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THE JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
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AND SCIENCES

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TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

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TELEVISION QUARTERLY

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Dedicated to quality programming for 24 years.

DEAR READER:

We apologize for the delay in publishing Volume XII No. 2 of TELEVISION QUARTERLY.

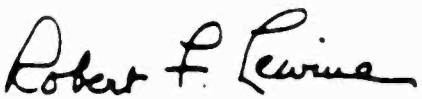
As you might have suspected, our struggle against the steadily rising costs of publishing had made TVQ's future uncertain as long ago as last Fall. We refused to roll over and play dead, however, because after 12 years we had not only acquired a loyal readership but we also had consummate faith in the purpose of TVQ and the fulfillment of that purpose.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all of you whose support is essential to our continuing this worthwhile effort and we're equally grateful to TVQ's advertisers whose assistance made it possible for us not only to continue but to revive the magazine after its 18-month hiatus following Volume IX No. 4. Without you and without them we could not have weathered the combined ravages of inflation and recession.

Special thanks are extended to ABC, CBS, NBC and Agnes Nixon (a valued member of our Editorial Board) for the interest which led to their generous contributions and a new life.

And, finally, all of *us* — officers, trustees and members of the Academy alike — hope that we can continue to merit this heartening endorsement from all of *you.* With it we can go on serving the best interests of our industry; without it we will have to abandon the only magazine to offer a continuing examination of television which is both independent and critical.

Many thanks,



Robert F. Lewine
President

GUNSMOKE

The longest running network television drama ever is now available locally for Fall 1975.

VIACOM

BACKSTAGE AT "UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS"

By Laurence Burgreen

LONDON

The city's second oldest cinema is a faded plush music hall, circa 1901 now known as the Electric Cinema Club. It is here that the cast and crew of about one hundred, two mobile vans, a platoon of cameras and an aged, greatly retouched silent film are assembled this day to record less than one minute's footage for Episode 41, Series IV, of *Upstairs, Downstairs.*

Over its four completed seasons (the English are ahead of us in transmission of these plays) *Upstairs, Downstairs* has followed one Edwardian household — the Bellamys — down the colorful trails of British history, beginning in 1903. Concentration has been on the sharp class distinctions existing under one roof, distinctions which define, almost totally, the attitudes, the biographies of each contingent.

It is a tribute to the skill of the show's writers and producers that each character is consistent, true to his or her milieu, all of a piece in every sense. We are never confused as to anybody's status.

Mr. Hudson is that indispensable man, the butler who reveres his master and sees no hypocrisy in the class system that forever limits his horizon. Hudson is a man with iron in his soul. He is confident of his abilities, as that later butler, *The Admirable Crichton,* was confident of his. Like the rest of the servants, he supports a system that works directly against his interests. He is a righteous man, proud to have risen from lowly footman, and not above reminding his underlings how fortunate they are to be working twelve hours a day and living in tiny attic rooms in the Bellamy mansion on Eaton Square.

By cleverly combining soap opera sentiment with history, *Upstairs, Downstairs* has become a phenomenal success in this country. Everybody has a favorite character, as Alistair Cooke has discovered in his travels about the United States. Older women are infatuated with Richard Bellamy, he has found, while their daughters are quite taken with his renegade son, James. Men admire Rose, the parlor maid, who's at once shrewd and gullible, tough and sweet. Mrs. Bridges, the cook, is an "Old Auntie" figure, by turns bossy and benevolent.

I went to the Electric Cinema and to the studio to observe the making of one episode, titled "News from the Front." This story takes the Bellamys into the full horror of the first World War. More loving care, more historical research and technical preparation have gone into this single TV play than into many a big budget feature film.

Today, Christopher Beeny, (Edward, the footman), and Jacqueline Tong (Daisy, the downstairs maid), are rehearsing their date at the picture show. In my privileged glimpse into the future life of the Bellamy household, I discovered quite a riot of romance, brought on by the usual war-time anxieties and fears.

London Weekend Television, the company producing *Upstairs, Downstairs,* has rented this seedy old cinema house especially for this episode. It's the sort of place a footman would take a downstairs maid for a bit of a squeeze and a tickle on their afternoon off. Producer John Hawkesworth, whose well-bred manner cloaks an iron executive will, has a passion for authentic detail. He has been to the British Film Institute to resurrect a silent movie of World War I vintage. He had edited it, and added special sub-titles to contrast ironically with the love affair blossoming down front of the silent screen.

Hawkesworth has even found an elderly lady who once played a tinkling piano in silent movie houses 50 years ago. She remembers all the old tunes.

Thirty extras, in the costumes of the period, wander about in the suffocating gloom of the cinema club. Hawkesworth sits with me in the rotting velvet seats, carefully explaining every piece of equipment involved in this particular scene. Since he has spent weeks in preparation, checking the research done by his staff, overseeing the smallest details, all he need do now is give the occasional command or suggestion. The director for this sequence is Derek Bennett. He is adjusting the lighting, choosing angles for the cameras.

We watch the heroine, a lovely creature named Lavinia — Hawkesworth has named her in honor of his secretary — romp into a garden with her lover. Below, in the first row, Edward and Daisy are in the first throes of their own rapture. The cameras seem to be in their laps. We hear Edward whisper, "Will you?" Daisy, eyes brimming with tears, whispers yes. It's a tender moment, one we are almost embarrassed to share. Edward suggests they leave the movie at once to go buy an engagement ring.

"Cut!", cries director Bennett. It just won't do. Daisy has not registered sufficient surprise at Edward's sudden proposal. Actress Tong is too tired to put up a fight. Shadows on her face are causing a problem. The lighting man is bored. Lunch time is drawing near and the company is hungry. Finally, the break comes. We are all excused for an hour.

Hawkesworth, a few technicians and I find our way to a dirty neighborhood pub and settle into a dark corner. We consume vast quantities of cheese and the brew the English call simply "bitter." The engineers regard Hawkesworth with affection, but they do not forget that he is the boss.

In his cool, Oxford fashion, Hawkesworth projects himself as a gifted dilettante who finds dabbling in television rather fascinating. One imagines he would be more at home riding to hounds, or making small talk in a fine English drawing room. He buys the engineers another round of drinks and they discuss the difficulties in shooting so many exterior scenes on location in Eaton Place, where they have taken over an authentic Edwardian town house for the Bellamys. Space is narrow, but their greatest problem, they confide, is finding enough chimney sweeps and knife grinders to "stand in front of every last bloody parking meter and streetlamp."

No one is especially anxious to return to the musty cinema club, but duty calls. We're all slightly groggy from our hearty lunch, and faintly bored with the cooing of Edward and Daisy.

Before the actors resume their places, I have a chat with Chris Beeny, who seems relieved not to be vowing his love for Daisy these few minutes. He is playing with his young son, an interested visitor to the set.

With his alert boyish face, his doughboy costume and ready smile, Beeny is the picture of youthful World War I idealism. He is a direct, unaffected sort, easy to talk with. He's also a tough professional. His reflections on playing a running part in England's most successful serial drama range from proud to bitter.

"I've been in this business 24 years," Beeny relates. He is now 32. "I was a child actor, though children really don't act at all. They just play themselves. I did a lot of movies and a serial that went out live for three years. I left the series to get married, but was lured back for a single show. Everything sort of snowballed after that. Now I'm a married man with family responsibilities."

Yes, Beeny is delighted to be associated with *Upstairs, Downstairs.* But he fears that his long-running role of Edward may be his ruin. "When the show stops, do I stop?", he asks. "Will anybody hire a footman to play upstairs parts?"

Beeny had hoped to make his mark as a dancer, but had a serious motor-bike accident in 1972. His years of ballet training were suddenly null and void. He broke his neck, thigh, pelvis, elbow and wrist. "I've had six major operations since, and I'm full of steel," he notes sadly. "So, the ballet is gone, the pantomime is gone. And I'm stuck with this footman image. Still, I find the series stimulating and pleasant. And it provides food and shelter for my family."

At this point the floor manager bellows, "QUIET!", and our conversation ends. Work begins at the front of the auditorium on the

reverse angle of this morning's scene. It is now two o'clock. To record this scene, which will slide past us in a few seconds on our home screens, the crew has been assembled here since seven A.M. They will continue until five P.M.

* * *

A week later, the final rehearsal for this *U/D* chapter takes place in a studio the size of a basketball court. It's located down in the bowels of London Weekend's vast complex on the South Bank of the Thames. I stroll past control rooms and cameras expecting to find the interiors of the Bellamy mansion spread out before me, an enormous dollhouse, room opening out of room. Instead, I find three quarter "scale sets," little nooks and corners, familiar because I have seen the show, but so much less elegant than one would have expected.

It seems that the set designers, to trim the budget, have worked on the premise that the camera distorts when you wish it to distort. And it forgives much. Backdrops have been created to give home viewers the illusion of three dimensions. The sweep and grandeur of this fine mansion are all evoked by tricks of design and photography.

The kitchen set, where Edward and Daisy are rehearsing the announcement of their engagement, throbs with activity. The servants are all assembled. Hawkesworth stands aside complaining that one of the actors is altering his lines.

In the control room, a woman whose title is "vision mixer," faces a battery of 40 monitors. She looks anxious. A few hours remain to rehearse and record the rest of this episode. No over-runs allowed.

We are back in the kitchen. Hudson, the good shepherd tending his flock, isn't likely to cheer his young footman's impulsive engagement. The scene unfolds magically, the director calling each camera shot with precision. It's hard, tense work. By contrast, the location shot was a cinch.

Hudson walks off the set, and that stern and proper manner vanishes. He is amiable Gordon Jackson, pleased to be giving an interview, delighted to meet a member of the press.

"I don't enjoy being an actor," Jackson says, "but I do love watching actors act. Especially Marlon Brando and Steve McQueen. I was with Marlon in *Mutiny on the Bounty*. I hope all Americans realize what a great actor he is."

Jackson was born in Glasgow in 1920. While working as an apprentice engineer, he began to perform in radio drama. Eventually, he worked his way into films, always playing a Scotsman. His favorite, of all his roles, is the military officer he played in *Tunes of Glory* with Alec Guinness.

Though he prefers films to the stage, Jackson notes, with the dour realism of the Scot, "I've never got rich out of films, even after 50 of them."

Surprisingly, Jackson then confided, "You know, I hate the character of Mr. Hudson. I could never be that sort myself. He is the complete

stereotype of the English butler, but obviously somebody said, 'Let's do him Scots.' "

Upstairs, Downstairs is a great success in the States, Jackson believes, because Americans are "tired of the demented rat race" they live. He senses a great longing, in confused 1975 people, to return to the security of Edwardian convention.

Jackson himself would not care to return to Edwardian days. He does admire the way children were raised in that era, however. "I've got two marvelous sons whom I tried to bring up reasonably," he says, smiling. "They treat me like an old boot now."

Suddenly, there's a hush. The kitchen rehearsal resumes. Returning to the set Jackson confides, "I don't watch myself in this series. I've seen only one play."

Our next scene moves Upstairs to the Bellamy dining room. Over brandy and cigars, the talk is of war. The family is worried that the servants may have to go into the Army. The usually reticent Hudson breaks in to say that he "would like to see the Hun hoisted by his own petard." Patriotism below stairs, we realize, is hot and fierce. Upstairs heads are cooler, risks are calculated.

Now we see the point "News from the Front" is making. Upstairs, the male Bellamys and guests are talking about the war in theory, discussing ministers and generals. Downstairs, they are all a-fire with the reality, the prospect of fighting for King and Country. They will go proudly to the slaughter, defending a class structure that has obliged them to remain forever Downstairs people.

The cameras and booms move frantically around the dining room, capturing each face as it speaks. The actors are oblivious to everything but the roles they are playing.

Shortly the talk dies . . . . and Episode 42 fades out. Wearily, the actors depart. They've had a long day.

* * * *

Between episodes, I study an *Upstairs, Downstairs* script. The brevity of the dialog surprises me. One thinks of the Bellamys and their servants as forever chatting. But that, too, is illusion. The speeches are brief, the dialog pared to the essentials of real life talk. The thought comes: how much these superb actors convey with gesture and facial expression! Jean Marsh, who plays Rose, can project a total state of mind with one brisk sniff of her expressive nose, as can Gordon Jackson with a bit of business involving Hudson's Holy Bible.

The producer and the entire staff take a very touching pride in the series' historical accuracy. The final arbiter of taste is an original 1907 catalogue from the Army and Navy store. This is designer John Clements' "Bible" and the cast joke is that he keeps it in his office safe.

* * *

My next visit to the set coincided with the start of a new episode in *Upstairs, Downstairs.* This day the cast was rehearsing in the old Duke of York barracks. Rehearsal space is short in London, and the cast assembles for readings in whatever barren room can be borrowed or rented.

The assembled company is relaxed, chatting amiably while awaiting the arrival of Jean Marsh, who is both star and originator (with Eileen Atkins) of the series. As she comes swinging through the door, the word that pops into one's mind is "radiant." She is animated and intense, concerned with all details of the production. And why not? She is the *doyenne* of this project, and her personal impact on audiences has been considerable. She has been awarded several prizes and trophies, including an Emmy.

Now she is back from a promotion tour of the U.S., where she was interviewed several times a week. She is a determined woman, more mature in person than in her role as parlor maid. She seems to balance her professional aggressions against her fine-boned femininity.She is a tiger on a short leash. Her tension shows in nervous smoking and frequent gulping of vitamins she describes as "my brain pills."

Like her collaborator, Miss Atkins, Jean Marsh grew up in the working class section of London. Both women studied dancing and each had a parent in domestic service.

"We both had deep feelings of anger about the downstairs people," said Miss Marsh. "The people who weren't supposed to speak or think for themselves. Servants have always been portrayed in English drama as slightly stupid, Cockney caricatures of real people. We wanted to show the flesh and blood reality of life below stairs."

The Edwardian and World War I periods are easy to recreate, Miss Marsh related, because people still alive remember those years vividly.

"The fact that the show is done accurately makes it very political," Miss Marsh continued. "John Hawkesworth's parents are very posh, upstairs people. He understands the Bellamys perfectly; they're his kin, so to speak. My parents are Cockney. I know all about life below stairs. We try to convey the class differences, the rigidity that made life the way it was in that period. Servants had a very limited life. In conveying all this, we are making a political statement about the period."

Miss Marsh speaks of her life with total candor; affectations are not her style. "My mother was a parlor maid like Rose," she told me. "But she went up in the world, which was extremely rare in her time. She was born beautiful, and she escaped service by becoming a bar maid and, later, a manageress."

Describing herself as a poor, thin creature with a sad, triangular face, the beaming Jean Marsh of today adds, "But I think my face is acceptable now." (She seems to need reassurance.) "My confidence had to grow from things not related to beauty or status. My father used to tell me that when

he was courting my mother he was surprised to see the walls move. Undulating! That's because there were bugs behind the wall paper."

Do her parents watch the show, I wondered?

Of course, they do and they like it. But they wish their daughter were playing an upstairs maid, involved with Milady's finery and excused from menial work. Our talk goes on:

"It's a temptation to play Rose as a *funny* sort. It's getting harder and harder to resist those Cockney touches of comedy. But Rose must be seen as very warm but aware of her own worth. You see her love being projected in strange ways. You must see her as brisk and snappish to hide the great warmth she feels."

Before *Upstairs, Downstairs,* Miss Marsh played Shakespeare, appearing as Hero in John Gielgud's production of *Much Ado About Nothing.* She also had a long run in television thrillers.

Jean Marsh is a woman of great determination and drive. You feel that she is forever struggling to quiet her inner anxieties. "My early childhood was full of bombs," she explains. "We moved from one part of London to another as the blitz grew worse. It was traumatic. When I was five I suddenly found that I was unable to walk. My legs wouldn't move. The doctor said it was a kind of functional paralysis brought on by the endless air raids."

While learning to walk again, she was sent to ballet classes. Here the performing virus entered her bloodstream, never to depart. "I have been very lucky," she now believes. "I might have ended up a shop girl, like so many other Cockney children."

Upstairs, Downstairs is, in a sense, Jean Marsh's *raison d'etre* these days. She will go to any extreme, any inconvenience, to promote the show. Her trip to the States delighted her and she is eager to return.

While she firmly identifies herself with the Downstairs cast, Miss Marsh lives a full, rich, upper-class life and dresses the part. That's implicit in her profession as an actress, she believes. But her comfortable existence in no way alters her cool vision of the series as a study of British class distinctions and their influence on history.

While John Hawkesworth looks for nostalgia, good plots and authentic detail, Miss Marsh seeks dramatic confrontations that indict the class system.

"The Edwardian period was fascinating," she told me. "There was elegance and glamour, but there was also the most appalling squalor. A servant thought himself very fortunate to be attached to a rich household. At least, he had food and shelter and an occasional shilling to call his own."

* * *

Hawkesworth sees the Edwardian era through a mist of his own background. Educated at Rugby, Oxford and the Sorbonne, he went into the last war as a member of the Grenadier Guards.

"My mother became engaged seven times during World War One," Hawkesworth recalled. "Of her many fiances, only my father survived. Mother has a box of medals from all her lost loves. People like my mother had — to survive — to studiously avoid falling in love."

Hawkesworth remembers the tender graces of life in pre-war England, when the rich had servants and great houses and imagined this sort of existence would go on forever.

Having "read history" at Oxford, Hawkesworth takes a keen interest in the show's background details. Any touch not quite authentic offends him. "We even get the newspapers precisely right," he said. "We find an actual issue for a particular day and have it reproduced."

Again, we are chatting between rehearsals, and now Hawkesworth must get back to his complex, nerve-fraying task: plotting action, juggling budgets, stroking egos, presiding over an operation as vast and intricate as any major Hollywood opus. Like others involved in *Upstairs, Downstairs,* the producer is enraptured by a labor of love. Never mind the rough schedule. London Weekend is far ahead of the Public Broadcasting System in producing and showing these *Masterpiece Theatre* programs. We'll not be seeing "News from the Front" for another season.

And when World War I finally comes to an end, leaving England's class system — which is to say the Bellamys and their servants — greatly shaken, *Upstairs, Downstairs* will finally come to an end. It may be remembered as the most successful program of its kind ever telecast anywhere. The inner certainty of this may explain the high spirit, the total dedication, above stairs and below.

* * *

Laurence Burgreen was graduated from Harvard with the Class of 1972. While living in London, he covered the world of the arts for Newsweek's international edition. He has completed a novel and expects to see his first play produced in London this summer.

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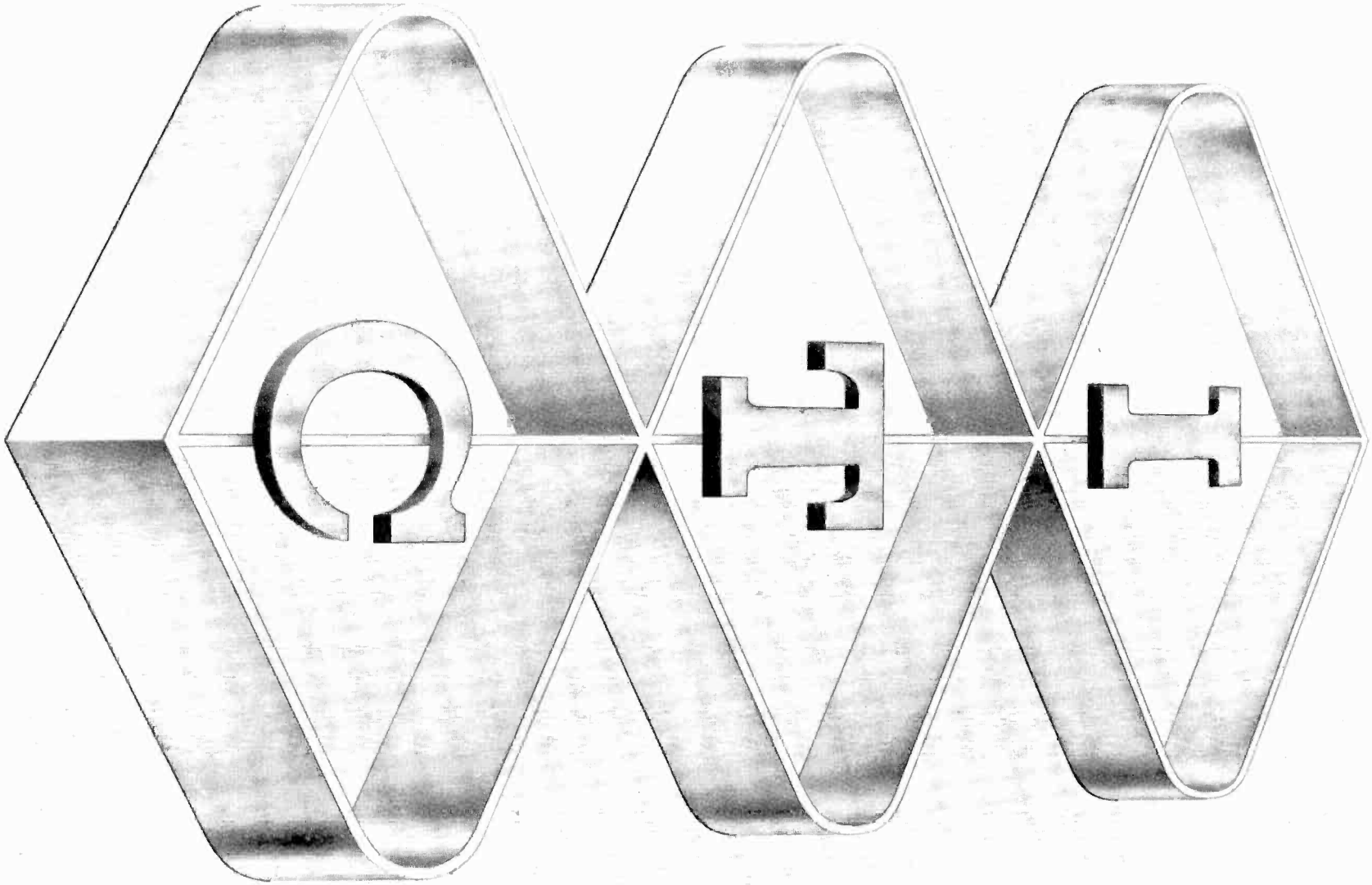

"CONGRESSMEN AT WORK — KEEP OUT!"

or Is This Any Way to Run a Country?

By Harriet Van Horne

"Congress is not coming through loud and clear."

Sen. Lee Metcalf (D) of Montana made that comment a few months ago when plans to televise Congressional proceedings were debated before his Joint Committee on Congressional Operations.

A recent study in Florida on the efficacy of televising legislative procedures concluded that viewers are "less likely to feel alienated from government" if they see their representatives in action on the home screen.

Sen. Metcalf seemingly was aware of this finding when he said, "With faith in Congressional effectiveness at a new low, it is time for us to do everything possible to let the people know what Congress is doing — and why it acts as it does."

There may be citizens who share the sentiments of an outspoken lady in Pennsylvania who says, "My Congressman is a vulgar bore and I don't care to see him making a fool of himself on the tube."

Sober second thoughts might persuade this lady that nothing is more likely to defeat an incompetent or offensive Congressman than steady TV exposure. Look what happened to Rep. Charles W. Sandman of New Jersey last November. Nobody doubts that it was his over-bearing defense on TV of Richard Nixon that did him in at the polls. Viewers many miles removed from New Jersey watching those impeachment hearings found Congressman Sandman so unattractive they were moved to send funds to his *opponent.*

For many years now, champions of good government have been agitating for the right of TV cameras to be present at important Congressional sessions. Only during a few crucial hearings has this permission been granted. On each occasion, the public's response sparked a notable change in popular attitude and in government policy.

In 1951, cameras were present every day during the crime investigation hearings conducted by the late Sen. Estes Kefauver. One result was an upsurge of feeling against the Mafia. Another was the enactment of stiffer crime laws.

In 1954 the nation that had put Sen. Joseph McCarthy on a pedestal saw him knocked off it. Lawyer Joseph Welch of Boston, now deceased, destroyed McCarthy by pitting his own decency and honor against the Senator's indecency and lack of honor. Public opinion came down on the side of Mr. Welch. And the Senate — largely in response to an outraged public — voted its historic censure of McCarthy.

Sen. Sam Ervin's special committee on Watergate played to unprecedented audiences and probably turned the tide of opinion against the Nixon White House.

It's the old story: Show the light and the people will find their way. Deny the light, forbid cameras inside the Senate and House chambers, and the people will remain in the dark. In the dark about the crucial issues affecting their lives and in the dark about the character of the men in Washington who vote on our welfare and destiny.

Some Congressmen believe the White House enjoys an unfair advantage because of its ready access to television. Rep. James C. Cleveland (R) of New Hampshire told the Metcalf committee that the executive branch's superior ability to communicate its views had weakened the supposedly co-equal branch, the Congress.

Rep. Jack Brooks (D) of Texas believes that televising Congress "would be confusing and of no interest at all." He compares such a practice to an all-day view of what transpires in a hospital operating room. Some citizens may find it difficult to grasp the analogy.

It's not difficult to understand Congressmen's reluctance to welcome 20 or 30 million viewers into their hallowed chambers. They fear exposure, fear the awful X-ray eye of TV, which sees through sham and pretense. To shut the doors is to shut out criticism and questions. In the final analysis, Congress is a smug, exclusive men's club (despite Bella Abzug in her giddy Floradora hats and Barbara Jordan in her Roman toga dignity). Let the camera roam freely, and the public WILL discover how much time is wasted and how petty, how ornery and how simple-minded some of our Honorable Representatives are.

Once the Congress starts debating on your hearth rug and mine, there is bound to be an outraged demand to reform the system. To turn off the bilge-water, as H.L. Mencken would say.

Were the networks to find live coverage of Congress less profitable than game shows and soap opera, public television assuredly would step into the breach. It was to Public TV that we all turned for the nightly replay of the Senate Watergate hearings in the summer of 1973.

During that long, hot summer, while Sen. Sam Ervin assumed folk-hero proportions and Sen. Howard Baker began to sound like a Presidential candidate, some of us watched the sessions on the networks in the afternoon, then turned to Public TV for the replay in the evening. In consequence, Public TV's ratings more than doubled and cash contributions

set a new record. That's how hungry people were to know what had been going on behind the White House pillars.

It should also be noted, if only to disarm those who say that nobody would watch Congress at work, that commercial television drew historic ratings with its Watergate coverage. At the close of the first week, it was reported that 47.4 million households had tuned in to what the trade was soon calling The Sam Ervin Show. That figure embraces 73.2 percent of all TV households.

Now, who dares say that vital committee hearings, such as those involving our taxes, our food and our oil supply, wouldn't draw a sizeable audience. Nobody is seeking to have the cameras turned on all day, every day, as Congressmen wander in and out of the two chambers, arguing, dozing, scratching, yawning — no, it wouldn't do.

But on the Big Days, newsmen — especially TV crews — wait outside the closed doors for hours, prepared to pounce on the first legislator to emerge. How much better to see the debate for ourselves, and not depend on some weary Senator's version of it as he makes his way, with mounting irritation, through the press mob.

This great adventure, a new series you might call Fifty Million Americans Go to Congress, almost came to pass early this spring. We were to have begun our new adventure with ringside seats for the energy policy hearings before the House Ways and Means Committee.

Why was this great leap forward suddenly cancelled? Walter Pincus explained why in a recent issue of *The New Republic.*

"A few legislators, one from an oil state, were fearful that network evening news shows would use segments critical of the oil companies. Other committee members were concerned that they, personally, would not come across well."

All that's not vanity would seem to be guile, greed and grovelling concern of the lobbyists who pay the campaign bills.

And so we are denied the right to watch the men we elect and support in their conduct of the nation's business — our business. In barring the television press, Congress may be shielding its less competent — and, though one hates to say it — less honorable — members from public scrutiny. But it is also denying us the pleasure of seeing honest, dedicated Congressmen fighting for fairer taxes, cleaner air, consumer protection and all the other legislation that would benefit the people rather than the special interests.

Despite an overwhelming disenchantment with government (recent polls suggest that faith in Congress is at an historic low), most people have a natural curiosity about their home-grown representatives. We were assured, two years ago, that post-Watergate morality would bring the people closer to their government, and that a searching light would be turned on all heretofore secret debate and decisions.

A modest start has been made toward these goals. Let nobody discount the significance of the current probes into the CIA, the FBI and Army Intelligence. But the work of Congress remains the focal point. For it is here that our fate — how prosperous, how healthy, how educated we are — is determined.

Congressmen who oppose televising their business sessions cite the view of the late Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn who said, "the temptation to make laws is strong enough without giving (Congressman) a chance to become an actor on television.

And so the halls of Congress are likely to remain a privileged sanctuary, at least for a time. And this is the republic's loss.

With all photography banned, Warren Weaver, Jr. writes in "Both Your Houses," citizens never will come to understand how the system really functions. "They have no notion of how poorly attended the sessions are, of how dreary debate has become, of how much time is wasted, indeed, of the quality of the man they have elected. And this is precisely the way Congress prefers it."

Even if telecasting were limited only to important sessions, even if these sessions were carried on public channels exclusively, it seems fairly certain that the electorate would rise up and roar, "Is this any way to run a Congress?"

There is no distinction in principle, Mr. Weaver writes, between admitting a U.S. taxpayer to the visitors' gallery and inviting him and his family to watch the same proceedings from comfortable chairs at home.

"Given the sort of searching exposure that television could provide," this veteran New York Times man continues, "the voters would have a much sounder basis for discerning judgment in filling House and Senate seats than they do now. And anyone who contends that the voters are not capable of distinguishing between a ham actor and a solid citizen is not questioning the utility of television but denying one of the premises of the entire democratic system."

Next time you write to your Congressman, remind him of these hard truths.

Harriet Van Horne, Editor of Television Quarterly, is a long-time observer of the medium. She was television editor and critic of the old New York World-Telegram and Sun until its demise in 1966. Currently she is syndicated general columnist whose work appears in The New York Post, The Philadelphia Inquirer and many other newspapers.

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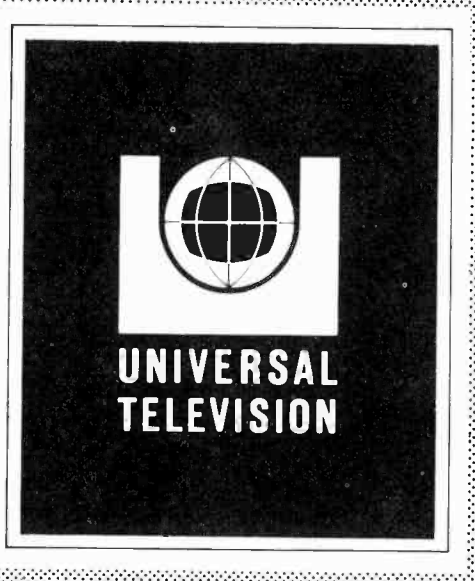
UNIVERSAL
TELEVISION

TELEVISION AND THE IMAGE OF AGING

By Richard H. Davis, Ph.D.

The question, "Whatever did we do before television?" has special poignance when voiced by the elderly. That animated screen is, in the fullest sense, their window on the world, a lamp unto their feet and a way of remaining "involved" with society.

Today there are 29 million Americans over the age of 60. The over-65 population exceeds the population of the 20 smallest states. If the present low birth rate continues, we shall have, by the year 2000, 20 to 30 million elderly Americans. Thanks to modern medicine and nutrition, more people are reaching old age. Their recreation, their emotional problems, should be very much our concern.

What do these statistics mean to broadcasters? First, they mean that a majority bloc of future audiences will be older. The audience, generally, is older now and will grow increasingly so as the years pass. This fact has obvious implications for programming as well as advertising.

For several years now, I have devoted a good part of my academic career to the subject of television and its place in the lives of older persons. I am now conducting the third in a series of related research projects designed to evaluate audience behavior among the elderly. This concern has kept me active in two academic disciplines — gerontology and telecommunications. It has also enabled me to serve as a consultant in programming problems when the subject is human development and aging.

My interest in the older viewer came about, curiously, as a result of my concern with television's effect on children. A number of research problems have lately dealt with the suggestive powers of violence on the TV screen. My own feeling was that the television experience was, on the whole, beneficial to children. I noticed that the performers who presided over the various children's programs had a particular warmth, an empathy with young people. They reassured the children, made them feel comfortable. Was this not an essential quality in adult programs, too?

Studying children's programs, it occurred to me that certain behavior patterns of the tiny tot audience might have something in common with other types of audiences.

What other group, I wondered, might be confined to the house, even watching from bed? What other group led a limited, proscribed life and depended upon the video screen to enlarge the boundaries of that life?

The answer, of course, was old people. I then began to wonder: What is it that television does for these older viewers? There was little research available when I began my studies, but what there was indicated that Americans 65 and over spent more time watching television than in any other leisure activity. For some, the home screen, with its colorful, lively people, had become a substitute for life itself.

Was the broadcast industry aware of this devoted audience? Not in any special way, it turned out. At least, the over-65 bloc was not seen as a significant or profitable group to be singled out for special attention.

Back in 1969 and 1970 when my interest in this project first stirred, program planners were not eager to cater to the Social Security set. Nor were they sensitized to any other facet of old folks' life style. For business reasons, their attention was directed to "where it was at." And that was with youth, especially the young market that was embarking on life long careers as consumers.

Though they do not loom large in the programmers' thinking, older individuals remain deeply attached to television. A few performers, such as Lawrence Welk, are shrewdly mindful of the older audience. They aim their style, their choice of old songs, directly at the viewer who likes to "remember when." Such a viewer is a natural target for commercials describing the merits of denture fixatives, laxatives, iron tonics and the like.

Television, as an environmental factor, offers certain unique advantages to the elderly. The first of these, to those of us who have observed audience behavior, may be taken as universal. That is, "involvement." Television persuades the viewer who doesn't get around much any more that he is still caught up in the mainstream of life.

Reading a newspaper is often difficult for older eyes. But watching the news on television is an exciting interlude in each day. One sits quietly in front of the screen and a brisk young man not only reads the news, he shows you the people to whom it happened. You are there!

Many older people are depression-prone. The presence of television may stave off feelings of loneliness and keep an old man or woman from feeling rejected or out of touch.

Our studies suggest that the older viewer finds television a very beneficial source of companionship. Friends may die or move away. Children marry and focus their attention on raising their children. But good friends remain, smiling benevolently from the shadow box. To viewers whose human contacts are severely limited, Walter Cronkite, Harry Reasoner and Johnny Carson may now become good friends. Substitutes, of course, never actually there to pat a shoulder or kiss a cheek, but curiously

reassuring.

Older people may resurrect, through the real and fictitious characters on the screen, a kind of "family." This is how life was years ago, when there were always voices in the house, people coming and going. Television friendships can be fairly intense among the elderly.

It should also be noted that television offers these friendships under particularly satisfying terms. Though the relationships are one-way, they are non-judgmental. They are also safe, non-threatening. The message projected might be roughtly translated, "Come, join the group. Enjoy what we're doing today. Be my guest. I like you." The viewer joins, enjoys . . . and feels alive.

Another positive help to the aged is the way television "marks the hours." Certain dearly familiar faces are bound to appear at certain hours. For young, active people the hours are defined by work, recreation, meetings, household chores and the like. All the demarcations are significant to us because we program our days. For old people, there is often no firm schedule. Without the lively doings on the screen, the day would be all gray, and the hours would drag. The viewer who has moved out of the labor force may now find his day structured only by the changing television scene.

There is another pleasant element. When he is acquainted with television's virtually immutable schedule, the viewer knows he can "look forward" — and how important this is! — to certain "old friends" appearing at certain times.

Finally, television eases and brightens older people's lives by simply filling up their time. It would surprise the young to discover how much empty, uncommitted time the elderly face each day. Some of the programs turned on may be execrable. But watching them is doing *something* as opposed to doing *nothing.*

Now, certain troubling questions are raised by this dependency. If the older viewer depends on television to this degree, should there be an opportunity for "positive feedback" through the image of aging, as it is presented to him? Should he not, in other words, see his counterparts realistically portrayed on the screen?

I am not the first to point out that older adults, these faithful watchers who bulk so large in today's audience, rarely see a mirror image of themselves on the screen. Their special problems have, over the years, rarely beset the people in the drama they watch.

But there are signs that this situation is changing. It seems that our best actors now grow old before our eyes. Beards whiten and the wrinkles are real. Some of the leading players in situation comedies and other series are, if not old, definitely middle-aged. It is also noteworthy that aging and its consequences — as well as death — have been treated dramatically on various anthology series.

We seem to be living through a period of nostalgia these days. When times are hard, it's natural to gaze back wistfully to happier days. Grandparents appear in some dramatic programs and their chief function seems to be remembering the past and stressing the old values. Suddenly, growing old is viable subject matter for television. There have been a gratifying number of documentaries on aging, as well as on other matters of great interest to the elderly: pensions, drugs, medical treatment, Social Security and nursing homes. All these programs remind the older person that his problems are not his alone, that many people, including those in government, are working to improve his life.

In my view, we need still more programs of this type. We who are not yet aged are confused by the mythology of aging. We have been seduced by the shallow notion that youth is wonderful, old age is sad and ridiculous. Endorsing such ideas means that we are building inevitable sorrows into our own lives. When age comes, we'll be unprepared. Or we'll be bitter with regret.

Less than four per cent of today's elderly now reside in institutions, unable to function in the outside world. The great majority of older persons enjoy mobility and autonomy. It seems to be that television ought to project an image of the aging that is inspiring to the older viewer, one that shows him busy and involved. If we can give high school students "role models," why can we not supply them to the elderly as well? The audience is large, faithful and, above all, eager.

* * *

Richard Davis holds a Doctorate in Communications from the University of Southern California and a Master's Degree in Theatre Arts from UCLA. He was graduated from the University of Oklahoma. He has done considerable research in the area of children's programming. He is particularly interested in television's role in the lives of the aged and in the uses of video tape in treating mental health problems. He is currently associated with the Gerontology Center of UCLA.

* * *


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CHARISMA . . . BANE OR BLESSING?

Does The Camera See Through The Hearts Of Men?

By Martin Carr

There's hardly a journalist or commentator alive who has not commented, at some time, on the less than endearing "image" projected by former President Nixon during his long career in politics.

Over and over again we have read about Richard Nixon's spastic gestures, his bad grammar, his shifting eyes. The word most conspicuously missing when the Nixon image is analyzed is "charisma." It's a word that apparently died with John F. Kennedy, died of exhaustion, you might say. But it's a word ready for resuscitation the instant a stylish, handsome aspirant for the White House steps into focus.

With Nixon out of sight and, for the most part, out of mind, there are nagging questions about his rise and fall that must be answered. Some of the most tantalizing concern the Nixon *persona*, the public face he wore to conceal the private man.

There were uneasy questions about this upward striver from California in Joe McGinnis's 1968 book, "The Selling of the President." And troublesome questions lurked at the edges of the famous Nixon-Kennedy debates in 1960, when the Republican candidate's five o'clock shadow seemed to cast a pall over his future as well as his face.

Let us conjecture for a moment. Let's suppose that Richard Nixon, representing the kind of politics he always embraced, had been blessed with good looks, a warm, easy manner and a polished, witty delivery. Would we have liked him better? Would we have trusted him more fully?

Before rejecting this question out of hand, let us remember that good looks and fine manners are not attributes of character. We all know scoundrels who have risen to glory on sheer charm and a gift for blarney. Sellers of snake oil have much in common with certain men who have sat for years — smiling, affable and all sham — in the U.S. Senate.

Madison Avenue knows, by practice and instinct, precisely what qualities a TV pitchman must project to make his spiel believable. A "nice guy" image can sell champagne to beer drinkers and hair spray to the hairless. It's not the virtue of the product that counts, it's the sincerity and charm of the man selling it.

Thus we may fairly ask, Would the public ever have turned against Nixon had be been gifted with the avuncular solidity of Walter Cronkite?

Would we have forgiven his sins and omissions had he spoken in the courtly style of Howard K. Smith?

Nixon, let it be said, did his best to appear lovable. Hair dye, cosmetic dentistry, artful makeup and lighting may have helped. But something uneasy in his manner, some sly dissemblance, came through the tube like a death ray. We were always taking three steps backward from this man. He never really lived down that famous poster with the caption, "Would you buy a used car from this man?"

It can be charged against us, the television audience, that our responses too often are visceral — even hostile — when they ought to be thoughtful and charitable.

A similar point might be made about New York's recent gubernatorial campaign. Hugh Carey, the Democratic contender, had the charisma. His manner was relaxed, even jovial. He also had the services of David Garth, reputedly the best of the TV image-makers. In some circles he is given more credit for Carey's huge victory than is Carey himself. But a realist would counter this view by recalling Republican candidate's Malcolm Wilson's image. No charisma whatsoever. And it's doubtful that the great Garth himself could have manufactured charisma for him. The image he projected was even less endearing than that of the early Nixon.

In a world that values appearance above reality, glamour above substance, a documentary film maker must tread carefully. I had an experience, in the line of duty, that vividly illustrates this point.

While filming *Migrant*, an NBC White Paper examining the plight of migrant workers in the verdant fields of Florida, I was summoned — yes, indeed, *summoned* — to the office of an immensely powerful fruit grower. Had I not been anxious to meet this citrus czar and put some questions to him, I'd have ignored his command invitation. Above all, I hoped to hear, in his own words, why he was so intent on preventing me from filming in his area of Florida.

It was a dramatic confrontation. Outside, I recall, the day was hot and blindingly bright. Inside his office all was cool, elegant and serene. Draperies filtered out the light and an air conditioner hummed discreetly. My host might have been sent by Central Casting, nature having endowed him with the looks, the voice, the bearing of an aristocrat born to wealth and power.

This man, whose workers lived in degrading conditions, faced me across a huge desk, murmuring pleasantries and platitudes. His mother, a handsome lady with a cool, forceful manner, sat nearby.

This lord of the citrus groves had quantities of what I suppose you would call Southern charm. His voice was light and pleasing, the regional accent subtle. He spoke so softly that I had to strain my ears to hear him. His tone, his diction, were those of a gentleman — but what he was saying was absolutely outrageous. Inhuman. Indecent. But I had to focus my mind

sharply on the import of what he said lest I be beguiled by his perfect courtesy, his subtle flattery. A TV audience, lacking my stabbing memory of those migrant shacks, those slave wages, might have been thoroughly beguiled by this elegant villain.

For more than a month I had seen my fellow Americans — white, black and brown — living and working in almost incredible squalor. Daily I saw these meek, driven men, women and young children labor under conditions that would have been called indecent back in the days of slavery. In some respects, I believe they were worse off than the plantation slaves of the ante-bellum South.

But sitting here in his cool, uncluttered office, glossing over the misery of the workers to tell of his own generosity in the face of great tribulation, was a man loaded with charisma. He spoke so gently, so reasonably, that he was making the indefensible sound almost virtuous.

His chief concern, this exploiter of the unskilled told me, was the "welfare" of his workers. His mother (a gracious nod in her direction) cared so deeply about the fruit pickers that she had introduced, years ago, the radical concept of "separate but equal" into their area of Florida.

Looking back, I daresay it was this man's self-preening pride at having endorsed the — to him — "liberal" notion of "separate but equal" that snapped me back into reality. As a long-time documentarian, I knew that hogwash, no matter how elegantly it's packaged, is still hogwash. And a dirty lie was a dirty lie, even when spoken by a man of breeding and wealth.

Refusing to be seduced by the elaborate courtesy being shown me, I asked my host about the totally false story that had appeared in a local paper about the NBC White Paper we were making. Oh, yes, he smiled, he had given the reporter that particular piece of misinformation but, naturally, he never dreamed the reporter would print it. He was awfully sorry about that reporter's breach of confidence and hoped I had not been caused any "inconvenience."

Then, his *politesse* unimpaired, this employer of slave labor, asked me some searching questions about our film. He said he would like very much to appear in it simply to state the point of view of the growers. I explained, echoing his courtesy, how sorry I was that his presence would now be redundant. I had already filmed several growers who had expressed his point of view exactly. There was, in short, no need to film him.

But even as I was turning him down, the thought crossed my mind, "How charming this man would be on camera!" I was able to give, in my film, a glimpse into the grim, back-breaking existence of the "stoop labor" that picked the beans and the men with aching arms who harvested the fruit.

But would this view of migrant life, reinforced by the testimony of the sickly, under-nourished workers — some rendered inarticulate by the very conditions of their lives — be offset by the shrewd, oh-so-reasonable

propaganda put forth by this gently-bred remnant of the Old South?

It would be comforting to think that the average viewer would instantly discriminate between the exploiter and the exploited, between the true and the false. But would he? The average viewer, after all, is the multitude that has been sold snake oil by Madison Avenue and "four more years" by Richard Nixon.

As an honest film-maker, I cannot "cast" my documentaries. I cannot deliberately choose only those people whose manner and appearance will reinforce their message. Good men, speaking wise words, often present an unbeguiling appearance to the world. Abe Lincoln, it has been pointed out more than once, would have had little impact on TV, what with that scraggly beard and that old shawl. Franklin Roosevelt, on the other hand, would have been a smash hit.

The question a documentarian must ask is: Can we ignore a man's charisma or lack of it and focus simply on his words?

Fortunately, I did not have to film the Southern planter described in this essay. I had footage of others expressing an identical point of view.

But, let's assume I had had no choice, that blinding hot day in Florida. Suppose I had gone to his office with cameras and sound equipment. Would the audience have responded to this man's appealing manner rather than to the inarticulate fruit picker and his hungry brood?

All of us who labor in the documentary field must continuously ask questions such as these. There are no firm rules, no easy answer. But the question must never be put aside.

* * *

Martin Carr is an outstanding documentarian, having produced such memorable studies as Hunger in America, Migrant, and The Culture Thieves. He was won four Emmy Awards, three Peabody and two Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards. He was graduated from Williams College where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

* * *

"QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE"

Some Recent and Memorable Comments on the Media

"I find it sad that producers and actors are so willing to sell out for money. It's awfully easy in the entertainment business to talk yourself into the degrading things you do. . . . I don't mind nudity if it's used in a decent way, not merely for pornographic effect. Pornography generally presents a disgusting point of view about the human race which I do not think is representative. . . . Only impotent people have to look at dirty pictures to get a kick. Why don't they just admit that is the case?"

— Katharine Hepburn
Interviewed in the Christian Science Monitor

* * *

". . . The inescapable impression emerges that there are those in positions of power and trust who are, from all appearances, against a free press — and that they are against it, not just because they *think* it will distort some facts, but because they *know* it will disclose others. So I say, with all the strength at my command, that the time has come to eliminate entirely the Fairness Doctrine. . . ."

— William S. Paley, Chairman CBS, Inc.
Address at Syracuse University

* * *

"I've been accused of having bad taste. It's true . . . but what's wrong with bad taste?"

— Mel Brooks
Interviewed in Action Magazine

* * *

"In my opinion, actors do a job, provide a service; they do not *owe* their public anything."

— James Mason
Interviewed in Punch

"QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE"

"Nudity and erotic bed scenes are extraordinarily common in British televised drama. Female bosoms and bottoms are flashed or lingered over on almost any pretext. . . . But there are people here in Britain who are taking offense. Some 14,000 of them have paid 25p. (62 cents) each to join the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association. This group tries militantly to counter what they regard as 'the undermining of moral values, social ethics and cultural standards' in British television and other media. But that still leaves a lot of British viewers not protesting, and just possibly not objecting."

— David Littlejohn, Professor of Journalism
University of California at Berkeley
Sunday New York Times Drama Section.

* * *

"The First Amendment for broadcasting has come to be bent around the 1934 Communications Act and the corporate structure of the television industry, when in fact the opposite should be the case.

"In broadcast journalism at least, the functions of the press and the government are co-mingled, and the First Amendment wall of separation between government and press envisaged two hundred years ago has been eroded significantly. The precedent is not healthy, and it will be difficult to change.

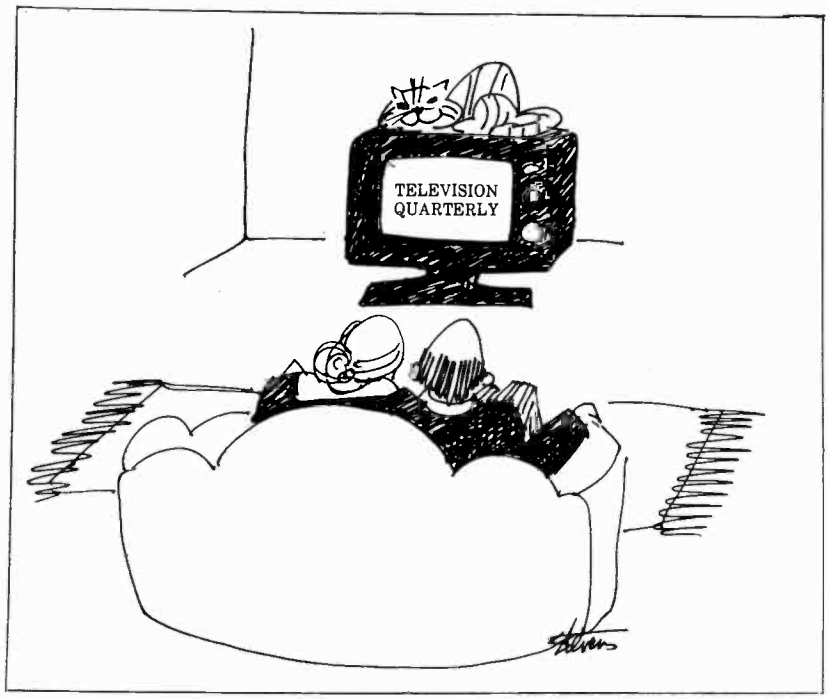
"The real question of press freedom today, it therefore seems to me, is whether the government regulators and the broadcasting regulatees can be persuaded to loosen the big media, big government grip they have on television programming today — and whether our future journalists will care as much about the well-intentioned bureaucratic erosion of a free press as they have about poorly intentioned attempts at press censorship."

— Marvin Barrett in "Moments of Truth"
(Alfred I. Dupont — Columbia University
Survey of Broadcast Journalism).

* * *

"Half the people in Wisconsin and Colorado told the pollsters they watched TV (political) spots because they couldn't avoid them — a tribute to the heavy concentration of the spots in prime TV time. However, 64 per cent of the viewers said TV filled them in on the candidates' qualifications, 56 per cent said it helped them understand the issues, and 41 per cent said it acquainted them with politicians as people."

— Human Behavior Magazine



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THE SIGN OF GOOD TELEVISION

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

By David G. Yellin

Dear Friends:

I'd like to make an immodest proposal.

Television, almost without our realizing it, has become a principal keeper of the key stories of our time for future generations. Film and video, like the pencil, typewriter, still camera, and audiotape recorder, are now essential tools for recording primary source material that depicts our society's past and ongoing present. Television is Visual History.

But what about television's own history? Its own stories? Its own accounting as the "massest" communications medium of all time? Its own record as a mirror/influence of/on society? Where is the source material about its own folk heroes, told in its own vernacular of images and sounds?

Where are the reels and cassettes that herald for posterity the men and women — members of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences — who are the medium's discoverers, its pioneers, its developers, its perpetuators?

Until now, television documenting of television history has been sparse, sporadic, and uncharacteristically modest. It has been limited to the collecting and preserving by a few institutions — colleges and universities mainly — of available films, tapes and kinescopes of retired programs. Nothing precisely dazzling. Yet, it should not discourage TV historians that the number of programs now slumbering in archives around the country constitute but a tiny percentage of television's total output. It would, however, be discouraging — and a great disservice to the future — if the well-intentioned collectors for the medium continue to cherish the premise that the best and only way to preserve television history is to collect old television programs.

Wrong.

Mission impossible.

First of all, the great bulk of early, no-repeat, live shows are, alas, vanished beyond recall and, in all charity, more than a few are better off dead. Then: copyright and publication rights for many known survivors are a legal labyrinth. Original prints as well as copies of numbers of shows are already lost, cached, damaged, deteriorated, or destroyed. The various modes of available films, tapes, and now, cassettes, are for many ready and willing users, incompatible for projection. And, to cork the bottlenecks, nearly all of the collecting colleges and universities play their holdings close to their vestries. Most have an unyielding, uniform policy of permitting restricted, on-premises-only viewing, knocking out any chance of setting up some kind of national lending-exchange program.

Networks have not displayed an overwhelming eagerness to release their combined richest-of-all lodes for the general cause. There's little chance, therefore, of creating a television model of The Library of Congress.

This is not to say that an industry-wide, one-for-all amassing of bygone programs should not be tried, nor that the National Academy should not take the lead in the trying. If nothing else, it would redound to the great historical good if the Academy could become the industry's Clearing House of Program Information, and come up with a comprehensive catalog of all holdings.

Such a centralized and systematic compilation (covering colleges, universities, libraries, networks, stations, producers, advertisers, agencies, private collections, and commercial distributors) would specify where what programs are stored, availability and conditions for viewing, prices for rental and purchase, and — Excelsior! — a listing of all programs *ever* produced, complete with credits!

But — and this is my main point — there is another way, and a most fitting way, of recording the history of television: Surely the message of this medium can best be told first-hand by its messengers. And I believe that above and beyond any collecting, preserving, and cataloging of programs, the National Academy should undertake a more profoundly valuable, exciting and possible mission.

I propose that the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences produce a series of on-camera, SOF-VO, television career memoirs. History in living television recounted by those who made the history.

I propose that film, video, laser, whatever, be used to record the stories of people still here who were there when television began.

I propose that those first-generation, early-day television doers — many of whom have been doing it ever since, and are doing it now — be urged to talk about the doing. Show and tell facts. Retrieve personal recollections. Indulge in relaxed shop talk. Remember the Awkward Age, the Golden Age and The Great Days When. . . .

I propose, in addition, that to accompany these visual records, the

Academy acquire from these doers their scripts, notes, diaries, letters, scrapbooks, reviews, contracts, films/tapes/kines of their programs (who knows what hitherto missing-in-action-and-presumed-dead shows might thus be resurrected?) and whatever else, in whatever form, the history-makers have and are willing to part with.

I propose, in short, that the National Academy create and maintain a full and complete Multi-Media Resource Center of Television History.

And, finally, I propose immediacy. Time, as it is for everything about broadcasting, is critical. The unalterable fact of life — death — has struck the industry heavily in past months. And, lest we forget, the American Film Institute started its comprehensive compilation of film history too late to include filmings of Edwin Porter, D.W. Griffith, Irving Thalberg. . . . Visual Historian, record thyself!

Urgently yours,
David G. Yellin

* * *

David G. Yellin has been in broadcasting and the theatre for more than 25 years, working as director, writer, producer and lecturer. His articles have appeared in Harper's, Show and The Saturday Evening Post. He is currently Director of Broadcasting and Film at Memphis State University.

A reply to this letter of David G. Yellin from Robert F. Lewine, president of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, appears on page 65.

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TELEVISION NEWS: A NEW SLANT

By Martin Wenglinsky, Ph.D.

For at least three years now we have heard redundant public controversy over bias in television news, every political faction contending at some point that television does not portray events "accurately."

And all sides are, of course, correct: television news is biased against the views from the political right, left, and center because it pursues a reality of its own, created out of the particular kind of truth for which newsmen search regardless of their own political sentiments. At its best, and under certain circumstances, television news both makes and reports the news, offering a portrait of the world wherein the perception of the viewer is the meaning of the event.

But to see all this more concretely, we should first clear away the accumulated charges and countercharges by radicals, conservatives, and liberals.

Radicals contend that television news is ruled by the interests of big business, most especially Eastern Establishment business, and so one can predict what events news programs will, as we say, "cover" and how they will cover them, or cover them up. The suffering of the poor is underplayed, and the resistance of the downtrodden to their oppressors is portrayed by television news as criminal or else sick. Indeed, ghetto riots are no longer much *shown* at all, now that networks and local stations have reflected on their coverage of certain events in the 1960's. Today, television producers seem to see themselves as acting responsibly when they censor such coverage lest it encourage others to join a dangerous action; but were they to apply this doctrine of "responsibility" for the *results* of news broadcating evenhandedly, they would long since have stopped reporting news briefings by Presidential spokesmen, Presidents, or other self-admitted liars.

The power of the press, so the radical argument goes, is like a telescope: magnifying the importance of those in power, diminishing the grievances — and the very presence — of those with little power. When radicals themselves appear on television, it is usually on talk shows, where they entertain (and so are not taken seriously) by shocking. Radical spokesmen used to turn up on Sunday interview programs too, on the occasional slow week. But the hostile questioning of Tom Hayden on "Face The Nation" some years ago caught perfectly the style in which they were handled: the interviewers found time to ask Hayden why he was not grateful for the democratic freedom that allowed him to appear on national television in the first place — a gratuitous attempt to put a malcontent in his place, though he was in a place he had every right to be in.

By that logic, the substance of freedom is that grievances vanish because they are heard. When Hayden explained that his brief appearance hardly countervailed the general tenor of public affairs broadcasting, he was asked, reasonably, why he then bothered appearing at all. He answered that it was to keep faith with his compatriots, in preparation for the period of harassment and suppression he believed the country would soon face.

Prophetic or not, his defense was lame. The radicals of the 1960's were wedded to the media because they thought it the most powerful force for social control. At the same time they found it beyond their power to influence.

Perhaps the quintessential demonstration of free expression on television was a *Merv Griffin Show* of a few years ago, which Griffin announced, with much self-congratulation, as a no-holds-barred discussion of the medium itself by several of its critics, a discussion that would show just how brave and free television was. (If it was free, one wondered, why was bravery or congratulation required?) Nicholas Johnson, then a member of the Federal Communications Commission, proceeded to offer some genuinely critical remarks — the most pointed of which were edited out before the tape was broadcast.

What is further apparent to radicals is that television commentaries range only from conservative to liberal. Why no radical spokesman to join James Kilpatrick and Nicholas Von Hoffman on *60 Minutes* or Howard K. Smith and Harry Reasoner on ABC? Edward P. Morgan is much subdued of late, and Sander Vanocur left NBC because of what he said were restrictions on being a network newsman. I remember one delectable on-the-air discussion among NBC correspondents after the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. Vanocur had been on the plane returning to New York from Los Angeles with the Kennedy party. He was asked for the tone of things during the trip, and he said that he wasn't supposed to say: the Kennedy people thought there might be a conspiracy to kill Kennedys. Someone quickly interjected that Vanocur's answer was, of course, not

seriously meant. Vanocur did not take the hint, and said the Kennedy people were quite serious. The others were clearly embarrassed, as if by a breach of taste. On television, questions of censorship are always perceived as matters of taste.

For their part, conservatives are well aware of the plentitude of liberal newsmen. George Wallace has always had a harsher going-over on television than other politicians. The case for segregated schools is not made, but shots of charred school buses in Michigan and violent crowds in Boston are in ample supply. Newsmen are, of course, against bureaucracy, yet they picture every new government program as quite possibly a step in the right direction, as if attempts or beginnings meant successful results. And newsmen were always soft on the Vietnam war, overcome by misgivings about refugees even as they raised few questions about the Viet Cong's taxes, drafts, and confiscations among the Vietnamese.

To be sure, many conservative objections to newscasting can be answered by saying that there simply are not two sides to every story; that in some instances no "conservative case" can be made, because in the hands of any but a few ideologues like William F. Buckley, Jr., who are continually pressed into service to defend the minority view, conservatism in this country is not so much a governmental philosophy as a defense of privilege with little consistency of principle from one case to another. But the networks disregard the fact that liberalism too is a defense of privilege, and that a great number of liberals defend their viewpoint no better than conservatives. Network people make the substantive judgment (which I share) that in our country liberal thought can justify liberal opinion, while much of conservative opinion (and, in a way, radical opinion) cannot be turned into thought and debate because it is only a defense of prejudices and nasty sentiments.

Perhaps that is why, when the networks defended themselves against Vice President Agnew's attacks on bias in the news, their answers seemed disingenuous, and, at the very least, begged the question. It was as if they had no need to consider the merits of the question, only the self-serving source. By way of defense, the networks pointed out that many commentators were in fact born in the Midwest — when the point is that they are selected because they identify with a cosmopolitan point of view.

Network people further maintained that every wink and raised eyebrow could seem, to the paranoid critic, an interpretation — when selectivity of coverage is the issue. And they insisted that freedom of the press must be inviolate — when, in fact, the networks have a monopoly on national news and need to be responsible to some form of pressure other than the obtuseness of their affiliates.

Conservatives also recognize in news coverage the liberal belief that the march of progress forbids retrograde speculation. An issue, once settled, is settled: no longer subject to controversy, but part of the common wisdom.

Soon after the New York State law eliminating most restriction on abortion came into effect, CBS denied a request for equal time by the Catholic Archdiocese of New York to present its point of view. That is, CBS had been reporting on abortion clinics and the lives they saved but refused air time to those who felt CBS was not considering the prenatal lives that were being lost. The corporate explanation was that CBS would in the full course of normal news coverage offer a balanced representation. In short, the producing agency would decide what was a balance, how much of each side was enough, whether there was a moral issue left over about which the public might change its mind, or whether what was left over was just the honking of the unenlightened.

Pushed to the wall, liberal (and network) opinion about news on television denies that political perspective is the issue at all: the media, it claims, are attacked for being the bearers of bad but truthful tidings, and since both Left and Right attack them, they must be doing their job properly. If reportage has its limitations, they further claim, these are due to the economics and practical problems of putting on news programs daily.

Newsmen cover radical violence rather than radical press conferences because there are only so many film crews, and they need something "visual." Presenting complex events, like a gold crisis, does not, furthermore, build ratings — and anyway, there is just not enough time to present enough of the facts to make such events comprehensible. And finally, such events are boring: how many shots of bullion in vaults will people watch as a "visual" for the "voice-over"?

But the view that informs the selection and presentation of news is not to be found in news producers' appeals to the non-ideological madhouse of day-to-day operations, nor even in the discrete actions or decisions that producers make on the job. Rather, it stands out in high relief in the product actually presented on the screen.

First off, the principle of selection is not that of greatest visual impact. Most news stories are in fact voice-overs with only the most general relation to the picture on the screen. Stories about food shortages or agricultural problems show fields of grain with or without reapers, barns with or without livestock. Stories on transportation or gas prices or mass-transit fares show a subway or automobiles going by. Stories on rent control show buildings. Such camera shots do not explain or even present the event and could have been made years before and used for any number of stories.

Pictures of rat-infested apartments or the faces of politicians answering questions can occasionally be illuminating. But not often, and television producers know this better than we do.

Second, the working principle of news selection is not "to show the unusual": the dog-bites-man dictum. If it were, we would be spared the

repetitious statements of candidates and officials and even the fact of continually rising food prices.

There is nothing new in these, even if they are important. As for arrests for corruption or murder, as for forest fires and lost children, these are not even important events, unless they are explicitly connected to matters of public policy.

Inevitably, then, we have to conclude that political and social judgment *do* guide news selection: the producer selects as being important thoses items which affect the people at large. Rising prices and mass transit fares do affect the people at large, but Sunday backyard barbecues do not, except when they indicate changing styles of life because of price increases. Stories about what people do on a hot summer Sunday or about lost children are described by newsmen as "human interest": not real news, but sufficiently poignant or attractive to catch the viewer's attention. They provide a respite from serious news, but newsmen who overplay them are thought unprofessional. And so it is that the Governor's announcement of something or other is covered because it is believed that what he does affects our lives more than does a sit-in at a hospital by members of the local community. Protestors are of interest when they are violent; or when they are, like Cesar Chavez, seen by the newsmen as legitimate.

But news is not selected for being *immediately* important to most of us. Weather reports, if they were supposed to be informative, would be shorter. War and crime news affect us hardly at all: few of us have been mugged today, and none of us have sons at the front at the moment. Practical news of the sort that fills country newspapers — births and deaths, promotions and local festivals — is presented on television, not as a calendar of events to be used, but as a continuing report on the life of the city and the world.

Television news is in fact a marvel of construction that allows snippets of material to give us both a daily sense of the continuing drama of Watergate or Edward Kennedy or John Lindsay or Clifford Irving, and of the continuing background of floods and famine, wars and crime, poverty and consumer fads, that make up the saga of the contemporary world. We are not so much told what is important to our daily lives as what is important to and makes up public life — which is a world defined by the newsmen's sense of it. The newsman in turn is as tightly bound by the conventions of this, his genre, as is the composer of musical comedy.

Consider, for instance, that television news rarely presents the decisions and personalities of major figures in business corporations, but minor management troubles in a city agency are covered in detail: corruption in government is thought to be news, while waste and inefficiency in corporations is not. Americans believe business is more efficient than government. Is that because high overheads for office decoration and expense accounts are not made as visible or subject to inquiry as a

congressional junket or political favoritism on the public payroll? Corporation officials should be no more able to escape reporters than are public officials — but they are. Economic news is clearly as important in the making as when it finally and dramatically breaks through into the consumer's life. It is just that government, like baseball, the weather, and crime, is a traditional subject in the contemporary epic of news while, for the most part, ongoing events in large corporations and universities and literature are not.

In short, the whole of the news constitutes a world of its own. What gives dynamism and interest to a shot of a hood being hurried through a crowd to a federal courthouse is the very real art of news coverage.

But before we conclude that television news is a sort of traveling show, with its own stock characters and cliche situations, we had better remember that this particular form of entertainment is presumed to have some share of literal truth, to represent factual reality, and so influences our sense of the world. From it we are given daily a view of continuing and contending forces in the social landscape, much as in a medieval church we would be reminded of where we stood in relation to Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. We place ourselves within this mental landscape, and, like the medieval one, it can affect major and minor decisions in our lives: we choose, say, to move to the suburbs or away from a stranger because the news keeps telling us to beware the mugger.

Our experience of TV news is vicarious and archetypal experience, as in the medieval mental landscape, an unfolding tapestry into which we place, say, our dwindling savings accounts or the price-rise at our own supermarket. With inflation the official story, our own trouble with grocery bills becomes a social rather than a personal problem, just as malicious gossip about a neighbor becomes part of the cosmic drama of salvation when the preacher convinces us there is retribution for the spiteful.

One can of course be a heretic and dispute the official version — that is, find the news media's version of the Democratic convention of 1968 unpersuasive, discordant with one's own philosophy and experience and unsanctified secondary sources. But, as with other heresies, there is a price to pay for refusing the facts from the pulpit in favor of the facts of one's own life. If it seems unjust for the poor to get all that attention and sympathy from television when you have a mortgage on your semi-detached quarter-acre to worry about, you may be able to make all the economic facts fit your theory; but you will pay the price of having an unofficial theory — feeling like an outsider even as you savor the satisfaction of believing that your theory is unofficial because it is true.

Television's continuing interpretation of life gives rise, then, to a sense of being in agreement or dissent, and so to a sense of society as being divided between an establishment and the conspirators — you and I — for

or against it, depending upon who agrees or disagrees with the official television view. If we think Mayor Daley is the people's man at Chicago, and the networks and the radical politicians are in conspiracy against him, that is why he looks bad on TV.

Indeed, can the networks tell the truth, even if they are in agreement with some party but in conspiracy with none? That might be called honest bias, but it is bias nonetheless. Truth is terribly difficult to sift out, a matter of motives and interests rather than a product of that ideological shibboleth "objectivity." It has always been that way, deciding whether the king's representative speaks for him or on his own, whether the church or a particular preacher is for God or against Him. The difference is that we, the television viewers, experience a sort of sermon every night, and it claims a political rather than a religious truth. The church made no claim that the world it presented looked like the everyday world a peasant inhabited, only that our world had its place in the larger one, and should emulate it. Newsmen portray themselves as showing us the world we inhabit — and this they patently do not do.

We need not accuse the TV newsmen of hypocrisy, but we should look more closely at how they decide what is the socially significant story. And again, we do better to consult what appears on the TV screen than most newsmen's reflections upon their decisions, which they make, in any case, without much time to reflect. What the screen tells us is that news is not what is unprecedented — certainly not that — but what has been previously undisclosed. News is what people want to hide, or what happened to be hidden. Graft and secret treaties and memos and bombings, these are in the first category; unforeseen floods and shortages and food prices and stock crashes are in the second. "Why did this happen?" usually means "Why didn't we know about this before?" And "getting the story" means discovering lies or circumstances people could not have known about. The climactic event came when the matter went underground, or when it emerged.

When was the cover-up planned, and when did the President know about it? If we have an oil crisis, what oil companies did things, in good or bad faith, that led to the lines for gasoline we see? Those lines are the present, apparent fact which has come suddenly upon us. The newsman wants to uncover the circumstances of the surprise: how something *could* be news to us, a new fact or recognition of an old fact; that is "getting to the bottom" of the story. For there to be a story, there must be a mystery to investigate, and getting scoops is what brings a newsman highest praise. It follows that all concerned assume that every story (except natural disasters or public occasions) requires unraveling and investigation. If no arduous work is required to get the story, where is the newsman's skill?

But untangling the past means neglecting the present and the obvious. It means reporting what happened that people did not know was

happening, rather than reporting what is always going on and could be known but almost never is. It means neglecting the overt actions for the inner workings, which is like looking at the mechanism of a clock to find out what the time is. Rather than scanning the records to find out about a prospective appointee's past, so as to tell where he once stood, it might be useful to question him closely on where he stands now, and on the kind of person he is. (Newsmen share — and prompt — the politician's view that facts about past private misbehavior discredit someone more than what he believes today and is prepared publicly to act on.) We see little television coverage of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but a lot about the occupation of a reservation. Senatorial ambitions are scrutinized, but not the continuing business of the Senate. Why do so few reporters emulate the exemplary I. F. Stone, who has shown how to develop immensely informative stories that get "behind" the official facade by examining the handouts, briefings, and official data which constitute that facade? By looking at *appearances* so closely, Stone reveals them as being in fact the reality of politics and policy.

* * *

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* * *

"The things which hurt, instruct."
—Benjamin Franklin

Nothing is more comfortable than complacent acceptance of what is. Nothing is more upsetting than reaching out for what might be.

Hence, the pains that accompany the growth of the individual mind and conscience. And, by extension, the mind and conscience of society.

Today, broadcasting plays a significant role in cultivating this growth.

Rather than paint a flattering portrait, broadcasting strives to hold up a mirror that shows society as it truly is, warts and all.

It dwells not only upon achievements but also upon problems which may be conveniently "swept under the rug."

Along with familiar ideas and opinions, it exposes new ones that may challenge and disconcert.

And in so doing, it goads its audience to that most uncomfortable of human occupations, the thoughtful reflection that precedes change.

Two hundred years ago, Benjamin Franklin realized how essential this process was to a free society.

We as broadcasters are proud to continue this tradition.

BOSTON WBZ · WBZ-TV
NEW YORK WINS
PHILADELPHIA KYW · KYW-TV
BALTIMORE WJZ-TV
PITTSBURGH KDKA · KDKA-TV
FORT WAYNE WOWO
CHICAGO WIND
SAN FRANCISCO KPIX
LOS ANGELES KFWB

WESTINGHOUSE BROADCASTING COMPANY

OH, TO BE IN ENGLAND NOW THAT SIX O'CLOCK IS HERE !

By Michael Russnow

It was my first trip to London. There was much to see and do, but one curiosity outweighed all the others. The Tower of London and Westminster Abbey could wait. I had to discover what made the British so spectacularly successful in creating television shows that amazed and delighted America and enjoyed critical acclaim all around the civilized world.

In recent years, British imports have won Academy Emmys, drawn bales of fan mail and sent critics and feature writers dashing off to London to examine first-hand the techniques they expected to find so different from our own.

There seemed to be some special mystique behind the excellence of such series as *The Private Life of Henry VIII, Elizabeth R., Tom Brown's School Days* and the current rage, *Upstairs, Downstairs.*

Clearly, the British knew a secret we didn't know. I was determined to find out what it was.

Through traditional friend-of-a-friend channels in Hollywood, I arranged to visit two television production centers in England. A London publicist introduced me to one of his clients, Simon Williams, who plays the renegade son, James Bellamy, on *Upstairs, Downstairs.*

Invited to "drop by London Weekend," I had to admit my confusion. I thought the invitation was to come by the studio during one particular weekend in London. But no, London Weekend was the oddly named frequency for independent commercial television. There being only one such frequency, it was shared by two companies. Thames Television held the franchise from Monday to Friday evening, the other on weekends. *Upstairs, Downstairs* falls within the province of London Weekend.

Arrived at the handsome, white structure — oddly reminiscent of New York or Los Angeles — where London Weekend operated, I was ushered into the public relations office and offered a drink. What was my pleasure? "Iced tea or coffee," I said politely. The stout secretary chuckled. So funny, these Yanks and their cold tea. But she scribbled my order on her pad and withdrew, still smiling.

A few minutes later my host, PR man George Spackman entered. He, too, immediately asked if I'd like a drink. This time I was cagey, sensing iced tea was not what he had in mind. "I'll have whatever you're having," I told him. He picked up the telephone and ordered two bourbons with water. Bourbon *whiskey.* I was sorry for my caginess. I couldn't stomach the thought of Bourbon without something sweet and carbonated as a mixer. Crazy Yanks and their treacly booze.

Soon we were joined by other publicists. Though it was only three o'clock in the afternoon, the atmosphere was suddenly full of six o'clock conviviality. I felt curiously out of place. There were none of the usual tensions I remembered from mid-afternoons in other television offices. Everybody seemed relaxed, even festive. Viewing the scene with the fresh eyes of an American visitor, I wondered: are they relaxed and merry because they're drinking Scotch at 3 p.m., or are they relaxed and merry anyway?

The jollity continued as I was taken on a tour of the facilities by an affable, white haired press agent. Very cautiously, he took me into the control room where the shots are called for *Upstairs, Downstairs.* I felt strangely privileged to be there, amid such hush-hush, airtight security. My respect for the precautions deepened when I was told that the scenes being taped that day would not be seen in the States for two years.

Inspecting the thoroughly modern studios, seeing all the familiar equipment that's part of my own working life, I thought, "How very like TV back home!" Then it struck me that I was indeed a provincial. Of course, the same sort of cameras and lights inhabit all up to date TV studios. It could not be otherwise.

Somewhere between the Bellamy house in Eaton Square and the set for a comedy series much like our *Get Smart,* I was shown a special and clearly reverenced area which I later learned was the fulcrum of this vast television operation. The studio bar.

My guide dwelt upon this friendly saloon with grave respect. It was heavily used during the lunch hour and the afternoon tea breaks, he said. But I was to see it later in the rousing period when it really came alive — after the day's shooting was over.

The British, it should be noted here, are civilized drinkers. Getting drunk is frowned upon. Just not done, old boy. One has a drink after work to relax, to go over the errors of the day, to share in the gossip, the hopes and sorrows of one's colleagues. Spirits, as the British call all hard liquors,

are not used as anaesthetics, but as social stimulants.

My guide having returned me to George Spackman, I was then escorted back to the bar to have a drink with his client, Williams, who had just finished work for the day. The studio saloon, so sparsely populated a short time ago, now was chock-a-block with the actors, staff and crew of every London Weekend production. This was what we call, rather archly, the cocktail hour. It's the unwinding hour in England. And what could be more agreeable than sharing it, on the premises, with one's co-workers?

As I made my way through the laughter and smoke and clinking glasses, I remembered similar hours spent at Sardi's, 21 and the Polo Lounge of the Beverly Hills Hotel. But this was England, where Chesterton celebrated "the fellowship of beer and board," and where Hilaire Belloc warned his countrymen, "When you have lost your inns, drown your empty selves for you will have lost the last of England."

The inn, the pub, the ale house . . . and now the studio bar. There's a sturdy philosophy of togetherness in the British that Americans have never quite achieved. I tried to imagine the scene before me transferred to the NBC Commissary. No, I couldn't do it. Something uniquely English in this setting just wouldn't travel.

There I was, relaxed, drink in hand, discussing show business with my comrades across the Atlantic. John Hawkesworth discoursed on the sanity of running a hit show for a firm tenure of four or five years, rather than letting it wear itself out and go to seed as happens in our country.

What impressed me most was the warm sense of "family" exhibited in this gathering. There was a festive, how-nice-to-be-together mood that embraced the stranger, made him wish to belong. It was a spirit I had previously felt only at Christmas time back home. But here in London it was repeated every working night.

I soon learned that this conviviality wasn't the exclusive property of London Weekend. The next night I was a guest at the taping of the BBC's *Steptoe and Son*, the prototype of Norman Lear's *Sanford and Son*. There I was introduced, as a writer of *The Waltons*, to Alan Simpson, creator of *Steptoe and Son*.

We exchanged a few pleasantries, then Simpson said, "The bar is just opening upstairs. Shall we . . .?"

Again, the cozy pub atmosphere. A goodly crowd, even though it was Saturday night. All these people could have rushed off to the festivities that always make Saturday night rather special. But no, they preferred to stay here, to relax with colleagues.

Now, it would be foolish to claim that the British turn out a superior television product because of the *camaraderie*, the warm saloon friendship that seems to exist among them. Inevitably, there are inferior British programs, there are below-par episodes in some of their best series. But surely this family feeling hasn't harmed the final product. It's a way of

evoking the kind of esprit that we see only in veteran repertory companies over here, that special unity that pulls divergent personalities together in the interests of good theatre.

We who toil in television over here do not see ourselves as a band of brothers. And this is our loss. Next time one of the networks, or Public Television, decides to buy 13 weeks of a British drama, it might be a nice afterthought to expand the order. To say, "And send us an English bartender and fifty cases of Scotch."

* * *

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WARNER BROS. TELEVISION

A WARNER COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

TELEVISION'S STATUS SOARING

Americans rate television stations higher than other community institutions such as schools, local government, newspapers, the churches and police, according to the ninth in a series of national public opinion polls conducted by The Roper Organization, Inc., for the Television Information Office. The findings were announced in presentations in April to the National Association of Broadcasters convention.

From 1959 to 1974 television's score — the percentage considering its performance excellent or good — rose from 59 to 71 per cent, while schools dropped from 64 to 50 per cent, newspapers declined from 64 to 58 per cent and local government fell from 44 to 35 per cent. Asked about for the first time in the 1974 study, churches posted 66 per cent and police 65 per cent.

— Television increased its lead as the most believable, compared with 20 per cent for its nearest competitor, newspapers.

— Television was cited as the source of most news by a record percentage, 65 per cent, with 47 per cent naming newspapers.

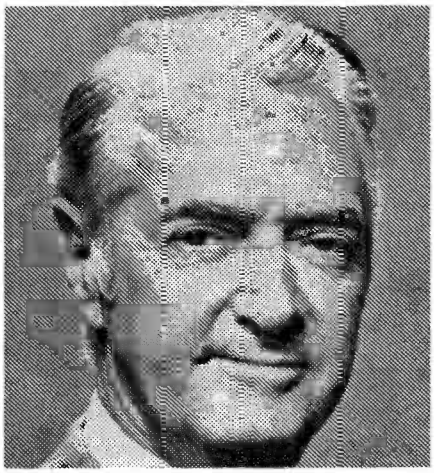
— A larger percentage than ever before (81 per cent) voiced opposition to government control over TV news.

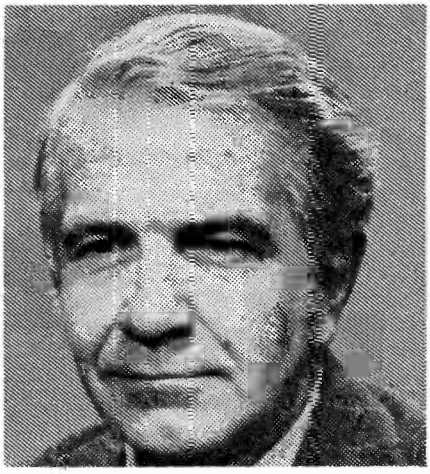
— A record percentage (41 per cent) expressed the belief that there should be less government control over television programs. More than one-third (36 per cent) feels that the present amount of government control over programs is "about right."

— The principle of having commercials on children's programs is endorsed by an increasing majority, 63 per cent.

— Interest in Pay Television declined from 24 to 20 per cent.

On the ABC Evening News the facts speak for themselves. So do the commentators.





The ABC Evening News with Howard K. Smith and Harry Reasoner

Weeknights

abc

WHAT'S LIGHT, QUICK! CHEAP — AND REVOLUTIONARY ?

By Ray Popkin

The home viewer may not have noticed, but there has been a quiet revolution in television. It was set in motion by the half-inch portable tape recorder. Its ease of operation has persuaded some stations to eliminate film altogether. And why not, if a news event occurring at 5:45 p.m. can be shown on the six o'clock news?

When these "porta-pak" units, as they are technically known, first appeared, reaction in the industry was mixed. Some saw the unit as the New Wave in television; others looked upon it as an amusing toy for novices. Those who first divined the magic properties of the porta-pak were, for the most part, outside the mainstream, seeking a way in. The scoffers were the old establishment hands, willing to string along with 16mm film or a bulky PCP color camera.

With the addition of a Time Base Corrector (TBC) a new system of information gathering was born. It is known as Electronic News Gathering (ENG). A newsman (or newswoman) can go forth with as little as twenty-five pounds of equipment, and record audio as well as color video, all under *battery power*. Best of all, these units cost less than $7000.

Put on the market in 1973, the Time Base Corrector is as important to the world of portable video as the tape recorder was to television as a whole. Before the TBC, the signal was so unstable it was almost impossible to cast. It even went poorly through the CATV systems which have less exacting requirements. The TBC measures the lines in the picture and the space between them. Then, through a complicated electronic process, the lines are made even and lo! a splendid broadcast signal. Quick, handy and cheap. Its effects are bound to be revolutionary.

One of the first groups to test the TBC was the bold, pioneer outfit that calls itself TVTV. Translation: Top Value Television. Under Michael Shamburg's direction, the group produced its maiden documentary, *Lord of the Universe*. The title figure was the 15-year-old Guru from India, Maharah Ji. Several crews, using half-inch black and white porta-paks, followed the Guru and his cult across the country, covering his public sessions. The grand climax was the Guru's festival at the Astrodome in Houston. Final editing was made on a two-inch system. Result was a high clarity documentary shown on PBS stations coast to coast, and honored with an Alfred I. du Pont Award.

Concurrent with the development of the TBC was a color porta-pak system. Suddenly major stations were putting aside their bulky remote units and using $3000 color cameras. Today Electronic News Gathering is generally accepted, with some 40 stations using this light, quick equipment.

Nobody advocates use of these small units for studio production, but they are as capable as 10mm film for fast news. Those who claim that processed half-inch video tape can't be telecast on the network should harken to the experience of WNET, New York. Besides the show on Guru Maharaj Ji, four others have gone out on half-inch tape.

First there was *Cuba, The People*, produced by the Downtown Community TV Center in Manhattan, in cooperation with WNET. The crew used a new portable system from Japan, the Akai. At that time it was not available in this country. The complete system — case, video tape recorder, camera, brace battery and AC power supply — cost under $7000.

At about this time, KSD-TV in St. Louis began using this Akai system for fast-breaking news. The station bought a good camera, a microwave equipped van and live action remotes became a staple of the daily news programs. News crews are now using the camera with Akai VTS portable recorders which use — incredibly — quarter-inch tape. Total weight for camera and recorder is twenty-two pounds.

The portable system may be said to have "arrived" when it finally invaded the White House. There, ceremoniously lined up, were the lights and cameras of all the networks. And there were the TVTV "freaks," as they call themselves, with their midget equipment. TVTV had set up shop to produce the highly unconventional series, *Gerald Ford's America.*

For old-style Establishment hands, there were three shocks at once: Novices, young and scruffy, in the White House, a woman manning one camera, and a total absence of film. A network man told the TVTV crew that since they had not contributed to the lighting pool, they would have to "pay up or shut down." What the network crew didn't know, at that time, is that the porta-pak, under these conditions, required no special lights.

Fascinated by their surroundings, the Top Value crew shot everything in sight, including the back of President Ford. Three controversial programs resulted, all shown on PBS. At one point, the porta-pak went through a receiving line, capturing every frown, raised eyebrow and

muttered aside.

This time around the Top Value crew used the new Sony portable, with its three-quarter-inch cassette system. Somewhat more sophisticated than others, (it has an automatic editing console) this unit costs $12,000.

Recently I paid a visit to WMAL-TV in Washington to examine the ENG system. What I found was most impressive.

For WMAL, the system is operated by Milt Wishard, a 23-year veteran of television. He told me that some of the pictures he gets with the portable unit surpass much of the film he sees. Moreover, he feels that the sound is invariably superior to that recorded by film crews. Bad results with a porta-pak, he said, could usually be attributed to improper handling.

Viewing some of the video clips recently run on WMAL-TV, I was struck by the fine quality of the skin tones and the generally good detail. There were clips of a recent plane crash in the Blue Ridge Mountains. They were shot in rain and snow, under adverse conditions. Results were first-rate. Only bad scene was an interview lit by a "sun gun," which turned faces bright orange.

A cable systems operator fifty miles from Washington says he cannot tell the difference, on his screen, between the filmed and the video taped segments. This is the clinching argument that may cause considerable controversy within the industry. There's no denying the convenience, speed and economy of the porta-pak systems. But there's resistance to it in some quarters.

In California, unions representing film crews and video technicians are already locking horns. Film editors are now taking quick courses in video editing. Old-fashioned film makers are learning to use the new hardware.

Adherents of the film-is-best school now have one strong argument on their side. In a recent study called *Preserving the Moving Image,* published by the National Endowment for the Arts, author Ralph Sargent states that if you wish to preserve video tape material it is best to transfer it to film.

No one really knows how long tape will endure in storage. It's extremely susceptible to temperature, humidity and a strange phenomenon known as "print-through." This means that the image on one wind of tape will somehow be transferred to an adjacent wind. Some tapes "shed" so badly after two years that they cannot be played. It would also be impossible to copy them. Film, therefore, offers the only permanence.

Tape quality is improving all the time, and the tape of tomorrow may achieve archival quality. Stable Life estimates now range from three to twelve years. Old tapes in storage should be checked periodically. If a white powder is visible, make new copies at once. Sometimes, as in life, the magnetic charges simply lose their magnetism.

Tape Tips

- Always keep tape in its plastic bag and box.
- Keep tapes out of the sun, car trunks, and rain showers.
- Keep tapes away from heaters.
- Keep tapes away from sources of dirt especially *cigarettes.*
- Work in a dust free environment.
- When taping outside make sure deck is covered.
- Do not squeeze or pinch the reels together, nor drop or throw them.
- Store tapes in closed cabinets.
- Store tapes at 72° and 50% humidity.
- Store tapes away from electric wires and motors.
- Store tapes upright, not on flat side.
- Before storing tapes, wind them out to the end and then rewind them.
- Wind and rewind tapes at least once a year.
- Wind and rewind tapes at least once before using. (This removes rough spots in the oxide left during manufacture that will cause dropout.)

* * *

An authority on the technology of broadcasting, Ray Popkin is Associate Editor of TELE-Visions, official publication of the Washington, D.C. Community Center.

Mr. Popkin is co-director of the Center and consultant in video training.

* * *

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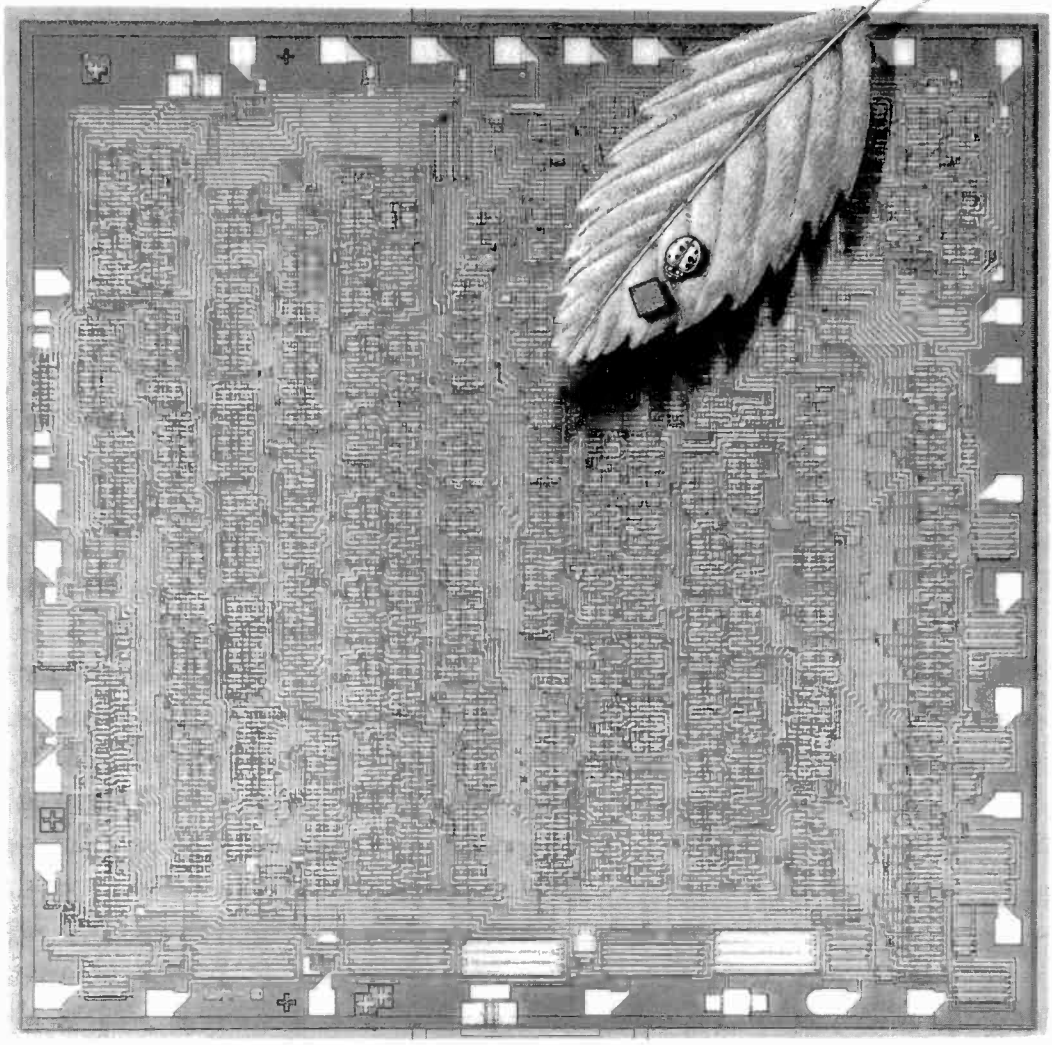

The electronic way

RCA

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT OF THE FREE PRESS

By Arthur R. Taylor
President, Columbia Broadcasting System

American journalism, of which CBS News is among the leaders, is a vigorous and successful practitioner of free expression. We in journalism also have been vigorous and successful practitioners of free enterprise since before the birth of Adam Smith. In fact, this is a birthday of sorts. It was on this very day in 1704 — predating the Industrial Revolution — that the first regularly issued American newspaper, the *Boston Newsletter,* began publication. Today, from that single newspaper, the nation's press has burgeoned into an extensive and extremely diverse industry of 1,750 daily newspapers, 8,000 weekly newspapers, over 7,000 broadcasting stations and 22,000 periodicals of all types. Clearly, journalism has thrived under our free enterprise system. This may be why we in journalism are especially sensitive to the increasing efforts from many quarters — but mostly from government — to limit the freedoms we have under that system.

This then is the focus of what I shall talk about today: the social contract of the free press.

In these years of bicentennial celebration, we are acutely conscious that the liberties won for us by the Founding Fathers 200 years ago are an integral part of the unique character of this nation. Without any one of them, this would be a different nation and we a different people.

Indeed, one can trace the progression of American ideals from the earliest settlements through the Revolution by the development of the free press. The very first attempt to publish an American newspaper in the colonies took place in Boston in 1690 — even before the *Boston Newsletter.* That first paper was quickly suppressed by the colonial authorities. No one at that time was permitted to operate a printing press without a license from the Crown, and that first newspaper had no license.

For those autocratic authorities understood that their rule was threatened by the free flow of ideas. As Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia, wrote in 1671: "I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred year." For learning, the Governor lamented, has brought such things as disobedience and heresy into the world, and "printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."

Three hundred years later, and 200 since the American colonies became a nation, we congratulate ourselves that we have come so far from the authoritarian and elitist ideas of Governor Berkeley and his friends. But have we?

The answer is not all that clear. Just how committed are we as a people to the idea of a free press? There are, to be sure, some positive signs of commitment. The Supreme Court refused to allow the government to impose prior restraint on the press's right to publish the Pentagon Papers — that prior restraint that was the same authoritarian principle that pre-Revolutionary journalists risked life and fortune to abolish. And the role of newspapers and broadcasting in exposing Watergate and bringing most of its participants to justice has been widely recognized. At the same time, we have been engaged in a broad process of defining and reexamining the role of journalism in our society. And, thanks to the impact of broadcast journalism, the press now is part of the life of every American.

Unfortunately, on the way to achievement of that vital role, we have seen a simultaneous and more ominous trend develop. On the surface, things look good. We see a national press that has developed in 200 years from a handful of feeble and often scurrilous weeklies into the world's most diverse, responsible and comprehensive system of journalism. We see polls that show the American people maintaining a high rate of confidence and trust in what they read in their newspapers and see and hear in the broadcast press.

And yet, an essential ingredient is lacking. Those of us who are connected with journalism have the disquieting feeling that, while we have won the attention of the public, and the confidence of the public, we have not won the support or the respect of much of the public. The people in record numbers watch us, and listen to us, and read us, and believe what we say. But many do not particularly like us, or — worse — they do not appreciate the importance of our function to a democratic society. We have sold advertising and newspapers, but we have not sold the importance of our mission to many of our countrymen.

We are all familiar with disquieting signs of this attitude: Mr. Agnew's attacks on the media found a ready response among many of our countrymen. There were, to my mind, lamentably few cries of protest from the general public when Administration officials, seeking to control the

news, made thinly disguised threats against the licenses of broadcasters and against newspapers owning broadcasting stations.

Now we have an unprecedented flood of subpoenas, contempt citations and gag orders directed at journalists and news organizations by government officials at the federal, state and local levels — and still no public protest. One wonders, if the inevitable friction between the press and the state ever boiled to a showdown, would public support stand behind a free press?

Considering the many indications of public hostility to the press, one must ask: Are we really as far removed from Governor Berkeley's state of mind as we think we are? Is the First Amendment as firmly lodged in the Bill of Rights as we imagine? And if not, what can we do about it? For let there be no mistake about one axiom of democracy: A free society cannot exist without a free press, and a free press cannot exist unless the people it serves wish it to be free. That is the social contract of the free press.

I am convinced that, at the root of this hostility is the very function of a free press. For living with a free press is, if you will permit the analogy, much like some marriages. You may love your spouse, but that does not prevent you from making each other miserable at times. And the cornerstone of press freedom and other freedoms — the First Amendment — cuts both ways. The very freedoms that it grants also carries with them responsibilities and decisions — painful, frustrating responsibilities and decisions both for the press and the public.

We ought not to forget that the First Amendment grew out of a spontaneous demand for specific guarantees to ensure that the Founding Fathers were not simply trading tyranny abroad for tyranny at home.

When the Constitution went to the state ratifying conventions, with no specific guarantee of freedom of the press and other personal freedoms, the people rose up and demanded those guarantees. Particularly, they wanted assurance that the press would be wholly free, to act as a buffer between the governors and the governed.

The First Amendment was unpopular from the beginning with many politicians. And it became increasingly unpopular with the bar and the bench. For those in authority soon saw that, with a free press, they would be held to public accountability — that their performance would perhaps be found lacking. The result has been a steady erosion of the First Amendment, through court decisions and through political maneuvering, from that crystalline meaning of 1789 to the point that now the First Amendment has become somewhat muddied — not only less than absolute, but constantly threatened by further limitation.

With the passage of time, public appreciation, too, of what the First Amendment means has gradually diminished in this country. Not long ago, a CBS News poll confirmed anew that there is little strong support among the American public for the Bill of Rights. Polls and studies by social

scientists have demonstrated, again and again, that if this vital charter of our liberties were submitted as legislation today, it might not become law. A standard Fourth of July feature story on some newspapers is to send a reporter around with a copy of the Bill of Rights, unlabeled, and ask people to sign it as a petition. The equally standard result is that many Americans will have nothing to do with a document that is so revolutionary, and no doubt subversive.

This contemporary hostility toward the press has surfaced in a number of ways. Letters to the newspapers, and to the news departments of the networks frequently complain that only negative, unhappy news is printed and broadcast. The recurring cry in these letters is "Why don't you tell what's right about America, what's good about our people and our government, instead of what's wrong?"

The answer, simply, is that this is not the function of a free press. The press is there to tell the people what is most newsworthy and vital and important to them — whether good or bad. As a matter of fact, we report a great deal of good news, but the press is not a cheering section for those who make our decisions. We are a world power, and as such our leaders in government and industry are faced with decisions that are more difficult and carry more import than those faced by the leaders of most countries. Thus, there are many more opportunities to make mistakes. We report the mistakes, and the right moves too. For that is the only way our free people can make intelligent decisions about how they want their country to be run.

Because of this, it is evident why the Vietnam War considerably deepened public hostility toward the press. There were many who viewed as somehow unpatriotic the revelations of the massacre at My Lai, and the steady exposure of events in Vietnam that were either suppressed or lied about by our government.

In the wake of the 1968 Democratic Convention here in Chicago, many who saw the violent, ugly events on television blamed not the participants in those events — the protestors seeking to disrupt the convention or the police seeking to quell the protests. Instead, they blamed the press, which was doing what it is supposed to do, and doing it remarkably well. But people were angry because television had exposed so vividly an ugly side of American life.

Many people, in fact, appearing to resent reporting of the turbulent 60's in general — the anti-war movement, the student riots, the rise of the counterculture, the struggle for civil rights. They would have, I am afraid, just as soon not known what was going on. Now I concede to you that this coverage may have had its faults, but overall no major social movement in American history has ever been so thoroughly and so accurately reported. However, because television, especially, brought an unprecedented number of people into close visual contact with an unpleasant world which they

previously had known only indirectly, they lashed back in their fear and confusion — not always at the participants in the drama — but rather at the messengers who brought them the bad news.

Today, in the immediate aftermath of Watergate, there are many Americans who are sincerely convinced that the American press conspired to "get" Richard Nixon. They disregard the demonstrable fact that, throughout his entire previous political career, Mr. Nixon was supported editorially by two-thirds of the nation's print press. But when the facts of Watergate began to appear, the press had no alternative but to report them. Finally, those facts became so overwhelming that even Mr. Nixon's allies on the Judiciary Committee said that they would vote for impeachment.

Obviously, the nation's press is not entirely blameless for the chasm of misunderstanding that seems to have grown up between it and some of our countrymen. There are, too often, abuses that exist in the highly competitive and extremely non-exact science of journalism. For example, there are places where greater self-discipline, restraint or taste need to be exercised. Mistakes are made, as they are in every other institution. But journalists must be even more ready to recognize and admit their mistakes than government and business, because while government and business operate in the public arena, journalism *is* the public arena.

Journalists must listen to criticism, no matter what the source, while still retaining the right to final independence of judgment. They must not only listen, but act. They must strive to ensure that their standards of reporting keep pace with the ever-growing complexity of issues and events. Their responsibility is to remain educated, professional and informed.

Given all these efforts, and no matter how fairly and accurately the news is reported, someone still is going to think that it is biased and unfair. There are some press critics who think journalists lack historical perspective, but historical perspective is not an easy thing to attain, and as a student and teacher in history, I know that there are many historians who lack such perspective. Such criticism is all the more reason for journalists to strive even harder toward the ideal of objectivity, even while realizing that it is impossible to achieve completely. This is a worthwhile goal, but a very elusive undertaking.

The stakes are very large in the struggle to make the press more worthy of the First Amendment which protects it, and more worthy of the general confidence and respect which so many Americans now withhold from it. The need for better communication has never been so urgent in the history of the world. Living with a free press is never easy — it is often painful — it is also vital for our survival. For how else are we to gain the knowledge on which we must base the decisions that enable us to deal with our friends and our enemies? Our free society cannot exist without a free press, and the proof of it lies all about us.

Look beyond our borders. Control of radio and television by government, either wholly or in part, prevails in virtually every country. And nowhere in the world does a free society exist where a free press does not. The reverse is equally true. No authoritarian society, whether of the right or the left, can survive in the glare of a free press. It is no accident that every time one regime overthrows another by force, the very first act of the new government is to silence the opposition press.

Can our press survive the challenges which it faces today? Can it really sustain the confidence and respect of our own people and nurture in them a lasting commitment to the preservation of its freedom?

It is a large order, I grant you, and there may be some historical trends moving against it. There are, however, some encouraging developments to which we can point. Today, as a result of the turmoil of the past few years, journalists now have a much clearer picture of their responsibilities, and what must be done about them. They see their successes and failures in much sharper perspective. And, most important, they still have a relatively free hand — freer than that enjoyed by the press of any other country — not only to preserve the independence and freedom of journalism, but of all Americans.

The responsibility for achieving this goal — popular government with popular information — is a mutual one, between press and public, between press and governnent. We must all rise to this social contract and continuously prove ourselves worthy of it, or we will lose it. It will be lost if we are not mature enough and willing enough to understand and accept its demanding consequences. For freedom is not always lost by violent revolution. It can be lost by simple lack of vigilance, and by our failure to prevent it from being nibbled away in the night.

Once we let the lights go out, it is always more difficult to turn them on.

* * *

The foregoing article is adapted from an address by Arthur L. Taylor, President of CBS, Inc., delivered in April before the Economic Club of Chicago.

* * *

AN OPEN REPLY TO DAVID YELLIN

from The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences

I believe that open letters are entitled to open replies, therefore: Dear Mr. Yellin, thanks for your open letter. At first I found myself somewhat indignant that you recommend that the Television Academy undertake an activity in which it has been engaged for more than ten years. After more sober reflection, however, I decided that it was a comfort to know that others share our concern for the retrieval and preservation of television programs. What matters is that this difficult undertaking is well publicized and your letter has helped to do that.

We've been at this collecting business for about fifteen years. Our Board authorized the establishment of an Academy archival library as far back as 1956 but it took us five or more years to lay plans, to wrestle with the problems of criteria and to discover that we had committed ourselves to a most expensive and demanding goal. Nevertheless, those of us dedicated to the value, importance and need for such a collection refused to be discouraged so that as of today we have more than 4000 titles catalogued, stored on shelves with many in daily use.

Perhaps a little history would be helpful here not only in answer to your letter but also for those who will be reading your letter and mine. After a few false starts it was decided that the best environment for housing such a library would be a college or university campus where it could be employed by many academic disciplines as well as by scholars, researchers, graduate students and the industry itself. The choice was the University of California at Los Angeles since virtually all entertainment production was then and is now located in Hollywood and its neighboring communities.

Accordingly, in December of 1965 a contract between UCLA and the Academy's Foundation was signed the essence of which was to agree that an archival library of television programs, memorabilia and artifacts would be housed on its campus, supervised by university personnel and financed by both parties.

Today it is acknowledged that the NATAS/UCLA television library is the largest private collection of its kind in the United States and its growth

is really just beginning. But despite having accomplished this much against great odds and even greater apathy, we recognize that we've only scratched the surface and that we need dollars, man-power, publicity and industry support to fulfill our ambitions.

I'm not surprised that you didn't know of this effort; not enough people do. We've tried to publicize it professionally, we've tried to interest Foundations in providing us with some funding, we've even approached the FCC and certain members in Congress for federal help. We've held press conferences, arranged for trade paper interviews, written countless letters, retained fund-raising specialists and solicited active participation from the networks. The results, I'm sorry to say, have been negligible. Our research reveals that too many executives in television are skeptical about the need for such a collection. They maintain that if it was that important the three commercial networks would have established such a library long ago. They ignore the fact that after more than 50 years the motion picture industry still doesn't have either its own or a national archive. Fortunately, the American Film Institute is at work retrieving long hidden or "lost" prints and negatives and is rescuing them from oblivion. We may be almost as late as the motion picture industry but in a very short time and with very little money and no more than a handful of concerned people, a library exists and it's one that already enjoys a steady stream of customers — approximately 1000 screenings since July, 1974, not to mention requests for information, for prints and for group screenings from Junior and Senior High School teachers.

As I said earlier, we soon discovered that this would be a formidable task for which neither we nor UCLA could provide the necessary resources to do a thorough and well organized campaign of retrieval. Ironically, our largest donors have been major advertisers on television. Two, in particular, have turned over to us a complete collection of programs they sponsored over many years; Hallmark has given us 167 of their distinguished Hall of Fame presentations while only recently Alcoa presented us with 234 hours and half-hours.

But, as a late movie mogul is reported to have said, "We've only scraped the top of the barrel" which is to say that there are many more major dramatic program series which should be acquired if, hopefully, they still exist. It would be a pity if such outstanding properties as Philco Playhouse, Kraft Theatre, Producer's Showcase, United States Steel Hour, Playhouse 90, Climax and many more have been lost or destroyed. No collection could be considered complete without programs of this caliber.

This is why, Mr. Yellin, I share your sense of urgency; this is why I'm delighted that you wrote to us. To expedite our growth, we've committed ourselves to a policy of accepting anything and everything offered. It goes without saying that at this point selectivity is a luxury we can't afford.

As far as I'm personally concerned, there is nothing to compare with

television's ability to mirror our times, nothing that can be as valuable historically, nothing having greater academic values as television. I only wish that I had more time to devote to expansion but at the same time our Foundation should be grateful to have Dr. Ruth Schwartz, an Associate Professor at UCLA, as our curator. No single person has given as much time and effort; no single person has had the same devotion to what was once a project destined to fail. She and several of her colleagues have been generous with their time and most helpful with their counsel.

True, there are problems yet to be solved before we can lay claim to a clear, fast track. Most important of these are copyrights and union and guild restrictions. I'm confident that these can be solved. After all, we guarantee that no print or tape will be allowed to leave the campus and no broadcast or public screenings are allowed. Also, any donor who wants to have his contribution returned need only to notify us accordingly and it will be sent to him post haste.

To reinforce your views, I join you by saying that what is desperately needed is an awareness that we cannot afford to ignore this potentially great national resource — and the time is *now* because each day that passes could mean another 24 hours of deterioration or of destruction of tapes and prints which should be a part of our collection.

In one way or another, the Academy Foundation will find some money and will enlist the voluntary services of eager and interested manpower. What we need the most of are those programs which are in private hands gathering dust on closet shelves, in attics and in basements, serving no useful purpose. If only a small percentage of the programs in network warehouses could be obtained. If the motion picture studios and independent production companies would give us one single episode from all of the series produced by them — well, we could reach a new plateau; perhaps as many as 10,000 titles in a matter of months.

Again, my thanks to you on behalf of the Academy and its Foundation for your interest and concern. We welcome you to the ranks and, with your permission, will seek your counsel.

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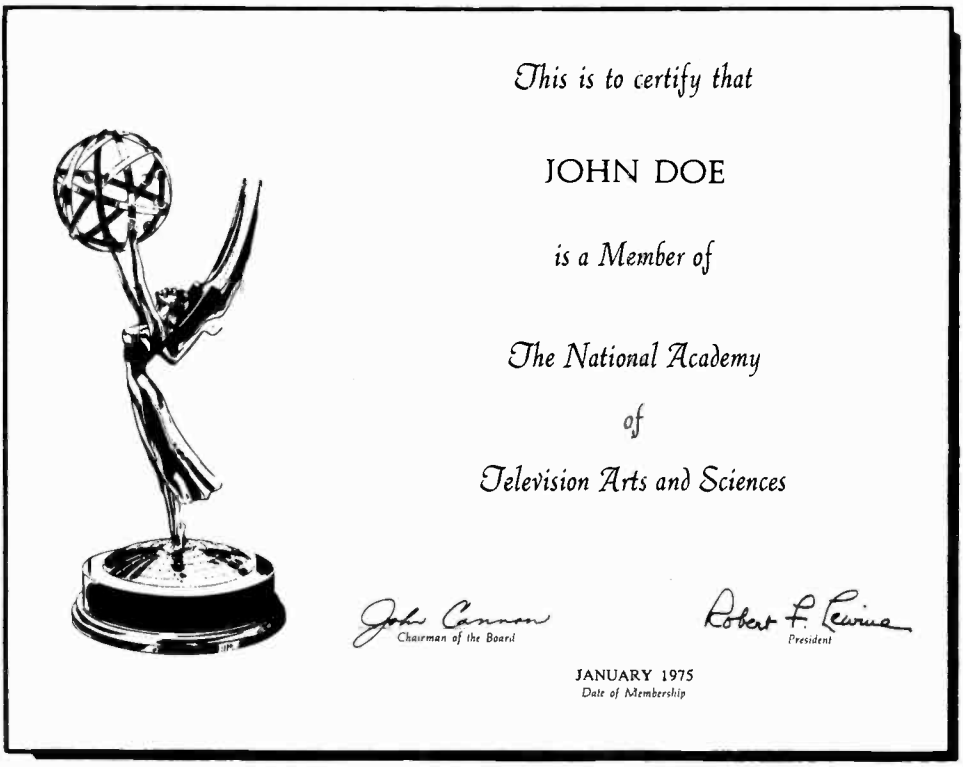

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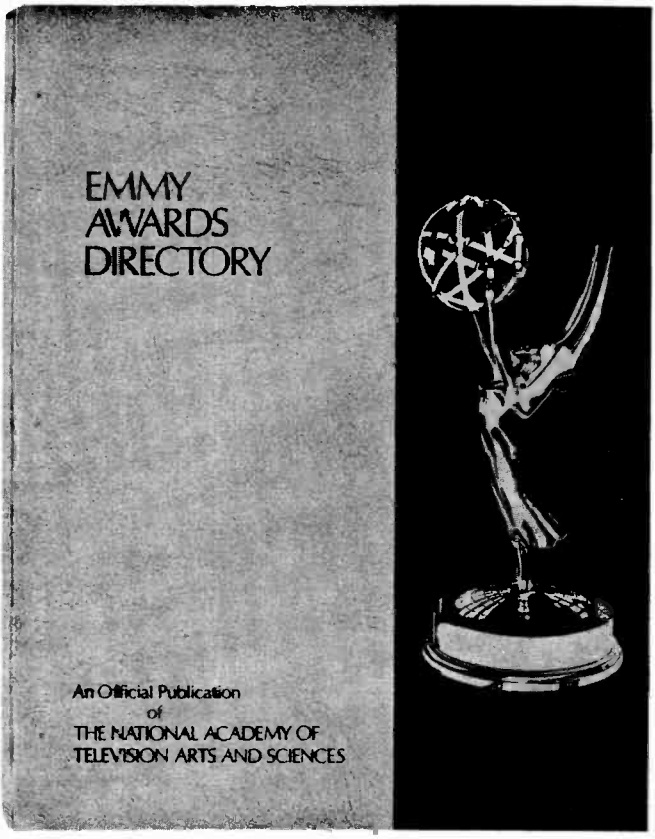

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