.

As life went, there was another day. Years later, they were going to put them on rerun syndication. And they couldn't put them on, according to the Writers Guild, unless they paid me for those vignettes. Because they split them up into half hours and everything. And so they came to me and said, "We're going into reruns now and we've got to pick up your things. So we're going to give you \$1500 for the vignettes." And I said \$25,000. And they said, "But you can't do that." I said, "Yeah, well, you hurt me once way back—you hurt me and that's it." And they couldn't put them on the air, so they paid. So that was even. So if you just wait, it'll all even out.

My sister Penny did it. She was here on *Odd Couple* and she worked for the same salary for three years. They wouldn't give her a raise because they figured she wouldn't quit on her brother. And I said to her, "Well, you're not in such a good position, you need a job. Don't make a fuss now. They've got us over a barrel." And she worked three years for the same salary. Years later, here's *Laverne & Shirley*, number one. They came to her for a contract and she just called me up and just said one word. "Now?" And I said, "Now." And it probably cost them maybe a million dollars over six years for that.

FROST: *One thing that I read in lots of articles about you was the 129 allergies that you always refer to.*

MARSHALL: I had a childhood where I was allergic to everything. They basi-



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cally said, "Don't eat. Best thing you can do is drink water." I was sick in bed all the time. One doctor finally said, "Well, you'll outgrow some of them," and I did. I'm allergic to maybe 20 things now.

Today if I get up in the morning and I'm not throwing up, it's going to be a hell of a day. If I'm walking around and I'm not in pain, then, wow, what a good day it is. So that's why I don't get crazy. In a sense, the allergies were horrible. But I think they set a pace for me that has helped me later.

FROST: *It formed your rather relaxed philosophy of life?*

MARSHALL: Pretty much. As an 8-year-old I heard a doctor say to my parents—I had asthma and allergies—"If you don't move this boy to Arizona, he's going to die." And as an 8-year-old, this made quite an impression on me. We couldn't afford to move and we never did. So I felt I was lucky it didn't happen like that doctor said.

But that was my background, so all the business problems don't seem that important. The work is fun and I can't get all upset and get ulcers about it.

FROST: *I guess that's a pretty good deal: 20 allergies, but no ulcers. Do you lose two or three allergies a year?*

MARSHALL: It's a strange thing with me, I've outgrown them all except maybe five or six really—mustard, mayonnaise—that's the way they can get me. I expect some day, in the heat of competition, Fred Silverman in frustration will come find me and put mustard in my food. That's how to get me. I must add a comment, because I don't want to come out negative, but part of my success in a strange way is because I believe in teams. My teaming up with Fred Silverman just by fate and history was a wonderful team. We worked very well together in the years he was at ABC. I still admire him and I think he really is one of the best television executives no matter what anybody says.

FROST: *Did he actually make a contribution to your hits?*

MARSHALL: He made a contribution, not in the creative way they keep saying, but with his enthusiasm and faith

and by pushing me ahead and giving me the chance. In that, he was marvelous. I just loved working with him.

FROST: *There seems to be a new trend—where the network executives actually get more publicity than the stars.*

MARSHALL: Well, we hold a writers' caucus, and there've been a lot of complaints recently about the network not only becoming the buyer, but wanting to be the creative force too. I'm very unhappy with that. I don't think the networks should have that much to say creatively. And they do. And I think it's the same thing that happened in our society with the youth problem. Everybody wants the youth market so they hire all of these young kids and they say they'll know the youth market, and they're in charge of a lot of things now. We do satires of it, but it's true.

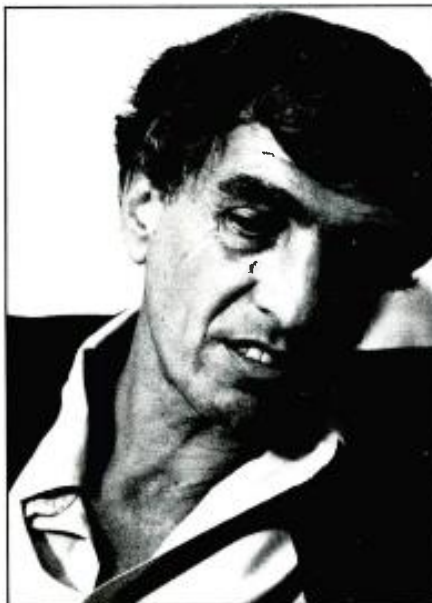
If you look around my shop here, I have young people, old people—whoever has talent. That's who works for me. None of this nonsense of "He's 19, so he knows." He knows nothing when he's 19.

I get a lot of veterans, top professional guys who come to me and say, "I want to work your show." I say, "You want to work on staff on *Happy Days*?" "Yeah, whatever." And I always just say, "Well, why? You could do five of your own pilots." And they'll say, "I can't go to the network. I don't want to

go. I've been in the business 30 years, 35 years. I don't want to go and pitch my wares to a guy who's been in the business two years and telling me what to do and how to fix it. I just don't want to do it any more. I'd rather come and just work and forget it." And that seems to be what's hurting some of television. The guys who really know how to do shows don't want to go pitch them to the network.

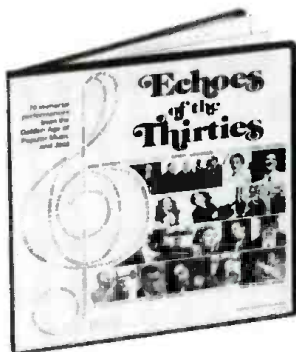
A discussion we had at the writers' caucus was why the networks have such a creative influence. The networks say they do because you guys [the writers] are no good. That's the way it is. That's the underneath of what's going on.

On the other hand, I read about all this sickness in the industry and I don't think television is sick at all. There was a good article in *The Boston Globe*. They're now blaming television for marital breakups. If you don't know what to blame something on, blame it on television. I think that's a lot of nonsense. I think it's one of the best influences. I once said the reason television often goes to the lowest common denominator is because it's the only thing that can reach the lowest common denominator. You know there's a large percentage of people 'round the world who don't read, can't write and have a vocabulary of three words. But they all understand the picture. Television is a powerful force, and I wish everyone would stop putting TV down so much. (■)

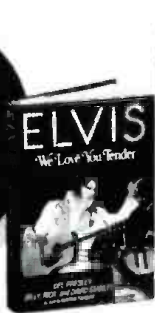


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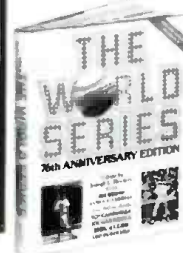
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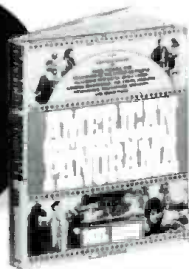
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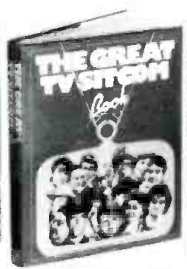
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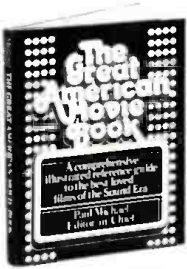
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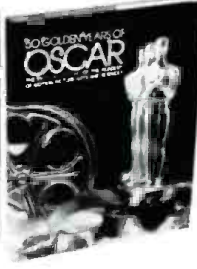
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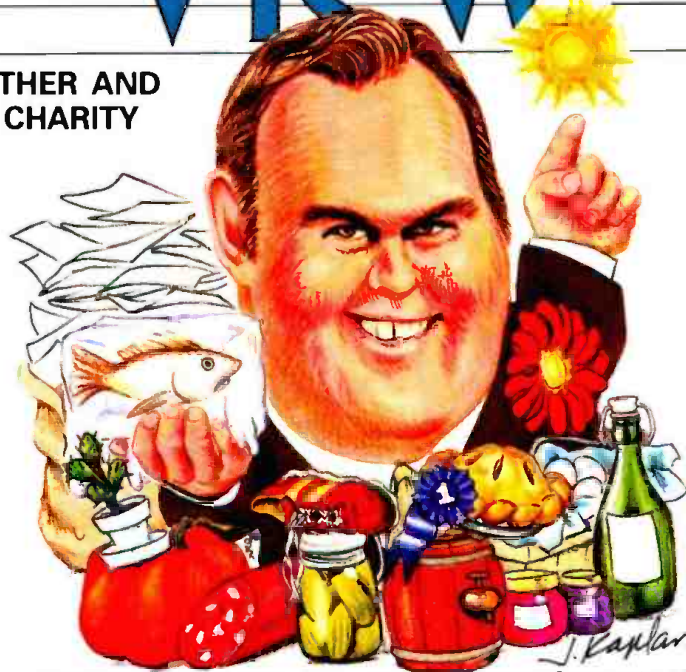
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Any TV weatherman worth his pressure chart can tell you whether or not it will rain tomorrow, but who among them knows when the Smelly Sneaker Festival in Pennsylvania is? And who cares? Willard Scott knows—and NBC cares.

When the network added Scott to the *Today* show cast last March, in an effort to boost sagging ratings, they weren't banking on his temperature-humidity index to bowl viewers over. They were banking on what Scott cheerfully calls "my gimmick"—plugging local charities. Even before he was a folksy weatherman, Willard was dealing in Cucumber Festivals and Cow-Chip-Throwing Contests, back in the late '60s when he was half of a popular radio slapstick team called The Joy Boys, in Washington, D.C. He stuck with the schtick after stumbling into the weatherman role on WRC in 1953, and now that he's gone national, it's stuck to him—with a vengeance.



Scott receives between 200 and 300 suggestions for items every day. He uses about 30 of the most colorful or ridiculous a week, but a secretary answers every letter with a friendly "Thanks, try again." About half the submissions come with some sort of gift: hundreds of cakes, pies and canned goods of every variety ("I've got some thimble-

berry jam here," Scott said. "I don't even know what a thimbleberry is"), a miniature outhouse from the organizers of a craft fair, frozen fish from as far away as Washington State and Guam.

Scott says he's never been offered an outright bribe for a plug, but that about one out of every 100 letters comes from a group with less-than-chari-

table intentions. "You can spot those a mile away," he said. "They always come on fancy stationery from some agency or something."

Scott's skepticism also has a long history. As the creator of the original Ronald McDonald clown, back in 1963, Scott says he sold McDonald's the rights to the character with the understanding that he'd be the one to play him in national advertising. "This is the part that hurt," Scott says; "the ad agency didn't even give me a call."

They'd probably have a hard time reaching him these days—unless they wrote. Willard Scott may not have changed *Today's* ratings (audience levels remain about the same) but he is a very popular man among festival patrons from far and near. Actually, a majority of the submissions this past summer appeared to have come from the Northwest, according to Scott. "It seemed like every time we opened a letter, lava dust would fall out," he said. "We must have gotten 10 million pounds of it."

CHECK IT OUT

The next time you run into the supermarket for a measly jar of mustard and get caught behind six people who obviously never heard of the stigma attached to hoarding, don't think of it as lost time. Think of it as a chance to catch up on all those TV commercials you've missed by sleeping, eating, working and other self-indulgent pastimes designed to foil the ad industry.

Surprise! A company called On-Line Media has hatched a scheme for program-free television that involves plac-

ing color-TV sets over check-out counters to display three-, five- and 10-second ad messages continuously; every six minutes the same cassette starts over.

The philosophy behind this new advertising medium is that the supermarket check-out counter provides a great environment to peddle products. "You've got people bored and trapped in those lines," gushes Ransel Potter, an enthusiastic 30-year-old whiz kid weaned on Madison Avenue, now senior V.P. at

On-Line Media. "We don't want customers to leave the line and go back and get something. Our research indicates that they will go back later in the week and buy it."

Having tested its concept in three stores in New Jersey this summer, On-Line will move into selected stores in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles starting Oct. 6. By the end of 1981, Potter expects to have his television sets perched in more than 2000 stores around the country, reaching an estimated 25 mil-

lion viewers a week. Eventually he hopes to reach 100 million viewers for what he claims will be one-sixth the cost of network advertising. It's no wonder some of Madison Avenue's top advertisers have participated in the summer test—including True cigarettes, which produced the first American TV cigarette ad in almost 10 years.

Perhaps the best aspect of the whole venture is the volume level of the commercials. They have no sound whatsoever.

“Everyone is talking about the new technology, but I don’t believe we’ve yet discovered the potential of the old technology.”

—Lewis Freedman, director, Corporation for Public Broadcasting Program Fund, interviewed by *Broadcasting* magazine

SUDDEN DEATH

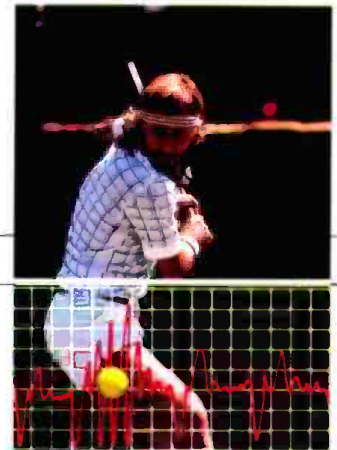
This year’s men’s singles final between Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe was described as a “heart-stopper” by the world’s sportscasters at Wimbledon.

But in Sweden that cliché proved eerily accurate—50 of Borg’s compatriots died of heart failure in hospitals while rooting for their tennis champ during the epic four-hour, five-set duel on the Centre Court. This figure comes from heart specialist Dr. Jan Soloski of the General Hospital in Malmö. He and his colleagues have been studying heart mortality linked to sports events that make the pulse race. Their conclusion

is that the TV set at the end of the hospital bed can spell “game, set and match” to the Grim Reaper. Says Dr. Soloski: “Excitable heart patients should be kept well away from TV sets when events like the Wimbledon final are shown. The risk of a fatal heart attack is much too great.”

His like-minded colleague Dr. Alf Torp often forbids patients to watch TV: “I can’t take the sort of responsibility that watching Borg and McEnroe play can mean for a bad heart.”

A British cardiologist, Dr. Morris Butler, commented that he wasn’t at all surprised at the Swedish doctors’ find-



ings. “In Britain we wouldn’t have TV sets for heart patients in intensive-care units because it’s quite feasible that extreme emotional stress could precipitate a heart attack.”

Since Bjorn Borg seems invincible at the game, the Swedish doctors will have to plan to switch off plenty of hospital TV sets next summer—for just as long as the cool Swede fancies using his racquets at Wimbledon.

—Richard Gilbert

STOP THOSE PIRATES

Psst—wanna buy *Fawlty Towers*, “Death of a Princess,” James Bond films? Get thee to London—fast. As the videocassette market starts to take off in Britain and the BBC stands poised to enter the home-video market with its huge range of programs, the growth of video piracy has forced the major TV and film companies to set up jointly an antipiracy body. Known as the Video Copyright Protection Society, its mission will be to fight the illicit copying and sale of TV programs.

The video pirates’ top markets are the Persian Gulf States, Southwest Asia, Nigeria and South Africa. The BBC has unearthed one group of Arab entrepreneurs who were taping the complete output of BBC-1 and flying the cassettes by private jet to the Middle East; other pirates

were offering a catalogue of 200 titles at \$100 each, including all the major BBC and ITV series of the last few years. A BBC executive on a sales trip abroad was actually invited to buy a tape of one of the programs he was there to sell.

The international video black market, as might be expected, flourishes in countries like South Africa, where TV owners enjoy high incomes but only mediocre pro-

gramming. The British program guides, TV Times and Radio Times, are speeded there, coded telexes sent back to London and requested programs taped off the air for South African customers.

Not that merry olde England itself is free of mischief: pirated copies of popular shows like *Monty Python* and *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* can easily be bought in central London. One BBC investi-

gator not only was offered “The Empire Strikes Back” a week after it opened in London but also Stanley Kubrick’s new film “The Shining”—not due to be released there until October. And a BBC news program uncovered a video-copying factory in a London suburb that could copy pirated tapes 50 at a time.

The haziness of Britain’s copyright laws, which have not yet caught up with the video revolution, is a boon to the pirates. And there’ll be more legal complications in the near future when British TV programs can be received on the North European coast and redistributed live by cable. It’s no surprise, then, that in October there will be two conferences in London on the video copyright jungle—one with the prophetic title “Video Rights ‘80—New Frontiers, No Frontiers?”

—R.G.





Oscar Brown Jr.

ALL THAT JAZZ

Oscar Brown Jr. wanders down a deserted inner-city avenue called Jumpstreet. He stops, in turn, at a church and a saloon, walks up a flight of tenement steps. What he finds in these places is music: black music in a kaleidoscope of incarnations from jazz to blues, to gospel, soul and even distant African folk forms. It's *From Jumpstreet: A Story of Black Music*, a new PBS program—and the cause of a small but fanatic flurry of protest letters to several conservative senators in Washington.

Since the 13-part series is not scheduled for TV until October at the earliest, the letters were not from viewers disappointed with *From Jumpstreet's* content. No, what seems to have some folks in an uproar is the fact that WETA-TV in Washington, D.C., received a \$1.6 million grant from HEW's Department of Education to help

produce the series, following a pilot test of the program with over 1300 teen-agers. So strong was the students' response that *From Jumpstreet* will likely play in high schools throughout the country after its initial television run; the University of Michigan is preparing a secondary-school curriculum guide based on the series.

Says host Brown about the funding controversy, "Of course, there are some people in America who don't want black people to have *anything*. Some of them wear hoods and some of them don't, but it's the same general mentality that really is hard to explain.

"You know," he goes on, "this is basically an educational program. . . . It's not *Saturday Night Live* or *The Carol Burnett Show* or something. There are going to be some fine performances, but what also is going to come out is historically what music is all about."

on TV. I don't know how he knows. But at any rate, he was quite good"), Dizzy Gillespie, Pearl Bailey ("She had some very nice, kind of grandmotherly hip advice to give the kids"), Bo Diddley, Quincy Jones and many others.

"From Jumpstreet" does not, of course, actually refer to a thoroughfare. It's a slang term common today among young blacks, meaning "from the beginning." Hence, *From Jumpstreet* attempts to explore, or at least highlight, the evolution of black music from its source in Africa through migration to North America and up to its flowering here in the 20th century. It's a long way for one program to travel, but Brown hopes there will be others to follow in its ground-breaking path.

"This is the first program," he explains. "This is not going to be the be-all and end-all of it. It's taken 80 years to get this, but it shouldn't take 80 years to get some more."

—Robert Henschen

BOY MEETS BOY

It was the perfect media event. Everyone but WKRP Cincinnati was there to cover the first—and only—showing of "The Gay Dating Game." In fact, there were so many reporters in the tiny public-access TV studio in San Francisco that there was hardly room for the crew. "It's like shooting a movie in your bathroom," commented one observer.

"The Gay Dating Game," hailed as "boy meets boy in good taste," started eight minutes late. The date, 23-year-old bank clerk Xavier Villaneuva, was led on-stage, blindfolded like a hostage. The three contestants, looking like nervous English graduate students, sat on the opposite side of a makeshift curtain. Using two ancient, mismatched, black-and-white TV cameras and a backdrop painted with red hearts, pro-

ducers Marty Chavkin and Mark Seidenberg seemed more to be playing at TV than offering homage to Chuck Barris.

Nevertheless, the format, if not the setting, was familiar. There were outrageous questions: "If I were a potato, would you fry me, bake me or mash me?" "When it's love, whom do you call?" "If I were an explosive, how would you set me off?"

And outrageous answers: "I'd butter you up and bake you," said contestant number one. "I'd call my mom," replied number two. "It wouldn't take too much," said number three.

In the end, Xavier chose Greg for his date and collected the prize: a box of roses, dinner and a handful of tickets to a local theater. "Is that all there is?" he asked.

"What we wanted to do

was take advantage commercially of the gay community while offering it a service," said co-producer Chavkin. "Our hope was that we'd produce the first show and then get some advertising money." He admitted that his entire production budget ran less than \$100.

Viacom Cablevision of San Francisco seemed somewhat chagrined by the actions of its public-access stepchild. "We didn't even know about the 'GDG' until the morning before it aired," said director of programming Barrett Giorgis.

The show was only available to Viacom's 53,000 San Francisco subscribers, but the complaints came mainly from out-of-towners who had heard about it. People chided the producers and the station for everything from "poor taste" to acting "against natural law." Locally, most calls

came from people who wanted to be future contestants, although one did complain that he thought the guys on the current show were not attractive enough.

The name itself attracted the most attention. "Ah, ah, ah—San Francisco," said Chuck Barris Productions vice president Bud Granoff. Then he threatened to sue. The Barris-originated *Dating Game*, begun 15 years ago, is still in reruns.

Chavkin and Seidenberg got the message and the show came off the air—but Chavkin and Seidenberg might not be. "We made some interesting connections through the game," said Chavkin. "*Speak Up America* was interested in us and there's a good possibility of going on the *Tomorrow* show."

Ah, ah, ah—show business.

—Randi Slaughter



**MILLIONS ON EARTH ARE EXPECTED TO WATCH
CARL SAGAN'S "COSMOS"
BUT YOU NEVER KNOW WHO ELSE MIGHT BE WATCHING.**

Carl Sagan, the distinguished astronomer and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, invites you to join him for "Cosmos," a 13-part series starting September 28th on public television.

"Cosmos" is described as the most ambitious project ever undertaken for PBS. It takes you on a journey through space and time to explore the great cosmic questions.

One moment, you find yourself in a spaceship billions of light-years from Earth among the galaxies. The next, walking the marble floors of a library in ancient Egypt. And the next, exploring the possibilities of extraterrestrial life.

Since television signals travel through space, Sagan has been asked to speculate on what beings of other worlds might think of his series.

"I would hope," he said, "that they would see this as an attempt by humans to understand something of their origins and their destinies."

So watch for "Cosmos" on PBS. Somewhere out there, "they" may be watching, too.

ARCO 

Atlantic Richfield Company

COSMOS is produced by Carl Sagan Productions and KCET, Los Angeles. Made possible by grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and Atlantic Richfield Company.



LUST TANGO IN COLUMBUS

Thanks to those two new-fangled inventions, cable TV and videocassettes, a theater manager was recently acquitted of a crime that probably predates *all* technology: making a buck out of pornography.

Last winter, police raided the Adult Theater in downtown Columbus, home of the Ohio State Buckeyes and Warner Amex's unique two-

way interactive television service called Qube. Dominic Suriano, the theater manager, was arrested and charged with "pandering to obscenity" by showing the pornographic movies "Captain Lust" and "Taxi Girls."

Enter Laurence Sturtz, a sharp lawyer whose areas of expertise include First Amendment cases. Sturtz's defense of Suriano was sim-

ple: the films did not, in fact, violate community standards of obscenity. His reasoning? According to Sturtz, "Captain Lust" had already appeared on Warner's adult movie channel, which uses a pay-per-view system. Additionally, the movie is sold on videocassettes in several Columbus stores.

"I wanted to expose the hypocrisy of the situation," explains Sturtz. "If you were wealthy enough to afford to live in the ritzy area of town, which Warner wired, you could watch 'Captain Lust' on cable TV. If you could afford to spend \$1000 for a videocassette recorder and \$100 for a videocassette of 'Captain Lust,' you could watch it. But if you're not wealthy,

you're not allowed to spend \$3 to watch it in a downtown theater."

Sturtz subpoenaed viewer-ship data from Qube about the gross numbers of households that ordered the soft-core version of "Captain Lust," the first time such information has been used for this purpose. (Qube released only the *number* of viewing households, not the names.) According to Sturtz, out of 30,000 Qube subscribers, 10,500 households paid to watch "Captain Lust."

On June 21, 1980, a jury of men and women found Dominic Suriano innocent of pandering to obscenity. It all took place in Columbus, Ohio. You know the town. X marks the spot.

AYATOLLAH WHO?

It seems that hardly a day passes without some new poll or academic study demonstrating just how much television news viewers aren't comprehending. Taken to heart, the research would be enough to drive even the most jaundiced anchor or reporter out of the newsroom.

Well, hold onto your news copy, Walter, John and Frank. A new study from the Communication Research Center at Cleveland State University contends that previous research may "underestimate seriously what the news audience takes in. . . ." It's not that the American public has gotten any smarter. It's just that researchers may not have been asking the right questions.

Instead of relying on the conventional telephone follow-up, which asks point-blank what was shown (a technique that in 1970 found more than half the viewers in an up-scale San Francisco area "could not freely recall a single news item they had seen earlier in the evening"), the Cleveland State research-

ers used simple hints such as "the Pope," "DC-10 problems" or "Iran" to jog the memory.

Through in-person interviews with 425 viewers in nine major cities and their suburbs over three nights in June of last year, the academicians determined that the average viewer actually absorbed the central point of a little more than half of the 15 to 20 items on a routine network newscast.

The researchers acknowledge that the level of comprehension "may be disappointing to journalists," but claim "it is a highly creditable performance, given the diversity of audience interests, of stories covered and of viewer distractions. . . ." About 65 percent of those interviewed, in fact, said they were doing something else while watching, be it drinking coffee or talking on the telephone.

However "creditable" the level of comprehension may be, the researchers on the project are aiming still higher. Their report, "Toward More Responsible News Re-

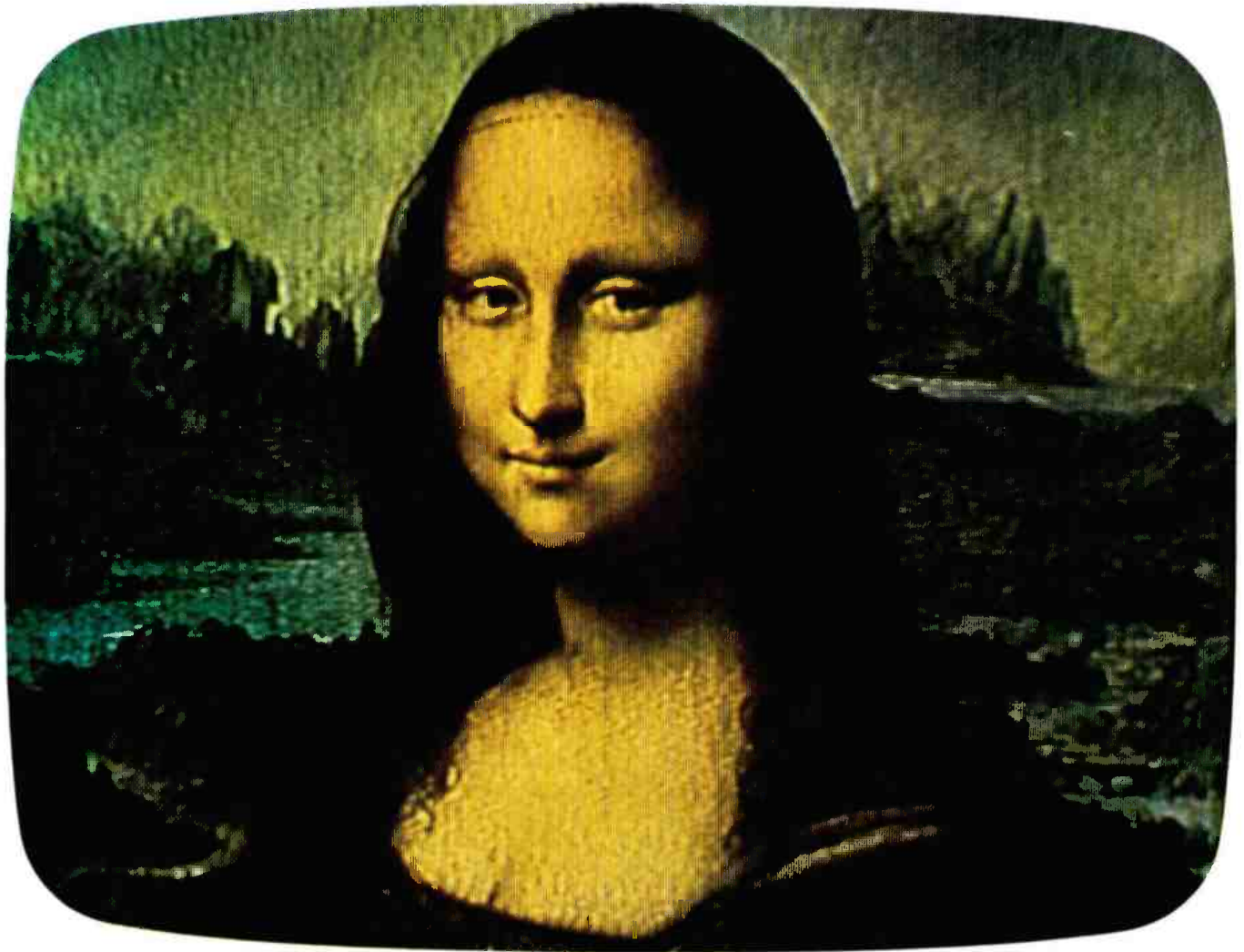
search," encourages networks and TV stations to concentrate not just on cosmetic improvements and ratings head counts, but also on "what is going on inside those heads as a result of the newscast."

Several pieces of advice are offered, among them one calling for "clearer boundaries" between similar stories to avoid "melt-down"—when viewers confuse elements of one story with those of another. Reporters and anchors also are cautioned to make sure the pictures they use accurately reflect the story being told; to repeat the central points or themes of the story; to emphasize and elaborate the "why" aspect of the story; and, more generally, to try to convey why the journalist

thinks the viewers should know about the story.

In the meantime, the Communication Research Center is continuing to develop its techniques to measure how well specific items in a newscast are understood and why. Indeed, John P. Robinson, former director of the Center (now at the University of Maryland)—who has done similar news research in Britain and who, in the 1960s, studied comprehension of rock-music lyric messages—claims that "there's no reason why almost any kind of entertainment product" can't get the same treatment. There may even come a time when the Center will start questioning how well viewers really understand *Laverne & Shirley* or *Dallas*. —Frank Jacobs





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The Mona Lisa, by Sony Beta cassettes. Note how this master tape captures all the delicate shadings and subtle color.

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When you're not home, but want to record that game of the year, that State Of The Union address,

that once-in-a-lifetime event—you need a tape that will record everything perfectly.

And when you look at it later it will be even more exciting, with Picture-Perfect Pictures on Sony Beta cassettes—of course.



SONY

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BETTER ACCESS

John Haynes, a dapper 33-year-old Canadian, dresses the role of your classic prepie: blue blazer, gray slacks, striped tie. He looks like he might be a rising young advertising executive, but he actually heads programming for Atlanta's fledgling cable-TV operation, Cable Atlanta. And he thinks of himself as a revolutionary. His cause? Public-access television—television of, by and for the people. "We are at the beginning of a new communications era," Haynes tells audiences. "We are going to convert television from the genre of the entertainment box it has become to the communications tool it was meant to be."

These brave words have been heard before, nearly as long as there has been talk of "the cable revolution." But in Haynes' case there's a difference. He has a tested program to back them up, something he calls "do-it-yourself television," an approach designed to get folks out of their easy chairs and behind the cameras producing their own shows.

Public access, originally mandated by the FCC, has generally languished throughout the United States, a victim of "benign neglect." Most operators view it as a burden and are loath to provide much money or attention. In Canada, where Cable Atlanta's parent company is based, it's another story. There, operators are required to redirect from three to five percent of annual revenues back into public access. The service is correspondingly slick and professional even though performed by amateurs.

John Haynes intends to apply in Atlanta what he has already learned in cities like Toronto, Winnipeg and Calgary. And the rest of the industry will be keeping an eye on him. In their intense com-

petition for major franchises, operators have begun to promote public access as a high-visibility item, something city councils look at to distinguish one company's bid from another. If Haynes is able to work his "revolution" in Atlanta, its impact will likely be felt elsewhere.

The key to the Cable Atlanta approach is *training* the public. "You don't have to be an electronics expert to know the message you want to get out," says Haynes. "We intend to demystify the medium, to get the public used to the notion that every individual potentially has some information to put on television."

To do that the company has reserved two of its 54 channels for public access and plans to equip five neighborhood production centers (one is already operational) at a cost of \$340,000. Merely making spectrum space available and leasing storefront studios, however, doesn't guarantee they will be used. So in addition to the hardware, Cable Atlanta provides extensive "software": free, four-week training seminars, during which private citizens are transformed into public-access videomakers.

"The workshops take away the razzle-dazzle and get down to the nitty-gritty," Haynes cryptically explains. In eight hours of instruction, students learn the rudiments of camera operation, control-room functions and studio technique (for those interested in on-camera studio productions) or location shooting and editing (for field reports)—all that is needed to assemble an air-worthy product. I had to be convinced.

Since the workshops

weren't yet in full swing (Cable Atlanta had taken over an existing franchise this past spring and was still in the process of wiring the city), Haynes agreed to give me a personal preview. What was I interested in? When his 15-person Public Access department is geared up, it will offer four different kinds of training: studio operation, remote shooting and postproduction, on-camera performance (for talk shows), and public-access radio. I told him I wanted to make a documentary. Nothing simpler.

First step was the camera. Haynes' First Commandment: Don't let the camera run you; you run the camera. "The operation has been so simplified that you don't have to be intimidated," he says. We go over the parts—viewfinder, lens, trigger. Then the operation of the portable video recorder. Then the camera controls—focus, aperture zoom. Haynes' Second Commandment: Zoom in; focus; zoom out and compose.

Within an hour, with some trepidation, I was ready to take to the streets, with camera mounted on one shoulder (¾-inch Hitachi Gp 5A), portapack slung over the other and Haynes' Third Commandment ringing in my ears: Think out your shot before you pull the trigger.

Off I went, to shoot an off-the-cuff video (complete with sound) of "a day in the life of a city park." Not an Emmy candidate, but it had its moments.

Then back to the editing console.

The excitement of seeing video footage you have just shot for the first time is almost impossible to describe—it's like catching lightning in a bottle. The act of editing—sembling the raw material into a formal narrative—turned out to be nearly as easy as taking the pictures. Haynes walked me through

the essentials of the Sony RM 430 editing keyboard and, after several hours of diligent plodding, I was shuffling shots from the original tape to a master. I wouldn't have wanted to be on deadline for the 6 P.M. news but I was slowly assembling a watchable tape.

"Not too bad," was Haynes' verdict when he came by to inspect my work. "Your shots are a little too rushed and you have to practice keeping the camera steadier. But not too bad at all." My verdict on the workshops: it doesn't take four weeks to learn how to make air-worthy video—the technical details actually can be acquired in one day.

My "postproduction enthusiasm" was not a surprise to Haynes. He is, in fact, counting on just such a reaction to make the workshops an effective promotional tool for the cable system itself; so far, almost 300 people have completed or signed up for the training course, even before the city has been completely wired.

"We're going to spend \$370,000 annually to operate public access here," says Haynes. "That kind of sizable investment could either be a write-off for the company or go to providing the city with the most effective public-relations tool imaginable. We're determined to turn television into that kind of powerful local tool to get people to know more about each other."

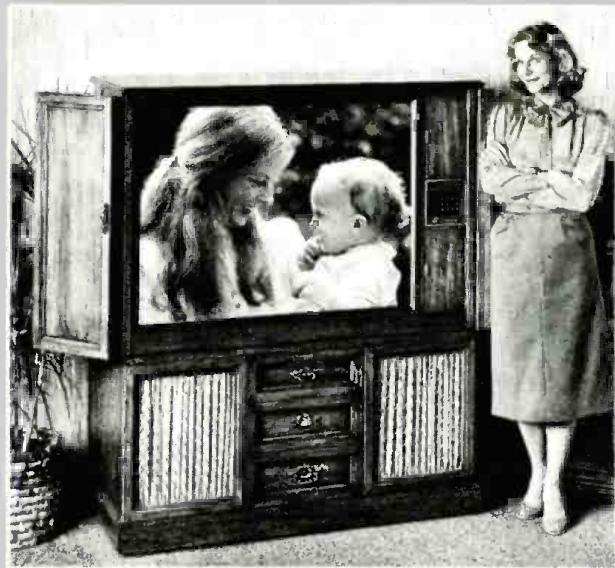
—Neil Shister

“Broadcasters are preparing for change like the French generals with the Maginot line.”

—Edward Bleier, executive vice president, Warner Bros. TV, at a conference of the Broadcast Financial Management Association, New York

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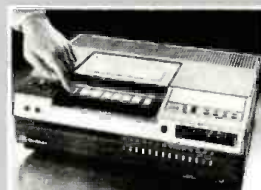


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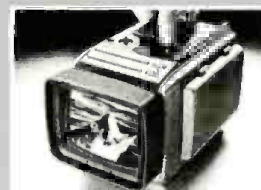
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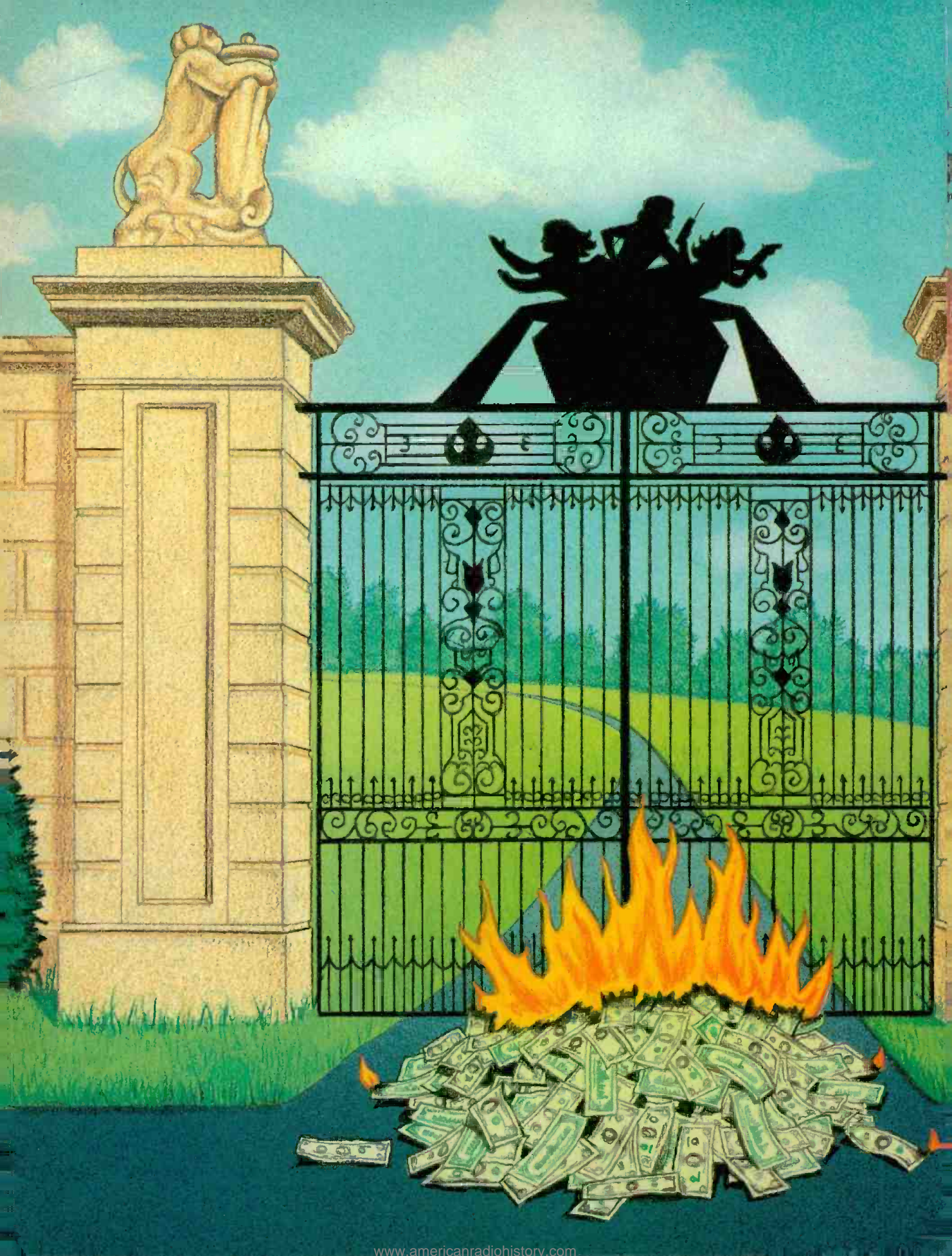


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BEHIND TV'S ANGELGATE MESS:

How Shady Deals Work—and Why Hollywood Loves Them

An insider's report on the wheeling and dealing that make Hollywood ripe for scandal

By ARTHUR WELLESLEY

A summer's evening in front of Chasen's on Beverly Boulevard, at the intersection where West Hollywood runs into Beverly Hills. After a dinner of hobo steak and chili, I am waiting for the Mexican valet to bring up my Toyota. Next to me stands Johnny, a man who has written enough television scripts to girdle the globe. As we wait for our cars, a middle-aged man pulls up in a gleaming blue Rolls-Royce, stunningly accessorized with a gleaming blonde girl. He steps out jauntily, escorts her from the car, smiles at my friend, and saunters into Chasen's to the wild applause of the captain.

"Wow," I say. "Would I love to have a car like that."

"Become a producer, like him," says Johnny. "You have a hit show, you're taking home \$10,000 for a producer's fee every week."

"That's not enough to have a Rolls convertible. A show's only for 24 weeks, tops, a year."

Johnny looks at me pityingly. "Boychick," he says, "they get another \$10,000 a week, too."

"Where do they get that?" I ask.

"They steal it," he says. "They steal it from me and about 5000 other people in this town."

And thereby hangs a tale of discoveries, surprises that are not really surprises, surprises that are surprises, and what life is really like in the world

when commerce and art come together in Hollywood.

Since this is a true story, and since I live here and since I want to sell scripts here, let's not bother with real names. Call me Arthur.

The Discovery

About a year ago, Jennifer Martin, a young lawyer at the ABC network offices in Century City, made a discovery. Her employer had apparently been paying money to two major producers of television shows in what she thought was a rather unorthodox way.

The two producers were Aaron Spelling and Leonard Goldberg. Among their many successes was a titan called *Charlie's Angels*. It showed beautiful girls in skintight outfits. Everyone loved it. Spelling-Goldberg also produced a show about two slovenly policemen. *Starsky & Hutch* was a hit, too, but not quite as big a hit.

Ms. Martin noticed that for each episode of *Charlie's Angels*, Spelling-Goldberg was being paid \$30,000 on top of the license fee and the union-protection payment (money which the networks pay producers ostensibly to cover possible escalations in labor contract costs). Her superiors at the network had labeled this an "exclusivity fee," which would bind Spelling-Goldberg to work only for ABC.

The lawyer was still suspicious.
continued



After all, as far as she could tell, Spelling-Goldberg had been exclusive to ABC before the payments started. Ms. Martin burrowed through documents, interviewed people, and got an idea. As she saw it, the \$30,000 was in fact an additional payment for *Charlie's Angels* and not an exclusivity fee at all.

Ms. Martin claims that, in the course of her investigation, her boss told her that a mysterious \$30,000 per week that had been added to the basic payments for the *Starsky & Hutch* account over the last few years had really been for *Charlie's Angels*. It was paid into the *Starsky* account so that Spelling and Goldberg could keep it all. You see, as the result of many complex earlier deals, Spelling-Goldberg shared ownership of *Charlie's Angels* with two actors, Natalie Wood and Robert Wagner, and two successful writers, Ivan Goff and Ben Roberts. If the \$30,000 were entered as payment and profit on *Charlie's Angels*, Spelling-Goldberg would have to share it. If it came in as payment for *Starsky*, they could keep it for themselves. Once *Starsky* left the air, the \$30,000 had to have another designation to keep it out of the *Charlie's Angels* account. Hence the exclusivity payment. At least, that is what Ms. Martin claims was told to her.

Apparently, Ms. Martin irritated her superiors in some way, perhaps because of her investigation, perhaps for other reasons. At any rate, she was fired in October of 1979 from her job at the network.

She did not lose interest in the case for a moment. Ms. Martin took her theories and certain written material to the district attorney for the county of Los Angeles, who had already received some information on the affair from another ABC lawyer to whom Ms. Martin had earlier expressed concern, and who was launching an investigation. Since then, the Securities and Exchange Commission has let some of its young lawyers have a free trip to California to begin a probe of ABC's behavior.

Now Hollywood is talking. About what is now being called "Angelgate." About Aaron Spelling and Len Goldberg, two extremely well-liked guys in this town. About the ABC network and Fred Silverman. About talent, creativity, profits and the sharing of profits. About how clean got dirty. And about why all the fuss anyway.

How Clean Got Dirty

First, a little background. When you see one of those fun TV shows on your set, it usually has come from a production company in Los Angeles. The networks produce almost nothing for themselves except news and sports. The rest is bought from suppliers.

When television first started, back when it was the "cleanest business in the world," the networks produced many of their own shows. But they found it expensive to maintain big studios, so within a few years they began to farm out production to private companies. The production companies sold their labors to the networks on much the same basis that you would buy a custom-made house—cost-plus. That is, the production company would total all of its costs for making the show and then would add a five-percent or a 10-percent or a 20-percent profit, which the network would pay. That was the "front end"—or original—cost of putting the show on the air. The network owned the "back end"—the right to sell the show to be syndicated in daytime or to be sold to Australian or Japanese television or to be made into comic books or paperbacks. But in the early 1970s the Federal Communications Commission ruled that the networks could no longer own "back-end" rights. From then on, the producers held onto them, and the days of "cost-plus" ended.

These days, there are a few large production companies—Universal, Lorimar, Spelling-Goldberg, Spelling and Goldberg separately, Paramount, MTM, Columbia, and Warner's if it is having a good year. There are a multitude of small companies. All of these companies are constantly trying to get the networks to buy shows from them.

The networks usually order a great many scripts written by writers working for the various production companies. From those scripts, they select a far smaller number, say five percent, and order pilots to be made.

The networks pay what is called a "license fee" for a pilot. Usually (although not always) this license fee is less than the actual cost of making the pilot. For example, if it costs \$400,000 to make a pilot of a situation comedy, the license fee from the network might be \$350,000. The producer makes up

the difference from his own pocket or from the pockets of his investors. He hopes that, in the long run, all the rights and permissions and profits that may come his way will more than compensate him for going out-of-pocket on the license fee.

If the network likes the show, it can order a whole season of the series. If the series is a hit, the networks could run the show for years. *Gunsmoke* ran for 20 years. For each episode of each show, the networks will pay the producer that same old license fee.

Amazingly enough, the old license fee for each and every episode is still rarely as much as the real cost of making the show. In other words, for most producers (again, not all producers), there is a deficit on every single show, even of a long-running series.

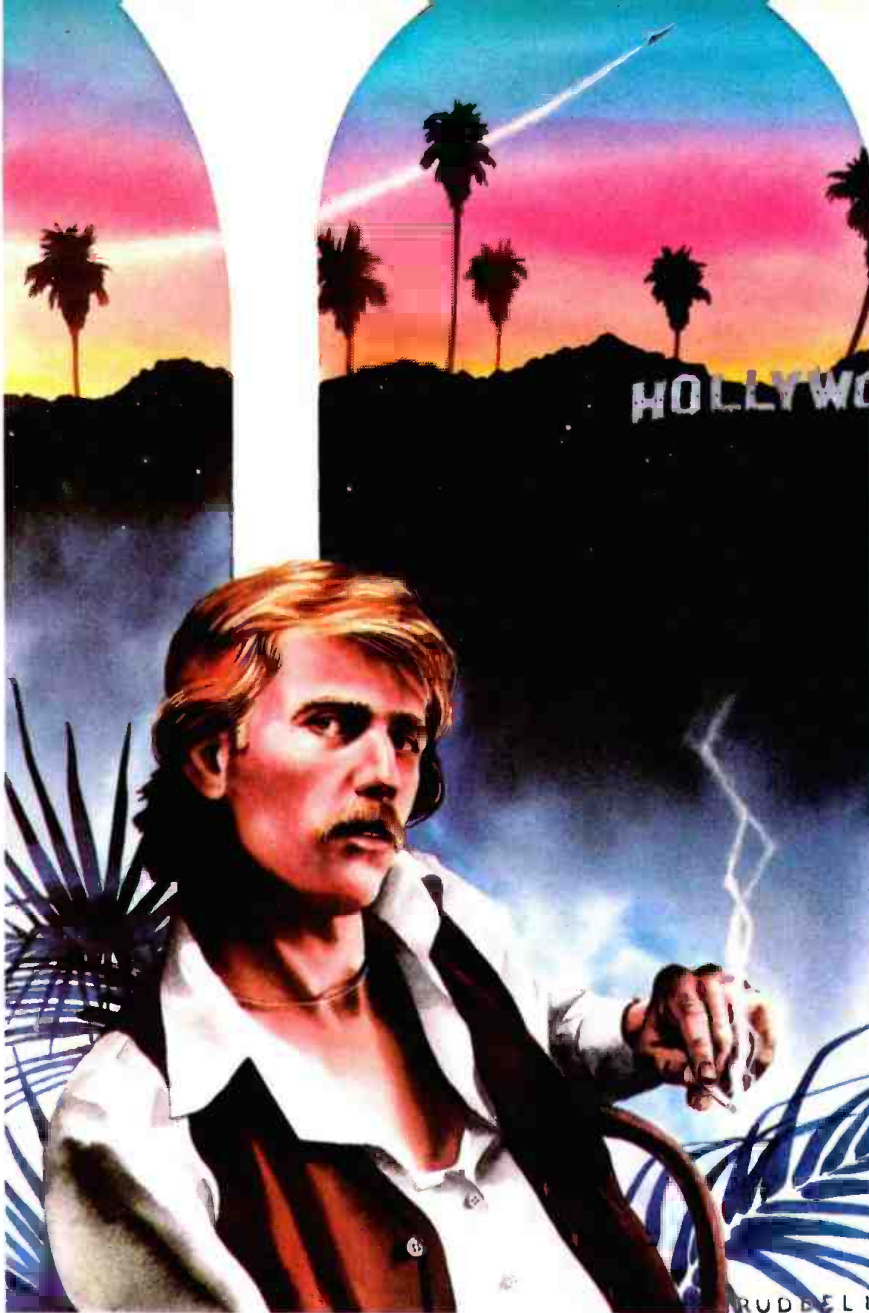
Why do the producers allow such a thing to happen? Are they crazy?

Not at all. They hope to make up all of those deficits—and usually do if the show is a long-running success—by the sale of all those rights and permissions we talked about above. Properly handled, the "back-end" rights and permissions for syndication, foreign sales and literary rights can add up to millions of dollars of profit for the producers. A long-running sitcom can be worth \$20 million to \$30 million easily, sometimes more, for domestic syndication alone. The foreign rights to a successful show can be worth eight digits to the left of the decimal point.

But very few shows get to the point where they can be syndicated. Of 10 shows that get on the air as series (out of tens of thousands of ideas), seven will be immediate failures. Two will run for the whole year. One will be a lingering success.

That means the producers have no "back end" on nine out of 10 shows that get made. They literally have to eat their losses on the license-fee deficit. The huge megabucks lure the producers onward, ever onward, but the pie stays in the sky for most shows and for most producers.

"Just imagine that you're _____," says the Hip Young Network Executive. He looks out at the overcast Studio City sky. "You're sitting there in Burbank with a list of deficits and losses for the last 10 years. You're wondering why you still have a Camaro when all your pals have Rolls



The Hip Young Network Executive:
 ●●Everybody's playing that everything is
 inexpensive, honest, and real. Instead it's expensive,
 highly questionable, and phony. ●●

convertibles. Two scruffy-looking writers come to you with an idea for a series. It's a cute idea. You figure it could hit. It's all BS and random chance anyway. This idea could be the next *All in the Family* as well as anything else. You buy the show idea and you promise the writers part of the profits."

The Hip Young Network Executive smiles confidently. "Next thing you know, you're sitting on top of the Mount St. Helens of television comedy. It's in the top 10 of the Nielsens every week. But you look at your li-

cence fees and you see that you're still in deficit. You get your fee for being executive producer, but, basically, you're in the red on the deal. And there are no profits at all to share with the writers, even if you wanted to share them—which you don't."

The Hip Young Network Executive toys with a silver Gucci ballpoint pen on his desk. "So, if you're smart, you go to the head of the network and you say, 'Look, I can't do this show any more. I'm losing money on every goddamn episode. I know it's gonna be big in syndication, but I'll be broke before

there are enough shows for it to be syndicated.'

"And if the head of the network is really smart, he argues with you for a little while, and then he says, 'Look, I'll make sure you don't lose money on this thing. I can't break the deal I have for license fees, or else I'd have to pay more license fees to everyone. But I can do this. I can give you a check for something we'll call overages every week. And that'll just be between me and you. You carry it on your books as anything you like, and I'll take care of it over here. And then you won't be losing any money any longer.'

"It's all perfectly simple and underhanded," says the network hotshot. "It's all part of the reason this business has gotten so dirty. If it were still cost-plus, everything would be on the up and up. But now that the networks are trying to keep the license fees down to nothing and the producers are trying to stay alive until they can get the 'back end,' it's all dirty." The producer smiles a wry smile and cleans his gold-rimmed glasses. "Everybody's playing that everything is inexpensive, honest, and real. Instead, it's expensive as hell, highly questionable, and phony."

The Hip Young Network Executive runs his fingers through his straight blond hair. He pours himself a glass of Poland water (which has replaced Perrier in many of the smartest circles). "See, the producer by this point probably has a profit. But he doesn't want to share it with anyone. The network doesn't make him share it with anyone. And he just keeps pretending he has a loss. But really, he's on his way to having his Rolls convertible."

The Tangled Web

That is just the beginning of the story. A Sex-bomb Producer, a woman known for her allure and her knowledge of the biz, sits at a dim table at Le Dome. "See," she says, "put yourself in the place of _____. He's been losing money for years. These guys who got to be profit participants in his show that finally made it are just plain lucky. They didn't have to share in any of his losses. So the producer says to himself, 'Well, the hell with those guys. They didn't share my pain, and it's going to be a long time before they share my joy'." She pauses, then adds, "See, the networks are paying in such

a complicated way that nobody's ever going to be able to figure out whether there was really profit or not except the producer. And he's not telling. After all, where were his profit participants when he had to go out and get a second mortgage on his house after 10 flops? They were nowhere in sight."

The Sex-bomb Producer sighs. "Of course, the producer can't cover up all of the profits all the time. That would be simply impossible," she says with a knowing smile.

"When the show goes into syndication or late night or foreign, there's no way the producers can hide all the profits. But for the time being, when the network is making up the losses and calling it something else—overages or something like union-wage protection—those profit participants are not going to see a penny," says the Sex-bomb Producer.

The Vise

The Worldly Producer, who has seen it all from his desk in Burbank, explains a little more about how mud got spattered on the TV business. "I won't kid you," he says. "It all started after Fred [Silverman] took over at ABC [in 1975]. The man is a genius, but he just turned everything upside down. The truth is that the networks have been making up losses on license fees, either openly or not openly, for years. That's the truth. But the amounts involved were always small change.

"When Fred took over at ABC, he made deals with producers that made them shoot unbelievably expensive shows. He promised all kinds of production deals and bonuses if the producers would make these really expensive shows. If the shows failed, Fred would usually make up the loss, under the table or above the table. But that would be the end of it and everybody would be happy," says the Worldly Producer, knitting his bushy eyebrows.

"It was like that movie, 'The Producers,' with Zero Mostel. If the show was a flop, nobody would get hurt. But if the show was a success, then you started to get problems.

"The problem was that the deficits for these shows were so enormous that there was no way the producer could make out if he even shared anything at all with his profit participants.

The producers were so deep in the hole that they needed all the overages and union-protection payments just to stay above water. The profit participants were out the window. The producers couldn't stay in business and divide up their profits. They had to keep it all because they were playing for such huge stakes," says the Worldly Producer.

"Don't get me wrong," he adds. "I'm not saying this exact thing happened on any specific show. It just happened a lot. Producers got locked into a place where there was so much money on the line that they couldn't share with their profit participants and still stay in the black."

The Worldly Producer then adds what everyone else has: "Once the show becomes a big hit and goes into syndication, then the profit participants will see money. But not until then." He gives a rueful smile. "And you really can't blame the producers at all. It's the time-honored practice in every business there is that whoever collects the money keeps the money. Just like in the old days: when the studios owned theaters, they got to collect the money for the tickets and they got rich. Now, when the movie studios get to collect the rentals for their pictures, they get rich. And when the TV producers get to collect the money from the network, either openly or in some kind of secret deal, they let it stick to their fingers until they just can't hide it any more. That's the way it's always been unless you had cost-plus deals like in the old days, when this was the cleanest business in the world," says the Worldly Producer who has seen it all.

The Funny Part

The Worldly Producer smiles a lopsided, huge smile. His smile is so huge, in fact, that it is almost frightening. "The funny part is that Aaron [Spelling] is getting a totally bum rap on this whole thing. He was getting a cost-plus deal and everybody knew it. If the profit participants didn't know it, they should have. He had the cleanest deal in town. He got cost-plus, and then he got an exclusivity fee that really was an exclusivity fee, if there ever is such a thing as an exclusivity fee. Fred [Silverman] liked his work so much that he

just signed him up to be exclusive and just paid him for being exclusive. You could call it profit, and maybe Bob Wagner will, but you could call it an exclusivity fee, too, and you'd be just as right."

A hoarse laugh from the Worldly Producer. "The deal with *Charlie's Angels* looks bad, but it's not bad at all. It's the deals that nobody's talking about yet that are really bad. Where profit participants are getting robbed blind. And it's happening at big studios that are public corporations. It happens all the time. They cover up their real financial position so that the profit participants don't know whether they're coming or going."

Hollywood Logrolling

The Successful Hollywood Writer in a custom-tailored suit sits in a booth at the Palm. Beautiful girls and ugly girls pass by in trousers that sometimes look wonderful and usually look terrifying.

"You cannot blame it all on Freddie," he says. "I know that for a fact. He may have put this business of making up overages onto a bigger level, but he didn't start it. It started back in the Sixties when no one had even heard of Fred Silverman. He did a lot of new things that no one else had ever done, like paying writers not to write, or paying Redd Foxx \$5 million to keep him off NBC, but he did not start the whole thing. I was getting screwed out of profit points for years before Fred was out of college."

Why do writers and other profit participants continue to deal with companies that might possibly not be playing fairly with their deals?

The Successful Hollywood Writer laughs so hard that he starts to choke on a fried onion. "Why?" He can hardly believe I have asked the question. "You go out onto Santa Monica Boulevard. The air is all filled with smog and crap. You can't just say, 'I'm not gonna breathe that air.' That's the only air there is. You've got to breathe it, dirt and all. That's the way it is here. All the companies figure out some way to take money away from the people who are supposed to be getting a share of the profits [usually the creator of the show, the writer of the pilot and the original director]. They all do it. Even

the most honest of them figure out some way to charge some overhead against the license fee or charge a trip to Hawaii against syndication fees. There's no way to escape it, any more than you can escape smog in L.A.

"But it's not really that big a problem, because everybody takes care of you if you play the game and don't complain. A producer may not share his \$20,000 in profits on a show with you, but then he'll hire you to write two pilots a year and you'll get \$60,000 more. So everybody makes out. It's a friendly town," the Successful Hollywood Writer says, rummaging in his pockets for a cigar.

Fact of Life: The Entitlement Frame of Mind

A question kept going through my mind. Why would a major producer, who already has shows in syndication, who already has shows in late night and foreign, who is set for his whole life and his children's lives and everybody's life in his whole neighborhood, care about splitting a few thousand bucks a week—or even 30,000 bucks a week—with the writers or the director or some other profit participants? Why would he risk all those bad vibes for what must be small change to a really successful Hollywood television producer? (Remember that if he has a successful show in syndication, he's a millionaire many times over. If he has several successful shows in syndication, he is the Emir of Kuwait.)

To answer that question, one calls upon the Wise Agent. The Wise Agent sits in a darkened office high above Sunset Strip. Even in the darkened office he wears sunglasses. He eats lunch at his desk. He keeps punching his intercom button and screaming at his secretary. "Goddammit, Elaine, I asked for a Perrier with a fresh goddamn lime, not one left over from the party for Judy Krantz last year!" (He is not Judy Krantz's agent, who is in New York anyway.)

"What you have to understand about these guys, the guys who really strike it rich in Hollywood, is that they've all gone hungry for years. At least they think they have. They're all really bitter about it. Even if it happened when they were 5 years old, they're still really bitter about it. If they

ever strike it really big, they're still bitter. They feel as if the world owes it to them to give them every drop of water in the ocean, every hunk of gold in South Africa. They really think they deserve everything.

"Elaine," he shouts into the intercom, "you stupid jerk, I can't eat this salad!" He glares at a salad containing nothing but lettuce and lemons. "The

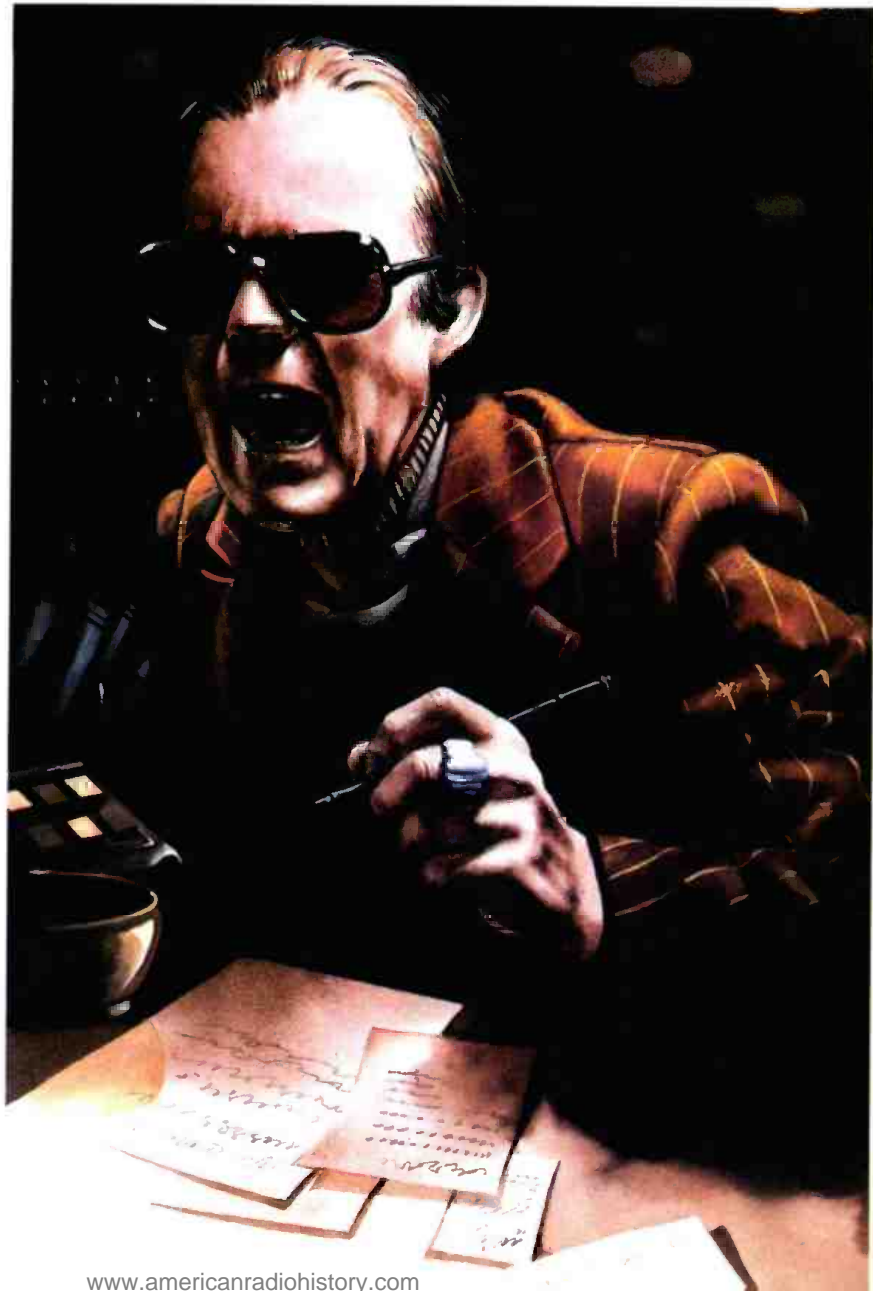
lettuce wasn't dried properly."

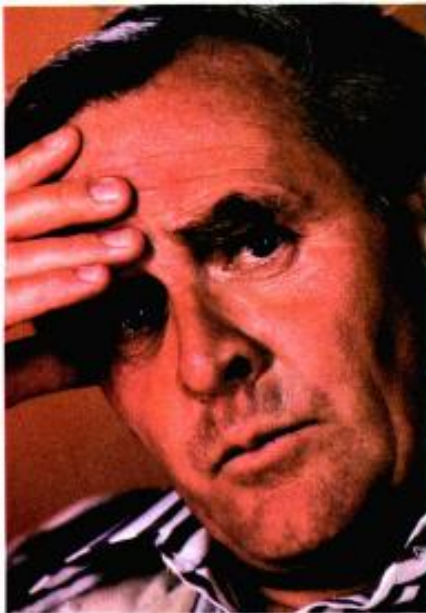
With an effort, the Wise Agent pulls himself together.

"In this business," he says, "you're not dealing with calm, rational people like the ones who work their way up the ladder at General Electric. You're dealing with egomaniacs. They have to be egomaniacs to put up with all the failure. All the loss. All the pain." (I

continued on page 93

The Wise Agent: ●● The producers are really just making sure that if anyone is going to be a multimillionaire, it'll be the producer first and foremost. ●●



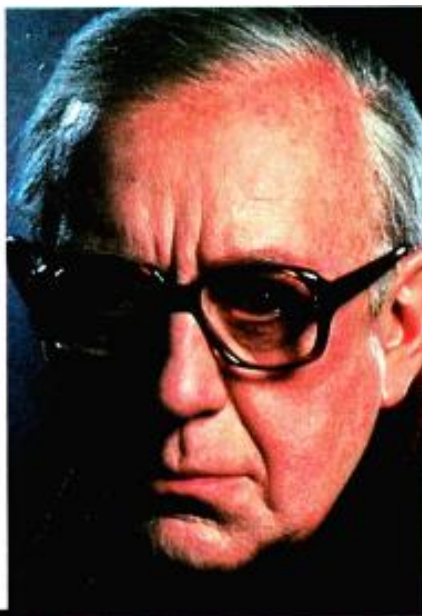


John le Carré

The Case of the Scared Spy Novelist and the Skeptical Actor

Adapting "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy" for TV proved to be a formidable task

By JOHN LE CARRÉ



Alec Guinness

With the current broadcast of "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy" on PBS's Great Performances, television viewers enter a cold, gray world first drawn for readers by John le Carré in the early 1960s. Its center is "the Circus": a nondescript government building on Cambridge Circus, London, that houses the British Secret Service.

George Smiley (played by Sir Alec Guinness), described by his own wife as "breathtakingly ordinary," is a long-time member of the Circus: the man who trains recruits, sends them out, and oversees attempts—when at-

tempts are made—to rescue those who fall into trouble. He is also a father confessor (or, in Guinness's words, "geriatric ear") to his subordinates.

Forced to retire when Control (head of the Circus from its early days) is discredited and removed, Smiley is called back in "Tinker, Tailor" to help ferret out a "mole"—a double agent who has worked his way high into Intelligence. "The Honourable Schoolboy" and "Smiley's People" continue Smiley's efforts to reassemble the service fragmented and demoralized by the mole.

Like most authors, I am a timid creature, and desperately scared of the screen presentation of my work. I expect no good of it; I have little or no natural understanding of filmmaking; the whole business is anathema to my lightly slumbering artistic paranoia; yet I think secretly I could do the job better than they can.

As to why I am so wary—well, I have been through the movie mill more times than I care to remember, not out of love for the medium so much as a terror of it. Like a mother on the beach, I have waded, time and again, fully dressed, into the sea to save my imperiled children—and what is more, like a mother who cannot swim. For I have gradually come to accept, with the more rational side of my head, that I really am no good at adapting my own work. I have never tried anyone else's. I am not even good at reading scripts. At other times, of course, once again I tell myself I am too good for them: that I am another Scott Fitzgerald caught up in the wrong ball game. The fantasy does not last long. The more likely truth is that moviemakers are not one-half as bad as we novelists think they are, and that our egos fight tooth and nail against a medium where the writer is no longer king.

All the same, we do have our reasons, and most of them have to do with that most thorny question: characterization.

Until the prospect of the film comes along, the novelist's characters have lived *undefined* in his imagination. To write about them at all is to hunt them, to pursue an abstraction which, in order to lure him, must remain always a little bit beyond his reach. Drawing a character is like contributing to an elusive, constantly changing, constantly imperfect portrait. You do a line, rub it out, do another, the fleeting vision comes and is lost again.

Thus, in the writer's eyes, and quite often in the reader's, to give a character a screen identity at all—to cast him—is not only to snatch him painfully from the living arms of his creator, but to reduce him: to impose upon him crippling limitations of mannerism, speech, movement, expression and, finally, of feeling. All, at a stroke of casting, become the property of a single, mortal, professional actor who has his own public to consider and his own director to follow.

Yet, curiously enough, even as I agonize about the process, I realize that I speak as one who has largely escaped its hazards.

Richard Burton's rendering of Alec Leamas in "The Spy Who Came In

from the Cold” was arguably his best screen performance. Cyril Cusack’s Control in the same film was sheer delight to me; so was Ralph Richardson as the mad head of the Department in “The Looking Glass War.” As to Simone Signoret playing Elsa Fenan in “Call for the Dead” (rechristened “The Deadly Affair” because some paragon at Columbia smelt Dracula in the original title), when I saw her performance, I walked all the way home dreaming of tearing up the book and rewriting every scene just for her.

As to George Smiley, my anchor man and familiar through seven novels, the three films which had been made of my work had all succeeded in passing him by. His only official screen appearance was in “The Spy Who Came In from the Cold”—where he was played by Rupert Davies from behind a large mustache and a gypsy hair style, which were supposed to conceal from us the fact that he was really Simenon’s Inspector Maigret, whom he had recently been playing on British television. And since the part of Smiley had little meaning in the film or the book, except as a lever to turn the plot, no real violence could be done to him.

On the other hand, Smiley *should* have been the central character in Sidney Lumet’s screen version of “Call for the Dead”: it is in this book that he makes his debut. But there, as so often, Hollywood defeated itself. Paramount by now had a lien on the character of Smiley and would not release him. So for Columbia’s film he was renamed Dobbs and played by the excellent James Mason—also from behind a mustache. Mason’s performance was elegant and touching, but he was not Smiley, and not meant to be. And—dare I say it?—the Smiley of the first book was not the Smiley of “Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy.” “Tinker, Tailor” was written 13 years later, and by that time both Smiley and I were seeing the world in a rather different way.

In “The Looking Glass War”—also a Smiley book and a Columbia film—the same restriction applied. The Smiley character, so far as I remember, was written out entirely.

Thus it happened that in the BBC’s miniseries of “Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy,” Alec Guinness took over a part which was, after all, still to be played for the first time. I scarcely remember any longer how he came to accept it. I know I wrote to him. I know that I never seriously considered anybody else. I think I had read somewhere that he liked my work. And I know that after meeting him, we all felt

the same: it was Guinness or nobody. Guinness said “Yes, in principle”; Arthur Hopcraft went off to start his script. The rest of us—Jonathan Powell, the producer; John Irvin, the director; and myself—withdrew for prayer and contemplation while Arthur toiled.

In the beginning—as everyone but the public seems to know—is the Word. Without a good script we should have no Guinness and no series, and there were those who said flatly that “Tinker, Tailor” was unadaptable. Even Guinness himself reckoned it might be just that.

One problem was the sheer quantity of the information Hopcraft had to handle. In the novel the facts of the affair were presented as a deliberate jungle; as a devilish, perverse chaos which only Smiley could resolve. This is a perfectly normal feature of the detective story and, in the convention, requires Poirot, or Holmes, or whom you will, to call everyone together and ex-

the raw material for the story as well. How could Arthur Hopcraft’s screenplay get round this? Flashback, obviously, was available to him as a device, but the small screen is choosy about how much of this it can handle, particularly when the drama is an extended series and each episode must restore the audience to the present time before it signs off for the evening.

Another problem was not just the quantity of information but its complex nature. The inside-out thinking of double cross is a habit of mind; its logic had to be expounded to a lay audience as well as dramatized. The notion of how a double agent inside a secret service—a Blake or a Philby—might bowl and bat at the same time was, on the face of it, cerebral and static—a condition rather than a story. A television audience cannot turn back a few pages to refresh its memory. Nor does it take kindly to being out of its depth for long at a time.



Smiley (Alec Guinness) visits the Secret Service’s former research chief, Connie Sachs (Beryl Reid), in the hope of unearthing clues to the mole’s identity.

plain who precisely was in the woodshed at 3 A.M., and for what fell purpose, and why it is that only the great man himself was able to come up with the solution. The audience does not really *follow* the arguments, but it derives a vicarious sense of accomplishment, which is musical rather than rational, from somebody else’s spurious arithmetic. The luckless miscreant then attempts to escape, and is foiled or not foiled, or shot, or falls from a scaffolding. But in “Tinker, Tailor” the facts were largely derived from Smiley’s own memory. His little gray cells supplied not only the deductions, but

The journey from perplexity to anger is a very short one; and anger in the television business is swiftly expressed by the turn of a switch.

On the other hand, Hopcraft had advantages. To state the obvious, television is a talk medium whereas the motion picture definitely is not. A television audience, contrary to show-biz mythology, is brighter than its reputation. Many people turn on their sets expecting to have to listen, and even work a little for their entertainment. Television drama is nearer to the radio play than to film. We needed that. Then, again, Hopcraft could choose his

Continued on page 90

A SPECIAL PANORAMA
SURVEY REVEALS:

The Viewers' Verdict— So Far—on Cable TV

By STANLEY MARCUS

Cable television, as PANORAMA readers are well aware, has arrived. The exclusive community of 4.5 million households that were plugged into cable in 1970 has grown this year to 17 million, and by the end of the Eighties it's expected that at least half of U.S. homes will be receiving their television programs from underground.

What these statistics fail to tell us is whether cable TV is fulfilling the expectations of subscribers. Do they consider that the services they are getting are worth the \$8 to \$25 a month they are paying for them? How much TV are they watching now, in comparison

with precable days? And what more are they seeking from the protean cable technology?

A special PANORAMA survey of cable viewers around the country answers these questions, and reveals that cable TV is an outstanding success in terms of consumer satisfaction. No less than 89 percent of a national sample of subscribers said they were satisfied with their cable-TV service (53 percent "very satisfied"). The wider range of programming choice was the feature that drew most appreciation (46 percent mentioned this), with improved reception the second most frequently cited benefit (25 percent). Interestingly, the absence of commercial interruptions during programs, though it was cited by 66 percent of respondents as an important reason for originally subscribing to cable, was mentioned by only 9 percent as a "chief benefit"—a classic case of "out of sight, out of mind."

The other side of the coin of present satisfaction is a marked indifference to the numerous add-on luxuries that are becoming increasingly available from cable systems. The vast majority of

subscribers have no desire for "interactive," two-way cable TV, for example, which would enable them to communicate their opinions and marketing needs instantaneously to pollsters and advertisers. They are equally cool toward TV-operated burglar alarms, TV-screen newspapers, video games, and teleconferences with other cable viewers. More than two-thirds of those who lack these items say they wouldn't want them in the future.

"So much for the wired society," you say? Not so fast. The younger generation—those between 18 and 29—is considerably more enthusiastic than its elders about cable television's burgeoning accessories. Though this group, too, is unmoved by the prospect of sci-fi burglar alarms, more than a third consider themselves potential users of interactive TV and video games, and nearly half express interest in a computer hookup that would provide access to diverse information sources. So even if the wired society



doesn't materialize tomorrow, we're clearly headed for Videoville on the day after.

The PANORAMA survey, conducted in mid-June by Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, was based on a national random sampling of households. Five hundred and four cable-TV subscribers were interviewed and the demographic breakdown of the sample gives a good indication of the total cable constituency. Ninety percent was white; 30 percent of the households had an income of \$25,000 or more; nearly a third of the respondents were over 50, with 27 percent under 30; and 44 percent were college-educated.

How has the advent of cable affected viewing patterns? The commercial networks have a nervous interest in the answer to this question, as do advertisers, consumer groups, independent program-makers and the giant corporations such as Time, Inc., American Express and Getty Oil, which are currently pouring millions of dollars into the cable gold rush. Do viewers desert the networks when they have a profusion of distant stations and satellite-delivered programming to choose from? Do they spend more time in front of their television sets?

Might there even be some folk who watch less TV, getting a more concentrated dose of satisfaction from cable than they used to get from plain old over-the-air broadcasting?

Our survey shows that the presence of cable has a mildly tonic effect on overall viewing: though 55 percent of respondents claim that the total amount of time they devote to TV has remained unchanged, 35 percent say their viewing hours have increased. This latter percentage seems to be unaffected by the length of time that a household has had cable television: veterans of six years or more are just as likely to report increased viewing as are the neophytes. A minority of subscribers—8 percent—claim that viewing hours have *decreased* since cable came into the home.

The effect on network viewing is noticeable, but is hardly a landslide. Twenty-nine percent of cable subscribers say they now watch less network programming, 13 percent say they watch more, and the remainder—the majority—report no change. But among those who have had cable for less than a year, the decline in network viewing is significantly greater than average: 37 percent say they tune in less frequently to ABC, CBS and NBC.

In addition to their basic-cable service, 43 percent of the people interviewed for PANORAMA subscribe to one or more pay-TV channels, such as Home Box Office or Showtime. For their monthly fee, they can see a variety of full-length, unedited movies, as well as an increasing number of made-for-pay concert specials, comedy

shows and documentary programs. In this group of respondents, defection from noncable viewing (described in the questionnaire as "regular commercial and public television") was greater than in the sample as a whole: 36 percent told the interviewer that they were watching less. This figure, however, conceals significant regional variations. While in the East 46 percent had reduced their intake of regular programming, in the Midwest only 26 percent had done so.

The returns indicate that, in terms of audience loyalty, movie houses and live theater have suffered more from the growth of cable TV than have the television networks. Forty-six percent of our interviewees said that they were going out less frequently to see movies and plays since the arrival of cable, and in the East the percentage was higher—53. The stay-at-home movement is led by those in the middle-income bracket (between \$10,000 and \$25,000).

What are the programs that are keeping cable viewers glued to their video modules? Chart 1 on the next page shows how often particular types of programming are watched, with network and regular local programming included for comparison. The greatest draw is movies (63 percent of the sample watching fairly often); sports are second in popularity (49 percent); and entertainment specials run a close third (47 percent). However, of these three categories, only movies do better than noncable programming.

Other offerings, including news and weather information displayed as printed text, have relatively small regular audiences, though sizable numbers of subscribers tune in occasionally. It is noteworthy that more than a third of all subscribers say they are occasional viewers of religious programs.

Three other items in the chart deserve comment. First, the 5 percent figure for frequent viewing of shows for the elderly yields a surprising breakdown by age group. The 18-to-



29-year-old group watches these programs almost as much as the over-50s; the intermediate group of 30-to-49-year-olds turns the dial. Second, the figures for children's programs are overall averages that are heavily deflated by households that don't include children under 16; among households with children, frequent kidvid viewing is double the average. Finally, the viewership data for the Cable News Network are at best provisional, since CNN began operations only three weeks prior to the survey.

Pay-TV subscribers were asked how satisfied they were with the allocation of time to particular classes of programming. Was the current amount in each case about right, or would they prefer more or less? Chart 2 (opposite) shows the percentage of respondents who stated that they would like to see more of each programming category. The heaviest demand is for more educational programs, 58 percent requesting an increase; more chil-

dren's programs are sought by 43 percent; more cultural programs by 41 percent. There are also substantial minorities who would like to see increases in sports, celebrity specials, R- and X-rated movies, and news. Individuals who watch five or more hours of TV per day tend to be more demanding in most of these areas, though they are less hungry than are lighter viewers for larger servings of culture and sports.

The demand for decreases in programming was small and fairly uniform among the categories, hovering between 10 and 15 percent. But there was a higher incidence of dissatisfaction with religious programs (32 percent wanting fewer), X-rated movies (27 percent) and ethnic programs (24 percent). The category that drew the largest number of "about right" votes was news (62 percent).

Chart 3 (bottom right) details the gripes of the small minority of sub-

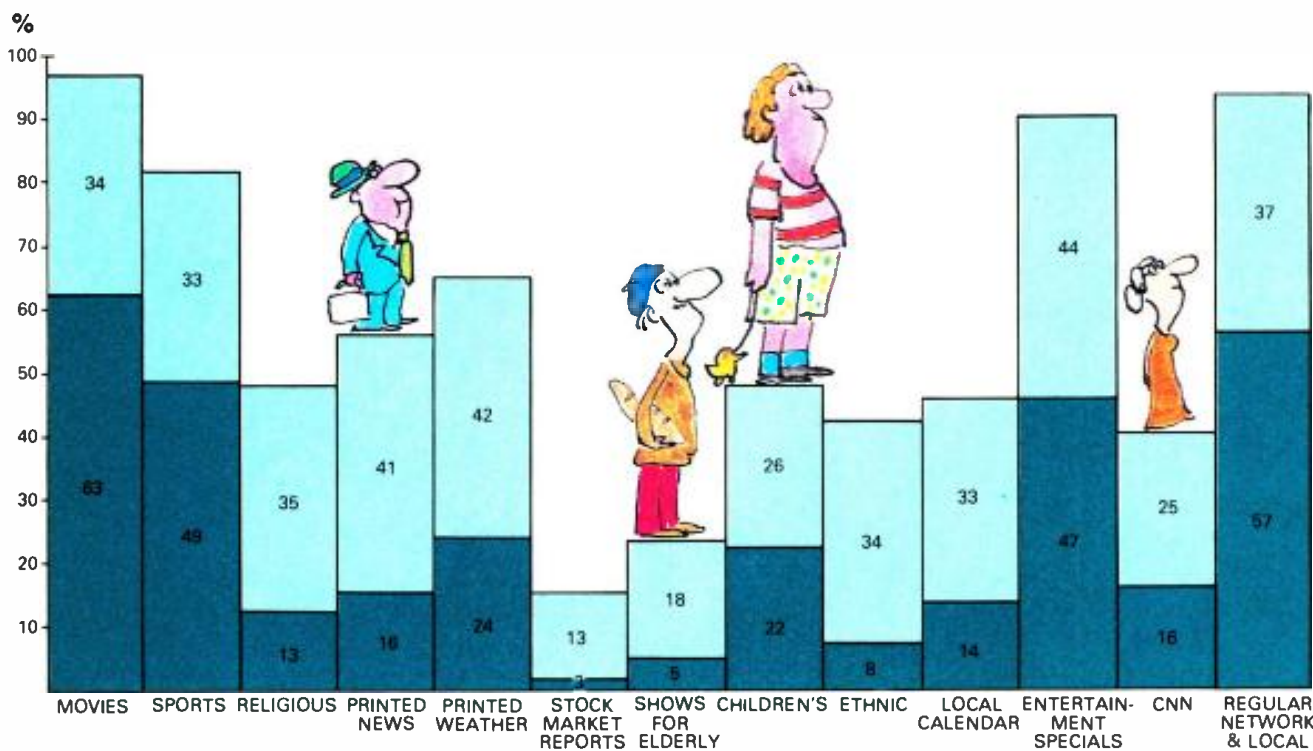
scribers (11 percent) who say they are dissatisfied with their cable service. They were asked an open-ended question: "Why are you not satisfied? What is lacking? What disappoints you?" The largest number of complaints, 38 percent, concerned reception (more than one respondent said that sets had gone dark during rainstorms); 19 percent of the complainants cited problems with servicing; and smaller numbers beefed about the range of programs available. The enigmatic "other" category, which includes 22 percent of the disaffected group, covers a chaotic miscellany of complaints, ranging from the incomprehensible "All the movies are in black and white" to the dubious "Nothing classical." One respondent berated his cable system for never answering its phone when he called. Another said the problem was that she wasn't a TV-watcher. Yes, ma'am, that indeed is a problem—and one for which no technological solution is in sight. ■

1. WHAT ARE THEY WATCHING?

All 504 survey respondents were asked how often they watched particular categories of programming. The possible replies were: "Fairly often," "Once in a while," "Never." The chart below shows the percentage of respondents giving the first two replies in each case.

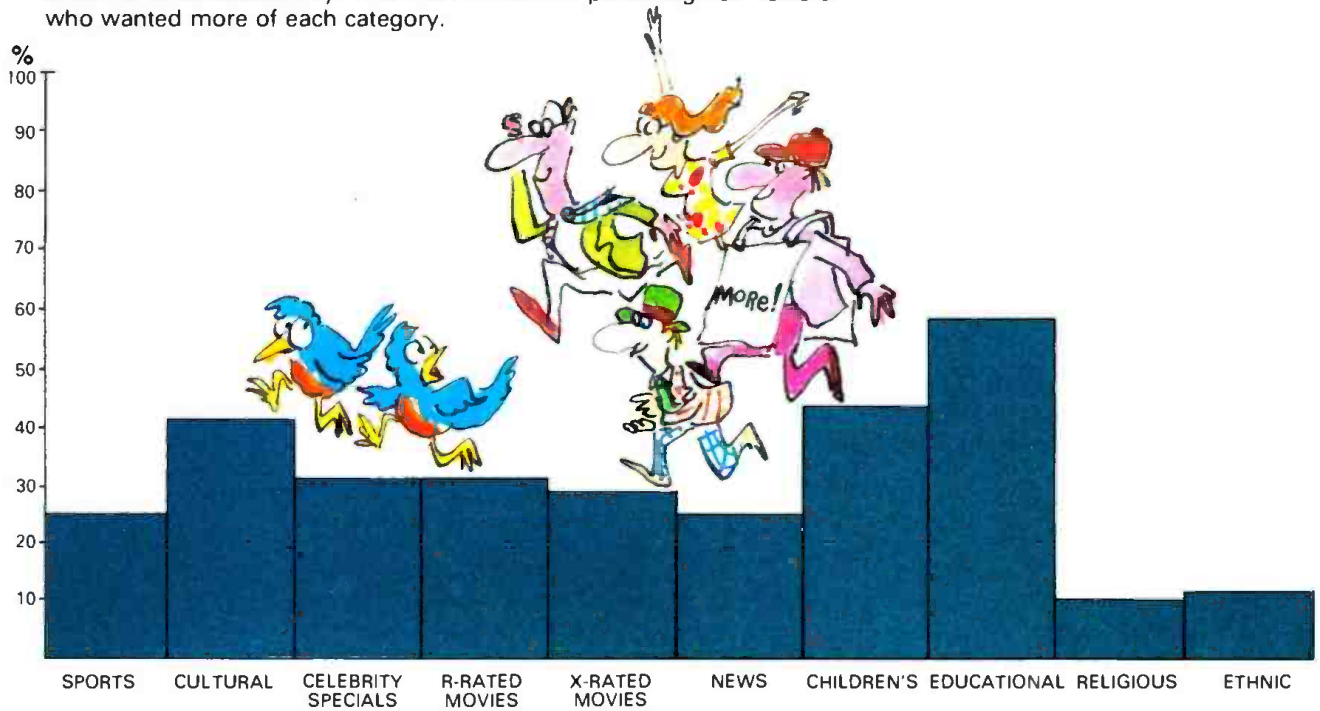


FAIRLY OFTEN ONCE IN A WHILE



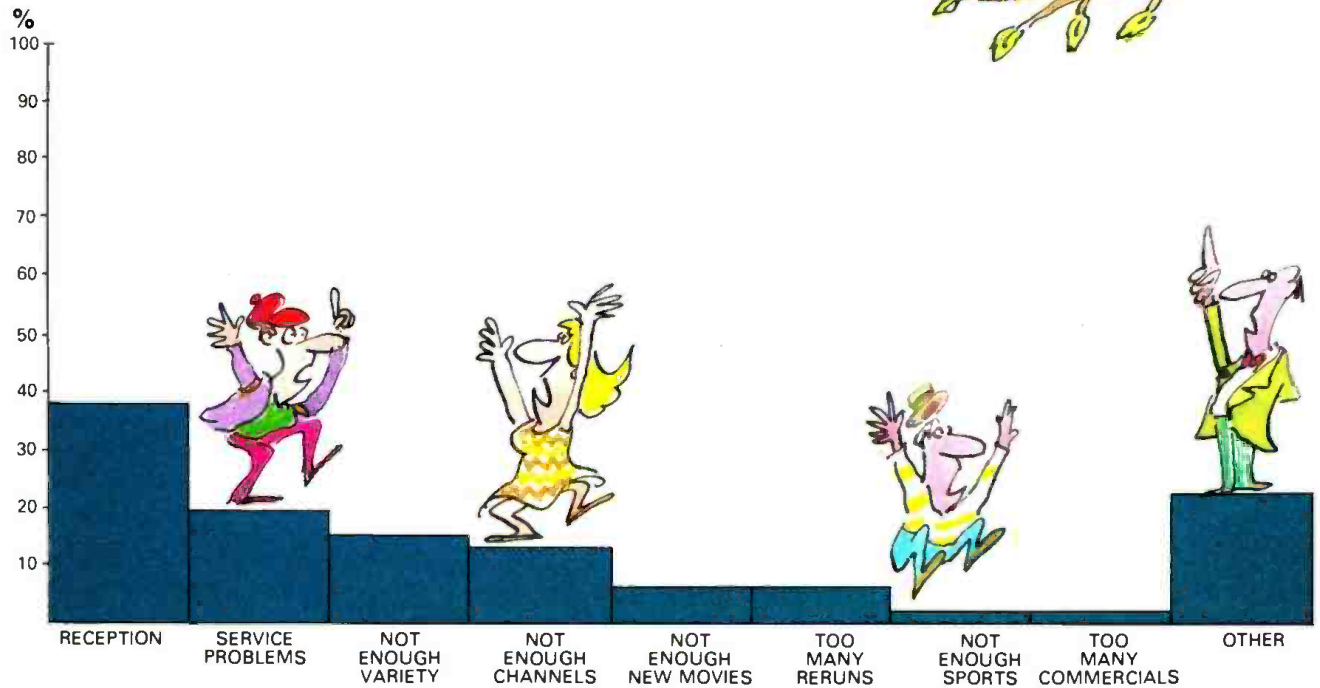
2. WHAT MORE DO THEY WANT?

The 214 respondents who subscribe to a pay-TV service were asked if they wanted more or less of particular types of programming, or if the current amounts were satisfactory. This chart shows the percentage of viewers who wanted more of each category.



3. WHAT ARE THEY COMPLAINING ABOUT?

Only 11 percent of the survey sample expressed dissatisfaction with cable TV. This minority was asked: "Why are you not satisfied? What is lacking? What disappoints you?"



Coming to You Live ...from Potholes and Trash Baskets

In New York, ratings madness apparently blinds local newscasters to substance and fact

By GINNIA WOOD and ERNEST VOLKMAN

Right from the start, it was obvious what he was going to do. Standing out there in the cold while the cars and trucks rumbled by, WABC-TV reporter Milton Lewis planted himself next to the pothole. And the more he talked about that pothole, the angrier Milton got.

"When you gonna fix this thing, Mr. Koch?" he demanded, obviously outraged that the mayor of New York City was not there in his overalls, spreading asphalt into the offending chasm.

"Milton is so cute when he gets mad," said an ABC executive as he watched this little drama unfolding on the monitor at the WABC *Eyewitness News* studio in New York. Cute? Well, maybe if you're charmed by the spectacle of a diminutive man shrieking at viewers in a choppy Brooklyn accent about the potholes in the Big Apple. Toward the end of his diatribe came the quintessential mark of television reporting today: Milton Lewis, to no one's surprise, jumped into the pothole, demonstrating to all that he wasn't kidding—the damn thing was deep.

Stick a videotape of that report in a time capsule, dig it up several years from now, and what have we told generations yet unborn? That at a time when the city of New York was beset by fiscal, housing, crime and assorted other crises of civilization, the number-one television-news show in that city was foaming at the mouth over holes in the street. And instead of reporting the news, *participating* in it.

Ginnia Wood and Ernest Volkman are freelance writers who specialize in the media.

But then, a clip of any local news show across the Nation would bear a chilling similarity, for what Milton Lewis was doing in the middle of the street on that day last winter is what local television journalism is all about. Here's a reporter for the CBS Baltimore affiliate getting personally involved in the story of a fire that has destroyed several homes; here's a reporter for the NBC affiliate in San Francisco telling viewers about his personal experiences on a recent trip; here's a weatherman in Washington, D.C.—dressed for the forecast—in a fur-lined earflap hat, announcing the start of a cold wave.

Once the stepchild of television, local news was an underbudgeted, throw-away lead-in to the more important network news—the electronic equivalent of a local weekly newspaper that barely supplements the news coverage of a big-city daily. In the late '60s, however, it suddenly occurred to any number of TV executives that if network news was an important source of revenue as a result of high audience shares—and it was—then the same thing could be true for local news. Why not? Why couldn't local news define a station's image in the community?

These thoughts had a particular impact in such markets as New York City, where three of the local stations are wholly owned subsidiaries of the networks, meaning that their profits go directly into the networks' respective treasuries. Now, a single audience rating point in a medium-sized market (say, Columbus, Ohio) can mean about \$250,000; in New York City the same

rating point can mean up to \$1 million in revenue.

At about the same time, one particular TV executive at KYW-TV in Philadelphia, Albert T. Primo, also realized that, while viewers were apparently willing to accept gloom and doom from the networks, for some curious reason they wanted something different in their local news. In 1968, Primo moved to WABC in New York, taking his new ideas with him. And so, just 12 years ago, WABC introduced a different kind of news show, featuring on-camera "personalities" who would leaven hard news with special, local, "happy" news reports, lots of visuals and something called "personal chemistry" among the anchor people. Reporters would no longer merely report the news; they would participate in it, discuss it with one another on the air and often trade comments and asides. The new television "journalism" was upon us.

In strictly journalistic terms, the approach has a number of obvious drawbacks, mainly an obsession with stories that have high visual content—fires and murders are special favorites—and a tendency toward tabloidism (the classic formula of sex, crime, children and animals). Hard news, which usually is less visual, falls by the wayside.

Indeed, its legion of critics charge that *Eyewitness News* is a sloppy mixture of schlock and trivia that seeks to entertain rather than inform. (Interestingly enough, Albert Primo, who left ABC in 1976, now is a news consultant, hard at work trying to correct the "ex-





Chee Chee Williams: an "eyewitness" stuck behind barricades at the Israeli Embassy.

cesses" of local "happy" news operations across the country.) But one fact is indisputable: judged in terms of audience ratings, the *Eyewitness News* concept is the most successful in the history of television news. Even more important, the show makes an awful lot of money for ABC. For that reason, it has been widely emulated—cloned, to be blunt—by virtually every local-news operation in the country. And so the network executives, who are not journalists but businessmen, can, as the saying goes, laugh all the way to the bank.

Just how much they're taking to the bank is something of a state secret around television stations, but one ABC executive provides this eye-opener: last year, all ABC local-news operations returned a combined profit of \$135 million, the bulk of it realized from the New York and Los Angeles stations. New York alone brought in about \$40 million, meaning that WABC-TV news is a gold mine. And in television, nothing talks louder than ratings and profits. Last November, for example—one of the all-important times in which station ratings that will be used to set advertising rates for the coming months are taken—WABC took a whopping lead of nearly six points over its competitors, WNBC and WCBS. Considering that each one of those points can mean up to a cool million in extra revenue, it is no wonder that the November "sweeps" are regarded in the industry as something of a matter of life and death.

Which explains why the New York affiliates during that month fell all over themselves in a search for superior schlock. The CBS affiliate de-

ecided on a five-part series examining the burning question of marital infidelity; over at NBC they were busy with a series on "decadence" (apparently another burning public issue); while WABC had a series on dogfighting, an in-depth report on venereal disease and, incredibly, a series titled "Who Are You? The Who's Who of You." Judging by the results, it could be concluded that millions of New Yorkers are more concerned about dogfighting, who they are, and whether they've got a social disease than about infidelity or decadence.

But it goes beyond that. WABC, with its continuing stranglehold on the minds and hearts of the viewers, demonstrated that the subtle components



Milton Lewis: foaming at the mouth over potholes and shrieking at viewers.

that make its news unique can be imitated but never duplicated. What makes *Eyewitness News* so successful? Let's take a look at a typical show, selected at random, for some answers.

The most popular local-TV news program in the United States opens with a flashing montage of New York City sights (the Staten Island ferry, people walking along the streets, the Empire State Building, etc.), accompanied by a frenetic musical background that sounds something like the mix of an aging disco record and a Teletype machine gone mad. The last piece of the montage is, modestly enough, a shot of the new ABC building, and then, suddenly, the viewers are inside "the Newsroom."

At the center of the set sit Roger Grimsby and Bill Beutel, the most durable anchor team in the country (10 years on the job). Their success has been extraordinary, all the more so



Melinda Nix: doggedly chasing down clues in the backward-windows case.

because nobody quite understands why. The more interesting of the two is Grimsby, a dour man resembling an undertaker who has just been told he's out of embalming fluid. "I'm Roger Grimsby. Here now the news," he intones sonorously, as though he were about to recite death notices. Beutel, who looks like the boy next door, then introduces some quick scenes of reporters in the field. The impression is that they've been hustling their tails off all day, ferreting out the major developments in the Big Apple. Have they?

"This is Melinda Nix in the Bronx with a story about how a landlord took out the windows of Mrs. _____'s apartment and then put new ones in, sort of."

That's the lead story? Well, try the next one:

"I'm John Slattery," says a man with a microphone, standing beside a large wire wastebasket in the street. "I'm on Fifth Avenue and I'll be telling you about the problems of finding a place to throw your wrappers away."

The next sounds more promising:

"I'm Chee Chee Williams outside the Israeli Consulate and I'll be talking to some of the demonstrators here."

That's all they've managed to dig up in a whole day in a city of eight million people?

The scene shifts back to the studio. "These stories and others, plus my special report on stress, after these messages," Beutel says. Cut to commercial.

Then back to a head shot of Grimsby. "Ten people were stabbed in Union City, New Jersey, today. Gloria Rojas is there now and will be bringing you a live report later in the show as details develop. Bill—"

Switch to Beutel. "Today, the trial of Buddy Jacobson began—that's the love-triangle case," Beutel says. "Bob Miller is there now with this report. Bob—"

The scene switches to a man with a microphone, standing in what appears to be a courtroom entranceway. "The trial of Buddy Jacobson began in the Bronx Superior Court today," Miller says. The viewer develops an uneasy feeling: there is no Superior Court anywhere in the Bronx. Is it possible Miller does not know where he is? Apparently; for while he summarizes the developments of the case—"Mr. Jacobson is charged with murdering the boyfriend of his former girlfriend, while his codefendant is charged with disposing of the body"—Miller makes no further references to his location: the Bronx County Supreme Court.

A small point, perhaps, but subsequent portions of his report reveal an appalling lack of understanding about criminal law. Miller shows tape shot earlier of his interview with a rather depressed-looking man who turns out to be the defendant.

Miller hits him with the Big Question: "Do you think you'll be found innocent?"

Jacobson looks at Miller incredulously for a moment, then replies, "Yes, of course." The point of the question was hard to fathom: did Miller expect the man to say, "Well, I'll probably be found guilty and then be sent away for life, but what can you do?"

Miller then leads into another interview: "The defense attorney today said that the codefendant disposed of the body, but neither he nor Mr. Jacobson had anything to do with the murder. I asked the defense attorney about this admission."

Cut to a shot of a dapper-looking man who appears to be upset. And no wonder: Miller has just outlined a defense that would be laughed out of a first-year law-school class. "I did not admit anything of the sort," the attorney snaps. "That would be ridiculous."

Miller ignores this statement, which leaves the viewer with a problem: If Miller is right, if the defense attorney admitted that the codefendant disposed of a murder victim but had no connection with the murder itself, then the defense attorney is an idiot. But if the lawyer is right in claiming to have said no such thing, then Miller must

have been in Istanbul while the trial was going on.

Return to Grimsby. "There was a shooting in Brooklyn today," he says. "The police have arrested two people in connection with it." The camera switches to Beutel, who says, "The cost of a clean city, buying a new home, the price of gold—these and other stories when *Eyewitness News* continues." Cut to commercial, which marks the end of any further information about the shooting in Brooklyn—no names, facts, details, nothing.

For those wondering whatever happened to the lead item about windows in the Bronx, the scene after the commercials reveals that Melinda Nix, the reporter on this story, is still there. "A

“Russian troops have been gathering at the Pakistan border. . . .”
So much for the day’s major international events

few weeks ago," she states seriously, "I told you about Mrs. _____'s landlord removing the windows from her apartment. Well, after pressure from ABC, the landlord has finally put new ones in. But, tell us, Mrs. _____, how are they?"

"Well," says a black woman, "they're in backwards. So there are big gaps and the cold air just comes in."

Ms. Nix, immediately grasping the crux of the situation, replies, "They were put in backwards. Is that what you're saying?"

"Yes," the woman answers, seeming confused by the question.

Ms. Nix plows on. "We called the landlord, but couldn't reach him for comment. But we did get a building inspector here." She turns to face an officious-looking man. "You've looked at these windows—what do you think?"

"Well, they're in backwards," the inspector says. "Which I don't under-

stand; it seems odd that someone would put them in that way."

"What are you going to do about this?" Ms. Nix presses.

"Well, I'll issue a summons to the landlord and he'll have to put the windows in properly."

Moving toward a summing up, Ms. Nix says, "So the landlord will be served with a summons?"

"Yes," replies the inspector, looking as though he wants desperately to be someplace else.

Ms. Nix turns from him, looks directly into the camera and says dramatically, "Well, Mrs. _____'s troubles aren't exactly over, but things may get warmer. Roger."

So much for the lead story, hardly the stuff of great investigative journalism.

Grimsby returns. "Russian troops have been gathering at the Pakistan border," he says in that deadening tone, "and the Soviet Union seems to be in control of Afghanistan. Bill—" So much for the day's major international events.

"When we return," Beutel says, "I'll be telling you about some of the everyday things that cause stress in the first part of my special report on stress." He appears momentarily confused, losing track of where the camera is. "Oh, there you are. Well, stay tuned."

Commercials. Then Grimsby: "We now have the story on the stabbings in Union City, New Jersey. Gloria—" There are a few moments of apparent technical lapses before Gloria Rojas appears, clutching an earpiece to her head. "Roger," she says plaintively, "I haven't been able to get any details about what happened here today, but from what I can gather, a man went berserk when some of his co-workers teased him about his macho. The man, a Puerto Rican and a factory worker, was having difficulties at home and his wife recently left him. Some of the workers were kidding him about this, and he grabbed a knife and began attacking those around him. I don't know how serious the injuries are, but I was able to find out that the man has been charged with multiple counts of atrocious assault. Back to you, Roger."

Without changing expression, Grimsby deadpans, "There's more to a story than meets the eye. Today, John Slattery was out investigating the problem of litter baskets."

continued on page 102

Flash! Youthin-Asia Wins the Gold for Knocking Out Balloons

"Wholeheartedly heeding President Carter's call for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics, the International Electronic Olympics Committee announced it will stage alternative games in Los Angeles on April 19, 1980."—Electronic Olympics press release

Don Peterson, a burly, 38-year-old, Chicago-born photographer and conceptual artist, stands before a video screen. Sweat beads on his corrugated brow. His dirty-blond hair is matted after hours of exertion. He's dressed in rubber thongs and khaki shorts; across his hunched shoulders he wears a skin of musk-ox fur. Pinned to the musk-ox fur is a rubber lamb chop, symbol of his Olympic team.

Concentration quivers through every fiber of Don Peterson's being. He is so intent on the video screen that offers of stimulating chemicals from the rest of his team glance off him into space. On that screen, a pair of video clowns—stylized Bozos, televised Punchinellos—dance their way across a horizontal video line and onto a teeter-totter. Peterson manipulates the teeter-totter to launch these tiny buffoons upward, where they bop the living day-lights out of a mass of balloons. As the balloons are extinguished, points on a small counter in one corner of the video screen mount up faster than the price gauge on a premium-gas pump.

In the end, Don Peterson's clowns knock out more balloons than the clowns of the opposing teams of Leisureworld and Freedonia. Peterson's team, Youthin-Asia, has picked up another gold medal in the first-ever International Electronic Olympics and in the process has struck a blow for Truth, Freedom and the American Way of Video Games.

"All major nations of the world will participate. Specifically, they are: The People's Pseudo-Socialistic Republic of Youthin-Asia (P.P.S.R.Y.A.); Freedonia; and Leisureworld. Over fifteen electronic athletes are expected to participate, representing a severe diplomatic defeat for and a big slap in the face of the Soviet Union in the wake of its rape and sodomy of Afghanistan."

The Electronic Olympics are the brainchild of Peterson, an artist known for such conceptual works as "The

History will remember the first Electronic Olympic Games for the feverish knob-twisting, yawning spectators—and the sore losers who declared war on the world

By MERRILL SHINDLER



Click Heard Around the World," in which he coordinated the taking of 24 different photographs at the same time, one in each time zone around the globe. "My background is in the fine arts and photography," says Peterson, fiddling with a Bally video-control knob. "It makes as much sense to me to get involved in video as in photography. To me, they're both great ways to act out concepts."

Peterson's interest in video games, which began in bowling alleys playing the game Tanks, intensified when a friend introduced him to video football. In time Peterson founded an Electronic Football League (EFL). Since a basic tenet of conceptual art is to think in as grandiose a fashion as possible, the Electronic Olympics were only a

twist of the video dial away.

"All major electronic sports will be represented in the competition. Elaborate facilities are being hastily constructed for electronic football, hockey, baseball, clowns. . . . NBC is rumored to have offered up to \$933, all in quarters, for the right to broadcast the Games. As well they might, for the Alternate Electronic Olympics promise to be a thrilling spectacle."

The First Electronic Olympiad was scheduled to begin at 6 P.M. at the Bret Lopez Art Center in downtown Los Angeles. At 6:40, an announcement came over the public address system stating that there were technical difficulties. At 7, artists, ath-



letes, the press and fellow travelers wandered around the auditorium-sized art studio staring at the games being practiced on a pair of 52-inch Muntz giant-screen televisions donated to the event by Earl "Madman" Muntz, inventor of the Muntzmobile and introducer of car stereo. At 7:10, Italian free-lance photographer Elisa Leonelli dashed into the Art Center carrying the Electronic Olympics' torch—a disposable Bic lighter.

Since the Electronic Olympics were first, and probably foremost, an art event, the three participating teams had gone to some trouble to create the countries they were supposed to be representing. The Youthin-Asian team members dressed in their native costumes of rubber thongs, Chinese wov-

en-grass hats and musk-ox furs; rubber lamb chops (a lamb chop is the shape of the island of Youthin-Asia) were pinned to their lapels.

The team from Leisureworld sported natty duck-bill caps, Hawaiian shirts, shorts and beach shoes. According to its official history, Leisureworld began when Arizona seceded from the Union and formed a confederacy with Barry Goldwater as president. The players from Freedomia came attired in tan shorts and black shirts. Their symbol was a black boot. Their motto was: "Freedomia, land of the spree and home of the knave." They were the heavies in the Olympics. And they enjoyed their role very much.

"Amidst unparalleled pageantry and

splendor, the athletes of the world that counts will march the 30 feet from the Olympic Village to the Electronic Arena, flags flying. And then, the Games will begin."

By 7:30, video hockey had commenced with the teams steering their players back and forth across the screen, scoring goals and blocking shots while the game's built-in audio effects hollered, cheered, gasped and groaned. On another screen, teams battled their way through the video racing-car event, smashing their computerized racers into fence posts to the sound of much gnashing of gears and rending of metal. The noise from the TV screens was a lot more animated than was the audience of about a hun-

continued on page 88

Finally—More Sound and Less Fury

After much to-do, TV audio has come of age

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

American television makes beautiful pictures—and sounds rotten.

This incredible premise is so widely accepted that most viewers willingly settle for television sets whose audio is just barely above the level of intelligibility. We have become so accustomed to squawks, squeaks, groans, mumbles and music that sounds as if it was played on a kazoo that we don't seem to care—or even recognize—that television finally is capable of exercising a true high-fidelity voice.

The potential has always been there: when regular commercial television broadcasting was authorized in the United States in 1941, it was given a full-fidelity sound channel whose frequency response was equal to that of FM radio. The fact that we have failed to capitalize on that potential probably has to do more with psychology than with anything else. The wonder of producing a picture on a piece of plastic furniture was so astounding that manufacturers paid little attention to sound. Nor did the public demand quality audio. As television grew and became accepted, it was overwhelmingly a visual medium. Even in the heyday of the variety show, the music was incidental to the production numbers or the personalities involved, and television stuck largely to familiar music, letting viewers fill in the tonal gaps

from subconscious memory.

Some psychologists have even argued that the poor sound on television enhances the picture. According to this theory, television provides a relatively low-resolution, smaller-than-life image, and anything better than its traditionally mushy sound would upset the viewer's video-to-audio balance and destroy the illusion that the picture actually is lifelike. In other words, a crummy meal makes the dessert taste better.

Thus an entire generation—that famous television generation—grew up with little or no appreciation of good TV sound. Of course, this is the same generation that spends perhaps \$1.5 billion a year for high-fidelity components, plus more than \$2.5 billion for audio tape recorders and another billion for self-contained phonograph systems.

Off to a bad start, television sound suffered three decades of neglect. The sets weren't alone in being at fault. When the American Telephone & Telegraph Company connected the Nation's television stations into networks—first via coaxial cable and later by microwave—the soundtrack was carried separately on a standard telephone line, capable of the same frequency response as network AM radio: that is, up to five kilohertz, only

one-third the capability of an FM radio station, with all of the high notes clipped off.

Because of the tin-eared characteristics of the network lines and the even more limited capabilities of most TV sets, networks and local stations developed sloppy audio habits. After all, who was listening? Through most of the 1960s and '70s, television sound was atrocious, even at its best—when transmitted directly from the key station of the originating network without even going through the signal-chopping telephone line. Hobbyists in New York who hooked good VHF tuners to their hi-fi components often could hear camera cables being dragged across the studio floor.

Although television manufacturers often took more than their share of the blame, they didn't help much, either. A cost-saving system in some sets, called intercarrier sound, which amplified both audio and video, often added hum and buzz of its own. Actually, the sound passed through the network lines, although it had all of its high notes clipped off, was capable of fairly decent bass rendition. But a booming bass can distort and unbalance the sound when there are no high notes present, so most television manufacturers filtered out the low notes to provide a "balanced," but extremely limited, sound. *continued*



Although the broadcasters blamed the set-makers, the set-makers blamed the broadcasters and everybody blamed the telephone company, television's first 30 years *were* marked by sporadic attempts to break the cycle and improve sound quality. Occasionally networks would spruce up their audio systems, and every now and then a TV-set manufacturer would produce a model designed to make a selling point of better sound reproduction. Although a vocal segment of the public has always been given to complaining about the poor quality of TV sound, these efforts fell on tone-deaf ears; the sets with good sound cost more than standard sets, and they flopped repeatedly. Americans with thousand-dollar stereos in their homes refused to kick in an extra 50 bucks for a TV that could distinguish a flute from a snare drum.

Then too, the way television sets are sold has repeatedly militated against any efforts of manufacturers to add better audio capability. The customer generally chooses the TV he's going to live with for the next seven to 10 years by comparing pictures on a group of sets in a big showroom, *with the sound turned off*.

The inadequate quality of our droning video voice quite probably has shaped the nature of programming itself. Television simply is not a musical medium, and true musical programs have become rarities. Talk, on the other hand, is usually comprehensible, so that's what we get—action we can see and talk we can understand (except when the background music drowns it out on sets that can't even distinguish between music and voice). The scarcity of musical shows, once cited as an excuse for maintaining the institution of poor sound, actually may be the result of that tinny audio. Another vicious cycle.

Now the good news: *all* the vicious cycles of sound have been broken. Television now promises to become a true hi-fi medium—thanks to communications satellites, the phone company, Japan, the set-makers, PBS and the commercial networks.

The Public Broadcasting Service (whose former vice chairman, Hartford Gunn, once called television "a beautiful young lady with an ear trumpet") has always presented more musical programs than all the commercial networks combined and lobbied untiringly for better audio. At great cost, it occasionally has proven the value of good sound to television by presenting simulcasts of musical programs, using

FM stations to carry the sound in stereo. (On infrequent occasions, the commercial networks also have experimented with simulcasts.) In the mid-1970s, PBS decided to interconnect its member stations by space satellite in place of land lines of the type operated by AT&T. Although it wasn't the principal consideration, one of the benefits of satellite transmission is its ability to carry a high-fidelity sound channel—mono or stereo—matching FM radio's capability of conveying the full frequency spectrum out to 15 kilohertz.

Possibly by coincidence, but probably because of the potential competition from satellites, AT&T in the late 1970s modified its nationwide microwave network circuits with a technique

TV set-makers had
been burned before in
their attempts to use
sound as a selling
point

called diplexing, which, in effect, folds the sound into the video channel, eliminating the use of a separate telephone line to carry TV's audio. Not only does this arrangement permit the transmission of the full FM frequency spectrum of 15 kilohertz; it also makes possible an easy conversion to stereo if the need should arise.

That leaves the TV-set manufacturers. About the time AT&T got its conversion under way, many set-makers took a serious new look at television sound. One of them, General Telephone & Electronics Company (GTE), which makes Sylvania and Philco sets, surveyed a large sample of consumers on attitudes toward TV sound. A big 90 percent responded that they'd "definitely" or "probably" pay a premium of \$125 for a console television set with a built-in high-fidelity sound system, and 70 percent indicated they'd be willing to buy a \$300 adapter kit to convert their present set to hi-fi.

Seeking to capitalize on TV's new capability, U.S. Pioneer Electronics in 1978 introduced a new component for home high-fidelity systems: a tuner

designed to bring in television's audio with maximum quality. It was considered a natural, and even spawned a competitor or two before the disappointing results came in. The public simply wasn't willing to put its money where its ear was.

Telelevision-set manufacturers had been burned before in their attempts to use sound as a selling point, but now they foresaw demand growing out of the better audio available as the result of the new network transmission facilities—and they finally took a headlong plunge. Crash programs short-circuited the usually lengthy television-set design cycle, and the "new sound" models started appearing in good quantities last year.

The set-makers generally upgraded the sound in many of their sets by using higher quality parts and better speakers. Almost every one of them also added a couple of showcase models whose audio amplification systems were completely separate from the video circuits. Some of these sets have audio amplifiers powered at a respectable (for television) 10 or 12 watts, with two- or three-way speaker systems (for better reproduction of treble, mid-range and bass notes) in acoustically designed enclosures, *and* separate bass and treble tone controls. These systems may not qualify as genuine hi-fi, but they certainly put out far better notes than the raspy 3-inch speaker hooked to the one-watt amp.

Some manufacturers are going a step further and adding "simulated stereo." This effect usually is accomplished by dividing the sound into two different bands of frequencies and channeling these into different speakers on either side of the screen. The technique is similar to that used in "rechanneling" old monophonic master recordings for stereophonic reproduction. Quasar has offered this type of system on some of its sets for several years without generating much consumer enthusiasm; RCA added it this year. Tatung, a Taiwan-based manufacturer, is equipping all of its 1981-model color sets for this stereolike effect, but they must be connected to home stereo systems to achieve it. Sony follows a different approach, using a special circuit to achieve a split-second time delay between the sound from the left and the right speakers.

The sound barrier still hasn't been broken, but TV sets this year are entering the second phase of the better-audio program: the addition of audio output jacks to the back of the sets so they can be plugged into home stereo

systems. This relatively low-cost approach to realizing the new good vibes from TV is expected to spread rapidly over the next year or two, until it's present in almost all new living-room-sized models—great news for people who have a hi-fi and a TV in the same room. For those who haven't, Sylvania offers a one-piece, accessory amplifier-speaker with reasonably good fidelity, which can be plugged into the TV set's audio jack; at \$90, it's priced considerably below the \$300 surveys found so many consumers willing to spend.

If you're in the market for a new color set now and want to be able to hear as well as see, you're advised to audition prospective candidates by ear as well as eye. If it will be convenient for you to plug the set into your hi-fi, you have a low-cost path to good sound by buying a set with an audio output jack. Bear in mind that this involves a little inconvenience—you'll have to turn on both the TV and the hi-fi (keeping the TV sound turned down) every time you want to get good sound from your TV.

As to television sets with improved sound built in, there are now a few worthy options, with plenty more on the way. To get really high-quality separate sound-amplification systems, you'll have to stick with 25-inch consoles for the time being. Magnavox has 12-watt audio amplifiers in some of its consoles, seven-watters in others, with separate treble and bass controls and three-way speaker systems. Zenith provides a 10-watt amplifier, four speakers and separate controls in its top-priced sets. Quasar has eight-watt amplifiers and pseudo-stereo in its new Audio Spectrum Sound II series with double speaker systems. Sony uses not one but two audio amplifiers in its super-deluxe, pseudo-stereo 26-inch console, but this comes at the rather high list price of \$1250. Sylvania offers consoles with eight-watt amplifiers, vented-port speaker systems and beefed-up cabinets to improve the sound. If you want something with a smaller screen, you'll have to settle for a little less in the sound department. Sanyo has a couple of 19-inchers with audio-quality amplifiers, and Magnavox has increased amplifier power and put better speakers in all its 19-inch sets. RCA's Dual Dimension Sound pseudo-stereo is available in one 19-inch set as well as in a 25-inch series. Next year, there should be too many improved-sound models to list.

Beyond good sound may lie stereophonic sound. Many of Japan's television stations have been broadcasting

on dual-sound channels for more than a year, and there have been brisk sales of television sets with built-in stereo, as well as stereo adapters for older TVs and TV-stereo tuners for hi-fi systems. The Japanese system permits the transmission of dual-language sound tracks in addition to stereo. Because of the increasing sales of dual-sound TV receivers, Japanese manufacturers are now building two sound channels into home videocassette recorders that can be attached to TV sets.

The mere existence of stereophonic television in Japan is spurring work here. Japan-based TV-set manufacturers are influential in this country and are gaining broad experience in the manufacture of stereo-sound sets.

If all goes well, stereophonic television broadcasting might begin as early as late 1982

Naturally, they'd like to see the economies of large-scale tooling and manufacture to help keep costs low—and they'd love to bring another genuine innovation to American TV.

In the United States, the FCC has let it be known it's interested in better sound for television. An industry-wide engineering subcommittee of broadcasters and transmission- and receiving-equipment manufacturers, under the auspices of the Electronic Industries Association, has been meeting for more than a year to explore all proposed technical standards, with the goal of recommending a single system of multichannel television sound to the Commission.

The subcommittee currently is testing three proposals for multichannel sound specifications at the Matsushita Industrial Corporation plant in Franklin Park, Ill., as well as companion techniques to improve sound dynamics and expand the reception area for good sound. The timetable calls for completion of work and a recommendation to the FCC before next spring. If all goes well, stereophonic television

broadcasting might begin as early as late 1982.

Although the networks are high on multichannel sound, they're probably more interested in its dual-language aspects than in stereo—broadcasting in Spanish and English simultaneously could sharply increase their audiences. However, PBS has long been an exponent of music stereo, and it's expected that the commercial networks will add stereo to musical specials (and to movies originally made with stereophonic sound) virtually from the start of the new service.

The emerging videodisc market also is expected to have a positive effect on the market for good sound in general, and for stereo in particular. Two of the three existing or proposed videodisc systems are being introduced with stereo capability from the start, and the third (RCA Selecta-Vision) will catch up in future models. Optical disc players being sold by Magnavox and Pioneer can reproduce stereo right now and are designed to be channeled into either a television set or a home stereo system. Stereophonic videodiscs are already on the market, and disc producers are promising a lot more where those came from.

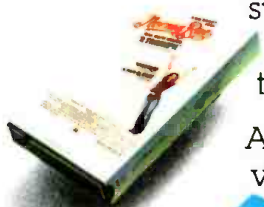
Videocassette recorders, too, are expected to sprout stereo sound, since they're all made in Japan and dual sound is an increasingly popular feature there. One model, recently introduced by Akai, can accommodate two separate soundtracks; although no American TV set can yet make use of this feature, a TV could reproduce *either* track in the case of bilingual tapes (for stereo, the recorder's sound output can be fed to a home music system).

Broadcasters and set manufacturers still face the problem of selling stereophonic sound—or, indeed, good monophonic sound. So far, even consumers who insist they're dissatisfied with TV's current groaning, buzzing, lo-fi sound track have stayed away from the new better-sound sets in droves. It's obvious that many of them simply don't believe the manufacturers' claims, and for good reason: retailers have been lax in pushing sound as a "feature," and many prospective buyers simply haven't heard about the sound revolution. This situation should change with the advent of multichannel TV audio, which will no doubt be accompanied by a heavy drumbeat of helpful publicity.

So take heart. Even if nobody knows it yet, good sound is here—and even better sound is coming. ■

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"Freud says somewhere that the only happy men are those whose boyhood dreams are realized."—Carl Sagan, in "The Cosmic Connection"

There are five viewing screens on the bulkhead in front of us, more on the control console, still more on the bank of electronic machines to our right. Men and women crouch in the darkness, their tense faces reflected in gleaming surfaces of plastic and metal, their attention riveted by a vision of bright galaxies ahead.

A supernova flares in a galactic spiral arm. "It's tearing!" a man says in alarm. "Never make it home," replies another, mumbling something about time-code-base correction. A screen to the right shows our ship plummeting toward a blue planet, flashing through clouds, disappearing in a burst of light—from which appears the silhouette of a samurai warrior.

Paul Preuss is the author of a science-fiction novel titled "The Gates of Heaven." He is also a television producer and lives in San Francisco.

A samurai warrior?

Yes. This is not the bridge of a spaceship but the shiny new one-inch-videotape editing facility at KCET in Los Angeles, and the cosmos we see through our viewing screens is in fact *Cosmos*, the stunningly beautiful 13-episode science series from KCET and Carl Sagan Productions, which is now appearing on public television Sunday nights.

Cosmos is Carl Sagan's personal journey, recorded on both film and videotape, through space and time. Much of the trip is made in a "ship of the imagination" that travels the universe at the precise speed of thought, now quick as a wish, now slow as a good conversation. In the first episode we start our trip from "The Shores of the Cosmic Ocean"; this program and the next few keep us close to home, looking at the evolution of life on Earth, learning the truth about Venus, Mars and the other planets, and listening to some "Travelers' Tales," the title of episode 6. Later, as we move away from the solar system, we peek into

"The Danger Is to Walk Through Life Without Seeing Anything"

Carl Sagan and his "Cosmos" team have spent three years and \$8 million creating their evocative visions of the universe

By PAUL PREUSS

"The Lives of the Stars" (episode 9) and eventually reach "The Edge of Forever" (episode 10)—then go inside the human brain for an inquiry into "The Persistence of Memory" (episode 11). In the final episode we come home again to ask, "Who Speaks for Earth?"

In real time and space, the journey has already taken three years, sent two film crews around the world, employed many of Hollywood's best special-effects experts, and consumed a budget of \$8 million (and then some). *Cosmos* engages the mind as well as the eye and ear, entertaining, teaching, and not infrequently inviting an argument. It may be such a good show precisely because the people who made it have been passionately arguing for it and for their personal visions of what it could be almost from the beginning. "Science is a human endeavor," Sagan continually reminds the viewer, an enterprise filled with beauty, laughter, pain and hope; *Cosmos* conveys these qualities better than any series I've seen—both in its content and in the circumstances of its creation.

I find myself in the videotape control room because the producers have given me the extraordinary freedom to poke into whatever I find interesting, on the perhaps optimistic presumption that as a filmmaker and science buff myself I will be able to correctly interpret what I see. As the big monitors fade and the lights come up, the samurai continue to do silent battle on smaller screens to the side; they belong to a different episode being worked on elsewhere in the studio. Later, I will learn the surprising connection *Cosmos* makes between these ancient warriors and the principles of biological evolution. After a brief discussion, tape editor Roy Stewart is told that the show on cosmology ("The



Edge of Forever") is "locked for video." The decision is made by Adrian Malone, executive producer and series director, late of the BBC. It no longer surprises me to hear *Cosmos* speak with a British accent, off-camera; several of the key production people are products of the "Beeb," the English universities, or both.

From Greg Andorfer, *Cosmos* project director for KCET, and from Sagan's business partner Gentry Lee, I learned how *Cosmos* took the first steps from imagination to reality. Lee was director of science analysis and mission planning for the Viking Mars landings. He'd seen there how Sagan, who was also involved in the mission, could convey a sense of purpose and excitement to a group of scientists and engineers, and he was fired by the idea of getting Sagan to inspire the general public about science through the mass media. He and Sagan decided to form Carl Sagan Pro-

continued on page 84

In Cosmos, Carl Sagan uses the device of a spaceship (above) to explore the universe. Among the places he "visits" is Titan, one of Saturn's moons; a representation is shown on the previous two pages. Scenes from the making of the series appear on the opposite page, clockwise from top left: A Viking Mars landing is replicated in California's Death Valley; Jim Dow of the Magicam model shop poses with a re-creation of Alexandria's ancient library, which Sagan "walks through" with the help of Magicam's special effects; the similar appearance of crab shells and samurai warriors' faces illustrates the principles of biological evolution; fireworks raining down on a California beach help Sagan convey an image of "stars like grains of sand"; in a historical vignette, astronomer Johannes Kepler is played by Czech actor Jaromir Hanzlik; and Magicam model-maker Richard Thompson creates a representation of a DNA molecule.



What's Missing from TV's

Though potentially great theater, these confrontations—in the eyes

By ROGER KAHN

According to one of my favorite reference works, debate is a literary form, popular in the Middle Ages, in which dialogue takes place between two persons representing different points of view on philosophy, theology, love or dogma. Debate blossomed in the 13th century with a Middle English poem called "The Debate of the Body and the Soul." A dead man is destined for hell. Along the way his body and soul argue: which one is responsible for this dismal trip?

In a sense, the original "Body and Soul" could be a primer for reviewing televised Presidential debates, which are about to descend upon us. Presidential debates, carried by the three commercial networks and PBS, are as remote from medieval literary forms as the transistor. But the candidates, Democratic, Republican—and this year possibly Mr. Anderson—will all agree on one point: the other guy, if elected, will take the country on a four-year trip to hell.

I don't know about that. I'm beginning to believe in a system that survived Vietnam and Watergate in succession. As a matter of fact, I'm not even sure about hell. Perhaps it is an eternity of boredom. If so, and form holds true, these next debates will give us a satanic taste of tedium.

Nothing innately militates against eliciting modern excitement from the medieval form. Adversaries confront each other. They attack. They respond. They challenge. They use all they have of logic, wit and rhetoric. We are aroused, amused and possibly persuaded. Or so we hope. At the first announcement that John Kennedy and Richard Nixon would debate in the autumn of 1960, we reacted with the clear anticipation one feels before two powerful heavyweight sluggers fight. But do you remember what we actually got to see?

A handsome, nervous Kennedy threw out jabs about the missile gap, which meant that the Soviet rocket program was ahead of ours. A soft-voiced, dark-jawed Nixon led with light



flicks about Quemoy and Matsu, two coastal Chinese islands whose safety, he said, was important to Taiwan. With Kennedy's election, the missile gap vanished. In Nixon's time of power, he neglected Quemoy and Matsu and flew to Peking. Both candidates of 1960 were cautious. Nobody landed a telling blow. The only individual knocked out was Nixon's makeup man, who had failed to put enough pancake on the dark jaw. We had come a long way, not necessarily forward, from "The Debate of the Body and the Soul."

Presidential politics is men, ideas and sometimes eloquence. It is also staffs—of thinkers, typists, pollsters,

ghosts, publicity men and their computers. Televised debate is living theater. It also should be spontaneity. But pollsters, ghosts, computers and the rest create a process as spontaneous as arson. I look for spontaneity in candidates. Spontaneity and eloquence, which bespeaks a lucid mind, and strength, and—most important—humanity.

In the summer of '64, when the Republicans nominated Barry Goldwater, I suddenly found myself assigned to write 5000 words about an obscure congressman from upstate New York named William Miller. Gold-

Roger Kahn is the author of "The Boys of Summer" and the recently published novel "But Not to Keep."

Presidential Debates

of a famed writer—are usually as spontaneous as arson



water had anointed Miller to run for Vice President. We met in a duplex suite at the San Francisco Hilton, and I mentioned Poland. In 1964, Polish leaders were trying to move out from under the suffocating Moscow blanket. "Doesn't the Polish stride toward independence suggest that communism is something other than a monolith?"

Miller blinked and said, "You're asking me about Poland?"

"Yes."

"Right. The captive nations issue. The brave people of Eastern Europe must never be abandoned. . . ."

"But I'm not asking about captive

nations, Mr. Miller. The Polish leaders want some independence within communism. Doesn't that suggest that communism has many faces, many stresses?"

Miller's visage darkened and he looked about. No position paper had prepared him for this question. He seemed to want to utter something profound. "Communism is evil," Miller said. "What else do you want to know?"

In 1968, I was writing about the movement to dump Lyndon Johnson when Eugene McCarthy appeared in the old caucus room of the Senate Office Building and announced his

solitary candidacy. I met him several weeks later in a small suite at the Plaza Hotel in New York. "If your movement fails," I said, "won't Johnson go after you?"

"How?" McCarthy asked.

"Audit the hell out of your tax returns."

McCarthy smiled. "They're well documented."

"Well, however this particular President would go after this particular senator."

"You don't understand Lyndon," McCarthy said. "He doesn't waste time in the name of vengeance. What will happen if we fail is that I won't be invited to White House parties. They're tedious anyway."

"But it's not just Johnson. You're fighting the entire Democratic establishment."

"Near the end of his life," McCarthy said, "Dylan Thomas remarked that his own survival now mattered less to him than the deaths of certain friends. Well, we both know Vietnam, and I tell you my political survival matters less to me than the deaths of other men."

I gulped.

McCarthy rose and punched me lightly in the shoulder. "If you want to get heavy," he said.

Barry Goldwater stumped the country with four speeches someone else had written. One argued that the Social Security system as currently structured would bankrupt itself within 10 years. Another told us that our wives and daughters were no longer safe on the sidewalks largely because the Earl Warren Supreme Court encouraged criminal violence. Goldwater's campaign was remarkable for monotony until one night at the basketball arena of the University of North Carolina. The hall was loud with radicals of the right—*Southern* rightists—and Strom Thurmond, who introduced Goldwater, roused them with a brilliant, ranting speech. The crowds roared and chanted. A race riot waited to be born.

Goldwater stepped to the microphones, looking embarrassed, and read speech A, about Social Security. By the time he finished the crowd was

continued on page 93





A Star Is ~~Born~~ Made

Sure, Mare Winningham has talent, but her success will depend largely on some calculated business decisions

By ALAN CARTNAL

It's high noon at Jerry's Deli. Most of the patrons are not famous, but merely San Fernando Valley suburbanites still discussing the old Southern California get-rich-quick scheme—pyramid parties—over matzo ball soup. Jerry's is not a show-biz, star-watching hot spot; its main claim to fame is its proximity to a pink-and-orange bowling alley that Valley locals call "Teeny-bopper Heaven." But things are picking up. Here comes Mare Winningham, 21 years old and well on her way to becoming a TV superstar of the 1980s.

Few of Jerry's regulars pause in their spooning and gabbing to watch the arrival of the actress whose performance as a teen-age hooker in ABC's TV-movie "Off the Minnesota Strip" was called "extraordinary" by The New York Times. Then one of the deli's countermen spots her, grins, waves and yells, "Hi, hookie."

Even though she is poised for stardom, Mare Winningham's lifestyle is low profile. "I'm not sure I'm supposed to say this," she says, "but this whole star-making thing is crazy. I just want to move audiences with my performances. But if I get caught up in the fame and the Hollywood BS, I'll just be in the same tornado as everyone else in this town."

Yet the process for bringing her fame has begun. Ask anyone in Hollywood. First of all, people sense some-

Alan Cartnal is a free-lance writer based in Southern California and the author of the book "California Crazy," to be published in January.

thing new about her. In casting language, that means she's got "individuality." Or, in marketing language, that she's easily "identifiable," meaning that no one could mistake her for any other actress. Not that anyone says she's the next Meryl Streep. Or the new Kristy McNichol. The only thing she has in common with Bo Derek is that they both live in Southern California.

Winningham has the right style and skills for this particular moment in Hollywood star-making. "We think we've struck oil," says one ABC executive. "Mare just might possess the magic that sets her off from the hundreds of Farrah and Cheryl and Suzanne clones pouring into Hollywood right now. Look what happened with Peter Strauss. He came off of *Rich Man, Poor Man* and could have asked for anything. He could have made deal after deal. Instead, he held out for quality. Mare has the same instincts. Audiences are already being primed to expect that anything she appears in stands for quality and will be a breakthrough event for television. *That* makes stars."

The betting is that viewers, tired of last year's blonde, are currently rooting for talent. At least, that's the theory being put to work in the drive to make Winningham a star. There are those who view Mare's rise as nothing more than the old Hollywood hype, with a new twist thought up by the Machiavellian men in the towering buildings: sell Mare Win-

ningham as quality—even if she's had very little theatrical training.

"TV stars are just like racehorses," says Winningham's agent, Meyer Mishkin, the man responsible for the successful careers of Lee Marvin, Richard Dreyfuss and Gary Busey. "It's all in the grooming. I'm using every trick I've learned in the last 50 years of grooming stars. The fact that she's not from the New York stage doesn't bother me. This is the '80s. Where are the stars coming from? Television. It's replaced summer stock as the launching pad for stardom."

But how do you launch a dramatic star from TV? In the past, for Carol Burnett and Mary Tyler Moore, among others, the route was through a lead role in a series. With Mare Winningham, however, they are building a female dramatic star from scratch. That requires guidelines that have never been tried before. Rules such as:

1. The Only-the-Best Principle: Surround a newcomer with the best co-stars, producers, screenwriters and—especially—directors. This is also known as the Rub-Off Principle, because with talent like this surrounding the kid, how can she miss?

2. The For-Once-the-Critics-Count Principle: Who cares what The New York Times thinks of the Fonz? But, with a dramatic star, critical acclaim is important.

3. The Super-Agent-Is-All-Important Principle: This is not a case for an agent who specializes in sex bombs. The agent should know how to nurture

talent, to turn an actress into a major award-winner. Very important.

4. The Talent Principle: In all publicity, etc., the star's talent as an actress should be stressed, not her looks. Also known in some circles as the Suddenly-Networks-Realize-That-Not-All-Women-Are-Sex-Objects Principle.

5. The Bottom-Line Principle: If all the above do not produce ratings, cancel all the above. Still the ultimate principle.

But audiences do seem to respond to Winningham and she certainly has come along at the right time for a dramatic star buildup; a time when the networks are feeling fierce competition from cable TV, when network TV viewing is down and when women executives are clamoring for significant drama on television. And so here comes Mare Winningham, who was discovered playing Maria in a Chatsworth, Cal., 1977 high-school production of "The Sound of Music." She has just spent two years playing serious bit parts on TV and has demonstrated particular skill in a meaningful ABC TV-movie, "Special Olympics," about handicapped children. Now she is being brought along carefully and selectively for just this moment in TV.

"It's like a modern fairy tale," says Winningham. "All these people that the world sees as ogres—network executives and Hollywood big shots—are all ganging together to make something new happen on television. I mean, I'm supposed to have to kick, scream and crawl on my knees to get quality work on television. And they're dropping it in my lap."

Yet even though she is rising faster and easier than an actress trained in the School of Hard Knocks, Winningham realizes that her star is nowhere near its zenith. One day when she arrives for a meeting at her agent's Sunset Strip office in Hollywood, she notices that in the reception area there are no women's pictures displayed among the large, glossy photographs of big-time clients. Two weeks later she returns for another appointment. In her hand is an unglossy 8x10 publicity photo of herself. She cuts it in half and hangs it between portraits of Lee Marvin and Richard Dreyfuss. "I may be only half a star now," says Winningham, "but someday I'll be up there with the big boys." Mishkin gives a fatherly laugh and says, "This only goes to show you what a cutup Mare is."

Mishkin may joke about his client's prankster side, but he takes his role of

piloting her career through the Hollywood shoals very seriously. Under his guidance the buildup is begun. First, she is surrounded with talent. She soon works opposite Dennis Weaver in the big ABC TV-movie "Amber Waves," and with Hal Holbrook and



In "Amber Waves," as in coming parts, Winningham is surrounded by talent.

“I’m supposed to have to crawl on my knees to get quality work on television. They’re dropping it in my lap.”

Michael Learned in "Minnesota Strip." And she gets to work for quality directors (Joseph Sargent and Lamont Johnson) and producers (Meta Rosenberg and David Chase).

But it's not enough just to work with such talents; you've got to *impress* them. And Winningham does. "I have never seen an actress so young and so good and so knowledgeable about acting," says Hal Holbrook.

It also helps to receive an Emmy nomination and critical acclaim. The producers of "Minnesota Strip" push her for an Emmy after a New York Times critic writes of her performance: "Throughout 'Minnesota Strip,' Miss Winningham gives an extraordinary performance, an almost frightening slice of life. Coming on top of her affecting portrayal of Dennis Weaver's daughter in 'Amber Waves,' this ap-

pearance establishes Miss Winningham as a young actress of formidable ability."

And Winningham proves she can get ratings. Her TV-movie about teenybopper ladies of the night comes within one point of some very heralded competition, the NBC presentation—within weeks of its Oscar—of the theatrical film "Breaking Away." Notice is taken. Deals are made. ABC signs Winningham to a two-picture contract.

She agrees to take a character role in a TV-movie featuring Lee Remick and Colleen Dewhurst—an adaptation of Marilyn French's "The Women's Room," scheduled for fall broadcast. This is a very good move. It demonstrates that, though a rising star, Winningham isn't afraid to accept a quality supporting part. Once again, her name is linked to class and she will learn from two giants of the acting profession.

Most important, however, is receiving the support of the network executives. You either fit into their pattern for the future of television or you become *last year's* hot young thing. Mare Winningham fits.

"She has no idea how good she is," says Leonard Hill, vice president, movies for TV, ABC Entertainment, who supervises 30 films a year. "Mare is not a star in the Old Hollywood sense. She's not like Lynda Carter, who is heavily into the old star system and won't even look at a script unless there's a quarter-of-a-million-dollar deal or [her husband/manager] Ron Samuels is hired as her executive producer. Mare is part of a new Hollywood and is desperately concerned with the excellence of her material. She will sacrifice considerable numbers of dollars to find interesting projects that develop her as an actress."

So far, so good. With the support of the ABC brass, Mare reaches for the big leagues. She becomes part of an elite group, those in the top two percent of the Screen Actors Guild. (Translation: she now makes more than \$50,000 a year.) And as her market value rises, the movie studios begin calling. Universal. Columbia.

Winningham, however, signs for an off-the-wall New York film production called "The Paul Simon Movie." Again, a good choice. Perhaps rock star Simon's movie can bring Winningham the same fame Woody Allen's offbeat "Manhattan" brought Mariel Hemingway. The gamble is slight—Winningham gets supporting

billing, so even if the film flops, she can't be blamed. Meanwhile, Simon introduces her to New York theater and film insiders, and his film forces her as an actress to take a step on the big screen that she can't on the small one—she does a semi-nude scene. "That was hard. HARO!" she roars.

Winningham does seem to have difficulty adjusting to her sexuality being publicly tapped as part of a dramatic rendering. On the June evening when "Off the Minnesota Strip" is broadcast, her entire family is gathered around the television at her parents' house in Northridge, Cal. (She lives nearby, alone, in a rented and decidedly modest home.) At the movie's end, everybody but Mare Winningham applauds—she is on the floor, hiding under a pillow.

"The hardest lines for me to hear around my family were about my being sensuous in this part," she recalls. "Hey, they know me as Mare, the former tomboy. When I first started making the acting rounds, I never got the gorgeous-girl roles. I never saw myself like that at all. But here I am being sexy on coast-to-coast television."

The day after "Minnesota Strip" is broadcast, Winningham is at a Linda Ronstadt concert. She walks up to a refreshment stand to get a beer. A girl in the crowd comes rushing up. She is dressed like the teen-ager Winningham played in the TV film. "Oh, my God!" the stranger begins yelling. "You're that girl. Aren't you? The girl on TV?" Then she yells even louder: "Good. GOOO!" The fan asks for an autograph. Winningham obliges—then asks for the fan's autograph.

"That incident is so Mare Winningham," says one of her best friends. "It's that vulnerability that people love. When Mare is on the screen, every man or woman can experience what it's like to be looking for the love that we all want in life. Off-screen, what can I tell you? She plays football. She hangs out in delis, studying characters. She just wants to show how ordinary people are beautiful."

To ensure becoming a superstar, an actress needs two things. They are not a Mercedes 450SL or a Gucci handbag. Her first need is a big, smashing hit. (Example: Meryl Streep in "Kramer vs. Kramer.") The second is the cover of Time or Newsweek. It helps with both goals if she has the support of the media, and Winningham clearly has the natural flair to obtain it. She not only possesses off-

beat good looks and precocious acting intelligence, but during the reporting on this story, she displays a zestful aptitude for banter—a talent that is marketable on the talk-show circuit.

Examples: Were you popular in high school? "Yes. I was popular for odd



Winningham was embarrassed to hear lines about her being sensuous in "Off the Minnesota Strip."

“When Mare is on the screen, every man or woman can experience what it's like to be looking for the love that we all want.”

reasons. I went to my senior prom as a gorilla. I was the kind of girl who sat in class and everyone thought was tough. I'd say, 'Yeah, well, what are you gonna do about it?' My classmates challenged me to go on *The Gong Show* when I was 16. I won. I won \$500. At that time, that was big money. You should have seen me. I dressed up as this really backward, awkward child with lots of pimples and oily hair. I came out with my guitar and the people started laughing before I did anything."

What about the future? "Eventually I want to be a singer. That's where my heart is. I love rock-and-roll. But El-Lay rock-and-roll. The kind of music you listen to in your car and you are driving down by the beach and suddenly you realize it's great to be alive. I write all the time at my house in the Valley. Some of my titles are "My Sweet-

heart" and "Meet Me in the Closet."

How would you describe your family? "I've got the greatest family. My father is chairman of the department of athletics for Northridge College in Southern California. A real jock. My mother is a schoolteacher. A real lady. I have three brothers and one sister. A big, Catholic family. My real name is Mary, but I changed it to Mare because my dad called me Mare Bear when I was 4. I got rid of teddy bears, but I kept Mare."

She may sound cloying, too good to be true, but beyond those formidable assets of looks and talent there is still a 21-year-old stumbling across the bridge between girl and woman.

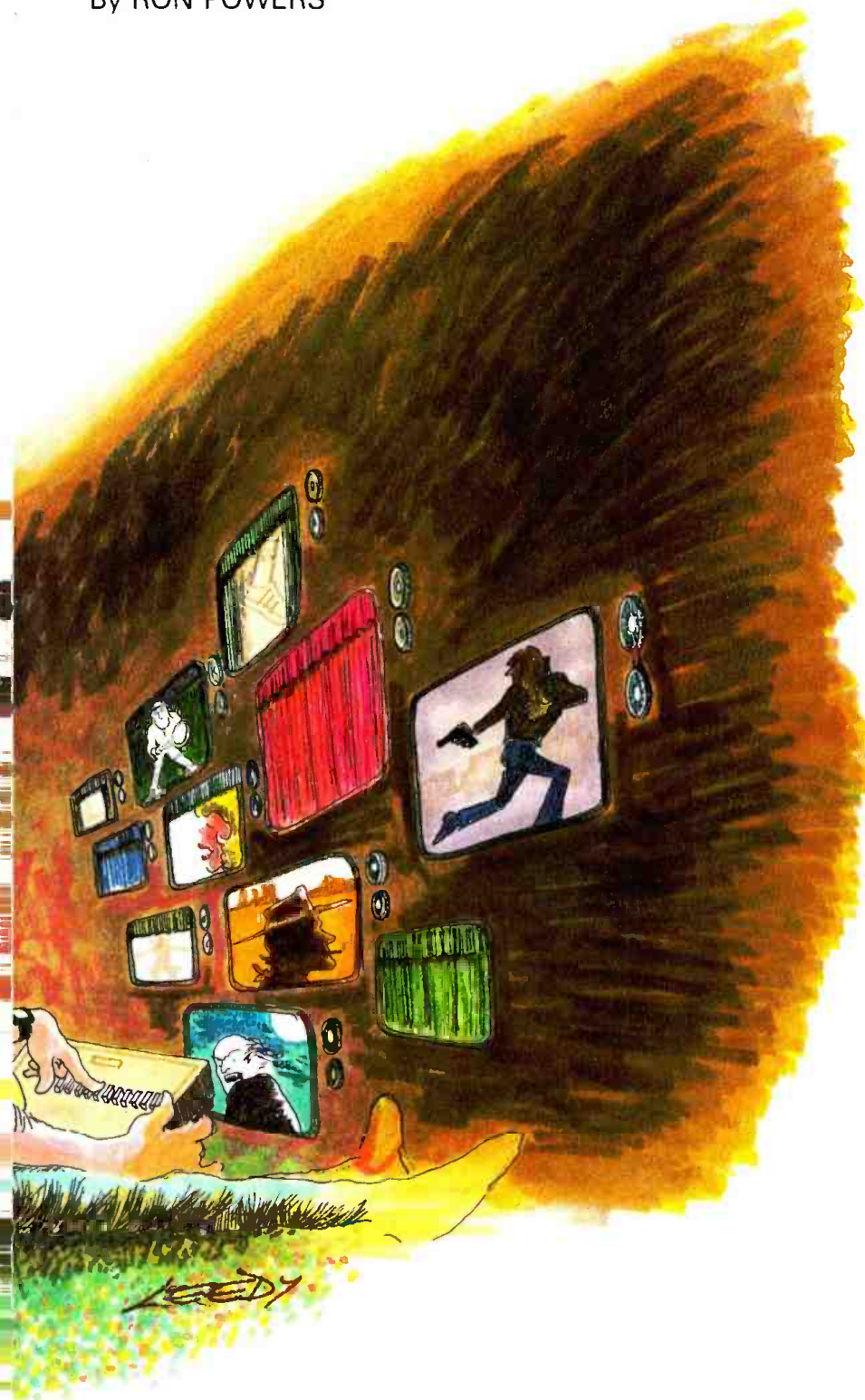
It's Saturday night at Ou Par's coffee shop, another of Winningham's off-beat hangouts. She is with her friends, most of whom she knew in high school or has met on the coffee-shop circuit. They are attractive, young, some into show biz, but most of them teachers and college students. They discuss everything from politics to draft registration for women. Hollywood is hardly ever mentioned. But Mare is sad. She has just broken up with a musician she had been dating for more than a year. The relationship was important to her. This is not playacting. This is real.

"I'm growing as an actress," she says to a friend over coffee. "But I'm growing as a person, also. I guess the thing I've learned about relationships is that I've got to stop being so mechanical with men. I've got to stop having to be the first to leave a party because I'm the star. Or because I'm afraid that people don't really want me—Mare—hanging around. I'm learning to stop acting all the time. And I'm learning to stop sizing every other woman up as if we were in competition with each other. I've stopped kicking my friends under the table if I see someone who isn't 'normal.' I'm looking for what's good in others, not the flaws."

So that's Mare Winningham. The next big TV star. Everybody in Hollywood says so. But she knows Hollywood can serve you to audiences as Miss Super-Hype, and she is wary of the pitfalls, determined that her career won't be compromised by easy success. "Everybody tells me what a star is, but I think it's all changed," she says. "Give me a role that's a challenge and it'll make me a star. I'm not going to be Sandra Oee. I'm going to take chances." ■

than Network TV?

By RON POWERS



In the small Midwestern town where I grew up, "pay television" was a vicious rumor, like fluoridated water. Popular wisdom encouraged an image of a subterranean bunker somewhere on the dark side of New York City manned by a nefarious cadre of technicians in identical green tunics, their skulls probably shaved clean, who had masterminded a scheme to trick Americans into paying for what God had intended them to receive free. A twist of logic that only a Ralls County (Mo.) Rotarian could understand had it that this perversion was Communistic.

Times (if not Ralls County) have changed. "Pay" television is suddenly a middle-class vogue: at last report, more than seven percent of Americans now top off their regular over-the-air viewing with a pay channel or two, or three. By decade's end, forecasters say, that figure could rise to 20 percent.

Why? After all, these are not flush times. We are talking roughly \$100, \$200, maybe \$300 extra per year—depending on how many pay channels the customer wants to buy—coming from the pockets of people who *already* get three commercial networks, the Public Broadcasting Service, a few independent stations and UHF. (And since most pay systems are delivered via cable, we can assume the customer has perhaps six or a dozen basic-cable outlets available as well.)

The obvious guess is that "pay-cable," as it is commonly known, has managed to reinvent the medium: hit upon some fabulous secret for liberating television from its bondage of tired, repetitive formulas that have kept it in a lock step for 30 years. These aren't bluenosed elitists who are flocking to pay-cable, after all. The new industry's own research shows that subscribers are typically middle-class, middle-income Americans, perhaps even a little older than the hip buying group wooed by the over-the-air networks. *What have these people discovered that the rest of us don't know?*

A few months ago I determined to find out. I set aside a week—July 7 through 13—for an intensive spate of comparative viewing. I wanted to see whether it was possible to draw any general conclusions about the differences between pay-cable programming and the fare that is available to anyone who owns a set. Is one system of television somehow better? Or more rewarding? And, specifically:

Ron Powers won the Pulitzer Prize for television criticism in 1973. He is the author of "The Newscasters" and the novel "Face Value."

Has pay-cable managed to stretch the limits of that curiously self-contained universe known as "television"?

My methods were anything but scientifically rigorous. By switching back and forth among channels, I ran the risk of missing certain programs that would somehow contain important truths about pay or over-the-air TV. By concentrating on prime time, I eliminated much of over-the-air TV's scheduling of news, talk, game and soap formats. (But then, since pay-cable clusters its offerings in and around prime time, the real competition is in that arena.) And a week's worth of viewing is hardly exhaustive. Exhausting, yes. Exhaustive, no.

On the other hand, I suspect that my random pattern was more typical of an average viewer's impulses than a rigorous study might suggest. And in between my prime-time viewing stints I occupied myself by studying the long-term schedules and promotional material of all the channels involved.

I selected the Nation's two leading pay-cable entertainment systems, Home Box Office and Showtime, as my "alternatives" to over-the-air TV. HBO, owned by Time, Inc., has a nationwide subscription base of more than four million homes. Showtime, a joint venture of Teleprompter Corp. and Viacom International Inc., claims more than one million customers—me included, because my Manhattan apartment lies within its territory. (The HBO staff in New York was kind enough to let me see advance screenings of programs I requested.) My night-by-night choices, with notes, follow.

SUNDAY—I watched *60 Minutes* because it is good for me, then turned to the pay-cable listings. Feature movies were rampant. (Movies, of course, form about three quarters of the entertainment programming base of HBO and Showtime; specially produced features the rest.) I settled into "Foul Play" on Showtime. The stars of this film are Chevy Chase and Goldie Hawn, two superstars from the TV world. (This is a significant detail, as I was to learn as the week progressed.)

MONDAY—Again, feature movies dominated the pay channels: "The In-Laws" and "Wanda Nevada." CBS had the "Miss Universe Pageant." I chose the heavyweight championship fight between Larry Holmes and Scott

LeDoux on ABC. Networks fear that sports will soon become a deadly pay-cable weapon, but this event was over-the-air. Mostly Howard Cosell's air. Fight stopped in the seventh; Cosell should have been stopped in the third. What was the fight's appeal? I asked myself. *Live television*, I decided—and here conventional TV holds the edge.

TUESDAY—On this night, pay-cable's peculiar strategy started to come into focus—and it was anything but the "fabulous secret" I had imagined earlier. At 7:30 P.M., HBO had a special,

"Mission Galactica: The Cylon Attack" conformed to the perceived imperative for a pay-cable show—it starred people (Lorne Greene, Lloyd Bridges) who had gained their notoriety in the mainstream of commercial TV

"Comedy Tonight: Here Comes Summer." The host was Martin Mull, familiar to TV aficionados of *Fernwood 2Night*. Mull appeared in a floral Hawaiian shirt, lounging by a back-yard swimming pool—he's *watching someone's place*; that's the premise for this "crazy mix of summertime happenings." Mull, in a chef's hat, remarked that lime Jell-O *helps relish!* Mull, barbequing, bantered with demented next-door-neighbor kid (Jim Stahl) as follows: Mull—"Get lost!" Kid—"Oh, that's a great game! I could get lost and you could find me!" Mull—"You got it half right, Timmy!" And so on. There was a laugh track. My program notes told me that the producer for "Here Comes Summer" was Kenny Solms, who worked with *The Carol Burnett Show* for years. It seemed to figure.

ABC had the All-Star Game at 8:30. I joined a dozen serious thinkers at a friend's apartment, where we spent the evening deploring television's hyping of a subtle game like baseball.

One further note on Tuesday: Showtime had scheduled an episode from the 1978 NBC series *Centennial*, whose stars included Richard Chamberlain, Robert Conrad, Sally Kellerman, Robert Vaughn, Raymond Burr and Chad Everett—major icons, every one, from the mainstream of commercial TV. Pay-cable's strategic approach was becoming clearer by the minute.

WEDNESDAY—An odd scheduling coincidence: both Showtime and Home Box Office listed "Mission Galactica: The Cylon Attack" as their early-evening movie. This feature-length spinoff from the ill-fated ABC series *Battlestar Galactica* again conformed to the perceived imperative—it starred people (Lorne Greene, Lloyd Bridges) who had gained their notoriety in the mainstream of commercial TV.

I switched the dial restlessly until 9 P.M., when Showtime offered the movie "Americathon," a sendup of American pop-cultural obsessions. Most critics had panned it, but I was thoroughly entertained.

It took an act of will to switch away from "Americathon" at 10 to catch a *CBS Reports* installment that had grabbed my attention: "See You in Court," co-written and anchored by the estimable Fred Graham and dealing with the national mania for lawsuits.

"See You in Court" was the first prime-time evidence of the week that a world existed beyond the self-defined boundaries of television itself. (Even the All-Star Game seemed somehow to have been played in a gigantic TV studio.) I was wondering whether a similar piece of programming might ever surface on HBO or Showtime when an uncannily familiar—almost inevitable—aspect of "Americathon" struck me: its stars, John Ritter and Harvey Korman, were actors whose reputations were established . . . you know the rest.

THURSDAY—Another night of pay-cable viewing that lacked a trace of original vision or of anything else besides slavish devotion to tried-and-true network formulas. I began with two specials produced expressly for HBO. The first was called "Show Stop-

pers," and its host was Tony Randall. The idea was to have famous Broadway personalities sing the numbers that actually *stopped shows* down through the years. So: Ethel Merman sang "There's No Business like Show Business," from "Annie Get Your Gun." Robert Klein sang the title tune from "They're Playing Our Song." And so forth. In between numbers, Randall clowned it up. Where, I kept wondering, had I seen this show before?

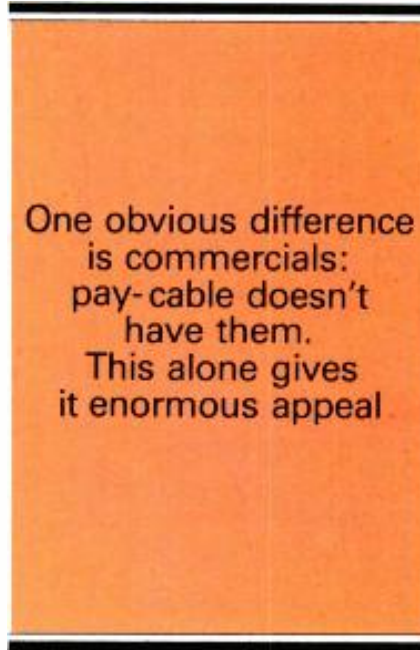
Later in the evening, HBO presented a sports special, "Race for the Pennant: Halfway to the World Series." If the All-Star Game on ABC had seemed claustrophobic, this hour seemed cacophonous, an echo within an echo. Hosts Maury Wills and Len Berman narrated highlights of the season's first three months, aided by film clips. The special droned on, its vision and rhythms deadeningly familiar from a thousand Saturday-afternoon wrap-ups. (Howard Cosell—where are you when we need you?) The glimmer about pay-cable was widening into a glare.

FRIDAY—With feature movies again dominating the two pay channels, it was again a network program that offered the only escape from escapism: an excellent *ABC News Closeup*: "Lights, Cameras, Politics." Written and narrated by a non-television personality—journalist Richard Reeves—the special took the viewer through the intricate process by which TV has come to influence Presidential campaigns and elections. The special managed to achieve the same "feeling" as the *CBS Reports* of two nights before: a feeling that boundaries had been extended, that television had managed to step outside its own idiom and breathe the air of a larger, flesh-and-blood world. (An ironic feat, when one considers that the subject of the piece was television itself.)

SATURDAY—Eschewing, thank you, a Johnny Mathis special on HBO, I took advantage of pay-cable's rerun philosophy and tuned into a repeat performance of "Americathon" on Showtime, catching the conclusion that I missed earlier in the week. Then it was over to CBS for the premiere of a limited-run science series, *Universe*, narrated by Walter Cronkite. I topped off the prime-time evening with an NBC preview of the Republican Na-

tional Convention—and then, the week finished, my comparison duties over, I feel asleep watching "The Thing" somewhere past midnight on a local station that understands the importance of serious sleaze.

My reaction to the week? Pay-cable television as "alternative" is a joke. It is, rather, to coin a phrase, more networky than the networks—and thus, perhaps, a threat. My viewing stint—coupled with a careful study of HBO's and Showtime's



schedules—convinced me that innovation in form or content is the last thing the pay-cable services have in mind.

What they are doing instead is burrowing deeper into the narrow, pre-established idioms, conventions and viewpoints of mass-audience fare honed over three decades by CBS, ABC and NBC. This may not be heartening news to the hopeful critics who insist that American audiences would welcome a chance to escape the threadbare vision dished up nightly by the established networks.

Admittedly, this analysis ignores some fine points and one obvious one. The obvious point is *commercials*: pay-cable doesn't have them. And when you start to recall how many times the mood of a love scene has been shat-

tered by a message from Lorne Greene squatting on his haunches with dog food in his hand, a hundred bucks or so a year seems like nothing. There are people—I am one of them—who would pay to watch a test pattern if it didn't break for commercials. The escape from commercials alone gives pay-cable enormous appeal.

But there are other points to consider as well. HBO and Showtime strive mightily to project distinct identities: HBO aims for a large, across-the-board family audience, while smaller Showtime has made some attempts at luring a more sophisticated clientele. For instance, Showtime has a series featuring consumer advocate Ralph Nader, and some of Showtime's movies tend to be a bit racier and more action-oriented than HBO's.

But these differences are obscured when set against the bulk of special programming offered by both systems. As I studied the pay-cable systems' promotional literature, names from the great, safe, repetitive middle of television's pantheon appeared again and again: Steve Allen, Jonathan Winters, Mull, Burnett, John Davidson, Rich Little, Steve Martin, George Carlin. And the formats for these entertainers—at least those I viewed—were awash with brash, glossy sets; fast-paced editing; familiar "sketch" vignettes between star and guests; and canned laughter. All in all, pay-TV seemed to pay dutiful homage to the orthodoxy that threatens to become standard issue for the entire American popular culture.

My week of comparative viewing produced the almost heretical evidence that over-the-air network television is capable of greater diversity than a competitor—any competitor. But one should temper even this faint praise with a note of caution: the networks, it seems, are looking at pay-cable for *ideas*. After all, it was a Showtime recurring special—*What's Up America*—that served as a prototype for two big, successful network series: NBC's *Real People* and ABC's *That's Incredible!*

Hold on to your hats, Ralls County. You're about to see the *real* threat of that newfangled thing called pay television—and it's not something weird and different. It's worse: something eerily the same. ■

The Ritz boasts a 20-foot-high video screen at one end of its vast art-deco ballroom in New York's East Village.

Video Makes New Waves

Today's trendy discos feature more than music and dancing

Emily and Pat

When Emily Armstrong first noticed Mick Jagger, he was watching a videotape of a Caesarean birth. She asked him if he liked the tape and he said he really loved it. They stood around for a few minutes more, he in his gray silk suit with skinny red tie, she in nurse's uniform, talking about the scene at Danceteria. Then the photographers discovered Mick, and a wave of people swept over them and he was gone.

The place was the hottest nightspot in New York, a former button factory and black disco located in the heart of the garment district, which now offers new-wave music and a large, upstairs video lounge displaying the latest tapes from the art music/video underground. The occasion was the promotional party for the release of the Rolling Stones' new album, "Emotional Rescue." It was a hospital-theme party and all 30-odd people on the Danceteria staff wore operating gowns, except for Emily and Patricia Ivers, the club's video deejays, who were dressed as nurses.

Emily and Pat are not rock groupies. They're just out in front of the normal stream of society, the Lewis and Clark of new-wave video, waiting for everyone else to catch up with them. They've both held jobs in the real world, which is what the new-wave video rockers call the daytime scene. Pat was once a

videotape editor for ABC. Emily worked at Manhattan Cable TV. They're not quite sure why new-wave video is such an underground success. All they know is that video is part of the hip scene in New York.

There are about half-a-dozen clubs in New York that cater to the hip crowd. They all have two things in common: new-wave music and video.

Danceteria wasn't the first to permanently install video as an entertainment fixture. About a year ago, Max's Kansas City launched the trend with a few monitors, followed by the Mudd Club, Hurrah, Danceteria and the Ritz. The tapes that are exhibited in these clubs can be divided into three basic categories: concert tapes of new-wave groups, usually shot by the clubs' in-house staff; promotional videotapes of bands, produced by record companies and featuring only one song; and tapes combining abstract visual images with new-wave music, produced by video artists.

"Video will catch on in clubs across the country," predicted Pat recently, just after she came back from advising a Long Island club on video. "It has to. That's where the music industry is heading."

After a hard day's night working at the Danceteria, Emily and Pat sometimes head over to the ultra-hip, ultra-cool Laight Street Bar behind the Hol-







land Tunnel to wind down. "It's not like the Mudd Club," says Emily, "where people are so bored they can hardly stand it."

Carole and Steve

Upstairs at the Danceteria, Carole is bored as hell. She's watching TV with Steve on a hot Thursday night in July. They watch impassively. She's 33, strikingly attractive and has a purple streak running through her thick hair. She's wearing a white minidress right out of 1968, with ankle boots.

It's almost midnight, which is early for Danceteria; the band doesn't come on until about 2 A.M. So everyone heads upstairs to the video lounge. It's not TV that they're watching. It's video. "Let's watch some videos upstairs," is what they say at Danceteria.

A series of two-minute tapes with swirling colors and loud new-wave music is being shown. Seven color-TV sets are scattered around the third-floor video lounge, an L-shaped area with four couches and four upholstered chairs. Carole and Steve get up and walk to the bar. "I came here because I was extremely neurotic," she says. "But it's not very interesting tonight. It's not decadent or interesting. It's too middle-class. Maybe I shouldn't say that because . . . well . . . I'm middle-class."

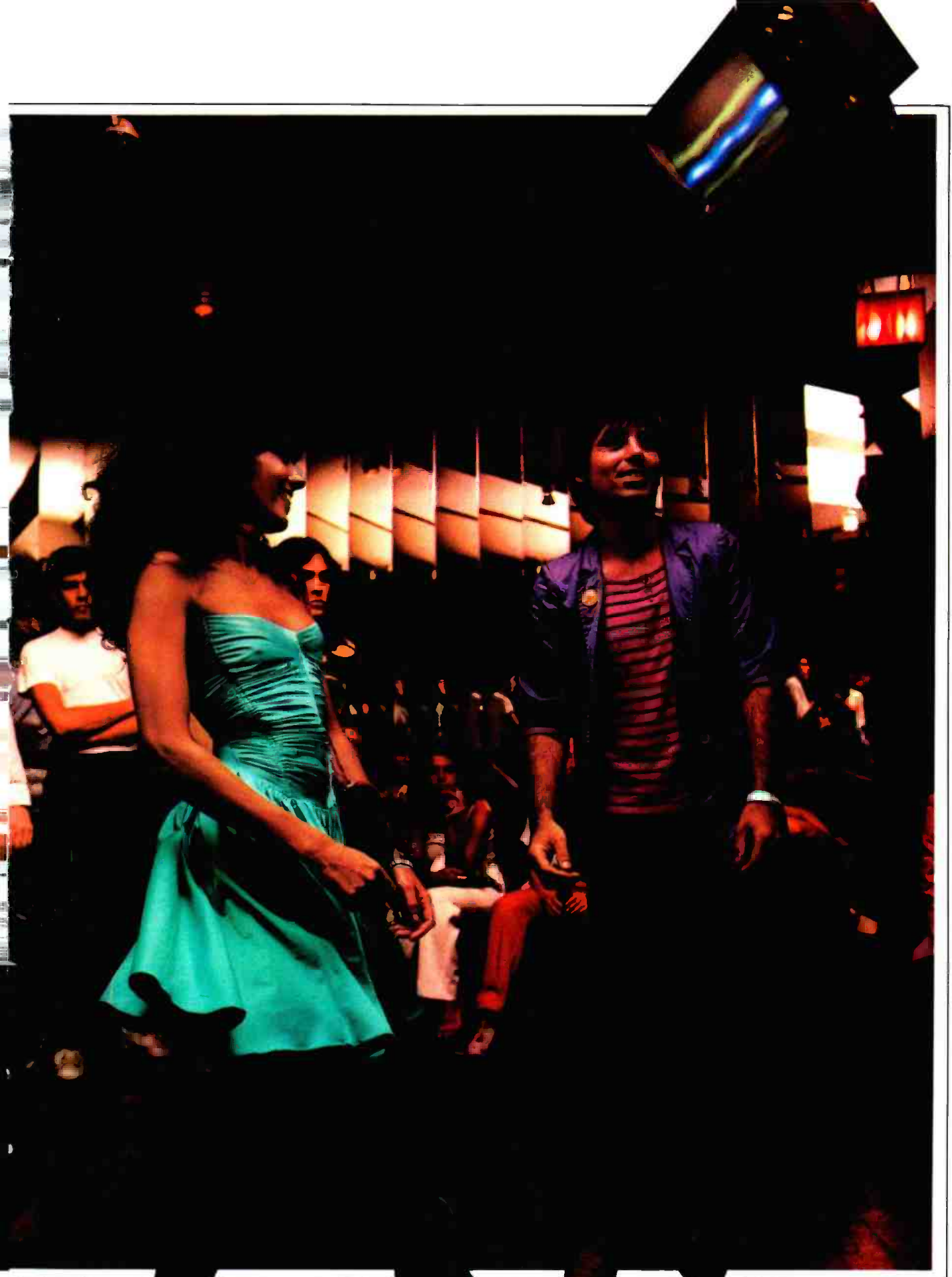
Later in the evening, Carole and Steve watch some Betty Boop cartoons on the monitor and then go downstairs to see the band. "The band is terrible tonight," Carole says. They leave around 3 A.M.

Lisa

Over in the far end of Hurrah, Lisa observes the proceedings as the club starts to fill up. Lisa makes the club scene about twice a week, relying on her contacts from her days as a rock publicist to get her in for free. "I've been professionally involved in rock-and-roll for eight years," says the pretty 26-year-old woman, who is too tanned and healthy-looking to pass for a serious new-waver. "Video is definitely where all the new hip clubs are heading. I come to Hurrah often and I'm really bothered by their videos here. The monitors are too small."

Lisa prefers the video scene at the Ritz, a vast art-deco ballroom in the East Village, featuring a 20-foot-high video screen at one end of the floor. Besides showing fairly well-known rock-and-roll acts, the video department there shows record promo tapes,

"Let's watch some videos upstairs" is what they say at Danceteria, which features a large video lounge for displaying the latest tapes from the video music underground (top). Left: Danceteria's deejays, Emily and Pat—the Lewis and Clark of new-wave video. Bottom: Members of New York's latest fringe group, the new-wave rockers, at Hurrah. Right: Carole and Steve, the "perfect new-wave couple." She resembles a punk Cinderella; he hits an average of five nightspots a weekend.



The Lady or the Pirates?

It was no contest: a true sports fan had to put off his wedding until the October barrage of TV ball games had run its course

By DICK FRIEDMAN

From Sept. 29 to Oct. 17 of last year, I watched 18 baseball games, 12 pro football games, three college football games, two basketball opening games, and a hockey opener between the teams that ultimately closed the season around Memorial Day: the Philadelphia Flyers and the New York Islanders.

That adds up to roughly 74 hours of sports in 19 days. A detailed sport-by-sport breakdown is available from my wife, who at the time was not yet my wife and was probably wondering whether or not she should be. She wanted us to get married last October, but after consulting my schedule, I demurred. Booked solid. Oct. 14 seemed perfect to her, but I did a little figuring and allowed that there was a good chance that would be the day of the seventh game of the World Series. I plea-bargained. The wedding was held on Nov. 4.

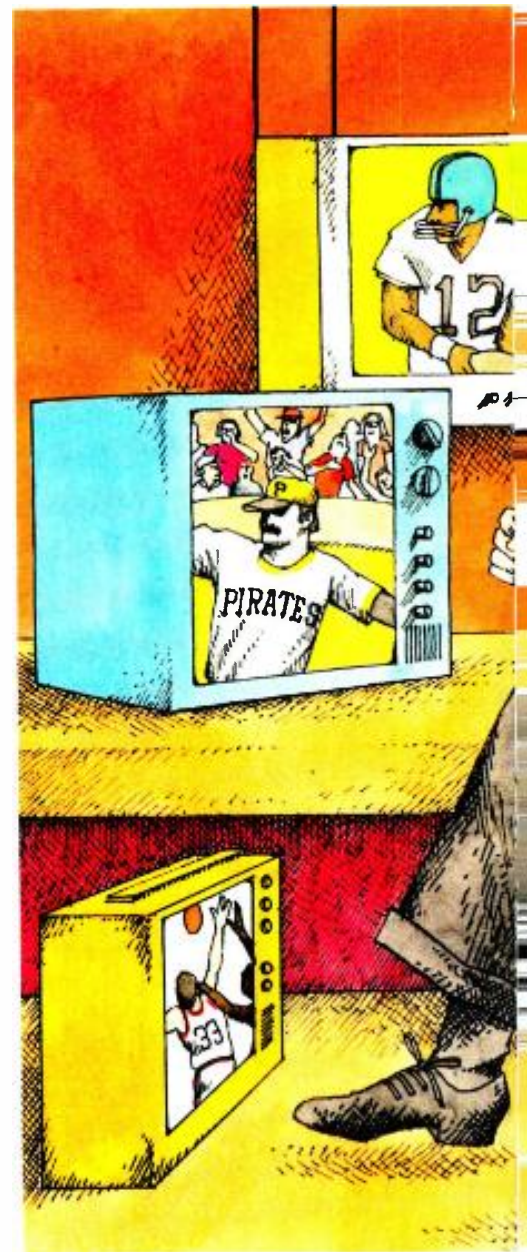
This year, sans wedding date, I'll be right back in front of that TV set, rooting for extra innings and overtime and the maximum number of play-off games. I expect to see some plays upwards of 20 times (figure it out: the play itself, three or four instant replays, repeated at halftime, on the post-game show and on the eleven o'clock news). Stinting on sleep, I will barely fit my work into the breaks in the action; I'll disregard the calls admonishing me to get in one final windblown set of tennis before winter. And when the champagne is flowing in the locker room of the World Series winner, I expect to feel a mite disgusted. Call it the post-orgy syndrome.

Someday, when sports fans have their own satellite receiving dishes and it is routine to gorge yourself year-

round on an exotic diet of big events (the Australian Rules Football Championship from Sydney, say, followed by the Sled-Dog Olympics from Siberia), the autumnal devotion of today's sports fanatics to their televisions will seem quaint, much as we regard those fans in the pre-radio days who crowded in front of Western Union offices to get inning-by-inning scores of World Series games. And when videocassette recorders are in every household, there'll be no need to forsake October's golden sunshine to ensure you won't miss a play.

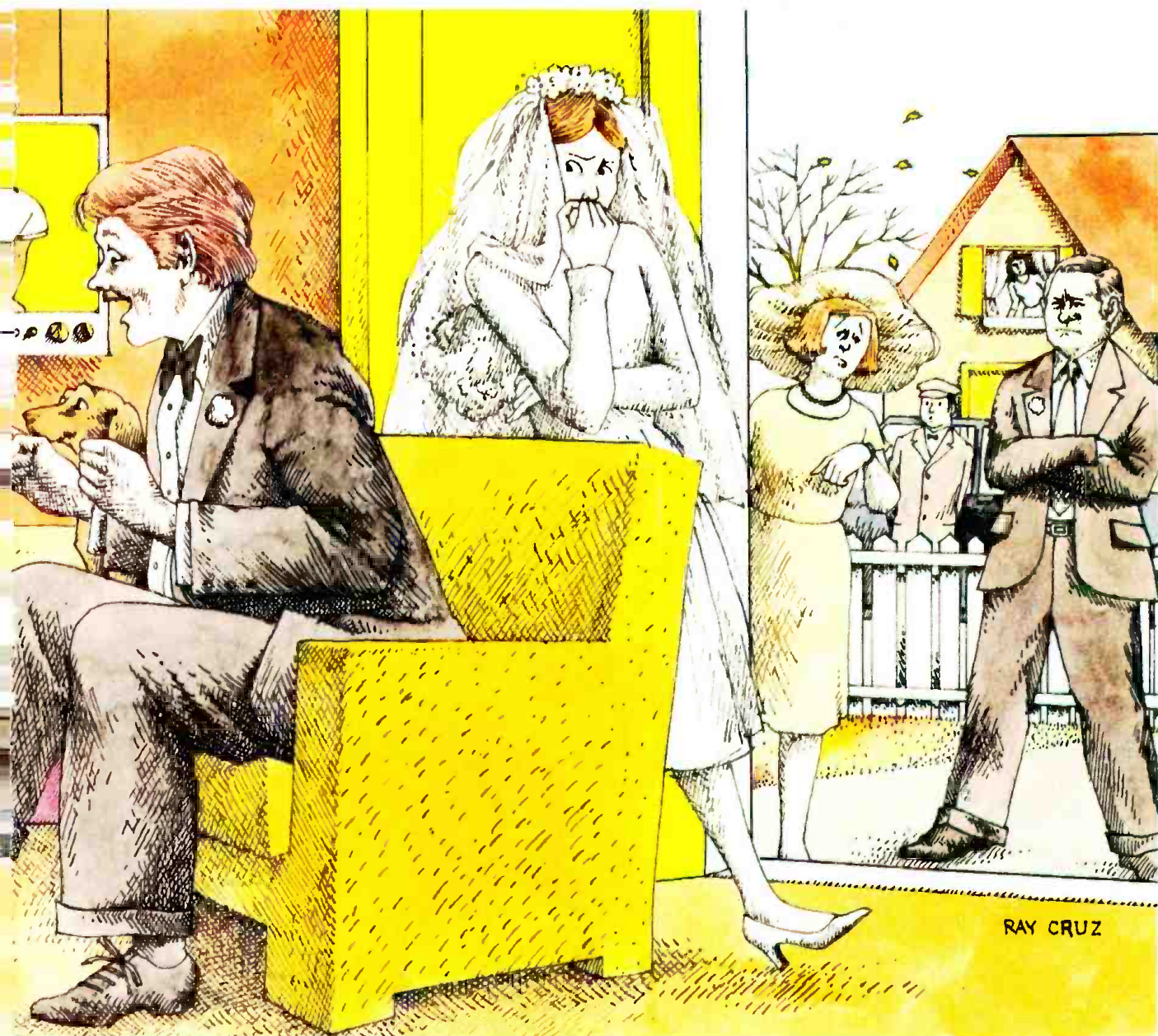
But for those of us old enough to remember when preseason football games were known as "exhibitions," that crazy three-week "sports overlap" period in the early fall is perhaps our one fantasy come completely true. If you live in a city with teams in all four major-league sports, you can virtually program your life around the set, as I did last year watching local telecasts of the Philadelphia 76ers' and the Flyers' games, not to mention the cornucopia of nationally televised baseball and football. The scheduling of this marathon sports watch has been so artfully designed over the past decade that faking sick to watch a World Series game in the afternoon has become a lost art. Most weekday games are on at night, or they begin late enough in the afternoon so that you can get home in time to watch the last inning or so.

To real sports freaks like myself, of course, who wins and loses all these contests is decidedly secondary. What counts is, simply, that they play as many games as possible, prolonging weekends into Wednesday. At times, your viewing strategy, in terms



of formulating the perfect weekend, would do credit to the caginess of a baseball manager like Earl Weaver—though it backfires as often as Weaver's cogitations did last World Series.

During the hectic divisional play-off weekend last fall, I had a grand schedule mapped out, but it was contingent upon either the American or National League play-offs going the maximum five games. Sadly, in the National, the Pittsburgh Pirates knocked the Cincinnati Reds out in three straight games, so that left only the overmatched California Angels to try to extend the Baltimore Orioles to the five-game limit in the American. In the best of all possible outcomes, that fifth game would be



RAY CRUZ

played on Sunday night, making my weekend look like this:

Friday afternoon—Pirates vs. Reds (I really was sick that day, so I stayed home to watch this one).

Friday evening—Orioles vs. Angels, third game.

Saturday afternoon—Michigan vs. Michigan State football; Orioles vs. Angels, fourth game.

Saturday night—Reintroduce myself to fiancée.

Sunday afternoon—Eagles-Redskins football; Steelers-Browns football (double-header).

Sunday evening—Eat, read paper; Orioles-Angels, fifth game.

Monday night—*Monday Night Football*, Miami vs. Oakland.

It took a great play to keep me from 10 hours of Sunday sports that weekend. In the fourth Orioles-Angels game on Saturday, Doug DeCinces of Baltimore snared a shot by California's Jim Anderson and turned a double into a double play, effectively killing the Angels' best rally and California's season. Thus, there was no fifth game Sunday to follow the football double-header. As Sparky Anderson might say, "That ball's down the left-field line and Archie Bunker gets a 17 share Sunday night."

Sometimes the schedule does not break so neatly and you are faced with two or more desirable games simultaneously. Then you must resort to the nerve-racking practice of dial-hopping,

as I did on the final days of the National League East regular season last fall. Both the Pittsburgh Pirates and Montreal Expos were in contention and both were on TV. On Saturday, I flipped back and forth between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Expos on a local channel and the Pirates and the Chicago Cubs on the nationally telecast game. Not only did the Expos and Cubs win, forging a tie in the loss column between the Expos and Pirates and creating the possibility of a play-off, but the Pirates-Cubs game went 13 pulse-pounding innings, finally ending at around 6:30—as did the college football game I also was watching, Ohio State vs. UCLA. At the end of the afternoon, I don't know who was more

continued on page 107



So Tell Us, Mr. Wooten, Don't You Feel a

One fine day last spring, a young man with a very serious look about him stopped me on the street in downtown Washington and asked if I was who he thought I was.

He seemed to have the goods on me, so I confessed.

"I knew it was you," he chortled. "I saw you on the ABC news just last night."

Then, like the priest I hope to have at my funeral, he began showering upon me such a rich profusion of compliments that I decided then and there to hire him to represent me in all future contract negotiations with the network. It was truly remarkable. He was a perfect stranger, yet he seemed to know every phase and facet of my checkered career in journalism—my

Switching to video has been a painful—but sometimes hilarious—struggle for a respected print journalist

By JAMES WOOTEN

reporting from the South and from the White House for *The New York Times*, my writing for *Esquire* and other magazines over the years, even my books—and he had admired and respected all of it; especially, he said, my biography of Jimmy Carter.

"Well, you're very kind," I responded, realizing that the young man had been blessed at birth with consummate good taste.

"No, no, no, not at all," he said. "I thought your Carter book was an important addition to our political literature."

"Well, thank you. Thank you very much," I said, rummaging through the insides of my jacket, sensing that he would soon ask for my autograph.

"So, tell me, Mr. Wooten, don't you



Little Dirty Now, Being in Television?

feel a little dirty now, being in *television*?" the young man asked, pronouncing the word as though it suddenly had turned fetid in his mouth. And before I could answer, he had disappeared into the passing crowd, a satisfied smirk on his very serious face, forever disqualified from any future consideration as my agent.

Well, the answer, my boy, wherever you and your smirk may be, is *no!*—absolutely, positively, unequivocally *no!*—and not one bit regretful, either, for having decided in the summer of 1979, after a reasonably proficient and satisfying career in print, to try my hand at broadcasting.

I love television, although it hasn't been an easy transition. It has, in fact,

been painful at times, utterly maddening on occasion, and almost always frustrating. My first network appearance is a vivid case in point.

It was an essay, more or less, on the fifth anniversary of Richard Nixon's resignation from the Presidency, broadcast on ABC's *World News Tonight* in early August. Although some of my new colleagues were quite generous in their reviews, I thought—hell, I knew—I'd rather thoroughly bombed.

Being good on television is decidedly not the same as being good at *The New York Times*, and I realized when I saw the story that night that what I'd done was not much more than my impression of a *Times* reporter who'd just happened to wander into range of the ABC cameras and microphones.

The writing was wildly complicated, baroque and labyrinthine; I'd employed irony, similes, metaphors, even a bit of Agnewesque alliteration. I doubt if more than a half-dozen viewers in the entire country had any idea of what I'd been driving at in the story, if you count me and the producer.

But what was equally as disappointing as the murky, unintelligible content of the piece was my *appearance* on the television screens of America: pale as a negligee, squinting like a sniper.

We had videotaped my on-camera portions of the story on the south lawn of the White House at high noon, which meant that all parts of my face below my rather prominent nose were in its sizable shadow. To com-

pensate, the camera crew placed an aluminum reflector the size of a poker table directly in front of me; its purpose was to reflect the sun's rays and bounce them back into those areas darkened by my proboscis.

"How's that, Jim?" the electrician asked, moving the reflector even closer. "Not too much now, is it?"

"Oh, no, no, no," I lied, speaking through the blinding glare in the general direction of his voice.

Now, some television people, I've learned, can, as they say, *take* a reflector. Frank Reynolds, for instance, is legendary among camera crews for his uncanny immunity to any kind of artificial lighting, including not only reflectors of the sort that was robbing me of my sight that afternoon, but the high beams of passing automobiles, searchlights and presumably laser beams as well. "O! Frank, he can really *take* it," the electrician said. "Of course, some people can't," he added, possibly in reference to the veritable cataract of tears coursing from my eyes, long since slammed shut against the unbearable light—the same light whose intense heat was draining away whatever color may have been in my face when the cameras started to roll.

I felt like Icarus on his first and last pass around the sun.

Hence, in the living rooms of America that August evening, ABC's viewers were treated to the maiden appearance of the Nation's first blind, albino television correspondent, blinking, weeping and squinting into the distance.

There were a few other problems along the way.

Down in Norfolk, Va., a few days later, I did my first on-camera interview with another person. There is a very simple technique to this. The microphone held by the reporter is to be pointed in the direction of the person being interviewed when that person is talking. When the reporter is talking, the microphone is to be pointed toward his own mouth. Down in Norfolk, however, with Richard Hatcher, the mayor of Gary, Ind., I systematically reversed that system. I know because I watched it on tape later. The mayor had a very peculiar look on his face.

Then there was the night of the New Hampshire primary election, when I would have traded any two of my children for that big aluminum reflector. It was an extraordinarily cold evening, just a bit above zero in Concord, and I was standing in front of

the state capitol in greatcoat and gloves, with long johns beneath my suit, still painfully, incredibly cold. Through the plug attached to my ear (called the IFB in television parlance), I could hear Frank Reynolds, warm and cozy behind his indoor anchor desk, saying something about the Republican race that day, asking me a profound question about it. At last I was on-camera, on the air, live for the first time to millions of American homes—shivering. My words finally emerged, with a vigorous vibrato only Beverly Sills would have envied. Although the chattering of my teeth made no journalistic contribution to ABC's election-night coverage, the castanet-like clatter was, at least, something you

I came to take a rather dim view of the work that TV correspondents did. It just looked so simple, so easy, that it couldn't be very important

couldn't get on either of the other networks.

A few weeks later, assigned to Milwaukee for the Wisconsin primary, I was grateful to be indoors—but the IFB wasn't working. "It's dead," the engineer on the scene gravely pronounced. The producer said not to worry; he would give me a hand signal when it was time for me to go on the air. Fine, I said. The downtown hotel room was deathly quiet as I waited, the plug in my ear still silent. He gave me the cue and I began my spiel on how the Republicans had fared that day in Wisconsin, and about halfway through I was suddenly blasted by a jolt of high-decibel rock music coming into my ear through the IFB—*mainlined*, as it were.

I never found out exactly what had happened, but I watched a videotape of my appearance that evening and observed myself at the exact instant the alien input began. Sure enough, my eyes clouded over, my words disintegrated into garbled sounds, and there was such a look of abject terror on my face that those viewers just tuning in might have thought they

were seeing the first live broadcast of a condemned man on his way to the gallows.

At least I wasn't squinting, but it's a wonder I didn't dance.

I've recounted a few of the adjustment pangs of moving from one basic mode of journalism to the other more as parables than as anecdotes because there is in each of them an example of the basic differences between the two. They are differences of *technique* and *technology*, of course. One simply cannot practice journalism on television in the same way one practices journalism for newspapers and magazines. And yet this elementary truth is not readily grasped by a broad swath of either television viewers or newspaper readers.

In a way, that was the problem of the young man who accosted me on the street in Washington. He had been well pleased, he said, by my work in one medium and quite offended by it in the other, but what he was doing was applying one standard to both: the standard of *print*. I could understand him—I used to have the same problem.

Over the years as a newspaperman, I'd shared dozens of assignments with dozens of television correspondents. They came in all shapes and sizes and colors, with a variety of intelligence quotients and professional skills. Some I learned to respect and some I didn't. Some I came to like and some I disliked a great deal and some became close friends. But in the course of our common wanderings through floods, riots, wars, hurricanes, civil-rights violence, murder trials, national conventions, Presidential campaigns and assorted other natural disasters, I came to take a rather dim view of the work that all of them did. It just looked so simple, so easy, that it couldn't be very important. They were paid better than the rest of us, and God knows they dressed better than we ink-stained wretches did, but I was convinced that what the television correspondent—any television correspondent—did for a living was not really *fit* work for grown men and women.

Then I made the switch and discovered that my simple-minded appraisal had been entirely incorrect. I have never worked harder in my career than I have in the year since I became a television correspondent, simply because the demands this medium makes on the storyteller are so much greater—because the time we have to

continued on page 82

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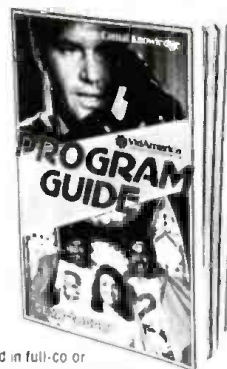
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MR. WOOTEN

continued from page 80

tell the story is so much less. A television script, I have learned, is a thing of beauty when it's well done. The television reporter can rarely use any of the techniques of language and style available to the newspaper writer—all those approaches I'd mistakenly employed in the Nixon-resignation essay—and because he cannot, his writing is all the more difficult. Moreover, the television reporter cannot merely say something; he must, if his story is to make sense, say something that matches the pictures the viewer is seeing as he hears the reporter's voice reading the script. It is a fragile marriage, consummated only with intense concentration and focus on the basic function of the story.

The young man who stopped me on the sidewalk believed that television journalism is simplistic and therefore not quite as honorable as journalism in print. His mistake was to equate simplicity with simplistic-ness. Television writing must be simple because there is, of course, no opportunity for the viewer to *reread* the story. It just must be there the first time around for the viewer, or it isn't there at all. To accomplish that is no simple feat. To accomplish that is fit work for grown men and women.

But television's problems these days, it seems to me, often arise from this same murky swamp of ill-advised definitions. Producers, correspondents, executives—all of us—frequently try to assume for ourselves the same journalistic commission legitimately undertaken by newspapers and magazines. There are some things that television simply cannot do as well as newspapers, including, for instance, coverage of the Federal budget—a subject to which The New York Times devotes several full pages every year, offering in great and meticulous detail an anatomy of the Government's spending plans for the forthcoming fiscal period. That is not to suggest, of course, that television news should ignore the Federal budget, but rather that it must not make the mistake of trying to offer some half-baked replica of The Times or The Washington Post on the subject.

In the same way, network news must begin—and, in fact, has begun—to set its own agendas, its own priorities. It is no secret that the attention given to a particular story by either The Times or The Post, in varying degrees, has quite often determined the attention given that same story by the networks. It is no slur on the integrity or the news judgment of either of those newspapers to suggest that their choices are

not the be-all and end-all of American journalism. Television news is slowly coming of age now. It is populated by serious, intelligent men and women who know a news story when they see one and who need not fall back on what's been printed on page one of The Times and The Post for either motivation or justification.

On the other hand, there are some kinds of stories that television tells so much better than newspapers that the difference should be emblazoned on every producer's wall. I recall a couple. I was assigned to tell readers of The New York Times about the great eclipse that was visible up and down the eastern seaboard a few years ago. I went to Perry, Fla., to do the deed and ran into Ed Rabel of CBS and his camera crew. I watched his story that night

There are some kinds of stories that TV tells so much better than newspapers that the difference should be emblazoned on every producer's wall

as I read what I had filed. There was no contest. The pictures of the moon's shadow darkening the sun went far beyond what I could do with language.

The year before that, Ron Nessen, then of NBC, and I were both putting together stories of how Hurricane Camille had integrated the schools of Pass Christian, Miss. The storm had severely damaged both the black and white high schools in the town and there were emergency funds for rehabilitating only one. Black kids and white were going to school together there for the first time in history, and the pictures of that—in the classrooms, in the gymnasium, on the football field and on the buses—were far more powerful than the narrative I wrote. Hell, Nessen didn't even have to write. All he had to do was turn on the camera.

A few days after that abysmal essay on Nixon's resignation, I was still depressed by what I had seen of myself. I wandered into Frank Reynolds' office in the ABC Washington Bureau and flagellated myself a bit. "How many unfortunate Americans were subjected to that little travesty of mine last week?" I asked. Reynolds said little in response, but instead presented me

with a copy of a recent magazine article explaining television's rating system. I took it to my office, locked the door, drew the blinds and, with little enthusiasm, began reading—and was immediately overwhelmed by what I learned.

Even on a very slow night, about 50 million people watch the news programs broadcast by the three commercial networks in this country; moreover, although it varies a bit from week to week, about 15 million or so of that number turn their channel selectors to ABC.

I'd never been all that interested in the numbers before, never even been curious enough to ask about them until that afternoon, but, once registered in my brain, they changed my entire attitude. For a reporter, nothing has more value than *impact*, and all reporters know or should know that there's no more direct route to impact than *audience*. I'd spent my professional life writing for a readership that had ranged from 65,000 on The Huntsville (Ala.) Times, my first job, to about 850,000 on The New York Times. That afternoon, I'd discovered that my audience was—my God—15 million people, give or take a few measly thousands here and there.

I've been happy with television ever since.

Whether television's happy with me, of course, is another question entirely—one I shall not address here; but the size of the audience my new employers have given me has prompted me to approach my work as a journalist much more seriously than ever before. It is no more than the direct application of that simple Biblical observation that *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*; and no facet of the American press has been given more than broadcast journalism.

Those vast audiences, multiplied in quantum fashion for network entertainment and sports programs, generate prodigious incomes for the networks. Their news operations, including the men and women like me who work in them, are the direct beneficiaries. In an election year like this one, with the two nominating conventions and the various campaigns of the candidates having to be covered, the networks will have spent more than \$100 million on news. What is even more important than actually *spending* that amount of money on news is being able to *afford* that amount of money for news—and the networks can afford it.

The impact of broadcast journalism is so much greater than that of news-

papers—including The Times and The Post—that those involved in television who do not take it seriously should perhaps find something else to do with themselves. The world sometimes seems to be shaping itself to the contours acceptable to the evening news programs. That kind of responsibility cannot be computed by cost or ratings. It must be factored in terms of history.

One more parable.

On a chilly evening last March, after the votes had been counted in the Massachusetts primary, I was standing in the crowded ballroom of a Boston hotel, surrounded by a noisy swirl of Rep. John Anderson's happy partisans. They were waiting for him to appear in person to accept their congratulations on his second-place finish that day. I was waiting to go on the air, live, with 90 seconds or so of lucid commentary on the cosmic meaning of the politics of the moment—a microphone in my hand, that little plug in my ear, and hidden wires snaking down my spine beneath my suit coat.

Suddenly, a very proper-looking woman, quite well-dressed, in her mid-50s, I'd guess, approached me from starboard, tugged on my sleeve, grabbed my hand—the one without the microphone—and over the maddening din of a rock band and a thousand excited Anderson fans, introduced herself, literally shrieking her name into my ear—the one without the plug.

"Jim Wooten! You're my family's favorite television person!" she shouted, planting a rather moist and matrimonial kiss on my cheek.

"Hey, thanks. Thanks a lot," I yelled back.

"We've been watching you for years," she screamed. "You look so much younger in person."

And she vanished into the multitudes, blissfully unaware that her family's favorite broadcaster *over the years* had been in television exactly seven months.

She was, nevertheless, a woman of consummate good taste. (■)

NEW WAVES *continued from page 75*

video art, and some offbeat cable-TV shows. Sometimes a Ritz cameraman videotapes the crowd as they dance and their images simultaneously appear on the screen. "One night when I was there, I looked up and saw myself 20 feet high," says Lisa. "It was so wonderful."

Carole and Steve

"I took a Valium and had a few drinks," says Carole, who is standing with Steve in the middle of Hurrah. "So

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I'm not very neurotic tonight." Thursday night Carole looked like a new-wave Dallas Cowboy cheerleader. Tonight she resembles a punk Cinderella, with her strapless aqua-blue dress cut low and sexy, wearing matching ankle boots.

When prodded, Carole reluctantly talks about her life. "I was into the whole '60s thing," she says, while watching a tape of David Bowie's "When You're a Boy." "But I wasn't very political . . . and the '70s . . . I wasn't into too much," she says with a vacant look.

Around 1:20 the crowd at Hurrah starts to thin. The straights go home to bed. The scene-makers head over to Danceteria for a private party thrown by the Rock Pool, a national organiza-

tion that distributes the tapes and records of new-wave musicians to deejays in clubs.

Carole and Steve stand in the middle of the teeming main floor at Danceteria, the perfect new-wave video couple, greeting old friends, making the scene. A tanned blonde woman stops to talk to Carole. The woman is wearing nothing but a tight white skirt.

Carole and Steve don't even bother going upstairs to the video lounge. It's too hot up there. They stand around watching a new-wave band perform. Carole looks bored and someone asks her what excites her. "Pretty young boys," she says, snapping her fingers to the music, swaying back and forth . . . "and pretty young girls."

—Howard Polskin

ductions for just this purpose.

Meanwhile Greg Andorfer, a graduate of the UCLA business school's arts-management program, had developed an idea for an astronomy series that would use state-of-the-art special-effects techniques. Charles Allen, then vice president of KCET, was instrumental in bringing everyone together. KCET had the backing, the facilities and the right spirit (not to mention the right location, near the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Cal.). Sagan Productions would supply the intellectual thrust and the scientific credibility. The only missing element was a producer/director—preferably a brilliant one—with the requisite experience. Enter Malone, a specialist in applying his unique "created documentary" style to series on the history of ideas, among them, *The Ascent of Man* and *The Age of Uncertainty*.

The first major step in the actual production was to "reconnoiter the terrain"—scout locations all over the world—from London to Bombay to Cairo to Nairobi to Juneau to Albuquerque. Malone's quietly competent assistant Susan Stribling helped me dig up some of the original reconnaissance reports and planning memos. In them, I was startled to find a carton of papyrus scrolls. Thorough research indeed! Of course, they were props.

I see as much of the series as I can in the time available, in every state of completion from rough-cut film sequences to finished air tapes.

In the first episode Sagan's fabled spaceship, with its pearly, vaulted walls, speeds through intergalactic space past quasars, black holes, neutron stars, the swarming snowballs of Saturn's rings, the jagged red cliffs of Martian canyons—scenes the ship will revisit later in the series.

The great library of Alexandria, burned repeatedly in ancient times, rises again to figure prominently in the first and last episodes. This is no million-dollar set, as it appears, but an exquisitely detailed model. The model is only 3 feet high and as big as a couple of Ping-Pong tables, but Sagan's living figure has been electronically inserted into it so flawlessly that the camera glides along behind him as he walks up stairs and behind the pillars of the balcony and among the bushes of the garden. As he moves, his shadow falls on the mosaic floors and his footsteps echo in the vast marble halls.

Historical scenes are not only lavishly re-created but show a fine regard for accuracy. Sequences filmed in Holland for "Travelers' Tales" and Czechoslovakia for "The Harmony of the Worlds"



Adrian Malone (left), *Cosmos's* executive producer, has a chat with Sagan. "One of the decisions Sagan and I came to very early on," says Malone, "was that though this was going to be about space and about astronomy, that's only another way of looking at the natural philosophies."

(episode 3) are worthy of a good old-fashioned Hollywood spectacle—but the acting is much better. Jaromir Hanzlik, who plays 16th- and 17th-century astronomer Johannes Kepler, moonlighted as Hamlet for Czechoslovakia's National Theater.

All is not solemnity and memory-work. In episode 7, Sagan tells how he became interested in science as a small boy living in Brooklyn, when it occurred to him that those lights in the sky called stars were "farther away, probably, than New Jersey." In the same episode, Sagan conducts a class at his old elementary school, P.S. 101; he is a gifted, gentle teacher, and when he helps a young girl see that not only Earth, but she herself is a part of the Milky Way galaxy—made, like us all, of "starstuff"—the look on her face as that thought blossoms is enough to bring tears. The title of this program is "The Backbone of Night," a bushman's name for the Milky Way.

I encounter the samurai again—this time in context. The samurai sequence is virtually a model for the way Sagan and Malone and their colleagues have made *Cosmos* work. A classic problem in any exposition of evolutionary biology is to introduce the concept of "selection" in a way that is both clear and memorable. Sagan learned of an unusual Japanese custom that illustrated the point, and Malone arranged to bring it vividly to the screen. In the 12th century a battle was fought in which the troops of the child emperor Antoku were defeated; the 7-year-old boy drowned himself in the ocean. In memory of the event, crab fishermen keep a sharp lookout for crabs whose shells are formed in the image of a samurai face; and when these crabs are caught, they are tossed back into the water.

How do human faces come to be embossed on the shells of crabs? Through selection—a process of human selection that no doubt long predates the battle it has since served to memorialize. Crabs whose carapaces looked anything like a face were superstitiously spared. These crabs survived to breed offspring with similar traits.

Over the centuries, selection has favored crabs that look the most convincing; today the faces on the crab shells are startling in their fierce detail.

Associate producer Richard Wells and producer/director David Kennard re-created the battle, using local residents as actors, at the Akama shrine, where the battle is commemorated annually. The sequence is full of mist and light and watery reflection, as energetic and simultaneously as lovely as a Zen *sumi* painting. The local fishermen's association also cooperated to provide the crabs. In cutting between the close-ups of the shell and close-ups of a warrior's face, an image of the power of selection is fixed indelibly in the viewer's mind.

So this show is sort of like "Mr. Wizard Meets Star Wars," right?—a reporter at a PBS press conference.

Cosmos is a human achievement, not a superhuman one. Not every scene works. Here and there a bit of budget-stretching can be detected (remarkably well disguised, for the most part). And in painting his picture of the scientific enterprise marching bravely forward, resolutely discarding error wherever it is identified, Sagan is occasionally guilty of crediting science with more logic than it deserves.

The special photographic effects are executed with verve and precision, but there are some miscalculations of design. As our ship speeds through interstellar space, the stars stream past on either side—a sight that could never be seen because the stars are so far apart. The interior of the spaceship is beautifully realized, but the image of a flying church is not felicitous—it's too big and empty and bears no relationship to the brilliantly conceived exterior, a luminous dandelion-seed shape. And the "control panel" is silly, a sort of color organ, like a bunch of Christmas ornaments under glass. If a ship of the imagination needs controls at all, they should be suited to that most human of appendages, the hand.

Jim Latham's hands have shaped many of the successful sequences in *Cosmos*. He is senior film editor of the series, a thin, quiet man with a neat dark beard, on leave from the BBC. I spent a couple of editing sessions with Latham, while he worked in turn with producer/directors Kennard and Geoffrey Haines-Stiles, who function as Malone's chiefs of staff.

Latham and Kennard were choosing music for the second episode, on biology, titled "One Voice in the Cosmic Fugue." For a scene illustrating the

continued on page 86

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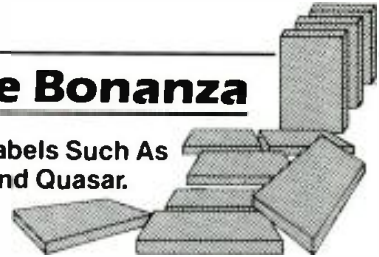
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COSMOS *continued from page 84*

structure of DNA, Sagan had suggested the accompaniment of the familiar Pachelbel canon. At first, this particular choice seemed a bit clichéd—as Kennard said of a different piece, "a bit of the old all-purpose-when-in-doubt."

Kennard ran a silent videocassette while Latham cued up various renditions of the canon. Finally one arrangement sounded good, and Kennard let the cassette play. After a moment I realized I was watching an astonishing computer simulation, unlike anything I'd ever seen: the three-dimensional DNA strand was twisting in the most complex way, and then a gray blob of the enzyme polymerase floated in and began cutting the spiral down the middle, seemingly unzipping it to expose the severed bases. From intracellular space other enzymes dragged in floating molecules to reconstitute the replicating strands. The intricate and scientifically accurate sequence ran several minutes without a cut.

The Pachelbel canon was perfect, turning endlessly with the graceful spiral, elegantly expressing the tragic sweetness of life itself—and, by extension, the emotion inherent in life's most basic chemical process.

I learned that most Hollywood ani-

mation houses had refused to even bid on the sequence I'd just seen, much less attempt to do it for the budget amount available. The *Cosmos* producers called on computer specialist Dr. James Blinn at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory; what he produced represented the state of his arcane art.

In Audio A, sound designer Kent Gibson and mixer Gerald Zelinger are adding thundering great noises and other effects to sequences directed by Richard Wells for episode 5, "Blues for a Red Planet."

On-screen, the Viking lander sets down on the Martian surface in a cloud of vapor. In this scene, Mars is played by Death Valley and the Viking by a twin of the landers that traveled to Mars. Its complexly articulated instruments begin to unfold.

"What the hell's that?" asks Zelinger. A sound like a windup plastic ducky is coming from the speakers.

The incongruous noise is the authentic sound of the Viking's spring-loaded antenna motor. However efficient it may be at storing energy, a spring motor leaves much to be desired dramatically—by comparison with, say, R2-D2's charming bleeps and whirs. But Viking's honest, rat-

cheting noises will remain, though not without some sweet, subtle "cooking" on the part of the audio wizards.

"I believe the secret of successfully popularizing anything is to remember the time just before you yourself learned it," Carl Sagan says. "Then you did a thing that *transformed* the subject inside your head . . . and you went from ignorance to knowledge."

On the last day of my visit I'm talking to Sagan in the backyard of his unpretentious West Hollywood home. He's taller and thinner than he looks on TV, and he carries his head thrust forward, as if concentrating all the energy of his body into seeing ahead and putting what he sees into just the right words.

Cosmos is a show that makes you want to talk back, and I'm glad of the chance to ask Sagan about its philosophy. For example, there is insistent criticism in the show of any form of suppression of free inquiry—an activity in which the Christian church, in one form or another, has repeatedly indulged itself. Of course, it is hardly the only organized religion to do so. Are science and religion necessarily inimical? Perhaps more to the point, is *Cosmos* trying to steal religion's thunder?

"I think there's a fundamentally religious tone to *Cosmos*," says Sagan. "It's not any doctrinal or bureaucratic religion. It's a sense of respect and love for the universe we live in." He gestures at the trees in his garden. "Just take anything in your line of sight. . . . Every place you turn there's an astonishing intricacy, beauty, awe, *grandeur*—the danger is to walk through life without seeing anything, without thinking about it."

Sagan is convinced that the universe is easy to understand, that our evolutionary heritage has equipped us with an intuitive grasp of mathematics. Though he readily admits that "nobody ever died because they didn't understand the rules of quantum mechanics," he maintains that we have the mental equipment to uncover the fundamental laws of nature. Because of past successes we also have the courage to keep trying new theories. But we have to be willing to say, "Let's test the hell out of it. And that's precisely what I don't see happening on social, political, economic fronts—the conviction that there's a truth, and the idea is to find out what the truth is."

This state of affairs worries him deeply. "My sense is there is not on the planet Earth today a single society that is structured to take us into the next century. We have to understand science and technology a lot better if

continued on page 88

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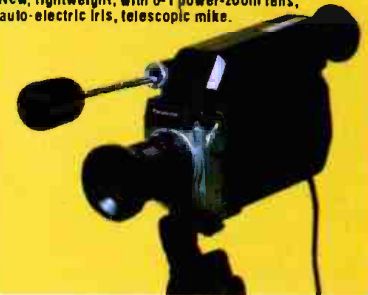
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ELECTRONIC OLYMPICS

continued from page 51

dred, who were quickly discovering that watching games invented for bar-rooms is almost as dull as watching grass grow. Throughout the evening, people would make sage observations like, "Why are we here?" and "Don't we have anything better to do tonight?" and "What's going on?"

What was going on was that Youthin-Asia appeared to be winning the Olympics, though there was enough confusion in the hall to make this conclusion questionable. Youthin-Asia picked up seven out of 13 gold medals—in the events of Racing Cars, Pinball, Baseball, Football, Darts, Gunfight and Clowns. Freedonia, which came in second, took gold medals in Tanks, Tennis and Missiles. And third place Leisureworld took golds in Hockey, Maze and Checkmate.

Had the spectators taken a slightly closer look at the action, they might have appreciated the style and the gamesmanship of the individual players. In the Clowns event, for instance, Peterson, who took the gold, was obviously a master of the Bally control box. With subtle grunts of pleasure, he would send his clowns pirouetting across the rows of balloons, yet each time they would land smoothly right back on the edge of the teeter-totter, only to be gracefully tossed yet again into space in search of balloons to burst. "The strategy," Don explained, "is to get the clowns to carom off the edge of the wall, so that they skip along the rows of balloons, getting as many as possible on a single launch."

Peterson's opponents—Leisureworld's Jeff Ginsberg and Freedonia's Marty Gunsaulus—had obviously not spent nearly as much time in front of their home television sets practicing Clowns as Peterson had. Their movements lacked the flow needed to smoothly launch the clowns, position them, catch them and keep them doing a jolly string of *grand jetés*. They stood in awe of Peterson's sheer professionalism, which was proof, obviously, of too many hours frittered away playing games designed for children but well suited to the temperament of an artist.

In another, and considerably more esoteric game, the three competing teams were far better matched. The game was Checkmate, which is basically a variation on the ancient Japanese game of Go. You cleverly, and electronically, try to encircle your opponent while he, equally cleverly and just as electronically, attempts to encircle you. In this particular series of matches, Leisureworld's Tiffanie Morrow turned out to be slightly more

continued on page 90

COSMOS *continued from page 86*

we're going to make it—and I don't just mean Americans; I mean everybody."

To make *Cosmos* Sagan had to learn a whole new form of the creative process—sitting in a room with a group of bright and opinionated people and pursuing sometimes very tangential ideas. And during the production there were pressures from other commitments; "I'm often not very realistic about how much trouble it is to do a thing well," Sagan admits.

In the middle of filming, Sagan's father became ill and died. On some of the locations Sagan could not even be present.

Despite these profound difficulties, has *Cosmos* achieved what Sagan hoped it would? "Overall, it exceeds my expectations—by a large amount." And he credits this to "at least a hundred other people. *Cosmos* is a collective enterprise."

When Sagan said that, I already knew he wasn't making the obligatory bow to the "little people"—he meant it, and he had reason. The quiet young American director David Oyster had related an incident to me that had given me a feel for the essentially collective nature of *Cosmos*.

"Carl had a verbal image of the stars like grains of sand," Oyster told me, "and Adrian said, 'Let's figure out how to make that real.'" Oyster went out and found a beach within a reasonable distance of the studio that could work for the scene he had in mind, provided it was filmed at low tide. He arranged to have a thousand electric bulbs planted in the sand, and to have a pyrotechnics expert on hand.

In the scene, Sagan tosses a handful of sand into the sky, where the grains freeze as stars. Sometime later, the stars unfreeze and rain down on the beach.

Thus in the eighth *Cosmos* episode, "Journeys in Space and Time," we will find Sagan standing on the shores of the Pacific, at dusk, and beyond him the sand will be twinkling with a thousand fallen stars.

Carl Sagan has gotten his spaceship. It is guided and powered by imagination—his own, Adrian Malone's, and that of dozens of other gifted and dedicated people. With it he is taking all of us on a wonderful trip this fall, and I plan to be hanging on for every minute of the ride. ■

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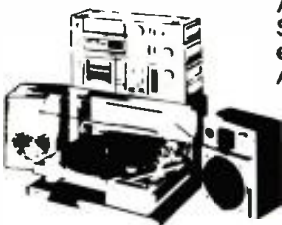
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ELECTRONIC OLYMPICS

continued from page 88

clever than her opponents, Freedonia's Mark Ross and Youthin-Asia's Eric Radnetter. While Ross and Radnetter would either zig or zag, Morrow would both zig and zag, cutting off any possible escape for her opponents. The end always came not with a bang but, when a player was encircled, with a resounding buzz.

Still, the many gold medals picked up at the Olympics were often more theoretical than actual. Video screens constantly flickered on and off as jerry-rigged wiring systems blew apart under the strain of competition. The volatile Freedonia team regularly marched off the playing field, yelling foul against Youthin-Asia. Usually Freedonia returned, though, because there wasn't any place to go off the playing field, and nothing much to do except fulminate for a while. Nor did the running commentary of announcer David (Squiggy from *Laverne & Shirley*) Lander help. Even before his microphone went dead, Lander's Squiggy nasality effectively concealed any pearls of wisdom.

By the end, the Video Olympics just plain stopped being fun, and the bulk of the crowd had headed home to watch a rerun of *Saturday Night Live*. "Actually, I don't think the games are falling apart," said Robert Chandler, an advertising copywriter who was acting as Minister of Propaganda for the Electronic Olympics, "though they certainly look as if they are. This was conceived as a media event. Real life is irrelevant to the Electronic Olympics. Have you ever actually seen Johnny Carson in person? He's never as good as he is on television. Television makes things seem more real. This whole event has been staged to be recorded. Of course, it's boring at the scene . . . but that isn't important. This is one of those things that doesn't happen until it's interpreted later in the media."

When the clocks in downtown Los Angeles tolled midnight, there weren't very many spectators, media or otherwise, left in the Bret Lopez Art Center to see the Apple computer finally give up the ghost and lose all the carefully accumulated scores. In an attempt at fairness, Don Peterson and Robert Chandler declared all three teams to be losers. "So what happened?" said Chandler the next day. "Freedonia left in a huff and declared war on the rest of the world. Such," he said with a sigh, "are the dangers of the Electronic Olympics." ■

TINKER, TAILOR

continued from page 41

length. He plumped in the end for six episodes, but if he had thought he needed longer nobody would have grudged him the extra couple of hours. Far from being prey to the unnerving compressions of the cinema, he could lie back, like the novelist or his reader, and stalk his characters to their end.

Hopcraft is also a very tidy and determined worker, with the ex-journalist's training in finding a line through facts. Finally he selected a skillful blend of the two main options open to him. He used flashback, but never in such a way as to give undesirable authority to the testimony of a suspect. And he started the story further back in time, in order to convert recollection into present-tense narrative. We agreed on the matrix at our first script meeting. Arthur wrote an outline and stuck to it like a terrier. The first episode supplied our only real dispute. In the book, as in the television version, Control summons Jim Prideaux to a safe flat in order to brief him for his mission into Czechoslovakia. I argued that the safe flat was confusing to the audience and that we needed at this early stage to establish the Circus in the audience's mind as the viper's nest where everything went on. By entering the Circus in episode one, I insisted, we should also be able to put the suspects on show in their natural habitat. Hopcraft and the book won the argument, and I still cannot find anyone who agreed with me that it should have been otherwise.

By the time we had the final version, an extraordinary thing had happened—or, at least, extraordinary to me: Hopcraft got liftoff. He had sufficiently found his way inside the material that his several original scenes were as pleasing to me as they were to him. I think particularly of the final scene of all, which shows us the Grail of hopeless love which Smiley, and in some strange sense the entire cast, have been unconsciously pursuing. The Circus, Hopcraft once suggested to me, was a sort of cauldron of male hates. In the final scene, as in the book, he supplies us with an inkling of what absent romantic forces have been stirring in the pot.

With the script behind us—or rather ahead of us—whatever small part I had had was over, and I went back to my writing of "Smiley's People," the third in the trilogy which "Tinker, Tailor" had begun (the second having been "The Honourable Schoolboy"). I attended a day's shooting. But for the

next week I found myself writing Guinness, not Smiley. The gossip said the rushes were marvelous, but when did it not? I ate a few end-of-day meals with Guinness, and mercifully he usually had the flatness of after-work, as I did, and the process of cross-fertilization was less. At first, he was dreadfully worried and seemed to find the part formless. "So hard to be a sort of geriatric ear," he remarked once. He was worried that everyone he spoke to seemed to have a different notion of who Smiley was and was not, perhaps for the very reason that Smiley had been much read about but scarcely seen on the screen. It was very strange to feel Guinness hunting for Smiley

“It was very strange to feel Guinness hunting for Smiley just as I had hunted for him.”

just as I had hunted for him, and to realize that the journey was as intense for him in *his* medium as it was for me in mine.

The affinities between Smiley and Guinness were from the start remarkable. Guinness is not plump, and that worried him, too; but, as a friend of his remarked, "If Alec wants to act fat, he'll be fat." Some actors *act* intelligent, some are: Guinness is. He reads and thinks and worries and assimilates all at the same time; he has extraordinary professional self-discipline; he has a power of response that is like an open wound, and to protect himself he is capable of a sort of social duck dive which is an almost physical act of self-obliteration. When he wishes it, he can be exactly the way I once described Smiley: one of London's meek who do not inherit the earth. He can affiliate like nobody I have met; a moment later he can be luckless, inconsolable and utterly alone.

It was now a matter of turning these qualities to account. Guinness's natural intelligence was of crucial dramatic advantage. When Guinness expounds, we believe him even if we don't follow; the lovely voice adds to the persuasiveness; his authority as the presiding father confessor among these err-

ing children is never in doubt, any more than are his powers of deduction. We had a Poirot; we had a Father Brown; but we also had a man searching for his own lost innocence among the sins of his companions.

Now and then, as the drama progresses, somebody asks Smiley a question. The answer to it would tell us a great deal; it could foreshorten our quest, though not Smiley's. Smiley says nothing at all. We wait, and for a moment we wonder whether the sound track has gone on the blink. I don't know what Guinness does then—perhaps nothing, perhaps a lot. His arts are quite as arcane as Smiley's. But the effect of his silence is to make you feel, not that Smiley is dodging an answer, but that such questions of him are in rank bad taste. I was reminded, the first time it happened, of myself as a small child asking my father whether God had a beard. He simply affected not to hear. It never crossed my mind that he did not know the answer.

I am a country man, just now. I write with one eye on the Cornish cliff and my mind on the little claustrophobic enclosures of John Irvin's cities: the former Ministry of Defence offices in Cork Street, which he used for the interior of Cambridge Circus; the winding corridors, the stairways with fish-eye mirrors, the safe flats with their grimy, weeping walls. Irvin is a country man as well, as his direction shows. The moment he gets out of doors, he makes us feel, with Irina the Russian girl, that "we have only to open the door and step outside to be free." Somewhere out there, he seems to be telling us, is a natural life without conspiracy. In his portrayal of the Circus, he has shown us also a world that for once makes defection understandable. There were even moments, as I listened to the apologia of the mole when he is finally unmasked, when I wondered—until I caught my balance again—whether I might have followed in his footsteps.

Irvin's first task was to confront Guinness with a cast that could stand against him and make, collectively, a seemingly unscalable citadel. Villains and fools they might be, but they must be worthy of the chase. Watching his film, I never saw a lazily drawn character or a lazily composed scene.

I had no part in it. I was scared of it, and I woke up to find it wonderful. I believe I shall find it so for a long time to come. ■

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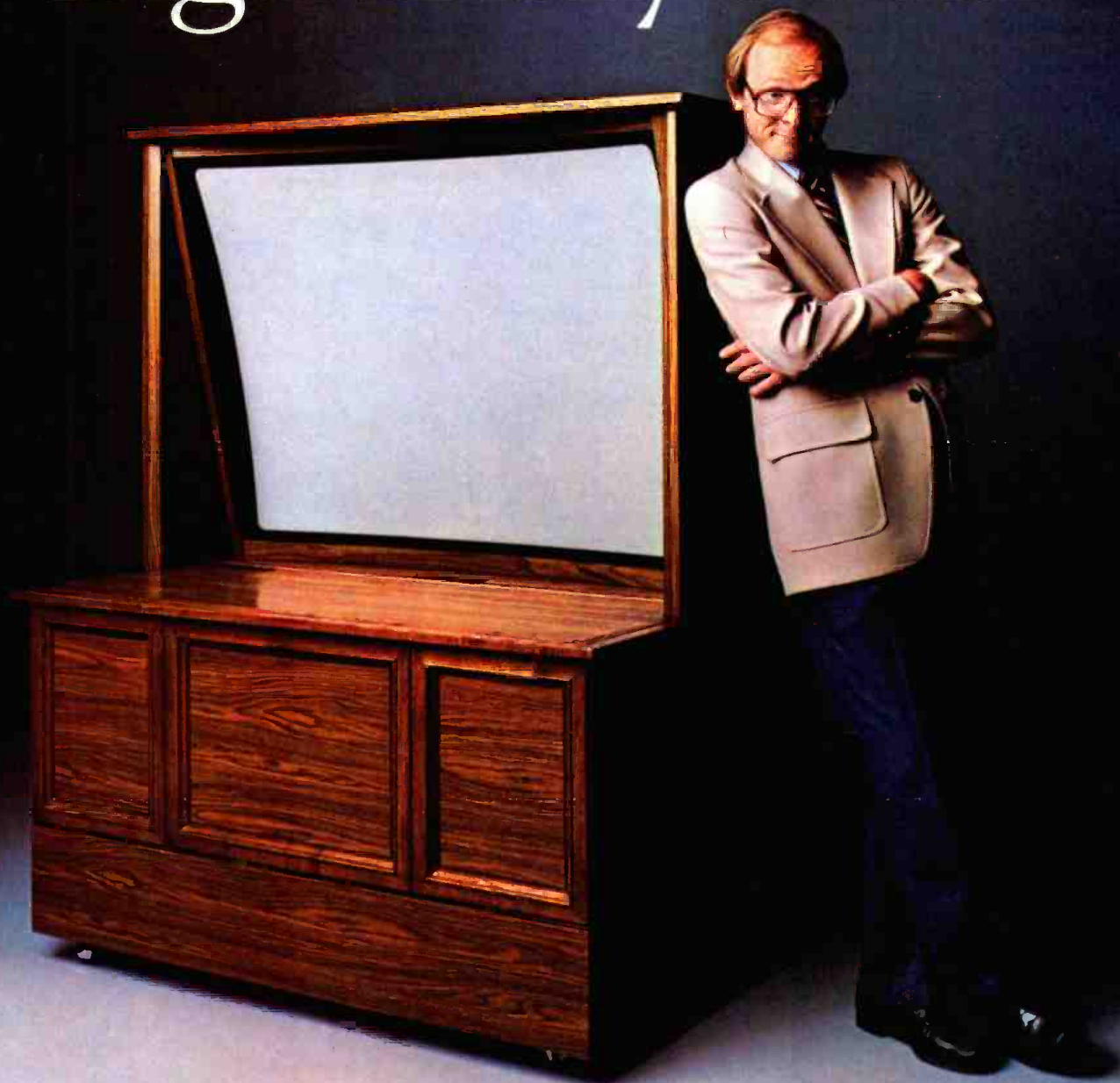
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PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

continued from page 63

silent and bored. The senator dropped his text. "I know I could have said other things that maybe you wanted to hear more," Goldwater said, "but when this campaign is over and when I'm with my grandchildren, they're going to say 'Papa'—that's what they call me, Papa—'did you do everything right?' I want to tell them that I did do everything right and, uh, that's why I made the speech I did tonight."

None of these revealing incidents would have happened under the hot, paralyzing lights of a television studio. A debating Miller would have been briefed—briefed at length to use contemporary English—on Gomulka and the Polish freedom movement. McCarthy, who did debate Robert Kennedy listlessly before the 1968 California primary, disliked theatricality. There was no shred of Brando in the man. Goldwater's simple desire to be decent came not from ghosts or pollsters, but himself.

When candidate Jimmy Carter debated President Gerald Ford in 1976, we were given parallel canned performances. Two ambitious, ineloquent men recited from position papers. Neither had found a writer who could create phrases. As one suburban viewer summed up, "In our high-school debating contest, both these guys would finish tied for eighth."

Must TV debates always be that boring? No, but they can never be spontaneous. So much is at stake, with so many cameras at the ready, that no candidate wants to stumble, stutter or even truly pause. So they rely on the hired experts who, quite simply, homogenize all vitality away.

Debates have a function, mostly exposure, and we are always trapped by hope. Maybe this time somebody will say something. Maybe this time we'll get real political theater. But experience should make us temper hope. I like political theater and stayed up late the other night to watch Laurence Olivier as Henry V. By 1:12 A.M., I was ready to vote in Olivier, or a Platanet, for any office in the land.

As for our current debaters, they can neither act like Olivier nor think like Shakespeare, and it's even money I'll pass them up in favor of something fresher, say a rerun of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* in black and white. ■

ANGELGATE

continued from page 39

notice he has a book by Karen Horney behind his desk.) "That kind of guy has no hesitation at all about taking money away from messengers and secretaries, let alone a writer who he thinks is grossly overpaid anyway."

Did Fred Silverman start them doing it?

"Oh, hell no. It's been happening as long as there was Hollywood. Longer. As long as people have known about keeping accounting books, the ones who keep the books have been stealing from everybody else. And the rich always like to steal from the poor. At least out here they do."

The Wise Agent tugs at his collar. He punches his intercom button again. "Elaine," he rasps, "tell the building manager that we're going to court to get the air conditioning made colder in here if it isn't below 70 by 3 P.M." He turns to me. "Really, they aren't poor as a matter of fact. Most producers pay pretty well. They have to. The Guilds make them. So it isn't as if the producers were making anyone starve. They're really just making sure that if anyone is going to be a multimillionaire, it'll be the producer first and foremost."

The Bottom Line

The Wise Agent smiles knowingly. "As a matter of fact," he says, "this whole thing with Spelling and Goldberg and Natalie Wood is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard of. This woman lawyer thinks that she's discovered original sin. 'Wow! Hey, I just discovered that a producer might be holding out on the profit participants!' It's ridiculous. Everyone has been holding out on profit participants for as long as there have been profit participants. For this lawyer to think she's put her finger on anything new or different is like you or me thinking that we've discovered sex. She must be the most naive person in the world."

"The bottom line is that everybody makes out all right, even with the profits getting held out. You don't notice people rushing to rock the boat, do you? The writers and directors know damn well that the reason they get such huge fees is that they're never going to see any profits anyway. They're not complaining. The bottom line is that this woman at ABC must have been in a convent all her life."

continued on page 94

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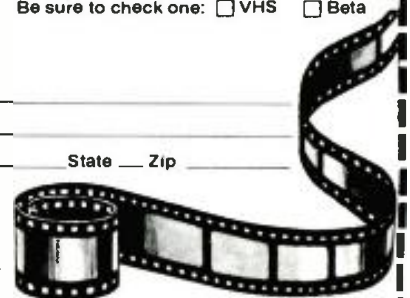
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ANGELGATE

continued from page 93



Or Was She?

Now, look at it this way. If profit participants have been getting robbed in Hollywood for years, and if everyone knew it, and if everybody was getting along pretty well anyway, why did Jennifer Martin get so jacked up about it? "It's a cinch," says the Worldly Producer in Burbank, "that Jennifer Martin isn't the first lawyer in Hollywood to find out that there was something a little bit funny about profit distribution. Every lawyer who works in show business must know what's going on. He must see examples of it going on every day of the week."

So?

"So," he says, picking at his teeth with an ivory toothpick, "the real question is why everybody is yelling and screaming about something that was a fact of life for 15 years—maybe more. Could it possibly be," he asks with a gleam in his light-blue eyes, "that there are persons unknown who want to make it easy for the FCC to lift a few of ABC's station licenses? Could it be that someone is trying to hurt ABC? People around town are guessing at all sorts of motivations behind this business."

At least four other people in Hollywood have raised the same questions to me.

Standards

Hmmm. Let's see where we are now. Apparently, producers cannot make ends meet because the license fee is less than their cost of production for a show. Apparently, the networks make up the deficits and throw in a little something extra for profits. Not only that, but those payments are kept well away from the profit participants in the shows so that the producers do not have to share that money with them.

Also apparently, this has been going on for a long time, although it may have been stepped up in tempo and size by Fred Silverman's dizzying reign at ABC.

But to go back to our favorite place, the bottom line: we have businesses and businessmen cheating people. That's it. That's the whole thing. "So what?" says the Slick Accountant in his office lined with signed pictures of the stars. "I'd like for you to show me a business that doesn't cheat people. I've worked in the auto industry, in

investment banking, in the IRS. Everybody's always cheating everybody. I'm amazed that anybody even notices it any more."

What? This is the essence of the free-enterprise system? That businesses cheat people?

"Are you crazy?" the Slick Accountant asks. "The top brass at these big corporations have hunting lodges and jet planes and call girls at their conventions of dealers. Who do you think pays for it? The shareholders. The profit participants of the great free-enterprise system. You think that's any different from what goes on in Hollywood?"

"The people who run every big company in America are so busy lining up limousines and country-club memberships for themselves at company expense that they hardly have time to get their shoes shined. Who do you think gets burned for the money? The shareholders. The same goddamn profit participants.

"Look at any little folding-box company or any little coat-and-suit business. The guys who collect the money are always robbing the investors who put up the money. That's the way business is."

The Slick Accountant looks at his nails and then picks up a Baccarat crystal paperweight with a miniature gold record inside. "In most businesses the profit participants don't even know they're being robbed. Or if they do, there's not a thing they can do about it. It's just rape, pure and simple. In Hollywood, the profit participants know the score going in. The whole thing is that everybody's going to make money in the long run. It's strictly a thing between consenting adults."

The Worldly Producer in Burbank has the final word. "You're wasting your time if you're looking for something shocking in this whole thing about *Charlie's Angels*," he says. "It's the same kind of thing that goes on all the time, only not as bad. And it goes on everywhere. It's just the nature of the business.

"More than that, it's the nature of people. People want to have and so they take. At least in Hollywood, everybody's hip. The standards are no different here from anywhere else. It's just that it's an insiders' game, and everybody who makes it in Hollywood plays the game.

"And in the final analysis," says the Worldly Producer, "in the history of the world, the whole thing isn't even going to be a footnote." ■



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WHAT'S HAPPENING

continued from page 16

LONDON

Richard Gilbert reporting

Not just a prithe farce. John Cleese, alias Basil Fawly of *Fawly Towers* and expert on silly walks for *Monty Python*, is acting in Shakespeare for the first time. He plays Petruccio in "The Taming of the Shrew," which Jonathan Miller is directing for TV in the latest phase of the BBC Shakespeare cycle.

What lured him to this role, which will be seen on British screens this fall and in the U.S.A. in 1981? "I've walked out of so many Shakespeare plays," he says, "that I

couldn't resist the challenge to try to make Shakespeare work. Jonathan Miller and I think exactly the same way about playing Shakespeare—you can't just rely on the poetry; it's very hard work."

Might he consider one of the Bard's tragedies next? "Oh, no. I couldn't play anything serious. People would have all the wrong expectations."

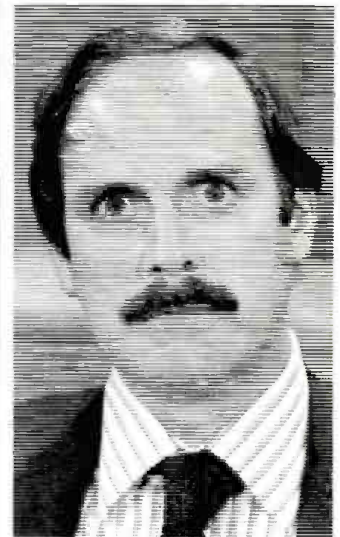
And what was the hardest job in playing Petruccio? "Learning all the damned lines."

All day, all night. Thames Television, London's commercial TV channel, is to broadcast Britain's first telethon this month. The 24-hour program, with a potential au-

dience of 14 million, is expected to raise \$2.5 million for children's charities in the metropolis.

Top of the bill is Bob Hope, and with him will be a host of British entertainers and sportsmen who will link numerous segments of program material. An army of 200 volunteers will man the phones, ready to record viewers' pledges.

Britain's longest-ever TV event will be closely watched by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, which supervises commercial television, to make sure that Thames is fulfilling its obligation to offer "a proper balance of programming" over a 24-hour period. But Thames director of programs Nigel Ryan doesn't anticipate problems. He hopes that "telethons will become a part of television life" in his country. ■



John Cleese: Doing the Bard between Python's barbs.



Richard Dreyfuss: Checks out the premises in "Close Encounters" addendum.

VIDEOCASSETTES

NEW RELEASES

MOVIES

An American in Paris (1951)—George Gershwin's music punctuates this tale of an American artist in Paris and his love for a French shopgirl. Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Adam's Rib (1949)—Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn as two lawyers, married to each other, who take opposite sides in the case of a woman who tried to kill her husband. Judy Holliday, Tom Ewell. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Ben-Hur (1959)—Director William Wyler's Biblical epic recreates the Nativity, the Crucifixion and a thundering chariot race. Charlton Heston, Jack

Hawkins, Stephen Boyd. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Break of Hearts (1935)—Music supplies the connecting thread in this love story about a composer (Katharine Hepburn) and an orchestra conductor (Charles Boyer). With Jean Hersholt. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$54.95)

A Clockwork Orange (1971)—Stanley Kubrick's vivid drama, based on Anthony Burgess's novel, has Malcolm McDowell as a leader of vicious hoodlums in a future where sex and violence have taken over our culture. With Patrick Magee. (WCI Home Video; \$75) (R)

Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Special Edition (1980)—Steven Spielberg's 1977 UFO spectacular, now reedited and with some new scenes. With François Truffaut, Teri Garr, Melinda Dil-

lon. (Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment; *) (PG)

Coma (1978)—Suspense drama based on Robin Cook's novel about a young doctor (Genevieve Bujold) whose suspicions about surgical errors in her hospital lead her to uncover a diabolical scheme. With Michael Douglas, Elizabeth Ashley, Rip Torn. (CBS Video Enterprises; *) (PG)

The Dirty Dozen (1967)—World War II thriller about a band of GI convicts on a suicidal mission in occupied France. Lee Marvin, Ernest Borgnine, Charles Bronson, Jim Brown, Donald Sutherland, Telly Savalas. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Doctor Zhivago (1965)—David Lean directed this grand-scale romantic drama, set in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution. Based on Boris



Julie Christie: Purple passion amid rampaging Reds in "Doctor Zhivago."



Steve Martin: Heroic ineptitude in "The Jerk."

Pasternak's novel. Omar Sharif, Julie Christie, Geraldine Chaplin, Rod Steiger, Alec Guinness. (CBS Video Enterprises; *) (G)

Every Which Way but Loose (1978)—Clint Eastwood as a barroom-brawling truck driver with an orangutan as a buddy, in pursuit of country-and-western singer Sonda Locke. With Ruth Gordon. (WCI Home Video; \$75) (PG)

The Ex-Mrs. Bradford (1936)—A doctor-detective becomes interested in the case of a jockey who has been killed during a race. William Powell, Jean Arthur. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$54.95)

The Falcon in Hollywood (1944) and **The Saint's Double Trouble** (1940)—While on vacation in the movie capital, the Falcon becomes involved in a murder mystery inside a film studio. Tom Conway, Barbara Hale, Rita Corday.

There's trouble ahead for the Saint when diamond smugglers contact him, believing him to be their chief. George Sanders, Bela Lugosi. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$59.95, double feature)

The Falcon's Brother (1942) and **The Saint in London** (1939)—The Falcon becomes involved with a Nazi spy ring intent on murdering a Latin-American diplomat. George Sanders, Tom Conway.

The Saint tackles the job of breaking up an organization of international counterfeiters. George Sanders, Gordon McLeod. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$59.95, double feature)

Fog Island (1945) and **Return of the Ape Man** (1944)—A once-rich man is released from prison and invites everyone connected with his imprisonment to his private island, where he plans vengeance. Lionel Atwill, Ian Keith.

A scientist discovers a way to preserve animals and humans by freezing them. Bela

Lugosi, John Carradine. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$59.95, double feature)

Gilda Live (1980)—*Saturday Night Live's* Gilda Radner entertains Broadway audiences with her familiar cast of comic characters, including Emily Litella and Roseann Roseannadanna. With Don Novello, Paul Shaffer, Rouge. (WCI Home Video; \$55) (R)

In Old California (1942)—A Boston druggist goes to Sacramento to open a store during the gold rush. John Wayne, Binnie Barnes. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$54.95)

It's in the Bag (1945)—When Fred Floogle's wealthy uncle dies mysteriously, the flea circus owner goes on a spending spree, expecting to inherit millions. Fred Allen, Jack Benny, Don Ameche, Robert Benchley. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$54.95)

Jailhouse Rock (1957)—Elvis Presley plays an ex-con who takes the music world by storm. With Mickey Shaughnessy, Vaughn Taylor, Dean Jones. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

The Killing of Sister George (1968)—Melodramatic story of the downhill slide of a lesbian actress (Beryl Reid) who is fired from her TV serial. Susannah York, Patricia Medina. (Magnetic Video; *)

Klute (1971)—Adult thriller about a Manhattan call girl (Jane Fonda) involved in a missing-person search by a small-town detective (Donald Sutherland). With Charles Cioffi, Roy Scheider. (WCI Home Video; \$55) (R)

Kotch (1971)—Jack Lemmon directed this story of a well-intentioned widower (Walter Matthau) whose relatives want to put him out to pasture. Deborah Winters, Felicia Farr. (Magnetic Video; *) (PG)

Look Who's Laughing (1941) and **The Great Gildersleeve**

(1942)—Fibber McGee and Molly receive unexpected guests when a plane is forced down at Wistful Vista. Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy, Lucille Ball.

Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve finds himself being stalked by an old maid. Object: matrimony. Harold Peary, Jane Darwell, Nancy Gates. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$59.95, double feature)

Lovers and Other Strangers (1970)—A top-notch cast stirs up laughter in this story of a wedding about which only the bride and groom seem happy. Bea Arthur, Gig Young, Richard Castellano, Bonnie Bedelia, Michael Brandon, Diane Keaton. (Magnetic Video; *) (R)

Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)—Nostalgic musical about a middle-class family at the turn of the century. Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Mary Astor, Marjorie Main. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Mysterious Doctor Satan (1940)—Melodramatic tale of a hooded hero after a master criminal. Robert Wilcox, Eduardo Ciannelli. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$139.95 for 15 episodes)

Network (1976)—A savage satire of TV-network wheeling and dealing; an aggressive programming executive (Faye Dunaway) capitalizes on the breakdown of a news anchor (Peter Finch) to sensationalize the news operation. With William Holden, Robert Duvall, Ned Beatty. (CBS Video Enterprises; *) (R)

A Night at the Opera (1935)—The incomparable Marx Brothers satirize the world of opera. With Allan Jones, Kitty Carlisle, Margaret Dumont. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Night Train to Memphis (1946) and **Grand Ol' Opry** (1940)—An ex-con and his brother outsmart railroad interests trying to buy land

cheap. Allan Lane, Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys.

Comedy involving hillbilies, an election and crooked politicians. Leon Weaver, Frank Weaver, June Weaver, Lois Ransom. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$59.95, double feature)

Notorious (1946)—Undercover agents fall in love during a dangerous assignment: trapping spies. Ingrid Bergman, Cary Grant, Claude Rains. (Magnetic Video; *)

Nyoka and the Tigermen (1942)—Adventures of the jungle girl (Kay Aldridge). (Nostalgia Merchant; \$139.95 for 15 episodes)

Rebecca (1940)—Alfred Hitchcock directed this adap-

tation of Daphne du Maurier's novel about a shy girl whose marriage is threatened by the evil memory of her husband's first wife. (Best Picture, 1940.) Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine, Judith Anderson. (Magnetic Video; *)

Song of Norway (1970)—Norwegian locations highlight this operetta-like account of composer Edvard Grieg's younger years. Florence Henderson, Frank Poretta. (Magnetic Video; *) (G)

Straw Dogs (1971)—Sam Peckinpah directed this violent account of a young couple (Dustin Hoffman, Susan George) faced with sinister townspeople in rural England. With Peter Vaughan. (Magnetic Video; *) (R)

Summer of '42 (1971)—Nostalgic account of three teenagers coming of age on a New England coastal island. Gary Grimes, Jennifer O'Neill, Jerry Houser. (WCI Home Video; \$55) (R)

Take the Money and Run (1969)—Woody Allen debuted as an actor/director with this sendup of robbery and prison dramas. Janet Margolin, Jacquelyn Hyde, Lonny Chapman. (Magnetic Video; *) (R)

Terror by Night (1946) and **Meeting at Midnight** (1943)—Basil Rathbone stars as Sherlock Holmes in this story of jewel snatchers out to nab a fabulous diamond. With Nigel Bruce.

continued on page 100



Olivia Newton-John: Glues herself to greaser in "Grease."

BEST SELLERS

This list of the top 20 prerecorded videocassettes is based on sales figures from a survey of retail outlets around the country.

(*) **1. Alien** (1979)—Haunted-house drama in outer space. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95)

(2) **2. Superman** (1978)—Super-budget film starring the special effects. (WCI Home Video; \$65)

(4) **3. The Muppet Movie** (1979)—Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy sing and dance their way to Hollywood fame. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95)

(3) **4. "10"** (1979)—Featuring the Eighties' first sex symbol, Bo Derek. (WCI Home Video; \$65)

(6) **5. A Star Is Born** (1976)—Second remake of the 1937 tear-jerker, this time starring Barbra Streisand. (WCI Home Video; \$75)

(-) **6. The Electric Horseman** (1979)—Jane Fonda and Robert Redford in a breezy, romantic comedy. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

(-) **7. Return of the Dragon** (1974)—Bruce Lee's last film. (Video Gems; \$59.95)

(11) **8. The Main Event** (1979)—Boxing and romance vie for laughs. (WCI Home Video; \$60)

(17) **9. Life of Brian** (1979)—Monty Python's comic tale of a young man mistaken for the Messiah. (WCI Home Video; \$55)

(-) **10. The Boys from Brazil** (1978)—Laurence Olivier as a mad doctor intent on creating a Fourth Reich. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95)

(12) **11. Grease** (1978)—

John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John in the film version of the hit musical. (Paramount Pictures; \$59.95)

(-) **12. The Onion Field** (1979)—True-to-life suspense story, based on the book by Joseph Wambaugh. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95)

(5) **13. National Lampoon's Animal House** (1978)—Zany misadventures of the Delta House fraternity brothers. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

(15) **14. The Jerk** (1979)—Carl Reiner's wacky comedy, starring Steve Martin. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

(-) **15. Battlestar Galactica** (1979)—Elaborately produced TV-movie about interplanetary wars. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

(7) **16. 1941** (1979)—Steven Spielberg's farce about war fever in Los Angeles following Pearl Harbor. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

(8) **17. Enter the Dragon** (1973)—A martial-arts film, starring Bruce Lee. (WCI Home Video; \$60)

(19) **18. Blazing Saddles** (1974)—Mel Brooks' parody of Hollywood Westerns. (WCI Home Video; \$55)

(-) **19. Escape from Alcatraz** (1979)—True story of the only successful escape from the island prison. (Paramount Pictures Home Video; \$59.95)

(10) **20. Jaws** (1975)—A New England beach community is terrorized by a great white shark. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

* *Position last month*

Sales figures are from the month of July. Retail outlets participating in our survey include: Associated Video, Houston; Audio Center, Honolulu; Audio Video Craft, Inc., Los Angeles; Brenda's Movie House, Philadelphia; Cinema Concepts, Inc., Wethersfield, Conn.; Columbia Video Systems, Highland Park, Ill.; Communications Maintenance, Inc., Litchfield, Ill.; Concord Video Center, Stamford, Conn.; Cyclops Video, Sherman Oaks, Cal.; Discotronics, Inc., Cranbury, N.J.; Future World Video, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Giffen Video, Staten Island, N.Y.; Godwin Radio Inc. Godwin Video Centers, Birmingham, Ala.; Henry's Camera, Los Angeles; Home Entertainment Emporium, Manhattan Beach, Cal.; Jantzen Beach Magnavox Home Entertainment Center, Portland, Ore.; Kaleidoscope Video Shops, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Okla.; Media Associates, Mountain View, Cal.; Media Concepts, Inc., St. Petersburg, Fla.; Barney Miller's, Inc., Lexington, Ky.; Modern Communications, St. Louis; Newbury TV and Appliances,

New Bedford, Mass.; Nichols Electronics, Wichita, Kan.; Northern Lights Video, Pacific Grove, Cal.; Precision TV and Video, Bellwood, Ill.; Record Rendezvous, Cleveland; Red Fox, Elizabethville, Pa.; Select Film Library, New York; Self's Electronic Entertainment Center, Clovis, N.M.; The Sheik Video Corp., Metairie, La.; Stansbury Stereo, Baltimore; Televideo Systems, Richmond, Va.; Thomas Film Video, Royal Oak, Mich.; Valas TV, Denver; Video Audio Electronics, Williamsport, Pa.; Video Cassette, Phoenix, Ariz.; Video Cassettes, Etc., Lubbock, Texas; The Video Connection, Toledo, Ohio; Video Corp. of America, Edison, N.J.; Video Dimensions, New York; Video Industries of America, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Video Library, Torrance, Cal.; The Video Library Company, Baia Cynwyd, Pa.; Video Mart, San Bernardino, Cal.; Video Services, Towson, Md.; Videospace, Bellevue, Wash.; Video Specialties, Houston; Videostop, Beverly Hills; The Video Store, Gretna, La.; Visual Adventures, Cleveland



Boomer: Arranged marriage.



Rona Barrett: Goodbye to Good Morning.

NEW RELEASES

continued

Charlie Chan (Sidney Toler) investigates murder at a seance. Mantam Moreland, Frances Chan. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$59.95, double feature)

That's Entertainment (1974)—Sparkling compilation of show stoppers from over 70 MGM musicals, from "The Hollywood Revue of 1929" to 1958's "Gigi." On-screen: Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, Gene Kelly, Mickey Rooney, Clark Gable, James Stewart, Bing Crosby, Debbie Reynolds, Frank Sinatra, Elizabeth Taylor. (CBS Video Enterprises; *) (G)

They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1969)—Jane Fonda stars in this downbeat drama centering on a 1932 dance marathon at a seedy Los Angeles ballroom. Michael Sarrazin, Gig Young, Susannah York, Red Buttons, Bonnie Bedelia. (Magnetic Video; *) (R)

Topper (1937)—Cosmo Topper (Roland Young) hasn't a ghost of a chance against a dead couple who return to make mischief with the living. Cary Grant, Constance Bennett, Billie Burke. (Nostalgia Merchant; \$54.95)

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)—Stanley Kubrick's milestone space epic stars the visual effects. Keir Dullea, William Sylvester, Gary Lockwood. (CBS Video Enterprises; *) (G)

The Wizard of Oz (1939)—Judy Garland stars in the beloved musical about a Kansas farm girl and her adventures in the land of Oz with her friends, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion. Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Some movie descriptions courtesy of TV Guide magazine. Ratings are those assigned by the Motion Picture Association of America for theatrical showings.

SPECIALS

The Nutcracker—The world-famous ballet, performed by the Bolshoi Ballet and produced in Moscow. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Giselle—Features the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

Electric Light Orchestra at Wembley—The popular rock group recorded live in concert. (CBS Video Enterprises; *)

***Price to be announced**

Readers wishing to obtain more information from the distributors of the above-listed movies and specials may do so at these addresses: CBS Video Enterprises, 51 West 52nd St., New York, N.Y. 10019; Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment, 711 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; Magnetic Video Corp., 23434 Industrial Park Court, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48024; Nostalgia Merchant, 6255 Sunset Blvd., Suite 1019, Hollywood, Cal. 90028; WCI Home Video, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019.

PASSAGES

WED

Van Gordon Sauter, newly appointed president of CBS Sports, and Kathy Brown, a sister of California governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.

Boomer, star of NBC's *Here's Boomer*, and Cynthia, a similarly shaggy mutt, rescued (as was Boomer) from certain death in the Los Angeles pound by trainer Ray Berwick. The couple were married at the Niagara Hilton Hotel and, after honeymooning at the Falls, returned to their home with the Berwicks.

HONORED

Alan Alda and James Jay Ru-

binfier, with a Humanitas prize, given by the Human Family Institute, for best 30-minute TV script ("Dreams," *M*A*S*H*) "to illuminate the human situation."

SWITCHED

Happy Days' Ron Howard, from ABC to NBC, with an exclusive three-year contract to develop both series and films via his family-owned Major H Productions.

Rona Barrett, Hollywood gossip columnist, from ABC's *Good Morning America* to NBC's *Today*, beginning in January; Barrett has also been appointed West Coast

anchor of the new, expanded *Tomorrow* show.

Robert Pierpoint, from CBS White House correspondent to CBS diplomatic correspondent.

RE-SIGNED

Bob Hope, to a new, long-term contract with NBC, which calls for him to star in his first television movie, "The Walter Winchell Story."

DIED

Strother Martin, 61, Hollywood character actor.

Bobby Van, 47, actor, comedian and dancer.

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LOCAL NEWS

continued from page 49

Litter baskets? "I'm here on Fifth Avenue," says Slattery, standing on a street corner, "and I have a problem. Maybe one of the passers-by can help. Let's see."

Holding a piece of crumpled paper, he stops a young woman and asks her, "Where can I throw this?"

The woman looks around and replies, "I don't know; there don't seem to be any trash cans."

"Well, what should I do?"

"Take it home with you."

The next scene shows Slattery standing beside a wire litter basket. "The Department of Public Works," he notes darkly, "says that these baskets are becoming scarcer and scarcer. It seems that more than 12,000 are lost every year." From there, Slattery moves to a surreal interview with a public-works commissioner (who says that people steal the baskets for barbecues, an analysis that makes no sense) and then to another neighborhood, where the baskets are anchored inside large cement containers. Slattery notes that each such facility costs \$300, versus \$12 for the basket alone; just the thing for a city in a fiscal crisis.

"So think about it," Slattery concludes, "maybe you can come up with something. Bill—"

"Well," Beutel says cheerfully, "I don't know about designing litter baskets, but in the first part of my special report, I'll be talking about some of the causes of stress you experience every day. Storm Field will tell us what we can expect for tonight's and tomorrow's weather. Please stay tuned."

Why would anyone want to stay tuned? Despite the *Eyewitness News* label, the reporters don't seem to have witnessed anything, unless you count litter baskets on Fifth Avenue. Miller not only doesn't know what court he's in, he has no idea of what happened there. Rojas is in the middle of some sort of berserk stabbing, yet seems to have no glimmering of what went on.

For those who do stay tuned, there is a one-sentence item about the developments in Iran; then Beutel begins his series on stress, which in itself is stressful—at one point, he is shown trying to talk over the sound of a jackhammer. That finished, Grimsby says, "The Israeli Embassy was the scene of a massive demonstration by members of the Jewish Defense League. With that story is Chee Chee Williams, live at the Embassy."

"Well, Roger," says Ms. Williams,

"we weren't allowed to get near the Embassy but had to stay by these police barricades." Again, another *Eyewitness News* reporter seems not to have witnessed anything, but she does have an interview subject at hand: one of the JDL leaders, who talks about "the streets running with blood." Ms. Williams asks him, "Are you advocating violence?"

Next comes the nightly sports segment. Up until recently, this was performed by Warner Wolf, who usually began his report with a guffaw, then fairly shouted his way through the items, punctuating each with ecstatic shouts at outstanding plays ("BOOM!" for a home run) and running expert commentary ("Hey, look at that foul; the ref didn't even call it! C'mon ref,

●● Half the people on that show don't seem to know what the hell they're doing. ●●

GIVE US A BREAK!"). Alas for ABC, Wolf has recently departed for WCBS-TV, which hiked his salary from \$250,000 per annum to \$400,000: a measure of the journalistic priorities in the world of local television news.

A number of Warner Wolf clones have since tried out at WABC, most notably Ted Dawson from KABC-TV in Los Angeles. If viewers thought Wolf was a screamer, Dawson made his predecessor look like a laryngitis victim. "Hey," Dawson shouted in one recent newscast, "did the Mets let five-up get them down? No way, big stallion!" This was followed by his commentary on some videotape replays (a Wolf specialty). "Watch this!" Dawson screamed, noting a base hit—"Kerr-runnccchhhh!"—and a double play—"Binnnggggooo, bannnggggoooo, BOOONNNNGGOOO!"

There is not too much that need be said for the remainder of the broadcast, except to note that yes, *Eyewitness News* really has a weatherman named

Storm Field. Oh, and one other thing: serving as the chief anchor for the 11 o'clock news (and occasionally as co-anchor at six o'clock) is Rose Ann Scarmadella, one of the great legends in the business. The real-life model for the Gilda Radner character of Rose-Ann Roseannadonna, Ms. Scarmadella won her journalistic spurs some years ago as a WABC-TV *Eyewitness News* reporter by specializing in abandoned baby stories; night after night, she managed to find babies left for dead in garbage cans. She herself played a major role in those stories, predictably pointing out how "awful" or "heartbreaking" the latest discovery was.

Her specialty has not changed, to judge by the opening story from one of her recent shows: "We have a tragic story tonight about a baby who suffered burns over 90 percent of its body when its mother tried to drive the devil out of it. It seems neighbors heard the baby's cries and forced their way in. The baby is in critical condition at St. Luke's Hospital." She paused for a moment, looked as though she was about to cry, and said, "Terrible, just terrible."

And so it goes, night after night—*Eyewitness News* on the job, all over town, checking out baby stories, fires, murders, love triangles, wire baskets on Fifth Avenue. In a word, trivia; tons of it, mind-numbing piles of inconsequential journalism written and presented for 10-year-old minds. All this in a city supposedly inhabited by the most sophisticated TV viewers in the country. How is it possible?

"Who can say?" says one ABC executive. "I remember my reaction the first time I actually saw *Eyewitness News*. I thought, my God, it's a god-damn dog-and-pony show. The production is a mess; there are errors and goof-ups all over the place. Half the people on that show don't seem to know what the hell they're doing. I don't know how the viewers put up with it."

It could be that some of those viewers are starting to ask themselves the same question. In ratings taken during the summer, CBS, thanks to its new sportscaster Warner Wolf, tied with *Eyewitness News* for the number-one post at six o'clock and surpassed it at 11. Reeling from the shock, ABC sought an injunction to have its former star removed from CBS broadcasts for two years on the premise that he already had an existing contract with

continued on page 107

LOOK WHO'S BACK ON TV



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World Serious

By JOHN SCHULIAN



When you get down to this part of the baseball season, the frown is the thing. There is seemingly no place for levity, irony or any of the other side streets that prove a man's juices flow in more than one direction. Small wonder, then, that there are rumors of television's great thinkers lobbying to have the World Series renamed the World Serious.

That would be the perfect verbal curveball for upholding a tradition established long before players locked up their inhibitions to protect their stock portfolios. Even when our heroes had only two choices in life—get in the batter's box or pump gas on Route 66—the TV cameras bowed to the idea that honest insights have no business getting in the way of American mythology. In short, what you saw on the screen was hardly the whole story.

Do you have any idea, for instance, how long it was before anybody realized that Dusty Rhodes, the pinch-hitting colossus of the 1954 Series, wore his cap at a rakish angle because he was under the influence of Jack Daniels, not Errol Flynn?

Twenty-six years later, we still find ourselves afflicted by broadcasters who think they are showing the dark side of baseball if the cameras catch a manager smoking in the dugout. Perhaps such shortsightedness is the result of watching too many instant replays, an easy enough temptation after the theatrical Reggie Jackson bashed three home runs in the deciding game of the '77 Series. Or perhaps the truth-seekers appointed in alternate years by NBC and ABC really do think they are giving the public all it needs to know by showing a relief pitcher blowing bubbles or an outfielder adjusting his protective cup. If that is so—and it certainly

appears to be—then someone should light a candle for all the telling moments television has missed.

You can start with the off-speed humor of a New York Yankee pitching instructor named Clyde King, who turned on the French when his team was struggling against extinction in the '78 Series. "*Je ne sais quoi*," King said to a question he couldn't handle. *Je ne sais quoi*? From a baseball lifer from North Carolina? With the World Serious at stake?

NBC didn't get a whiff of it.

Not to be outdone—or should that be underdone?—ABC took over the show last year and tried to make the Nation think everything began and ended with the world champion Pittsburgh Pirates' wives dancing on the dugout roof. Surely, viewers everywhere would have been more interested in how Howard Cosell, his limousine mau-maued by grandstand critics in Baltimore, retreated to a hotel bar and vowed that he was retiring.

Promises, promises. Cosell didn't keep his, and neither did ABC when it came to shedding light on every corner of the Series. It was a classic case of just deserts, for no network believes its advertisements for itself quite so fervently as ABC. This time, however, Cosell and Company were gazing lovingly in the mirror while their subjects, the Pirates and the Baltimore Orioles, were living the human comedy that always lies beneath baseball's greatest drama.

The scenario began to unfold, appropriately enough, on an opening night cursed by rain and snow. In the Pittsburgh clubhouse, where it is normal to see chairs thrown off the wall and to hear death threats if the

coffee is cold, the Pirates were experimenting with respectability. While disco music shook the floor, they lined up and got their ears lowered in honor of prime time. The deed was done by one Matt (The Scat) Alexander, whom Pittsburgh had lured out of his barbershop at midseason to run the bases in crucial situations. Alexander had handled the base-running chore admirably, but now, as his shears hummed a happy tune and his teammates' hair piled around his feet like drifts of snow, he was enjoying what may have been his finest moment as a Pirate. Alas, the TV cameras weren't there to show it.

All ABC was going to show were the basics—Baltimore frittering away a lead of three games to one and Pittsburgh's proud old Willie Stargell wielding his bat as if it were a terrible swift sword. There was no time for humor, even though the Pirates had all those loonies in black-and-gold regalia and the Orioles had John Lowenstein, an outfielder who claimed he strengthened his wrists by flushing toilets. Imagine what a memorable picture that would have made. But no, Lowenstein was allowed to keep the bathroom door closed.

Anyway, you would have had to go into the locker room to see Lowenstein's wrist workout, and television didn't find that area visually appealing until the Pirates had won bragging rights to the planet. Even then the muttonheads from ABC managed to be in the wrong place. They stayed in the locker room with the winners while, outside, the vanquished Orioles were being summoned for a curtain call by a Baltimore crowd that refused to go home. And so the losers returned to take their bows for winning 102 games in vain and to listen to the cries of "Next year! You'll do it next year!"

"Yeah," rasped Earl Weaver, the Orioles' manager. "All we got to do is win 102 more games."

Try getting a scene like that on TV. ■

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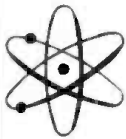
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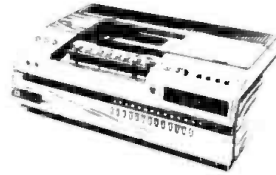
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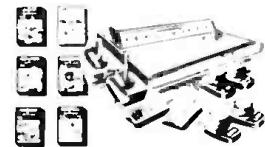
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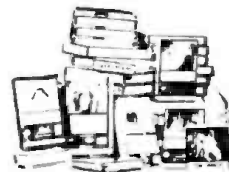
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Taking Aim at the Super 8

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH



When Akio Morita, the puckish chairman of the board of Sony Corporation, recently let the world in on a trade secret, he didn't exactly let it slip by mistake. He held a press conference in New York to reveal it. And just to make sure nobody important missed the message, Kazuo Iwama, Sony's president, officiated at a twin press conference the same day in Japan.

The secret came complete with an elaborate press kit and considerable PR hoopla, which in this case seemed appropriate. For what Morita and Iwama demonstrated were working models of a four-pound combination video camera and videocassette recorder, which they expect will replace the super-8 home-movie camera—and which Sony plans to introduce in four or five years.

What Sony is tentatively calling "Video Movie" is an exciting concept. As demonstrated, the handheld machine, slightly larger than a cigar box, contains everything needed to make an on-the-spot videotape and almost everything needed to show it. The camera section employs a solid-state charge-coupled device (CCD) in place of a pickup tube. The tiny videocassette measures little more than 1 by 3 inches and will record for 20 minutes. A battery that can operate the system for 40 minutes per charge is contained in the handle.

Video Movie is designed as a replacement for a home-movie system and a supplement to existing standard home VCRs. A companion "editor" unit, included with the portable machine, stays at home. To play back a color-and-sound tape made with the portable, the entire camera/recorder is placed in a compartment in the editor, which can be connected to a TV set. Alternatively, the editor's output can be fed to a Beta or

VHS recorder to transfer and/or edit (cut, rearrange, etc.) several out-of-home recordings onto the longer standard cassettes. All this for less than \$1000 (with cassettes for about \$10 each), according to Morita.

Why did Sony let its cat out of the bag? Morita explained: "In the future, when such a machine is spread all over the world, I hope the cassette and format will be the same [for all brands]," so that standard cassettes can be bought anywhere, in the same way film is now universal.

As might be predicted, Sony's competitors reacted rather grumpily. Most major electronics and film-camera manufacturers have been working on similar concepts—but in complete silence and with tight security. With its grandstand play, Sony simultaneously grabs the credit for being the first to introduce the new concept and puts its competitors in the position of at least having to consider the Sony system to avoid being branded anti-standardization.

Morita said that Sony's design isn't frozen, that his people will listen to the ideas of others in the interest of adopting a standard system for all home-movie video camera-recorders throughout the world. To interpret this apparently gracious assertion properly, you must remember that Sony itself has been badly stung once before by lack of standardization, when it introduced the first successful home videocassette recorder—the Beta-max—only to be overtaken in the race by the more popular VHS format. It's obviously one of Sony's top priorities to see that this doesn't happen again when electronics takes over the home-movie business.

Whatever the outcome, the concept of the extremely light, one-piece portable camera/recorder is out in

the open—which probably means that Sony's competitors are speeding up their development work in order to show their own prototypes in the near future. So the big race is on for the successor to the film camera. Given the competition, it's a good bet that Morita's forecast of a saleable product in 1984 or 1985 is conservative.

GE Okays VHD

Efforts to standardize the videodisc lie in tatters all over the United States, Europe and Japan, with three mutually incompatible systems now scheduled for production. General Electric finally has cast its lot with the Japanese VHD (Video High Density) technique and set a target for late-1981 introduction. (VHD players also are scheduled to be sold here by Panasonic and Quasar.) GE has announced that it plans to form a new company with Japan Victor (JVC), Matsushita Electric and Thorn EMI of England (Capitol Records) to manufacture VHD discs in the United States.

The Philips-MCA optical system is already on the market, with players made by Magnavox and Pioneer, discs by DiscoVision Associates (a joint MCA-IBM venture). RCA plans nationwide introduction of its SelectaVision, or CED (Capacitance Electronic Disc), system early in 1981, with Zenith and Sanyo to join in offering players, CBS and RCA to press discs.

Except for Sears Roebuck and General Telephone & Electronics (Sylvania and Philco), the major American TV brands now have chosen sides. So, barring some strange and unexpected development, we now can expect three different types of videodisc players, none of which can play discs designed for either of the others. Faced with the necessity of gambling on which will win, the American public might boycott the whole idea, and the videodisc could quietly sink from sight. ■

LOCAL NEWS

continued from page 102

ABC. The court refused, but allowed as how ABC might have the basis for a possible damage suit against Wolf and his new employer.

Even as the network tries to regain its feet following that blow, it is mindful that another of its stars, Roger Grimsby, is now 51, ancient by TV standards, and is not expected to renew his contract when it expires in 1984.

And that's not the only thing worrying ABC executives about the New York operation. For one thing, says a network insider, "the feeling is that they haven't been making the money they should. There's been a tremendous amount of waste in the news operation; they've figured they're number one, 'so what the hell—we can spend just what we want'."

In the past several years there have

been numerous administrative shake-ups; so frequent, in fact, that while the new ABC building was under construction, the in-joke was that the doors to the news director's and general manager's offices should be revolving ones. Grimsby and his colleagues are regarded nervously by the new regime at ABC, particularly by Phil Boyer, the general manager, who tends to see them as eccentric and expensive creatures in need of close supervision.

More serious than the personal idiosyncrasies of the *Eyewitness News* team—if idiosyncrasy is the right word to account for such instances as Grimsby's reporting of the death of Conrad Hilton by remarking "Conrad Hilton has checked out"—are the continual instances of almost endemic casualness bordering on arrogance. How else to explain, for example, how raw footage of an event at the Winter

Olympics in Lake Placid somehow got on air? Or the time a story about 3000 deaths in India was cut to make room for a story about someone's pet ducks in the Bronx?

"You're asking the wrong questions," insists one of the *Eyewitness News* correspondents. "How can you talk about breaking rules when there aren't any? There are no rules here. They'll put anything on, figuring people will continue to watch no matter what."

Maybe so, maybe not. "I'm not sure time is on our side," says an ABC insider in oblique answer. "I've said repeatedly that there's too much sloppiness and childishness on *Eyewitness News* for it to last. On the other hand, I have no idea why it continues to be so successful; nobody does. And I suppose nobody will have any idea why it will decline, either. That's show business, I guess." ■

LADY OR PIRATES

continued from page 77

tired: the Pirates' Willie Stargell, Ohio State's Art Schlichter, or me. (Of course, Willie and I had to go right back out there the next day—Willie had to help clinch the division title while I had to follow—all simultaneously, of course—the Pirates and Cubs, the Phils and the Expos, and the usual Sunday quota of pro football.)

Amazingly, by the second or third Sunday of this period, I was even impervious to Howard Cosell. Oddly, what is most grating is the constant shilling, amid the balls and strikes and three-point goals, for nonsports programming. Last year, Joe Garagiola's hyping of *The Tonight Show* was an irritant and only served to remind us that at the time Johnny Carson was engaged in a contract hassle with Joe's network, NBC.

On the commercial side, somebody should have told the tire company *without* the blimp to stop running its "baseball ad," the one featuring a runner getting picked off first base. After seeing it for the hundredth time, even the hardcore like me were tempted to hire a blimp, paint "Goodrich" on it, float it above the stadium and watch the goddamn first baseman's reaction: "Holy _____, Goodrich *does* have a blimp!"—followed by the pick-off throw sailing past his up-

turned head.

Despite my best efforts to keep all the passes and punts and goals and bonus fouls straight, however, the whole thing began to blur by mid-October. Soon, I was hearing imaginary broadcasts in my head in which the sports, the commercials and the promos all ran together: "Because Weaver wants him to have to pitch to Murray. . . . See the Gillette display. . . . That's the first power-play opportunity for the Islanders. . . . Big Bill Walton won't play tonight. . . . OK, Giff, let's go to our weekly half-time highlights. . . . *60 Minutes* will be seen in its entirety following the completion of the game."

Sports overlap also brings on a loss of global perspective. This year, the Presidential election campaign will be at its zenith in October, and some pundits will try to convince me that it is more important than the Oklahoma-Texas game. (You won't hear any candidate making that declaration in Dallas midmonth.) Last year, the great outside world happening—and, as Chris Schenkel might say, a great one it was—was Pope John Paul II's visit to our shores. I was aware of the Pontiff's arrival. The first time I learned of it was when the local NBC affiliate preempted the second game of the Reds-Pirates series to cover the Mass celebrated by John Paul in Philadelphia. (I was greatly relieved, after minutes of fran-

tic dial-twisting, to find a UHF station carrying the game.) I then forgot about John Paul until Saturday's Michigan-Michigan State game when, in the middle of the second quarter, the graphics flashed: "At half time, high-lights of the Pope in Washington."

My loved one, however, suffered from my neglect much more than did His Holiness. (Again, remember, she wasn't even married to me yet!) During that *Monday Night Football* game between Miami and Oakland, I was watching with the sound off—you need *some* relief *sometime*—and in the middle of the third quarter the Dolphins had the ball at the Raiders' one-yard line, third down and goal to go. My fiancée was sitting next to me on the couch, unaware of the tense moment. As the Dolphins moved to the line of scrimmage, she leaned over to nuzzle me. Just then a Miami lineman moved off-side. "Penalty!" I yelled as her lips reached my arm. "My God!" she cried. "I try to get romantic with him and he calls a penalty."

When the sports overlap ended, we had another talk like the one we had to schedule our wedding. Which was more important, she demanded to know, our marriage or the damn games? Hey, I told her, I'm a reasonable guy. So from now on I'll skip all the pregame shows. ■

Teaching Old Games New Tricks

By TED NELSON

If you have bought your own home computer, you can learn to program it, even if you're a complete novice.

The best way to think of a program is as a magical spell. Any necromancer worth his eye of newt knows that spells have to be chanted in a precise way, with appropriate pyrotechnics and jiggling about, or the designated spirits will not be moved to compliance.

The same is true for conjuring what you want from today's new magical familiar, the computer. But the Spirit of the Computer is not going to reply to chanting or ritual smoke. It will do your bidding only if the right incantations are *typed in correctly*. It will follow precisely the spells you give it, and like King Midas, you will find repeatedly that the consequences of your conjuring are what you really asked for rather than what you *meant*.

Initially, the computer is a blank machine waiting for a script. Using one of the computer languages the machine responds to—such as BASIC, PASCAL or SMALLTALK—this script or program is typed on the computer's keyboard as a series of symbols and becomes part of the computer's memory.

All other machines have a limited and predetermined set of things they can do. But the *writer* of a computer's program determines what the machine does and how it responds.

(This program can be stored on disc or cassette tape and zipped back into the machine, giving the computer many different identities.) And the program can include all kinds of changes, rearrangements and varying responses.

No matter how clear an explanation of programming is, it can't compare with actually *doing* the programming. When you have programmed for a little while, there comes a Great Aha, a moment of Holy Cow, a rush of power to your fingertips, as at last you sense how completely the machine submits to you. Your mind goes off to new places because the machine offers all the challenges of chess and origami and the crossword puzzle.

So, lucky you if you've got your own computer, even if you haven't programmed yet. It's not like taking a computer course; you won't have to wait around to share the machine.

You can learn to program your computer by the usual route, with a lot of little exercises. Or you can begin by taking programs you already own and changing first their printed messages, then their actual logic and control structure.

One popular computer game, Hammurabi (often seen under other names, such as Kingdom), makes you a monarch with storehouses of grain and hungry subjects to feed. For each year of play, you decide how much grain you feed your sub-

jects and how much to plant—and a year flies by in minutes as your subjects starve against your will. It's a simple but powerful learning experience, teaching about resources, population and dynamic growth problems all at once.

If you command the computer to display the actual program that runs Hammurabi, you'll begin to see the changes you can make. First try changing the messages from the prime minister—that's small stuff, but cute. Now change the rates of grain consumption and agricultural efficiency and see how dramatically the whole game changes, making it easier or harder to feed your subjects.

You can make these same types of changes in other video games. By the time you can do all this, you're a programmer. But to make the program work, the computer must be made to read a message exactly as it is meant to be read.

By the time a program is working the way it was originally intended to work, hundreds of improvements have been made. Debugging is the term for this modifying process and it can become extremely frustrating, especially for the beginner.

Being a beginner, however, can be a blessing. The beginner doesn't know what can't be done, so he launches into things that experienced programmers wouldn't touch. Nine times out of 10, probably more, it will result in a mess. But many of the most important programming inventions have come out of innocent curiosity. So here's to the brave beginners. May they (or you, if you're ready to try it) keep daring, for they are the ones who accomplish what their saner elders think can't be done. (■)

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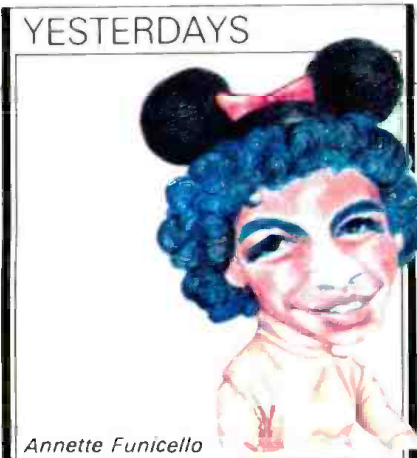
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YESTERDAYS



25 Years Ago: October 1955

In the season's first Niensens, newcomer *Gunsmoke* ranks fifth. . . . *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* begins chilling Sunday nights. . . . The *Mickey Mouse Club* introduces Mouseketeers—and hats with ears. . . . It's *this* year for the "next year" team: the Brooklyn Dodgers beat the Yankees four games to three in the World Series. . . . *Our Miss Brooks* transfers to an elementary school, and Mr. Conklin follows. . . . GOP chairman Leonard Hill warns his party, "You've got to have a candidate who looks good on TV." . . . "Life in the Future"—1976—predicts shopping by television, wall-sized TV screens and family helicopters. . . . Ed Sullivan presents a scene from the Broadway hit "Inherit the Wind." . . . Kukla, Fran and Ollie challenge the *I've Got a Secret* panel. . . . Literary adaptations on-screen this month include "Cyrano de Bergerac," with José Ferrer

and Claire Bloom; "The Ox-Bow Incident," with Raymond Burr and E.G. Marshall; and "The [H.M.S.] Bounty Court Martial," with Raymond Massey and Ronald Reagan. . . . *Omnibus* visits 1492 Florence. . . . On *Perry Como*, an average citizen encounters a toll-TV set. . . . *Home* recounts the history of butter. . . . *See It Now* asks, "Is the American method of selecting Vice Presidential candidates adequate?"

10 Years Ago: October 1970

New NAB guidelines discourage ads that promote reliance on pep-up pills. . . . The girls of *Room 222*'s Whitman High invade the auto shop and boys' basketball tryouts, and *McCloud* becomes the lone male in a policewomen's karate class. . . . The Baltimore Orioles win the World Series from the Cincinnati Reds in five games. . . . *The Advocates* debate using Federal funds for national election campaigns. . . . *Civilisation* makes its U.S. debut; a similar series about America, with *Omnibus* alumnus Alistair Cooke as host, is in production. . . . On *Speaking Freely*, the Shah of Iran tells Edwin Newman he is willing to mediate the Arab-Israeli dispute. . . . Rookie Pete Maravich plays his first game with the Atlanta Hawks, against the Milwaukee Bucks and one-year veteran Lew Alcindor. . . . *First Tuesday* reports on mercury poisoning in waterways. . . . *Face the Nation* interviews incumbent California governor Ronald Rea-

gan. . . . Zero Mostel auditions to play Hamlet on *Laugh-In*. . . . President Nixon vetoes a bill to curb campaign spending on radio and TV. . . . *Gunsmoke* tops the early ratings; ABC's new *Monday Night Football* ranks 54th.

5 Years Ago: October 1975

"Family viewing time" makes itself felt: the 7 to 9 P.M. period is now attracting seven percent more young viewers and six percent fewer adults. . . . CBS and NBC refuse President Ford air time for a speech on tax and spending cuts, citing the equal-time rule. The only other declared GOP candidate is Jacob John Gordon of Worcester, Mass. . . . *The Price Is Right* expands to an hour. . . . In one of the most dramatic World Series in baseball history, Cincinnati ekes out a win over the Boston Red Sox in seven games. . . . George Carlin hosts the first *NBC Saturday Night Live*. . . . On *M*A*S*H*, Hawkeye Pierce learns the Army has declared him deceased. . . . *CBS Reports* reviews evidence that 85 percent of all cancer may be environmentally caused. . . . On *Monty Python*, a TV garden club critiques Tchaikovsky. . . . "Fear on Trial," with George C. Scott as Louis Nizer, traces John Henry Faulk's six-year fight to refute blacklist charges. . . . The FCC rules Presidential news conferences and major-candidate debates exempt from the equal-time requirement. ■

COMING UP IN PANORAMA

Why All the Nazi Specials? What Effect Will They Have?

By William L. Shirer

Backstage at *Barney Miller*—A Q&A with Hal Linden and Producer Danny Arnold

TV, Integration and the South: Recalling the Drama and Impact
By Marshall Frady

Previewing the Hottest New Video Games

Will Cable's Electronic Newspapers Prove a Boom or a Bust?

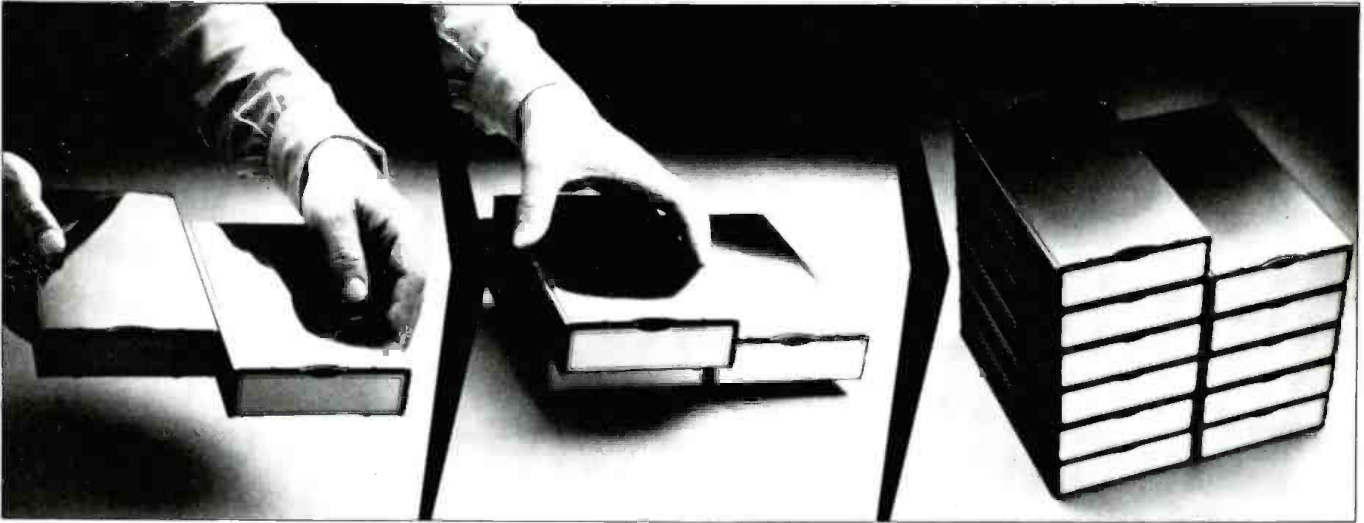
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PAN 10/80

REAR VIEW

By HARRY STEIN

Hints for the Helpful

There is a show on in the New York City area in which a middle-aged man and a middle-aged woman offer instruction on gardening. These people tell viewers how to grow begonias and cherry tomatoes and marigolds. Once in a while, when they are particularly feeling their oats, they even offer suggestions as to how to get some exotic tree, hitherto ungrowable outside the Andes, to flourish in a cockroach-infested tenement.

I hate these people. I get livid at the very sight of them. Where others see a pair of benign do-gooders, I see Big Brother and Sister in their most insidious guise. Where others are able to smile at them, I silently plot their demise. I see myself jumping into the TV screen and trampling their radishes. "Take that, Mr. and Mrs. Urban Gardener!" I shout, as the smugly superior grins disappear from their faces. And then, ax in hand, I make for their prize dracaena.

Truth be told, I have always loathed helpful people on television. As a kid, I could never even stomach Mr. Wizard; and weathermen—with their maps and pointers and satellite photos—have always made me apoplectic. Why the hell can't they just say it's gonna rain and leave it at that? But those intent on instruction—from cooks, to crafts experts, to fix-it types—are the worst. So what if they are handier than

the rest of us? So what if we're a bunch of klutzes? Hell, if anything, there ought to be people on television who are *less* competent than the rest of us. That way we'd at least feel good about ourselves for a change.

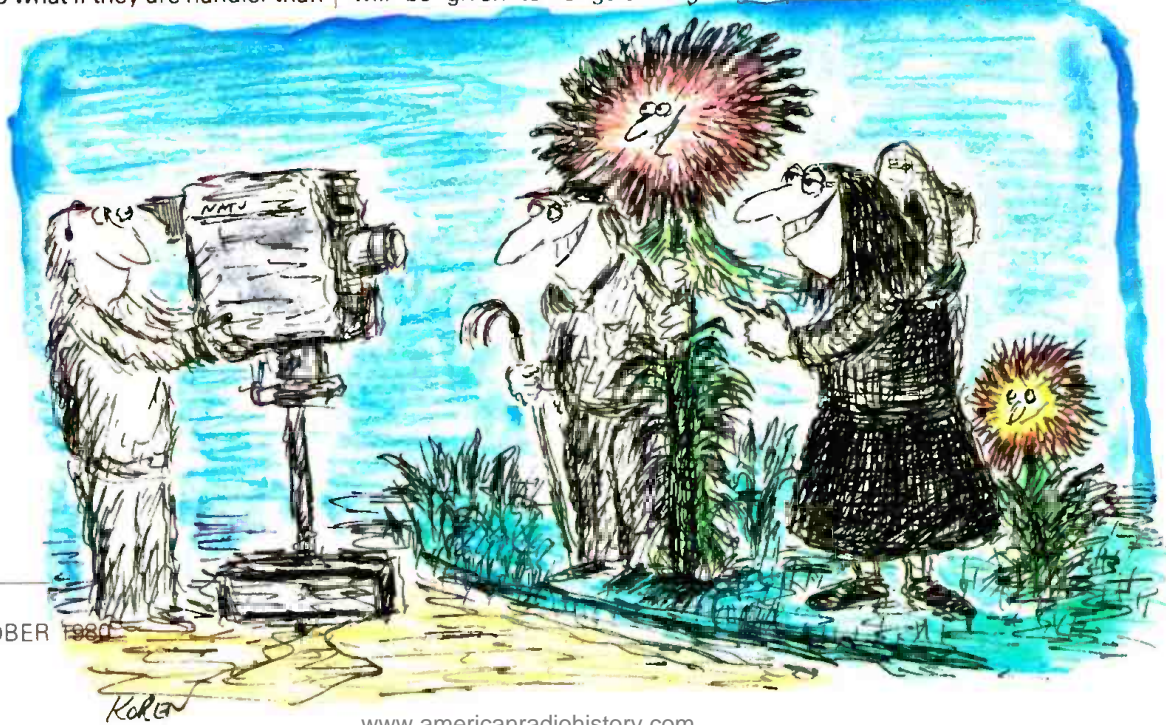
Accordingly, I propose a series of service-oriented programs with which we could all live quite comfortably.

HARRY'S VICTORY GARDEN: This show will instruct viewers in the Darwinian Theory of Gardening: a no-nonsense, "nature-will-provide" approach to horticulture that I myself have used with gratifying success. In mid-November, I had 16 house plants—geraniums, ivy and several species of cacti—on my outside window ledge. These were left exactly where they were, untouched, throughout the winter. On the first day of April, I examined the plants and found five missing, apparently blown to the pavement during a January blizzard. Of the 11 that remained, 10 showed no trace of life whatever and the other, a Swedish ivy, was 85-percent brown. I discarded the first 10 and left the ivy to fend for itself. No fuss, no bother.

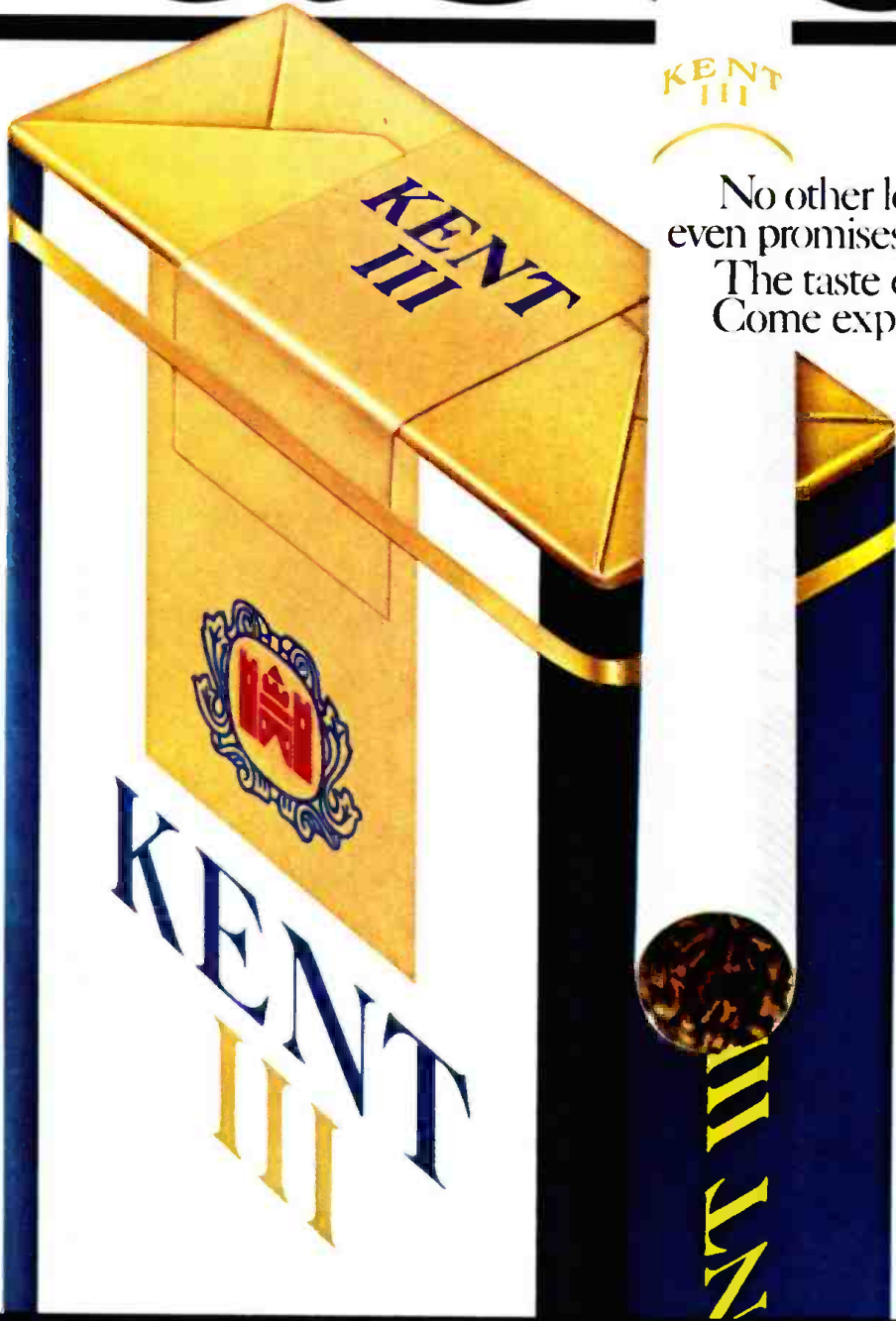
THE REAL-GOOD CUISINE SHOW: The first program in this series, a layman's guide to fine food, will be entitled "Cookies." Though it will deal in part with classic forms of this culinary masterpiece—the Mallomar, the Twinkie, the Chips Ahoy—special consideration will be given to longstanding argu-

ment over the relative merits of Oreos and Hydrox. A second program, entitled "The Joy of Cereal," will offer complete instruction in the preparation of a nutritious breakfast. Ingredients: One pitcher premixed Minute Maid frozen concentrate (note: if not already mixed, substitute a carton of Tropicana), one box Sugar Frosted Flakes, one carton milk, spoon. Glass and bowl are optional. Show #3: "Making Bread." Directions: Go to supermarket bread shelf, select package, carry to counter, pay, eat. This procedure may be used with equal effectiveness in the preparation of ice cream, jams and corn chips.

MR. FIX-IT: This program will instruct viewers on how to mend those tough-to-repair articles like paper (a little Scotch tape will work magic!), loose screws and bent paper clips. Each week Mr. Fix-It will be faced with a surprise task, which he will accomplish through grit and ingenuity. On the first program, for example, he will be asked to straighten a picture that is hanging crooked on a wall. He does it manually! On the second, he will be requested to repair a nonfunctioning lamp. He screws in the bulb just a little tighter and—*Presto!*—let there be light! For those extra-special tasks, instruction shall be offered in the use of the Yellow Pages and the push-button telephone. (Those old-fashioned, hard-to-master dial phones will be dealt with in the second season.)



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This is the most versatile Magnavox portable VHS Video Cassette Recorder yet. Its compact recording deck weighs less than 13 pounds. It gives you up to six full hours of recording time per cassette. Add our optional Chromavue® Color Video Sound Camera and it's easy to record all types of family action no matter where it happens.

At home, this Magnavox lets you preprogram unattended recording of up to seven different television programs within a 14-day period. Other advancements include our new transition



Simulated TV Picture

editing feature, compact touch-tune control center and a remote control unit with frame-by-frame advance and pause/still.

And Model 8372 (shown) is just one of three "Escort 6" video recorders from Magnavox. The others do a little bit less than this one. But check them all out and you'll find all three do a great job. Especially when it comes to laughing and talking and hanging from trees.

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