

TELEVISION QUARTERLY



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TELEVISION QUARTERLY

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THE JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

- 5** **New NATAS President:** Peter O. Price
- 8** **Laughing in the Isles** | Dick Fiddy
- 16** **Transforming Chinese Television** | John V. Pavlik and Hu Zhengrong
- 24** **Who Speaks for CBS?** | Bernard M. Timberg
- 34** **Rod Serling: Caught in the "Censorship Zone"** | Bob Pondillo
- 44** **"The Godfather of Soul" and the Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.** | John Baker
- 54** **Behind the TV Scenes with JFK and Eleanor Roosevelt** David Marc
- 64** **Morton Downey, Jr. Really was a Gentleman** Richard G. Carter
- 70** **Shaming Children on Television** | Thomas J. Cottle
- 76** **Hawaii Five-0: A Case Study in Haole-Wood Agitprop** Ed Rampell
- 84** **REVIEW AND COMMENT**
Brought to You By: Postwar Television and the Advertising Dream, by Lawrence R. Samuel | *Reviewed by Mary Ann Watson*
- The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting;** by David Barsamian; **Ambient Television,** by Anna McCarthy | *Reviewed by Ron Simon*
- Hello Darlin': Tall (and Absolutely True) Tales About My Life,** by Larry Hagman, with Todd Gold | *Reviewed by Richard G. Carter*
- Flirting with Danger: Confessions of a Reluctant War Reporter,** by Siobhan Darrow | *Reviewed by Bernard S. Redmont*
- 94** **In Memoriam: Pat Weaver**

Cover: Jennifer Saunders (left) and Joanne Lumley of *Absolutely Fabulous*.
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New NATAS President: Peter O. Price

“I don’t think I can do a better job than John Cannon did in building an organization but I can explore new ways to grow,” says Peter O. Price, a television and publishing veteran who has just been named President of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Mr. Cannon had served as NATAS president for 25 years before he died suddenly last summer.

Most recently the president of Television Tonight, a venture between the major television networks and movie chains, Mr. Price entered the television industry as founder and president of Cable Networks, Inc., in 1975. He was president of Liberty Cable Television from 1990 to 1997. He had also been president of Television USA, a joint venture with *The Wall Street Journal*, publisher of the *New York Post*, director of corporate development at Time,

Inc., and president of Media Networks, Inc, a firm he managed for five years after selling it to the 3-M Company.

A board member of the New York Chapter of NATAS, Mr. Price has made one of his immediate goals to visit chapters throughout the country—“to meet with everyone I’m working for,” he says, “knowing that there are different needs in different places.” Indeed in the first few weeks after being named to his new post in February he has visited 16 of the 18 NATAS chapters coast-to-coast.

“My long-term goal is to build on John Cannon’s substantial work in perfecting the Emmy awards as a means of promoting excellence in television,” he says. Among his critical initiatives will be to expand membership not only among young people but also in “adjacent spaces”—the new media, digital technology and films. “The Academy has traditionally grown by organizing new chapters,” he says. “I would now like to build membership in these ‘adjacent spaces.’” He aims to strengthen NATAS’s educational activities and to “dig deeper into the new technologies to tell our story.”

Mr. Price has also met with the West Coast Academy of Television Arts and Sciences because he senses that “there is an operating relationship and collaboration already in place. The question is: can we build a series of bridges that will better serve our audience?”

A 1962 honors graduate of Princeton University, Mr. Price subsequently graduated from Yale Law School and served as a U.S. Air Force officer before joining Mayor John V. Lindsay’s New York City government as counsel to the Taxi Commission.

Active in many educational and civic affairs, Mr. Price has been chairman of the board of governors of the Eugene Lang College and a trustee of the New School University. He has served as an advisor to the governments of France and the U.S. on telecommunications policy. He is a trustee of the Colbert Foundation, a French organization that promotes arts and crafts. And Mr. Price, whose father was an architect, founded the Price Prize for aspiring architects at New York’s Museum of Modern Art. Winners get to build their dream house in the courtyard of MOMA’s P.S.1.

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.

“Gracias” to the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for recognizing not just the increasing importance, but the worldclass quality of Spanish-language newscasting in this country.



Univision

Laughing In The Isles

In the early 1990s few “Britcoms”
could hold a candle to American
imports, but that has all changed
By Dick Fiddy



*Cast of British Men
Behaving Badly*

Jennifer Saunders (L) and
Joanna Lumley of *AbFab*



Comedy in Britain was no laughing matter in the early 1990s. The genre had entered a crisis with a lack of imagination, an over-reliance on crudity and a failure to recreate the strengths of the great shows of the past. This was particularly true of situation comedy, a durable, versatile format which in the past had given rise to such marvellous productions as *Fawlty Towers*, *Yes Minister*, *Steptoe and Son*, *Porridge* and *The Good Life*.

Or so it seemed. These views (freely aired in the national press) may have had an element of truth, but there was also some sterling stuff being done in the

field at the time. Trouble is the slow-news-day carping coincided with the fact that our cousins across the pond had seemingly struck gold with a group of finely spun sitcoms that were as funny and clever as any that had gone before. Granted we were importing only the very best of the U.S. model but even allowing for that fact the new shows were pretty impressive. The brilliant ensemble sitcom *Cheers* had spawned an even greater son, *Frasier*, and a new ensemble comedy *Friends* was fast achieving cult status among younger viewers. *The Larry Sanders Show* proved to be a brilliant and unmissable satire, which, along with

Dream On, was pioneering the way for risqué adult-coms. Then there was the phenomenon of *The Simpsons*, an animated tour de force as well rounded and as perfectly realized as any live action series. And if that wasn't enough there was *Seinfeld*, a show that was to the sitcom what the Sistine Chapel was to art. These razor-sharp, archly paced, half-hour masterpieces were so good they made our shows look pedestrian.

***Seinfeld* was to the sitcom what the Sistine Chapel was to art.**



John Cleese in *Fawlty Towers*

But it was not all gloom. Britain's longest running sitcom, *Last of the Summer Wine*, a gently paced comedy about old-timers who refused to act their age; and the brilliant London-based working

class comedy of colorful petty criminals, *Only Fools and Horses*, continued to attract huge viewing figures. Both, however were products of an earlier time (they began in 1973 and 1981 respectively). Successful but genteel comedies like *As Time Goes By* (from 1992—Dame Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer as lovers coming together late in life) and *Keeping Up Appearances* (from 1990—Patricia Routledge as the hideous snob Hyacinth Bucket – pronounced Bouquet) were also viewer friendly. However, they didn't click with the critics and chattering classes like the American offerings..

In the early 1990s only three Britcoms could hold a candle to the imports: *One Foot in the Grave* (from 1990), the dark-edged, life-threateningly funny tales of a retired man battling against the lunacy of modern life; *Men Behaving Badly* (from 1992), the risqué comedy of two arrested adolescents and their long-suffering female opposite numbers; and *Absolutely Fabulous* (from 1992), a sort of *Women Behaving Worse*, with Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley tearing up the p.c. handbook and bringing the shock factor back into a genre which had become either too tame or too thoughtlessly crude.

Needless to say these were all BBC shows (although *Men Behaving Badly* had begun on Independent Television only to be dropped after one season). The commercial network has always

struggled to match the comedy successes of its publicly owned rival, although the second Independent programmer, Channel 4 (launched 1982), conceived as a ground-breaking and innovative ser-

vice catering to those not served by existing broadcasters, has fared better. These were great shows indeed but the press speculation on the imminent demise of the Great British Sitcom worried programmers who began to truly believe that we were in dire straits. Seizing upon the success of the U.S. shows (and aware that some stupendously successful U.S. shows had been format sales from the U.K. like *All in the Family*,



Patricia Routledge in *Keeping Up Appearances*

Sandford & Son and *Three's Company*) British producers (at commercial ITV) toyed with the idea of copying US formats in the hope of sparking the same success. Thus America's *The Golden Girls* was reborn as *The Brighton Belles* (Carlton Television, 1993), *Married... With Children* became *Married For Life* (Central Television, 1996), *Mad About You* became *Loved By You* (Carlton Television, 1997) and *That 70s Show* became *Days Like These* (Granada Television 1999). None of these shows duplicated their U.S. success (despite the fact that some used the same American talents that had worked on the original!) Why?

Well let's just take the example of *The Golden Girls*. The British version featured four top-quality actresses in more-than-competent scripts. It was OK, and may have matured into

something very good, but, initially, *The Brighton Belles* was no *Golden Girls* – and that was the problem. The original *Golden Girls* had already run in the U.K. and proved to be a big hit, thus the newly created U.K. version was inevitably compared to an already beloved show that had itself matured into a Rolls

Royce of sorts – an elegant, smooth running, beautifully put together vehicle. Next to that the U.K. version looked like an Edsel.

All the format copies suffered similar problems – even those based on programs which hadn't aired in Britain. The bottom line was that we couldn't commit to the sort of production costs and season runs that the U.S. could; therefore there was always going to be a compromise. This was especially so in the case of writers, who are handsomely rewarded in the States but fare far worse in Britain. When the U.S. had taken a U.K. format they invariably had to make ma-

New shows came and went at an alarming rate, their downfall often aided by a hostile press that was quick to point to the U.S. successes and ask why we were falling behind.

For changes to prepare the show for such long seasons. Secondary characters were further developed to carry sub-plots and sometimes whole new characters were brought in. The successful U.S. versions of U.K. shows have managed to keep the essential strengths of the original idea while carefully adding new elements

needed to ensure that the transition works in the new environment. The major difference is that the original U.K. versions (with very very few exceptions) wouldn't appeal to a mass U.S. market, whereas the U.K. (in common with many other parts of the world) has absorbed enough Americana to appreciate and understand the culture and references, allowing the originals to work as well there as they do here. (In fact in some cases they work better there. *The Phil Silvers Show* is far more celebrated in Britain than in its homeland).

So the easy answer wasn't just to copy the U.S. model (although some years later there would be a breakthrough in this field, of which more later) though the failure of these shows added weight to the argument that we had lost our way. Perhaps we had to rediscover the strengths that had made the UK model

Whatever happens, no one expects success to come easily. As the actor Edmund Gwenn reputedly said on his deathbed, "Dying is easy. Comedy is difficult."

work so well in the past. But this was easier said than done. New shows came and went at an alarming rate, their downfall often aided by a hostile press that was quick to point to the US successes and ask why we were falling behind. Nervy decisions were made, with cancellation coming all too quickly for shows that failed to make an immediate impact. In the past, the BBC in particular would give a new series a chance to develop, often commissioning a second series despite poor audience figures for the first. There was an element of trust between the broadcasting chiefs and their heads of development, likewise the head of comedy trusted the writers. Often an idea took a

while to find its audience and patience had paid dividends in the past. But the landscape had changed. The producers seemed to be more accountable now and the "space to fail" had been replaced by a demand for overnight success. This was true of all genres, not just sitcom, but sitcom was more often the one singled out for criticism, perhaps because of the public's hunger for laughter. While there was a lot of fun to be had on British TV, it wasn't strictly within the field of comedy.

Soap operas hold an almost magical fascination for British TV audiences and long running shows like *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders* are omnipresent at the top of the viewing charts. The former in particular has a tradition of featuring funny characters and witty dialogue. Indeed writers often find it easier to get laughs in a soap where the humor

is perhaps unexpected and operates as an antidote to the heavier drama being played out elsewhere within the program. But the single most successful new subgenre where fun was at a premium was the Quiz-com. The trail was

blazed by *Have I Got News For You* (from 1990) a topical news quiz which was in actuality a biting satire on the week's events. A sardonic wit (Ian Hislop, editor of the long-running satire rag *Private Eye*) and a brilliant improvisational surrealist (stand-up comic Paul Merton) were the team captains, welcoming politicians, writers and celebrities to join in the acid-tongued, verbal disembowelment of those at the sharp end of news stories. A dry, urbane host (Angus Deayton) kept control of proceedings and the whole jelled into a terrifically funny, weekly dose of vitriol. The format proved a durable one and other shows proved equally adept at combining quiz and comedy including the sports-

themed *They Think It's All Over* (from 1995) and the music-themed *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* (from 1996). All attracted big laughs but ostensibly were classed as game shows rather than comedies.

The other traditional areas for comedy, the sketch show, the variety series



Dawn French in *The Vicar of Dibley*

and satire, were also in a transitory period. The clever sketch show *Harry Enfield's Television Programme* (from 1990) spawned an ever better series, *The Fast Show* (from 1994), which featured much of the creative team of the earlier series and followed a similar winning format (a series of recurring regular character-driven sketches running through each show like two-minute mini-sitcoms). This made the sketch show suddenly respectable again and other fresh and funny series soon followed, including *Armstrong & Miller* (C4 from 1997), *Big Train* (from 1998), the all-girl *Smack the Pony* (C4 from 1999) and *The Sketch Show* (ITV from 2001). Modern variety was represented by anarchic double-act Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer, who presided over a crazy bunch of different shows (from 1990) which were strange hybrids mixing violent slapstick with doubletalk and the echoes of traditional

music hall. Satire was safe in the hands of comedian Sacha Brown Cohen, whose outrageous creation Ali G (a white guy who acts and seems to believe he is black) initially duped various celebrities in bogus interviews before later presiding over interviews with knowing celebrities who nevertheless seemed unprepared for Ali G's rude, crude and gauche line of questioning (*The Ali G Show*, C4 from 2000).

The Ali G shows may have been in dubious taste but they were tame indeed compared to another series that emerged in the latter part of the 1990s, *Brass Eye* (from 1997). *Brass Eye* was from the *enfant terrible* of British comedy, the outrageous satirist and media guerrilla Chris Morris. Morris had first made his mark on radio, especially in the

news-programme spoof *On the Hour*, which transferred to TV as *The Day Today* (1994). The series lampooned the high-tech look of news-coverage, ridiculing the style-over-content nature of some of the shows. Morris' speciality was to cajole public figures into commenting on fictitious subjects. The aim was always the same, to show just how easily such figures can be tricked and just how willing they are to provide soundbites to journalists. With *Brass Eye*, Morris pushed the envelope even further, particularly in the first episode on the theme of drugs, in which Morris persuaded politicians and celebrities to speak out on the dangers of the (fictitious) drug "Cake." In 2001 Morris faced his greatest controversy when a *Brass Eye Special* on pedophilia caused a furor. It was evident that the show was commenting on the frenzied hysteria to the subject from the tabloids, but the papers,

showing no sense of irony, took the bait and screamed for Morris' head, condemning him for making a program on such a sick subject. Morris remained customarily silent throughout and the more thoughtful areas of the media were left to leap to his defense, pointing out that the program's points about media hysteria had now been proven – especially as many of the show's detractors unashamedly admitted that they hadn't actually watched it.

So although British TV comedy was perceived to be in crisis in the early to mid-nineties we can see there were actually many interesting projects. Later in the decade, a series of shows re-established the home-grown sitcom as a dynamic force. First up was *The Vicar of Dibley*, a sitcom starring Dawn French (comedy partner of AbFab's Jennifer Saunders) as a lady vicar sent to the parish of Dibley and encountering initial hostility to her appointment from the eccentric inhabitants of the village. It debuted in 1994 but took a couple of years to truly make its mark. Written by Richard Curtis (screenwriter of feature films *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Mr Bean* and *Notting Hill*), its great strength (apart from fine acting) was the fact that it contained much subversive humor beneath its quaint veneer.

Then there was *Father Ted* (C4 from 1995), a barnstorming slice of Irish blarney featuring three mad priests and their equally mad housekeeper. With its outrageous and surreal plotlines and bizarre take on a religious existence, the series soon became a firm favorite with viewers (though less popular with the Catholic Church). Equally good was *I'm Alan Partridge* (1997), an excruciating and staggeringly funny comedy of embarrassment. Actor/writer Steve Coogan had created the character of Alan Partridge years earlier (and he had been one of the reporters in *The Day Today* before

graduating to his own series). Alan Partridge was a true TV monster, a snob-bish, boorish, egocentric, incompetent, thoughtless oaf who has somehow managed to become a minor celebrity as a sports reporter, DJ and talk show host. His first series (*Knowing Me, Knowing You*, 1994) was a spoof chat show, allowing Partridge full rein to display his typical brand of gauche buffoonery. The show was strong enough but the follow-up series, which showed Partridge's non-professional life, was simply wonderful. Rarely has the dark side of a comic character been so thoroughly examined (perhaps only by Jeffrey Tambor with his epic performance as Hank in *The Larry Sanders Show*).

And there was more. *The Royle Family* (from 1997) is one of those shows that sound flat on paper but that are brilliant in the flesh. Basically it eavesdrops on a working-class family who seem to spend all their time bickering and gossiping while camped round the ever-on TV. The dialogue, though bereft of any one-liners or sharp retorts, is nonetheless hilarious and the interplay between the characters has a real smack of authenticity. Writer/comedian Victoria Wood, Britain's pre-eminent female comedian, also entered the sitcom world with *dinnerladies* (from 1998), an earthy romp set in a factory canteen overflowing with larger than life characters.

It took a full season to catch on, but when the public finally got it, they loved it. *The League of Gentlemen* (from 1999) crossed Monty Python style antics with the darkness of *Twin Peaks* for a memorable horror-com that became a huge cult hit. *Spaced* (C4 from 1999) was another groundbreaker: a romantic apartment-share comedy shot like a slasher movie with zooming camera-work, fantasy sequences and special sound effects. Like *The Simpsons* the series regularly lampooned plots from TV

and movies, and had soon attracted a hip following. It was one of the few sitcoms that really looked modern, the world of *Spaced* recognizably that of the London of the 21st century. Further proof of the healthy state of the genre in Britain can be seen by the fact that the U.S. – currently kings of the sitcom – still buy British formats to adapt, witness *Cosby* (from *One Foot in the Grave*), *Behaving Badly* (from *Men Behaving Badly*) and the latest transplant, *The Kennedys* (from *The Royle Family*)

A remarkable resurgence, and it continued apace into 2001 when Jennifer Saunders delivered a new series of *Absolutely Fabulous* (she had originally put the series to bed in 1996) and the smash hit *Only Fools and Horses* was revived for a three-part Christmas special. With the new *Ab-Fab*, Saunders sensibly moved the action some years forward, making the antics of its adolescent forty-somethings (fifty-somethings?) looking even more desperate. The initial press response was that the new series was weaker than the old but really you need the space of a couple of

years to make those judgements. For most of the audience it was absolutely fabulous to welcome back the awful, but awfully amusing, bad girls of comedy.

And what of the future? Well, most pundits agree that although the U.K. should play to its traditional comedy strengths, there is much to be learned from the American model. With this in mind the BBC invited U.S. comedy writer/producer Fred Barron (*Kate and Allie*, *Caroline in the City*) to custom craft a British show, *My Family*, which was to be produced on the lines of an American series, with a team of writers, episodes in production while other scripts are being written, and extended seasons. The first series in 2000 failed to impress the critics but picked up decent viewing figures. The second series (2001) has proven to be a big hit and the experiment may yet point to at least one route in the future. Whatever happens, no one expects success to come easily. As the actor Edmund Gwenn reputedly said on his deathbed, “Dying is easy. Comedy is difficult.”

Dick Fiddy is a writer/researcher currently serving as a television consultant to the British Film Institute in London. He has recently published *Missing Believed Wiped* (BFI Books 2001) which highlights missing British archival television material and the search to retrieve it.

Transforming Chinese Television:

The Year of the Digital Dragon

Two experts reveal that private investment in TV and dependence on advertising income are beginning to erode government control over programming, but restrictions are still very tight. | **By John V. Pavlik and Hu Zhengrong**

China has been undergoing dramatic reform since 1978, when that country initiated its “Open-Door” policy after Deng Xiaoping re-took control. In the past 24 years, many changes have taken place in almost every aspect of Chinese life, including politics, economics, culture and the daily lives of everyday people. As an indispensable component of society, mass media have played a very important role in China’s social, political and economic development.

In principle, all mass media in China are government-owned, especially such mainstream media as television and newspapers. So virtually all mass media are government monopolies.

But something fundamental has changed since the beginning of the 1990s. Some media, including television, have already developed new kinds of private ownership—a form of joint ownership by the government and private investors. In the 1990s, some domestic and international investors—among them the International Data Group and the News Corp’s News Digital System—learned that the Chinese media industry is very profitable, so they decided to invest in Chinese media, hoping to see a good yield from these investments. Of course, there are still some limitations on their investments. As for media, investors are usually allowed to put money into cable television networks, magazines, newspapers, film production and



the Internet. What they can invest in is such hardware as cable TV network construction, printing machines and so on. They have not been permitted to invest in or otherwise influence the “Software” of media, that is the content, which is, of course, more crucial and profitable. But there are some signs that these restrictions on content investment and production are beginning to loosen.

Television occupies a central position in mass media in China and constitutes a comprehensive information industry. Chinese TV began as China Central Television (CCTV), established in 1956 as the Beijing TV station. The station went on the air two years later. The system has grown considerably since then. As of 2001, there were 1,923 TV stations

(1,272 of them are rural TV stations) that operate a total of 1,206 channels across the country, covering 93.65 percent of general population of the entire country of 1.2 billion persons, including 8.476 million cable users. There are three billion television sets and 1.1 billion TV viewers in China.

A Four-Level Media System

Chinese mass media is organized on four levels, corresponding to the nation’s four-level system of government: the central, provincial, municipal and rural county governments.

The first level, the dominant national media, includes television, which is owned by the central government. It ex-

erts a powerful influence.

China Central Television (CCTV), with 800 million viewers, has 11 channels covering the following special interests: 1- news; 2-economy, life and service; 3-music; 4-overseas Chinese; 5-sports; 6-movies; 7-children's programming, agriculture and the military; 8-drama; 9-an English channel world service, which will be transmitted this year by such American cable networks as AOL Time Warner and News Corporation's Fox Cable Network; 10-science and education; 11-Chinese operas. CCTV recently launched its 12th channel in March 2002, which will be positioned as the Western China channel.

The second level are run by the 32 provincial governments and are independent from the central media, producing and broadcasting their own TV

Although the government owns the media, it funds them for staff wages and nothing more. So they cover other costs and make a profit by carrying advertising.

programs. This system includes 32 satellite TV channels and many regional broadcast channels.

The third level is at the city level. Every city has at least one TV channel. So this system has hundreds of TV stations, and therefore several hundred TV channels.

The city media profoundly impact the daily life of people, because these TV channels are so close to their audiences. They report regional and local news and provide useful information to people living in the area. Local audiences even can interact with a live show in regional TV and the TV channels respond promptly to the local agenda and events. Regional media are both the most important part of the Chinese media system in terms of

its size and the most popular in terms of its content.

The fourth level is county-level television. More than half of China's rural area is still underdeveloped. Although there are hundreds of TV stations at this level, they are not the main part of the media system. As for rural TV stations, they normally just transmit and replay the programs from the three levels above. It is best to view them as simply a distribution network for the massive television system in China.

An Evolving System

Last year the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of China adopted a new policy for the TV industry, merging the so-called Four-level Media System (FLMS) into a two-level

system. The new system includes only national media and provincial media. In other words, the TV stations of the third and fourth level will be under the control of the provincial governments.

These stations will not be allowed to produce programs except local news and some local entertainment programs, but just transmit programs from those TV stations above them.

Today, 374 TV stations are operated by the central and provincial governments. Of these, 45 are satellite stations, 234 are cable stations, and the rest are wireless terrestrial broadcast stations. The average daily (cumulative) broadcasting hours of all domestic TV stations are 61,656 hours. CCTV's 11 channels provide 147.6 (cumulative) hours of programs a day for audience.

Although mass media in China are almost all government monopolies, they can only survive with advertising revenues because although the govern-

ment owns the media, it funds them for staff wages and nothing more. So Chinese media must cover other costs and make a profit by carrying advertising. They are government-owned but market-supported.

Some stations with high ratings have quite substantial advertising incomes. For instance, profits (almost entirely derived from advertising revenues) of CCTV before taxes in 2000 reached more than RMB 400 million (about US\$50 million). CCTV also has a joint-venture with a French research company specializing in TV audience-ratings surveys. Meanwhile, A.C. Nielsen runs its business in China, too, and provides TV ratings for both media and companies in China.

TV stations in China are undergoing the process of commercialization. It is not privatization. TV stations are still government-owned, but will have other ownership as well. Meanwhile, besides advertising, TV stations can make profits by expanding their media industry to other businesses such as the entertainment industry, tourism, culture, etc.

“We have no reason at all to feel satisfied with our status quo and hug ourselves,” observes Xu Guangchun, Minister of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of China. “We should be conscious of the whole world and its hardship, should be aware of potential crisis and pressure which the broadcasting media could confront after China enters the World Trade Organization.”

What is the status of satellite TV?

Satellite TV plays a very important role in Chinese media. In general, the quality of programs produced by satellite TV stations is high both in signal and

content. It is an ideal medium for diverse audiences to see programs of varying regional style.

There are 45 satellite TV stations in China now. Eleven of them are channels of CCTV; the others are provincial TV channels. Most viewers receive them via cable TV. Most residents have been forbidden by the government to receive foreign TV channels and Taiwan TV channels via satellite since 1993. In 2001, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of China relaxed the regulation in order to meet the needs of some concerned units. According to the new regulation, not only institutions of scientific study, information-concerned units, financial institutions and educational institutions, but also three-star hotels and above have been given permission to

The formation of multimedia conglomerates is an inevitable trend, initiated mainly by the visible hand of the government and guided by the invisible hand of the market.

receive 18 appointed overseas satellite TV channels. These include CNN, HBO, CNBC, ESPN, Fox News, Sky News, Discovery and the BBC World News.

Additionally, as a “Chinese media special region” Guangdong Province is permitted to receive five extra TV channels, including Sun satellite, Phoenix satellite, Macao satellite, Chinese Entertainment Television channel in Hong Kong which is owned by AOL Time Warner, and one channel of Star TV in Hong Kong owned by Rupert Murdoch. To some extent, this indicates that China is opening the door to the outside world.

On the other hand, China is planning to launch its first Direct Broadcasting Satellite (DBS) service in 2003. Viewers will be able to get direct-to-home satellite television service next year. The DBS

service is designed to transmit at least 80 channels and will also carry interactive services such as mobile Internet.

What is the status of Cable TV?

Most people living in urban areas of China right now have access to a multi-channel cable TV systems, ranging from at least 10 channels to more than 40 channels. Total cable TV viewership is about 84 million. Audiences in rural areas usually have access to fewer than 10 TV channels because most of rural China is not wired for cable.

Some CATV (community antenna cable television) stations produce their own programs, offering local information. But due to the great expense of producing original programs, there is little prospect for growth. Thus, the need for cooperation and merger between local broadcast TV and cable TV arises from the following points: 1) Prohibitively high costs of program production that

TV stations are not permitted to broadcast any matter banned. All programs must be submitted to government-appointed station supervisors for advance censorship... Restrictions are still very tight.

make it untenable for a single local station to independently produce programming. 2) Broadcast TV stations and cable TV stations are rivals instead of cooperators. It is almost impossible for them to exchange or share talent and resources. For these reasons, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television has begun to look into the question of whether and how to merge two TV stations, one broadcast and one cable. Meanwhile, in view of the recent TV industry development in China, formation of multimedia conglomerates is an in-

evitable trend. This trend has been initiated mainly by the visible hand of the government and guided by the invisible hand of the market.

Since the late 1990s, cable TV stations in China have been divided into two parts: hardware and software. Hardware is the network used for signal transmission. Software, the programming and related income, belongs to the TV stations.

Major new programming developments

Chinese TV programs can be classified into four types: 1) drama, 2) news and public affairs, which includes sports, 3) entertainment, and 4) educational and cultural programming. In television, about half the total broadcasting time is taken up by entertainment programs, followed by 30 to 40 percent educational and cultural programs and 10 percent of news and information programs.

The number of domestically produced TV dramas has reached 8,000 episodes per year. In the field of entertainment programming, the development of wholesome family programs is promoted. For example, CCTV's game show, *Fortune 52*, is very popular because of its interactivity and intelligence. *News Probe* and *Focus & Interview* are CCTV's leading news programs. Additionally, each provincial TV station has its own local news programs. Talk shows grew immensely in popularity in the mid-1990's. Some outstanding talk shows (such as CCTV's *Tell it True* and *Dialogue*) have a stable and loyal audience. Most regional TV stations offer each of these four kinds of programs, although there is sometimes duplication between the programs in both style and content. The level of quality of domestic programs is un-

even, and represents an area of potential improvement.

In addition to the production in government-run domestic media, more private production and international production companies are beginning to appear in China. Some of them have produced China's most popular programs, including TV drama series, entertainment, game shows, news reports, feature programming and documentaries. What's more, along with the globalization brought by China's entry into the WTO (World Trade Organization), many global media giants are coveting China as the world's biggest commercially unexploited media market. For example, AOL Time Warner sells its films to China, and according to the Sino-American agreements signed for WTO, China can import at least 20 American movies each year. Meanwhile, Viacom's MTV channel co-operates with over 100 cable TV stations in China to produce and broadcast the pop music program called *MTV-Village of Sounds of Nature*. More than 54 million viewers in China watch this program weekly. Additionally, several other global media giants, such as the Walt Disney Co., News Corporation, Discovery Channel and others also have invested in China and are trying to take a share of the profits in the huge TV market.

"As for Chinese television, we ought to get going from the reality of our own, catch hold of opportunities and develop ourselves," notes Zhao Huayong, President, China Central Television (CCTV). "Chinese television should experience and observe public feelings, rely on public intelligence, care about the people's livelihood, reflect public opinion, work for public interests, conform public morale so as to insure Chinese reforms advance smoothly and the Chinese economy and society develop healthily."

One noteworthy point regarding con-

tent is that TV stations are not permitted to broadcast any matter banned. All programs must be submitted to government-appointed station supervisors for advance censorship. For example, in 1989, the Chinese government banned Rupert Murdoch's Star-TV that is targeted to China because Star-TV World Channel transmitted the BBC's news and documentaries, which were not friendly to the Chinese government. Similarly, Chinese TV channels are not allowed to report on various critical issues such as the alleged corruption of some high-level government officials, conflicts between nations, major disasters and so forth. The government considers these issues to be too sensitive and that reporting on them may lead to some unsteadiness in society. These restrictions are still very tight.

However, the Chinese government is becoming less capable of controlling or censoring all program content, for two reasons. First, there are more and more non-ideological media channels covering science, trends, children's programming, travel and sports. Some of these channels are not exclusively owned by the government: they are jointly owned by the government and private investors including international media groups and domestic private investors. For instance, International Data Group (IDG) in the U.S. has invested in information technology in many Chinese newspapers and magazines since 1990s. This trend is beginning to erode government control of television.

Second, the explosion in media channels in recent years has made it a practical impossibility for the government to control all media and some new media do not strictly obey the government's censorship restrictions. Because these media are making a profit they have even greater independence. So as the regulatory environment changes and

ownership of media is being diversified, it is increasingly difficult for government to control all program content.

What is the prospect for digital broadcast television?

Both media and government in China recognize the importance of advanced technology. So cable networks in China are replacing their old one-way, narrow-band cable infrastructure with interactive, broadband cable. Private investors also see a prosperous future for broadband networks, so they are pouring money into new technology.

Meanwhile, Chinese digital broadcast television (DBT) has been engaged in its own healthy redevelopment: Six technical platforms for DBT have been built in China and a special team of technological experts is working on its implementation. The State Planning Committee of China made the development of DBT a top priority for the next 5-year plan of national development outlined in October 2000.

According to officials of the Ministry of Information Industry, some audiences in China will be able to view digital broadcast TV at their homes in 2005 because one-quarter of TV stations in China will have been digitalized by the end of 2005. In fact, DBT has begun a test run in Sichuan Province. The officials also claim that the 7.14 million cable TV audience members in Sichuan, which constitutes one-tenth of all cable TV audiences in China, would become the first consumers of digital television in China by the end of 2002. Aiming toward this goal, NDS, a British manufacturer of digital TV equipment owned by News Corporation, will cooperate with the Bureau of Radio and

Television in Sichuan to develop the market. According to its contract, NDS is the supplier of the conditional receiver system and set-up box operational system for digital television. It is estimated that users of cable TV would climb to 150 million by 2005 with the introduction of digital television. DBT is a major trend in the future of Chinese television.

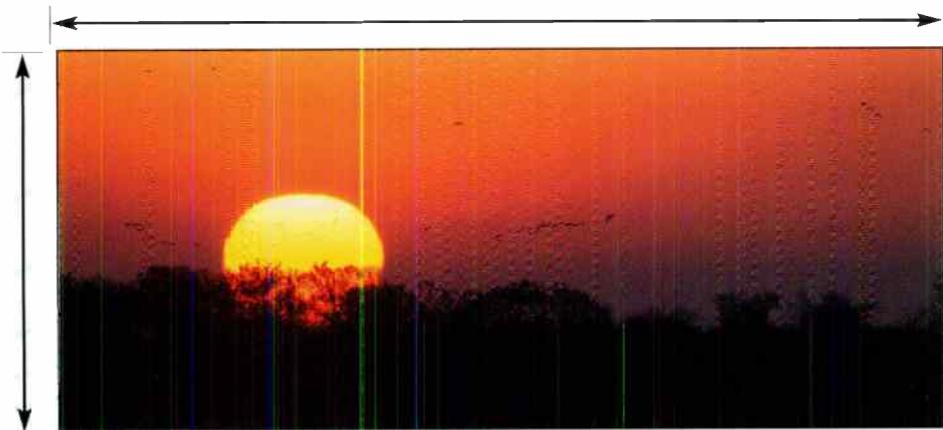
Enter the Digital Dragon

China officially designated 2001 "The year of broadband." Last year, China began experimental delivery of digital HDTV (high-definition television) via cable and satellite TV. It will offer home viewers digital HDTV via direct broadcast satellite in 2003. One-quarter of terrestrial broadcast television stations will offer digital signals by 2005. By the end of 2010, all radio and TV stations in China will broadcast digitally and will stop transmitting all analog signals in 2015. It is expected that through digital television, including over-the-air, via cable and satellite, Chinese viewers will watch video on demand (VOD), access the Internet with high-speed service, and get interactive services including distance education, video conferencing and the like.

Japan's broadcast of the Seoul Olympic Games of 1988 in Hi-Vision (NHK's high-definition television) may have given U.S. broadcasters and regulators the impetus to develop digital television. But China may soon be the world's largest and most profitable digital television marketplace.

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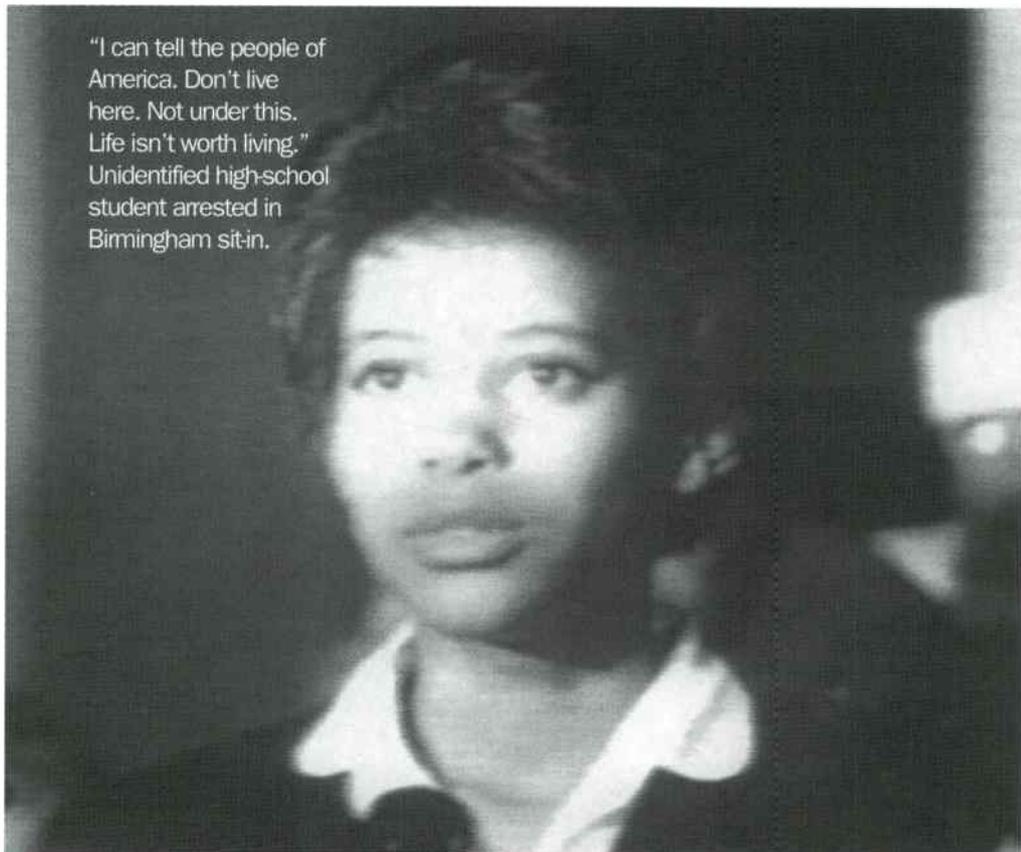
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ACQUISITION - EDITING - MASTERING

"I can tell the people of
America. Don't live
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Unidentified high-school
student arrested in
Birmingham sit-in.



Who Speaks for CBS?

How Edward R. Murrow's last—and uncredited—
documentary turned out to be his most powerful and
precipitated a crisis at CBS News. | **By Bernard M. Timberg**



The late Howard K. Smith in 1961, when "Who Speaks for Birmingham?" was broadcast. Smith died last February at the age of 87.

His name did not appear in the credits of the *CBS Reports* special investigative documentary broadcast on May 18, 1961. But the program that aired that evening was Edward R. Murrow's last major news production at CBS—not "Harvest of Shame," as many people believe. In many ways, Murrow's uncredited work turned out to be his most powerful.

"Who Speaks for Birmingham?" was a report on the racial divide between the white and black communities of Birmingham, Alabama. It was shot by the same team that had produced "Harvest of Shame" six months before—a team that included cinematographer Marty

Barnett, editor John Schultz, line producer David Lowe, and Murrow's long-time co-producer Fred Friendly. Edward R. Murrow did not complete the documentary; it was finished by Howard K. Smith, who stepped in for Murrow at the last moment. But it was Murrow's last program for CBS nevertheless.

Having recently re-viewed "Harvest of Shame" and "Who Speaks for Birmingham?" side by side, I could admire both films as works of documentary art, as important journalistic statements, and as calls to social conscience. Each of them was a powerful plea for a national response to entrenched systems of institutionalized injustice that only someone with the stature of Edward R. Murrow's

stature could claim at that moment in history have pulled off. But I came to the conclusion that “Who Speaks for Birmingham?” was an advance over “Harvest of Shame” in one important way. Though the black, white and Hispanic migrant workers in “Harvest of Shame” had spoken into the camera about their conditions, and their statements were essential ingredients of the program—the center of all the cauldron of passion, anger, irony and the army of statistics that Murrow and his team had put together for this investigative report—there was something not quite free about their answers of these migrant workers on camera. Though they spoke succinctly and honestly, from their porches, perched shyly on corn-cob mattresses in rat-infested rooms, standing patiently in the hot sun in the fields or speaking to producer David Lowe on the dusty roads

The changes that were occurring in television news practices and technology at this time were as dramatic as the sit-ins and freedom rides themselves.

of migrant farm labor camps, we never forget that the newsman was there guiding their responses.

In “Who Speaks for Birmingham?” Murrow and Lowe designed the show differently. At certain crucial moments throughout the documentary, white and black communities, in separate settings, rose up and spoke directly into the camera with no visible reporter present. In powerful, sometimes deeply conflicted, individual and collective statements, they were speaking to and for the people standing or sitting around them, yet at the same time they were making their case directly to the nation. These personal and communal statements formed the heart of “Who Speaks for Birmingham?”

The film is, among other things, a remarkable time capsule of Birmingham in 1961, for it shows how the civil rights movement provoked both white and black communities to come to terms with the long-term costs of segregation at this moment in history. Indeed, the film presented, in Howard K. Smith’s words, a “rough draft” of history.

“Harvest of Shame” is certainly the better known of the two films produced by the CBS Lowe unit—“a lasting work of art,” in Murrow biographer Joseph Persico’s words, “the most studied, most respected documentary in television history,” as CBS correspondent Ed Bradley put it in his introduction to the CBS Classics version of these 1960 documentary, released in 1998. But if “Who Speaks for Birmingham?” is so much less well known, why is that so? This is the question that immediately struck me

when I saw the program at the Museum of Television and Radio. How and why did this program come to be relegated to

the dustbin of history? How did Murrow’s last documentary for CBS, in which he did all the set-up work, the planning with Friendly, the pre-interview trips to Birmingham with Lowe, end up without a single mention of Murrow in the closing credits?

The answers comprise a story that is as compelling and dramatic as the story of *See It Now’s* “The Case of Milo Radulovich.” This was the show which began marked a turning point in the institutional conflict between the Murrow CBS news team and CBS President William Paley and that would eventually lead to the confrontation five months after the airing of “Who Speaks for Birmingham?” between Howard K. Smith and Paley in the CBS executive dining room

when Paley would fire Smith, in many ways a stand-in for Edward R. Murrow at this time, for violating CBS' news objectivity policy. But that is getting ahead of the story.

When on February 1, 1960, four Negro students sat down at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, it was, in the words of Smithsonian African-American Programs curator Niani Kilkenny, the "birth of a whirlwind." Yet on the day it occurred, the Greensboro sit-in constituted hardly a blip on the national media scene. News media and civil rights organizations alike were caught completely off guard. That was soon corrected. Within weeks, as sit-ins broke out in Raleigh-Durham, Winston-Salem, Raleigh-Durham, Nashville and towns and cities throughout the south, news photographers and television news camera crews were there to capture the action. From this time on press photographers, television news cameramen, and documentary filmmakers in particular played an increasingly important role in capturing the nonviolent direct action campaigns of the early 1960s civil rights movement.

The changes that were occurring in television news practices and technology at this time were as dramatic as the sit-ins and freedom rides themselves. Up until this time, the "Negro" problem was discussed tepidly in newsrooms or television studios by white reporters and carefully selected representatives of the African-American community. All of a sudden, in a very brief period of time, from 1960-61 during the first heady years of the Kennedy administration, the period of "expanding vistas" in television, in telecommunications and film professor Mary Ann Watson's terms, the new lightweight portable film equipment, the

"cinema verite" documentary style of Drew Associates, and the moral crusading traditions of *See It Now* and *CBS Reports* created a series of powerful film documentaries that gave direct voice to African Americans and civil rights activists speaking for their cause.

At CBS in 1960, Edward R. Murrow and Fred Friendly had just wrestled to life, in torturous negotiations with an increasingly resistant CBS management, a new series, *CBS Reports*. CBS management wanted "class act" journalism, to counter criticism and Congressional and regulatory assaults in the post-quiz scandal era of the broadcast industry, but they did not want controversy and they did not want to lose Southern affiliates. In the heat of the civil rights movement that was exactly what was happening, CBS affiliates were threatening to jump ship to NBC or ABC.

Edward R. Murrow was already ill at this time with the lung cancer that would eventually kill him. He was exhausted by the struggles with CBS management, coughing constantly now, and left in limbo concerning his future role with the network. Yet within the dying embers of his body came a new glow, a new sense of purpose on camera, and a new sense of conviction that was quite apparent in his jeremiad against the television industry at the Radio and Television News Director Association meetings in Chicago in 1958. (This was a speech that did more than anything else to upset and alienate CBS head William Paley.) There was a sense from those who knew Murrow that he had a few more important programs left to do, and that his. His last work at CBS was going to stand for something. As Murrow's stature grew in the outside world, as he brought *Small World* to life with Friendly, one of the most important news and cultural-affairs talk shows in broadcasting history, and as he took assignments

like “Harvest of Shame” and “Who Speaks for Birmingham?” CBS management’s worry about the growing power and stature of Edward R. Murrow also grew.

Unlike the new mobile 16mm. *cinéma vérité* film equipment used by the Bell and Howell ABC “Close-up” film unit under Drew Associates, the gear used by the CBS investigative documentary film unit was older, more expensive and more cumbersome: big packages of 35mm camera and sound equipment. This became a factor at one crucial moment in the making of “Who Speaks for Birmingham?” when the freedom riders came to town—and no shots could be taken. But it also gave the film a stark and sometimes stunningly beautiful visual quality that spelled “class” and helped make it, for those who had a chance to see it on the evening of Tuesday, May 18, at 10:30 p.m., a remarkable television experience.

“Who Speaks for Birmingham?” portrayed two Birminghams: one that affluent members of white society experienced and the other that was the daily reality of Birmingham’s Negro citizens. Birmingham was one of the most segregated in the South, with a Chief of Police, Eugene (Bull) Connor, nicknamed for the sound of his voice, who was one of the most obdurate defenders of segregation in the South. There was nothing subtle about Bull Connor, and his support of and link to the local White Citizens Council and Ku Klux Klan, coupled by his unwillingness to stop the bombings and intimidation of civil rights workers, led to Birmingham’s designation, among civil rights activists, as “Bombingham.”

What precipitated Friendly and Murrow’s decision to do a program was a series of two front-page articles by Harrison Salisbury in *The New York Times* in April 12 and 13, 1960, that discussed the charged racial climate in Birmingham

and atrocities that had been committed against Negroes. The article was reprinted in the *Birmingham News* on April 14th, and the city launched a libel suit against the *Times* for \$1,600,000. CBS Reports, in a team headed by Murrow and Lowe, went to Birmingham to investigate.

In the midst of this process something unusual happened. In the mid-stride of early production Edward R. Murrow was called to Washington by President Kennedy to head the USIA. There have been relatively few occasions when the mantle of one major news broadcaster passes directly to another. This was one such occasion. It was a case study in how the auteur theory of film can be applied to a documentary. This “Edward R. Murrow” film was completed by a longtime CBS associate, a disciple, one of “Murrow’s boys” at CBS, and in the making of this program, Howard K. Smith was to become Edward R. Murrow.

The passing of the baton from Murrow to Smith, shortly before the cameras were about to roll, made a great deal of sense. Both were from the South, Murrow having spent his early years in a rural North Carolina and Smith having been born and raised in a small town of near the Mississippi River in Louisiana, before going on to New Orleans for high school and college. Both Murrow and Smith had become cosmopolitan members of the world through international study (Smith had studied at Heidelberg University in the 1930s), travel and professional journalism assignments overseas. As liberal white Southerners, both CBS reporters were deeply attuned to the conflicts that were occurring in Southern cities throughout the South in the wake of the Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education desegregation decision in 1954. Smith had covered the Little Rock

school integration crisis as a reporter for CBS in 1957. He and his Scandinavian wife, shocked at the racism of his home city of New Orleans after the war, had made a quick decision never to live in the South.

Smith had risen rapidly in the CBS ranks as a European correspondent under Murrow. He had written an important book, *Last Train from Berlin*, about his experience as a wartime correspondent, and, as chief Washington correspondent for CBS in 1961, had considerable status of his own. Like others of Murrow's boys, he idolized his boss, emulated him, and when he was eventually chosen to succeed him as head of the London Bureau chief when Murrow came back to New York in 1947, never felt quite at home in Murrow's considerable shoes.

Ironically, Howard K. Smith had been CBS management's chief candidate to host the new *CBS Reports* series—but not Murrow and Friendly's. Though known for his independence and his acerbic commentaries, Howard K. Smith would be considerably more manageable than Murrow, or so at least CBS executives thought. Murrow and Friendly resisted the idea of a "revolving" anchor, or having Smith imposed upon them for *CBS Reports*, despite CBS News Chief Sig Mickelson's argument that Smith was the best candidate, citing for support a letter from a sponsor specifically requesting Smith. As Murrow biographer A.M. Sperber reports it, Mickelson did quickly back down on the point, and by the time the cameras were ready to roll for the Birmingham documentary, Smith was the logical choice. Murrow personally asked Howard K. Smith if he would take over when Murrow himself he went to Washington.

Knowing the history of the back-room negotiations, Smith felt a special obliga-

tion to live up to Murrow's expectations. In his memoirs, *Events Leading Up to My Death: The Life of a Twentieth-Century Reporter*,² Smith says he had a very good idea of what he was walking into. He quotes line producer David Lowe as saying: "You know how this report is going to turn out. However balanced we try to keep it, the Establishment is going to look awful because its position is awful. So we have got to work harder than ever to give it a form of balance." Smith himself put it another way at the end of his

Despite the formal balance we see on the screen, the debate is not an equal one. One side is accorded clear moral ascendancy.

book: "The courts understood," said Smith, "what CBS had not, that truth is not somewhere equidistant between right and wrong." Smith set out to follow Murrow's footsteps and "Who Speaks for Birmingham?" was on its way to becoming a film like "Harvest of Shame"—a documentary that challenged the nation to respond to the moral imperatives of the civil rights movement of the early 1960s.

The documentary opens with visuals of a bustling, prosperous city, with all its civic landmarks and emblems of civic pride run behind Howard K. Smith's commentary. "Fear and hatred gripped the city," Smith quotes the *New York Times*. "Every channel of communication, every medium of mutual interest, every reasoned approach, every middle ground has been fragmented by the emotional dynamite of racism." The CBS team wanted to see had gone to Birmingham to see if this was true.

The prologue of the show prefigures its narrative strategy. It is constructed

out of a sequence of four alternating short statements, two by white segregationists, two by African Americans who have been active in the civil rights struggle. The running time of the sequence is precisely two minutes. Each speaker is given precisely 30 seconds; an exactly even division of broadcast time between them. The opening in many ways sum up the strategy of the documentary, as artfully constructed film prologues often do. The antiphonal editing of the voices of the white and black communities, the use of voice-over narration, camera work and editing turn the "little picture" of Edward R. Murrow into the "big picture" of a major national debate. In the case of the advocacy journalism of a film like "Harvest of Shame" or "Who Speaks for Birmingham?," despite the formal balance we see on the screen, the debate is not an equal one. One side is accorded clear moral ascendancy. It is done through the words of the narration, but Smith is careful, as Murrow was, to stick to the mode of factual report through much of this show. The point of view comes through forcefully, however, in the camera, the editing, and the use of music.

The first speaker, newspaper columnist John Temple Graves, leans back in his chair and delivers his words over Lowe's shoulder to the camera from what appears to be his home office in Birmingham. Throughout his interview with Graves, Lowe, like the anonymous reporter in *Citizen Kane*, is an almost invisible presence, the back of his fringed bald head visible from the side. We know he is there but we are not meant to notice him most of the time. Graves speaks quietly, articulately, rationally. His feelings are wounded, however, his sensibility outraged. He questions the assertion in the *New York Times* report that there was a "reign of terror" in Birmingham. When Salisbury speaks of "the rope, the

knot, the whip, the razor," Graves says incredulously, "instruments of violence and terror," he is talking about a Birmingham that neither Graves, nor anyone he knows, has ever seen. If a murder or act of violence happens in the North, in Chicago, for example, it is ignored, but if it occurs in the South, Graves says, it is news. We southerners are not "the villain" that the Northern press makes us out to be, he says, and he hopes that fair-minded viewers of this show will see that. No, Graves repeats the word, no, he has never seen any evidence of a "reign" of terror in Birmingham, Alabama. How could a veteran reporter like Harrison Salisbury get it so wrong?

The next speaker, an African American. He is identified only later in the program as the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, a key civil rights activist and leader of the African-American community who has had his home bombed, been arrested many times, and was presently involved in 14 law suits concerning civil rights violations in Birmingham. He rebuts the previous speaker. "I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Salisbury," he says. Seated quietly behind a table, the African American, hands folded, reflective, makes it clear in thoughtful, precise terms, that he has experienced the terror himself. Cut to a third speaker, an anonymous young white man in short sleeves, who is speaking in a public hearing in an auditorium in front of a camera. He speaks directly out into the camera. "I have never seen fear in Birmingham as has been expressed in the Northern newspapers. If we are afraid of anything perhaps its that outside agitators, attempting to cause trouble, attempting to sell newspapers, will cause trouble that actually doesn't exist." Members of the audience listen respectfully.

The last speaker appears to be a high-school or college student. It is difficult to tell her age. The camera lights her in

such a way that she stands out from her surroundings, a spotlight, Rembrandt chiaroscuro effect, but she is clearly in the midst of a gathering at a church speaking from a podium and surrounded by members of the African-American community. Though the crowd is still, there are occasional audible murmurs of assent. She says: "I can tell the people of America. Don't live here. White, black, red, yellow, green. Not under this. Life isn't worth living." Cut to the opening chords of Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," the *CBS Reports* theme music is heard as the program's logo zooms from a small point of light into large letters over one of the crowd scenes on the city streets we have seen before the in Howard K. Smith's opening statements, and Smith launches into his factual narration.

The statement from the young African American is powerful in itself. Her eyes shine. She speaks slowly, each word measured, each word carrying with it the feeling of her whole being. But the sharp cut from the quote to the *CBS Reports* theme music, as the whole weight of CBS News comes crashing in, with the authoritative voice of journalist Howard K. Smith standing in for Edward R. Murrow, this is what creates such a remarkable film moment.

The ending of the report, what Howard K. Smith introduced as an "epilogue," is equally powerful. Here it is pictures rather than words that make the final statement. As the CBS team was completing its work in Birmingham, a major news event erupted: the much-heralded first freedom riders arrived in the city. A bus had already been firebombed and assaulted in Anniston, Alabama, an hour away, and local segregationists were waiting for the battered survivors now. Smith had re-

ceived a phone tip from the local leader of the Ku Klux Klan to be on hand at the bus station to watch, and what he saw, running to one of the two city bus stations as it happened, was "horrific." Six of the freedom riders were being beaten with brass knuckles, chains, fists and boots, several seriously with permanent injury for life. Police Chief Connor had ordered the police to conveniently "disappear" during the minutes it took to occur. The *Birmingham News*, the daily paper that had run the original Harrison Salisbury *New York Times* article two days after it had appeared in the *New York Times* a little over a year previously, before the uproar and the lawsuits, took a position the day after the massacre at the Birmingham Trailways bus station. In a front-page editorial, quoted by Howard K. Smith at the end of the program, the paper had said that "fear and hatred did stalk Birmingham's streets" that day. It was as if the event had been planned to demonstrate the points the CBS report had been making throughout the program.

Before the epilogue there was once again a penultimate statement from a member of the African-American community speaking at the church gathering. An older African-American woman gave testimony in words that echoed Rev. Shuttlesworth claim that the African-American citizens of Birmingham were willing to die for their cause. "We will keep on fighting" she said so that her children, and any African-American children, could get the same opportunities as whites. "I'm the mother of eight children," she said, "and my life is on the altar. And I will die for those eight children. If it takes death to show them that I mean that, I meant that. I'm not afraid. I may feel that I'm afraid, but I'm not afraid, for I trust in God, and I know God. I walks with God." Although time had been divided

equally, and each side had its say, there was no question where Howard K. Smith and CBS News stood on this issue.

The conflict between Edward R. Murrow and CBS management strikes deep chords. It is a conflict that is still central to American broadcasting today: how much, and indeed whether, news can report events or ideas that threaten a company's flow of profits. "Who Speaks for Birmingham?" brought to a head the institutional crisis at the heart of CBS News that had been festering ever since the Radulovich program. CBS management was concerned about the reaction of their southern affiliates; threats to disaffiliate were real and had already been acted upon, with several affiliates jumping to NBC or ABC. Now the network had a law suit to deal with as well, this

The conflict between Edward R. Murrow and CBS management... is still central to American broadcasting today: how much, and indeed whether, news can report events or ideas that threaten a company's flow of profits.

one for a million dollars from the city of Birmingham, building on its case against the *New York Times*. Howard K. Smith was suspended, taken off the air and forbidden to speak to other CBS staffers.

The end might have appeared to casual onlookers "cordial," according to Smith when he met with CBS top management over drinks in the company restaurant that mid-afternoon in October 1961. Though Frank Stanton described the event as considerably more tense, everyone agreed on what happened. CBS President Bill Paley took Smith's carefully worded memo defending Murrow's position on commentary and the need for investigative and advocacy journalism on issues of national

importance, and tossed it at the chief CBS correspondent. If that is what you believe, William Paley said to Howard K. Smith, you can go work somewhere else. It was called by some a "resignation," but Bill Paley was able to do to Howard K. Smith what he would not and could do to Edward R. Murrow: fire him. Smith had violated the same CBS's "objectivity" policy Murrow had regularly flouted, and now CBS management took a firm stand. In the making of "Who Speaks for Birmingham?" Edward R. Murrow and Howard K. Smith had spoken as one. Now so did the CBS management team. In the offices and studios of CBS News, the remaining *See It Now* and *CBS Reports* staff members mourned the loss of Murrow and his key lieutenant. Though his ghost presided over the building, the Edward R. Murrow era was over.

What set "Who Speaks for Birmingham?" apart from the NBC *White Paper* on the sit-in movement aired in December, 1960, narrated by Chet Huntley, and other skillfully pro-

duced and edited documentaries of the time—including the fine documentaries of "Cast the First Stone, 1960" and "Walk in My Shoes," by Drew Associates for ABC—was the restraint, deep thought and moral passion of the program, all hallmarks of the Edward R. Murrow tradition at CBS. There was even a Murrovian quote at the end, more powerful, perhaps, in its absence from the final program. It was censored in a turbulent script-review session with CBS managers, in which Smith and Lowe had battled for their script for the program and ended up getting most of what they wanted. But the words of the quote had to go, the executives said. It violated CBS News' objectivity policy. The quote was

taken from an 18th century speech by Edmund Burke. In retrospect, the words could be applied to the middle managers and upper network officials at CBS, to William Paley himself, not just the Southern “moderates” to whom they were addressed. Just as Paley and other CBS executives must have reacted on some level personally to Edward R. Murrow’s quote from Shakespeare seven years previously (“the fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars but in ourselves”), so too Howard K. Smith’s indictment of Southern liberals must have resounded in the sensitive ears of these CBS execu-

tives—still ringing from Murrow’s indictment of them in front of the Radio and Television News Directors in the fall of 1958.

The missing words—which became, in terms of broadcast history, more powerful by their removal—have been cited again and again in accounts of this show. “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil,” Burke had said, “is for good men to do nothing.” When it time came time to read the words in his final standup, Howard K. Smith defiantly remained silent and let the silence read louder than the missing words.

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Rod Serling: Caught in the “Censorship Zone”

How a sponsor diluted a powerful civil rights script and turned it into a critical and popular failure. | **By Bob Pondillo**

On April 26, 1956, Rod Serling awoke to bad news. The celebrated TV writer’s troubled teleplay, “Noon On Doomsday,” was broadcast the night before on CBS-TV’s prestigious *United States Steel Hour*, and the reviews were not good. Jack Gould of the *New York Times* dismissed the telecast as “inconsequential.” Henry Furst, critic for the *Cincinnati Times-Star* wrote,

“Noon On Doomsday’ . . . will not win the lavish praise heaped upon him for ‘Patterns’— Serling’s Emmy-winning script that still holds the honor of being the first *live* TV drama in history to be restaged and retelevized due to overwhelming critical acclaim. “Doomsday,” on the other hand, was a bomb. Even

Serling wrote to a columnist at *Daily Variety* saying, “if anybody asks you about “Noon On Doomsday” and its author, just tell them you never heard of me or it, at least until this goddamned thing settles.” For nearly a year after the broadcast Serling admitted he was “professionally destroyed” by the show. It also brought him the label of “controversial writer”— the kiss of death in the overly cautious television industry of the 1950s.

What happened? It was as if Serling had crossed a shadowy boundary and was trapped in a new dimension; a dimension of corporate capitalism and cultural control — a familiar place where the status quo is praised, dominant sensibilities are rarely challenged, and *nothing* upsets “the sale.” Serling was caught

Rod Serling in 1956



and participated as a willing partner in a very real yet completely invisible locale found somewhere “between the pit of man’s fears and the summit of his knowledge,” a place called “The Censorship Zone.”

How it began

In late summer of 1955, a 14-year-old African-American youth from Chicago was lynched while on vacation in Mississippi. Emmett Till’s alleged crime: “whistling at a white woman.” The drama of the incident was palpable to Serling; he was stunned and outraged, as was most of the nation. But could a human tragedy so horrible and controver-

sial be turned into a teleplay? Serling was convinced it was a cautionary tale that had to be told, and he saw himself as the writer to tell it. After all, he had won the Emmy Award for Best Teleplay earlier that year, and, although he had written (and seen produced) fifteen teleplays since “Patterns,” Serling was still snared in its shadow. Serling biographer Joe Engle explained, “Patterns” was Serling’s “Death of a Salesman’ . . . [it] established a benchmark for the author’s skill.” Perhaps, by using the Till murder as inspiration, Serling could write another story as powerful as “Patterns”—a play about the character and ethics of big business (and a story so controversial CBS-TV refused to broadcast it!) Might

the 31-one-year-old writer parlay the celebrity of a national Emmy into a *new* TV play that would change the attitudes of a nation? Admittedly it was a tall order, but Serling thought himself up to the challenge.

Another Serling biographer, Gordon F. Sander, explains that like the great social writers of radio and agitprop of the 1930s – Corwin, Obler, Welles, Odets – Serling believed deeply “the theater of the air, like the other literary arts, in addition to being entertaining, should be both relevant and provocative.” For Serling writing was about being an “agent of change and a spark to controversy.” In a speech before the Library of Congress in 1968 he remarked: “The writer’s role is to menace the public’s conscience. He must have a position, a

headlights off. It was almost 2 a.m., August 28, 1955.

The Chevy rolled to a stop next to the shanty home of sharecropper Moses “Preacher” Wright. Two white men stepped out of the cab; one carried a flashlight; both were armed with .45 caliber automatic weapons. They pounded on the front door of the tiny, unpainted cabin. Waking the household, the two men announced they’d come for “the boy from Chicago who wolf-whistled at the white woman.”

Moses Wright, Emmett Till’s uncle, pleaded with the two men. “The boy ain’t got good sense,” he said. “He was raised up yonder . . . and . . . didn’t know what he was doin.’ Please, don’t take him,” Preacher begged.

Wright’s wife, Elizabeth, promised to

The acquittal rippled across the nation like a shock wave. Serling was outraged and knew a powerful statement had to be made against this kind of hate.

point of view. He must see the arts as a vehicle for social criticism and he must focus on the issues of his time.” What single issue could be as morally and socially challenging as race in postwar America? The question was: Could Serling write a play on the inhumanity of racial hatred that both accommodated the needs of commercial network television *and* gripped the soul of a nation? Serling based his story on the case of Emmett Till.

The True Story of Emmett Till

It was a humid, moonless night in the Mississippi Delta. The Southern moss hung thick on the persimmons as cicadas droned in the cotton fields. In the distance, the faint rumble of a Chevrolet pickup could be heard. The truck was coming up the back road, its

“pay you gentlemen for the damages.” But Roy Bryant, 24, and J.W. Milam, 36, could not be mollified.

“You niggers go back to sleep,” Milam ordered, as he roused one of the four youngsters sleeping there that night.

The boy they kidnapped and threw onto the bed of their green pickup was an eighth-grader from just outside of Chicago. Till had come south to spend part of his summer vacation with his cousins in the Delta.

The boy’s naked corpse was found less than three days later in the Tallahatchie River at Pecan Point. It was described as “hideously decomposed.” Only the lower half of his badly beaten remains protruded from the water, because the upper half had a heavy cotton gin fan wrapped around it with barbed wire. The left side of Till’s head was missing. His tongue had swollen to eight times its

normal size; one eye dangled. There was a bullet hole above his right ear.

The *Jackson Daily News*, one of the two dailies in Mississippi's state capital, called the slaying "a brutal, senseless crime and just incidentally one which merits not one iota of sympathy for the killers. The people of Mississippi deplore this evil act. Till's death has appalled Mississippi." A front-page editorial in the *Greenwood Commonwealth* asserted that "the citizens of this area are determined that the guilty parties be punished to the full extent of the law." Its editor, Tom Shepard, called the "nauseating" killing "way, way beyond the bounds of human decency." The NAACP got involved. *Time* and *Newsweek* printed stories, as did the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the Associated Press. All of America – indeed all the world – became aware of the appalling death of Emmett Till.

Soon the wagons formed a circle. The highly publicized trial of Bryant and Milam began Monday, September 19, 1955, in Sumner, Mississippi. As the macabre details of the lynching poured from the town, outrage and protests from the North and East began filling the state. As many as seventy reporters from across the country descended upon the small cotton growing community, and many white Mississippians began to hunker down to protect their own. Local pride and self-sufficiency was at stake. The perennial Civil War argument of the primacy of states' rights became so urgent, and the feelings of defensiveness so raw and exposed, that the cold-blooded murder of a young black kid seemed secondary. Historian Seven J. Whitfield wrote, "The court proceedings produced front-page coverage throughout the nation. Probably

not since the trial of Bruno Richard Hauptmann in the death of the Lindbergh baby twenty years earlier had a kidnap-murder case generated so much front page publicity."

In 1955 neither blacks nor women were permitted to serve on Mississippi juries. The twelve "peers" of Bryant and Milam included nine farmers, two carpenters and an insurance agent. All five Bryant and Milam defense lawyers worked without fee. Their strategy was to appeal to Mississippi's "Anglo-Saxon" traditions and plant doubt in the mind of the jurors that the corpse had been correctly identified. Years after the state had rested its case, the five defense lawyers – the entire Sumner County bar – would admit to Hugh Stephen Whitacre, a graduate student studying the Till case, that prosecutors had presented "sufficient evidence to convict." Even the jurors later confessed that not a single member doubted the defendants were guilty of murder. Still, on September 23, 1955, after a deliberation of one hour and seven minutes (the verdict would have come sooner but the jurors decided to take a Coca-Cola break) Bryant and Milam were found not guilty in the death of Emmett Till. The acquittal rippled across the nation like a shock wave. Serling was outraged and knew a powerful statement had to be made against this kind of hate. And he began to write.

Serling's First Draft

The first and most passionate draft of Serling's "Noon On Doomsday" centers on a character named John Kattell, a white man in his early 20s, who knifes to death a 19-year-old black man in the town square of fictional Demerest, Georgia. Kattell is written as an incognizant bully, full of rage and racial hatred, that lashes out at those weaker than

he. A white Northern newspaperman, Chester Lanier, narrates the play.

The black teenager's lifeless body is found immediately, and there are witnesses. Moreover, the town sheriff arrests Kattell at the scene and takes him to jail. (In the Till case no immediate arrest was made and there were no witnesses.) The local newspaper stringer, Ben Tyler – a character written as a “sleazy, clubfooted little man,” acting more as the town's chamber of commerce than a hardnews reporter – sends a “murder-by-self-defense” story to an Atlanta paper. The incendiary report is transmitted nationwide by the AP causing the Northern “liberal” press to descend on the small Southern city to witness the trial. A young local attorney, Bob Grinstead, defends Kattell against the wishes of his father, Frank Grinstead, once the respected town prosecutor. The elder Grinstead was driven to drink and near-madness by a lynching in which he participated thirty-years earlier – a torment he wished to spare his son. After a brief sham trial, an all-white jury of townspeople acquits Kattell for the homicide of the black man. Incensed by the injustice of the verdict, Frank Grinstead confronts Kattell, who is getting drunker by the minute during a “victory” celebration for him in the Town Square. Kattell becomes enraged at Grinstead's pointed accusations of ignorance and cowardice, and Kattell murders him with the same knife he used to kill the young black man. Grinstead, by his righteous death, is thus symbolically vindicated from the lynching of which he was a part three-decades earlier, and as Kattell tries to escape, is shot to death by the sheriff.

Serling knew he had an explosive play, but because of the racial taboos of the

time didn't think it would work on television. Most writers who “probe current social problems [using] them as background pieces on television . . . precursor” themselves automatically, Serling said. But this raw drama pulled no punches so Serling simply dismissed it as a TV project, and brought the concept to The Theater Guild as a legitimate stage play. As it happened Lawrence Langner, Director of the Guild and occasional TV producer for the *United States Steel Hour*, was looking for a television script. Langer rejected the idea of turning the property into a stage production, telling Serling, “I think you have the bone structure of a very effective teleplay here. I don't think you'll have to dilute it at all.” However, if Serling wished his script produced for TV, Langner counseled, he would have to make one small change: it ostensibly couldn't be about racial issues. Serling protested that such a thematic shift would “eliminate a great deal of the [story's] built-in emotional” power. Langer persisted, and even though Serling felt the heart would be cut out of his script, he still thought he could use the intractable white-hot issue of race to “say something” important to a massive TV audience. He pressed ahead with a draft for The Theater Guild, and Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc., the advertising agency representing United States Steel. Little did Serling know he had opened a creative Pandora's Box.

The second draft of “Noon On Doomsday” was the script submitted by The Theatre Guild to BBD&O and United States Steel. This incarnation saw an all-white version in which Serling made the murder victim not a teenage black youth but an elderly Jewish pawnbroker who dies at the hands of a provincial,

Serling's second draft, although clearly watered down, still points up the horrific power of racism.

Ford was having an “industrial public relations” problem with white and African-American workers on its Southern assembly lines. Air this show in the South, Ford warned, and race relations would be set back five years.

neurotic malcontent. Serling said, “[It’s now] the story of a town protecting its own on a ‘he’s a bastard, but he’s our bastard’ kind of basis. Thus, the town itself was the real killer.” This version of Serling’s script didn’t pinpoint the state, but the action was set in a small Southern border town somewhere “below the Mason-Dixon line.”

Although clearly watered down, Serling’s new script still points up the horrific power of racism and introduced the character of a Jewish newspaper photographer to comment on the palpable town bigotry and xenophobia. Frank Grinstead, the pathetic drunk in draft one, now becomes a respectable attorney who was *indirectly* involved in a town lynching thirty years earlier. Nonetheless, the elder Grinstead is haunted in a dream sequence that recalls the terror and injustice of the racial murder in which he participated. By using this dramatic device the audience gets to witness the decades-old lynching, complete with the specter of anonymous hooded men coming to kill in the night. Serling’s jury of eight white men and four white women (there were only white men in the actual trial) acquit Kattell in one hour and seventeen minutes – a ten-minute difference from the Till prosecution.

This second draft again includes the post-trial victory celebration in which the older Grinstead confronts Kattell, and despite the jury vindication exposes Kattell’s racial hatred and poltroonery to the assembled townsfolk. The community, which shielded “its own,” now shuns him and Kattell must for the remainder of his life live with the shame and guilt of the cold-blooded murder.

Milam, one of Till’s killers, was similarly forsaken after the actual trial. In a *Look* magazine article a year after the acquittal author William Bradford Huie noted Milam had been ostracized from “the white people in his own county who [had previously] defended” him.

Serling was pleased with this draft. He thought his message had been couched well enough to appease BBD&O and its client while allowing a large majority of the viewing audience to comprehend the ramifications of a larger tragedy – humankind’s need to find a scapegoat for its own fear and nescience. The script was accepted as the next dramatic offering on the *United States Steel Hour*.

Publicly Serling was ecstatic. He wrote, “Noon On Doomsday’ . . . is the shining light of my life.” Yet in a personal letter Serling dejectedly acknowledged, “If I fail on this one I think I’ll want to give up entirely . . . It makes [me] feel if my best is not good enough, I might as well walk away from the ring.”

Serling’s Third and Fourth Drafts

One day in early February 1956, while discussing his coming TV show with a newspaper reporter, Serling casually gave him a brief outline of the narrative. The reporter said, “Hey, that sounds like the Till case.” Serling offhandedly quipped, “If the shoe fits . . .” He later admitted it “was a little bit idiotic to say.” The wire services immediately picked up the story that the Theater Guild was about to produce a television play based on the grisly Till murder. That’s when “all hell broke loose,” wrote Serling. Several “Southern White Citi-

zens Councils” – collections of empty-headed bigots and former Ku Klux Klansmen – became outraged and threatened a major boycott of United States Steel. Serling joked, “Does that mean from now on everybody below the Mason-Dixon line is going to build with aluminum?” Actually, United States Steel feared the Ford Motor plant would pull sheet-metal orders. Ford was having an “industrial public relations” problem with white and African-American workers on its Southern assembly lines. Air this show in the South, Ford warned, and race relations would be set back five years. CBS-TV was even asked to block the show in the Southern markets – which, to its credit, it refused to do.

Serling was immediately summoned to New York. There he looked into the ashen faces of executives from BBD&O, CBS-TV, the Theater Guild and United States Steel. “You know,” they sputtered, “the whole thing must be completely altered.” Serling wrote, “[T]hey then proceeded to say what had to be done to the script. It could bear no resemblance remotely, in context or otherwise, to the South or any existing institutions in the South. It had to be moved up. I agreed to move it up just as long as we didn’t pinpoint it geographically. They said, no, that it *must* be pinpointed geographically to prove it was not in the South. So they made it *New England*. This, of course, was the most ludicrous of all the alterations imposed, because the sort of emotional mob stuff that was going on is now foreign to New England.”

BBD&O also removed the Coca-Cola sign from the set of the town diner, saying Coke was obviously “a Southern beverage, the drink of the Negro.” In the 1950s, advertisers openly asserted they could not afford to have their products

known as “Negro products.” It was suggested the word *lynch* be omitted, contractions removed, and the letter *g* added to all participles and gerunds, so that nobody would be talking with what the sponsor and advertising agency called a “drawl.”

Side-by-side script comparison reveals that by draft three and four, the play was beginning to take on the appearance of the final TV show. More cuts were made to any specific ethnic or religious appearances. The Jewish photographer character was excised, along with his potent comments on religious and ethnic hatred. The murdered man was no longer an elderly Jew but a nonspecific “foreigner from the old country.” The old man’s daughter’s name was Anglicized from Esther, an ancient biblical name (and Serling’s mother’s name), to Felicia. In the third draft, the action is still set in a Southern city, but it’s not clear exactly where. By the fourth draft, the setting is clearly changed to New England with no Southern references in speech, dress, or cultural artifacts.

Also in draft three came a puzzling addendum. Kattell was made to own a competing store to the “old foreigner” Chinik. Kattell was incensed that the immigrant was “undercutting his prices and stealing his customers.” Such a change switched the motivation for murder to greed as well as xenophobia, and in so doing implicated Americanism itself. The greed and competition angle was abandoned in the fourth iteration and would not again surface in successive drafts.

The Fifth or “Rehearsal” Draft

By draft five, the teleplay was no longer a tension-filled polemic on racial hatred, bigotry, and ignorance. The story’s dramatic focus shifted from embedded racial hatred – the true

Television of that era was not intended as a vehicle for public discourse... TV's need for writers, directors, actors, musicians, costumers and set designers existed only to... create a positive environment in which to sell products

meaning Till's murder – and is diffused among various relationships: the defense attorney and his father; an obvious albeit restrained love affair between the reporter and the old man's daughter; the town's connection to the killer; and the reporter's need to confront his own lack of courage because of a physical deformity. In this rehearsal draft the only remaining plot point based upon the actual Till murder was the idea of a small xenophobic town wanting to protect its own from intruding outsiders.

On April 25, 1956 *The United States Steel Hour* presented Rod Serling's "Noon On Doomsday," part of its nationally televised anthology series on CBS-TV. The critical response from the television industry ranged from tepid praise to simply dismissing the program as a non-event.

One may be shocked but not surprised at how Rod Serling's teleplay was handled by the emerging television medium. After all, television of that era was not intended as a vehicle for public

MORE CONTROVERSY After his disheartening 1956 experience with "Noon On Doomsday" – a TV play focusing on American racial issues – one might think Serling would have stopped writing race stories. Such was *not* the case. He authored another contentious and powerful script that was scheduled to open the *Playhouse 90* season in 1958 called "Aftermath." Again it was the story of an African-American lynching set in the contemporary South. *Again* the sponsor disapproved of the subject matter, this time forcing delay of the show. To appease, Serling retitled it "A Town Has Turned To Dust," reworked the setting to the Southwest of the late 1800s, and changed its focus from Negro to Mexican lynchings. The show didn't air until June, when sponsors were assured of a smaller audience because of summer vacations – fewer people watching meant fewer complaints! ("A Town Has Turned To Dust" nonetheless won Serling a Writers Guild of America award for best script.)

Later that year Serling was again taken to task, but this time by the airline industry over a subsequent *Playhouse 90* drama called "Panic Button," the story of an investigation of a commercial plane crash. The airlines pressured him to change the focus from a commercial aircraft to a chartered plane, which only caused the charter plane industry to scream. That's when Serling decided he was "giving up" writing live television and moved to the West Coast.

In 1959 CBS-TV broadcast the first installment of the long-running, multi-award winning series: Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*. – BP

discourse, although network brass always claimed the medium was there to serve the common good. TV's need for writers, directors, actors, musicians, costumers and set designers existed only to the extent of having those workers create a positive environment in which to sell products. Any idea that might be considered controversial threatened the advertiser. To the agency and the sponsor it made little sense to associate with a show that might hurt business, no matter how important the program's message.

In 1949 less than three percent of American homes had television receivers, but by 1954 the number of TV sets in the U.S. exploded to over 32 million. Moreover, those who advertised on the emerging medium told astonishing success stories. Television writer Robert Alan Aurthur related the story of Reynolds Aluminum: "They had bought and stored enormous quantities of aluminum when the Korean War started thinking the price would go up. When it didn't, they were stuck with warehouses full of aluminum. So they bought a television show specifically to get rid of it. And they did. They emptied the warehouses."

In 1960, CBS Chairman Frank Stanton explained that advertiser-supported network television "must take into account the general objectives and desires as advertisers as a whole. An advertiser . . . is spending a very large sum of money – often many millions of dollars – to increase his sales, to strengthen his distribution and to win public favor. . . . [I]t seems perfectly obvious that advertisers cannot and should not be forced into programs incompatible with their objectives." Stanton further observed that advertisers and their agents should be allowed

participation in the creative process. To that, Serling adamantly remarked, "If a sponsor chooses to utilize the dramatic form as a vehicle of communication, he has to take with it certain responsibilities which are innate in the form he chooses. Drama is not a bastardized thing that exists in a vacuum. This is an aspect of culture that has its roots in many, many past ages. With it come certain ageless standards, certain ancient aspects of quality. [The sponsors] can say all they want about moving goods, but if they want to move goods and do it by calling all the tunes, let them sponsor baseball games or bowling contests or something like that over which they have no control. If a sponsor chooses the play as a kind of piggyback on which he wants to use his commercials, then he has to respect the form he's chosen." But in the case of "Noon On Doomsday" they did not. And they would not because commercial television of that era was not about morally or politically correct expression. It was seen primarily as a sophisticated message conveyance system, dedicated to delivering millions of consumers to advertisers at the lowest cost per thousand. TV sponsors communicate, as writer and social critic Marya Mannes said, not "to elevate taste, to inform, to enlighten, to stimulate, but . . . to move goods. Period."

In sum, Serling's teleplay, his controversial vision of the time, was entangled in what cultural theorists call the "heavy, saturating omnipresence of the way things are." Such is the essence and power of censorship. It's part of the domain of everyday consciousness; an invisible place "controlled by the dominant class, but produced by absolutely everybody." This sense of reality, this consciousness of what is permitted and censored, in very real ways is a place of mind and imagination that gives reference, form, and structure to

the most mundane parts of life. It is a comfortable place that provides each of us the sense that our thoughts and ideas are all independently and freely chosen. But are they? Is it possible that most of us think along the lines *chosen for us* by our massive social institutions – schools, the legal system, churches, political parties, and yes, the mass media? Can these so-called “agencies of power,”

these institutions that manage the consent of society, shape or perpetuate the deepest beliefs of our heart? Serling thought so. With “Noon On Doomsday” he felt it his artistic mission to right wrongs, spark controversy, and awaken a nation to its better self and greater destiny. And for that he paid a painful creative price: he was caught in the “Censorship Zone.”

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“The Godfather of Soul” and the Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

A former Metromedia program manager reminisces about a harrowing experience | **By John Baker**

The Stock Exchange closed, the U. N. flag flew at half staff, the opening of baseball season (scheduled for April 8th), the Stanley Cup hockey playoffs, and the Academy Awards were all postponed. The presidential nomination campaign halted in disarray; all America was in a holding pattern.

This American tragedy was not the aftermath of September 11th. It was 33 years earlier, in 1968. And it struck the same chords of anguish on the American psyche.

I didn't know it happened. No one

called me, the Assistant Program Manager of WNEW Channel 5, the Metromedia station in New York. I found out after pushing buttons on my car radio while driving to the train station in Tarrytown, the Hudson River village from which I commuted. I was new to the job and no one called.

Channel 5's security guard gives me a blank look. I push 5 in an empty elevator. Normally, I would be joined with other want-to-be-on-time people. It is 9:02 a.m. when I enter the secretarial bullpen. All of them were gathered in the rear. Susan points toward to conference

room door. A pudgy hand waves me over. "I'm sorry I didn't call you," Mel Bailey, my boss, says, "Everyone is here now."

The hierarchy of Channel 5 and I stood facing a wall of TV monitors. Channel 5 and the other locals were in black. The networks were telling over and over what happened. Everyone in the room was mumbling and whispering, like at a funeral. I'm glad no one whispered to me. I was with them. I didn't have any idea either how to get out of blasted black.

Outside the conference room, the secretaries were taking turns fielding calls from the switchboard. All viewers wanted to know why Channel 5 was not on the air. Across from the secretaries was a small cubicle, just big enough for an artist table to fit in sideways. George was there.

George Petlowany had come to work at 5:00 a.m. George had heard about the King assassination while drinking in a bar at 4:00 a.m. George had a problem expressing his feelings to his bar companions; so three guys threw him out of the bar and put him upside down in a garbage can. It was at that moment George decided to go to work.

Now George sat barefoot on a stool in front of his drawing board. His hair looked like it had been plugged into an electrical socket. He had a four-day beard. George's Ivy League dress shirt was tieless, and one of his button-down collars was ripped back. It looked like an epaulet. The rest of him, his shirt and

pants, had lost their original color and it was a montage of stains. During the remaining wee hours of the morning, George had designed a piece of art. He barefooted his way up Third Avenue to an all night photo shop. (Channel 5 had no film-processing equipment.) The lone photo clerk wouldn't let him in. George looked like Nick Nolte in *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, but *Down and Out in New York City* was much worse. George's Channel 5 ID and \$10.00 got

him in the door. He had to process his own film. The photo jerk was just learning.

Back at Channel 5, George took his art to master control. "Larry Fraiberg, our General Manager himself, ordered me to kill the cartoons and go to black," Vince, the engineer, told George. "I don't know if being in black is in the union rules. I'm kind of nervous having the responsibility," he explained. "And, I'm due for a coffee break. I gotta pee and my relief

is late." "Look, Vince, you take your break;" George replied. "I'll sit on the board and make sure we stay in black." "Just don't touch anything," Vince shouted over his shoulder leaving George alone in master control.

Being the sneaky creative genius he was, George put his ready-made artwork slide on the air. New York television sets and all of Channel 5's monitors sprang to life with a tasteful line drawing of Martin Luther King, Jr. against a tinted purple background underneath the likeness Helvetica type read, 1929-1968.

I was the first to see it in the confer-



James Brown in 1968

ence room. "Hey, look" I said, pointing to the monitors. "What a great idea! Who's was it?" No one said a word. General Manager Fraiberg thought the artwork was a stroke of genius. He ordered master control to keep it on the air until further notice. I knew of course it had been George. You could almost smell Petlowany's doing. He caught my eye

"If you don't have a gun, go home. When the white man comes, he's going to kill you."

and flashed me a thumbs up O.K. sign as I left the conference room. Mel Bailey spotted him and asked me to do something about George's appearance.

The bullet that killed Martin Luther King, Jr. hit him on the right side of the neck at 6:01 p.m. Central Standard Time as he leaned over the second-floor railing outside his motel room. Before the sun had set in the east on April 4th, riots broke out in at least 25 cities and the District of Columbia. In the next eight days, 46 people died. All but five of the victims were black. 2,600 persons were injured, 2,100 arrested, 53,000 National Guard and Federal troops were called out, and 22,000 additional troops were on ready alert.

The worst outbreak of violence was in Washington, D.C. It started late in the evening on April 4th. Fifty youths from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee led by Stokeley Carmichael marched down 14th Street, urging stores to close as a sign of respect for King. The group shouted, "Close the stores— Martin Luther King is dead!" The group swelled to more than 400. Within an hour, the mob began breaking windows and looting. According to *The New York Times*, Carmichael urged members of the crowd, "If you don't

have a gun, go home. When the white man comes, he's going to kill you. I don't want any black blood on the street."

The next morning, April 5th, Carmichael held a news conference. "When white America killed Dr. King last night, they declared war on black America," he proclaimed. "Black people have to survive and the only way they will survive is by getting a gun."

At 4:02 p.m. that day, President Lyndon Johnson signed a proclamation declaring a state of domestic violence and disorder. He issued an executive order mobilizing regular Army and National Guard troops.

9:06 in the morning the next day, my secretary opens my office door and tells me "somebody calling himself the Godfather of Soul is in the lobby with an entourage and wants to see the man in charge." Fraiberg quickly assembled the heads of programming, news, sales, accounting, engineering, and me to his office. James Brown and his entourage entered Larry's office. James shook hands with Larry. "You the man in charge?" James asked. Larry nodded. Larry was sweating and Larry never sweats. "I want to talk to my people" Brown began. "Martin was a saint and non-violent and now my people are rioting everywhere. It's not right. I want to tell my people to cool it. I can talk to more of them over television. I want you to show me in the riot areas in Detroit, D.C. or other places. We'll put all the stuff in a live show from the Apollo Theatre day after tomorrow." For once, Larry was speechless. He looked to us for guidance; none of us spoke. Brown said, "Your people and mine can work it out." He then turned and his entourage split apart to allow him, the beautiful lady on his arm, and two bodyguards to leave Larry's office. Three of Brown's "people" stayed behind with our huddled group. One,

wearing a \$300.00 suit, began to speak in a posh New England accent. "Mr. Brown and his orchestra don't want compensation. They will perform for mandatory union scale and all of the money goes to a black boy's school in Harlem." In our stoic group, only Len the salesman began to smile. A concert with James Brown? Channel 5 would make a bundle.

"Here's what we want from you," the accented voice continued. "One, you produce the film segments Mr. Brown requested; two, you broadcast Mr. Brown's performance at the Apollo Theatre live in New York and Washington, D.C., inserting the film segments. The following night, you broadcast the James Brown special in primetime over Metro-media's other stations in Kansas City and Los Angeles." He paused to let everything sink in and then continued. "The audience at the Apollo will be a prestigious mix of black and white power people who will pay \$100.00 a seat. Most of the money goes to charity; the rest goes to the Apollo Theatre and the unions. Your station's cost will be nothing except for your own people and equipment." I

**"Oh, I almost forgot:
the James Brown special will
be commercial-free."**

was just listening, not adding up the dollars in my head. Larry, Mel, Len the salesman and Dan, the station's financial wizard, were grinning. Tasteful commercials, of course.

The \$300.00 suit ended with, "I'd like to have your answer by 3:00 this afternoon. He looked at his watch...that gives you four hours...Oh, I almost forgot...the James Brown special will be commercial-free." Our side of the room froze as he passed out his business cards to everyone.

All were silent until the door slammed. "No commercials," Dan the

bean counter whined in disbelief. "We're not PBS. Our remote cost and the film segments will cost thousands, and then multiply that by four of our other stations and we'll have to pre-empt already sold programming in all our markets. You're talking six figures here, Larry." The room was quiet and uncomfortable. All of us were waiting for Larry to speak. He wrote something down on his day-book. He raised his head and looked at us. "We're going to do it, you know."

All were shocked and looked back at Larry. Larry was grinning. "The publicity won't make up for the lost revenue," he said. "But, it's the right thing to do. It's good for the country. Metromedia has never done anything for the country before." He looked at Mel. "I want an outline how we're going to do the production and I want it by 1:00 p.m., likewise, for engineering."

"Dan, I want from you....Dan, where are you?"

Dan had moved to the back of the room not wanting to be singled out. He stepped forward.

"From you, I want a detailed accounting of projected revenue losses by 2:00 p.m. I have to make some calls of course, but I want everything together before I call Mr. Brown's Harvard Business School guy at 2:59:30. Let 'em sweat!"

I was to produce, Art Fisher was to direct, George Petlowany, if I could find him, was to design a set and all the artwork. 54 hours until show time.

Everything was a go. I bogged myself down in detail for the show. At 6:15 p.m., the phone rang. "Mr. Brown would like to meet you tonight at 7:00." "Here?" I asked.

"No, at his office off of Time Square. Mr. Brown would like to be assured that

everything is in place.” The thoughts in my mind changed from *where’s George Petlowany* to *what the hell does James Brown want now?* I watched taxis drive by, sometimes three or four abreast, some occupied – some not. It was a test of human endurance. Old-time New Yorkers bore up better than we newcomers sharing a cab. I finally de-cabbed in front of the Metropole Café on Seventh Avenue across from the seedy building housing James Brown Enterprises. A squawk of horns and drums rolled from the café satisfying those who looked in from the sidewalk, not wanting to pay the cover charge. The Metropole door-men hustled the sidewalk crowd along. “Let’s keep it moving, leave room for the paying customers.”

It was two minutes to 7:00. Sometimes TV people can be late, no matter what the odds. James Brown Enterprises was on the second floor. The directory needed updating... There were no A’s, C’s, M’s or Q’s and the glass was cracked. I climbed up the stairs and knocked on a frosted glass door that could have said *Sam Spade* instead of *James Brown*. A \$300.00 “suit” with no coat greeted me at the door. “Come in. You hungry? We’re just catching up. Mr. Brown’s been delayed, but he’ll be here soon.”

I sat there, looking out at the windows of the dance club above the Metropole. You could see the couples moving and swaying behind the curtain windows. James Brown’s Ivy League staff’s jovial by-play moved to the back of my consciousness. *Where in the hell was George Petlowany?*

The phone rang on the desk behind the dining table. “Oh shit, the shirt said, his mouth full of egg roll. “Mr. Brown’s here...right now, he’s coming up. Oh

shit!”

Only on Broadway have I seen a scene change so quickly. All remnants of food disappeared. I gleaned from the panic in their voices that Mr. Brown didn’t allow food in the office. All four of them adjusted their coats and ties to hang just right. They called each other “Mister.” A moment ago, they were calling each other chicken, nigger, or something else I couldn’t decipher. They all stared at the door like the savior was going to drop by. I got nervous and stood up.

The door opened as if by magic. James Brown entered, a beautiful woman on each arm, followed by his ever-present bodyguards. He grinned and talked jive to everyone but me.

To me he said, “How you doin’?”

“Good” I said.

“Where you from?” James asked.

“Houston, Texas”

“KYOK, that’s the rhythm and blues station in Houston. You ever listen to it?”

“All the time” I dutifully responded.

Brown sat down across from me wanting to know how the “TV thing” was going. I started to explain, but we kept being distracted. James had problems with one of the Ivy League guys who answered in measured tones of perfect snob English. James laughed and said to everyone, I love the way he talks.

“Sit up girl—you’re slumpin’,” he told

“I want to tell my people to cool it. I can talk to more of them over television.”

one of his women. “I can talk to her like that because she’s my sister. Ain’t that right, Mr. Reece?” Mr. Reece nodded, and everyone laughed. Brown got tired of half-listening to my somewhat convoluted description of tomorrow’s plan. Finally, I said, “Please be at LaGuardia Airport at 6:30 tomorrow morning.” James, tired of the whole meeting, stood up and

shook my hand and called me “KYOK.” The last thing he told me was “I’m leaving for Washington tonight. I’ll pick you up tomorrow at the DC Airport. Look for the long white limo.” James turned, his followers closing like the Red Sea. When the door slammed, every one of the \$300.00 suits slumped in relief.

The phone rang and one of Brown’s staff handed it to me. *Who knew I was here?* I thought.

“Hey Baker, this is Mario down at the scene shop. You’re a hard man to find.”

“Stop the car! I can’t ride in here with you white guys—everyone’s watching. What would they think?”

“Hello, Mario. This is a surprise. What’s up?” I asked holding my breath. “George Petlowany came over hours ago and ordered some scenery.”

“What kind of scenery?”

Mario laughed and said, “We both know George is a little—shall we say,—undependable. Most things he wants, I give. But, he wants us to build a set off a design he has yet to draw. He wants the set finished and delivered to the Apollo Theatre by noon day after tomorrow. Depending on George’s design, I’ll have to bring crews in overnight and keep my people on overtime—triple overtime. You know how we work.”

“I’m listening.” I felt tension drain from my body. I was almost smiling. “The dollar figure is going to be out of sight,” Mario continued. “I sort of need an OK from you—Channel 5 has never spent this much money on sets before and you know George.”

Yes, “I know George, Mario. Do whatever George says. Whatever it cost is OK.”

“Gee,” Mario responded, “you all right? I mean, this doesn’t sound like Metromedia talking.”

“Just do it, Mario. Where’s George

now?”

“I don’t know. He came in here looking like he spent the night in a garbage truck. He even had a piece of lettuce in his hair.”

“I know the look. Talk to you tomorrow.”

In the D.C. suburb of Anacostia, every other corner was guarded by a National Guard Jeep carrying three soldiers and a 50-caliber machine gun, its threaded bullet belts reflecting sunlight through the haze of still-smoking buildings. Our

drivers tried to dodge the broken glass on the street; the pieces were like pebbles and our tires crunched along block after block. Res-

idents came out to view our two-limousine parade.

Suddenly James Brown hollered, “Stop the car!” He opened the door and jumped out. “I can’t ride in here with you white guys—everyone’s watching. What would they think? I’ll ride with my people in the other limo.”

Oh, great! Now I had no communication with Brown. I’d been giving him a crash course on what he was going to say during our filming.

Art had found two good locations; both had smoke and military vehicles in the background. James Brown kept blowing his lines. He threw away his prepared notes and we let him ad-lib as he walked; he was a little better, but not good enough. Art and I decided to film him in natural sound walking through the devastation and boarded up homes with a concerned look on his face. We’d write another script that night, and he could read it over the film footage later.

After about three hours, we got plenty of footage of James Brown walking around looking sad. He wanted to go to Detroit. I’d had it—he was starting to put the whole show in jeopardy.

“Look, Mr. Brown,” I said evenly, “We

don't have time to go to Detroit and film. We'll get the same kind of pictures anyway. Let's fly back to New York and shoot from Grant's tomb. That will give us a misty look at the New York skyline. You can walk around on the flagstones meditating. We'll put your words of concern and sympathy in later. It's called making a low budget movie, James." I was tired of calling him "Mr. Brown."

"Hey, don't get so flaked out, KYOK. What you say is okay with me. Let's make movies."

Back in New York, Mario was happy to see me. "George has outdone himself on this one," he was quick to assure me. Everything was in pieces being assembled by an elated group of carpenters on double time. George was sleeping on an office desk with no pillow—just a blotter. "George needed a nap, Mario allowed. He's been up almost 24 hours. I'll wake him if need be."

I slept in my office—the clock said 4:30a.m. Mario called me at 10:00 a.m. After I fell off my couch and thrashed around for my phone, "the set's on the truck" was Mario's wake-up call. "George is riding shotgun. Meet you at the Apollo about 11:30."

George's creation amazed me as the pieces came together. Sections of white glass, four feet wide and 10 feet high, would frame James Brown's band. At first I thought George wanted the band and James Brown to appear as a painting hung on the stage. I had a queasy feeling—this was rock and roll soul, not Mozart or *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Fluorescent light strips lit the white glass from behind. Then George unrolled what looked like Saran Wrap with a three times larger-than-life image of James Brown from the top of his shoulders up. The Saran-Wrapped Brown

held a thin microphone above his tilted-back head, the mike almost touching his lips. George glued the picture on the stage—right panel. It was awesome. I'm sure the original photo had been suggestive, but this version was downright photographic erotica.

Across the stage, on the stage-left panel, George attached a much larger-than-life James Brown doing it with a mike stand. Red graphic "JB's" floated above the stage on a glass panel two feet wide. When the lights were switched on, George's creation was nasty, sweaty, horny and, most important, totally James Brown.

"You did it again, George, I said. "You pulled it off."

George grinned and had a certain naughtiness in his eyes, "Wait 'til the band get here," he said. "To borrow an overused phrase, 'You ain't seen nothin' yet.'"

The audience arrived in force early. Dinner jackets and evening dresses crowded the aisles. The balconies were filling. Backstage, the musicians were blowing or fingering scales. I spotted George Petlowany running around backstage with an engineer, plugging and unplugging cables.

Art Fisher, my director, had been rehearsing camera shots in the darkness. I joined him in the remote truck to coordinate rolling the James Brown walk-arounds in the D.C. and New York into the show. Art smiled. "It's showtime!" he proclaimed and we were off.

The house lights dimmed—the curtain opened to a stage in black—a single violin played the early notes of *A Man's World* as James Brown's voice screamed "*This is a Man's World!*" George Petlowany's milk glass set came to life. The full orchestra joined in and James stood under crossed spotlights in mid-center stage.

*This is a man's world...ahaaa,
This is a man's world.
But it wouldn't be nothing, nothing,
without a woman or a girl.*

George's white panels flashed bright, flickering with the music. The electricity source for the lights had been wired into the amplifier. It was George's "you ain't seen nothin' yet" trick.

It was an awesome scene. The audience was spellbound, mesmerized, staring at James and George Petlowany's erotic offering. As the show continued, the audience's frenzy built. They were clapping, cheering, crying, singing along as they waved and swayed to the music.

George Petlowany burst into the remote truck and told Art Fisher, the director, that he was shooting the wrong show. "The audience is where it's happening." George felt we were missing the emotion of the event.

At intermission, I squeezed my way backstage to James Brown's dressing room. He was stripped to the waist, a masseuse kneading his shoulders. His hairdresser was rolling James's hair up in rollers lined with Kleenex to soak up the sweat. I'd heard he lost 15 pounds every time he performed. He put down a glass of water when he spotted me.

"Hey, KYOK, come on over here. Hey, make room for KYOK," James motioned people to move over to let me through. James Brown looked really funny sitting in a barber's chair surrounded by his court. Wearing his hair-roller crown, he looked like a long-ago African king in a 1920's movie.

"Did you get what I did on tape?" was his first question.

"Yes indeed, James," I replied. "You broke a leg."

"We call it getting' all the white meat," he told me, grinning slyly.

"That, too," I said. The room got a laugh on that one.

"I'll make 'em weep 'til the end," he promised.

*I feel good, I knew that I would.
So good, so good, 'cause I got you.
I feel nice, like sugar and spice.
When I hold you in my arms, I know
that I can do no wrong.
And when I hold you in my arms,
My love don't do me no harm,
And I feel good...*

In the early morning hours and on into daylight, Art Fisher and I edited the James Brown Special for time. There were a lot of pauses, and the intermission time to take out. We inserted James Brown's filmed messages to his people. We cut the two-hour live performance to a great ninety-minute show and made copies for the other Metromedia stations.

The switchboard operator found me in the videotape editing room. It was Mr. Brown himself on the phone. "Hey, KYOK, how you doin'? Can I come down and see what the show really looked like? I don't want to bother you if you're busy, but I'd appreciate..."

"It's okay, James," I interrupted the Godfather of Soul—almost no one ever did that. "You're most welcome. We're almost finished. Come on down."

James Brown didn't arrive with an entourage this time. He came with one of his Harvard Business School types, no one else. He wore an English-cut tan suit, white shirt, and solid light-blue tie. I had never seen James Brown without a sequin. He stared at the TV monitors as we played back the first ten minutes. He didn't say anything. He stared at the screen through the dip to black before our first insertion of James's walking Washington, D.C. The concert resumed, about two minutes later, James

stood up and said, "that's enough. I never like looking at myself." He had a grin on his face and a tear in his eyes.

"That was real good, really good," he exclaimed. "Who put those pictures of me on those white towers, or panels, or whatever they were? Those things were really downtown. Did a white boy do that?"

"Yes, George Petlowany designed the set, and he's white."

"He couldn't be all white." James laughed. "I'd like to meet him."

"Another time, James," I answered. "George is on sort of a personal sabbatical. I'll tell him you loved his stuff."

Art Fisher and I sat in the quiet of the conference room. We had been watching monitors and listening to music for the last eight hours. The silent decay was welcome. Slouching in high-armed, overstuffed chairs, we looked over at

each other and grinned. We'd pulled it off; it was done. "Let's go find what bar George is in," Art suggested.

That was the last time I worked with Art Fisher. He ended up in Hollywood directing *Andy Williams* and the *Sonny and Cher Show*. Art always lived on the edge. One day he fell off the edge and died in a helicopter crash. He was 45 years old. Sometimes I wonder if people like Art, who cram everything into every waking moment, have more fun than normal folks who may live to be a 100.

I saw James Brown 15 years later. He was in a studio preparing to be interviewed by CNN, the fledgling cable news network few people knew about, or could get on their TV sets. I walked out of the shadows behind the cameras and onto the interview set. James spotted me at once. He stood up and said, "Hey, KYOK, how you doin'?" and offered his hand.

Assistant program manager at WNEW Channel 5 New York at the time of this narrative, John Baker also served television time in Houston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Detroit. He was among the originals who started CNN. He now lives in Atlanta and has finished a book about surviving 40 years in television without missing a paycheck.

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Behind the TV Scenes with JFK and Eleanor Roosevelt

Veteran public television producer Henry Morgenthau III reveals some fascinating details about his life and times at WGBH Boston and elsewhere | **By David Marc**

Henry Morgenthau produced some of the earliest successful television documentary and public affairs series, including *The Prospects of Mankind*, an interview program hosted by Eleanor Roosevelt. The following is an excerpt from a three-hour interview conducted at Morgenthau's home in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The interview is part of the Steven H. Scheuer Collection in Television History, which is housed at Syracuse University's Bird Library. It is one of more than 200 taped and transcribed conversations with pioneers of all aspects of American TV production, performance, journalism and administration that have been produced by the Center for the Study of Popular Television, a research facility of the Newhouse School of Public Communications.

DM: *How did you first become involved in radio and TV broadcasting?*

HM: It was after World War II. I was in the service for four years. When I came back, I had been working in an entirely different field. I had been working actually in public housing. Then I started again to work in public housing in New York. At that time there was a lot of talk about FM as radio's second chance. There was the Siepmann book [*Radio's Second Chance*, 1946, by Charles Arthur Siepmann], which I had read. There were also all kinds of veterans preference. I got organized with a friend of mine, Arthur Rosenthal, who later went on to take over Basic Books and then became head of Harvard University Press. We were both young [war] veterans at the time. We started to make an application for an FM station. We went quite far on it. You had to have a site for the an-

tenna. I remember we got permission to have one on top of the Carlyle Hotel. Then, as time went on, it seemed like it was too much to organize and finance. One of the things I remember was that my father, who of course knew everybody—including General Sarnoff—sent me to see General Sarnoff.

DM: *You must tell me about your meeting General Sarnoff.*

HM: I have a memory—it may not be accurate—of walking down endless corridors, sort of like approaching the Sun King at Versailles, and meeting Sarnoff and talking to him briefly. He said that

Henry Morgenthau III (right) with Eleanor Roosevelt and President John F. Kennedy at the White House in March 1961 for a recording of the National Educational Television series, *Prospects of Mankind*.



he thought this was the worst possible thing to do.

DM: *Did he mean for you to be going into FM, or for you to go into radio at all?*

HM: Really, into radio at all. I was talking about the advantages of FM; it was static-free. He said that was like inventing an improved horse carriage just at the time that automobiles were coming in. He said that the thing to get into was television.

DM: *Did he actually mean to imply that he thought radio was going to disappear because of television?*

HM: I can't say that. I do remember that he said, "Get into television!" I'm working on a history of public, noncommercial radio and in my reading I've found that Sarnoff was really tremendously farsighted about television. In fact, I read a talk that he gave. I think it was in 1929 at Harvard Business School.

DM: *That was the year of RCA's first TV patents.*

HM: He was talking about television then with total certainty as though it were just around the corner.

DM: *He had Vladimir Zworykin working for him in his laboratory, and Zworykin had created a vacuum tube at that point. So he knew he had it.*

HM: Yes, he saw that as the coming medium. There were other experiments going on, too, but he was totally certain about that. Anyway, he advised strongly against going into radio. But that wasn't the determining factor. I think it was just more that Arthur Rosenthal and I were prepared to take on at the time. But by then I had been bitten by the bug of broadcasting. So I got a job at WNEW radio, which was probably the most profitable independent radio station in New York, if not anywhere.

DM: *WNEW becomes very important in the television era as the Fox network flagship station.*

HM: At that time, WNEW was owned by a man by the name of Milton Biow. He had the Biow Advertising Agency. One of the accounts he had was the Bulova Watch Company, which they'd had for a long time. I guess it was during the Depression... I got a job in 1947 at WNEW as an assistant to [the late] Dick Pack [editor of *Television Quarterly*, 1971-99].

DM: *Was the station formatted at all, or did it have a full variety of programs as radio stations had before the television era?*

HM: I'll tell you about that. During the Depression, the Biow Agency had bought blocks of time. I don't know if they ever actually had a "Bulova Watch Hour" or whatever. In those days, of course, radio productions were live. They were very elaborate, very expensive.

DM: *...and controlled directly by the advertising agency.*

HM: ...yes, and controlled by the agency. So the agency had bought the time for the watch company. Then they were going to have to pay for a show, which would maybe include a large live orchestra or whatever. They couldn't afford to put on the show. They had all this time that they had contracted for. So I guess it was somebody at the Biow Agency who got the idea of simply putting the time on every hour, calling it "Bulova Watch Time." "It's 10:30 a.m., Bulova Watch Time." Of course, this cost nothing and it was on all the time. It was probably the invention of the spot announcement; or, if it wasn't, it catapulted the Bulova Watch Company, which was a relatively small company that im-

ported Swiss watchworks and put out relatively inexpensive watches, into a major company. So Biow was so impressed with this that he actually bought WNEW and also some other stations. Actually, a man by the name of Arde Bulova came in with him, but later discovered that owning a station would make him vulnerable to political pressure. He had problems with tariffs and so forth. Since manufacturing watches was his thing, he figured, he better get out of the broadcasting. I won't go too far into that, but there was a man by the name of Wigglesworth, right here, who had another watch company, and was a Congressman and he went after Bulova. So Bulova got out. But Biow continued. Then he hired a woman by the name of Bernice Judas, who was a friend of his wife and had, I think, no business experience. But she was the manager of the station. She was terrific! She was tough and rough at times. And if that didn't work, she could burst into tears. She would sit at her desk, I remember, making decisions and having somebody do her nails at the same time. She was an early woman executive. This was not unusual, because she didn't want any other women around, except in secretarial...

DM: *She didn't want any other women working in the office except in support positions? Why do you think that was? Office politics?*

HM: It was a common practice, I think, with any group when they [women] were coming along. They perhaps didn't want the competition or the challenge.

DM: *Or maybe they didn't want it to look like they were "taking over"?*

HM: Right. You would see it with other groups that were coming along, whether it was African-Americans who didn't necessarily want to have other African-

Americans working for them. Jews would do the same thing, although certainly not in broadcasting.

DM: *I interviewed [the late] David Levy for this project and he told me what it was like at Young & Rubicam. He was the second Jew ever hired and he was sort of "assigned" to the first Jew as his mentor to bring him through.*

HM: In radio, particularly in New York and at WNEW, certainly a great majority of the people working there, with all of their changed names, were Jewish. I used to say jokingly that, as far as I was concerned, everybody was Jewish until they proved otherwise. Of course, the élite at WNEW and commercial stations were the sales force. The head of the sales department was a man by the name of Ira Herbert, who was Bernice's boyfriend. They eventually got married and retired to Florida. You asked about the format. I don't know where disc jockeys began, but they had some of the most successful musical disc jockeys. They had a man by the name of Martin Block who had a show called *The Make-Believe Ballroom*. He was Number One. Then they had Rayburn & Finch. Rayburn's real name was Rabessa. The broadcasters would make up names. First of all, they didn't want any kind of foreign-sounding names. But, secondly, they would actually own these names. So if they decided to fire the person, and since you didn't see the person—you knew their voice perhaps—they could fire the person and put another person in with the same name.

DM: *That kind of practice has become very lucrative recently in professional wrestling. They put in a masked man and give him a name, which they own. Then, if he wants too much money, they fire him and get somebody else. But this is the first I've ever heard of this practice, which is*

sort of the granddaddy of this marketing idea.

HM: I don't know whether Mary Margaret McBride was her real name or not. She had a woman's radio program, but not on WNEW.

DM: *Was she on WOR?*

HM: I think possibly, yes. At the local station, they had their own live combo. There were some good musicians. I remember that Teddy Wilson used to come in and play the piano. On some occasions, he came in quite high on whatever. I, as the producer, was very officiously going to do something about that. The musicians who were there just moved in. They were just not going to have this. I certainly backed off and they were certainly right. This was really the end of radio, just as television was beginning to come in, so there was quite an overlap in that period. In fact, during that period, network radio was, to some extent, subsidizing network television.

DM: *Approximately how long did you stay at WNEW?*

HM: A couple of years, I think. I moved from the PR department to the program department. I was an assistant to a very imaginative guy by the name of Ted Cott. He encouraged me to do all kinds of programming, which attracted quite a bit of attention in the press, in *Variety* and so forth.

DM: *What kind of programming?*

HM: For instance, I did a radio documentary history of World War II.

DM: *Was recorded footage around for that? Did you have audiotape to work with? Or did you write a completely new narration?*

HM: There was a certain amount of recorded material then, mostly on these

huge platters. It was tape recorders and wire recorders. They weren't used very much at that time. They were just beginning to be used. It was interesting that at the end of the war, [General Douglas] MacArthur, who was a great showman, had had somebody "produce" the surrender of the Japanese on the battleship *Missouri*. It was done kind of like a show, with a commentator. So it was great theater.

DM: *By this time, had people become conscious that radio was going to document these great events? [Did they begin] planning them around the medium?*

HM: Yes. The surrender on V-J Day, with MacArthur accepting the surrender, and with him as the star of the show, was exceedingly well done. Whereas at the surrender in Europe, with Eisenhower, they actually arranged to have it in the same railroad car where the Armistice had been signed at the end of World War I. Eisenhower, who was a relatively modest man, certainly so as compared to MacArthur, didn't have that showmanship flair. Whoever was in charge for him did. I think maybe you could hear the scratching of the pens, but there was almost nothing to use, very little material to use. So I had to just write that.

DM: *It seems what you're saying is that the idea of a media event preceded television; that in the radio era there were already what they would call "media events" today.*

HM: Yes, I think so. Certainly Roosevelt had discovered the power of radio and mastered it and used it to great advantage.

DM: *Is it true of all the great leaders of World War II—Churchill, Roosevelt, Hitler as well—that they were "radio men"?*

HM: Yes. Of course, my memory goes

back to the beginnings of radio. I was born in 1917. My first memories were of the phonograph. We called it the Victrola. I don't know where that name came from. I was curious about that.

DM: *I have been told that it has to do with the Victor Company. Their brand name for their phonograph was Victrola. As Kleenex became a synonym for tissue, RCA Victor's brand name was Victrola.*

HM: I was wondering whether that was something that had to do with victory of World War I, or maybe it went back to Queen Victoria? Perhaps "Victor" came from Queen Victoria? Maybe it was something at the Crystal Palace at the turn of the century? Anyway, we had a machine at home with a hand crank and the old records. The first record I can remember that we had, had been done during the time of patriotism in this country in World War I. It was Enrico Caruso singing "Over There," with a strong Italian accent. Then I can remember the first radios coming in. People were probably more fascinated initially just about the fact that you could get something out of the air. What was on didn't seem to make too much difference.

DM: *Did it seem to hearken some new era? Was there a sense that it was more than a toy? The world was going to change because of this?*

HM: I was a child and it was something new in the house. Just to operate it took some skill. There was a multiplicity of dials for tuning it. Very poor, static-filled reception. My parents were very closely associated with the Roosevelts from the beginning. We had this farm up in Dutchess County, New York, and we had the radio there. Roosevelt actually began using radio to give informal talks and reports when he was Governor [of New York] in 1928. So this must have been probably in that period, sometime between 1928 and 1932, when he ran for

President. He would give these informal talks. Also, just listening to the radio was kind of an event. If you had a radio in the house, the man of the house would probably tune it in and the whole family would listen to it.

DM: *Did you look at the radio as you sat around it?*

HM: Oh, yes. The idea of an informal, intimate talk was something that radio was particularly adept at. It was quite a different style from the oratorical flamboyance that was still popular in that period [in live public speaking]. Although I can't say that I actually remember it, I've read now that, interestingly, Coolidge's style came across very well on radio.

DM: *I always think of him as this cold fish.*

HM: He was very laconic and not flamboyant at all. As a result, the formal oratory which was used in that day didn't come across well on radio, but Coolidge's style did. He started using it early in his presidency. I guess he read his first message to Congress on radio.

DM: *Was he most likely the first to do that?*

HM: One of the first important public events that was covered by radio was the Harding election in 1920.

DM: *Lee De Forest, I believe, broadcast from his own home with bits and pieces of election news.*

HM: That news was even carried overseas. Whether Harding's voice was on or not, I can't remember.

DM: *How did they manage to get a signal to Europe? Through the Atlantic cable?*

HM: I guess so. They may have just telegraphed. They may have sent it over by code, but it was reported directly.

Probably the most effective group that's been organized and one of the reasons that children's programming today is something for which there is a general sense of public responsibility, is because of what Peggy Charren did, pretty much single-handedly.

DM: *There was already regular wireless service between Newfoundland and England at that time, so that would make sense.*

HM: The first Marconi station was right out here on Cape Cod. I can remember when Harding died. It was August of 1923. I was with my family on vacation in Rhode Island at a place called Wicker Park. We had a cottage that was connected with a hotel. They sent around word that Harding had died and there was going to be a little memorial. This inn was a Quaker operation. In those days, Jews, if they didn't go to strictly Jewish resorts, one of the few non-Jewish resort areas they could go to were those that were operated by Quakers. This place is actually still in existence, still operated by the same family. Anyway, word was sent around that Harding had died and there was going to be a service and that everybody was invited to come. I remember asking my mother if she and my father weren't going to go over. She said no. I said, why not? "President Harding really wasn't a very nice person." But Roosevelt began using radio in this kind of informal way. He also had the flair for great oratory, but he became a master of radio.

DM: *I wonder if this analogy makes sense to you. A number of actors have talked about this. The difference between public oratory and radio is similar to the difference between acting in the theater and acting on film. You don't need to project so much, so you use other kinds of subtleties, because you have the microphone.*

HM: I think so, yes. Oratory—and singing, too. I can remember some of the early Roosevelt speeches.

DM: *Roosevelt, of course, is known for radio. Were there others around at that time who also made pioneering use of radio in politics?*

HM: On election night, I believe, there was a big event at Madison Square Garden. Then there would be wind-up speeches. They would have a woman speaker. I remember, on one occasion, for the Democratic Party it was Fanny Hurst, with whom I later became a very good friend.

DM: *Was she famous at this time?*

HM: Yes, she was a very popular novelist. There was also Dorothy Thompson, the columnist, who at the end of her life became wildly reactionary. She had been married at one point to a great novelist, Sinclair Lewis... Anyway, back to WNEW. I worked at WNEW. Indeed, Sarnoff's prediction that television was the thing to be in became apparent, even to me. Actually, through Dick Pack's good offices, I got a job at CBS television.

DM: *You were an educated man. You had gone to Princeton. Your family had a tradition of public service. Did you have any idealism about broadcasting, that somehow it was a way to improve society?*

HM: I did, yes, having read *Radio's Second Chance*, which was a very idealistic book. He was talking about FM, but he was also talking about the opportunities, and the missed opportunities, for radio

in this country. Charles Siepmann, an Englishman, was the author. He was very careful to say he was not suggesting a U.S. BBC, but that there were a lot of things that could be done. He was particularly interested in getting listeners organized.

DM: *Sort of like what Peggy Charren did with children's television—a grassroots movement?*

HM: Yes, exactly. Probably the most effective group that's been organized and one of the reasons that children's programming today is something for which there is a general sense of public responsibility, is because of what Peggy Charren did, pretty much single-handedly. She was a housewife right here in Newton, with a husband who was a reasonably successful building contractor. She had the time and the energy and the talent and did this. Yes, she did. As I had these various jobs in commercial broadcasting, I realized that there was something else that could be done. That eventually led me to public broadcasting. I had an underlying interest in the public-service opportunities of broadcasting

DM: *In the age of cable, with Bravo and A&E and the Discovery Channel and The Learning Channel and so forth, what justification would you offer (if you would offer one) for the continuation of PBS?*

HM: It's been public television's job, and I think continues to be, to find new areas that are important to audiences that haven't really been fully developed. I'm sure there will be new things coming along. Right now, for instance, in the field of serious music, there is almost nothing being done on commercial tele-

vision or cable, as far as I know. I think there will continue to be things that are important, that are a little ahead of the cutting edge, that need to be done. For instance, in documentary, there is nothing being done of cable that compares to the quality of documentaries that PBS is now doing. I don't watch *Nature*. That's not a particular interest of mine. But certainly things like *The American Experience* and the Ken Burns shows.

From later in the interview:

DM: *Was Mrs. Roosevelt a good interviewer?*

HM: She was a good interviewer. She wasn't really a very good M.C. She was at her best when she was talking herself, when she could express her own views. She was a great personality. Also a great attraction. In those days, when NET was looked down on and people were not scrambling to get on, they would come on because she invited them. We had Jack Kennedy on, each of the three years that the program was on. She didn't want him on. I wanted him on.

DM: *Was she no longer involved in Democratic Party politics?*

HM: She certainly was. She was still for Adlai Stevenson. The first year Kennedy came on, he was a Senator. The second two years, he was a President. In those days Presidents didn't do talk shows! The good politician that she was, in addition to being a great humanitarian, she realized there were things that she was interested in having accomplished and that she needed White House entrée to accomplish. So she made her peace with Kennedy, but she was not an enthusiast. When he became President she

JFK could get on television all he wanted. Mrs. Roosevelt was a challenge to him. He liked a challenge.

knew better than anybody that thousands of letters a day come into the White House and that there were no computers that would pick out a letter from Eleanor Roosevelt from a letter from Eleanor Smith. She never heard from Kennedy and she was kind of annoyed. I talked to Pierre Salinger at the White House and said: "Mrs. Roosevelt invited the President to come on [her television program] and do an introductory interview but she never heard from him." So Salinger said, "Oh? I think the President would be very interested. Let me look into this." Evelyn Lincoln, the President's personal secretary, called to say "The President would

like to do this with Mrs. Roosevelt." I said, "Oh, that's wonderful! When would it be convenient for the President to do it?" Without a pause she said, "When would it be convenient for Mrs. Roosevelt?"

DM: *Was he being deferential to the Grand Lady of the Party, or was he really anxious to get on television as much as possible?*

HM: He could get on television all he wanted. I think it was that Mrs. Roosevelt was a challenge to him. He liked a challenge. He respected her, but to win her favor was a challenge to him. He wanted to meet that challenge.

David Marc is the author of four books and more than 100 articles on the history and criticism of American television. He has taught at Syracuse University's Newhouse School and USC's Annenberg School. With Robert J. Thompson he is collaborating on *The Entertainment-Industrial Complex: How America Came to Television*, to be published by Blackwell Press.

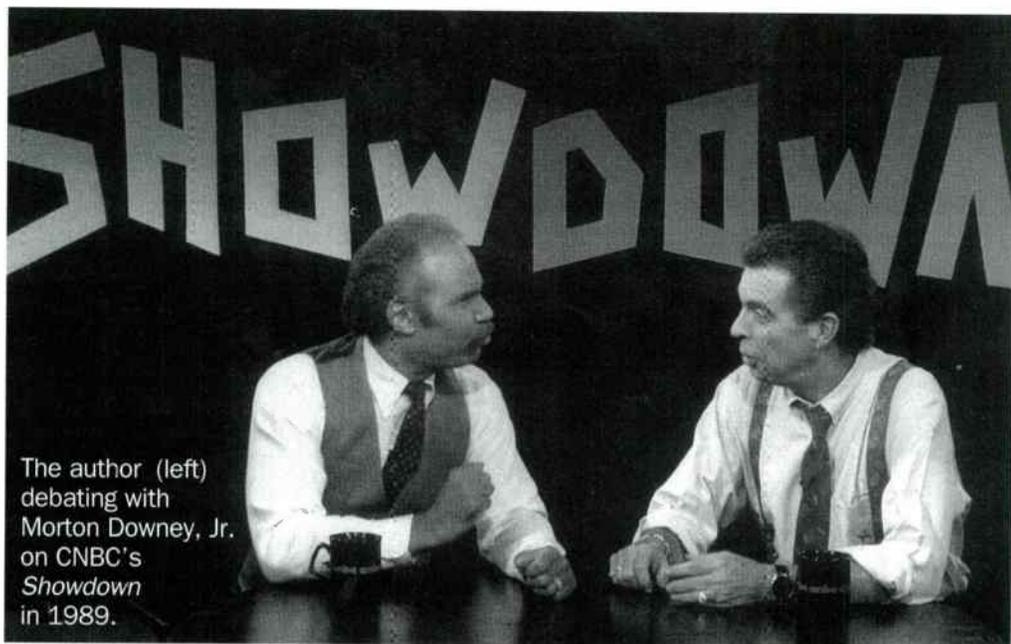
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Morton Downey, Jr. Really was a Gentleman

The late loud-mouth's persona belied his true character, his black TV co-host recalls. | **By Richard G. Carter**



The author (left) debating with Morton Downey, Jr. on CNBC's *Showdown* in 1989.

A little over a year ago, on March 12, 2001, my pal, Morton Downey, Jr., passed away. His demise was due to the lung cancer he'd been battling for a number of years. The man who originated biting, in-your-face battles on the tube between disparate personalities, lost the big battle. But it wasn't the only battle that mattered to Morton, or to me, during our up-and-down professional and personal relationship.

News of the death, at age 68, of my former TV talk-show foe, ally and friend hit me between the eyes like one of his patented loud-mouth lines. It was as if Morton himself had been forced to "zip it," as he was fond of screaming at various and sundry guests — and occasionally at me — as we faced off across the table in front of a live audience while taping CNBC's *Showdown* in 1989-90.

The sad tidings about Morton — unlike others I never called him "Mort" — also brought back memories of seeing him chain-smoke while I worked in 1987-89 as a frequent guest on his nightly syndicated show on superstation WOR-TV (to become WWOR), and later on *Showdown*. I knew, that he knew, full well, what it was doing to him and how he'd ultimately end up.

My concern for Morton began to grow in November 1998, during one of his liberating anti-smoking interviews on CNN's *Larry King Live*. Although I was delighted to see King giving him the accolades he deserved, his appearance shocked me. Having made a miraculous recovery following surgery two years earlier, he still was obviously very sick. He looked wan and gaunt and, uncharacteristically, hung his head after speaking.

So when Downey died in Los Angeles, where he had lived in recent years — acting in small parts in movies and plan-

ning a hoped-for, big-time TV talk show comeback — I was saddened, but not really surprised. As a matter of fact, before his operation in the summer of 1996 and fearing the worst, I'd paid him tribute in my "Critic-at-Large" commentary on Milwaukee's CBS affiliate WDJT-TV (Channel 58). I'd said, in part:

"...In speaking with Morton the other day, he told me he'll be undergoing surgery in Los Angeles on July 12 — preceded by two weeks of no smoking. Despite the prospect of losing part of a lung, he said, he has high hopes of getting back to doing movies, TV infomercials and starring in a show he's written called *The Investigator*. Morton also reminded me that our highly volatile *Showdown* gig was the first black-host/white-host talk show ever on national TV... So hang in there, Morton. Lots of people are pulling for you."

To illustrate how popular Morton Downey, Jr. was, on June 17, 1994, a *USA Today* write-in "star gauging" poll of 2,000 readers picked him as a celebrity they wanted to see more of. Morton was fourth (behind Michael Bolton, Paul McCartney and Barry Manilow) and ahead of 500 others — as well as ahead of 200 names that people were sick of, such as Madonna and Michael Jackson.

Of course, these results were anticipated by me and by Brooklyn's Len Schwende, president of the 3-million-strong national Downey support organization Loudmouth America, and editor of its Downey fanzine. It was Schwende who informed me of Morton's death, in a tearful phone call, just past midnight on March 13, 2001.

"He befriended the working people," explained Schwende, whom I've known since my *New York Daily News* days (1987-91). There's no doubt in his mind that Downey was television's premier talk personality. He arrived at this conclusion, he said, when discovering the

fervor with which Morton stood up for the downtrodden and his genuine, easy manner with fans.

The soft-spoken Schwende, retired from the Manhattan office of the Directors' Guild of America in New York, spent 10 years making TV viewers, networks and advertisers aware of the loyalty of Downey's nationwide supporters, whom Schwende called "the beast." He did this, along with a small staff, by writing, editing and distributing a self-styled monthly publication *Loudmouth*. Its

His shtick was out-shouting guests. His arch-conservative, race-baiting reputation preceded him.

purpose was clear: To sing Downey's praises, help to get him back on national TV and keep him there.

Becoming a regular part of the live Downey audience at WWOR's Secaucus, New Jersey studios in 1987, Schwende launched the fanzine in honor of his outspoken hero. His initial effort was a seven-page photocopied job with a local distribution to a few hundred fellow fans. Until Downey's death, many issues — with information on Morton's career, snippets about his personal activities and national blood drives and pointed comments on the state of the TV talk show universe — ran over 100 pages and went coast-to-coast.

"We are convinced the people want news about Downey and we try to make it our business to give it to them," said Schwende, who often journeyed to Los Angeles to provide moral support to Morton, and who was with him when his star was placed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1993.

I was initially skeptical about this son of the famed Irish tenor Morton Downey Sr., because Morton, Jr.'s shtick

was out-shouting guests. His arch-conservative, race-baiting reputation preceded him. But when my visceral *Daily News* Op-Ed Page columns kept getting me invited on his original show, my opinion changed — which really surprised me. Still, I got a lot of flack from black readers — and a couple of well-known politicians — who felt I was wrong to appear so often on his show.

However, when I got to know Downey, I found that he was a good guy, a sincere guy and a regular guy, without a prejudiced bone in his body. We became fast friends and he and I and my wife, Janice, then an assistant to the publisher at the *Daily News*, had dinner together after a number of shows.

Downey's contributions to live-action, up-close-and-personal talk television ought to be appreciated, not forgotten or shunted aside. He was one of the first and, perhaps, the very best of the genre. He preceded Oprah, Geraldo, Jerry Springer and Sally Jessy Raphael, and upped the ante by moving around the stage and inviting audience members to the microphone to take their best shots, despite calling many of them "pablumpukers."

Indeed, WWOR's Downey gave equal time to spokespersons for both sides of important issues. The fiery hollercast he called "energy TV" dealt with far more serious subjects in a more serious manner than the copycats who followed. Downey's shows took on the national economy, street crime, vigilantism, illegal drugs, gambling, white supremacists, black nationalists, the racially explosive Central Park jogger rape, notorious New York subway vigilante Bernhard Goetz, Panama's Manuel Noriega and many, many more.

Of course, Morton came in for his share of criticism — much of it misguided, personal and below the belt. There was the "who-is-this-nut" finger-point-

ing as his show super-stationed its way around the country, creating a sensation in both large and small markets. Many of the reviews were scathing and the inevitable “I told-you-so” surfaced when, despite high ratings, Morton was dumped in the wake of the infamous skinhead “attack” on him — an ill-advised publicity stunt — at the San Francisco airport in mid-1989.

Seeking a comeback, but aware he had become *persona non grata* without a novel approach, he asked me, in November 1989, to co-host *Showdown* on CNBC — NBC’s brand-new cable outlet — in national prime time for a half-hour, five nights a week. Typically, his call to me came about 3 a.m. from Minneapolis, where he was appearing at a night club. He said he always liked the way I stood up to him on his original show and touted the black-white thing as a TV breakthrough and a major positive in race relations.

I recognized this as a great opportunity to get into TV in a high-profile way, which is one of the main reasons I’d come to New York from the Midwest in the first place. I had a fine public forum as a *Daily News* columnist and editorial writer, but this could be special and much more far-reaching and, thus, was irresistible. So I accepted his offer.

Once we agreed on terms, billing and my autonomy, Morton arranged for a limo to pick me up at my newspaper’s E. 42nd St. offices — the “star treatment,” he called it — for twice-weekly, four-show tapings at CNBC’s Fort Lee, New Jersey studios. He also encouraged me to occasionally bring Janice along.

We had a highly charged six-month run, with informed barbs flying fast and furious. It was similar to CNN’s long-running *Crossfire* — but racially mixed and far more volatile and confrontational. Morton was the cunning conservative and I was the lippy liberal.

Our many guests ran the spectrum of white, black, conservative and liberal. They included Goetz lawyer Barry Slotnick; controversial artist Mark Kostabi; Reed Irvine, of Accuracy in Media; Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz; New York TV anchor Roger Grimsby; Attorney Colin Moore, who defended one of the teenagers accused in the Central Park jogger rape; Boston sportswriter Eddie Andelman; former light-heavyweight boxing champion Jose Torres; New York TV movie critic Pia Lindstrom (daughter of legendary screen star Ingrid Bergman); the Rev. Al Sharpton; the Congress of Racial Equality’s Roy Innis; Bill Tatum, editor-publisher of the *New York Amsterdam News* and PBS-TV’s Tony Brown of *Tony Brown’s Journal*.

Perhaps our best, most dramatic moments came when we journeyed to Boston in January 1990, to do *Showdown* live with an interracial panel of local guests — including Dershowitz and TV talker Jerry Williams — to report on a highly publicized, racially polarizing murder case, later to become a TV movie. This is the one in which the white Charles Stuart fatally shot his

His television persona belied the real-life gentleman and sensitive, concerned human being.

pregnant wife, Carol, and wounded himself in the stomach in their car in a black neighborhood. He then called police on his car phone and said a black man did the deed.

As a result, Boston cops infuriated the city’s black residents by terrorizing blacks in their homes and on the street in Mission Hill and Roxbury. They eventually arrested the black Willie Bennett as their prime suspect. After positively identifying him, Stuart eventually com-

mitted suicide by jumping off a bridge and the whole sordid story came out.

As long as we lasted, *Showdown* was the fledgling CNBC's highest rated program — easily topping our lead-in, the chummy talker Dick Cavett, and the irascible John McLaughlin's interview show. After our collaboration ended — following a falling-out over unresolved financial issues and substitute co-hosts — Morton continued the show with several other people. But *Showdown* never was the same without our give-and-take and the sparks we generated, and it folded its tent a short time later.

I continued with the *Daily News* and Downey went on to do syndicated radio shows from Washington, D.C., Cleveland and Dallas, and a standup TV talk show from Palm Springs, California. He and I remained fast friends and he was a guest in 1995 on WNOV radio's *The Carter-McGee Report* — my Milwaukee morning drive-time talk show. In another TV gig, Morton hosted a juicy, short-lived talk-fest in Chicago, on which I ap-

peared in March 1996. Our subject was black liberals vs. black conservatives, and the jibes were plentiful, as usual. By then he was married to his charming and beautiful Lorrie, and I introduced them to my new wife, Susan. We all had a fine time together.

Morton and I often spoke by phone since parting company as take-no-prisoners TV antagonists, including just prior to his 1996 surgery to remove a lung, and I continued to be struck by his compassion. For example, in 1999, when I was seriously ill, Morton was quick to call, commiserate and cheer me up. Indeed, his television persona belied the real-life gentleman and sensitive, concerned human being.

So take it from one who knows: Morton Downey Jr. was for real. He was never phony. He was a down-to-earth, approachable celebrity and a nice man. I feel privileged to have known him and worked with him. I loved the guy, and miss him to this day.

Richard G. Carter, a New York freelance writer, is a former columnist and editorial writer with the *New York Daily News*. He has appeared on *Larry King Live* and *The Phil Donahue Show* and co-hosted *Showdown* on CNBC with Morton Downey Jr. He also served as Vice President-Public Affairs with Group W Cable. He is a graduate of Marquette University and received the 1986 By-Line Award from its College of Journalism for distinguished achievement.

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Shaming Children on Television

An expert reveals the effect of public humiliation on the susceptible young | **By Thomas J. Cottle**

One child is screaming, another has her head down, another weeps, another appears utterly bewildered and unable to speak, another stands up and with rage shakes his fist at the crowd. We see them every week, it seems, on day time television programs. These are children put on display, brought to these programs by their parents, no less, who announce to the world how horrible, impossible, difficult, mean, unruly, unacceptable and shameful are their children.

The topics of such programs as Sally Jessy Raphael's and Jerry Springer's carry titles like, "My child dresses like a hooker," "My child's flunking out of school," "My child needs boot camp," "My child's too sexual," "My child's a criminal." Yet whatever the topic, there on the screen is

a child, yelling, fighting, looking sullen, crying, or conversely, revealing a seemingly inappropriate stoicism. There is a child, battling and yelling, raging or implacable, or shrinking away from her parent, burying herself in her chair in a futile effort to vanish from sight, and totally unable to find the words to describe the unspeakable horrors of her existence, her mental representations of herself and of the parent who sits next to her. And all of these children reveal faces of exquisite pain.

Because they are staged in the most public arena of all, television, these programs cannot but add to the child's already unbearable level of shame. If his parent isn't proclaiming him evil, then we witness a studio audience actually booing the child, hooting at him, and all, apparently, for the sake of entertain-

ing us. For in the eyes of too many people, producers, hosts, advertisers and audiences alike, humiliating children makes for delicious television. Television ratings indicate that programs of this sort yield their largest audiences. Raphael explained this to Larry King—wrongly, I believe—by noting that American families, for good reason, fear their adolescents. But a university colleague may have the last word when she likens this sort of spectacle to the gladiators of ancient Rome.

It is in fact the public setting that renders shame so powerful in the first place. Shame does not derive directly from personal ruminations about actions that one fears to take, or impulses that seem likely to catapult one into dangerous if not immoral behavior. Rather, it is the personal humiliation caused and wit-

Studies indicate that as horrendous as child battering is, it becomes even more devastating when the child's battering is witnessed by siblings or friends. Convicted murderers, hunting for the reasons behind their rage and absence of morality, tell not merely of their own physical abuse, but the public circumstances surrounding it. Need one even mention the scarlet letter worn by the women of Salem? It is the fact that authority has publicly deemed us unworthy, inferior, bad that continues to eat away at us well into adulthood, and perhaps forever.

Numerous childhood and adolescent disorders, some of them represented but not explicitly defined on these daytime television programs, contain significant elements of shame. Post-trauma cases are obvious examples; the raped girl is

As horrendous as child battering is, it becomes even more devastating when the child's battering is witnessed by siblings or friends.

nessed by others that destroys the shamed one. At the core, perhaps, of psychological trauma, lies the very same sense of shame one witnesses in these children on television. It is the feeling that because of the wounding, abuse, rape, battering, public humiliation, one is now forever defective, evil perhaps, and above all bad.

Ironically, humiliation of this sort often creates a reluctance to show one's face. The punished child hides under his bed ordering people not to look at him. Certain cultures demand that those designated shameful wear veils, or be permanently sequestered, literally kept out of sight. Shaming a child, what some continue to find an acceptable form of discipline, a parent announces: "I don't want to see your face until you can behave!"

told never to speak of the incident as it would bring shame to her family. There is as well the degree of shame felt by the child diagnosed as defiant, anxious, depressed. Children with tic and obsessive-compulsive disorders inevitably feel shame, just as they experience the world observing and wondering about them. So too, do children with learning disabilities who imagine they appear in classes, and in their minds, to be stupid, even brain dead.

Shame lives in the child with gender identity struggles and any variety of eating disorder and obesity. And shame constantly is battled in the families and in the hearts of those living with physical disabilities who everyday receive stares of confusion or even disgust. "What are you looking at?" their protective siblings scream out in the malls and parking lots;

always there is that public aspect to the emotion. We learn that whether or not people are born good or evil, we have been adjudged to be shameful, which means that we have done bad, and that we are bad.

Shame demands that one emotion substitute for another. The flamboyant narcissist begs for attention, or air time, at the same moment concealing shameful memories that must permanently remain invisible. Children often strike out, almost preemptively, educator Daniel Frank observes, to ward off personal assault. Indeed, the very meaning of shame involves concealing, masking, substituting emotions, hiding to the point that one's ultimate solution to private anguish and public humiliation and failure may be suicide, or as we have seen in certain high schools, mass homicide.

Anger, the psychiatrist Allan Young wrote, whether it be directed inward or outward, is pain remembered. And was it not the poet Rainer Maria Rilke who

of outing, and hence, it may be motivated by a desire to not take responsibility for you. Ultimately it is an attempt to shame you. No one genuinely sees the other person through gossip. For gossip and outing necessarily preclude affirmation.

It is clear that all people, not only the young who appear on television with their parents, require affirmation. They do not, however, require acts of shame, a psychological state Erik Erikson designated as rage turned toward the self. And is not rage at oneself the seemingly natural response to the rage others exhibit toward oneself? Of course I am going to rage, on television and at home in my room, if others announce that they detest the sight of me.

When, moreover, I am regularly being told how dreadfully I behave, and hence, how loathsome I am, then it is only a matter of time before I will reveal to the world the angry, repudiating, nihilistic behavior certain children are being

What makes these public humiliation rituals obscene is that they are meant to communicate to the child that he or she does not deserve to live.

suggested that murder is a form of wandering mourning.

The media, I believe, often blur the distinction between inner lives and private lives. To obtain through interviews what is essentially gossip is often advanced as a glance at the inner world, but it rarely is. Gossip is but a thin slice of other people, but it has nothing to do with who genuinely they are. It is a form of parasitic existence; one hardly need mention that my digging up gossip about you never constitutes a genuine affirmation of you, a genuine ratification of your being. In fact, it is meant to reveal precisely that part of your story which you wish not to reveal. It is a form

chastised for on television. Only naturally will these children be left feeling there is no place for them in the world. Indeed, in viewing these programs, one senses already that they have been abandoned, stranded; one can only assume that when the program is over they will return to an unfulfilled life lived in solitude. In a sense, these publicly shamed children are homeless. One wonders whether one of them might someday become the shooter in the high school, or the batterer in the home.

Let us take the notion of affirmation one step further. When affirmation comes to be internalized, children begin to believe in the reality of possibility.

There is no telling what they may become; always there is hope for them. On the other hand, take affirmations out of their lives, which is what appears to be happening on many of these programs, and suddenly these children are left with no prospects, no future, no foundation for hope.

They have memory, of course, of having been abandoned, if not humiliated on television by their own parents no less, just as they have a capacity to anticipate, or at least wish for some sort of reconciliation with their parents. But again, without being affirmed by their parents, or someone, all they can do is conjure a future that resembles or reenacts the past in the manner that Freud called a repetition compulsion.

On closer examination of these young people, however, it may not be a compulsion that we detect as much as it the sole piece of behavior the young person finds in his or her personal repertoire. Affirm the child and, as they say, hope springs eternal; the child has made a life of grace, a life of good will and gratefulness. Shame the child, which in a sense is the essential act of dis-affirmation that we are viewing on these programs, and the child lives a life of imposed dis-grace. Notice here that the audience is being taught to think of the child as having acted disgracefully, but what is actually happening is the child is being taught that he or she is a public disgrace to all of us. In other words, the child is being instructed that he or she is utterly undeserving of any form of affirmation, which in turn means that the child is undeserving merely of being. Cutting to the chase, what makes these public humiliation rituals obscene is that they are meant to communicate to the child that he or she does not deserve to live.

Ironically for those of us fascinated with both the content and power of television programs, one of the critical signs

that one has been disgraced, humiliated, or shamed is the inability to reveal one's eyes to another. It is the refusal to return the look, the renunciation of the gaze. Without feeling that one is affirmed, moreover, there can be nothing resembling genuine recognition, the very recognition that commences when parents lean down to look at their new baby in the crib. "I see you," the parent sings, and magically, the baby seems to respond; the baby recognizes this face and this voice. Both people are gazing at one another, both people are affirming one another. Even more profoundly, in these earliest moments, the baby is experiencing the groundwork that someday will develop as a capacity for the child to recognize himself or herself.

But now the child is being humiliated, shamed, and what we are observing is a person failing to recognize not merely the authority of the parent, an act that inevitably brings boos from the audience, but a person unable to recognize and affirm itself. There can be no self-regard here on the part of the child because the child can neither regard itself nor reflect upon itself. "Don't look at me!" the shamed child cries out, if in fact we have not already symbolically cloaked him in a veil. In return, we, the shamers, and frankly, that includes all of us witnessing these humiliation rituals, want to blurt out: "Leave the room at once! We can't stand the sight of you! How dare you show your face to us!"

What the humiliation ritual reveals to us is precisely what is captured in one of the most popular words of the decade: This is what the child means when he says he has been "dissed." "Dissing" the self is shaming the self; it is failing to affirm the self. All support for the shamed child seated apart from everyone on the television set has been removed. The child is on his or her own, utterly unsupported. As the whole world watches, the

child only naturally must feel the desire to disappear. Under these sorts of circumstances who wouldn't want to run away, which incidentally, is yet another complaint of the angry parent who has brought his or her detestable child to be publicly viewed. When in the future will

hope to see some form of domestic violence ensue? Are we not titillated by the prospect of witnessing acts of violence?

We once imagined that children, along with animals and the mentally ill, were incapable of killing themselves. We now know this not to be the case. If only in-

A recent investigation reveals that family connectedness seems to be a protection against suicide in adolescents, the very connectedness we rarely see on the television programs in question.

this child's shame, this child's rage turned inward lead to some form of destructive act? And will this act be directed at self or at others?

In one sense, television programs in which children are publicly shamed only perpetuate traditional societies' treatment of those they designate to be undesirable, intolerable. In the past, some of these persons, the lepers and pariahs, for example, were deemed unsuitable for public viewing. Now, however, we, the television audience, demand to see them all, providing, of course, we have the opportunity to repudiate or shame them. The spectacle of the ritual is simply too enticing.

Less appealing, apparently, are the television investigations with these very same children in which we learn about the self-perceptions and deepest sentiments of these disenfranchised ones, these presumably unwelcome strangers? Who of us is willing to linger a while and consider the effect on a child who feels he or she is ugly, impure, dishonest, unacceptable, as adjudged by his or her own parent? It just seems more comfortable, and of course more entertaining, to respond only to the symptoms, the dramatic outbursts, the expressions of rage in which hatred of the other, and self, approach unbearable levels. And might some of us in these moments actually

tuitively, shamed children understand the "value" and "purpose" of self-destruction; too many of them act accordingly. Suicide is not only the hostile message sent to those meant to be one's life-long affirming figures. Suicide may also be the ultimate act in which the child is obliged to engage as a response to having been shamed and renounced. Not surprisingly, a recent investigation reveals that family connectedness seems to be a protection against suicide in adolescents, the very connectedness we rarely see on the television programs in question.

If affirmation represents a life force for the child, then shame represents a death force. Shaming, the antithesis of affirming, necessarily destroys people; it is an act of soul murder. The whole point of shame is to reject or annihilate every last piece of the other person. Shaming carries the message that my intention is to make you disappear, and have you die. In response, the shamed one, Erikson wrote, "would like to force the world not to look at him, not to notice his exposure." The last place, presumably, the shamed child would wish to appear is on television. Shaming asks that people redefine and reconfigure themselves. Will you promise to be good now?" television hosts along with their audiences inquire of the weeping child.

There is, I believe, a moral obligation born in our relationships with our children to take responsibility for them and thereby create the genuinely just relationship. The good person, the moral person, always has his or her eyes on us; he or she is looking out for us, and doing everything possible to affirm us. One of Superman's most colossal gifts was his vision, a (super-) vision that allowed him to discern evil wherever it erupted, and then take responsibility for those of us innocents possessing nowhere near his skills or strength. He remains the ultimate earthly caretaker, the representative of Olympus, Krypton, Heaven. But we can all be Superman and Superwoman if we live according to the words of St. Thomas: "Harm should not be given to another."

Televised explorations of the world of children and families experiencing shame seem a perfectly legitimate enter-

prise. But there are proper ways to speak with children, proper ways to discover the shameful secrets they harbor, some of them, significantly, meant to preserve their families, which don't transform the children into circus animals, yet another species exploited for the purpose of entertainment. In a country that prides itself with its freedom of speech, knowledgeable, sensitive and above all caring adults, even with gobs of money on the line, must at times censor themselves.

An old fashioned part of me continues to believe that a country can only consider itself great when its most powerful technologies and people work in behalf of imperiled populations. Here is but another place for America to intervene and safeguard children, and, not so incidentally, their burdened parents too, from an entertainment-driven culture, an often exploitative economy, and men and women who profess to care.

Thomas J. Cottle is Professor of Education at Boston University. His recent books include *Mind Fields: Adolescent Consciousness in a Culture of Distraction*; *Hardest Times: The Trauma of Long Term Unemployment*; and *At Peril: The Ecology of Injustice*.

HAWAII FIVE-O A Case Study in Haole-Wood Agitprop

One critic claims that there was a symbiotic relationship between this popular TV series and the military. | By Ed Rampell

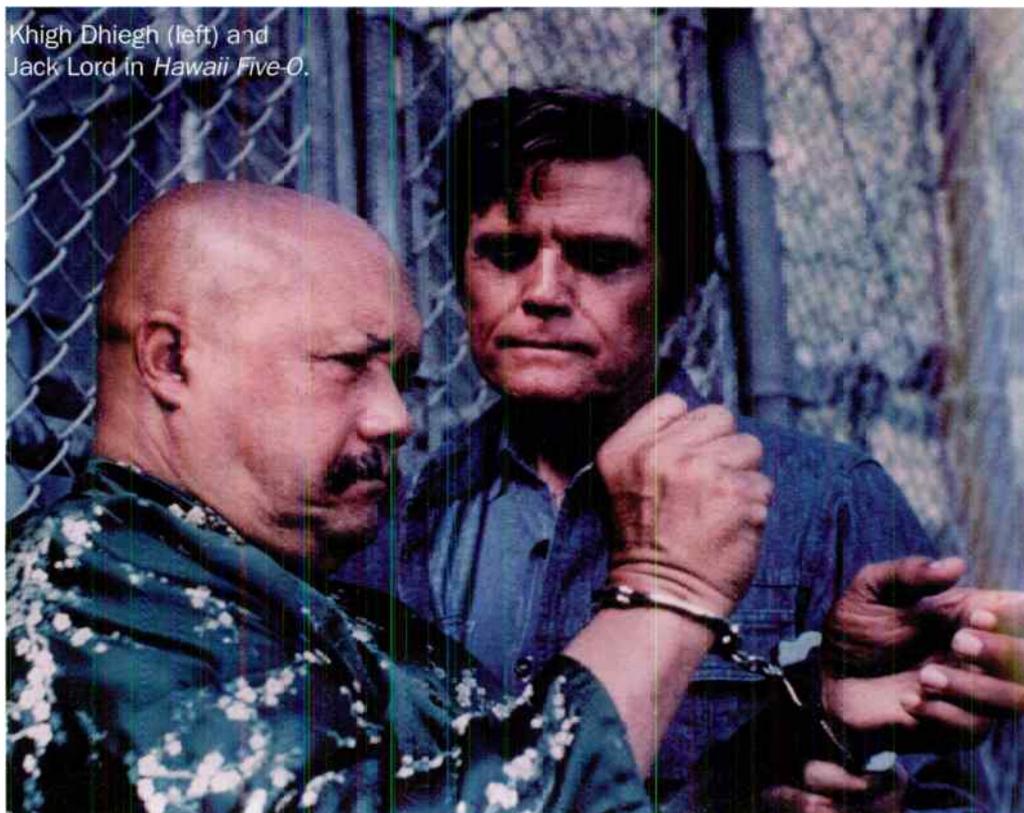
There's been much speculation as to how Hollywood will respond to Sept. 11's terrorist attacks. A clue can be found by examining TV's response to another turbulent, war-torn year: 1968.

Inflamed by the Vietnam War and racism, students took over Columbia University as college campuses across America exploded in protest. Peace candidate Gene McCarthy triumphed in the New Hampshire primary as cries of "Hey! Hey! LBJ, How many boys you kill today?" drove President Johnson from seeking reelection. French workers and students occupied factories and the Sorbonne in nationwide mass strikes. The assassination of Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Martin Luther King triggered race riots across what the Black Panthers called "Amerikka." In Czechoslovakia,

the Prague Spring defied Moscow's Stalinists and proclaimed "socialism with a human face." Upon winning the California primary, anti-war Presidential candidate Bobby Kennedy was shot. The Tet Offensive by Ho Chi Minh's North Vietnamese troops and the Viet Cong swept South Vietnam, even attacking the U.S. embassy at Saigon. Students and Yippies battled police in the streets of "Czechago" during the Democratic Convention as the whole world watched. Afro-American athletes gave the Black Power salute at the Mexico Olympics. Chairman Mao's Red Guards stormed through Peking making sure the East was red.

And what was the response of "Haolewood" television ("*Haole*" is the Hawaiian word for "Caucasian") as millions marched through the streets chanting "give peace a chance" in the largest

Khigh Dhiagh (left) and Jack Lord in *Hawaii Five-O*.



demonstrations ever held in the U.S.A.? A new network series set in the Fiftieth State called *Hawaii Five-O*, which premiered on September 26, 1968, glorifying the police, intelligence agencies and the Pentagon, at the very moment that millions of Americans and others around the world were rallying against these institutions. In the guise of popular entertainment, *Five-O* broadcast virulently anti-communist Cold War propaganda, set in the Land of Aloha, on prime time from coast to coast to coast.

From 1968-1980, the *Five-O* "special investigating unit" chased commies and criminals and were "handling cases too big or too far reaching for any other local agency," according to the CBS program's production notes. Jack Lord, as Steve McGarrett, always got his man (or woman) with his elite police squad. "Book him,

Danno!" became McGarrett's mantra as erstwhile detective Danny Williams (James MacArthur) made a bust.

With almost 300 episodes, *Hawaii Five-O* is the longest running police series in television history, and continues to be seen in reruns on TV screens from Korea to America. For example, during the entire week of October 11, 1993, the TBS cable TV channel reran *Five-O*'s two hour specials.

Some people in the Islands fondly remember the series for a variety of reasons. Matt Locey, who may be the only Polynesian member of the Directors Guild of America, says "*Five-O* gave a lot of locals work." In addition to employing TV production crews, the series also gave work to many local actors. Unlike other Hawaii series such as *Magnum, P.I.*— which had ethnically diverse stars

playing a Waspy American, an ethnic American, an African-American, and an Englishman, but managed to avoid portraying local leads or even recurring local roles—*Five-O* employed Asian and Polynesian actors as regulars in the supporting cast and gave work to many other locals in guest spots and crowd scenes.

Unlike other island-oriented shows like the mainly Hollywood-shot 1950s series *Hawaiian Eye*, *Five-O* was filmed predominantly on location in Hawaii. Although the *Five-O* unit occasionally traveled to locations like Hong Kong and Thailand, *Five-O*'s exteriors and interiors were primarily shot in the 50th State. In fact, it's sometimes said that the real star of the series is Hawaii. Honolulu newspaper columnist Eddie Sherman, who played a recurring *Five-O* character named "Detective Parker" and was president of the Diamond Head Studio, says the show was shot "everywhere" in the Aloha State. Like McGarrett on a man-hunt, the *Five-O* TV crew scoured neighboring islands for locations, although most action took place on Oahu.

Interiors were all shot at the Diamond Head Studio that Universal Studios built for *Five-O*, and is still in use.

Five-O was the first successful series to portray Hawaii's people and locales on television. With its lip service acknowledgement of Hawaii products like Maui potato chips and island words like "aloha," the program is also credited with promoting Hawaii far and wide as a tourist destination. "It was considered the ultimate travelogue for Hawaii," David Poltrack, executive vice president of research at CBS, told *The New York Times* when Lord died in 1998. "The ascent of Hawaii as a major tourist location coincided with the strong years of that program. It really hit a chord." With its 12-year run and continuing reruns *Hawaii Five-O* is credited with pumping over a billion dollars into Hawaii's economy.

The Other Side of Paradise

To a great extent, *Hawaii Five-O* came to define and represent Hawaii to the world. However, what kind of screen image did *Five-O* project?

Accompanied by pulsating music, the opening credits announce some key *Five-O* themes. A huge blue wave with the white *Hawaii Five-O* title bordered in red zooms out of the comber's curl, followed by a high-angle panning shot of the sea, and then a long shot of Diamond Head, with surfers in the foreground hanging ten. The red-and-white titles against blue backgrounds subliminally suggest Old Glory. The island actresses, actors and locales reveal the quaintly exotic grass skirt and sarong props and tropical backdrops for the derring-do of Bwana McGarrett, Lord of the spy rings, and his Gunga Din flunkies. The airport and Waikiki sequences are promotional ploys for tourism. The sirens, explosions, car chases and broken glass clearly dramatize the crime fighting nature of the show. The shots depicting the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the final resting place for U.S. servicemen who served in the Pacific Theatre, are a clear patriotic and militaristic reference. There are at least 50 rapid cuts in this unforgettable opening montage, or about one cut per second. Worthy of the father of montage, Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, *Five-O*'s opening credits are among the best in TV history. For many around the world, the sound and images of this title sequence epitomizes Hawaii, capturing the imaginations of millions of viewers.

A significant percentage of *Five-O* episodes deal with patriotic and military subjects. A study of its themes reveals that at least a tenth of all shows dealt with anti-communist subject matter.

Like Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.'s *F.B.I.* show, which had real-life links to the Federal Bureau of

Investigation and J. Edgar Hoover, *Hawaii Five-O* had ties to the Pentagon, intelligence agencies, the Honolulu Police Department and the state and federal governments.

Jim Propotnick, former chief deputy of Honolulu's U.S. Marshal Bureau, told me: "Jack Lord had a very close relationship with everybody [in the law enforcement community]... He was very, very well connected. He'd ask for technical assistance from the Feds. He was invited to and showed up for everything... police graduations, law enforcement functions... He was the guest of honor at the Congressional Medal of Honor Banquet held at Hawaii around 1986... He wanted to be patriotic."

Harry Williams, who retired in the 1990s as a U.S. intelligence officer with 30 years of experience (27 of them at Hawaii) and acted in 12 *Five-O* said: "*Hawaii Five-O* had close links with the military. The producers [which eventually included Lord] and writers realized

***Hawaii Five-O* had ties to the Pentagon, intelligence agencies, the Honolulu police department and the state and federal governments...The relationship between *Five-O* and the military was symbiotic.**

the importance of the military to Hawaii's economy and the role of Hawaii to the military since the Spanish-American War. *Five-O* acknowledged the fact that Hawaii is the center of the Pacific military community... The military was depicted as heroic."

A specific episode called "Murder—Eyes Only," shot during the 1970s and co-written by my former Hunter College screen-writing professor Jerome Coopersmith, provides an excellent case study

of the program's ties to the military, its pro-Pentagon tilt and virulent anti-communism. "Murder—Eyes Only" begins with a disclaimer: "The Producers gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Department of Defense and the U.S. Navy." The letters are superimposed over a Navy band playing the national anthem at Pearl Harbor as the Star Spangled Banner is raised aboard a warship. This endorsement is provided only after DOD script approval.

Pentagon locations in "Murder—Eyes Only" include CINCPAC (the U.S. Pacific Command, the world's largest military command post), FICPAC (Pacific Fleet Intelligence), Pearl Harbor, Tripler Hospital, the Arizona Memorial, what appears to be Hickam Air Force Base and Navy warships.

The relationship between *Five-O* and the military was symbiotic. Just as the Pentagon cooperated with the TV show, *Five-O* cooperated with the Defense Department. The plot of "Murder—Eyes Only" reveals the *Five-O* team to be the Cold Warriors they so clearly were. Just as Haole-wood supported the war effort

after Pearl Harbor, *Five-O* supported the Vietnam and Cold War efforts.

Throughout the episode, McGarrett is seen in a Navy uniform, as he is

on active duty in the Naval Reserve. After he boards a warship, back onshore a courier delivers a letter bomb marked "eyes only" to a FICPAC office. It explodes, killing Nordhoff, a U.S. intelligence commander identified as the "Navy's chief spy chaser."

Meanwhile, back at the warship, an admiral briefs McGarrett on the assassination. It turns out that Nordhoff was investigating the disappearance of "Eternity 12," a satellite which, contrary to mili-

tary disinformation is “a super-sensitive eye in the sky.” The admiral explains that within hours of Eternity 12’s malfunction in the Pacific, “THEIR trawlers were looking for it.” McGarrett responds: “You mean THEY knew about it?” The “their” and “they” apparently refer to the commies – in particular, the Red Chinese.

Steve embarks on a combined military-civilian inquiry into the matter, searching for the “mole” and “security leak” at FICPAC that’s responsible. The investigation leads to McGarrett’s arch enemy: Wo Fat (Khig Dhiegh), the secret Asian man, first glimpsed in a Boeing hydrofoil docked at Aloha Tower, reading *The Honolulu Advertiser* headlined: “BOMB BLASTS NAVY HQ.”

In the course of the story Wo Fat’s Asian espionage ring plant and pick up microfilm messages in flower bouquets at one of America’s most patriotic, sacred symbols: the Arizona Memorial. Lest we miss the symbolism, an Oriental woman rides a Navy boat out to the Memorial, as a Naval tour guide explains its significance.

Narco-hypnosis—drug-induced hypnotism—is a recurring *Five-O* theme, and in “Murder—Eyes Only” actor David Birney as a Naval intelligence officer, has been hypnotized into acting as a mole. Harry Williams asserts this is directly derivative of Chinese brainwashing techniques during the Korean War, and cites movie precedents: 1968’s *Sergeant Ryker*, starring Lee Marvin, and 1962’s assassination thriller *The Manchurian Candidate*, starring Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, and, fascinatingly, none other than Khig Diegh himself!

Incidentally, the Naval intelligence officers are all white (despite the disproportional representation of minorities in the armed services at the time), while Wo Fat’s spies are mostly or all Asian.

Naturally, the superior race prevails – but too late, as Wo Fat has escaped to downtown Shanghai. Although most viewers forget it, Wo Fat is explicitly portrayed as a Red Chinese “master spy,” Peking’s Man In Hawaii, Chairman Mao’s emissary of mayhem.

“Nine Dragons”

Much of the action of this two-hour special takes place at Hong Kong (giving the lie to the oft-repeated statement that “*Five-O* was shot entirely on location in Hawaii”). With the help of a liberal professor, Wo Fat infiltrates the University of Hawaii and steals biological-warfare elements (shades of anthrax!). The red agent kidnaps McGarrett in Hong Kong in order to stage a televised confession by the ultra-patriot that the U.S. government is responsible for the assassination of the Chinese Communist leaders. Wo Fat plans to use this as a pretext to launch a nuclear strike in order to bring the imperialist Yankees to their knees, and Wo Fat to power in Peking. But Steve’s mind is stronger than Wo Fat’s narco-hypnosis, and our man McGarrett foils the great proletarian cultural revolutionaries again.

Do these plots have any basis in reality or are they strictly Haole-wood fantasy? Was Hawaii really a front line in the Cold War subjected to sabotage, subversion and espionage? Ex-intelligence officer Williams asserts: “During the Cold War, 200-plus days a year a Soviet intelligence collection ship was 12 miles off Pearl. The purpose was to monitor U.S. military activity on island. Hawaii was a hub of military activity during the Korean and Vietnam Wars— Camp Smith, CINCPAC, the headquarters of the Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, are all here. The Soviets were extremely interested in activity revealing our intentions. They

monitored ships, phone calls..." And of course, 25 percent of Oahu is owned by the military.

But Williams points out: "I don't know of any espionage activity on the ground. There was no hostile intelligence threat against Oahu. Not one single incident that I knew of...There's no evidence whatsoever that the Honolulu 8 [1950s leftists and labor leaders, including ILWU chief Jack Hall, who were linked to the Communist Party, U.S.A.] was directed or funded by Moscow or any other foreign power."

Retired U.S. Marshal Propotnick believes otherwise: "This is a hot spot, this is the Pacific Rim. There's a lot going on, and if you want info you have to go where the info is." But Propotnick admits there's "no evidence of money" being given to Hawaii radical groups by foreign powers, and that there was "no sabotage" at Hawaii, not withstanding *Five-O* plots to the contrary.

While *Five-O* did employ local actors as regulars in the cast and in recurring and guest roles, the star and his number two man were *haole*. Jack Lord reprised the Lord Jim role of the omnipotent *gai-*

Given that nonwhites had already served as governor and chief of police in Hawaii, why was a white New Yorker from Hell's Kitchen the top cop and the face of Hawaii?

jin (Japanese for "foreigner") lording it over the natives. Given that nonwhites had already served as governor and chief of police in Hawaii, why was a white New Yorker from Hell's Kitchen the top cop and the face of Hawaii? (By the way, while *Hawaii Five-O* is often lauded for its minority-laden cast, it bears pointing out that America's largest minorities – blacks and Latinos – are almost completely missing in action on the series.)

When Lord died in 1998, University of Hawaii Hawaiian Studies Professor Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, a native nationalist, told The Honolulu Advertiser she regretted that the actor born John Joseph Ryan at Manhattan Island represented her Polynesian Island to so many around the world.

TV and Film Since 9/11

A pilot for a new *Hawaii Five-O* series shot a few years ago conspicuously bombed and was never aired on network TV. Meanwhile, Hollywood producer George Litto is trying to create a *Five-O* feature film. In any case, as TV/filmmakers and audiences ponder how to respond in the post-9/11 world, *Hawaii Five-O* stands as an example of how Haole-wood responded to a previous national crisis. Ironically, as 2001's Fall TV season rolled in, no less than three CIA series, including CBS' *The Agency* (which has unprecedented access to the Langley, Virginia HQ of the espionage service, that now has a liaison officer for Hollywood), went on the air, as the networks presciently tapped into the *zeitgeist*.

Since September 11th, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice has asked network news divisions not to air Osama Bin Laden's statements in their entirety, and following controversial statements on *Politically Incorrect*, presidential spokesman Ari Fleischer told Americans to "watch what they say." To paraphrase the philosopher George Santayana, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to rerun it. *Hawaii Five-O* provides insights into how the entertainment industry reacts to a national crisis.

Five-O was a series with a close collaborative relationship with the mili-

tary, which does not lightly dispense such favors as location filming on military bases. A condition for Pentagon cooperation is a form of script approval, ensuring the Defense Department's depicted in a favorable light, one likely to bolster recruitment and burnish the Armed Services' image. This was especially true during the Vietnam era. (*Apocalypse Now* depicted U.S. atrocities against Vietnamese; denied Pentagon support, Francis Ford Coppola was forced to hire Philippine military choppers for his 1979 anti-war epic. On the other hand, 2001's *Black Hawk Down* – which expunged the humiliating scene of dead U.S. soldiers in their underwear being dragged by merry Mogadishu Muslim mobs through dusty streets, arguably turning an abject defeat into a perceived triumph — received unparalleled DOD support.)

In addition to its pro-DOD stance, *Five-O* had racial undertones: one tenth of its episodes were figments of *Haole*-wood's imagination – that of a Chinese Communist threat of sabotage and violence in and against Hawaii that simply did not exist. Today, terrorists have replaced communists in the popular imagination as the international boogeyman. Will Arabs replace Asians, once depicted as the designated untrustworthy ethnic group?

As new features and series emerge, will the entertainment industry learn from or perpetuate the mistakes of series like *Hawaii Five-O*? Will film and television maintain their independence and cultural sensitivity or become Pentagon propagandists? Only time will tell if our most powerful communications media once again stifle dissent and promote consent.

Freelance writer Ed Rampell, who was named after Edward R. Murrow, divides his time between Los Angeles and Oahu. He co-authored two books of film history with Luis Reyes, "Pearl Harbor in the Movies" and "Made In Paradise, Hollywood's Films of Hawaii and the South Seas."

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.

We are formally called a journal, but although some of our pieces have come from the academic community *TVQ* might better be described as a specialized magazine (we don't go in for complex footnotes, nor do we have peer review of contributions). But we don't consider our audience a narrow one; we like to describe ourselves as a publication for concerned professionals—writers, actors, scholars, performers, directors, technicians, producers and executives.

If you send an article, please observe the basics: manuscripts double-spaced with a stamped return self-addressed envelope. If you have an idea and want to sound us out before you write an article, send along a few descriptive paragraphs.

Address your article or proposal to:

Frederick A. Jacobi

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Television Quarterly

11 West 57th Street

New York, N.Y. 10019

Brought To You By: Postwar Television Advertising and the American Dream

By Lawrence R. Samuel
University of Texas Press, Austin

By Mary Ann Watson

“Use it up. Wear it out. Make it do or do without.”

That old Yankee slogan extolling the virtue of frugality was a familiar refrain during World War II. Patriotic Americans endured years of shortages and rationing without complaint. Almost sixty years later, another national crisis united citizens in the resolve to do what their country needed them to do.

The people filling the malls during the first post-September 11th Christmas rush were told in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, “Keep shopping—or the terrorists win.”

How did we get from there to here? It’s a long, interesting story that Lawrence R. Samuel tells exceptionally well in *Brought to You By: Postwar Television Advertising and the American Dream*. This book focuses on the baby boom years, 1946-1964. A generation and an industry grew up together in a symbiotic embrace. As the population and the formation of new households

was exploding, a commodity culture was solidifying and the effectiveness of television advertising was dramatically established.

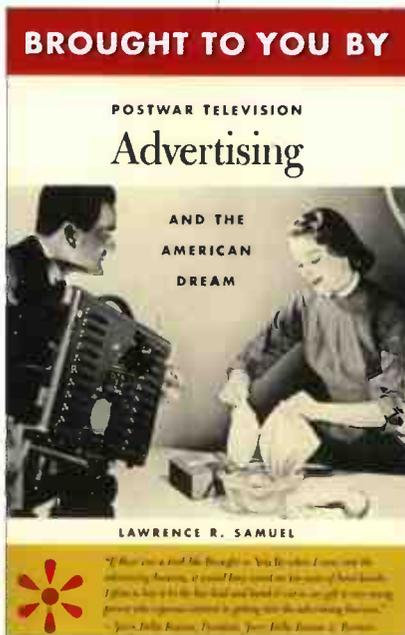
In his introduction, Samuel informs readers that his book “is designed to fill a gaping hole in the history of advertising and complete a missing chapter of twentieth-century American social history.” It seemed a bit grandiose. But he won me over in short order and delivered on his claim.

Unlike so many academic writers who are deliberately arcane just to impress, this author wants readers to *understand* the case he’s making that television advertising was the “loudest voice” in the formation of postwar culture. But, along with the explanatory power of clear prose, the book also benefits from Samuel’s formidable archival research.

So instead of scholarly theorizing, he offers specific examples of ad campaigns that illustrate his points.

Readers old enough to remember the meaning of “L.S./M.F.T.” (Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco) or dancing Old Gold cigarette packs will appreciate the detail of Samuel’s descriptions. But even readers too young for nostalgia about the era will get a feel for the time when consuming in the national interest was a New, New, New Concept.

The falling cost of energy combined with the postwar flowering of technology created in American industry a tremendous productive capacity. But the demand for the output—



REVIEW AND COMMENT

the urge to buy—needed to be aroused in a population conditioned to scrimp and save during the Depression and war. Samuel documents how television advertising developed potent methods of stimulating wants and needs.

Admen in the late 1940s and early fifties were pioneers. Some techniques—such as integrating commercial pitches into the content of entertainment shows—transferred from radio intact. But there was no handbook for TV advertising. “No matter what you try,” one agency exec said, “it’s never been done before.”

Brought to You By traces the evolution of TV ads from clumsy and carnivalesque live pitches to sophisticated, at times artistic, forms of expression. In one early beer commercial, for instance, the camera first showed the beer drinker bring the libation this lips. But instead of going to a beauty shot of the bottle, an ill-timed cutaway caught the pitcher sloshing the brew into a pail at his side. By the 1960s, though, Hertz was putting viewers in the driver’s seat with dazzling special effects. The Clios were celebrating ads of “epic grandeur” and documentary quality “reminiscent of Robert Flaherty.”

The real strength of Samuel’s chronicle is his exploration of TV advertising as a social force, not merely a means of pushing product. The successful campaign by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1963 to increase the number of black performers in commercials is a chapter of the civil rights movement that deserves greater historical attention. Samuel is absolutely correct in his assertion that the battle to desegregate television was “as significant perhaps as the parallel attempts to defeat segregation in housing, education, and transportation.”

He offers cultural analysis too of TV

advertising aimed at kids. Unlike Great Britain, where the government believed children needed protection and so limited the ability of sponsors to reach them through television, the U.S. chose instead to give marketers the freedom to manipulate the gullibility of young viewers.

Whatever the abuses or excesses of TV advertising, however, by the 1960s Americans for the most part accepted it as an integral part of daily life. The purpose of commercials was clear—they made entertainment and informational programming available at the flip of a switch. And, while enlarging consumption habits, advertising was thought of as an essential component in a thriving society—a spark plug in the economic machine.

And now here’s the testimonial: *Brought to You By: Postwar Television Advertising and the American Dream* by Lawrence R. Samuel is a fine work of narrative social history and an important contribution to our understanding of contemporary American culture. If you read it, you will be more attractive, smell better, and have more friends.

Mary Ann Watson is a professor of Telecommunication and Film at Eastern Michigan University and author of *Defining Visions: Television and the American Experience Since 1945*, published by Harcourt Brace.

The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting

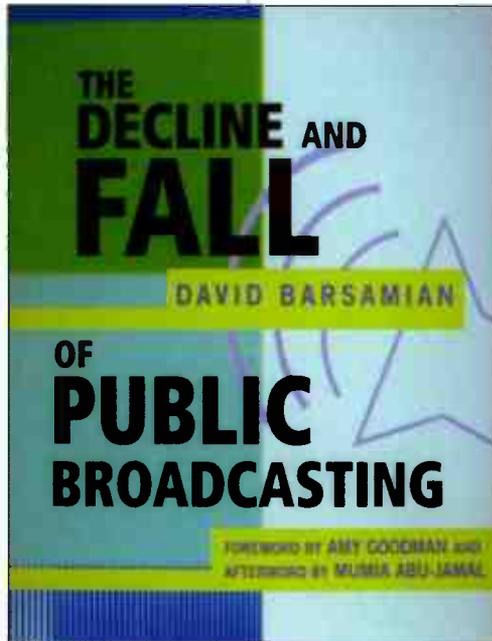
By David Barsamian
South End Press; Cambridge, MA

Ambient Television

By Anna McCarthy
Duke University Press, Durham and London

By Ron Simon

Public has been a key word, often loaded with utopian meaning, throughout broadcasting history. In 1967 educational programs morphed into public television upon recommendation of the Carnegie Commission with the optimistic hopes that this new form would “help us see America whole, in all its diversity.” Public access promised channels opened to everyone until space in the cable universe became very valuable and media deregulation threatened the entire community concept. Covering the spectrum from war propaganda to forest fires, public-service announcements helped to raise awareness about issues affecting the common welfare, until unsold airtime was used almost exclusively to promote the station and the network.



The most debated use of the word first occurred in the Radio Act of 1927, later expanded into the Communications Act, whereby stations are seen as trustees of the people, serving “the public interest, convenience, and necessity.” What constitutes “public interest” has been interpreted in a multitude of ways depending on the political and economic climate. During the industry consolidation of the nineties, with its emphasis on demographics and niche marketing, public became a term that evaporated from most discussions on television. Two new books seek to redefine what

public means to the industry in this new cost-cutting century.

David Barsamian, a producer of the syndicated audio program *Alternative Radio* and author of such books as *The Future of History: Interviews with Howard Zinn and Propaganda and the Public Mind: Conversations with Noam Chomsky*, seeks to reestablish the meaning of public programming as

codified in the original Carnegie Report: to provide “a voice for groups in the community that many otherwise be unheard.” His book, *The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting*, is a short but urgent call to action for would-be activists. Less than 100 pages, the work is part of a series produced by South End Press, a non-profit publisher committed to policies of social change.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

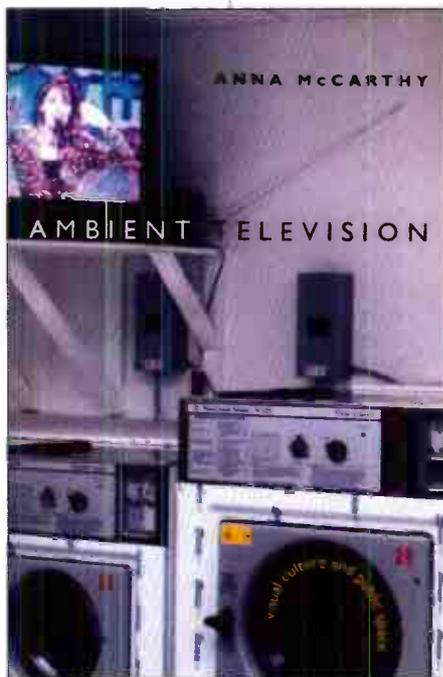
In his opening gambit Barsamian questions how diverse public broadcasting really is. He argues that the common liberal label is misplaced. The longest running public-affairs series in PBS history has been William F. Buckley's *Firing Line* and fellow conservatives, including Ben Wattenburg and John McLaughlin, host many of the system's most successful syndicated talk shows. He extensively quotes Garrison Keillor, who is disillusioned by the soft direction of National Public Radio and sees PBS as a "complete dinosaur." Barsamian is particularly dismayed that his own progressive radio show, which is given to public stations for free, is bypassed for game shows and business reports.

Barsamian assigns the "fall" of public broadcasting to immense funding pressures that have commercialized the entire network. With shrinking governmental support, public radio and television "have been driven into the outstretched arms of corporate advertisers." Barsamian argues that programs that please these advertisers ultimately get on the air while such challenging documentaries as "Out at Work," about gays in the workplace, and "Defending Our Lives," a program on domestic abuse in prisons, were rejected by PBS. Progressive voices are also denied access to the airwaves, but much of the discussion is about Barsamian's circle of friends. In his brief book he devotes

several pages to the broadcasting exile of Noam Chomsky, with whom he has recently written a book, and the frustrations of historian Howard Zinn, who testifies on the back of the back cover that Barsamian is "Studs Terkel of our generation."

Anna McCarthy, an Assistant Professor of Cinema Studies for New York University, seeks her definition of public television outside the home, in the social sphere of bars, airports, and department stores. During her original research for *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Sphere*, she unearthed in trade journals and retail merchandising publications how television has had a commercial presence beyond the living room from its beginning. *Ambient Television* engagingly investigates this history of television's role in the public environment and how it has been integrated into the social rhythms of everyday life.

McCarthy discovered that before the sale of television sets in the early fifties took off, there were many debates about the effect of television viewing in an institutional setting where many people received their first exposure to the new medium. Critics worried that the arrival of television into taverns would disrupt the free flow of conversation and beer. Some reformers wor-



REVIEW AND COMMENT

ried children would be attracted by the novelty of the televisual and congregate in morally suspect bars and be led astray. They demanded that alternative sites be established for adolescent viewing by churches and other civic groups. As men gathered for tavern TV, merchants greeted woman with video in retail spaces, hoping to influence buying habits. TV's presence in a different sites engendered different marketing discourses and assumptions of public identities.

The second half of *Ambient Television* is an informal survey of how contemporary television is employed in social space. McCarthy uses her won candid photographs to analyze how "TV as a distinctive kind of object communicates in a particular public contexts." She asserts that the most pervasive positioning of the TV monitor in a public setting is overhead and out of reach of the average viewer, a location in direction opposition to domestic arrangement. McCarthy theorizes that this ceiling-mounted use in food courts and retail stores throughout the country, approximates institutional speech, relegating the consumer to the status of an anonymous stranger. The viewer's experience is consciously disoriented in such postmodern "shoppertainments" as NikeTown and Virgin Megastore where layers of images often evoke hallucinations and peep shows.

Although both authors paint a similar picture of a citizenry overwhelmed by commercial interests, each closes by citing alternative possibilities of how the public welfare can also be served in the new millennium. Barsamian praises grassroots radio and Free Speech TV (FSTV), the first, fulltime progressive television channel, for reporting stories that would not be heard by a national

audience. McCarthy recognizes two video installations, one in a San Francisco transit station and the other in an Atlanta shopping mall, that encourage a critical engagement with their audiences. Both books hope to revive the tradition of a public interest, the foundation of American television but neglected by many in the industry and government, whether over the air or in shared environments.

Ron Simon, curator of television at the Museum of Television and Radio, also teaches the history of television at Columbia University's School of the Arts and at New York University.

Hello Darlin': Tall (and Absolutely True) Tales About My Life

By Larry Hagman, with Todd Gold
Simon & Schuster, New York

By Richard G. Carter

“**I** was once asked what were the three luckiest things that happened in my life,” writes Larry Hagman in his spellbinding autobiography, “and I said, ‘Being born white, in the U.S.A., and in the twentieth century...’”

Millions of television viewers know, and probably love, Hagman for his long-running roles on *Dallas* and *I Dream of Jeannie*. Arguably the biggest TV star of the 1980s as J.R. Ewing in *Dallas*, at his peak Hagman was paid \$250,000 an episode — shooting 24 episodes a year. This was a far cry from the \$1,000 a week he earned in 1965, the first year he co-starred with Barbara Eden on *Jeannie*.

J.R. was shot in his office in the March 21, 1980 episode, setting-up the legendary “Who Killed J.R.” show Nov. 21, 1980. It was seen by 83 million people in America — the second-largest TV audience ever for a single show. Worldwide, some 380 million tuned in.

Yet I more strongly identify with his film work — betraying my lifelong love

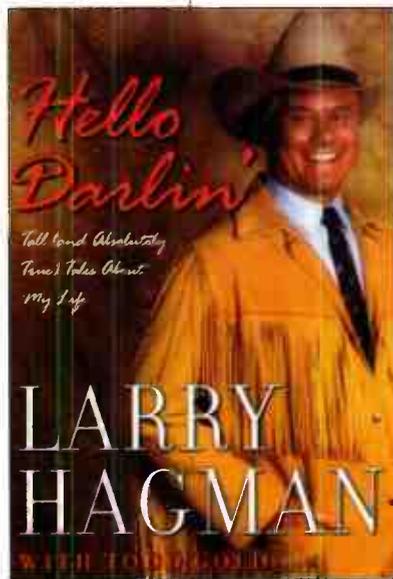
for the cinema. And he did great stuff. This is why, when I think of the colorful Hagman persona, I don’t think as much of his 13 years as the scoundrel J.R. in the ever-so-raunchy small-screen *Dallas*. Or of his delightful, straight-man as the astronaut, Major Nelson, in the sunny *Jeannie*. He created a deserved niche in the TV-watching hearts of millions.

But to me, Hagman — an excellent, versatile actor — always will be Col. Pitts, the flipped-out commander of a small detachment of American troops in World War II England, in 1977’s edge-of-the-seat suspenser “The Eagle Has Landed.” And Buck, the Russian-speaking translator for Henry Fonda’s stoic president in Sidney Lumet’s “Fail-Safe” (1964)

— the best Cold War thriller ever. And Jack Jones, the bigoted Texas oil millionaire, (a J.R. parody?) in Oliver Stone’s brilliant, discombobulated “Nixon” (1995).

Perhaps a big reason I consider Hagman’s work in such movies his most meaningful, is the great variety he brought to this demanding craft in the days when movies were movies. Indeed, on the big screen, he frequently displayed a Jack Nicholson-like devilishness that made you wonder whether to hate him or love him.

For example, Hagman’s sterling turn as Art Carney’s loser son in the latter’s Academy Award-winning “Harry and Tonto” (1974), brought tears to my eyes, while his over-sexed ambulance driver lusting after the luscious Raquel Welch in 1976’s frenetic black comedy “Mother,



REVIEW AND COMMENT

Jugs & Speed” reminded me how down-to-earth he could be.

Hagman’s many film and TV roles, along with precious peeks into more than 50 years in the high-profile, take-no-prisoners entertainment spotlight, make this book simply irresistible.

The 70-year-old Hagman’s bittersweet look at his personal and professional life; his wife of 37 years, Maj; his mother the Broadway and film star Mary Martin; his alcoholic Texas lawyer father; his excursion into exotic Eastern religions (gaining for him the sobriquet the Mad Monk of Malibu); his drinking, drug-ging and, finally, his harrowing 1995 liver transplant is, simply, the stuff Humphrey Bogart told us dreams are made of. This autobiography enabled me to learn so much more about Hagman’s life than I imagined there was.

For example, in discussing his tumultuous early life in Texas, Hagman relates that as an infant, his 17-year-old mother handed him over to his grandparents while she pursued her movie career at Paramount. In addition, there was “...Billy Jones, a wonderful, very round, extremely loving black woman who’d worked for us so long she became part of the family. She’d raised my mother and her older sister, Geraldine, and then she got me too...”

And in a dark insight into a demon that was to drive much of his adult life, Hagman discloses how Billy, in an effort to get him to stop his incessant talking “...resorted to another trick. She filled a little cloth sack with sugar, dipped it in bourbon, and let me suck on it. Was this the start of my alcoholism? Who knows?”

Over the years, the private Hagman did some flaky things and indulged in some flaky behavior, even for an actor — a species who long have gloried in their

flakiness. In addition to heavy drinking, dabbling (to say the least) in LSD and marijuana, the actor also adopted “silent Sundays.” That is, he refused to talk in the wake of one particularly bad sore throat. He’d whistle, but he wouldn’t speak. This went on for some 25 years.

Thus, when his celebrated mother, who’d gained fame for “South Pacific,” “The Sound of Music” and “Peter Pan,” was dying of colon cancer in 1989, he visited her on Sunday in a hospital — without talking. Mother and son communicated by whistling.

“Fortunately, the important stuff between us had all been said years before,” he explains. The next day, the nonpareil Mary Martin passed away.

On the other hand, the public Hagman — consummate pro and workmanlike actor — knew countless leading lights of film and TV, was pals with many and worked closely with more than his fair share. His recollections of selected encounters make fun reading.

For example, Roger Vadim, the renowned French filmmaker and swordsman once married to Brigitte Bardot and Jane Fonda, told Hagman, “My greatest mistake in our marriage was to teach Jane how to read a newspaper.” Hmm.

Hagman tells of smoking six or seven packs of cigarettes a day making “Fail-Safe” — unreleased by Columbia for two years so as not to compete with Stanley Kubrick’s “Dr. Strangelove,” which the studio wanted to come out first. During breaks, he says, Henry Fonda advised him “not to act with my hands, if at all possible... Sure enough, when I watched Henry, he just sat there with his hands crossed. He was a master

REVIEW AND COMMENT

of simplicity.”

Hagman talks at some length about the filming, at sea, of the World War II naval epic “In Harm’s Way” (1965). “...It seemed every male star in Hollywood was in it,” he says. Directed by the dictatorial Otto Preminger, Hagman relates that “every night, a bunch of us met in one of our rooms for cocktails and we discussed ways we could murder Otto. We fantasized about putting massive amounts of Ex-Lax in his coffee, loosening the threads on the back of his director’s chair so when he leaned back he’d topple overboard and countless other schemes...”

Hagman recalls the set of 1978’s “Superman,” and, in what seems a genuine demonstration of humility he says, “I wasn’t around Christopher Reeve or Marlon Brando, which was too bad, though I can still boast of having been in a film with both of them...”

Once more the rascal, he talks about a phone call he got after finishing the film from “Superman” co-star Margot Kidder. She said that when “riding a horse with a Western saddle, it bucked me up and I landed on the saddle horn. I think I broke my clitoris.”

“Oh, honey, I know just what to do,” Hagman told her. “I made a few calls before finding a doctor who fixed her up. I was a hero to her and advised her to ride English saddle from then on.”

Finally, Hagman says: “When people ask for my secret, I tell them it’s been 20 percent hard work and 80 percent luck. I think a lot of life comes down to that. If you push too hard for something, it seems to retreat. If you hold onto to something too tightly, it manages to slip away....” Sounds to me like words to live by.

“But even with all the luck in the world,” he also tells us, “you can’t ignore

fate. Sometimes fate requires you to need a liver transplant...” Which, of course, he did.

In 1992, Hagman was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver and in June 1995, doctors discovered a small cancerous tumor. He was put on a transplant waiting list and given a beeper. Two months later it beeped, and a helicopter arrived to fly him from his mountaintop California home to Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. There, he was given a new liver in a 16-hour operation.

Yes, Hagman, like people everywhere, has had a life of many ups and downs. The difference, however, is he lived much of his in public. And when the chips were down, he delivered the goods for all of us to see. Who could ask for more?

Richard G. Carter, a New York freelance writer and a former columnist and editorial writer with the *New York Daily News*, is the author of the tribute to Morton Downey, Jr., which appears in this issue of *Television Quarterly*.

Flirting with Danger: Confessions of a Reluctant War Reporter

By Siobhan Darrow
Anchor Books, New York

Bernard S. Redmont

Writing a memoir can mean flirting with danger. That quintessential broadcast reporter, William L. Shirer, who flirted with his share of danger for CBS, once talked to William Zinsser about writing memoirs. Shirer said, "I think most of us in this business want to have a final say, because we never had time to stop and ask what it all meant."

CNN correspondent Siobhan (pronounced "Shi-von") Darrow flirted with danger in a shorter but nonetheless dramatic career. Now she flirts with danger once more, taking another risk by dashing off a kiss-and-tell confession. It works. A bright producer might well fashion it into a soap opera or mini-series, complete with wartime "bang-bang" adventure, celebrities, humor, sex, soul searching, and even a happy ending.

On the book jacket, one of Siobhan's colleagues, *Dateline* producer Deborah Copaken Kogan, comments that "With quiet courage and poignant candor, Siobhan Darrow rips off her TV mask

and shows us her soul, confused, curious, at war with itself, brimming with love, and desperately human." All true.

Few have better described the frenetic life of a TV correspondent, with so little time to reflect or enjoy a stable personal life.

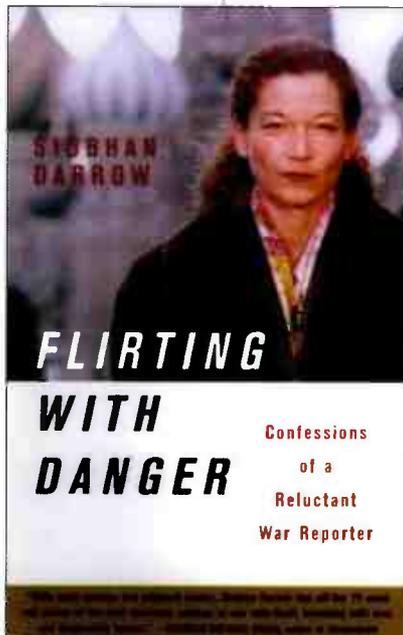
Born in Belfast of an Irish Protestant mother and an often absent Jewish American father, Siobhan describes her troubled family life, growing up in New Jersey on food stamps, shoplifting, smoking dope, waitressing at Dunkin' Donuts, and once enduring rape: "I was comfortable living on the edge."

Armed with a degree in Russian from Duke University, she made it to Moscow and the launching of an exciting and successful career in Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Middle East, Ireland, and the Balkans, including Croatia and Albania. She was nominated for an Emmy award for reporting from Chechnya in 1994.

About her years in Moscow, she writes that "laughter was often the best defense in coping with the inanity and degradation of daily Soviet life." She vacillated between loving and hating Russia, emotions not unfamiliar to correspondents who have lived and

worked there.

Siobhan worked alongside Christiane Amanpour, but never quite won the same star status. Nevertheless, for one who started menially logging tapes, she enjoyed a meteoric rise. Siobhan teamed up with Christiane to cover the collapse



REVIEW AND COMMENT

of the Soviet Union in 1992.

Covering war and peace, she can be eloquent. She says “After observing so many conflicts, the one thing I know is that war never succeeds. Nobody ever wins, and the wounds to the soul are distributed to both the victims and the vanquished.”

For some correspondents, she says, “the thrill and danger of war becomes a way of life. Perhaps being near death makes them feel more alive. In Chechnya, I felt the opposite. I wanted to do my job well, but the shock of near-death made me ask myself what I was doing there.”

In Atlanta, before going off to the wars, one of her great achievements was as producer of CNN’s *World Report*, a program on which broadcasters from all over the world sent their reports, providing global perspectives often absent from the network airwaves. *World Report* was a creation of CNN Chairman Ted Turner.

Many of her colleagues weren’t interested in it, and it was “treated like an unwanted stepchild.” She says it was “simultaneously the world’s most boring and most fascinating news program.” But for Siobhan, it was perfect, even “visionary, one of CNN’s greatest strengths.”

As she covers more and more war zones, she recounts quite candidly her preoccupation with love. She botched her romantic relationships: “Anyone who showed any interest tapped into my hunger for love.”

She was—as she acknowledges—“a lost soul.” Her personal life was “in a shambles.” By her own reckoning, she was “an experienced journalist, skilled at cutting a clear path through murky situations, but love threw me.”

There was a Russian named Dimi, who didn’t love her, but made her a Cold

War bride. She was not sure if marriage was “a product of politics or a victim of it.” Dimi got his exit papers, and they were eventually divorced.

Among other later amours, there was a 21-year-old Italian intern named Alessio; an American “action junkie” named Trevor who was a refugee from Wall Street; a British journalist named Julian (“not my type”); a Beverly Hills plastic surgeon named Larry, whom she dated on the Internet; and a budding screen writer named Mel who at 40 still lived with his mother.

And there was her boss, Ted Turner, who was 50 and between marriages, when she was 29. That affair lasted about six months.

Finally, she concluded, “My life felt so out of control that I just wanted to hide under my desk when any story broke...I was running so fast that my life felt like a blur.”

Yearning for a baby, with her biological clock ticking, she applied to a sperm bank.

Now comes the happy ending: An e-mail message out of the blue—fan mail from a *New York Times* correspondent in China. Before long, Shep Faison and Siobhan Darrow turned out to be soulmates. And so they were married. They live in Los Angeles. She is embarking on a different kind of journey— one she hopes is impending motherhood.

Now, you folks in Hollywood, how about that for a scenario?

Bernard S. Redmont served CBS News as a correspondent in Moscow and Paris. He is the author of a memoir, *Risks Worth Taking: The Odyssey of a Foreign Correspondent*, and is Dean Emeritus of the College of Communication of Boston University.

In Memoriam:

Pat Weaver

“Nobody influenced the broadcast world and its conversion to television any more profoundly than Pat Weaver did,” says veteran programming executive Mike Dann, a contemporary of Weaver’s at NBC in the 1950s. “We all learned from him about television’s potential.”

And that is the abiding legacy of this now-legendary broadcasting giant: Sylvester L. Weaver, Jr., who died last March at the age of 93, did more to define television’s possibilities than television could possibly realize in his lifetime.

“If properly developed,” he wrote in his autobiography, television “could raise the educational and cultural level of the entire nation. It could enrich the common man and make him the uncommon man.” Asked recently if this goal was being attained, he replied, “I’m afraid that we’re kind of staggering on our way, but the potential is still there.”

In his first year at NBC Weaver launched *Your Show of Shows*, with Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca; *Broadway Open House*, with Jerry Lester, Morey Amsterdam and the remarkably endowed Dagmar; and *The Colgate Comedy Hour*, with Jimmy Durante. Soon there were such gutsy innovations as *Today*, *The Home Show* and *Tonight*—two of which survive and prosper to this day, a half-century later. Fred Coe’s *Television Playhouse*, *Robert Montgomery Presents* and *Kraft Television Theater* provide even more evidence of Pat Weaver’s seminal influence.

High among his tangible effects on the development of the new medium was the launching of “long-form” programming which could not be sponsored by a single advertiser. He carefully devised a system whereby most of these big shows were supported by a multitude of advertisers. In so doing he captured network control of programming away from the advertising agencies, an achievement he deemed to be “the real heritage I passed on.”

While on the one hand Weaver put such intellectual celebrities as Norbert Wiener and Bertrand Russell on NBC Television because he wanted the audience to “see something inspiring and enriching,” he also personally persuaded the NBC affiliates to open up early in the morning for *The Today Show* and personally persuaded Dave Garroway to retain, against his violent objections, the rambunctious chimpanzee J. Fred Muggs because he felt that television was the only medium that would reach everyone—especially the minorities and the poor.

“He knew very quickly how to reach everyone,” says Mike Dann. “He made *the* great difference in the broadcast world.”

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Ms. Zorica S. Kostovska (Macedonia)
John Laing (USA)
Lee Cheok Yew (Singapore)
Richard Lippin (USA)
Liu Chang Le (Hong Kong, P.R. China)
Igor Malashenko (Russia)
James Marrinan (USA)
Veran Matic (Yugoslavia)
Kip Meek. (UK)
Farrell E. Meisel (USA)
Prince Alexandre de Merode (Monaco)
Ms. Peggy Miles (USA)
Prince Albert of Monaco (Monaco)
William Moses (USA)
Jean-Bernard Münch (Switzerland)
Armando Nuñez, Sr. (USA)
Steve Perlman (USA)
Ms. Monica Ridruejo (Spain)
Bill Roberts (Canada)
Ms. Mirtha Rodriguez de Saba (Paraguay)
Xavier Roy (France)
Johnny Saad (Brazil)
Didier Sapaut (France)
Ms. Rita Scarfone (USA)
Henry Schleiff (USA)
Reese Schonfeld (USA)
Werner Schwaderlapp (Germany)
Nachman Shai (Israel)
Zafar Siddiqi (Pakistan)
Sanford Socolow (USA)
Tim Thorsteinson (USA)
David Tomatis (Monaco)
Ms. Ursula von Zallinger (Germany)
Ivan Vrkic (Croatia)
James Warner (USA)
Arthur Weinthal (Canada)
Arne Wessberg (Finland)
Yang Pei-chi (Taiwan)
Vladimir Zvyagin (USA)

Fellows

Biagio Agnes (Italy)
Edward Bleier (USA)
Richard Carlton (USA)
Murray Cherverover (Canada)
Bruce Christensen (USA)
Mark Cohen (USA)
George Dessart (USA)
Irwin (Sonny) Fox (USA)
Ralph Franklin (USA)
Karl Honeystein (USA)
Norman Horowitz (USA)
Gene Jankowski (USA)
Arthur F. Kane (USA)
Len Mauger (Australia)
Richard A. O'Leary (USA)
Kevin O'Sullivan (USA)
Renato M. Pachetti (USA)
Robert Phillis (UK)
James Rosenfield (USA)
Dietrich Schwarzkopf (Germany)
James T. Shaw (USA)
Donald D. Wear (USA)
David Webster (USA)

Alternates

Shariar Ahy (USA)
Ms. Ginette Ast (USA)
Zane Bair (USA)
Gabor Banyai (Hungary)
Ms. Rebecca Batties (USA)
Mario Bona (USA)
Harold C. Crump (USA)
Fritz Diekmann (USA)
Ms. Nicole Devilaïne (USA)
John Fitzgerald (USA)
Harry Forbes (USA)
Ms. Ellen Frey-McCourt (USA)
Ms. Stefanie Gelinias (USA)
Sergio Gil Trullen (Spain)
Bernard Guillou (France)
Junnosuke Hayashi (USA)
Takashi Hogasident (USA)
Ms. Elisabeth Johansson (USA)
Ms. Maggie Jones (USA)
Shigetoshi Kobayashi (USA)
Ken Krushel (USA)
Ms. Alexandra Leclère (USA)
Klaus Lehmann (USA)
David Levy (USA)
Adrian McDaid (USA)
Ms. Margarita Millan (Puerto Rico)
Horst Mueller (USA)
Greg Osberg (USA)
Rafael Pastor (USA)
Andres Rodriguez (USA)
Felipe Rodriguez
Ierzy Romanski (Poland)
Ms. Gillian Rose (USA)
Jeff Ruhe
Anatoli Samochornov (USA)
Toshio Shirai (USA)
Ms. Eileen Slater-Cohen (USA)
Michael Spiessbach (USA)
Donald Taffner, Jr. (USA)
Jorge Vaillant (USA)
Dr. Kajohn Wanapun (USA)
Edward Wierzbowski (USA)
Dr. Yu Yuh-chao (USA)