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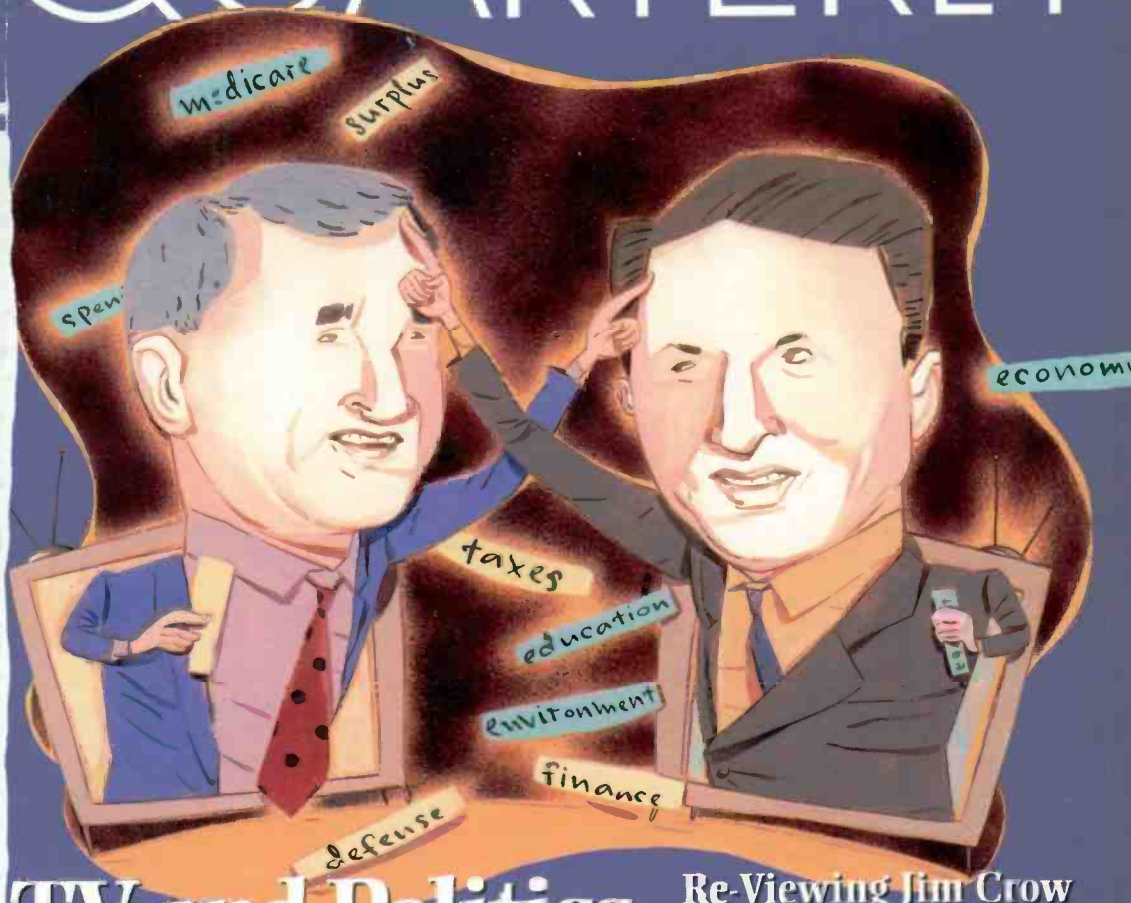

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A Shotgun Marriage
BY ED FOUHY

Re-Viewing Jim Crow
BY STEVEN D. CLASSEN

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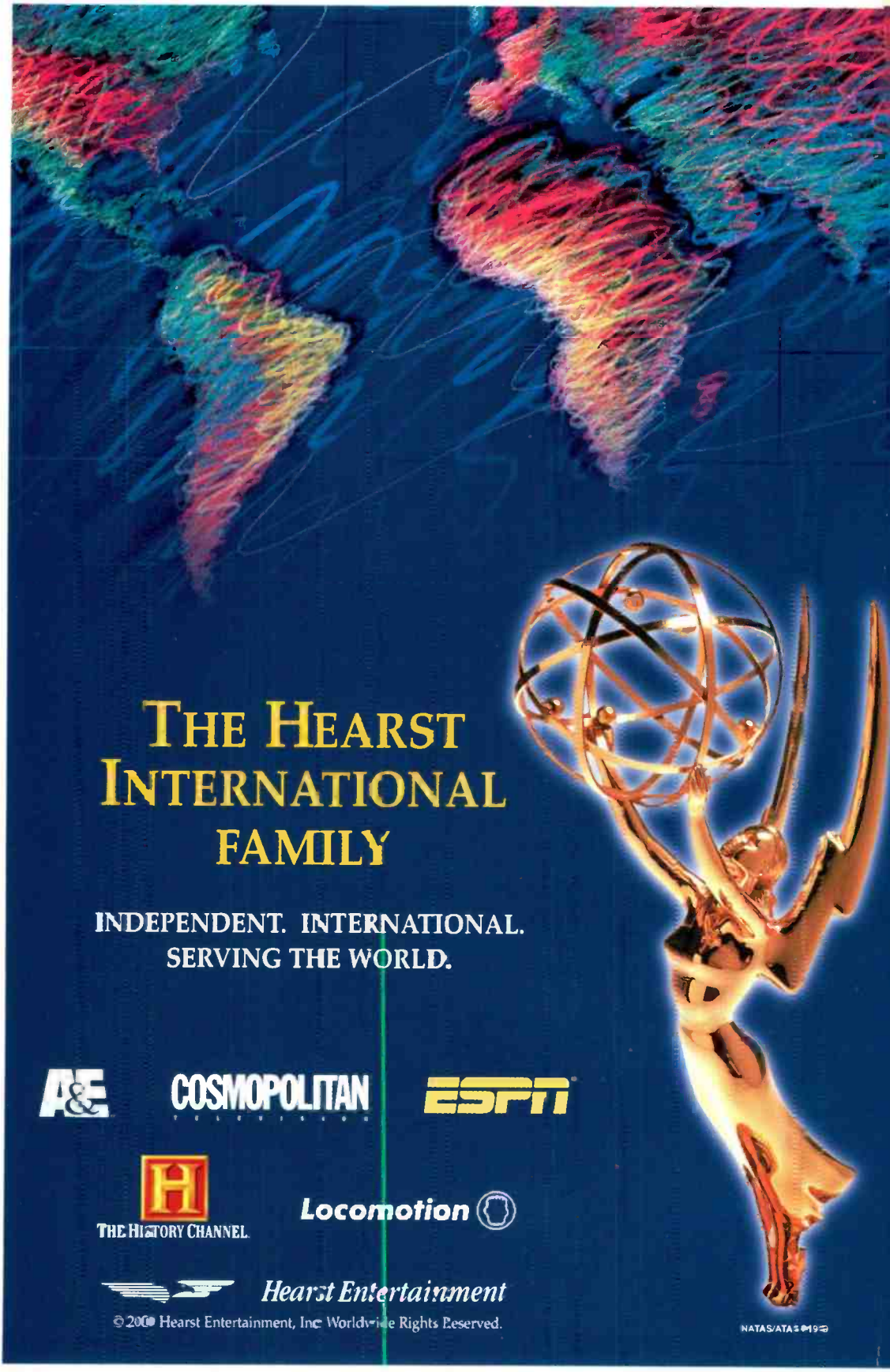

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Cover illustration by Amanda Duffy

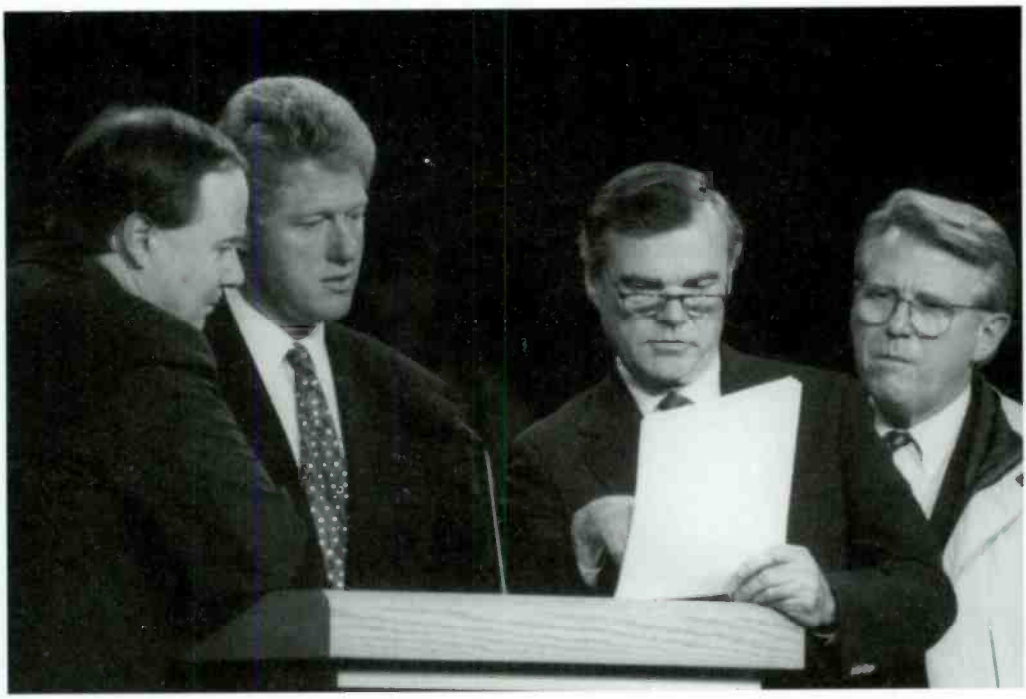
Television and National Politics: A Shotgun Marriage

Like any marriage, it's had its good days and its bad. Unlike a good marriage, neither party trusts the other. | **By Ed Fouhy**

It was a blue Monday in October 1992 and the weather reflected my mood. As executive producer of the Presidential debates I had just flown to Atlanta from St. Louis, site of the first debate. It had been lively debate; it was the first time President George Bush, challenger Bill Clinton and the sharp-tongued Texan Ross Perot had shared a stage. But I was gloomy because of what had happened with network coverage. CBS, the network of Murrow and Cronkite, had opted to skip the debate and instead carry a baseball game. ABC had suffered a computer glitch that kept their viewers' screens black for seven agonizing seconds, an eternity in network television.

As a veteran network producer I was certain that it wouldn't matter that the debate had been flawless from a production point of view, and serious and animated from a substance standpoint, if the ratings had taken a dive then as surely as the sun rises in the east, somebody would be looking for the producer's head. And I figured the ratings would be down because I had seen over the years how serious public-affairs television could be buried when counter-programmed by sports or entertainment shows.

As I walked through one of the Atlanta Airport's endless piers, my eye was drawn to the headline in the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution*. "Debate Beats Baseball" it



The author (second from right) briefing candidate Bill Clinton before the Presidential debate at Michigan State University in 1992 with (left to right) advisor Tom Donilon, Mr. Clinton and Presidential Campaign Advisor Frank Greer.

screamed, in a kind of wonderment. The ratings were in and they showed that despite the computer glitch and the ball game, TV viewers by the millions had spent 90 minutes with the three candidates for President. My head felt a bit more settled on my shoulders.

The response to the first debate foreshadowed viewer behavior over the next ten days as the succeeding debates set new records for the numbers of viewers, a record that still stands.

Even before the era when mass audiences began to decline, thanks to the inroads of cable and the other competitors for Americans' leisure time, television and national politics have been uneasy partners. It's been a shotgun marriage. Neither is comfortable with the other. Like any marriage it's had its good days and its bad. Unlike a good marriage, neither party trusts the other.

But the fact is that for the last 50 years if you were a politician looking for support, for name recognition, for validation, in short, looking for votes, the place to be was on television, because tv is where people spend their time . The camera has a kind of x-ray vision. It reveals, over time, the phonies, the crooks, the tongue-tied, the dissemblers, the incompetents.

There is a cemetery of the politically ambitious full of those who thought they could manipulate the medium. The headstones bear names like Agnew, Romney, Carter, Dukakis, Clinton. All sooner or later were found wanting by the all-seeing eye. In a memorable exegesis after the '84 campaign a bewildered Walter Mondale said, "If I had known how important TV was, I would have tried harder to master it."

But if television has been tough on the ambitions of some of our leaders, it has also been a sentinel and spotlight for the rest of us. Television is the closest thing we

have to what the Greeks called the agora, the public square where citizens once met to hash out the issues of self-government that arise in a democracy.

Barbara Cochran, president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association, remembers her first encounter with a television set. It wasn't watching *Howdy Doody*; it was sitting with her grandfather, a conservative Ohio Republican, watching the 1952 Republican convention. He was saddened when the convention chose the war hero Dwight Eisenhower as its candidate over the party stalwart Robert Taft. For her it was the beginning of a lifelong love affair with both politics and television.

"From the beginning it [television] was very powerful," she says looking back over nearly a half century. "It opened up the process."

David Burke, former president of CBS News and once a political horse whisperer, for Senator Ted Kennedy in Mary McGrory's elegant phrase, agrees with Cochran. "Politics was closed. You couldn't see for yourself. A handful of people were the funnel through which all news of politics passed." He dates the change to 1970 when television began to grow more sophisticated about politics.

It certainly wasn't sophisticated back in 1960 when the dashing and oh-so-telegenic junior senator from Massachusetts, John Kennedy, won the Democratic nomination, then took on and defeated Richard Nixon in the series of debates orchestrated by CBS's Frank Stanton. Nixon, with his famously sweating upper lip, had thought he was the master of television based on his boffo performance in the famous 1952 Checkers speech that saved his place on the Republican ticket. But a slapdash makeup job and a slight but nagging sense that Nixon wasn't comfortable in his own skin turned off viewers of the first debate from WBBM-TV's Chicago studios. Nixon couldn't recover in the subsequent debates.

In 1968 I was at the Hilton Hotel in Chicago covering for CBS News when antiwar protestors clashed with Mayor Richard J. Daley's Chicago police in the fiercest street battle of that chaotic year. Television pictures of that bloody police riot, as the Kerner Commission later labeled it, probably cost Hubert Humphrey the election. The pictures certainly changed the way political parties structured their conventions from that day to this. Gone is any element that might produce conflict and therefore, news. The conventions are now largely sterile affairs, three-day love-ins. The parties put on a show of unity, showcasing their most attractive members to a generally small and non-responsive audience. Senator John McCain, speaking to Gail Collins of *The New York Times* last June about this summer's Republican convention was forthright, "It'll be total boredom, I hope."

Network news divisions, which once competed fiercely for the smallest scrap of convention news, have gradually gotten out of the convention coverage business. They find little news there and have been leaving all but an hour of prime time coverage to the all-news cable operations.

In a sense the conventions are devoid of drama and backroom deals because the cameras are there; the ghost of Hubert Humphrey haunts both parties.

For Corcoran, as for others, the single most important way in which television has influenced politics is in opening up what were once smoke- filled rooms. The

The camera has a kind of x-ray vision. It reveals, over time, the phonies, the crooks, the tongue-tied, the dissemblers, the incompetents.

Nowhere has the uneasy partnership between television and politics been more far-reaching than in the final act of the political cycle, Election Day...The networks invented exit polls that have since become the single most important means we have for figuring out why voters behave the way they do.

TV public simply didn't understand why they couldn't be in the room when candidates were being nominated, rules written, deals cut. "TV made politics more democratic. It made it possible for the ordinary voter to feel like an insider," she says.

But is that feeling of being an insider real or an illusion? Sure television brings much of the nominating process for presidential candidates into our homes. C-Span's "Road to the White House" program trains its cameras on candidates, recording their banal greetings to voters going through reception lines at New Hampshire fund raisers a year before the political conventions, for example. But viewers get a staged view of the process. The public face candidates put on for television rarely slips. The reality is more nuanced than the camera reveals when the lens is capped.

But Burke, who has seen both politics and television up close, says the public is good at discounting in the marketplace of ideas.

He remembers the JFK White House when people had to wait for *Time* or *Newsweek* to come in the mail to get the details on what had happened in the West Wing. "Now you get it ten minutes after it's happened," he says.

Nowhere has the uneasy partnership between television and politics been more far-reaching than in the final act of the political cycle, Election Day. It is a consortium of the television networks and the Associated Press that now count the votes. A far cry from the night in 1960 recalled by veteran broadcast journalist Sander Vanocur when he wrote primary returns on a blackboard at the *Milwaukee Journal* during the Wisconsin Democratic primary. Now a 45,000-member army fans out to get the vote count on election night and feeds high speed computers that tally and display the vote.

NBC and CBS each spent a fortune counting votes in the Rockefeller-Goldwater California primary contest in 1964. Apalled by the cost of counting votes, they formed the News Election Service, along with the Associated Press, to save money.

With that enormous but essentially mechanical task in the hands of the new consortium, they could compete on analysis. For several elections it was NBC's Richard Scammon versus CBS's Warren Mitofsky. They fiercely competed for a few seconds' advantage, the yardstick by which the networks were judged by the morning after critics. They gradually acquired the tools they needed not only to call races based on the vote from key precincts, but also to figure out why this demographic group supported that candidate for President; what the issues were that moved voters to support or oppose a candidate.

Their main tool?

The exit poll.

The networks invented exit polls that have since become the single most important means we have for figuring out why voters behave the way they do. Old timers don't all agree but CBS News retired political director Martin Plissner says credit for

The Presidential debates...bring a huge and diverse nation together as it struggles in a messy, disorderly way with a question of profound importance to a democracy: Who will govern us?

the idea of exit polling should be divided between NBC and CBS— but not equally. The greater share of credit should go to CBS, he says.

Because they measure the opinions of only those Americans who make the effort to vote, unlike the telephone polls news organizations inflict on us each election year, exit polls produce reams of data for broadcast analysts to pore over on election night and to keep political scientists busy digging for deeper meaning until the next election.

So precise have exit polls become that, for better or worse, the results of most races are now known within a few hours, sometimes just a few minutes of the poll's closing. Memories of cliffhanger elections and all-night vigils waiting for returns from the West Coast are distant and fading.

Bill Headline, the former CBS and CNN Washington bureau chief who now runs Voter News Service, successor to NES, presides over a sophisticated news gathering operation that counts votes as well as analyzes them based on from 60-100 sample precincts in every state. The sample is so well drawn, the technique so sure-footed now that Headline could remember only two wrong "calls" out of the hundreds the consortium has made in the last dozen years.

No look at the uneasy embrace of television and politics would be complete without the acknowledgement of the vast, some say dominant, role now played by the cable news channels. CNN, Fox and MSNBC compete with the fervor, if not all the resources, that ABC, CBS and NBC once employed. With 24 hours a day to fill, politics, conventions and elections are welcome grist for the all-news mill. Politics is the perfect long-form story, say journalists. The race for president provides an important, appealing (at least to some) and ever-changing narrative built on conflict, and it's easy to describe in the lexicon of sports or of war and it climaxes in a neat and dramatic winner take all event.

CNN is determined to own this year's election. Fox and MSNBC are just as determined to make their marks. All three seem to be swimming against the tide. An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll published in June showed just 49% of Americans saying they were following the election.

Many are turned off by the relentless negative campaign ads crafted by political consultants, the HIV virus of democracy. A survey of stations in the top 75 television markets by the Washington-based advocacy group Alliance for Better Campaigns found that television and politics now co-exist in a kind of landlord-tenant relationship. Researchers found that the stations in those cities had broadcast 151,000 campaign commercials between January and May and charged $114 million for their time.

But the news departments at the stations had all but abandoned news coverage of politics. Stations in non-primary states such as WBTV, Charlotte, WCAU, Philadelphia and KNBC, Los Angeles had devoted an average of less than one minute per day to campaign coverage. Even stations in hotly contested states such as WHO and KCCI in Des Moines had likewise spent less than a minute a day covering politics.

A nation grown rich, fat and contented, fed by prosperity unequaled in breadth and depth, is not a place where politics is likely

to engage the interests of many citizens. Words like "duty" as in "It's your duty to be informed and to vote" seem to be foreign to large numbers of Americans, including many television executives. They are terrified by falling audiences and at a loss to explain where viewers have gone. One thing they seem certain of is that the ones remaining don't care for politics.

The one exception to the picture of apathy is the presidential debates. Even in the midst of the lackluster '96 campaign, 70 million viewers watched all or part of the debates. Though short of the huge numbers who watched in '92 when the nation was emerging from recession, the '96 debates were the single event that engaged voters. As a recent report from the Joan Shorenstein Center at Harvard said, "The general election debates...meet the 'water cooler' test—the next day millions of people share their impressions of what they saw and heard the night before. These debates are more than just another campaign event. They are an act of community."

Indeed they are. For a few nights every four years television does again what it did in times of past national crisis — Vietnam, Watergate, civil rights — it provides the nation with a common agenda, a shared interest, a sense of national fellowship. It does what only television can do — it brings a huge and diverse nation together as it struggles in a messy, disorderly way with a question of profound importance to a democracy: Who will govern us?

It might be the most important role left for television to play. ■

A five-time Emmy Award winner, Ed Fouhy is executive director of the Pew Center on the States and editor of *stateline.org*, an online news service that covers policy developments in state capitals. During his 23-year career in network news he served as Washington bureau chief and news vice-president for CBS and ABC, and as executive producer for prime-time news magazines at NBC News. He was executive producer of the 1988 and 1992 Presidential debates.

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How Television Forever Changed American Politics

In 1948 Dewey was the harbinger of the future, Truman the last of his kind. | **By Zachary Karabell**

In 1948, something happened that changed forever the way American politics are conducted, something whose effects are still being felt and whose influence is inescapable. In 1948, television cameras were placed in the Philadelphia convention hall and pictures of the most important moment in the election year save Election Day itself were carried by coaxial cable to the 350,000 televisions then in existence. At the time, television was an innocuous oddity. Some people confidently predicted that television was a fad that would never supplant radio. By 1952, it had, and in time it came to dominate public life more than radio ever did.

Was the famous headline right after all?

Famous for the *Chicago Tribune* headline claiming that Dewey had defeated Truman, the election of 1948 was also the last campaign before television became the primary medium of American political life. Now, in 2000, we may be on the verge of another shift, from television to the Internet, but the intervening 52 years has seen a precipitous narrowing of the political spectrum and a shrinkage in the number of options available to voters. Today, we portray a presidential election as a contest between two candidates (or more, during primary season) who square off against one another with the aid of a small circle of advisers. Increasingly, they represent one centrist ideology. Even at their most contested —in 1964 between Johnson

and Goldwater or in 1972 between McGovern and Nixon—modern elections have presented two perspectives, with the occasional, marginalized third-party candidate protesting both. If one believes that a country of hundreds of millions of literate and opinionated souls must have more than two hard-to-differentiate positions, then this evolution is not to be celebrated.

On television today, presidential races are entertainment, and not very good entertainment at that. In 1948, people predicted that a portion of television would go to public service, such as free air time for candidates. That didn't happen. Now, only money gets you on television, and it costs too much to risk spontaneity or passion. Each second costs and counts. And if you don't grab an audience, it has 500 channels and the Internet to turn to at whim. No, television has definitely not led to politics at its richest or fullest.

True, radio in its day was prohibitively expensive, and candidates such as Truman and the Progressive Henry Wallace railed against the high prices charged by radio corporations for time. True, also, that television was only one of several factors that led to a shift away from the straight-talking likes of Harry Truman and toward the packaged candidates and scripted conventions of latter years. The Cold War consensus, the violence of the 1960s and the 1968 Chicago convention, and the change in the nominating process towards front-loaded primaries all contributed to the erosion of political life. But television, and network news coverage especially, bears its share of responsibility.

On television today, presidential races are entertainment, and not very good entertainment.

The development of the so-called "news cycle" has created nearly insurmountable obstacles for anyone who might have had a mind to emulate Truman. Some candidates, most notably John McCain in the spring of 2000, have tried to emulate Truman's plain speaking style. But what no modern candidate has copied is Truman's tendency to smear Dewey and the Republicans, often in extreme language.

Truman's whistle-stop approach was to tailor his message to his audience. That had been the tendency of candidates before Truman, but television cameras and videotape ruin that strategy. Truman could speak to farmers in the Midwest and denounce the "fat cats on Wall Street." He could tell them that the Republicans were going to rob them blind. He'd get a rousing reception, and that would be the end of it. He would know when a speech was to be conveyed on radio, nationally, and most weren't. Newsmen might file a story, but the effect of reading his words is less than the effect of seeing and hearing them.

In short, in the television age, a speech given in one place is a speech given everywhere. That whistle-stop denunciation of the "fat cats" would get taped and then endlessly replayed. The three thousand people to whom the speech was delivered would be won over at the cost of the ten million other voters who would be alienated.

That is a trade-off. On the one hand, television has civilized politics and made them less demagogic. On the other hand, it has led to a surfeit of blandness and innuendo. The result is apathy, but for some, that apathy is preferable to the alternative. When voters today complain about the lack of choice in presidential politics, they often romanticize what those choices would be in an ideal world. In 1948, Strom Thurmond and his Dixiecrats thundered against civil rights and swore to

uphold a Jim Crow South. In reality, more choices mean a greater number of objectionable ideas. That is the trade-off. More option, more engagement, but also more divisions. Fewer options, more consensus, but also less passion and less substance.

Television coverage of elections may be at its most distorting in what it doesn't convey and doesn't show. Watch television for decades, and you'd never know that you were seeing only the tip of the iceberg. Had television been widely used in 1948, you'd never have known about the county volunteers for the Democrats in Chicago wards, or the organizers of the Dixiecrats in segregated Mississippi, or the women who tried so hard to get New Englanders to vote for Henry Wallace. But they were there, as much a part of the campaign as the men in the pictures.

The greatest irony of 1948 is that though Truman waged a scrappy, tough-talking, street-fighting campaign that ultimately overwhelmed the staid, glacial Governor Thomas E. Dewey, 1948 helped create our modern campaign system. While Dewey lost, he set the tone for television candidates of the future. In the immediate aftermath, many voters and commentators said that Dewey never seemed real to them. He appeared packaged and people didn't trust someone who looked to have been molded by professional manages into the perfect facsimile of a candidate.

But of the four men who ran for president in 1948, Dewey was the harbinger of the future, while Truman was the last of his kind. For the final time, a pre-television candidate, one who cultivated an unpolished image, who gave 'em hell and told it like it was, who wasn't above low blows and

While Dewey lost, he set the tone for television candidates of the future.

character assassination, triumphed. For all his rough edges, Truman captured the hearts of voters in1948, and he has since become an icon of honesty, integrity and grit. After the election, Dewey mostly sat on the sidelines, watching events that he had expected to shape. But forces larger than both of them were writing a different script than the one they played out in 1948. The cool, detached Dewey, the packaged candidate who ran so as not to lose, who steered clear of controversy and who made a good show of appearing presidential-that was the model that Americans chose after 1948. "Dewey Defeats Truman," the famous headline, so memorable for being wrong, had it right after all. ■

Zachary Karabell is the author of *The Last Campaign: How Harry Truman Won The 1948 Election*, from which this article is adapted. Copyright © 2000 by Zachary Karabell. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Mr. Karabell is also the author of *Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World, and the Cold War, 1946-1962*. He has just completed *The Seventh Stage: The Coming End of the New Economy and What Lies Ahead*, to be published by HarperCollins in the spring of 2001.

Re-viewing Jim Crow

The battle against broadcast segregation in Jackson, Mississippi | **By Steven D. Classen**

As his rebuttal to the mayor aired on WLBT-TV (Jackson, Mississippi) the evening of May 20, 1963, Medgar Evers was aware of the stakes involved. Already vilified as an agent of integration, communism and all things corrupt, the NAACP field secretary knew he was raising his public profile to a new level, speaking uncensored via the broadcast medium to Mississippians, black and white, for the first time. He had fought long and hard for air time on a station that had blocked virtually all pro-integration voices. And his eloquent comments not only spoke to the inequalities of Jim Crow in Jackson, but to the potentials of broadcasting as a provider of stories and perspectives unsettling to the status quo. Evers noted:

"Tonight the Negro knows from his radio and television ...about the free nations in Africa, and knows that a Congo native can be a locomotive engineer, but in Jackson he cannot even drive a truck. ...Then he looks about his home community and what does he see?...He sees a city where Negro citizens are refused admittance to the City Auditorium and the Coliseum; his children refused a ticket to a good movie in a downtown theater. He sees a city. . . in which there is not a single Negro policeman or policewoman, school crossing guard, fireman, clerk, stenographer, or supervisor employed in a city department"

Some of Evers' allies and close friends felt uneasy watching the NAACP leader on the screen. They knew that those who opposed their local rights movement (the "Jackson movement") would now have a recognizable leader to target—one that could be precisely visualized rather than abstractly imagined.

Within a month of Evers' television address the civil rights leader was assassinated. The killer waited for Evers to arrive home from late night meetings and gunned him down in the driveway of his Jackson home. Some closest to Evers, including his brother Charles, have argued that the 1963 TV appearance prompted the shooting. The local television appearance of an articulate, empowered black leader, they note, was extraordinarily rare and threatening to the segregationist status quo. It marked an access to popular media and the means of public storytelling long denied to black Mississippians. Due

in part to regulatory pressure from Washington, a local black leader was speaking directly to his avowed opponents. Stories of black oppression were being circulated in homes previously segregated from such signals.

Given Evers' already high profile, public courage and incessant civil rights campaigning, many friends of the leader and Jackson movement are reluctant to draw direct causal lines between the June television appearance and Evers' death. Clearly he was a man targeted by white supremacist forces and the recipient of regular death threats before his televised appearance. But even absent causal claims involving television, there is wide consensus that the stakes were high in Evers making his May 1963 appearance. The speech constituted an unusually direct challenge to supremacist segregation via a medium controlled by individuals and institutions invested in blocking just such political attacks.

From their first days of operation, both licensees had strong economic and social ties to the most powerful local institutions of segregation.

Local television came late to Jackson and Mississippi, as the state was one of three forced by FCC policy decisions to wait for available TV licenses until 1953. Before that time there were no operative television transmitters in Mississippi, Arkansas or South Carolina. Early in that year, WJTV-TV, affiliated with the CBS television network, became the Magnolia State's first station. Later in the year WLBT-TV, with a primary NBC, and secondary ABC, affiliation, went on air in Jackson. From their first days of operation, both licensees had strong economic and social ties to the most powerful local institutions of segregation. WJTV was owned by the Hederman family, which also operated Jackson's two daily newspapers, the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger.* Both periodicals were well-known for their long-standing attacks on integration and an unabashed support for an "old fashioned Southern way of life" that pictured Jim Crow practices as natural and normative. The tone and content of the newspapers' editorials addressing racial integration were defiant—vowing to preserve the institutions of segregation, and not infrequently warning of violence and bloodshed that would accompany integrationist activism.

WLBT-TV was owned by the Lamar Life Broadcasting Company, a subsidiary of Lamar Life Insurance Company, which also operated radio stations WJDX and WJDX-FM. The first general manager of WLBT, Fred Beard, was a prominent and particularly outspoken member of Jackson's White Citizens' Council. The Council publicly refuted the tactics and violence espoused by some segregationist groups, favoring a concentration on legal and economic strategies to fight integration. Still, this more "respectable" and "measured" group that included many prominent Jackson businessmen was sometimes called by Evers and other activists "the Klan in suits."

The daily television broadcasts managed by the Beard and Hederman teams were seldom marked by the vitriol of white supremacy seen routinely in the Jackson newspapers, and overall, were not that unusual for local Southern television stations at the time. And certainly, as a 1967 Kerner Commission Study made clear, the problem of race representation in broadcasting was a national problem—not simply regional. The Commission observed that not only was the televised

visibility of African-Americans generally low, but when blacks did appear on the screen they were represented as whites saw them, not as they saw themselves.

But in certain parts of the South, especially as civil-rights conflict and change increased throughout the region, the strategy of omitting or ignoring integrationist black perspectives was particularly marked. Journalists reflecting on that time have observed that audiences often would not have known of civil rights activism within their own cities had not network coverage been broadcast after local news. Ironically, even as Newton Minow and a more liberal FCC pushed the networks for additional news and documentary production addressing issues of importance to the American public, the very regions and audiences "in need" of such programming initiatives were often the least likely to see them broadcast. Several ground breaking network documentaries addressing race relations, integration, civil rights and/or the South, were aired in other markets but shelved away in Jackson.

Fearful of losing sponsors or audience support, stations throughout the South resisted the images and messages communicated by national television, at times going so far as to broadcast disclaimers about the "biased northern news" alongside promotions for "more accurate" local news programming. A significant number of southern affiliates organized for further independence from network and professional relations and adopted official "hands-off" policies toward journalistic treatment of the civil rights fight. In this industrial context, Fred Beard's early sixties memo to his station's staff ordering complete avoidance of programs with references to racial integration or segregation was certainly within the play of regional broadcast politics. For example, years earlier, in the late fifties, Virginia's WAVY-TV had announced as a matter of policy that staff would be forbidden from editorializing, giving an opinion or predicting any future development "relative to the integration issue."

Also, while southern stations carried network affiliations and programming, they often enjoyed the option of choosing prime-time evening fare from virtually any of television's major networks. Carrying a primary affiliation with NBC and a secondary affiliation with ABC, WLBT used this dual affiliation, as well as liberal access to syndicated sources, to offer programming that was, in the eyes of its managers, less "controversial," or less likely "to increase tensions." Such creative scheduling and program juggling further facilitated the often routinized practice of omitting integrationist or black perspectives.

Stations throughout the South resisted the images and messages communicated by national television.

However, the rhetoric and zeal of Jackson's segregationist television managers, as well as their strategy of completely blocking almost all broadcast African-American voices in a city that was more than forty percent black, invited further scrutiny from regulators and reformers.In 1955 a NAACP complaint against WLBT-TV quoted manager Beard publicly boasting of cutting off a NBC *Home* program segment featuring Thurgood Marshall and disguising the intentional interruption as a technical problem with a televised "Sorry, Cable Trouble" sign. After soliciting station comment, the FCC took no significant action against WLBT. Evoking the Commission's fairness doctrine in 1957, Medgar Evers petitioned WLBT and the FCC in response to an airing of an impor-

tant panel talk show on school integration, asking that black Mississippians, rather than three white men, be given airtime to express "what the Negro wants and doesn't want" regarding this problem. The station and Commission again took no significant action, and in 1959 the FCC renewed WLBT's license stating that the "isolated" and "honest" mistakes of the station should not be the basis for license revocation.

But as records would later show, such censoring and exclusionary actions were far from isolated. Rather, they were routine. Failing to receive airtime through direct appeals to the Jackson stations, and later, the formal regulatory appeal process, Evers also petitioned the national media industry, contacting general audience periodicals and network programs, arguing that "the plight of the Mississippi Negro" was not well understood. For example, in 1958 Evers wrote to Dave Garroway of NBC's *Today* program, requesting an opportunity to appear on that show. Evers' specific argument was that Mississippi's governor and WLBT's new director had, in concert with other segregation supporters, offered only a "distorted and slanted" view of the conditions faced by black Mississippians. "The Negro's point of view," as the field secretary put it, was not being seen or heard in local or network presentations. And, as Myrlie Evers would observe, activists such as her husband were discouraged because the northern, as well as southern, press dismissed Mississippi's brutality toward African Americans as an "old story. . .unless there was some new twist to make it newsworthy."

The FCC announced it was investigating eight Mississippi radio and television stations... concerning their role in instigating violence and broadcasting inflammatory editorials during the Oxford uprising.

A brutality that could not be ignored occurred in 1962, as James Meredith became the first black Mississippian to attend classes at the University of Mississippi, Oxford. During a weekend of violent clashes that ended with two dead and hundreds injured, Mississippi radio and television stations offered extensive, often incendiary, coverage of the campus battle. WLBT broadcast editorials exhorting viewers to ". . . all join together in a united front to combat forces from outside our state who would destroy us," and ". . . all stand with [Governor Ross Barnett] and say 'NEVER!'" [to school integration]. A month later, the FCC announced it was investigating eight Mississippi radio and television stations, including Jackson's two TV operations, concerning their role in instigating violence and broadcasting inflammatory editorials during the Oxford uprising. Nine months later, one month after Evers' assassination, while taking no direct action against the Mississippi stations, the Commission reiterated its fairness doctrine expectations in a nationally distributed memorandum, explicitly linking its fairness concerns to the issues of race and racial integration.

The Jackson television practices, viewed over several years, revealed a clear and troubling pattern. Jackson broadcasters were not alone in their employment of exclusionary and censoring strategies. But they were increasingly notorious for their stubborn response to integrationist challenges and regulatory appeals. While some southern stations, sensing the watchful eye of federal regulators, moderated their programming strategies, WLBT's directors

refused to substantially change station operations or managerial rhetoric.

But the policing and guardianship of popular culture and its resistant impulses is always imperfect. Contrary voices work to find various ways to be heard and build support.For example, in 1961, Reverend R.L.T. Smith, a prominent black Jackson pastor and successful grocery story owner, declared himself the first black candidate for U.S. Congress since Reconstruction and approached WLBT and WJTV regarding the purchase of campaign airtime. While WJTV reluctantly offered a small amount of time, WLBT quickly rejected Smith's numerous requests. When Smith approached the station manager, Beard not only refused to sell Smith the time sought, but threatened the minister and suggested how Smith should run his campaign—by speaking only at black churches. After Smith spent months writing letters of appeal to the FCC, National Democratic Party, President Kennedy and others, including Eleanor Roosevelt, the NBC affiliate felt significant federal pressure to relent and grant airtime. Candidate Smith was granted 30 minutes of time on WLBT one day before the election and lost to arch segregationist incumbent John Bell Williams. Nevertheless, Myrlie Evers recalls that the sight of Smith on television "was like the lifting of a giant curtain . . . he was on television saying things that had never before been said by a Negro to whites in Mississippi."

And while his brother Medgar worked tirelessly to bring black and integrationist perspectives to local newspaper and broadcast outlets, Charles Evers became one of the state's first black disc jockeys at a small radio station in Philadelphia (Mississippi) and used his on-air opportunity to regularly exhort the African-American community to claim their franchise too long denied—to pay their poll taxes, register and vote. His broadcast program was short-lived. White retaliation against Evers and his employer began immediately, and Evers was forced to resign after a short term on air. Still his activism helped empower local African-Americans in 1950s Mississippi, and was at least partially responsible for the addition of an estimated two hundred names to the voting rolls in one of the state's most militantly segregationist regions.

Many African-Americans in and around Jackson... grew impatient with the slow pace of change.

Reverend Smith, the Evers brothers and so many others recognized early in the life of this new medium that television would be a crucial arena of political struggle. They knew that the broadcasting industry and its regulation would be vital to the public discussion of race and rights.

While Medgar Evers, Aaron Henry, state president of the NAACP, Reverend Smith and other leaders of local rights activism worked using the tools of formal petition and legal recourse, many African-Americans in and around Jackson, and especially those of a younger generation, grew impatient with the slow pace of change. Nicknamed "cancer college" by its detractors, Tougaloo College, located just outside of Jackson, was one center of youthful activism. Tougaloo was a church-affiliated majority-black liberal arts institution that had students and staff ready to fight segregation on the culture front—including events with performers appearing on popular television shows.

When Austin C. Moore III, a Tougaloo student, came south from Chicago he was overwhelmed by the oppression of Southern segregation. Certainly Chicago was a segregated city too. However, racial integration was more common in a limited

number of social settings. Not so in Jackson. As he was driven into the city by his relatives, his aunt "Sugar" pointed to a prominent downtown theater and remarked, "That's a white theater—I'll never be able to go in..." Since Moore had worked as an usher at an integrated Chicago theater, he was surprised by his Aunt's statement and silently pledged to change things in Jackson.

Approximately a year later, Moore had become the coordinator of "cultural and artistic agitation," within the small group of Tougaloo staff and students calling themselves the "Nonviolent Agitation Association of College Pupils." At a November meeting in the home of the campus chaplain and his wife, Ed and Jeanette King, the group decided to work intensively to open entertainment in Jackson. With regard to segregated events and venues, they resolved that "if we can't go. . . nobody should be able to attend."

Tougaloo students had already been turned away from Jackson concerts and cultural events by the time of this 1963 meeting, but of most immediate concern was the local appearance of two network television show casts—ABC's *Original Hootenany, USA*, and NBC's *Bonanza*. The students immediately began correspondence with major motion picture distributors and NBC, asking that network and studio leaders recognize their films and production casts would appear in segregated settings, and to reconsider their plans for film distribution and talent appearances in the South.

The students soon pulled off their first coup. The Jackson establishment was hardly expecting such action, as the traditions and routines of segregated entertainment had long been established and seldom directly challenged. Most of the state's citizens knew nothing other than a racially segregated entertainment experience. The small Tougaloo cohort hardly anticipated the cause célèbre they would create. On November 15, three Tougaloo undergraduates—Austin Moore, Calvin Brown and Steven Rutledge—met the touring cast of *Hootenany* at the Jackson airport. Folk performers Glenn Yarbrough of the Limeliters, the Journeymen and Jo Mapes were among those scheduled to perform, and arrived in town as *Hootenany's* popularity was peaking, especially among teens and young adults.

The Tougaloo group explained their position, the consequences of continuing segregation for audiences and entertainers, and their intention to force a confrontation, if necessary, by attempting to seat black students at the evening concert. Even though the *Hootenany* group and their managers had been contacted by the activists prior to their arrival in Jackson, they initially resisted the student pleas. Intense negotiations ensued, involving agents and long distance phone consultation. Just three hours before the concert was to start, the group canceled, agreeing to perform a free and integrated concert that same evening at Tougaloo. Fifteen hundred ticket holders left the downtown venue disappointed that "their" television stars, instead of abiding by explicit financial and implicit social contracts, would be entertaining integrationists and their like at "cancer college." Meanwhile, Rutledge and other Tougaloo students expressed their appreciation to the musicians for "their courageous and difficult sacrifice."

The crisis in popular entertainment would only exacerbate three months later as another popular television cast prepared to appear in Jackson. The Mississippi Commerce and Industry Expo, to be held at the Jackson state fairgrounds, proudly advertised an upcoming appearance by the "Three Great Stars of *Bonanza*" — Michael Landon (Little Joe), Lorne Greene (Ben Cartwright) and Dan Blocker (Hoss), while, unbeknownst to the

promoters, the Tougaloo agitators sent letters of appeal to each of the actors and the network. Moore wrote, in part:

. . .we hope that the Bonanza *cast will be willing to take their stand on the issue. We are asking that you refuse to perform before a segregated audience. . . . We'd like to attend your show. We can't in Jackson.*

The Bonanza *program is an excellent proponent of the American ideals in earlier times. It would be good if the program could further extend its influence.*

In response, Dan Blocker sent a telegram, reprinted in the Jackson Daily News, stating that he had "long been in sympathy with the Negro struggle for total citizenship, therefore I would find an appearance of any sort before a segregated house completely incompatible with my moral concepts—indeed repugnant." In short order, cancellations were also confirmed by Lorne Greene and Michael Landon.

At the time, *Bonanza* was an extremely popular program—nationally, but also in and around Jackson. The city's mayor and other visible Jackson leaders admitted that the program was one of their very favorite, and felt betrayed—snubbed by the entertainers they enjoyed and invited into their home weekly. Jackson mayor Allen Thompson, in a lengthy speech to city department heads, remarked ". . . this *Bonanza* thing to my mind is one of the greatest insults to the intelligence and the activities and the good works that the people of Jackson and Mississippi are doing that I have ever heard." The *Bonanza* incident quickly became the talk of the town, stirring no small amount of anxiety. The practices of white segregationist entertainment and recreation were suddenly and unexpectedly jeopardized—made uncomfortable by a small group of young students.

Four thousand concert goers sat in stunned silence as a sponsor announced that the program was cancelled.

Before the mayor and city leaders had a chance to catch their collective breaths, three days later, Al Hirt cancelled a March of Dimes benefit concert. Having failed to dissuade Hirt from traveling to Jackson, Moore, accompanied by a few friends, gained access to the musician's room at a whites-only motel hours before the performance by borrowing a jacket and using the disguise of a room service waiter. Forty minutes before curtain time, Hirt acceded to the students' demands. Four thousand concert goers sat in stunned silence as a sponsor announced that the program was cancelled. Shouted responses and obscenities drowned out the announcer's final words. Within days the local Jackson newspapers explained that Hirt, a respected Southerner, and his agent, "had been worked on by Negro groups."

Within the next several weeks a top adminstrator in NASA and two internationally renowned classical musicians sent their regrets to Jackson organizers, citing the problems of appearing before segregated audiences. The agitators had targeted, and hit, key performances within a relatively short period of time.

In response, an angered and frustrated Mayor Thompson called for a campaign of "selective viewing" vowing that even though *Bonanza* was a "wonderful program," it would never again be viewed in his home. A few days later the *Jackson Daily News* pictured the politician sitting in front of a desk covered with "approximately 2,500 cards and letters. . . . calling for the blackout of the *Bonanza* television show." The Citizens' Council reiterated Thompson's call and warned state residents against watching TV

programs which feature . . . integrationist entertainers, or any other program which favors race-mixing."

Still, the pleasures offered by the men of the Ponderosa won out. While Jacksonians perhaps did not loudly announce their intention to continue viewing *Bonanza*, the program continued airing and attracting a large local audience and advertising base. WLBT's programming director, Hewitt Griffin, recalls that the program, despite all of the public rebuke, continued to perform strongly. What was denounced in public was often watched behind closed doors and drawn window shades.

The response of the mayor, the newspapers, and many other segregationist leaders spoke volumes regarding the perceived importance of television fare—and more particularly, entertainment programming. Then, as now, many dismissed television entertainment as relatively unimportant, and certainly unconnected to the prominent social questions of the day. However, it is clear that the viewing of television became a crucial social marker, intimately tied up with one's position regarding the most pressing social and ideological question of the moment. In times such as these, the thoroughly political nature of even the most "mindless" entertainment is laid bare. What one watches, or chooses to admit that they watch, matters—on multiple social levels.

The fight of Austin Moore and the Tougaloo students did not have a neat and happy ending. Moore left Tougaloo shortly after the activist group enjoyed their moments of integrationist intervention and returned to Chicago. In the wake of these disruptions, Jackson police and cultural organizers retrenched and reaffirmed their commitments to segregated entertainment experiences. Although Aunt Sugar did eventually go to the movies in an integrated theater, it took years of struggle. The students had not torn down the structures of segregated entertainment. These structures would slowly—too slowly—deteriorate over time. But what the students had done is begin to dispel the myth of the contented black consumer—happy with their second-class status and lack of cultural access. The agitators had boldly demonstrated dissatisfaction with a lack of access to popular media and performances. In subsequent years, others would follow their initiative, tearing down the mythology of black satisfaction so central to Jim Crow.

In Jackson, the attack on segregated television and entertainment was two-dimensional. While the students took their direct action campaigns to the streets and concert venues, others were investing their time and attention in application of legal strategies. By filing official challenges to the programming practices of WLBT and WJTV during the previous decade, the NAACP, Medgar Evers, R.L.T. Smith and their supporters had laid important foundations for subsequent licensing challenges. What these local activists lacked were the substantial legal and financial resources necessary to take on one of the state's most powerful commercial institutions. This support came from the offices of the United Church of Christ in New York, and more specifically, from Dr. Everett Parker, head of the Office of Communication for the denomination.

For years Parker had been troubled by the practices of white supremacist stations and in 1963 traveled to several southern states in search of a site for a successful licensing challenge. In Jackson, Parker met with Tougaloo president Dr. A.D. Beittel, state NAACP president Aaron Henry and R.L.T. Smith, among others. Henry and Smith agreed, despite some impassioned objections made by those concerned for their safety, to act as formal petitioners in a

licensing challenge aimed at the Jackson stations. The orthodox patterns of segregated entertainment were being challenged again—this time through the formal channels of broadcast law and the FCC.

In March of 1964, shortly before northern college students came south as part of the highly publicized "freedom summer" campaign, the station challengers organized a secret monitoring of WLBT and WJTV daily programming. The volunteer monitors, coordinated by two local social scientists—Gordon and Mary Anne Henderson—took great caution to avoid discovery of the project—for example, hiding their cars on different streets, and using prefabricated stories when talking to inquisitive neighborhood children about their comings and goings.

The Court delivered a stern rebuke to the Commission… and ordered the grant of license "vacated forthwith"

The monitoring produced evidence of the broadcast segregation that Evers had earlier alleged. Armed with this detailed study (laboriously conducted before the age of personal computers and VCRs), Aaron Henry, R.L.T. Smith and the United Church of Christ (represented locally by the congregation on the Tougaloo campus), filed two five-page "petitions to deny licensing" with the Federal Communications Commission in April of 1964. The petitions argued that both Jackson stations, WJTV and WLBT, had failed their public interest obligation to the more than forty percent of the Jackson population which was African American. In addressing black Mississippians, the monitors had found, among other complaints, "a failure to use courtesy titles although such titles were used for white persons; discrimination against blacks in the presentation of news, announcements, and other material; [and] discrimination in the presentation of controversial issues, especially in the field of race relations."

As WJTV had demonstrated some moderation in its programming practices and a willingness to change, it escaped more detailed Commission scrutiny and received a renewed license in 1965. However, the licensing battle surrounding WLBT went on for years. In 1965, when the Commission initially voted to extend the NBC station a one-year probationary renewal, the challengers took the licensing decision to the Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia, and won. The Court remanded the licensing decision to the Commission with the instruction that formal licensing hearings be held. When, after the hearings, the Commission again decided to renew the license of WLBT in 1968, again there was an appeal, and the same D.C. Court delivered a stern rebuke to the Commission, bypassed the Commission, and ordered the grant of license "vacated forthwith." The Court found the evidence accumulated by the petitioners convincing and decided there was no point in remanding the licensing decision to the FCC again, given the Commission's poor handling of the petitioners and the licensing question in previous years. For much of the seventies the station was under an interim management team. After another decade of hearings and deliberations regarding station ownership, the Commission decided to award licensing of WLBT to TV3, a largely local Jackson group that was fifty-one percent black and headed by Aaron Henry.

The petitioner victories won and changes made in the management and programming of WLBT came at great cost and only after very long and complicated legal fights. But what should not be lost in

discussion of legal and regulatory details surrounding this history is the point that those who fought against WLBT and WJTV and segregated entertainment recognized local television as a vital social institution, offering particular understandings of race, racial power,and community identity. Certainly television is a technology and business. But even more fundamentally, it is a technology and business of our own social imagination, a thoroughly social practice inextricably bound up with who we are, and how we understand one another. As the Jackson activists might remind us, television is a social activity that can, and should, explore new and different ways of understanding ourselves and others. ■

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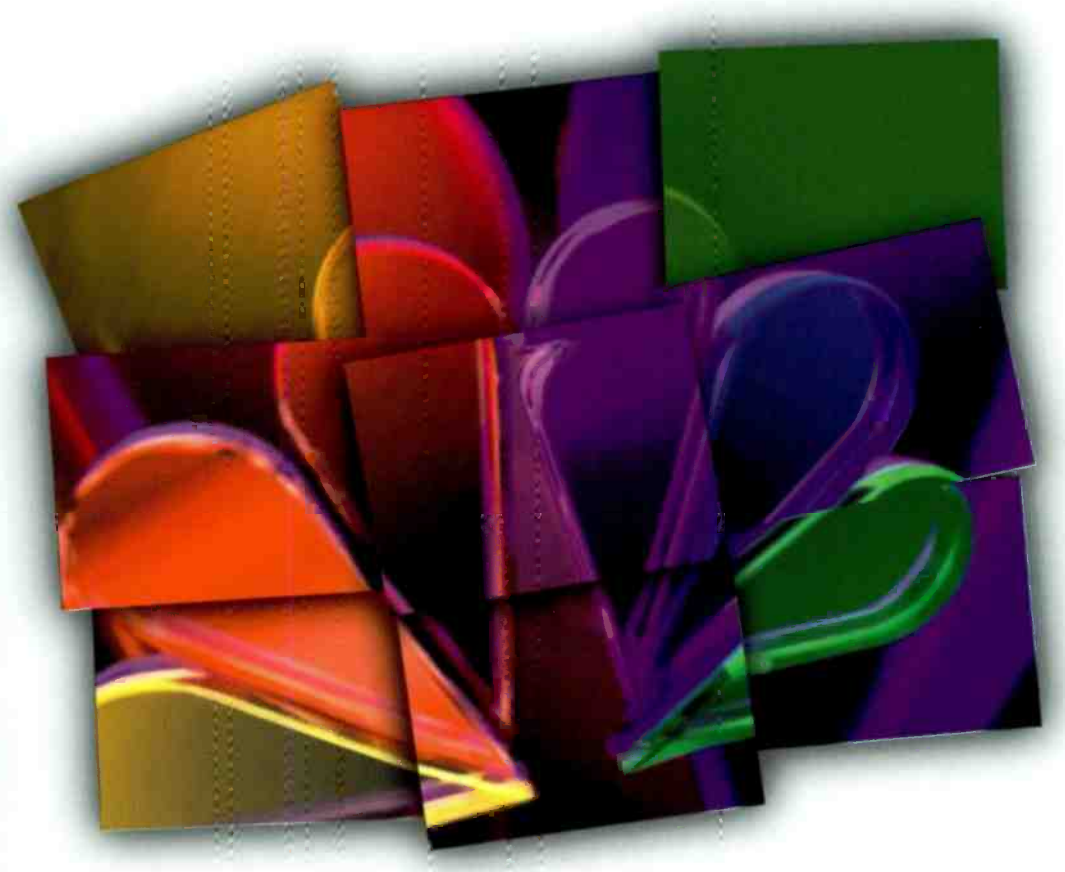
THE GOLDEN AGE



IT'S RIGHT HERE.
IT'S RIGHT NOW.
IT'S MUST SEE.

NBC

Pioneer Profile

The lasting legacy of being first | **by Mary Ann Watson**

There could be no more ideal candidate than Mal Goode to christen *TVQ*'s new feature of biographical sketches of men and women who blazed trails in American broadcasting. Malvin Russell Goode owns the historical distinction of being the first black correspondent hired by an American television network. It was an obstacle-laden road, though, that led him to that job with ABC in 1962 and the sobriquet "The Dean of Black Journalism."

The grandson of slaves, Mal Goode grew up in Homestead, Pennsylvania, a steel-mill town near Pittsburgh. Mal's father left White Plains, Virginia—and the land his family was given at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation—as a teenager to work in the Pittsburgh steel mills for $1.25 per day.

Even though Homestead had a sizable black population, all of Mal's schoolteachers were white and they often made him sit in the back of the class. After high school, Goode went to work at U.S. Steel's Homestead Works to pay his way through the University of Pittsburgh. He worked the night shift while attending classes by day.

In his sophomore year he received a C in a course in which he had earned no lower than a B on any of the assigned work or quizzes. Mal Goode visited the professor to ask about the grade. He recalled the professor saying, "Mr. Goode, you don't expect to get what a white student gets, do you?"

In 1931 he received his pre-law bachelor's degree and took the only employment he could find—as a janitor in a clothing store. Subsequent jobs included a position as a counselor at a Pittsburgh YMCA, a probation officer and a manager for the Pittsburgh Housing Authority.

Goode married Mary Louise Lavelle in 1936. The couple eventually had two daughters and four sons. In 1948, Mary's brother was the top ad salesman at the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the country's largest newspaper serving the black community. Mal Goode was hired by the *Courier* that same year as an assistant to the circulation manager. Goode also worked in public relations for the paper.

The following year, KQV radio offered the *Pittsburgh Courier* a fifteen-minute time slot for two days each week. Goode became the host of *The Courier Speaks*, a program on which he discussed bigotry and other issues relevant to the black community. In 1950 the program moved to WHOD, a radio station where Goode's sister, Mary Dee, was a staff member. The siblings co-hosted the show for six years.

It was his friendship with baseball great Jackie Robinson that led to Goode's hiring by ABC News. Robinson had been critical of the network for not hiring any black reporters. The vice president of ABC News, Jim Hagerty, asked Robinson to recommend a suitable candidate for an on-air position. His suggestion was Mal Goode. The reporter auditioned for 14 ABC executives and signed a contract, at age 54, on September 10, 1962.

Goode was sent to the United Nations,

Mal Goode

usually a fairly slow beat, to get acquainted with the new medium. His on-the-job training was greatly accelerated, though, when the Cuban missile crisis broke in October 1962. On the first day, he ended up doing seven special bulletins on network television and nine on network radio, without the assistance of a producer.

His fair complexion and wavy hair caused some uncertainty among viewers about Goode's race. A woman in the TV audience from South Carolina wrote to the network: "I think that was a colored man I

saw reporting all day long on the Cuban missile crisis. And although I am white, and although he is a colored man, I want to thank him and I want to thank ABC because this is America, and that's the way it ought to be."

But Goode endured racism on the job. Occasionally, a white cameraman assigned to record Goode's stories would twist the film in the camera to sabotage the endeavor. Goode persevered, however, and went on to cover many of the critical stories of the 1960s, including the Democratic and Republican conventions of 1964 and 1968. He interviewed Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. and was the sole African-American network correspondent assigned to cover Dr. King's funeral in April 1968. Goode also covered the 1968 funeral of Robert Kennedy and that summer's Poor People's March on Washington, D.C. He also reported the ABC documentary *It Can Be Done*, which chronicled the resignation of a Ku Klux Klan grand dragon in Atlanta, Georgia, and his eventual support of black voter registration and increased minority employment.

Goode retired from ABC News in 1973 but remained a consultant to the network for the following 15 years. As a former president of the United Nations Correspondents Association, he maintained an office at the UN Building until he was nearly 80. In his retirement Goode was also active on the lecture circuit. A favorite theme of his talks, particularly to young black audiences, was "I did it. You can do it too." The Minorities in Broadcast Training Program—a nonprofit organization that selects, trains and places minority college graduates in news reporting and management jobs—presents an annual Mal Goode Lifetime Achievement Award to a broadcaster chosen for his or her achievements in journalism, contributions to the community and service as a role model.

Mal Goode played dual roles in his professional life. He was a reporter and an advocate for civil rights. When he wore his reporter's cap, he was an impartial observer of events. But when he fought for the cause of his people, he was single-minded. Mal Goode died from the complications of a stroke on September 12, 1995, by which time he had witnessed dramatic progress for black reporters in American broadcasting and had received the graditude of luminaries, such as Bernard Shaw and Carole Simpson, for the inspiration he provided.

The Mal Goode Scholarship Fund is administered by Coppin State College at 2500 West North Ave., Baltimore, MD, 21216. ■

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Windows on the World

Manhattan's new TV studios with a view | **by Brian Rose**

Good Morning America at Times Square Studios

By design and by tradition, television studios have tended to be rather sealed-off environments. The outside world has no place in these utterly artificial enclosures. Technological demands have favored total isolation, so that every element, every sound, every source of light can be precisely controlled.

That hasn't meant that TV studios are entirely tributes to high tech. Through the years, many have tried to mirror the world, whether it's through a greenhouse effect, where sets may be stuffed with dozens of house plants and even small bushes, or an artificially cozy domestic atmosphere, complete with working fireplaces and lavish kitchens, or the simulated rumpled dormrooms and crash pads typical of MTV in its early years.

Lately, however, there has been a

concerted effort to break down the walls, or at least a wall, of the studio, and let some real sunshine in. New York City has seen an explosion of "window on the world" television programs, which let viewers share in the changing pulse and color of the Manhattan streets outside the control rooms. Every network based in the city now considers it a mandate to open its doors in some way to the passing parade. The results have been dramatic-not only can the home audience look out and see a vibrant and seemingly safe New York, but tourists and commuters can stop by and look in, literally lifting the veil of "secrecy" which once surrounded TV production.

It all began nearly 50 years ago when NBC's resident visionary Pat Weaver conceived of *The Today Show*...

Of course, this approach is hardly new. It all began nearly 50 years ago when NBC's resident visionary Pat Weaver conceived of *The Today Show* and its unique mission to explore the world at the then ungodly TV hours of 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. At the site of the RCA Exhibit Hall on 49th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, Weaver constructed, in his words, "TV's first communication studio" containing a working newsroom and street level windows to permit the bustling crowds at Rockefeller Center to peer in to the proceedings. Launched on January 14, 1952, the show's gradual success turned the location into a tourist mecca-a place for people to gather together and watch Dave Garroway and company, while waving signs and hoping to get recognized by the cameras and ultimately their friends and relatives back home.

Oddly enough, it was the very popularity of *The Today Show's* venue that led to the program's move to a sealed-off studio. According to Richard Hack in his lively chronicle *Madness in the Morning*, when Philco Television in 1958 lodged a complaint to RCA against the "unfair competitive advantage" the company received because its TV sets were on display in the background at the Exhibit Hall, NBC was told by its owners to find another site. The show was shifted to a more spacious but now windowlesss studio inside the Rockefeller Center headquarters. The era of the walk-by, see-through Manhattan studio came to a sudden halt.

It would take more than 25 years before the idea was successfully revived. The first glimmers came as a result of a *Today Show* railroad tour through the countryside in 1985. The program's executive producer at the time, Steve Friedman, was struck by the large crowds who gathered at every location, waving homemade signs greeting the show's hosts, and felt that a "glass studio" idea could work once again in New York. Initially, NBC wasn't convinced, but after eight years of brutal competition with *Good Morning America*, they decided that it was time to try something different. Fifteen months and fifteen million dollars later, they opened Studio 1-A in September 1994, close to the program's original home at the old RCA Exhibit Hall.

Steve Friedman (who had returned to the show as executive producer in 1993, after leaving in 1987) played a key role in shaping this state-of-the-art, street-level, bulletproof facility. "Our goal was to use 90s technology with the 1950's idea that was ahead of its time. Those people back then had the right idea, but unfortunately they didn't have the technology to pull it off. We thought it would be a neat idea to go back to the future." Originally this included 2-way kiosks outside the studio

so that the audience could ask questions of the hosts and guests, but these were quickly abandoned after continuing technical breakdowns and security issues (the units had to be set-up each morning and removed each night). A more useful innovation was the mechanical wall which could be raised inside the studio windows to block out the bustling crowd in segments that demanded a more reserved tone. However, the new studio's most successful feature was actually its least high-tech. This was the simple ability to open the doors and take the show directly outside on the Rockefeller Center Plaza. Al Roker, Matt Lauer and Katie Couric could now chat with enthusiastic audience members, conduct interviews, watch the ice skaters, set up demonstrations, and even showcase live musical performances.

Breaking down the studio walls enhanced *The Today Show's* carefully cultivated atmosphere of friendliness and informality, and within a few weeks, the show's central location had become a magnet for early morning commuters and eager tourists, delighted with the chance to banter with live TV personalities. Crowds continued to grow, especially for the program's Friday summer music series, which now regularly drew more than a thousand onlookers, ultimately reaching a record when 6,000 frenzied teenagers turned up for a Ricky Martin outdoors concert in June 1999.

There's no question *The Today Show's* flexible approach to studio boundaries played an important role in its increased ratings (the show has been number one for the last 41/2 years), but it's also had an effect on the city as well. As Steve Friedman notes, "I believe that part of the turnaround in New York City is because of The Today Show. People at home are sitting there, looking at all those people having fun. They're looking at people like them, safe, happy. I really believe that people said, 'hey, that place doesn't look so bad.'" Certainly, it's served as a powerful antidote to the toxic barbs hurled at Manhattan from David Letterman's program three blocks to the west. Since its 1994 CBS premiere, *The Late Show* has also taken its cameras to the city's streets, but primarily for apocalyptic comic ends, preferring to view New York as a Scorsese-ian hell hole, whose citizens are usually certifiable and whose tourists are lucky to get out alive. In its own way, *The Today Show's* cheering crowd of onlookers, with not a bulletproof vest in sight, have done as much a booming economy and the draconian efforts of Mayor Giuliani to counter Letterman's outdated grumblings of the city-as-sewer.

The program's upbeat view, and upbeat ratings, have not been lost on its major competitors, each of whom has responded to *The Today Show's* approach with new urban-oriented studios of their own. ABC began planning a new home for the ailing *Good Morning America* in 1997, focusing their efforts on Times Square. It was Roger Goodman, the network's vice-president of special projects, who instantly saw the possibilities of the former National movie theater at the corner of 44th and Broadway. "When I first saw the building everyone thought I was crazy. But I saw the old theater marquee and I thought 'if we were here we would be catapulted over Times Square.' It would be very different than a conventional studio, and I thought the views would be absolutely wild." In early 1998, Goodman and a team from Walt Disney Imagineering began planning a dramatic two-story, glass-walled studio, that would be encircled by an electronic wall, 122 feet long and 48 feet high, featuring an enormous 585-square foot TV screen, a programmable 2.3 million LED billboard, and two "news ribbons" broadcasting information from various ABC enterprises. Construction began in

June 1998 and was completed in time for a September 1999 opening, at an estimated cost of $75 million.

The undulating, rather futuristic structure proved to be a striking addition to the new Times Square and offered ABC an important presence at the city's crossroads. In contrast to *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America* was designed on two levels, with the main studio located on the large second floor to take advantage of the panoramic views. To provide a space for audience interaction, there's also a first floor studio (resembling an idealized subway station) equipped with hydraulically-controlled removable windows that expand the indoor capacity of 300 to an additional 200 people outside. The building's pulsing exterior, with its animated electronic billboard and massive TV set, gives the entire complex a glittering quality perfect both for the location and for the promotional bumper shots shown before the commercial breaks.

Though initially a bit wary of who would be around the neighborhood in the early morning hours, *GMA* quickly discovered that if you build it, they will come. Each morning a large crowd now gathers to watch Tony Perkins deliver the weather and to participate in chats and various demonstrations with hosts Diane Sawyer and Charles Gibson. Like *The Today Show* before it, the program's open presence has helped tame the wildness of New York, revealing the city to be just a large-scale version of a small town, with even Times Square coming across more as Main Street than mean street.

One added benefit of ABC's midtown studios was that its location proved even more theatrical at night. While Rockefeller Plaza's only evening attraction is a large Christmas tree for a couple of weeks a year, ABC was situated at ground zero for the country's, if not the world's, greatest permanent light show. Its new production complex was engineered to provide sweeping northern and southern views, and many of the network's news programs have moved in to take advantage of the brilliant backdrop. Nowhere was this demonstrated to greater effect than during ABC's 24-hour coverage of the millennium New Year celebrations. Peter Jennings anchored the proceedings from the second floor, with exterior cameras frequently capturing his position as he stood looking out over the ever increasing frenzy of the celebrants below. By midnight, East Coast time, Times Square seemed to be levitating with the combined enthusiasms of the performing dancers and puppeteers joined with the tens of thousands of elated spectators. From its futuristic studios, safely protected by its eight-inch thick glass windows, ABC was quite literally in the catbird seat to bring the event to the world.

CBS's approach to the on-the-street studio was a bit less flashy. The network, like its competitors, realized the value of a readily-familiar locale for their glass-windowed morning news program. In keeping with their mythic, and now slightly tarnished "Tiffany" tradition, they opted for the glamour of Fifth Avenue, choosing to renovate a former GM showroom directly across from the Plaza Hotel. The job was guided in part by ex-Today Show executive producer Steve Friedman, whose mandate was to give CBS's new *Early Show* a clear and competitive identity in the morning TV landscape. Friedman accepted the position as the program's first executive producer with the understanding that he didn't want to be the only show without an outdoor venue. The move from the hermetic environment of West 57th Street to the soaring corner glass expanse at Trump Plaza would offer a wide variety of street-level possibilities, ranging from the outside courtyard to nearby Central Park.

However, by the time *The Early Show* inaugurated its new home on November 1, 1999 (after nine months of construction and a price tag of $30 million) the studio's transition to full indoor/outdoor use was a bit delayed. The courtyard patio section was still undergoing extensive reconstruction, scheduled to last until the middle of 2000. Mark McEwen's weather reports, generally delivered to a sparse crowd of onlookers, were among the show's few out-of-doors activities. Nevertheless, the studio itself is an impressive, state-of-the art structure, with large plasma screen displays, a gleaming, high-tech interior, and 28-foot windows, complete with a glass shield that can instantly turn opaque when it's necessary to screen onlookers from the cameras. Once the courtyard is completed, the program should be able to offer all of the curbside attractions favored by its competitors.

Steve Friedman envisions that the identity of *The Early Show* will be clearly tied in to its Fifth Avenue location. "The way I want to compete," he said, "is to make this a neighborhood, not just a little place in Rockefeller Center and not a gaudy thing like Times Square. I want to be part of this neighborhood, and when it's all fixed up, we'll have a whole environment which will be an inviting place to go." So far, his new "neighborhood" hasn't exactly welcomed the show with open arms. The co-op board from the Sherry Netherlands Hotel across the street has sued CBS, concerned about the issue of overcrowding on the sidewalks outside the studio (a hypothetical problem at this point given the paltry number of early morning passersby). Still, the network has pledged to co-operate and plans for outdoor interactive kiosks have been temporarily put on hold. One imaginative, and less intrusive, way the show has made its presence known is its electronic logo, which it pastes during cutaways on the sides of buildings, taxicabs, horsedrawn carriages, and anything else that catches the director's eye from one of the nine remote cameras. It's a sprightly signature, wittily "branding" familiar landmarks around the city without upsetting any community groups in the process.

In contrast to its well-endowed broadcast rivals, MTV approached the issue of live, on-location television from a characteristically enterprising and cheeky perspective.

The issue of crowds has presented a different problem for MTV in its new Times Square studio. In this case, it's how to handle the swarms of teenagers, sometimes numbering in the thousands, who regularly gather outside the network's 45th and Broadway location, eager to be part of the action on its afternoon program, *Total Request Live*. The show's enormous popularity has a lot to do with the innovative way the cable network utilizes its New York see-through studio.

In contrast to its well-endowed broadcast rivals, MTV approached the issue of live, on-location television from a characteristically enterprising and cheeky perspective. Looking for production space, news director Dave Sirulnik walked into the second floor office of the off-air creative department's Jeff Keyton, admired the northern view of Times Square from his window, and asked if he could use the site to shoot the MTV newscast. Keyton graciously agreed, and gradually, all the offices on the floor were moved out, to be replaced by three glass-

walled studios, each instantly capable of being transformed into whatever theme grips the network's imaginative designers at the moment.

The largest studio, at the Viacom building's northeast corner, hosts various live audience and in-concert programs, as well as MTV's hit series, *Total Request Live*. More than any other show, it's *TRL* that has used the space to transform the network and the neighborhood. Though MTV began broadcasting from the mezzanine level beginning in September 1997 (after spending a modest $8 million for construction), it wasn't until Total Request moved in a year later that Times Square became irrefutably identified as the network's home base to its millions of viewers. Each afternoon at 4:30, host Carson Daly peers out at the throngs gathered outside (many of them listening to the show on radios tuned to a special low powered FM frequency), reads their handheld signs, chats with the crowd via remote cameras and mikes, and invites, in a gesture that appears almost magical, a few lucky souls up into the studio to talk with his celebrity guests. Television's power to reach out to its audience has rarely seemed as casually direct or as affable.

Even with its magnetic ability to lure hordes of viewers, aimless or otherwise, to its Times Square beachhead, MTV has encountered surprisingly few problems, thanks largely to its cooperative efforts with the New York City police, who are consulted on a daily basis regarding performer lineups and anticipated crowd response. As a result, the crowds are not only orderly but genuinely appear to be having fun, which only contributes to the location's appeal. Like ABC, its friendly across-the-street neighbor, MTV has succeeded, brilliantly, in transforming Times Square into its own image, harnessing the crossroad's edginess and irrepressible energy into a celebration of the network's youth and high spirits.

The discovery, or rather the rediscovery of Manhattan as a viable and vital stage setting for live television during the last six years has been rather remarkable. What began as a return to its on-the-street roots on *The Today Show* in 1994 has mushroomed into an explosion of see-through studios popping up throughout the city. In just six years, all three networks launched "open air" morning news shows, Fox introduced a glass-front news center at the corner of 49th Street and Sixth Avenue, MTV transformed their Times Square offices into a second-floor mecca for its spirited viewers, and the Food Network is planning a walk-in studio at Chelsea Food Market later this year. Decades after the networks largely packed up and moved their productions to Hollywood, the city's teeming streets and crowds are clearly back on the air, playing leading roles in the continuing drama of programming beamed "Live from New York." ■

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Digital Technology and Journalism Ethics

What obligation do TV news organizations have to avoid electronic image distortion in pursuit of truth or profit? | **By John V. Pavlik**

On New Year's Eve 1999, CBS News' Dan Rather reported to a national television audience live from New York City's Times Square. The televised report was notable not only because it helped ring in a millennium but also because it also helped usher in the digital era in television. In so doing it raised one of the ethical challenges of the digital age: The CBS broadcast inserted a virtual sign into Times Square.

The sign contained the CBS television logo, and it covered up a similar sign for competitor NBC, as well as a sign for "Budweiser," both of which were physically present in Times Square. Perhaps as much for ethical reasons as competitive ones, NBC objected to the digital sleight of hand. Viewers were not told either before or during the CBS broadcast that the image they were seeing of Times Square had been digitally altered. In all likelihood, few viewers knew there was any manipulation. The technology is virtually seamless in its alteration of the video image.

One viewer, however, did notice the manipulation: Adam Clayton Powell III, Freedom Forum vice-president of technology and a former CBS News producer, knows Times Square well. He watched the live broadcast, and wondered why there was a CBS News sign where there had not been one just a week earlier. So he switched channels and saw that on NBC there was a sign there—for NBC. That got him wondering, and it got him to do his own investigation, and even write an article about it at the Freedom Forum web site, Free! (www.freedomforum.org). From his experience at CBS News, he knows the division's internal standards prohibit digi-

tal or other manipulation of news footage. But when he asked CBS executives about it, they said this specific technology was not considered inappropriate. "Dan Rather disagreed," Powell noted, "saying a few days later use of the technology had been a mistake."

Digital technologies raise a host of thorny ethical challenges for news organizations. From virtual signage to digitally rendered synthetic video of news that may never have occurred, today's journalists face an increasingly sophisticated and complex ethical minefield as they produce stories for digital delivery. The following article addresses these ethical challenges— past, present and future— and concludes with a set of recommendations for the ethical use of digital technology.

Digital technologies raise a host of thorny ethical challenges for news organizations.

Open your wallet (or purse). Take out a five-dollar bill. Who's picture do you see? Honest Abe, right? Well, you're half right. It is a picture of Pres. Abraham Lincoln's face. But it is attached to the body of southern statesmen John C. Calhoun. The engravers didn't have a good image of Lincoln's body with the right aspect ratio, so they pasted his head from a famous Mathew Brady photograph onto the body of a properly aligned and dignified Calhoun.

All this shows is that image manipulation is not something new to the 21st century's digital age. As long as there have been photographic images, there have been people who have manipulated them to create the desired effect. In the pre-war and Civil War era in the United States, which aligned with the first decades of photography, Abraham Lincoln's head was placed on the engraved bodies of a variety of other political figures including Alexander Hamilton and Martin Van Buren.

Some might say this is not a problem, and indeed, in the realm of entertainment, especially entertainment television, a little digital image manipulation might be harmless, entertaining and sometimes quite helpful. *TV Guide* once placed the head of talk-show host Oprah Winfrey on the body of Ann-Margret to produce a cover image. Misleading? A promotional poster for the movie *Pretty Women* featured the head of the film's star, Julia Roberts, pasted seamlessly on to the scantily clad body of an anonymous model. Fair game?

In 1991 the Japanese weekly *Shukan Bunshun* published photos of unmarried Crown Prince Naruhito with ten alternative hairstyles—all digitally created. The newspaper invited some 100 women to indicate which style they preferred. Good fun? This technique was foreshadowed in a Freedom Forum Media Studies Center seminar a year earlier when the manager of the Center's Technology Lab demonstrated how simple and seamless digital image manipulation could be. With just a few keystrokes, Mark A. Thalhimer (then head of the Tech Lab and now Project Director—Future of News, the Radio Television News Directors Foundation, www.rtndf.org) showed the 20-some journalism professors participating in the seminar how easy it was to digitally photograph and transplant the hair of one professor to an image of the balding head of another professor. As part of a feature on 1989 film *Rain Man*, the picture editors of *Newsweek* photographed actors Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise—one in New York and the other in Hawaii—and then seamed them together appearing to share a joke. A leading women's lingerie manufacturer is alleged to digitally "stretch" its models by five percent, both in print and television, to make them

imperceptibly taller, thinner and presumably more beautiful. Harmless?

Sometimes such image manipulation has been done as a form of political satire. In 1861 a composite image of the Queen of Naples depicted her cavorting naked with the Pope and the cardinals, all in the hopes of discrediting her (or, I suppose, the Holy See). Such image fakery can have serious consequences. During the McCarthy era a faked photograph depicting U.S. Senator Millard Tydings meeting with the communist leader Earl Browder may have cost the senator his seat in Congress. Less for political than commercial reasons, tabloid newspapers have sometimes pasted the head of Princess Diana on various nude bodies to supplant photos they (sometimes) couldn't get. Such faked images of various celebrities are common on Internet pornography Web sites (find the URLs yourself).

In a 1970 budget request to Congress, NASA officials offered a colorized version of black-and-white film footage from the Apollo moon mission. The problem was the colorization was not real, but rather out of someone's imagination.

In news programming, image manipulation represents a very serious potential problem. A technician at the *Orange County Register* once changed the color of the water in a swimming pool from red to blue; unfortunately, the image was depicting how vandals had dyed the pool red. In 1995 editors at *Time* magazine darkened an image of O.J. Simpson on its cover for aesthetic reasons, but to many the effect was to create a more sinister-looking Simpson, then accused of murder. *National Geographic* once moved one of the Egyptian pyramids to create a better aspect ratio for it cover. *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* once removed a Coke can from a photo of its Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer. *The San Francisco Examiner* once changed the color of a wall behind the mayor for aesthetic reasons. *The Bellingham (Wash.) Herald* prints manipulated photographs in its lifestyle and feature sections, but labels them as photo-illustrations.

Television has not been immune to problems of image manipulation. In 1989 ABC News photographed a staged depiction of a man passing a briefcase to another. The image was altered electronically so the man passing the briefcase appeared to be Felix Bloch, a diplomat accused of espionage. In 1994 ABC News *World News Tonight* placed correspondent Cokie Roberts, wearing an overcoat, in front of the U.S. Capitol, while in reality she was standing in a studio at ABC News. ABC subsequently apologized for this transgression of its journalistic standards. Of course, many correspondents at a variety of news organizations are routinely videographed in front of an evenly lit blue-screen background and then chromakeyed into various virtual sets, although few would admit to this practice.

In news programming, image manipulation represents a very serious potential problem.

PVI Technology

The technology used by CBS News is in wide use on television today in the U.S. and around the world, but had not been used in news programming prior to the New Year's Eve broadcast. Developed by New Jersey-based Princeton Video Image, Inc. (http://www.pvi-inc.com/), the technology had been used in a wide spectrum of television broadcasts, including ESPN, CBS, ABC, Fox, Global (Canada), Televisa (Mexico), RTBF, VTM (Belgium) and SABC (South Africa). One of the best known applications has been to create a

yellow virtual "first-down" line marker on the football playing field. PVI's L-VIS Vision System uses a patented three-stage technology:

1) Searching video to see if the current video is the right scene;

2) Tracking motion in a video sequence once it is established that the sequence is the right one and allowing the insertion to be adjusted to appear to be in the right position and at the right size to appear to be part of the scene; and,

3) Taking account of occlusion so that when players walk in front of the inserted sign, the player occludes the sign.

As a result, to the viewer, the virtual images seen on the playing field, a television program or a newscast, appear completely real. One of the best places to see a PVI insertion on a daily basis is on *The CBS Early Show* with Bryant Gumbel, where virtual CBS signs are regularly placed on and around buildings, horse-drawn carriages and other venues near New York's Central Park.

Arguably, there is nothing unethical about using the PVI technology in sports or entertainment programming, but it clearly crosses the line when used in news programming, where credibility is the most important factor in keeping viewers' trust. Of course, that doesn't answer the question of what is news programming.

Is news programming that which is produced by the network news division? In that case, *The CBS Early Show* is news. Is news something defined more or less broadly? Is news programming whatever the viewer thinks it is? Are talk shows, which many viewers see as providing much news and information, part of the news genre? Is morning drive-time radio banter about current events part of the "news"? Are "reality" shows on Fox or elsewhere part of the news, at least from the viewers perspective? Does the blurring boundary between news and entertainment, sometimes done internationally and sometimes perhaps inadvertently, complicate the issue of where a limited amount of digital image manipulation is permissible? Should any amount of digital image manipulation in news or news-like programming be unacceptable?

Moreover, RTNDF's Thalhimer suggests the ethical problems raised by digital technology should be considered in the context of a variety of other questionable ethical practices sometimes all too common in journalism. Among these are cropping still photos to focus in on the newsworthy portion of the image, the wearing of makeup by television journalists (this is, arguably, an alteration of reality) or a producer's occasional use of artificial lighting and staging techniques in many so-called television news magazines.

Fifteen years earlier Powell speculated on the ethical implications of the first generation of non-linear digital video editing technology which made possible not only a variety of new capabilities for editing video via computer, but also for creating completely synthetic news events depicted on video. At a Freedom Forum Media Studies Center seminar for journalism educators, Powell described a conversation he'd had with the head of Manhattan's Caesar Video, one of the first production houses to take delivery of a broadcast quality non-linear digital video editor.

In news programming...credibility is the most important factor in keeping viewers' trust.

Powell asked Mr. Caesar whether they could use the non-linear digital editor to create a synthetic news event, one depicting the meeting of two newsmakers who had never actually met, say, Libya's Muammar Qaddafi embracing then-New

York City Mayor Ed Koch on the steps of City Hall. "Is this something that can be done fairly quickly and easily?" Powell inquired. "Yes," Caesar replied. "It depends on what the effect is you want...Do you want exploding stars in the sky? Green Jell-O coming down the steps of City Hall?" "No," Powell answered. "We just want Qaddafi and Koch embracing." Caesar said it was boring work for his people but yes, it would be easy to do. That was 1985. 2000 technology makes this look like child's play.

Introduced in 2000 is the world's first virtual newscaster, Ananova, a British digital creation (http://www.ananova. com/). Launched in April, Ana Nova bears a striking resemblance to the popular video game star, Lara Kraft, and in more ways than one. Not only is she beautiful, but she's completely artificial, a digital creation who exists only in cyberspace. But her reach may go far beyond the digital domain. Ana Nova gives audiences access to a "super-fast, super-intelligent news and information computer system with a difference. She has a 'human' face and personality and is capable of delivering on-the-fly fully-animated bulletins driven by real-time data files, text-to-speech technology and image rendering techniques."

Britain doesn't have a lock on computer-modeled faces and figures. A major research center at the University of Southern California, the Integrated Media Systems Center (IMSC) is also developing technologies for creating computer animations, or avatars, of real human faces. One of the major advantages of this technology is that avatars can be sent over the Internet using far less "bandwidth" than video of an actual face, even though the avatar may be visually indistinguishable from the actual face. IMSC Director (http://imsc.usc.edu/) Chrysostomos L. "Max" Nikias explains that avatars can be used to create sophisticated three-dimensional immersive environments for shared work or learning spaces.

Paul R. Dolan of ABC News notes that the use of digital images and technology coupled with zoom lenses, helicopter access, etc. places greater temptation in the hands of journalists to continue to erode basic privacy rights in our society. "Balancing personal privacy against a public's 'right to know' becomes even more complex with sophisticated digital imaging," he explains. "The long lens shot into the hospital room or helicopter shot of a celebrity's back yard become much easier to obtain as 'exclusive' shots. Once the domain of the tabloid press only, such shots are working their way into mainstream media. Privacy, as vague as it may be and as difficult as it is to enforce, still deserves journalistic ethical consideration in a digital age."

Digital technology is also presenting new ethical challenges to radio. A time compression technique called *Cash* has quickly become popular in radio and is in use at more than 50 radio stations throughout the U.S. Stations add up to four minutes of commercial time an hour by squeezing out the occasional pauses in live programming. Just as network television has seen its share of the national audience drop, radio listenership has fallen more than 10% since 1990. Arbitron, the independent research agency that tracks radio ratings, reports that daily radio listenership is down to 21 hours 15 minutes a week, from 23 hours 45 minutes a week a decade ago. This trend is putting increasing pressure on radio station operators to seek revenue opportunities. Further, although not dependent on digital technology, NPR and others regularly delay their so-called "live" transmissions by a few seconds to give them time to edit any "obscene" comments a guest or caller might make. Is this an acceptable manipulation of reality?

The Ethical Challenge

Part of the dilemma facing news programmers in today's fiercely competitive age (where you're not just competing against other broadcasters and cablecasters, but against the entire world on the Internet) is the need to provide a viable business model for the news enterprise. The Communications Act of 1934 mandated that the networks serve as public trustees of the airwaves they were given, and this translated into quality news programming that need not return a profit. This was part of serving in the public interest, convenience and necessity. This was all very satisfactory with the networks when they existed with relatively little competition for the audience and advertiser dollars. But today's digital media system is far more fragmented than in 1934 and the 1996 Telecommunications Act placed much greater emphasis on competition than public service in the communications marketplace.

Digital recording devices such as ReplayTV and TiVo make it a simple matter for viewers to record hours of their favorite programs, news or entertainment, and delete the commercials. Of course, the remote control had made skipping the commercials an easy matter for years. All these factors are eroding the commercial foundation of broadcast television. Pressure is increasing on news divisions to be profit centers and the future of broadcast television is likely to heavily feature commercial messages placed directly in programming, whether via virtual product placements, clickable banner ads (as on today's Web) or wrappers placed around programming. Will news be immune to these commercial intrusions? Will it be better to have less or even no news programming, if it cannot find a viable business model, than to accept such blurring of the commercial and news boundaries?

These are the questions facing journalists in the digital age. The answers are not easy ones.

But journalism ethics is not only about avoiding problems. It is also about doing the right thing. Emerging digital technology makes possible a wide variety of new possibilities that those in the news industry should embrace. There is, in fact, an ethical mandate to use these tools to report the news more fully, more accurately and in more complete context, all enabled by emerging digital tools. Covering natural disasters or a wide variety of other environmental stories (e.g., urban sprawl, deforestation), as well as military or other ethnic conflicts can all be improved through the use of a variety of digital technologies.

Remote sensing satellite imagery is among the most important of these tools. From 400 miles above the earth satellite imagery can give journalists access to areas they otherwise would be denied access. Of course, governmental efforts to censor satellite imagery, known as "shutter control," is a serious threat to access.

Journalism ethics is not only about avoiding problems. It is also about doing the right thing.

Nevertheless, journalists have an ethical imperative to seek out the use of satellite imagery to improve their reporting. Three-dimensional extrusions made from two-dimensional images can provide photo-realistic models of urban or other areas, offering viewers an accurate representation of cities and other regions. Such images are typically derived from stereoscopic views of an object or an area, with two images taken from slightly different angles with a three-dimensional view extruded mathematically. The results are quite realistic. Still or motion video

cameras that capture 360 views are of increasing quality and commercial availability, and can provide important context for news imagery. CBS News, ABC News and other news organizations are in fact already using these tools, and will likely increase their use in years ahead.

Below are recommended standards for the ethical use of digital technology in 21st century television and beyond. I propose these as realistic standards that news programmers can adhere to. I do not offer them as idealistic musings from the ivory tower. I acknowledge the realities of the news business, but also recognize that journalism as an institution is both too important to society and too dependent on its credibility to survive in the long run unless it adheres to a policy of honesty and integrity in news presentation. On this point there is no room for doubt or debate.

Recommended guidelines for digital news programming production

Alteration

• There are essentially three forms of image/audio alterations: 1) addition (adding information), 2) subtraction (removing information, as in cropping) and 3) transformations (e.g., changing color, creating three-dimensional extrusions, seaming two or more images together into a new composite image creating synthetic video).

• No alterations of any type should ever be made that may alter the meaning of the news.

• Whenever an alteration is made, such as the insertion of a virtual sign, it should be clear to the viewer that this has occurred. If it is not clear the voice-over should explain what has occurred. New methods of video modification should not be introduced without first explaining them to the viewer.

Subtracting information from video or an image should generally be avoided. The framing of the video or image is an essential part of composing a story and altering it in post-production is likely to result in changing the meaning of the video.

• Brightening an image or video to improve the viewer's ability to see it is permissible, but not if somehow alters the meaning of the material portrayed. Color modification should be avoided.

• Transformations should be used to improve the explanatory capability of the news, but should never be used for merely aesthetic reasons, or if they somehow change the meaning of the news. Composites of correspondents videographed in front of a blue-screen and then chromakeyed into virtual sets should not be used, or should be clearly labeled.

Labeling

• Whenever an image, video or audio has been altered, in whatever fashion or for whatever reason, it should always be labeled.

• ABC News' Dolan, who is also a member of the RTNDA Digital News Committee, observes that the use on air or on the internet of any digital simulations such as Defense Department renderings of weapons systems, crime re-enactment simulations prepared by the prosecution or defense, etc. should be clearly labeled, and carefully and critically examined. "The power of the digital graphics may obscure fundamental questions about their accuracy."

Privacy

• Journalists should be cautious in using digital imaging technology where it poses threats to privacy, especially where the news value of an image is limited.

Conclusion

Developments in digital technology present journalists with a double-edged sword. Although technology provides journalists with powerful new tools for storytelling, especially in the realm of computerized visualizations, they also raise serious ethical concerns. Their concerns revolve primarily around the manipulation of images and video, where changes, both insertions and deletions of visual information, can be compelling yet undetectable to the viewer.

Journalists should adhere closely to at least the following four principles in working in the digital domain. First, journalists should always be careful to avoid making any manipulations that might somehow distort the meaning of the news. Second, any changes should always be clearly labeled so the viewer knows what has happened. Third, journalists should be cautious in using digital imaging technology where it poses threats to privacy. Finally, in the context of these first three principles, the new storytelling techniques made possible by digital technology should be developed fully by journalists. Adhering to these principles will both insure the highest quality journalism and strengthen the credibility of the news. ■

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The Million-Dollar Question: Why is *Millionaire* So Successful?

And why does it beat Jeopardy *in audience appeal and educational values?* | **By Stephen Winzenburg**

For the first time in almost 45 years a game show is the number one evening program on network television. The lights, the music, the inquisitive host, and the chance for the audience at home to play along have re-ignited a format long thought dead on prime time.

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, while attracting a large audience, has not received overwhelming respect from the television community. Despite winning this year's Emmy award for Outstanding Game Show, competitors have called *Millionaire* "too easy" and criticize it for having too many questions that are related to pop culture. Others wonder why women and minorities have not been better represented on the show. And die-hard *Jeopardy* fans scoff at *Millionaire*'s quick success.

After conducting a formal content analysis of both programs, it is clear that there are specific reasons for *Millionaire*'s success. While a few criticisms of the show may be true, *Millionaire* is a hit because it is more entertaining than any other game show and could even be considered more educational than *Jeopardy*.

THE SURPRISE SUCCESS

When *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* premiered on August 16, 1999, no one could have predicted that a game show hosted by aging talk show host Regis Philbin would become the hottest show on television. Skeptics pointed out that *the $64,000 Question* was the last high-rated prime time game show, reaching number one in 1955-56, and that quiz shows had rarely been seen on prime time television since the scandals of 1958. Philbin, while hosting a moderately successful daytime talk show with Kathie Lee Gifford that appealed to older demographics, had a poor track record as the star of over a dozen failed network and local television shows.

Millionaire's Regis Philbin

He had even tried game shows, hosting the 1975 daytime flop *The Neighbors* and co-hosting 1976's prime time *Almost Anything Goes.*

The first episode of *Millionaire*, airing for a half hour at 8:30 p.m. eastern on a Monday night, attracted a respectable 10 million viewers and ranked 24th in the Nielsen ratings that week. Yet ABC's strategy of airing the program on consecutive nights over a two-week period paid off as the audience grew with each new episode. By the time the special series ended its limited run on Sunday, August 29, over 22 million people were watching and it was the number one program for the week.

Industry executives were baffled by the overnight success of a show that featured a tired format from the 50's and a host ready for retirement. They did not see that middle America was ready for something different: a prime time network show without sex, violence or profanity, where viewers could cheer on everyday people and again have something to talk about

Jeopardy's Alex Trebek

around the water cooler the next day.

When *Millionaire* returned for more special episodes in November, television executives again voiced skepticism that the audience numbers would hold up against stiffer sweeps competition. But by the time John Carpenter became TV's first million dollar winner, the program was attracting young demographics and every episode ended up in the top ten of the ratings. Competitors got past their disbelief and scrambled to ride on the coattails of the show's success, with each major network scheduling weak copies, such as *Greed* and *Winning Lines*. ABC then made the risky decision to slot *Millionaire* as a regular three-night-a-week series beginning in January of 2000.

Since then the show has won the Emmy award and fashion trendsetter Regis has become a multi-millionaire. Viewership topped out at 36 million during Rosie O'Donnell's May 3 celebrity appearance. Since then the show has continued to do well but overexposure has caused it to be occasionally beaten by highly promoted competition, such as the Jesus movie on CBS and the summer hit game show *Survivor*. And though the show's demographics have begun to skew older, *Millionaire* has remained popular enough to take up four hours a week on ABC's fall schedule and is shown even more often during sweeps periods. *Broadcasting & Cable* magazine reported that even NBC Entertainment President Garth Ancier called *Millionaire* the most significant show in the history of television!

FAME AND FORTUNE

Longtime television producer Mark Goodson once said that the driving motivation behind people appearing on his game shows was not money but celebrity—everyone wanted his or her "moment in the spotlight." *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* fulfills that desire by allowing a contestant to have a literal 15 minutes of fame. Once the fastest finger round begins, the winner averages 14 minutes and 51 seconds of screen time (see Table).

Some are on screen much longer and work their way up to the big money, but over half of all Millionaires hot seat players must settle for $32,000 or less. In the episodes studied, 38% of the contestants went home with only $1,000, while 24% left with $32,000. Three percent left with nothing and only one percent won the top prize, which means players have a better chance walking away empty handed than

they do becoming millionaires!

By comparison, individual screen time on *Jeopardy* is difficult to measure, since all three players are shown for most of the program. But even on Alex Trebek's show, players get about 15 minutes of fame: the two rounds of questioning take up a total of 12 minutes; the chat time between host and contestants lasts for around two minutes (averaging only 40 seconds of personal time getting to know each player); and "Final Jeopardy" lasts 45 seconds. Add it up and *Jeopardy* contestants get about 14 minutes and 45 seconds of TV fame.

Jeopardy winners also take home much less money. A "USA Weekend" magazine article reported that the average *Millionaire* winner takes home $83,590, while the Jeopardy winners in my study averaged winning only $12,000. However, the rare *Jeopardy* contestant who wins five days in a row can take home closer to $50,000 total and be awarded a new car, as well as becoming eligible to return for the tournament of champions where the winnings can total over $100,000.

Millionaire asks about 16 questions per half hour, with the average amount of time spent on a question being 45 seconds. *Jeopardy* asks about four times as many questions in a half hour (61 total), with questions and answers speeding by at a rate of 12 seconds each. Surprisingly, on both shows contestants answer incorrectly only an average of three times per program.

LIBERAL ARTS COURSES PAY OFF

Those core English and history classes that were required in high school and college come in handy when playing these popular game shows. While it's fun to criticize *Millionaire* for having its first million dollar winner answer a relatively easy pop culture question about which television show Richard Nixon appeared on (*Laugh In*), in reality contestants are more often asked about the liberal arts and sciences they learned in school.Three of the most often asked question categories are the same for both shows in this study: literature, history and language. *Millionaire*'s questions most often involved language (15%), history (13%), then science (11%) and literature (11%). Television (9%) and movies (7%) came next, closely followed by geography, animals and sports. *Jeopardy*'s most often asked questions came from history (16%), followed by geography (12%), then literature (11%), language (10%) and science (8%).

Almost half of all the questions Regis Philbin asks involve communication and entertainment, such as books, movies, television, music and word definitions. By contrast, less than one-third of Alex Trebek's questions deal with communication and entertainment. *Jeopardy* tends to offer a broader range of categories, from religion and business to foreign politics and education. *Millionaire* has a more narrow range of questions.

There are *Millionaire* question categories that are rarely asked and yet can be worth big money. The average art question in the episodes studied was worth $223,000, which is three times the value of the next closest categories of religion ($79,100), history ($67,500) and television ($67,300). Some *Millionaire* categories, such as sports, movies, science and animals, have questions that could be found spread across every money level, averaging around $40,000. The categories that have the lowest average values were language ($5,700), toys ($4,100), math ($1,900) and food ($988). These are typically used as the easy questions to begin each round of the game.

Since *Jeopardy* values are equally set at the start of the game (from $100 to $1,000), there is no one category that can stand out as having a higher value than another. Only during the "Daily Double" or

in the "Final Jeopardy" round is a question asked where contestants can wager all of their winnings. In this study there was not a pattern of any one category being favored for "Final Jeopardy," although literature and history each came up multiple times.

There are four "fastest finger" categories that get asked on *Millionaire* much more often than any other: television (20%), geography (20%), movies (16%) and history (14%). These are the threshold questions that will get the player to the hot seat. Once there, players usually select "ask the audience" as the first lifeline, usually at around the $16,000 level. The "50/50" is selected between the $32,000 and $64,000 level and the phone a friend is most often used during the $64,000 and $125,000 questions.

CONTESTANTS ALL LOOK THE SAME

On the *Millionaire* episodes viewed for this study, 80% of the contestants were male, most in their 20's and early 30's although ages ranged from 18 to 54. Fastest finger players came from a fairly balanced geographical cross-section of the country, with one exception: the West Coast was dramatically under-represented. The Northeast had the most fastest finger contestants with 35%, followed closely by the Midwest at 30% and the South at 25%. The West was only represented by 10% of those on the show.

The top professions of those who made it to the hot seat were education-related: students in college or graduate school were the top category, followed by teachers. Other top professions were sales people, lawyers and engineers.

By comparison, *Jeopardy's* contestants on the shows viewed for this study were mostly males in their 30's and 40's. The best represented region was the Northeast (44%), with 24% from the West and 20% from the Midwest. Only 12% came from the South. Certain cities had multiple contestants due to the method *Jeopardy* uses to go into a particular city to recruit guests. Professions of *Jeopardy* contestants also favored students, educators and lawyers.

With both shows having contestants in similar job categories, my conclusion is that *Millionaire* favors young adult males east of the Mississippi, while *Jeopardy* favors more middle-aged males from the east and west coasts. Based on this random sample, contestants from the western United States may have a more difficult time getting on *Millionaire*, while southerners are less apt to appear on *Jeopardy*.

The fact that Millionaire overwhelmingly favors white males reflects the contestant selection process. It is admirable that the show at first attempted to be totally fair in allowing anonymous telephone callers to be selected to play the in-studio game, yet it favored young males who may have video game experience in using fin-

Jeopardy vs. Millionaire

	JEOPARDY	MILLIONAIRE
Average time per contestant	14 minutes, 45 seconds	14 minutes, 51 seconds
Average winner earnings	$12,000	$83,590
Questions per half hour	61	16
Time per question	12 seconds	45 seconds
Most often used categories	1.Language 2.History 3.Science 4.Literature 5.Television	1.History 2.Geography 3.Literature 4.Language 5.Science

gers to press buttons quickly.

It would increase the credibility of *Millionaire* if it would attempt to be more like other game shows in including more women, minorities and players from all parts of the country. *Wheel of Fortune* and *The Price is Right* do a better job getting women and minorities on their programs because part of their selection process involves picking players with good television personalities. Even *Jeopardy* responded to criticisms in the 1990's by adding more minority contestants and today attempts to include a female on most programs (although when it came time for the tournament of champions, players again were almost all male).

One improvement is that *Millionaire* now asks phone callers who attempt to qualify for the show if they are male or female. After my research results were reported in the press in April and other critics questioned the lack of balance on the program, producers finally added a question to the initial phone qualifying round giving callers the option to state their gender. That change resulted in a dramatic increase in women contestants. By early June almost half of the fastest finger players were female. On one program seven of the ten contestants were women and three of them ended up in the hot seat!

WHY MILLIONAIRE SUCCEEDS

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire is a success because it is entertaining, well-produced, and allows the viewing audience to feel a part of the game. While the contestant sits in the hot seat, selecting from the four possible answers, viewers at home are analyzing the choices and the contestant. It is a rare program on television—it makes us think while allowing us to feel smarter than the person winning the big money.

Jeopardy is a success because it is challenging, fast-paced, and allows the audience to feel in awe of the brainy contestants. While three highly-intelligent, carefully screened players compete against each other to give the correct "question" to an obscure "answer", it makes the viewer at home feel a bit inferior for not measuring up to those pushing the button on the show.

Millionaire wins the ratings race because it appeals to a broader audience. Contestants are real people who could be the viewer's next-door neighbor. As the players are introduced they give a goofy grin and wave, unlike the *Jeopardy* contestants who are stone cold and military-like in their stance.

Ultimately, Regis Philbin gives *Millionaire* the extra edge that makes it stand out from the competition. As a long-time talk show host, Regis asks personal questions of those in the hot seat, jokes with them about their jobs or marital status, and acts like he really wants players to win the big money. Philbin can be both antagonist and cheerleader in the same sentence, leading to entertaining interplay. Often it's as much fun to watch the conversation between the host and guest as it is to play the game.

Millionaire is a truly unique combination of talk show and game show. However, it is not the first to do this successfully. After reviewing a 1957 episode of *The $64,000 Question*, I can only conclude that *Millionaire* copied some of the same appealing elements of that other number one game show. *$64,000* host Hal March spent two or three minutes chatting with each contestant, who had professions ranging from being a lawyer to a homemaker. March joked with one woman about not having a boyfriend, sympathized with another about her medical resident husband who only made $75 a month, and even verbally kidded with an assistant who handed March the questions upside down.

Not only has *$64,000 Question*'s scale of questions with increasing monetary val-

ue been copied by *Millionaire*, but Hal March also used to hold up a $32,000 check to the camera with the winner's name and the date on it, just as Regis Philbin does today. The old game show also encouraged the viewers at home to participate in the game by asking them to send post cards (their version of today's toll-free number).

The only major differences between the two shows are the *$64,000 Question*'s lack of multiple choice options and that show's insistence that once a player reach the $4,000 level he must return to answer one question a week. Were the questions then more difficult? Certainly they were. But the players then also had the advantage of being allowed to pick their category of specialty and all the questions were from that single category.

MILLIONAIRE IS EDUCATIONAL

Which of today's highly rated game shows is a more educational experience for the viewer? Viewers who watch Trebek's show like to think they come away from it better educated. *Jeopardy* certainly asks a larger volume of questions and contestants must come up with the answers off the top of their heads, remembering to put it in the form of a question. But at the end of the half-hour, viewers will retain almost none of what they saw on the show. Questions are flashed on the screen quickly and answer come every 12 seconds so people watching at home will not remember much of what they saw.

I would argue that *Millionaire* is actually more educational. It utilizes a number of methods that increase learning:

- multiple-choice answers are visible for viewers to study;
- questions are on screen for an average 45 seconds, increasing the chance that viewers will remember it later;
- the correct answers are brightly highlighted on the screen;
- critical thinking skills must be used to discern which of the answer choices are plausible; and,
- the use of lifelines makes the game a group experience, which can increase retention and encourage socialization skills.

Emotionally, Millionaire encourages viewers in invest in the player. The set reveals the studio audience surrounding the person in the hot seat, cheering him on. Regis chats with the player, asking personal information and introducing viewers to the family member or friend sitting in the audience. Regis acts like he wants the contestant to win, patting him on the back and apologizing when the player doesn't make it to a million dollars. At the end of the program, Regis invites viewers to call in to be a part of the show. It is all very emotionally inviting, so that those watching at home feel an attachment to the players, the game and the host.

Jeopardy is somewhat emotionally distant, with a large overlit set that separates the players from the host and the unseen audience. The most important part of the show is the wall of cold electronic monitors that reveal the "answers". We hardly even know the contestants and within a minute of the show's opening they are playing the game. It's only later in the show that a small amount of time (an average 40 seconds per person) is given to personal chit-chat. During the contest Alex may give encouraging words but is careful to not favor one contestant and shows no emotion toward the winner other than a professorial "well done" at the end of the round. Any emotional attachment viewers may have to *Jeopardy* comes from their admiration for the intellectual abilities of the host and players.

Thinking that *Millionaire* is easier than *Jeopardy* is like claiming golf is an easier sport than tennis simply because it is

played with a different pace and style. Like tennis, speed and accuracy are crucial in Jeopardy, and the players are in direct competition with each other. Like golf, Millionaire is laid back but analytical, and once in the hot seat the contestant is really competing against himself. Tennis stars would be frustrated on the golf course and golfers couldn't survive the intensity of tennis. So also it takes different skills to do well on these television games—many *Millionaire* contestants wouldn't even get past the practice test on *Jeopardy*, while the intellectual Jeopardy contestants may stumble over a simple $500 pop culture question on *Millionaire*.

Are *Jeopardy* questions are more difficult than those on *Millionaire*? Opinions will differ since the degrees of perceived difficulty are completely subjective. Though *Jeopardy* does have its own easy $100 questions (such as "The number of innings in a baseball game" or "The first American holiday in September"), Trebek quickly moves to more difficult questions. *Millionaire* seems to take awhile to get to the tough ones.

However, if given the opportunity to make an appearance on either show, most would choose *Millionaire*. It allows more time given to answer questions, provides lifelines that can be used for outside help and brings a much great potential monetary reward. The truth is that while all may admire *Jeopardy*, it involves much more work for much less money.

Millionaire's success reflects the typical American's desire to strike it rich without having to work too hard at it. It encompasses the ultimate American dream: an all expenses-paid trip to New York City; meeting the famous celebrity host; getting a chance to win big bucks while seated in a comfortable chair positioned in front of a television screen; and getting that 14 minutes and 51 seconds of fame. ■

Stephen Winzenburg, an associate professor of communications at Grand View College, in Des Moines, IA, is best known for his research on television evangelists and the PTL scandal of 1987.

Peeping Tom TV:

The beginning of the end or the birth of meaningful media? | By Steven Rosenbaum

The Fall 2000 season will be the season reality TV moves from cable to network TV. Already we've seen *Survivor, Big Brother* and more are on the way.

But is this trend a danger for people whose careers are staked on the status quo of TV programming? CBS Chief Les Moonves—a man who knows a hit when he sees one— kept all the advertising inventory for his nightly reality series *Big Brother* out of the CBS upfront. He bet that the ads will sell like hot cakes as millions of Americans tune in to see the lives of 10 real people locked in a house. And by and large, he was right. While the ratings didn't raise the roof, the show was strong in the key demo's of adults 18-49, a group that in the past rarely visited the geriatric CBS. The next season of *Survivor* is sure to continue the trend of hit reality shows—this group stranded in the Australian outback..

ABC, which was killing the competition with *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, had set the stage already. After all, in many ways they're the same genre. Real people ("It could be ME!") Are facing impossible odds ("Will he MAKE IT?") with a storybook prize for those who survive ("MONEY!!!). It's sure-fire formula for success. And, don't forget, it's cheap.

Is this the future of drama on network television? Simply put - yes. The question worth asking here is: why are the networks willing to let their franchises devolve into low-cost reality networks, and, is that bad?

But let's go back to the beginning.

The trend we're witnessing didn't appear out of thin air. The roots of this trend can be found in Fox's *Cops* and MTV's *Real World*. Truth is, we could have seen it coming. Roll back the clock 10 years and you can see the seeds. No big surprise - - - it's all about the money. Legend has it that MTV wanted to do a soap opera—and brought in then Soap Opera vet Mary Ellen Bunim to pitch the pilot. She did — with actors and scripts and sets and all that expensive stuff. But MTV balked at the price and Bunim had the good sense to rethink the form to fit MTV's itsy-bitsy budget. First, kill the writers. Then kill the actors. Finally, kill the sets. Now how's that for cheap! And so *Real World* was born. A mega-hit that has informed an entire generation of television viewers.

At about the same time Bob Pittman and Brian Bedol were running Quantum Media, a production company that was playing around with new ideas in reality TV. They'd gotten Morton Downey on the air, and had just sold MCA a short-lived police series called *The Street*. It was scripted, but shot documentary style on *The Streets* of Newark, New Jersey. Again legend — a writers strike put a crimp in that show's plans — and then Fox Television Stations chief Steven Chao took a look at *The Street*'s documentary feel.

Chao did some quick subtraction: kill the writers, kill the actors, kill the sets — and hired the team of Barbour/Langley to create a documentary-style show called *Cops*. Ironically, Barbour/Langley had been up for the role of producers on *The Street*, but MCA turned them down as being "too edgy." But *Cops* and *Real World* are the programs that laid the groundwork for what we see today - real people living "real-ish" lives.

So what does that mean for the future of big budget network "drama"?

The future can be seen on the air today. We have an audience of 30-somethings weaned on *Real World* and *Cops* that doesn't judge reality programs any differently than scripted dramas. The stars of *Real World* become larger than life — simply because they're on TV. Now lets' not be naive here: *Real World* ISN'T REAL. The people are cast for their charm, appeal, willingness to expose their most private feelings, and let's not forget — conflict. If they all got along it wouldn't be any fun. Similarly, *Cops* is altered reality — it's real-life police work, but filtered through the fact that the squad cars with the TV crews get the good calls, *cops* wearing wireless mikes tend to remember to say "Mam" and "Sir," and in the ever-important edit room hundreds hours of footage are trimmed down to fifty-four minutes of air time each week. TV is — after all —life with the boring parts cut out.

TV is—after all—life with the boring parts cut out.

Which brings us to the inevitable expansion of "self-exposure" shows about to explode on TV (because *Big Brother* won't be the last). TV loves imitation. And increasing competition from cable, the internet and pay-TV shows like *The Sopranos* leave the networks in the uncomfortable position of needing to lower costs, boost ratings, and not get caught in the uncomfortable position that Fox did with its blockbuster reality shows that drew huge audiences — *When Good Pets Go Bad*— but left them facing a barrage of critical arrows.

Real people-based reality can skate away from critics. CBS will say — "Hey, they said that stuff, we just put it on TV" and that defense will hold up. After all, *Real World* has been on the air for 10 years and has had virtually no criticism for it's managed and manipulated view of reality. That may be because critics don't take the show seriously (oh, those kids) but more likely it's because we like unreality in our entertainment. We like pretty people. Great parties. Passionate love affairs. It is, after all, entertainment.

If you consider the era of big-budget drama on network TV to be a beacon of quality, we may have sowed the seeds for our own destruction. CBS has created an Internet web site along with it's show *Big Brother* — and viewers are invited to have a more "immersive" experience, following the lives of the *Big Brother* participants round the clock.

The web-site traffic is huge. The CBS brand and the TV "frame" make the people of *Big Brother* stars — validating their importance — and the Internet gives us "access" to them in a more empowering and controlled way. The impact on TV can't be underestimated.

Already TV seems less special and more "real." Reality shows like Barry Diller's *Strip Poker* will invite real people to get naked for cash and prizes. Talk shows have plugged into the daily pain and suffering of real (and again not so 'real') people.

Real people are willing to trade in their privacy — and some would say dignity —

Real people are willing to trade in their privacy... for a chance at being "famous." Why?

for a chance at being 'famous'. Why?

People are searching for a way for TV to once again feel like community. They're searching for fame in a national rather than regional or local world. Fame used to be easy to come by. Communities provided fame in a nice, neat local package. The Mayor was famous. The City Council was famous. The Cop, the Mailman, the School Principal, all famous in their own worlds. But in our more transitory society — the things that are part of our world seem to be less trustworthy. Odds are that you know the characters on *90210* better than the Mayor in your home town. Fact is — you've probably moved twice while the characters on that show remained somewhat consistent. TV has become a global community. And people's hunger for importance — fame — call it what you will, have driven us to 'perform' in the circus that has become reality TV today.

The good news is —it won't last. What TV does well is BIG. It is after all "Mass Media." And now that TV has fully embraced reality TV it's likely to be sowing the seeds of it's own demise. Why? Because the barriers to entry in the "reality" world are extraordinarily low. At my company, BNNtv.com, we've just finished a documentary for MSNBC on "exhibitionism on the web." What we found was that an extraordinary number of 'real' people are putting their lives on-line. Twenty-four hours a day - seven days a week. They're turning their personal worlds into programs. And much like MTV's *Real World*, they'll begin to format their lives to generate audience. They'll figure out that inviting the shapely neighbor next door over to talk about her problems with her boyfriend "spike" the ratings (now we call them pageviews but it's the same thing).

And in the spirit of full disclosure, we're part of this trend as well. BNNtv.com's latest venture is a series of digital web—based channels called CameraPlanet.com. CameraPlanet.com turns real people with video cameras into storytellers and videographers — and we're doing it in partnership with Fox, *CourtTV* and *Baywatch*. Real people don't want to watch TV —they want to be TV!

So reality TV will become reality Internet content. And there will be lots of shocking, mass-audience content on the net. Already Fox has figured out the model, announcing a new site called TooHotforFox.com that will feature the salacious material that has been pulled off the Fox network.

But don't worry about the Internet becoming a lowbrow medium — that's the light at the end of the tunnel: TV is a mass medium that is funded by mass-marketing dollars. The Internet is a direct-marketing vehicle whose real value is in serving niche audiences in a focused and measurable way. So the very nature of mass entertainment, while it will gather many "eyeballs," won't excite the advertisers who are looking to the web for something very different. They want relationships. They want data. And they want customers who watch, buy, and return.

There will be lots of shocking, mass-audience content on the net.

How will the creative community survive in the new world? While "reality"

programs will likely push drama off network TV — who needs Popular on the WB when you've got American High on Fox?—there's a whole new economic world right around the corner. We used to call it pay-per-view. In the future we'll call it programming. Creators will develop, budget and sell programs to audiences who will — gasp — pay for them. Kind of like books, or movies, or magazines, or concerts, or CD's or plays. You get they idea. The truth is that TV, and only TV, has been built on this flawed model. A model that says we sell audience to advertisers in BULK. And bulk is, for the most, part bad.

I figured this out seven years ago — when I was producing a series called *Broadcast: New York*.The program was seen on 13 NBC affiliates in New York State — and was doing a 6 rating and a 15 share. Despite our audience of 1.5 million New Yorkers each week, we couldn't sell the advertising. Why? Because advertisers only bought national spot and local (per market) spot television. Our audience didn't fit the mold. So as we took a well-produced and successful show and shut it down, I couldn't help but think that some of those 1.5 million viewers valued our program at something more than 'zero' dollars and 'zero' cents. What if half of those viewers were willing to pay a quarter to see my show? I'd have brought in 187,500 per episode. Far more than our production budget of $50,000 per episode. Even if 250,000 viewers paid twenty cents each—a perfectly likely scenario—we'd be at break even. But there wasn't a way to deliver that show — no mechanism to get paid my twenty cents, and the show was closed down.

Revolution or evolution? Call it a new thing — not TV. There will always be a home for mass entertainment, but it will serve mass cultural tastes. Expect sex and violence to reign in these arenas — since lots of people tend to be drawn to certain base tastes.

But in the new pay-as-you-go world of broadband programming a mass audience won't be nearly as important as quality. So high-quality arts, travel, drama and music will find that, for the first time there's an economic basis that makes those niche program categories survive and maybe even thrive. Yes, there's light at the end of the content tunnel, as the distribution and delivery system changes. Just take a trip to your local Barnes and Noble (or browse Amazon if that's your favorite book-buying location) — and you'll see that there's a future in making media for high quality small audiences. So I toast *Survivor, Big Brother, Millionaire* and all the mass-audience phenomena that have not arrived: they're mass media reaffirming its role as an aggregator of large audiences, even as advertisers scramble to figure out how to befriend the new powerful niches that are sprouting up around us.

Revolution or evolution? Expect sex and violence to reign...

In the next battle in the content evolution it's quality that will win in the end. And yes, there will still be a market for peeping-tom TV. It just won't be the ONLY market. ■

Steven Rosenbaum is president and executive producer of BNNtv.com and CameraPlanet.Com. Winner of Emmy, Cine and New York Festival Gold awards, he is a trustee of the International Documentary Association. His recent productions have been shown on A&E, the History Channel, MSNBC, HBO, Metro and CNN.

Was Arthur Godfrey An Anti-Semite?

A new biography provides some surprising answers | **By Arthur J. Singer**

Forty years after his last television series, twenty-seven years after his last radio shows, sixteen years after his death, Arthur Godfrey's influence can still be seen and felt in the broadcasting, cable, and advertising industries, in other fields, and in the everyday lives of Americans.

No television or radio system in the world speaks so directly or personally to its audiences as does American television and radio. Godfrey pioneered that approach. No system provides as much opportunity for dialogue and discussion as ours, and he led that effort as well. If American businesses often use humor today to sell their products, they do so because Arthur Godfrey showed us how wit and a light touch can sell just as well as dunning. Most of the products he introduced and promoted are still in our stores and still in our homes. And many of the performers we've enjoyed over the years were given their first broadcasting exposure on his shows.

Arthur Godfrey in the 1940s

It's true that technology has given us all more choices as to what we watch or listen to at any given time. More television channels, more radio stations, videos, CDs, the Internet, make it impossible for any one individual to amass the concentration of audiences that Arthur Godfrey once had.

Yet even if technology *had not* greatly increased the competition, it is doubtful that *any* individual—U.S. President, a broadcaster, a sports hero—will ever again command such attention. With the possible exception of his own hero, FDR, no one in America has ever been

With the possible exception of his own hero, FDR, no one in America has ever been such a compelling presence on the air... It is usually despots, not entertainers, who hold such power to mesmerize.

such a compelling presence on the air. Call it bravado, courage or folly, the man was willing to literally *live his life* on the air. He was willing to share his adventures, his interests, his knowledge, his passions, his curiosity, his humor, his peeves, his anger, his pettiness. You knew his family, his farm, his friends, what he had for dinner the night before, what ailed him. He was an open book. "People watched because they were interested in his personality," as Andy Rooney put it. "And it did not take great grammar or even always great humor. They were watching this man live."

What performer or entertainer or politician today would ever expose himself or herself that much, every day? And even if the spirit were willing and their attorneys allowed it, who would have enough to say while hardly ever bringing a note or script along with them? Even allowing that, who could then say it in ways that could hold and rivet one's attention? It is frightening but true that in the history of the world, it is usually despots, not entertainers, who hold such power to mesmerize.

Several years back, there was a big stir when it was announced by CBS Radio that Charles Osgood would be delivering his own commercials on his five-minute radio commentaries each day. He would be mixing apples and oranges and would lose his credibility, critics charged. CBS went ahead anyway and Osgood never lost his credibility. Nor has ABC Newsman Paul Harvey, who has been effectively selling products during his news shows his entire career. They and Godfrey remain a rare breed.

Arthur Godfrey and singer Julius LaRosa. Their famous rift in 1953 had a negative impact on both of their careers.

Arthur Godfrey's messages for today's broadcasters and advertisers are still worth heeding. First and foremost, personal integrity is what matters. When Godfrey interrupted himself on Washington radio and ended a commercial that sounded suspect, when he dropped Chesterfield cigarettes because he no longer could tolerate them, when he forced the makers of Axion detergent to admit publicly that they were polluting the environment, he was leading by example. He would not represent *anything* or *anyone* he did not personally believe in.

Godfrey also believed that broadcasting should educate as well as entertain. When he discovered he had lung cancer, he used his position to drag the forbidden topic out from the shadows and made it OK to talk about the disease privately and publicly. An entire nation learned from his experience. If there seem to be fewer aspects of our lives that are not discussed publicly today—most to good advantage—that is another of his legacies. But educating must also involve setting time aside regularly to improve public understanding

of the world around us, whether the ratings that result are bad or good.

He was also living proof that if a performer wants to last beyond fifteen minutes of fame, or one year or even ten years, he or she has to keep learning, keep experiencing. "If you want to last, you have to grow," he would say. "That little screen is merciless and if you aren't constantly more interesting and intriguing, they—the public—will drop you, ruthlessly." As Peter Kelley put it, "He was the innovator. He was the beginning. Every talk show personality who's on the air right now can thank Arthur Godfrey for their job."

And he left other messages for broadcasters and non-broadcasters alike. First, to keep a sense of humor, assuming you have one. One of the highlights of his daily shows were the critical letters he unabashedly read from his detractors. "Godfrey, you stink!" was more than a funny line, it was a great leveler.

Second, there are no shortcuts to success. It took Godfrey 42 years before he made it on national radio. Growing up in poverty, working long hours by age 10, never finishing high school, he went on to work in a dozen different trades. Yet the reason that he became one of the most effective communicators in American history was because of these early experiences. By the time he arrived on radio, he understood and knew how to talk to people at every level of society.

Third, that if you have a dream, you have to be relentless in pursuing it. Godfrey's dream was to make it in network radio and, through years of failure and disappointment, he never gave up that dream.

Godfrey's temper, his rudeness, his arrogance were already legendary...

And you must be willing to take risks. "When I broke into radio," Larry King would later say, "there was a rule hanging up on the wall: 'If in doubt, leave it out.' I always broke that rule. Godfrey taught me that."

There is much we can learn from his mistakes as well. There is an old adage in the entertainment business: "Be nice to people on the way up because you never know whom you might need on the way down." Behind the scenes, Godfrey alienated so many of his co-workers that it literally blocked his path later in his career. "People wanted to get even," is how Frank Stanton put it.

For all of his deification, Godfrey's temper, his rudeness, his arrogance were already legendary around the organization. Gene Rayburn, who later became a popular master of ceremonies and host, was part of a morning radio team in New York in the early fifties when he went to CBS to discuss a possible television show. As he approached an open elevator to take him to his appointment, he was confronted by Godfrey who was alone inside the elevator and insisted that he (Rayburn) take another; that he wanted to ride alone.

And there was the famous Godfrey temper that had flared as far back as high school and later when he quit WMAL in 1934. Recalled band member Remo Palmier, "somebody would call up and say, 'Arthur, we want to use a particular thing and we want to use so and so.' And he'd practically rip their head off. I couldn't understand what he was doing.... Then he'd get off the phone and tell me what happened. It was self-destructive."

Palmier recalls how Godfrey was always saying things that could get him in trouble. "He was a very emotional person. He'd react emotionally to anything."

What became more unnerving, as Godfrey appeared more vulnerable, were long-

smoldering charges of anti-Semitism. And like the La Rosa firing, this accusation dogged him the rest of his life. It still persists today, though disputed by the facts and by almost every one who knew him. It is yet another example of how stars like Godfrey can be stereotyped by the public.

The previous winter of 1953, when Godfrey had done his first live broadcast from Miami Beach, it originated from the Kenilworth Hotel in Bal Harbor, up Collins Avenue from the downtown area. Bal Harbor was greener and posher, the hotels were fewer and more exclusive and the Kenilworth sat between Collins Avenue and a magnificent strip of the beach, far beyond the madding crowds just ten miles farther south. There was an entry from the ocean into the Intracoastal Waterway just north of the resort, and the hotel provided complete privacy for its upscale guests. Like many hotels in that area at the time, the Kenilworth was restricted, meaning it "took" no Jews or blacks. "There were lots of pockets of discrimination in many areas of South Florida," recalled Hank Meyer, who was head of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce at the time.

What became more unnerving, as Godfrey appeared more vulnerable, were long-smoldering charges of anti-Semitism.

In the 1920s, the entire "Gold Coast," as the Beach was called, along with the city of Miami just to the west, became one of the popular vacation destinations in the States. It drew wealthy socialites, not-so-wealthy retirees, and middle-class Americans to dozens of hotels built up and down Collins Avenue. The Jewish population of winter tourists, numbering in the thousands, congregated in a one mile-area that stretched north to 47th street and was filled with restaurants, shops, and an increasing number of luxury hotels surrounded by more modest ones.

Few Jewish people were interested in staying in Bal Harbor, but almost everyone was aware that the Kenilworth was one of those restricted hotels. It was Leo DeOrsey, Godfrey's lawyer and manager, who had introduced Arthur to the area and the hotel, of which he owned a sizable piece. Beginning in the late forties, Mary and Arthur would take trips to the Kenilworth with Leo and his wife Helen. Times were changing and walls of prejudice were beginning to come down, but many of his listeners and viewers found the Kenilworth representing an unexplained side of Godfrey: Why would he stay at a restricted hotel? Was he anti-Semitic?

To the contrary, Peter Kelley, Godfrey's primary agent for the last 20 years of his career, recalls that "Arthur wasn't anti-anything, except probably anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi." He traced the charge in part to the way Godfrey talked. Godfrey grew up in an era of mass immigration when many Americans, including the immigrants, referred to or identified others by their race or religion. He was no exception. Writer Ralph Schoenstein, who later guested on Arthur's radio shows and years later attempted to help him write an autobiography, agreed that it was Godfrey's way, at times, to so identify people but that it was also benign. "I know guys like Arthur. He was like my father. The same kind of street talk."

Though few of his signers were Jewish, his announcer, Tony Marvin and a number of his bandleaders, band members, producers and writers through the years were. Ironically, when these individuals traveled to Miami Beach to do the shows, they

stayed at the Kenilworth along with Godfrey. Jazz musician Dick Hyman, who was Godfrey's orchestra director in the late 1950s, along with dozens of performers who appeared with him through the years, saw no signs of anti-Semitism, no traces of any hostility. Nowhere in Bill Paley's memoirs or in biographies of the man does the charge emerge. Hank Meyer and his wife Lenore were often guests of Godfrey's when he was at the Beach. One time Arthur had been invited to a Bar Mitzvah and invited them to join him and the celebrating family for dinner. The Meyers once spent ten days as Godfrey's gusts at the Virginia farm.

"Arthur got such a bad rap... People pointed to the Kenilworth as proof of his anti-Semitism. Except when he bought into it, he desegregated it.

Non-Jews in the business such as Andy Rooney also dismissed the contention, as did Remo Palmier, who observed it would have been very prominent if it were true. Former CBS president Frank Stanton, who brought Godfrey to national prominence, never found truth in the rumors.

Kelley also suggests that Godfrey wasn't aware of the Kenilworth's policies during the early stays there. As far as he knew, everyone connected with his show could go there. "But shortly after he bought a small interest in it, in the early fifties, he found out about the policy and within six months had the restricted policy removed."

Ruth Ann Perlmutter, whose husband Nate was head of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Florida in those days, corroborates that story. "Arthur got such a bad rap. We lived near him in Florida. People pointed to the Kenilworth as proof of his anti-Semitism. Except when he bought into it, he desegregated it. My husband and I used to defend him."[9] "The problem," says Kelley, is that when he changed the policy, "it made the back pages, not the front pages."

If Godfrey had traveled with the entertainment crowd in Hollywood or even New York, where Jews were prominent, it is unlikely the charge would have stuck. Though financier Bernard Baruch was a close friend and advisor, most of his closest friends were corporate leaders and military men, few of whom were Jewish. Yet Jewish entertainers like Jack Benny did appear on his programs. Humorist Sam Levenson subbed for him regularly. In 1950, actress Gertrude Berg who played a popular character named Molly Goldberg on radio and television, appeared on his program. Then, two weeks later, he played himself on her situation comedy show, *The Goldbergs*. On that program, Molly brought in the neighborhood talent to "try out" for Godfrey and sent him off with "borscht, blintzes, and strudel."

Yet the assumption persisted, undermining his credibility. Peter Kelley's understanding was that the nemesis was Irving Mansfield, the talented producer for CBS in the 1940s who created the *Talent Scouts* program. It was common knowledge that Godfrey and Mansfield hated each other and that they carried out a constant series of slights or worse. It's said that Godfrey would purposefully fill the half-hour of his *Talent Scouts* show till the very last seconds so that there wouldn't be time to run Mansfield's credit. According to what Kelley had been told, Mansfield began to spread the word about the Kenilworth being restricted and Godfrey being anti-Semitic.

Others dispute that account. Interviewing Irving Mansfield once, Larry King found him to be surprisingly positive about Godfrey. King, who was a reporter

for the *Miami Herald* in the early fifties, was well aware of the Kenilworth policy. "If it had been me," he says, "I wouldn't have stayed there. But Arthur didn't think that way."

On one occasion, the ADL was asked to look into charges that Godfrey was anti-Semitic. Arnold Foster, now a New York attorney, was national director of the ADL at the time. According to Gail Gans of the ADL in New York, "the criticism of Godfrey dealt with his association with the Kenilworth Hotel. And the fact that he sometimes used an exaggerated Yiddish personal accent for comic effect." At the time, Foster wrote: "I personally do not believe that Godfrey is any menace to Jews or to any other ethnic group. Or that any human relations organization ought to be concerned in any way about him. There's no evidence in our record that he has stepped over the line, so to say, with ill-advised humor in a long time and the Kenilworth has now for many years been open to Jews."

Today, Foster adds that Irving Mansfield was a good friend of his. "Irving would say, `I know [Arthur] better. An anti-Semite he's not. A loose tongue, yes. I would trust him on my life that he's not an anti-Semite.... He knows I'm an active Jew and involved and I tell you he's not an anti-Semite.' Walter Winchell and his secretary Rose Bigman also assured me he was not. I spent 60-odd years in the ADL including years as counsel, and I've looked under beds for anti-Semites. And if I concluded at the time that he wasn't, he wasn't."

Yet for some who would define anti-Semitism broadly, and that does not include Foster, Godfrey is guilty as charged because of staying at the Kenilworth and apparent delays in getting the policy of the hotel changed once he took it over. Herman Klurfield, who was Walter Winchell's associate, acknowledges that Winchell's secretary, Rose Bigman, "was very fond of Arthur. Her sister worked for Arthur and he [Arthur] was fond of her." But he goes on to say that Winchell, also Jewish, became furious at Godfrey when he gained part ownership of the hotel that kept out Jews, and stopped writing about Godfrey. Though not suggesting that he or Winchell thought Godfrey anti-Semitic, Klurfield felt it was only under pressure that Godfrey changed the policy.

Traveling east across the Julia Tuttle Causeway, from the city of Miami to the Beach, two huge green highway signs loom overhead in front of you as you approach the beach side. One directs you to Mt. Sinai Medical Center, the other points straight ahead to Arthur Godfrey Road, which then stretches for a mile all the way to the Ocean. "Arthur loved the Beach," remembers Hank Meyer. "When we renamed 41st Street Arthur Godfrey Road, he loved that too. But he had a great fear that someday people would say he was anti-Semitic and that the sign should be taken down. I would say, `Arthur, they won't do that,' and he'd say, `It's not right, it's not fair, and it's not factually correct.'"

The signs are still up on Arthur Godfrey Road. But the charge of anti-Semitism still comes up from many, some fifty years later, whenever the name Arthur Godfrey is mentioned. It is a chilling comment on how casually we often label people, especially our celebrities, based on few hard facts, no direct involvement, and a good deal of hearsay. The damage done can be devastating. ■

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Television as Intelligence

Are children "dumbed down" by television? Not necessarily, says a child psychologist. | **By Thomas J. Cottle**

The debate over whether television exists as a potentially positive, even educational resource, or merely a vast wasteland causing generations of people to become less intelligent—not to mention violent has been raging for decades. As schools across the country introduce more television products in to their classrooms, an increasing number of parents are committed to cutting back on the number of hours their children are permitted to sit before the television set.

What is often lost in these often acrimonious debates, however, is that for good or for bad, the experience of watching television not only restructures the human mind, it transforms the nature of human intelligence. For it is not only that we are receiving information, albeit in hundreds of tiny servings, but our mind is changing, the way we think is changing, the way we tend to reason is changing, and the way we conceive of, react to and construct reality is changing, all as a function of experiencing television. The powerful impact, in other words, is not necessarily today's news, or last evening's sitcom. It may be the unseen, unfelt transformation of consciousness, the reorganization of thought and action caused by the constant act of watching and experiencing television. Sven Birkerts said it in a slightly different way: "...this is the first time, ever, that the perceptions of events and the transmission of the perceptions have become as important as the events themselves." Said differently, the messenger is as important as the message.

To fully appreciate this so-called restructuring of consciousness, we turn to the writings of the Swiss cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget.

For Piaget, if the essential function of education was to develop intelligence, then the essential function of intelligence was to understand and invent structures of the mind by the acts in which we structure reality. Simplifying this, Piaget believed that as we "take in" reality, as for example watch something on television, our consciousness is transformed as a direct result of the act of watching as well as by the actual stimulus we are viewing. We are not merely copying behavior, attitudes or opinions. Rather, we are structuring reality because we are constantly organizing it through the ways we act or think. Indeed, this reorganizing becomes a basis of reasoning.

While surely this seems complex, think of a simple action in which discerning some truth requires extraordinary cognitive sophistication. A child sees a doll. She smiles

because she recognizes it. Then the doll is hidden, and the child frowns; she is unhappy that the doll has "gone away." In time, however, the child will learn that the doll presently hidden is "still there." She will learn, in other words, that disappearance does not mean permanent absence, for she is now able to hold the concept of the doll in her mind. Thus the game of peek-a-boo is born, which in turn means that reality is not predicated solely on what she is able to directly sense or perceive. Maturity, and so-called normality, in fact depend on one's ability to hold competing abstract notions in mind. Without this capacity, there can be no mature form of reasoning. And notice again, this need not have anything to do with what one is literally viewing or hearing.

A little boy learns that there is a big animal with four legs called a horse... He proceeds to call any large animal with four legs "horse."

Reasoning requires profound transformations, or what Piaget called *restructuring* of the mind. Even small children go about generating hypotheses about the world as they attempt to make sense of it. At each point in their thinking, children reorganize their knowledge about the world. They are not merely accumulating information as much as they are restructuring the very nature of their thinking apparatus. This means that with each experience a child not only absorbs information, but in the ensuing restructuring of the mind, makes it possible for still newer information to be appreciated, understood and reacted to.

Numerous examples of this restructuring come to mind. A little boy learns that there is a big animal with four legs called a horse. Not surprisingly, he proceeds to call any large animal with four legs "horse." In time, however, the restructuring taking place provides the child sufficient sophistication to make more refined discriminations. Now he laughs at someone who calls an elephant or lion "horse." But note that it is not mere rote memory that Piaget claims is at play here. Rather, the mind has become restructured, literally "more intelligent." It is not that the child knows more, but rather the child thinks more, well, thoughtfully, intelligently. More generally, childhood, for Piaget, involves the development of a progressive synthesis of absorption of information and the restructuring of the mind that takes place because of this absorption.

An analogy for restructuring is in order. On the first occasion of eating a very hot pepper, many of us feel we are on fire. By the fourth or fifth time we eat this same species of pepper, however, we find our intestinal tract more adaptable. We even grow to like the taste of the pepper. In a sense, our digestive systems have been restructured by dint of the assimilation of the pepper, and we are prepared to take on even hotter peppers. By the mere action of eating the peppers our insides have been transformed, thereby allowing us to transform our attitudes about the peppers, as well as our capacity to digest them.

If Piaget is right, if intelligence is truly something having to do with actions of the person *on* the environment and vice versa, thereby affecting the structure of the mind, if choking on one pepper prepares us for reaching the point where we come to adore peppers, or at least find them palatable, then knowledge is not something imposed on us by teachers or television broadcasters, but rather something that is actually "called up" in us. Learning does not refer, in other words, to materials being piled on or shoved in. Rather, learning is a process of something being "brought up"

or "brought forth" as if it were already there, hence "all" we have to do is fetch or recall it. Yet what is already there is a function of all our previous experiences and interactions with reality, which includes all our previous involvement with television. In turn, this suggests that every form of learning affects the structure of the mind as much as the actual "thing" being learned. More precisely, the mind is constantly being restructured by dint of the activities in which it is engaged, the most prominent ones in recent decades being ones of sensation, and in particular the sensations generated by watching computer and television screens.

It is for this reason, therefore, that we allege the act (or sensation) of watching television to be as profoundly influencing—if not more so—than what is being watched. For each act of watching, which means every second of sitting before the set, structures the mind, again, irrespective of the contents of the program. Not surprisingly, by the recognition of an actor's face, the constantly changing visual images, commercial interruptions, the appeal to senses, the creation of appetites, all become part of the television experience. With Piaget's writings as encouragement, we might even argue that television seemingly produces a mind working in a manner some would label as Attention Deficit Disordered.

In Piaget's terms, experiencing television is merely a form of intelligence emerging. Children in front of the tube are neither shutting down nor "dumbing down." They are making mental leaps, imagining, literally conceiving mental images; they are experiencing a restructuring of the mind which on occasion dazzles, on occasion depresses us. We watch the child watching a television show and say, "You really understand this? You really know who all these people are?" No problem. And in time, this same (sensation based) cognitive structure will make, among other things, the child's encounters with computers, and especially computer graphics, that much easier (as he/she will be able to "call up"—"remember"—relevant modes of thinking if not actual information), while at the same time making encounters with other activities, like reading a three hundred page book, that much more vexing.

In Piaget's terms, experiencing television is merely a form of intelligence emerging.

To repeat, the mind assimilates not merely the information of television, but the framework or paradigm, (defined by Daniel Sage and Leonard Burrello as "mental models that we employ to put opportunities and problems in perspective,") provided by the framework or paradigm of television. Only naturally, the child will turn (inside) to this same framework when other realities, other circumstances present themselves. In this way, the framework acts almost as computer software or what cognitive psychologists call a neural net. By taking in the substance of television, the child at the same time is mentally accommodating to television's framework. In facing newer circumstances, the child calls up older frameworks, older structures, and accommodates to these newer circumstances by reliving or reviving the older frameworks and structures.

One can envision this idea of framework or structure as a computer word-processing program. What I write is one matter, but how the processing of these words takes place in fact is governed by the parameters and capacities of the word processing software. It provides a structure, a framework that exists irrespective of what substantively is being written. A major difference, however, between the mind and computer software, is that the use

of the mind's software may alter it. But since most of us do not work in television, we do not, alas, alter its structure; we are altered by it.

Television becomes a significant influence on the structure of moral reasoning and moral behavior.

If this sounds complicated, let us understand only that we cannot be surprised if television news, political campaigns, publicity events and press conferences of all varieties are nothing but shows that affect our senses and hence restructure our minds. The people involved may or may not believe their purpose is to entertain or distract, but the framework they unconsciously employ is predicated on earlier frameworks now lodged in their minds, the main frame of course being television. Television not only broadcasts the half-time show at the Super Bowl, or the lavish Oscar-night celebrations in Hollywood, it literally breeds a generation of people more than cognitively capable of producing such events. What one generation considers unthinkable, another generation finds perfectly simple. (If parents presumably are "more intelligent" than their children, why is it that in most homes the younger generation is called on to change the VCR clock, tape a television program or solve some computer glitch!)

The child glued, as we say, to the television set is actually performing a series of internal experiments, although apparently not too many that parents treasure. She is making deductions, inferences and drawing conclusions on the basis not merely of program content, but of the structure of the medium. As McLuhan said, the medium is the message, and we now add, a root structure of the modern mind as well.

Whereas once upon a time it might have been said that play represented the purest form of thinking for the child because in play the child assimilates reality into the self, now it might be alleged that television has supplanted play as the most common form of "thinking," and hence a fundamental aspect of intelligence. A child isn't just watching television, a child is absorbing, restructuring, thinking! And the adult sitting next to her? If Piaget is correct, he's doing the thing.

One thing more about this matter of television's role in restructuring the human mind. For Piaget, what goes for intelligence and reasoning also goes for morality. What goes, in other words, for consciousness goes for conscience as well. For the ways we assimilate and accommodate to circumstances, knowledge and experiences, shape not only our thinking, but our ways of dealing with others as well. Television, therefore, becomes a significant influence on the structure of moral reasoning and moral behavior.

Consider, in this regard, two prominent features in the scandal ignited by the President and a young intern, the images of which came to us through television. Feature one is that infamous moment when the President went on television, wagged his finger and proclaimed he did not have sex with that woman, Ms. Lewinsky. Question: Why did this lie, and his lying before a grand jury as well, turn out not to bother us all that much? Feature two was the topic of probably one million debates: namely, in the context of morality, does it matter how a public figure acts in the private moments of his life?

In great measure, our responses to these questions is predicated as much on the television experience generated part of our cognitive framework as anything else. Lying on television, or in courtrooms, which some believe is utterly unforgivable, often turns out to be a rather minimal event if only be-

cause television itself creates a framework of shows, performances and sensations. People clearly do not lie all the time on television nor in court rooms, but surely we know much of what we see on television is total make believe. We are, in other words, prepared for the illogical, the disconnected, the incoherent, the lie; they are part of the so-called neural net, inherent ingredients of the structure of the mind that has been formed in great measure by experiencing television. In this context, lying is not deemed immoral. Damage-control artists, spin doctors, slick defense attorneys, the infamous talking heads, all become acceptable agents of possible untruth, because, as the man said, "the play's the thing."

As for the matter of what a man does in the privacy of his life, this question, too, is answered in great measure by the ways in which our thinking has been structured by television. Reality, apparently, is what we directly witness. Everything derives from the looking, a fundamental aspect, clearly, of the television framework. What goes on backstage, offscreen, (or in the oval office) away from the camera almost doesn't count because it almost doesn't exist, because we haven't seen it.

The name of the framework is to bring us news, gossip, events about which we might otherwise not hear, although in common speech we say "see" rather than "hear." ("Did you see what the President said last night?") The framework prepares us to assess circumstances in terms of what is directly before us. That quintessential morality in fact is unenforceable morality, literally un-witnessable morality, seems to barely affect us. If we're not seen acting immorally, we reason, we're not acting immorally. The idea that if we're truly moral we act morally when no one is around to observe us, seems irrelevant. The irrelevance proves logical, however, given the structure of our minds created in part by experiencing television. Let us remember that a constant diet of disconnected events makes the generation of a structure or framework for logic rather difficult. John Dewey's writings about reflection spoke precisely to this matter: "Reflection," he wrote, "involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a consequence—a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each leans back on its predecessors."

In the end, Piaget's writings, although he never commented on television, help us to understand the impact of all those stimuli we encounter on television since they contribute to the formation of our consciousness. The very nature of intelligence, as Piaget asserted, describes in some measure, the way we learn about and make sense of the world and ourselves, as well as the ways we explain ourselves and our world to ourselves. Intelligence describes the way our very consciousness works, and thus helps us to appreciate how we come to, well, see ourselves and one another. And television viewing remains a highly significant component of the sorts of mental transformations we make, transformations which ultimately result in the shaping of our intelligence.

So, rather than thinking of children as being distracted or even "dumbed down" by television, we might instead think of children in front of the tube as the psychologist Ellen Langer has suggested we conceive of Attention Deficit Disordered children: they are merely "otherwise attracted." It is not that these children are quantitatively less intelligent; it is that they reveal a different quality of intelligence, actually a different mental structure. With that in mind, we may then address the issue of what sort of mental structures best serve the individual, as well as the culture. ■

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as I recall, was pictured but once, and when he asked questions—which he did informally and quietly—the camera did not switch back and forth between him and Lord Russell, as though some sort of intellectual tennis match were under way.

The half hour was Lord Russell's, and he made the most of it. He entered a comfortable-looking, book-lined room, and said, "How do you do?" to Mr. Wheeler in a manner that implied he really cared how Mr. Wheeler did. He sat down in a chair, peered at the camera with the bright, inquisitive eyes of youth (incidentally, he looked as if he has at least another eighty years ahead of him), and said, "What are we going to talk about?" Mr. Wheeler was ready for him. He suggested that Lord Russell, at eighty, might tell us "what you think you have learned, and what you think you will never learn, in your career as a philosopher." A lesser man might have reached for his hat and departed, but not Lord Russell. He started out by saying that there were some things he felt he would never learn; in fact, there were things he hoped he would never learn. "I don't wish to learn to change my hopes for the world," he said. "I am prepared to change my beliefs about the state of the world, but not my hopes.... I think we might call the subject of our talk `Eighty Years of Changing Beliefs and Unchanging Hopes.'"

Lord Russell pointed out how difficult it is for anyone born after 1914 to apprehend the disparity between his world and that of Lord Russell's childhood. He was born in 1872, he told us; his parents died when he was an infant, and he was brought up in the home of his grandparents. His grandfather had been born during the beginning years of the French Revolution, had been a Member of Parliament, had visited Napoleon at Elba, had introduced the Reform Bill of 1832_"which started England on the road toward democracy"—and had been Prime Minister during the Mexican War and the revolutions of 1848. "As you can see," said Lord Russell, "he belonged to an age that now seems rather remote. The world where I was young was a solid world, a world where all kinds of things that have now disappeared were thought to be going to last forever." It was an austere world for a young boy. He was forced to play the piano for a half hour each night, which he hated, and to join in family prayers at eight. The Russell household had eight servants, but the food was strikingly simple, and it was not considered proper for young people to eat what he called "nice things." If there was apple tart and rice pudding in the house, young Russell got the rice pudding. His grandmother permitted herself the luxury of sitting in an armchair only after dinner—until she was seventy, that is. His people had a horror of philosophy. They would say, "Philosophy is summed up completely in these two questions: `What is matter? Never mind. What is mind? No matter.'" He was not amused, and when he went to Cambridge, the world opened up before him, and he entered into what he called "a life of disagreements."

Lord Russell has been disagreeing ever since. He disagreed first with his own family, and sought solace among academic companions. He disagreed with many of them when he became a pacifist during the First World War, and took up with a circle of seemingly compatible folk whose principles he honored until he visited Russia in 1920 "and found that I abominated the Soviet government. They were dreadful people—dreadful people already and becoming more so—and so then I had to break with all the people who had endured my pacifism, who had liked Russia, or thought they did. I was left in a very great isolation at that time." When his children were born, he became interested in education, and discovered that progressive schools were not entirely to his taste. "I thought they didn't pay enough attention

to instruction. It seems to me that in our technically complex world you cannot play any important part unless you have a very considerable amount of actual knowledge, and I don't think most children will acquire much knowledge unless there is a certain amount of discipline in the school. I think the real discipline required for acquiring knowledge ought to be insisted upon, and isn't sufficiently ... in a good many modern schools I know." The conservative schools considered the use of a swear word worse than an unkind act, he said, "and that seems to me absurd." So Lord Russell created his own school, but gave it up because he proved to be no administrator, and, moreover, because he came upon a school in which he believed. For himself, if he were a young man today, he would not turn to philosophy, he said, but rather to physics or history or the study of mass psychology.

Mr. Wheeler wondered if Lord Russell could tell us what the world needs to reach a happier state. Lord Russell was delighted to reply. Three things, he said: World government. Approximate economic equality between different parts of the world. A nearly stationary population. He elaborated easily and eloquently upon all three points, and concluded by stating that he entertained real hope for the world. "Mankind will emerge from these dreadful things and will emerge into some world that will be happier than any world that has existed in the past," he said. "I am firmly persuaded of that. What I don't know is how long it will take." And then this great man was gone. ■

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Decoy... and Other Grand Dames

Beverly Garland recalls her pioneering role as a New York City police woman in the 1950s. | **by Cary O'Dell**

Even with reruns, *Nick-at-Night* and, of course, our collective memories, television of the 1950s (when it was very new, usually single-sponsored and always black-and-white) was a far more diverse and realistic place than many of us might originally recollect. This is especially true in its prime-time portrayals of women.

While Gracie Allen was delightfully ditsy and Dagmar was delicious, they were not the only images of women put forth in the early days of the medium. From (literally) pioneering women like Gail Davis in *Annie Oakley*, to careerists like Eve Arden in *Our Miss Brooks*, to savvy homemakers like Peggy Wood in *Mama*, there were many forward-thinking females leaping out at America through the tube.

And there are other shows, buried like a golden nuggets inside an already overflowing treasure chest of television series—long-running or short-lived—which were not only "ahead of their time," but always highly entertaining and, ultimately, inspiring.

Consider *Decoy*.

Decoy was—is—an amazingly progressive television series. It ran in the fringe world of first-run, off-network syndication

for one season in 1957. Produced in black-and-white and one half-hour in length for each of its 39 episodes, *Decoy* (a.k.a. *Policewoman Decoy*) was the story of New York City police woman Patricia "Casey" Jones.

Decoy was produced as a tribute to America's police women and its plots were (allegedly) torn from real-life Gotham cases, much as *Dragnet* dipped into the LAPD for its dramatized reenactments. As a series it was financed under the banner of Pyramid Productions (actually a consortium of major independent stations) and was produced by Everett Rosenthal, Stuart Rosenberg and Arthur Singer. For its one-and-only season it was syndicated, nationwide, by Official Films.

The series starred actress Beverly Garland, a respected, dependable film veteran and something of a TV industry good-luck charm, based on the number of pilots in which she starred or guested and ended up getting picked up for full runs. She was, with her smart and gutsy performance, the heart and soul of the series and its only regular cast member making her still one of only a handful of actresses to front her own dramatic series.

Garland, straight from a career milestone co-starring with Frank Sinatra in *The Joker is Wild*, got the lead in *Decoy* after receiving a call from an east coast producer. She remembers, "They asked, 'Would you be interest in doing a television series about a police woman in New York City?' Television was very new and I didn't pay much attention to what television meant [at that time] to the motion-picture industry. But it was a great opportunity and it was work."

Garland went to New York. She remembers, "I tested. Did a whole show, a half-hour. And then they went out to try to sell one of the networks on it." Selling the networks on a female-centered cop drama however proved difficult. When there were no takers, the producers sold the series into syndication. Eventually *Decoy* would air on independents in Boston, New Orleans, Buffalo, Oklahoma City and other markets. However, no stations in New York City or Los Angeles picked it up, which would ultimately add to the show's now "underground" mystique and, no doubt, also lead to the program's short lifespan.

With *Decoy* a "go," Garland relocated to the Big Apple, subletting friend Phyllis Kirk's apartment right across from Central Park. Garland began work in the same city studios that were home to *Sgt. Bilko* and which would double for *Decoy's* 16th precinct. And she went to work creating the character of Officer Jones: badge number was 300; weekly salary, $75.00. Remembers the actress, "I had to learn karate. I had to learn to shoot a gun...."

For authenticity and to keep production costs down, the series was filmed mostly on the streets of New York ("We would takes cabs from location to location and change clothes in the rest rooms of hamburger joints," recalls Garland of the less than glamourous working conditions). This method gave the series a unique documentary feel and a sense of neo-realism not unlike what *East Side, West Side* would later be celebrated for. Such economy also meant that Garland almost always did her own stunts. The majority of episodes were sometimes shot in as little as three days, often— as can be imagined—with filming going late into the night. The long work days usually left Garland with just enough time each night to get back home and start memorizing the script for the next morning. Being the lead also meant of course being in every single scene and, in time, the heavy workload would take its toll on the actress. Remembers Garland, who worked through colds and a case of the measles, "One day I fainted on the set. They revived me and I went on with it." She also recalls, "We shot through the winter. I remember one time, one of the first shows we did, and I'm running through Central Park and the camera is packed so it won't freeze up and I'm out there without a coat."

Being shot in New York also gave the series easy access to many talented up-and-comers: Ed Asner, Phyllis Newman, Colleen Dewhurst, Barbara Barrie, Joanna Linville, and Lois Nettleton, among others, all made guest appearances on the series.

Besides being filmed in New York and having a female in the lead, *Decoy* was unusual for fifties TV in many other ways as well, especially in its tackling of often taboo subject matter. Of course early television did not always shy away from tough situations as frequently as many remember. Though it took the talents of Norman Lear and others to fully bring social consciousness to all levels of entertainment, television of the 1950s and '60s, in series like *Medic* and of course the heyday of live drama, frequently took on tough issues and dealt with them responsibly.

During its one season, *Decoy* had plots which capably dealt with a wide variety of social issues: in an episode titled "Death Watch" there's a sensitive portrayal of a brain-damaged adult; in another, "Bullet of Hate," we see an insightful treatment of a child-abuse victim now trying to cope as an adult; in "Dream Fix," Jones attempts to help, and understand, a drug-addicted young debutante whose dependency is treated without sugar coating or shame; in "Scapegoat," Casey must come to the aid of a distraught mother who is considering murdering her son because he was born mentally retarded and is now ostracized from the woman's family. This episode ends in a climatic scene on a city bridge where Casey consoles, cajoles, and eventually taunts the woman into reconsidering.

We would takes cabs from location to location and change clothes in the rest rooms of hamburger joints.

It is a scene of such power and suspense it could easily fit in today into episodes of *NYPD Blue* or *Homicide: Life on the Street.*

Additionally the series also had the ability (and the gumption) to address many "women's issues": unplanned pregnancy, attempted rape, and, in its own way, feminism. In the episode "First Arrest" (the second-to-last episode shot), Jones, five years on the force, relates the story of her first undercover case to a fellow police woman just starting on the force. It is an image of supportive partnership years before the teamwork of Cagney and Lacey. This episode, told in flashback (and actress Garland's personal favorite) took place at Coney Island and recounted Jones's first assignment and how she dealt with her new job, its new demands and her neophyte jitters. Trying to collar a fence, Jones is shown as jumpy and insecure, frequently calling back to her sergeant seeking advice until, at episode's end, she not only catches the crook but finds a level of self-assurance.

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Casey Jones, as a character written and played, brought enormous compassion and humanity (what we would once have called a "woman's touch") to her policing that the bare-bones demeanor of Joe Friday could probably never comprehend. The black and whiteness of good and evil, of legal and illegal, so easily discerned by Friday or by Elliot Ness on *The Untouchables* was far less clean cut on *Decoy*. Officer Jones frequently found herself less than thrilled at an episode's close, wrestling with the moral issues at hand and frequently feeling sympathy for the guilty as well as for the victimized. In the series pilot, Officer Jones is seen making the arrest of a woman, a near rape victim who killed her abuser in order to get away, and then walking the woman out to the waiting police car, her arms around her. When did Joe Friday ever do that?

But *Decoy* never fell to any heavy-handed moralizing about issues; neither did its lead character. In an episode titled "Dark Corridor" Casey is sent deep undercover into a women's prison. She will pose as an inmate, only the warden will know her true identity. As her superior tells her of the importance complexity of her role "on the inside," Casey cuts him off briskly, "I'm a policewoman, not a sociologist. You just tell me where to report."

In some ways *Decoy* did borrow a page from the larger *Dragnet* archetype. As with *Dragnet*, Officer Jones's personal life was a non-issue. Though we can easily assume that Casey was unmarried, we would probably also have to assume that there was no steady man in her life. For Casey, her work was her life. Actress Garland in fact can only remember even one scene that took place in Casey's apartment. And that was a simple phone-call scene with no other actors and only minimal scenery. Remembers the actress, "If the show had gone on they might have gone more into her personal life, but it was fascinating [to me] that we didn't really know that much about her." The only insight we had into her background was in the series pilot when Casey makes mention of training for the ballet before—somehow—segueing into the police force.

Also, as with *Dragnet* and other hard-core cop shows of the era, Garland as Jones narrated each episode through voice-over, setting up the basic plot, then explaining

to the audience that week's "sting" operation. Occasionally, Jones broke the fourth wall, addressing the audience directly, and giving the show and the character of Casey Jones a unique, authoritative and personal voice.

Though the series was called *Decoy* and Casey's job was often to pose as something she wasn't, she was not in the show used as the traditional female *Decoy* character we have normally seen on television. Characters like Cinnamon Carter on *Mission: Impossible* or Eve Whitfield on *Ironside* had as the crux of their roles the art of distraction. Using feminine wiles (and of course no shortage of smarts) these women were always part of a team, always assisting in moving the scheme, that week's impossible mission, forward but seldom, if ever, were they seen as the mastermind or the key individual in the plan's resolution.

Later, even in series where the female hero took more center stage, they always seemed to have a man nearby, handy and able to pull them out of trouble. *Police Woman* Pepper Anderson could always call on Bill Crowley (Earl Holliman) to get her out of a tight spot just as Emma Peel had Mr. Stead on *The Avengers* and Honey West had her partner Sam Bolt. Casey Jones though was always on her own. In no episode does she become the hunted or the trapped, the cliché'd damsel in distress. Smart, calm and resourceful, Casey was always shown as the one in charge. Says Garland about her alter ego, "I was really one of the guys. You never got the feeling that this was a 'feminine' cop. She was just a cop.... She always handled things herself."

Additionally, and interestingly, *Decoy's* Casey Jones never depended for plot or ratings on "jiggle," the sexual overtness, that would color other series with heroic female leads, including *The Avengers, Honey West,* and, of course, *Charlie's Angels.* Though when first glimpsed in the show's pilot, Officer Jones is draped in mink, that was as openly seductive and glamourous as Garland was ever allowed to get. In this regard, *Decoy* outdistances *Police Woman* which frequently sent Angie Dickenson's Pepper undercover as go-go girl or prostitute. Remembers Garland, "I never recall ever getting a script where I thought Casey was being compromised as a professional or exploited." Conceived as a tribute to real-life policewomen, the show took its premise seriously and would only portray the women in blue with respect and with serious attention to realism. To keep the series true to life, the producers even hired a real-life New York City police woman to stay on the set and make sure Officer Casey Jones did everything by the book.

Playing a police woman who was sometimes pounding the beat but most often undercover was an actress's field day and Garland made the most of her role. One week Garland was a "plain clothesman," the next she was "doing time" in a women's prison playing a tough inmate without a trace sentiment or hesitation. Later, in another episode, she's a nurse; after that, a dancer in a carnival. Garland was up to any challenge. Her work is stunning, it turns on a dime, going from astute, observing police officer to hardened gun moll in slight seconds. That she was not Emmy-nominated is simply due to the series's syndicated form and its lack of exposure in New York and L.A., certainly not to Garland's work, which is still striking and timeless.

Decoy during its run racked up some impressive ratings. It was the highest-rated show on independent stations in three major markets, New Orleans, Boston and Buffalo. But without being under the largess of a network and with no big studio backing, the producers of *Decoy* had to scramble for the money to keep the show afloat. After 39 episodes though they had

run out of financing. Says Garland of her starring series' sudden demise, "I was so tired. SO TIRED. I was really rung out. So when those 39 were done, I was sort of glad it was over. Later, I thought it would have been good to go back. It was too bad really that they didn't have the money to go on." After the show ceased original production, it was syndicated successfully for seven more years under the title *Police-Woman*. Even then, it was frequently in the ratings top ten of off-network series.

Decoy never depended for plot or ratings on "jiggle," the sexual overtness that would color other series with heroic female leads...

Though proud of the series, Garland believes it may have done some damage to her career in the long run. She has said, "Because the show wasn't on in the markets of New York or Los Angeles, when I went back to California no one knew where I had been." Though considering Garland's omnipresence in front of television audiences via her reoccurring roles on *My Three Sons, Scarecrow & Mrs. King, Lois & Clark, 7th Heaven* and in innumerable guest appearances, whatever damage that might have been done was certainly short term. Garland is still a producer's good luck charm and a TV devotee's favorite.

But Garland holds no ill will towards *Decoy* or Officer Casey. She says, "I was fascinated by it. I LOVED doing it. It was one of the first television shows that had a woman as the star.... I didn't have a chance to talk to a lot of police women during the series due to the shooting schedule but I did know a lot were pleased that I was doing this because they were sort of the unsung heroes. Now, throughout my life, I've had ten or twenty women come up to me and tell me that they saw me on *Decoy* and because of it they became a police woman."

Definitely *Decoy*, as a series, had a sense of duty, not only to entertain its audience but to educate them about female police officers, the work they did at the time and would do in the future. At the end of the very first episode, Casey Jones's / Beverly Garland's closing speech, from her desk at the station, was proof enough of that. Her monologue, again addressing the camera directly, spoke of her and her fellow female officers's past and present:

Remember [police woman] Jean, the girl I talked to? She has a degree from the University of Southern California. She's a fully qualified chemist. Edna was a nurse. Marion was a social worker. I studied . . . believe it or not, to be a ballet dancer. Down the line you name it and we've done it. Today, tomorrow, next week, we'll pose as hostesses, society girls, models, anything and everything the department asks us to be. There are two-hundred and forty-nine of us in the department; we carry two things in common wherever we go: a shield—called a "potsie"—and a .32 revolver. We're New York's finest. We're police women.

Seventeen years before *Police Woman* and twenty-five years before the "breakthrough" of *Cagney & Lacey*, Beverly Garland's Casey Jones made the streets safe and early television a far more interesting place. ■

Cary O'Dell is former Archives Director for the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago and the author of *Women Pioneers in Television*. He is currently with cable TV's Discovery Channel.

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Those N.I.P.D. Blues

Some plot devices are just unbelievable! | **by Steven Doloff**

I call them N.I.P.D.'s, naturally incredible plot devices. They are those unbelievable little occurrences you find used over and over in police dramas, seemingly to generate tension or keep the plots moving. But the truth is that whenever you *do* see them, they actually break the tension and disrupt the stories because you start shouting at the TV "*Come on*, no one would do that!" What's worse, they are usually introduced by the same standard set-ups, so you see them lumbering towards you and think, "Oh, no, here it comes," right before you start shouting, "*Come on*, no one would do that!"

I offer you exhibit A: the *really* inept police roadblock. Here's the lead-in. A siren-screaming, fugitive-fleeing car chase is in progress. As the pursuing officer at the wheel whips the patrol car from side to side to avoid the hail of bullets from the escaping felons, his partner, holding his hat on his head with one hand, calls ahead for a roadblock on the police radio in his other hand. Flash forward. Three or four police cars are seen assembled down the road. They are arranged in the official formation of maximum ineffectiveness. Each car intrudes onto the road only a foot or two from each side (leaving a lane-wide hole between them) and each is angled sharply in the same direction that the felons' car is traveling. Whenever you see this formation, you *know* the driver of the escaping car is just going to yell "yahoo," speed up, and blow through the blockade virtually unimpeded. One wonders how many perps have to escape these Swiss-cheese roadblocks before the police figure out that they have to pull their patrol cars just a *little* further out onto the road.

Exhibit B: the frozen-finger fallacy. Consider this. An officer chases a felon down an alley and gets the drop on him. "Freeze!" shouts the cop at the perp's back, and the bad guy stops and throws his hands in the air. But we know, of course, that a chase in any action story *cannot* end this easily. So, even though the felon stands in the sights of the officer's raised, aimed, and cocked gun, the following balletic interlude invariably occurs. It is, instead, the *officer* who freezes for a good five seconds or so, while the felon pulls out a gun, spins around 180 degrees, squeezes off five rounds, laughs defiantly, and cartwheels through a nearby window to make his escape. *Then, then* the cop fires. This *might* make sense if the story were about a narcoleptic narcotics agent, but, of course, that is never the case. Instead, we see this happen regularly to the most aggressive, eagle-eyed lethal weapons on TV. Why? Maybe it's because television etiquette forbids "good" cops from shooting first (even though real cops *often* do, to protect themselves or their partners).

Exhibit C: the snide canary. Tell me if the following sounds familiar. Two detectives have a suspected minor felon in custody. They need certain information from him to either catch a *major* felon or prevent some anticipated dastardly crime. But the suspect won't talk. Now if he just sits there mum, staring at the wall, they can't touch him — it's not polite — and they're stuck. Well, but not really, because it

seems that the minor felon frequently wants to help. He looks up and for absolutely no reason at all colorfully and outrageously insults both detectives' manhoods. Now this, of course, righteously enables one of the cops to lift the "dirtbag" out of his chair by his ears and threaten to dismember him. And *this*, naturally, prompts the felon to instantly spill everything he knows. Watch for the smirk on the minor perp in the interrogation room. He is thinking up his best insult, and will be singing in two minutes.

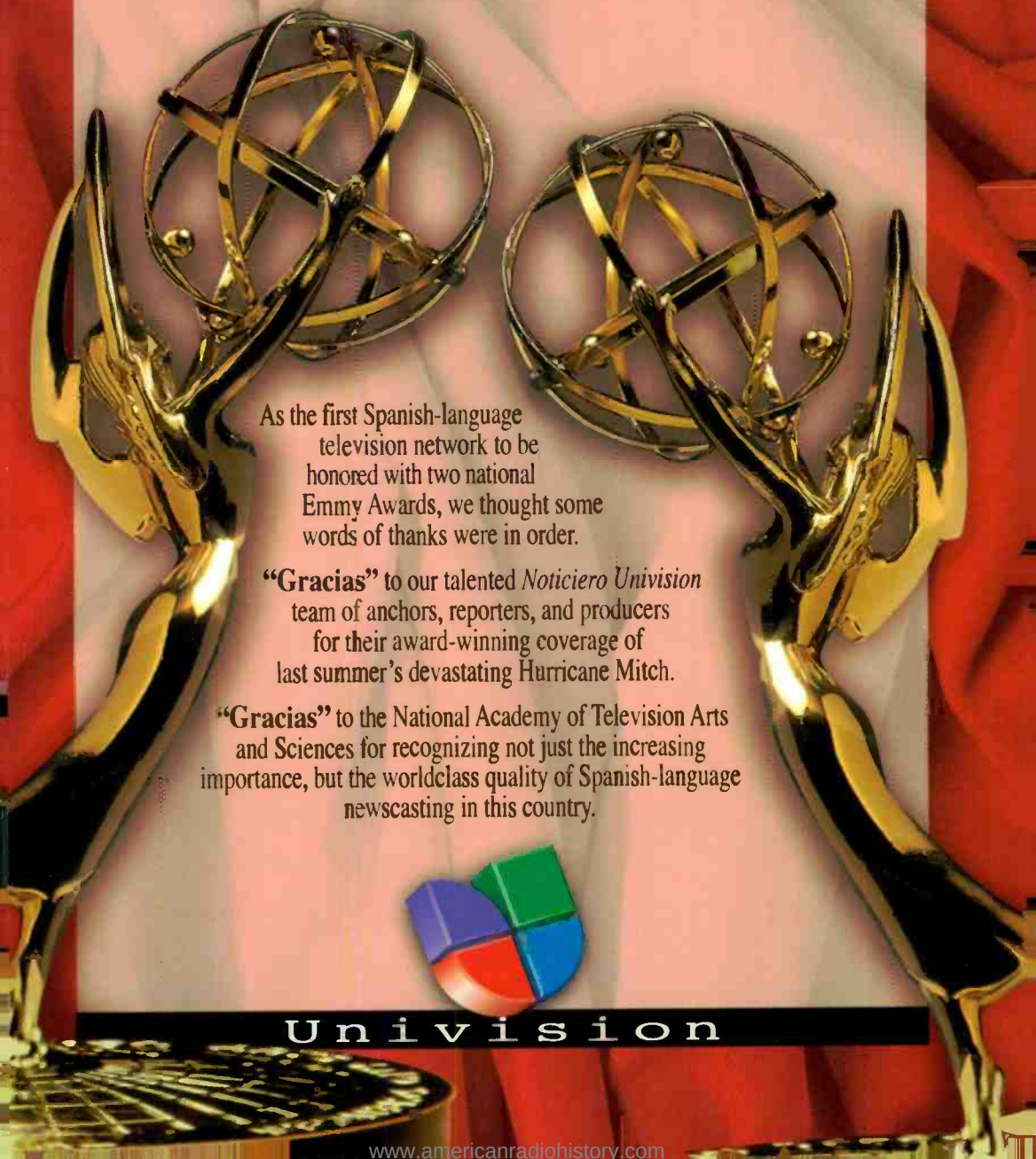
Exhibit D: the the gang that can't shoot low or hide. How many times have you seen the lone hero under fire from several desperados, all weilding state-of-the-art assault weapons of mass destruction? The good guy, armed only with his measely pistol, wisely dives behind a couch, bar, cardboard box, or breakfast nook counter. He is now completely safe, because he knows that however paper-thin his cover may be, the villains will blow to smithereens only what they can hit four or more feet above the floor. They *never* fire their machine guns low enough to shred our hero into cornflakes behind the breakfast nook. Moreover, *after* destroying everything above the four foot mark, they then inexplicably step out into the open where the hero can cap each one with a single shot. Every time. Am I right or am I right?

And finally, my favorite, Exhibit E: the "drop your gun or she gets it!" routine. (Did I just hear an "Oh, no, here it comes"?) The heinous villain has the detective's wife, girlfriend or daughter, or the detective's best friend's wife, girlfriend or daughter with a gun, knife, box cutter or scalpel to her throat or head. "Drop your gun or she gets it!" he commands our hero, who, according to the television rules of idiotic chivalry promptly puts down his weapon. He *always* puts it down. BUT REAL POLICE NEVER DO! COPS DON'T GIVE UP THEIR GUNS EVER! EVER! EVER! What would stop the villain from then just blowing the detective away? This certainly would make his escape a lot easier. He might even kill the (wife/girlfriend/daughter) witness for good measure. Now, real cops think of this. Real viewers think of this, too. Real television script writers, however, *don't* think of this. Aghhhhhhhh!

Had enough? There are lots more of these plot clunkers. In fact, I bet you have your *own* list. But I'd rather not discuss them. They just give me those N.I.P.D. blues. ■

Steven Doloff, a New York based writer, teaches modern drama at Pratt Institute.

Muchas gracias, muchas gracias.



As the first Spanish-language television network to be honored with two national Emmy Awards, we thought some words of thanks were in order.

"Gracias" to our talented *Noticiero Univision* team of anchors, reporters, and producers for their award-winning coverage of last summer's devastating Hurricane Mitch.

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Univision

An Invitation

Television Quarterly is looking for articles. We welcome contributions from readers who have something to say and know how to say it. Some of our pieces come from professional writers; others from television professionals who want to write about what they know best—their own field of expertise, whether it's programming, news, production or management. We especially seek articles about television's impact on society. We feel, too, that one of our functions can be to add to the developing history of television, particularly as told by individuals who have contributed to shaping the medium. We believe that such historical articles can be valuable for much more than their nostalgia value since they can illuminate present and future television.

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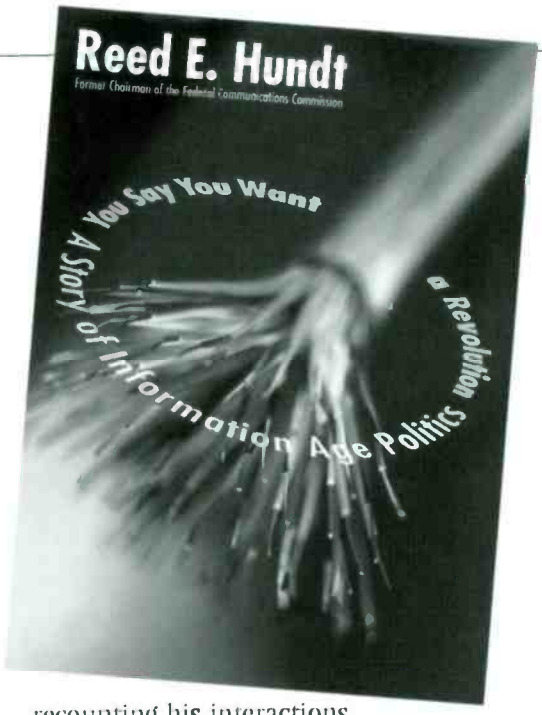
You Say You Want a Revolution: A Story of Information Age Politics

By Reed Hunt
Yale University Press, New Haven

By Michael M. Epstein



You Say You Want a Revolution, a new memoir by Reed Hundt, offers an interesting chronicle of the former FCC chairman's stewardship during the mid-1990s, when new media such as the Internet were quickly changing the rules in the communication game. The Revolution, of course, refers to the dramatic repeal and restructuring of communications regulation embodied by the telecommunications act of 1996, a far-reaching law that, among other things, allowed telephone carriers and entertainment conglomerates to compete in a converged new media marketplace. Subtitled, "A Story of Information Age Politics," Hundt's book couples a detailed account of the political skirmishes and strategy sessions that led to the Clinton Administration's legislative triumph over the Republicans with the author's candid reflections of personal naïveté, insecurities, and arrogance.

As a political chronicle, *You Say You Want a Revolution* is a good read. Hundt has crafted a largely thoughtful document of the major players in the scramble to control new media. Meetings with Bill Gates, Barry Diller, and John McCain (and many others) are reconstructed, meetings that nicely lay out the issues at stake for politicians, business tycoons, and consumers at the dawn of the Information Age. A high school friend of Al Gore, Hundt also spends considerable time recounting his interactions with the Vice President, whom he credits as the architect of the Clinton Administration's media policies. Indeed, Hundt's efforts to realize universal classroom access to the Internet make up a major component of the book. Much attention is given to Hundt's campaign to persuade industry leaders to shoulder the cost of wiring every public school classroom to the information superhighway. Noticeably absent from the book, however, is an account of the current status of classroom connectivity. Although Hundt's FCC won the battle in Congress to put classrooms on the web, few classrooms are hooked up, teachers remain untrained, and the infrastructure costs have been passed along to consumers in monthly surcharges by long distance telephone companies. For Hundt, connecting every classroom to the Internet is akin to the Holy Grail of communications technology. He may rightly take credit for getting the legislation passed, but, as with the mystical chalice of medieval romance, realizing the dream may prove elusive.

Hundt is at his very best when he explains the economic and technological changes in the media industry. Whether he is summarizing the distinction between analog and digital signals or describing the differences between circuit-switched and packet-switched telephone networks, Hundt writes in a style that is accessible and interesting even to a reader who may not be technically inclined. As Hundt explains, circuit switching requires a discreet path to remain open between caller and receiver, much like an electrical circuit. It is the traditional manner of telephone connection. Packet switching, on the other hand, deconstructs and reconstructs digital codes that transmit voice or data to a recipient. Since the codes are reconstructed at a receiving point, it doesn't matter what route it takes to get there. Hundt also deserves credit for excellent use of metaphor. People can clearly understand, for example, that packet-switching allows communication to travel in packets like a freeway filled with cars traveling at high speed while circuit switched communication requires each car to keep a lane open just for itself. In the course of three carefully written pages, Hundt masterfully articulates the reasons that the Internet, which uses packet-switched technology, has become a more efficient and less costly alternative to established analog communication.

As much as Hundt's focus is on revolution, the book is also about evolution—Hundt's own. With a voice at times reminiscent of a *Bildungsroman*, Hundt recounts the personal blunders and political missteps, especially with respect to cable regulation and industry relations, that nearly led to his premature ouster in the early 1990s. He admits that he came to the job almost largely unprepared to deal with communications issues and ignorant of the ways to do business with the press, lobbyists and politicians. That Hundt was able to overcome these deficiencies to become an effective, successful FCC Chairman is, of course, a great source of pride for the author. With fly-on-the-wall detail, Hundt reconstructs not only the substantive conversations he had with leaders in Congress and industry but the way he felt during those meetings. Vivid recollections of his many strategy sessions with aides at the FCC, his candid sparring with adversaries such as FCC Commissioner James Quello, former TCI chairman John Malone, and Republican members of Congress, and allies such as Vice President Gore and Barry Diller, are engrossing. It's fascinating to see how these substantive meetings helped shape the chairman's worldview on deregulation and media convergence.

Hundt, unfortunately, loses his way when he includes in his recollections meetings with famous people in which little or no substantive discussion occurs. In what are his least successful passages of the book, Hundt describes in detail meetings with former Disney mogul Mike Ovitz, investor guru Warren Buffett, and a litany of Hollywood celebrities. Apart from the fact that the author expresses awe to be in the presence of a major personality, the meetings often appear to be perfunctory exercises with little or no connection to Hundt's personal journey to information age epiphany. The Ovitz meeting, for example, focuses more on the executive's office etiquette and use of body language to suggest power than on anything relevant to the communications revolution. After two pages of thick description, in which Hundt attempts to present his political agenda to a super agent who doesn't even feign interest, the best Hundt can offer is the following climax: "Ovitz stared blankly at me as if I were an over-the-hill actor, no longer

worth an agent's time. He looked at his watch." Similar brief encounters with Richard Dreyfuss, Steven Spielberg, and former *NYPD* actress Sharon Lawrence, among others, also come across as dreary indulgences to Hundt's ego. In the absence of substance, these passages often read like the gushings of a celebrity sycophant and make the credentialed, otherwise probative Hundt seem shallow. In the absence of substance, one must ask what makes these encounters worthwhile reading.

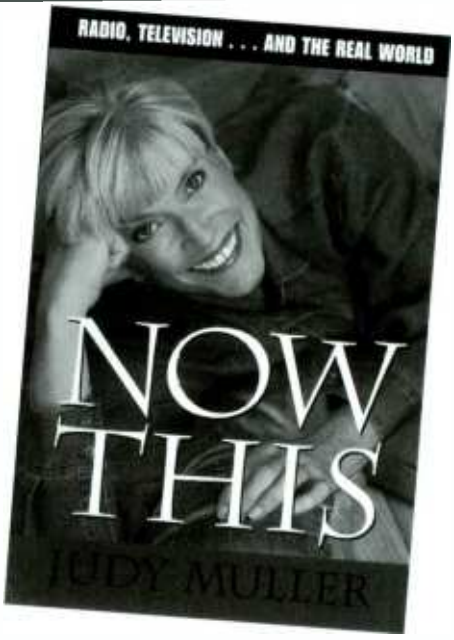
Luckily for Hundt (and his readers) these episodes of celebrity worship are usually fleeting and relatively infrequent. And while those passages do leaden the book's otherwise jaunty style, they are not fatal to the volume's overall quality. Indeed, as a primer on the growth spurts and growing pains that characterized America's entrance into the Information Age, *You Say You Want a Revolution* is first-rate. Hundt, as a leader who helped revamp the media landscape in the 1990s, offers valuable insights from the front lines in a manner that is as appealing to scholars and media professionals as it is understandable to general readers. ■

An attorney with a Ph.D. in American Culture, Michael M. Epstein is a member of the faculty at Southwestern University School of Law in Los Angeles, where he teaches courses in the school's Entertainment and Media law Institute. He is currently at work on a book about the portrayal of lawyers in popular culture.

Now This

By Judy Muller
G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York

By Marlene Sanders



When I met Judy Muller at CBS News back in the early 80's, she was working the so-called early a.m. shift, which really meant a version of the overnight. Her descriptions of that dark drive through the dreary New Jersey landscape at 4 in the morning should cure anyone of wanting to be on the air in the desirable prime radio broadcast hours called drive time. Her main chore was to write First Line Report, a feature usually based on breaking news, or some kind of humor piece, in which Muller excelled. She seemed perpetually harried. Now I know why. The life-disrupting quality of the shift was made more difficult for her as a divorced mother with two young girls in her full charge. She was a somewhat frantic person in those years who nevertheless managed to do a first-class job of writing and broadcasting, all the while struggling with the child-care issues her bizarre schedule entailed.

The story of her divorce and her efforts to find a job that could support her and the girls is a tale that the growing number of single moms will easily recognize.

Muller expresses some doubt that news rooms have become any more sympathetic to family crises that such women face, while the occasional news-room dad who rises to a family emergency is regarded as some kind of marvel. Muller's tale should reassure working mothers that the inevitable disruptions to children's lives need not be devastating to their development and warp them forever. Both girls seem to have turned out fine, and one is even a TV producer—for a rival network!

She finds wry humor in her accounts of mid-life dating, especially with the challenging scheduling problems her job entails.

Interspersed with the personal story are tales of office problems, including the displeasure Muller incurred from Dan Rather over a purely professional matter in which she was obviously in the right. His vindictiveness, illustrated elsewhere in Lesley Stahl's book, contrasts with correspondent Bob Shieffer's intervention on her behalf when she was nearly evicted from a press plane. CBS had not paid the bill for the radio correspondent on board, one of the illustrations of the low regard in which radio reporting has increasingly been held.

Still, Muller's book should hearten anyone who loves radio. Unlike television, where picture trumps writing, in radio, words still count. And even though she has been a TV correspondent for ABC since 1990, I still hear radio pieces that she continues to do. They are always good listening, and full of the wit she displays throughout her slim book

Now This is entertaining, but behind the humorous stories is a good picture of broadcast news and how it has changed in the years since Muller's career began. Anyone who kids themselves about making big bucks and having an easy life would do well to read her book. For journalism students, it would inject a dose of reality, and for people like me, who were there and experienced some of the same things, there were many nods of recognition. She devotes a chapter to the changes in TV news, bemoaned by older journalists: the shrinking sound bite, the paltry coverage of foreign news, the tabloidization, and the panic about ratings. Muller includes accounts of some of her biggest stories: reporting on the O.J. trials, Columbine, and tales of the more routine, mundane stories that make up the bulk of the work.

Muller is candid not only about the business but also about her own bout with alcoholism. She explains frankly why drink became a problem, and how she finally got sober. Additionally, when she was hired for television in her 40's because of her reporting and writing talent, she recognized the risk aging holds for women in the business, and resorted to a face-lift. And why not?

Now This is subtitled "radio, television...and the real world". She delivers on all three fronts. It's a good read from a fine writer and a real pro. ■

Marlene Sanders is Professional in Residence at the Freedom Forum's Media Studies Program. She was formerly a correspondent for ABC and CBS News. She was also a documentary producer, and later, Vice-President and Director of Documentaries for ABC News.

Air Wars: The Fight to Reclaim Public Broadcasting

By Jerold M. Starr
Beacon Press, Boston

By Ralph Engelman

Air Wars is an important addition to the growing body of literature on the troubled state of public broadcasting. The volume, written by "a scholar/activist in the humanist tradition," serves as both history and manifesto. It focuses on recent campaigns by citizen groups directed at local public television stations, especially the battle to reform television station WQED in Pittsburgh in the 1990s spearheaded by Starr. At the same time, the author—who is executive director of Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting—makes the case for a complete restructuring of the public broadcasting system on the national level.

WQED, the nation's original community-owned noncommercial television station, has been a leading producer of national programming for PBS. In 1993, as WQED faced a fiscal crisis, Starr, a professor of sociology, launched the WQED Accountability Project. In addition to fiscal improprieties, the community watchdog group focused on a broad spectrum of issues, especially the lack of local accountability and local programming. Starr describes the group's experiences—its successes and failures—in questioning practices and influencing policy at WQED. The WQED Accountability Project engaged the station bureaucracy at all levels, from top management to advisory board, and provided input on revised station bylaws as well as programming. The reformers were successful in gaining substantial coverage in Pittsburgh's mainstream and alternative press and on local talk radio. Indeed, Starr's vivid account of a series of running battles with WQED's management over a six-year period can serve as a manual of sorts for all citizens seeking greater community involvement in their public television stations.

Air Wars details the complex political and regulatory struggle prompted by WQED's attempt to resolve its financial problems by selling WQEX, a second public television station owned by QED Communications. Starr and the Save Pittsburgh Public Television Campaign fought a protracted and ultimately successful fight to block the sale. This became a national story involving Congress, the FCC, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the religious broadcasters Cornerstone TeleVision, Inc., Paxson Communications and even presidential candidates John McCain and Al Gore, among others. Starr provides an excellent account of the twists and turns of this precedent-setting conflict, which

helped preserve the other approximately 70 smaller public TV stations with overlapping signals that provide an alternative voice in public broadcasting.

Starr views WQED's problems as endemic to the public broadcasting system as a whole. For example, he characterizes WQED's CEO, George Miles, as "a major figure in a national movement to commercialize public broadcasting." Although Pittsburgh historically is a union town, a labor perspective is largely absent from its airwaves no less than from PBS's national schedule. To underscore the representative nature of the WQED experience, Starr reviews movements to reform public broadcasting stations in the 1990s in San Francisco, Phoenix, Chicago and Jacksonville, Florida. In addition, two chapters discuss "Corporate Media's Threat to Democracy" and "The Broken Promise of PBS." Although these two chapters interrupt the narrative flow, they provide important context for the local reform efforts described by Starr. Here he provides an excellent synthesis of research on public television's history, and charts the impact of increased corporate control of programming on public broadcasting.

As a result of the battle over the sale of WQEX in Pittsburgh and his contact with media activists in other communities, Starr came to the conclusion that a national reform movement was needed to make public broadcasting the democratic and independent instrument envisaged in 1967 by the landmark Carnegie Commission on Educational Television. To that end, Starr formed Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting with the support of two major figures in public television: Bill Moyers, in his capacity as president of the Florence and John Schumann Foundation, and Jack Willis, the former CEO of Twin Cities Public Broadcasting, who is a senior fellow at George Soros' Open Society Institute. An appendix to *Air Wars* contains the roster of Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting's board of directors and national advisory committee.

The final chapter on a democratic alternative to public broadcasting is highly suggestive but insufficiently focused and developed. Brief entries on Pacifica Radio and micro broadcasting, for example, cannot do justice to these topics. The focus of this section is on Starr's two-pronged strategy for Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting: supporting increased local reform efforts and a new national funding mechanism for the system as a whole.

Starr calls for making public broadcasting a center of renewed civic participation, "an electronic town square." He recommends empowered Community Advisory Boards with elected representatives. Starr echoes the Carnegie Commission in advocating greater diversity of voices, controversial public affairs programs, original drama and comedy, and local service.

However, Starr convincingly argues, fundamental change cannot occur given public broadcasting's current financial infrastructure. Its funding method must be reconfigured to lessen public broadcasting's dependency on government, corporations and upscale contributors. Starr makes note of the host of past recommendations for change-some made by distinguished commissions, others entered as proposed legislation-that failed to gain acceptance. He recommends that a truly independent Public Broadcasting Trust insulated from political pressure replace the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Starr chooses to keep his options open for alternate funding for the proposed Public Broadcasting Trust. He mentions a variety of possibilities: putting 2% of the current federal surplus into a trust fund, an annual spectrum fee on the revenues of

commercial broadcasters, a tax on the sale or transfer of commercial broadcast licenses, a tax on broadcast advertising, or proceeds from spectrum auctions. Starr advocates reviving the coalition of activists in the 1970s—labor, civil rights and public interest organizations, etc.—that was instrumental in passage of the Public Telecommunications Act of 1978. Since the 1970s, he notes, initiatives such as of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) and the Media and Democracy Congresses offer new resources for media reformers. Having documented the revival of reform efforts on the local level, Starr calls upon the public broadcasting reform movement to build a national campaign.

The principles and objectives voiced by Starr are commendable. What is missing, however, is a more fully developed strategy for change. How, for example, can the agenda of Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting avoid the fate of the earlier unheeded proposals for reform noted by Starr? How can the powerful interests committed to the status quo be circumvented? Which current political forces, social movements or technological developments might be harnessed in the cause for public broadcasting reform?

If *Air Wars* has not articulated a fully developed strategy for reforming public television—a tall order—it has succeeded in establishing the desirability and possibility of such reform in a compelling manner. For all interested in the future of public broadcasting, it is an indispensable book combining critique and hope. As Starr writes, "Certainly one message from this struggle is that, with enough passion and persistence, ordinary people can take on institutional power and prevail." ■

Ralph Engelman is Professor of Journalism and coordinator of the annual George Polk Awards Seminar at the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University. He is the author of *Public Radio and Television in America: A Political History* (Sage).

The Case For Television Violence

By Jib Fowles

On Media Violence

By W. James Potter
Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

By Sara Welles Briller

At a time when shocking episodes like schoolroom shootings bring calls for curbing TV's entertainment violence, it's important to consider the medium's social effects.

Jib Fowles and W. James Potter are both respected university media scholars, both professors of communication, both deeply concerned with violence on television and its effects on viewers. Both have written on television violence before. Now each has published a new book saying that the many TV studies we have relied on have a long way to go to give us a truly useful understanding of how viewers absorb, interpret and use TV violence.

Still, these are two very different books. Fowles' *The Case For Television Violence* continues his long-standing defense of depicted violence. He insists that viewers, from quite young childhood ages up through adulthood, find relaxation from their real life tensions as they watch what they accurately recognize as fantasy violence. He asserts they don't watch for instruction. They watch for relaxation (a catharsis, if you will). That is why both young and adult viewers self-select their popular programs, creating huge audiences for them, and cueing broadcasters to provide more such shows.

He writes, "Some viewers choose aggressive content out of boredom and are

searching for stimulation....Pleasure can occur either through excitation of feelings that are scant but desired (e.g., being admired) or the lessening of feelings that are abundant but unwanted (e.g. hostility)" Among other emotional gains he names is the viewer's knowledge that toward the conclusion the show will attempt to move the corrected feelings in the direction of endorsed social norms (from violence to nonviolence, for instance)."

Dr. Fowles of the University of Houston-Clear Lake has long found most of the TV violence studies by academics to be poorly designed, sloppily reported and even inaccurately summarized by their researchers, who nevertheless receive honors, press space and the attentions of publicity-seeking politicians.

"Opened up for inspection," he says, "the sizeable violence effects literature turns out to be an uneven discourse - inconsistent, flawed, pocked. This literature proves nothing conclusively.... Support for any position can be drawn from its corpus."

However, sociologist and theoretician W. James Potter of Florida State University says in his book, *On Media Violence*, that "violence in American society is a public health problem" and that television news shows and the uses of violence as a staple for fictional stories to entertain us "amplify and reconfigure the violence in real life and continuously pump these messages into our culture."

Professor Potter, who was the Principal Investigator on the National Television Violence Study, is not dissatisfied with the "accomplishments" of past TV studies. He calls them only "Phase One"' for a new media field. At the same time, he wants the beginning of a "Phase Two," which he believes is now clearly due or overdue. He discusses the weaknesses of older studies and he devotes his book to proposals for new methodologies and new social study designs for more "sophistication." His is a calm book, while Fowles shows the passion of the warrior he has lately become.

Fowles first adopted his controversial stance in the late 70s or early 80s "to determine if there was any merit" to a point of view that contradicted conventional wisdom.

He found, startled, that he had stumbled onto a hornet's nest. He was infuriating people. When he gave speeches, others' voices rose, others' fingers wagged at him, and "even industry representatives eyed me quizzically." He came to realize, he writes, that he would have to analyze fully, not only the unified attacks on TV violence, but also the strong reactions to any questioning of attacks. This book is his full analysis.

He points out that while condemnation of television is a regular issue, even cyclical in the U.S., it never results in any real change in TV fare. Studies are proposed and funded, they are published, and television is widely condemned. The politicians and academics express outrage, the broadcasters and the creative TV professionals are impressed. They promise changes. The condemnations die down. And TV entertainment mayhem goes on as before.

Then there is a hiatus, until a new cycle develops. New studies are funded, there are condemnations, and again, the TV entertainment goes on as before. What, Fowles asks, is the real game going on here?

Television violence has one of the largest and best-funded bodies of studies in the whole of the social sciences, he points out. He suggests that here we might look for a real "game," or whatever it is, that keeps these ongoing studies rolling steadily along, some for many years, on

their well-funded and well-paved paths.

"The war on television violence," he also writes, "has united many allies with otherwise weak ties - prominent authorities and grass roots organizations, liberals and conservatives, and the religious and the secular. We must ask why they put aside their differences, lift their voices together, and join in this particular cause."

One conclusion he comes to is that it represents a displacement of many other real conflicts in our society. That television is the "whipping boy" for the other ongoing real conflicts, and he analyzes such conflicts in his book. It is not possible to do justice here to his many-sided, in-depth perceptions and theories, about what are complex and variegated activities in modern society. We have room for only a few of his observations.

Dealing with the widespread belief that empirical research has "absolutely" demonstrated the perils of watching televised entertainment violence, he argues that the claim of a "proven" connection between TV violence and real life crime is absolutely untrue.

His reasons: First, research on violence suffers from unclear definitions (and this point is seconded by Potter). Not included in violence studies are sports of all kinds, which "certainly involve interpersonal aggression." Also, the research doesn't include humor, which is "inherently" aggressive. Or situation comedy, which commonly derides the overweight, the clumsy, the foolish, the naive, the smitten, and so on..

Fowles writes that while "counts" of television violence are allowed to imply real world violence effects, they are not equivalent. "Murder is a frequent crime on television but a rare crime in real life; slayer and victim are strangers on television but friends or family members in the real world." He cites a study that in the real world, half of all murder victims are black, but on television only 7.3% are black. He (and others) point out that crime is not rising, but criminalizing has been, which is what is filling and overfilling our jails.

Many of the "proofs of a program-crime-violence connection rely on correlations that may exist but in fact prove nothing about causes," Fowles asserts. He sees this as a serious flaw, which violates a basic scientific tenet. Both might be caused by a third factor.

Further, even the correlations are often shown later to be based on inaccurate fact. He cites specific cases in which a teenage crime was supposedly inspired by a particular show, but it was later found that the teenager never saw the show, could not have seen it at home or in any neighbor's home, and had a previous history of serious psychological disturbance.

Fowles believes humans (like chimpanzees) have an inherent capacity for violence. But, for reasons he elaborates in his book, he believes humans have been "civilizing" over the past 500 years, at least in the area of "interpersonal violence," as the redress of personal wrong has been turned over to the courts.

But humans also have an inherent capacity for cooperation, and both capacities seem related to human as well as specie survival. Therefore it seems relevant to ask whether, in the interest of further "civilizing," creative television (and communication) professionals, like Jib Fowles, might offer us at least some nonviolent options for resolving conflicts on TV programs.

Fowles' book does offer a daunting range of provocative, original observations and food for deep thought (or disagreement) by open-minded readers —by

broadcasters, television people, academics, researchers, policy setters, what he calls the "Academy," and by just plain parents and viewers.

He is easily (but not quickly) read. He could not offer this full analysis before, he says, because in the 90s, the "anti-television edifice, seemingly respected by all, appeared to be impregnable." But now several "capable overviews of the empirical literature on television violence have called the whole enterprise into question. From several academic fields has come corrective or at least probing work" by American and British scholars. The Potter book may or may be what he had in mind, but Fowles should like it.

Potter will not help a reader come to a conclusion about the good or evil of television-depicted violence in either news or entertainment shows. Potter's interest here is in social studies. But it certainly adds credence to Fowles' argument about serious shortcomings in past studies and the need for significant improvements in a next phase..

This is a textbook for social-studies scientists who do or plan to work in the field of television violence. It is a textbook on the theories and methodologies that underlie the designs for such studies. Definitely not a fast read. It will earn space on television professionals' shelves for its useful definitions and explanations of social-studies terms and techniques and for its reviews of what Potter calls the Phase One studies of the last 40 years. ■

Sara Welles Briller was a vice-president in public affairs for Citibank, after a long career in magazines and publishing. She co-authored *Born Female* with Carolyn Bird and won a National Press Club award for Consumer Views, a monthly newsletter she edited.

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