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Frank Stanton: A Great American Hero

By Bill Baker

In the final week of 2006, America lost a great hero. I'm sure that many members of the public – especially younger people – did not recognize his face or even his name. But there are few Americans whose lives were not touched by Frank Stanton.

I first came to admire Frank Stanton when I was a student of broadcasting back in Cleveland, Ohio. His epic defense of the First Amendment during the Nixon era and his willingness to go to prison for his beliefs were soon to become the stuff of legend. In *Fighting for the First Amendment* (Praeger, 1997), Corydon Dunham recounts Stanton's historic battles. I recommend the book to every student of radio and television, and, indeed, to any American who cares about the integrity of the free press.

From early on, I was deeply impressed by Dr. Stanton's ethics and values. It was his courage and vision, in fact, that inspired me to go to graduate school. I wanted to follow in the footsteps of this great man who cared so passionately about the media and so keenly understood the power and responsibility that came with broadcasting.

Frank Stanton (l.) and Paul Lazarsfeld, co-inventors of the Lazarsfeld-Stanton Program Analyzer.

CBS Photo Archive

You can imagine my thrill when I had the opportunity to interview him during my doctoral research in the early 70s. For a young, aspiring broadcaster, it was an unforgettable encounter with a man who was making modern history. Yet, even though he was larger than life, the impression that stays with me to this day was one of kindness. Frank Stanton was a man of great importance, but he

felt it was important to take the time to talk to a kid trying to get a toehold in the business. That's the kind of person he was, and – perhaps more so than any of his storied accomplishments – that early encounter showed me why he was such a great man.

Over the years, I was fortunate to develop a relationship with Frank that has enriched my career and my understanding of the media immeasurably.

It was Frank who hired me to be the president of Thirteen/WNET, one of America's foremost public television stations, back in 1986. At the time, I was the head of a big commercial and satellite television company and I hadn't really considered public television. But Frank persuaded me that I could do more good and make a bigger impact in public-service broadcasting than anywhere else in the industry. And he was right.

Over the past two decades, as president and CEO of Thirteen/WNET, I have received invaluable guidance and insight from Frank. It was he who called and suggested I meet Charlie Rose, proposing him as a strong candidate for the host of a public-affairs program we were planning. The result of that phone call to me was the birth of an American media icon and one of the most respected series on television.

One of the things that stands out so markedly about Frank Stanton is that he was not a producer or a journalist or any of the other so-called "creative" types that we usually put on pedestals for their great achievements. Frank was a corporate executive. But his effect on this industry was as profound as anyone's. That's because his style and business ethics infused this powerful, omnipresent medium with purpose and value.

Today, unfortunately, we find ourselves in an era where media executives often treat media content as nothing more than a way to maximize the corporate bottom line. Regarding television and radio as nothing more than commodities diminishes the media's potential to serve the public. The airwaves are a public trust and deserve to be treated with respect and care. Frank Stanton understood this and devoted his life to creating a media environment defined by thoughtfulness, integrity and the highest standards of civilized discourse. Today's media executives could learn much by studying Frank Stanton's life and work.

The Stanton legacy lives on in this great industry. It is indelible. Stanton touched the very fiber of American media and strengthened it. I am just one of hundreds of people he touched directly and personally with his special genius. And through us, he reached nearly every television viewer and radio listener in the nation; that is, nearly every person in America.

Not long ago, at a benefit in New York, he leaned over to me and said, "Always fight for the First Amendment, there is *nothing* more important." Among all the glitz and glamour of broadcasting in America, Frank never forgot what was essential, what truly mattered. And those of us who care about the power of the media in our lives will never forget him.

Prior to assuming his position at Thirteen/WNET New York, Dr. Baker was president of Westinghouse Television and chairman of the cable and programming companies. During his 10 years at Westinghouse, five cable networks were launched, including Discovery Channel and the Disney Channel. He established PM Magazine and introduced Oprah Winfrey as a talk-show host.

eTEENS: Teens and Technology: The perfect storm?

By Carla Seal-Wanner

Today's teen, who has grown up in the Digital Age when *planned obsolescence* might as well be a brand name, is specially conditioned to expect powerful and creative technological tools for work, play, and to define themselves and their personal space. Lets face it; this is the first generation of youths that say they prefer computers to TV if they're forced to choose. Growing up literally surrounded by media, these kids entered early adolescence heavily dependent on their 24/7 access to all that cyberspace has to offer. Consequently they are among the reigning experts in the digital universe. There is nothing passive or passionless about their use of media; it is an extension of them. If the medium is the message, they've got it.

As I was working on this article my high-school daughter was curled up on the living-room couch studying for her SATII subject test in Literature. As she perused The College Board website to refresh her knowledge of the difference between a Shakespearean and Petrarchan sonnet she listened to stories from NPR's *This American Life* that downloads weekly podcasts to her laptop; "Mom, listen to this Halloween story about rabid raccoons … it's hilarious. Ira Glass is a genius!" After completing another online prep test to her satisfaction she took a study break to reserve an e-ticket on the Amtrak site for an upcoming visit to her boyfriend in Albany, downloaded new Belle and Sebastian songs from itunes, checked out on-demand digital cable movie choices for that night, while IMing pals in their first year of college whom she can no longer see on a daily basis. Study, entertainment, socializing and commerce all without leaving the couch! All she needed from me was a shared sigh over Ira Glass's brilliance, some discussion about our evening movie options and my credit-card number.

Most notable in this flurry of *inter*-activity was the fact that she conducted it with the ease of an expert who no longer is aware that what they are doing is complex. I will admit that the cognitive parallel processing involved in these tech-savvy skills raise my parental eyebrows as I wonder: *Does the media multitasking distract her from the task at hand—namely, studying? Is her capacity*

E-teen doing homework.

to concentrate diminished by the constant interruptions of dialog boxes popping up as temptations to engage in anything but the work that demands her focused attention? Knowing that neuroscientists have only recently started to study these questions I put these legitimate parental worries aside for the moment as I silently reflect on how incomparably rich and proficient her media life is than mine was when I was an adolescent.

The new technologies can be tools for training to be a pro-active, self-sufficient, creative and productive young adult…giving teens something they don't have in many other contexts: control.

As I considered the knowledge necessary to access what she needed to get her tasks done, the choices she made about how to manage the necessary resources, as well as the independent technical mastery she exhibited, I realized something profoundly obvious. The new technologies can be tools for training to be a pro-active, self-sufficient, creative and productive young adult. These tools allow for a level of independence and self-management that adolescents have always wanted to demonstrate to their peers, parents, teachers and themselves that until recently, they have been hard-pressed to pull off. This fact alone can be enormously threatening to parents; tools that legitimately give them reason to tell us they *really can* manage on their own. Hello, Brave New World!

This observation clarified for me that the virtual love fest between teens and the new *personal technologies* derives from the exact match between their needs and the capacity of these tools to satisfy them. Through technology they have access to many of the same resources that adults have; giving teens something they don't feel they have in many other contexts: control. Bingo…the *perfect storm*.

John Carey

If a teenager were writing this article she might consult the online encyclopedia Wikipedia to explain the relevance of this *phrase-du-jour* to my argument.

> *The phrase "perfect storm" refers to the simultaneous occurrence of events which, taken individually, would be far less powerful than the result of their chance combination.*

Teens have always been the vanguard of new-technology adoption. Embracing what's new and slightly threatening to the rest of society establishes the requisite distance from the status quo *and* of course the dreaded grownups that have created it. For decades research on young peoples' media usage has shown that just as children are making the transition to their teenage years their media use hits its zenith. In the past, their voracious appetite for consuming edgy pop culture that set them apart from adults explained this phenomenon. Coming of age today, as technology has transformed the way we access information and each other, teens also realize the potential this powerful connectivity has for delivering the independence they desperately covet on their way to adulthood. These tools fit directly into the desire to demonstrate self-reliance in conducting their education, entertainment, social networking, life planning and organizational management. Though it's hard to envision a more empowering environment in which to explore *virtual* adulthood, many observers decry teens seemingly whirling-dervish ultra-plugged-in lifestyles.

Most articles about teens and the new personal digital technologies that connect youth to the all-media-all-the-time world we live in focus on the statistics describing their intensified media use. The data from these studies tend to reinforce the stereotypical concern that teens could be too wired for their own good. As a canvas for describing adolescent media usage these statistics are informative, but they do not paint the entire picture. Yet, the outline they sketch is a useful starting point for describing teens' relationship to media and technology.

Recent estimates put the average teen (12-17-year-olds) spending some 44 hours per week—or the equivalent of a half-day more than a full-time workweek—immersed in media. With a quarter to a third of teens reporting using another media "most of the time" while watching TV the extent of "media multi-tasking" makes it difficult to know which media is used for what amount of time. Data from various recent studies provide a confusing picture about how this breaks down by media. Some studies indicate that the average teen watches about 23 hours of TV per week, that they spend two to three hours daily on Internet activities, and listen to the radio 12 hours per week. Other recent national surveys show that in an average week, teens spent 16.7 hours online versus 13.6 hours watching TV teens suggesting that they now spend

more time on the Internet than with any other form of media. Whatever the precise breakdown of media use is, the approximately 11 million or 87% of teens online appear to be adept at creating their own media environments.

Of those nine in ten teen Internet users, one out of every two use the Internet in a home with a broadband connection where they spend time doing homework-related and other information searches, instant messaging (or IMing) and emailing, downloading music and video files, and creating digital media of their own. These media habits are facilitated by the fact that many teens who can afford it (or more likely whose parents can afford to buy it for them) own much of this technology, making it available to them 24 hours per day: 65% of teens have a cell phone, 80 percent own or have regularly access to a computer, 83 percent have access to DVD players, and 52 percent have video-game consoles.

Adding an interesting observation to the above statistics, a study just released by the Kaiser Family Foundation suggests that the computer promotes media multitasking by creating the technological capacity to integrate media. Further, these findings demonstrate that teens who have the greatest opportunity, as defined by availability, access time, the motivation to conduct multiple activities, and tasks that are most conducive to parallel processing, are the heaviest media multitaskers. This suggests the fascinating possibility that teens who are heavy computer users may be adapting the way they accomplish tasks due to the capacities fostered by the very nature of a fully wired media environment. Development psychologists and neuroscientists are just beginning to unpack the potential positive or negative significance of these findings for information processing and learning.

While I agree that teens are enveloped by a wired world they do not seem trapped by it. To the contrary, it appears that their lives can be facilitated by it.

Despite the fact that the jury is out on this question it is no surprise that these statistics and observations stand many parents' and educators' hair on end. They worry that the seductive aspects of interactive media and technology distract teens from their studies, may contribute to social isolation, result in overexposure to inappropriate adult content, encourage risk-taking behavior, and condition them to be hyperactive parallel processors who can not settle down long enough to do the focused work demanded in high school to prepare them for entrance to college or the work force. Hard to imagine an upside to this?

While I agree that teens are enveloped by a wired world they do not seem to be trapped by it. To the contrary, it appears that their lives can be facilitated by it. Without careful consideration of the confluence of factors that draw young *digerati* to find solutions to the characteristic issues that consume them during the adolescent years with technology, they can appear to some as megamedia consumers without a cause. However, it is far more informative to consider what the archetypical needs of adolescence are and how they are assuaged by the new technology (i.e. the need for personal space, the desire to develop communication skills, the need to develop and display competence,

mastery and creative expression, the need for companionship and feeling connected, the need for sexual exploration and the need to take risks). These are some of the ways technology can facilitate the psychological, socio-emotional and intellectual needs of adolescents. This is not a comprehensive list, but it identifies essential benefits technology can provide during these years.

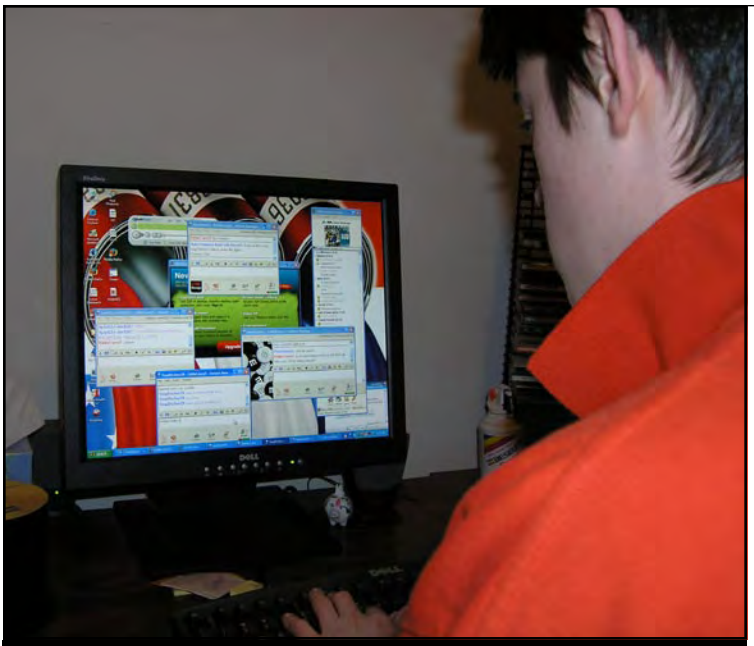
The need for personal space

Typically teenagers want to be left alone much of the time. And, though their behavior can seem antisocial, they need this time to themselves and its generally better for the rest of us if they get it. Technology allows them to have their cake and eat it too: they have access to the outside world while holding up in their own private spaces. Most importantly it allows them to control the use of these tools without the infantilizing barrier of asking a grown up for access. Do you recall having to wait for your turn to use the family telephone and trying to drag it into a closet so your younger sibs and parents could not hear your conversations? Could you ever imagine a world in which you could have company during all those lonely homework hours by doing your homework with your IM window open to chat with your pals, all out of range of parental eyes and ears? Think about how liberating it would have been to be able to read about or view a video on your own computer on a private topic, i.e. menstruation or contraception, out of view of your parents ?

The new personal, wireless, customizable, micro-portable, securable, telecommunication and entertainment devises that teens are wired to are ***privacy by design***. It is no surprise that the password-protected devices that teens have become dependent on for local and global access would be a threat to parents. They perform that function which parents want to prolong as long as possible: the separation of them from us. These tools secure the firewall that goes up in early adolescence that increasingly allows for the management of their cultural and social life by them not us. Through mastering the many features of these tools that allow them to protect their privacy, download music and programming selected by them alone, and use creative text messaging codes that are indecipherable by most parents, they are in control of these domains.

If there is one aspect of adolescence over which conflicts between parents and teens have arisen from time immemorial it is the teens' need for privacy and the parents' difficulty letting them have it. Of course parents have the (usually legitimate) worry for their academic success or safety as a motive, while our kids have the abject need to demonstrate their maturity in making their own decisions in these spheres. Of course the goal should be the responsible use of these tools. If parents decide that their kids are not living up to these expectations they can always stop paying for the service or deny access. Most teens use these tools appropriately, well, *at least* as responsibly as adults do.

There are also useful hard lessons learned through having the ability to express yourself freely online. As many adults have learned through misjudgments while online, digital communication can lead to breaches in personal privacy. Teens have to learn to be self-protective about what they communicate online because information they might not want shared can spread faster than a wildfire. Unfortunately, though we can warn them



E-teen IMing to four friends.

about possible missteps, taking the steps is up to them.

The desire to develop communication skills

Teenagers seem to have harnessed technology to learn to communicate adeptly and more due largely to the sheer volume of different kinds of writing they do on the computer. Apart from the school assignments that are aided by online resources, they write and post their own personal profiles and contribute to the social networking world of blogs, as well as produce a bulk of email and IM messages daily. About a quarter of all teens keep a blog and 38% read them. Then there are the serious gamers. For both the casual and hardcore gamers who participate in such obsessions as "Massively Multiplayer Online Games" or high-end simulations, writing is the primary mode of communication. Trying out your writing skills and voice in these dynamic contexts has two clear benefits; practice and feedback, both essential for writers. Sharing your work as a writer is often the biggest hurdle to get over. These enticing opportunities allow for a kind of free expression that seems to take some of the intimidation out of experimenting with writing styles.

The copious amount of social networking done by teens is an engaging way to participate in society through both authoritative and peer-driven networks. Add to this exposure the heady fact that their entries have a global reach. At a time in life when many adolescents' natural tendency would be to hide under a rock until it's over, technology provokes them to be participating citizens of the world, traversing the globe with their finger tips and leaving their mark with their brain. Not a bad way to get them to crawl out of their self-protective shell.

Anything that gets teens writing with such enthusiasm and bulk can't be bad for them in the long run. While the content may not initially be of high caliber it's a foray into adult activity that previously had a more difficult entry point. Testing these waters no longer has an age barrier.

Some argue that the rapidity of writing and the abbreviations teens use for chatting online and emailing will lead to diminished spelling and writing skills. This would be something to worry about if teens did not know that this is a distinct mode of communication—one

John Carey

in which perfection and eloquence is traded for speed of delivery and clever coding. Teens are well aware that they are using different language skills than those they would employ in an analytic paper, a short story submitted for school or publication, their college essay, or a letter to their grandmother.

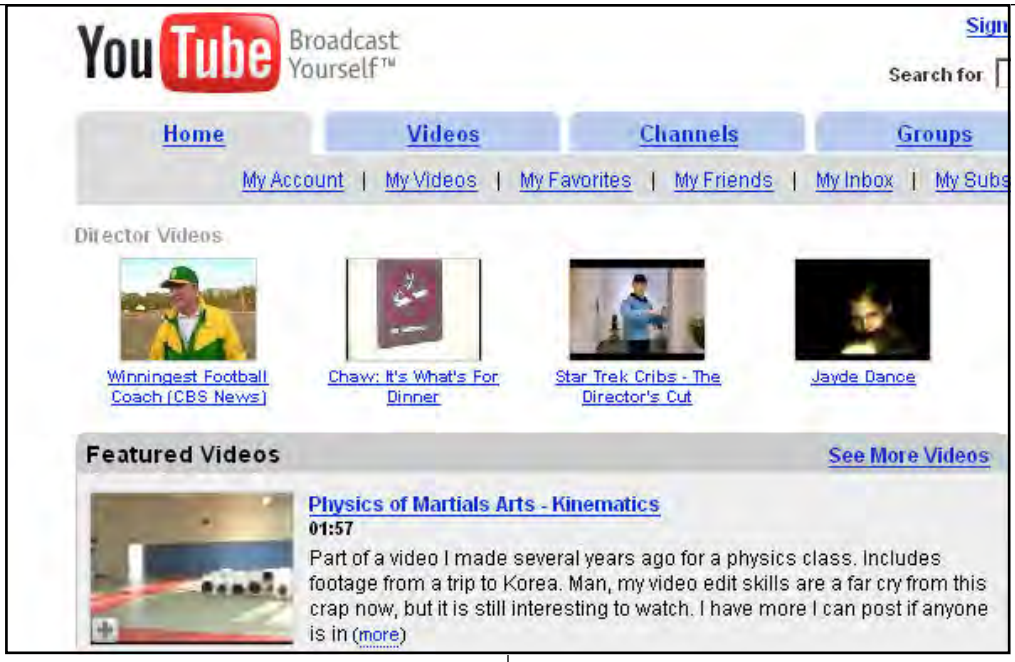
Beware: adults may get what they wish for; we could be the ones who seem illiterate if we don't learn some of these new language "skills." Not to worry, parents; since it is no secret that teens favor texting over talking on their cell phone, Cingular (currently the largest cell phone service in the United States), recently announced that they will hold a series of "texting bees" to teach parents to be more adept at communicating in this mode with their teens (*A Parent's Guide to Teenspeak by Text Message*, NYT, November 26, 2006). This promotion, in reality a shameless marketing ploy to increase sales and services, will probably be a huge success as too many parents don't quite get that the reason teens favor texting is largely because it is the cryptology of their peers and not ours. I'm afraid this is yet another one of those parental conundrums that should leave us sighing *damned if you do, damned if you don't* rather than anxiously trying to decipher letters and iconography not intended for our failing vision.

The need to develop and display competence, mastery and creative expression

Related to the above-mentioned desire to hone their ability to articulate and express themselves in writing, being recognized for your successes is perhaps the number one desire (albeit often unspoken) of teens. Just like the rest of us they enjoy getting noticed for their interests, talent, and skills. To satisfy this itch they adopt technological solutions to their work and social needs. They are highly motivated to master the cutting-edge technological tools they need to create and display their own work and self-expressive creations. Adolescents, notorious risk-takers, plunge in and are plugged in if not with ease with more determination than most of the rest of the population to put something out there in cyberspace to get reactions. Teens are leaders when it comes to harnessing new media literacy for personal creative expression.

That's a lot different from previous generations who were passive recipients of what the media industry had to offer. More than half of online teens are digital content creators, meaning that they write, create art, produce videos, compose music, build websites and design games that use all forms of multimedia. Teen bloggers may be the most tech-savvy and heaviest Internet users, with older girls leading blogging activity among teens. On blogs and personal profile sites they post regular multimedia presentations, expressing themselves through words, moving and still images and soundtracks.

Many teenagers get involved in producing digital content through MySpace.com, a social-networking website that lets people link to friends and create profiles with images and music. With roughly 90 million members, reaching 51% of 13-17- year- olds online (which is 85% of all 13-17 year olds), approximately 18 million visitors per month, and almost equal popularity among males and females (50.2% male, 49.8% female regular members), MySpace is the place to be online. Other hot destinations are Facebook, LiveJournal, Xanga, Deviant Art, Flickr, YouTube—all



representative of the new generation of sites where teens can write journals and create their profiles and blogs.

Building a profile on these sites is the perfect example of personal expression, as no one else dictates the content or creative choices teens make. The various customization tools available allow teens to create buddy icons or other distinct IM communication features that give users unique online identities. Using every tool that allows for instant messaging, posting personal profiles, and writing the "away" messages that keep them connected to their IM network while they are away from the computer (or need some uninterrupted study time?) teens are the masters of these online multimedia studios. These profiles and journals are part of their identity—that is, the identity that they present to their primary target audience, their peers.

Also sprinkled through these websites' millions of pages of discourse and comments are topics that that range from such typical teen interests as TV and film, music, fashion, high school and college searches to earnest discussions about politics, local and global concerns, community service and protests. For many, this thirst for knowledge is driven by a desire to make the world a better place. For others there is no altruistic intent whatsoever. But, the common theme is that being in-the-know gives teens the coveted position of ascendancy over others (their favorite place to be, especially with their peers).

Learning how to satisfy the desire to demonstrate knowledge and sophistication in mature ways will stand them in good stead for most challenges that are thrown at them in adulthood.

The need for companionship and feeling connected

Email and instant messages, along with the ability to be in 24-hour contact via cell phone and/or text messaging relieves some of unquenchable thirst for social interaction during the adolescent years. These forms of communication

that allow for constant accessibility are a sure antidote to loneliness *when* you want company. And no one knows better than the parent who gets to the voice mail more often than his or her child that they *have* to want the company to use it. The favorite feature of these devices seems to be that teens can selectively communicate on their own terms and schedule. An apparent match made in heaven.

In addition, being able to communicate in text seems to break down barriers for teens who may feel insecure about their spontaneous spoken skills and more confident with the hip cryptography of texting. Having a private channel where secrets can be delivered even more cautiously than with a whisper can be an obvious advantage. Moreover, for shy teens making perilous forays into this social world can be aided by this mode of communication, where you can pause long enough to reply without the unease that usually ends in embarrassment. Though texting can be a tricky skill to master with the speed required, its appeal is enhanced by these factors.

Another component of this need for self-directed social contact is the desire for immediate gratification. The so-called "sticky technologies " (read: addictive), such as email, IMing, cell and PDA text messaging embrace teenagers' need to have an instant response to their queries. Typically impatient and often impulsive, teens rely on these devices for quick reactions to thoughts, ideas and plans. It is the perfect reciprocal system because those replying to messages have the same expectations for immediate feedback. With a direct line to the recipient plans can be updated up to the moment you ultimately meet.

Having grown up with these telecommunication tools, it is no surprise teens tend to take the convenience they provide for granted. They have no clue what it used to be like when you would sit waiting for the phone to ring, hoping no one in your family would get a call first, potentially blowing your chances for a date that night!

Given the natural preoccupation with sex and sexuality during adolescence, having real-time sex education a mere click away can be a Pandora's Box.

The need for sexual exploration

The adolescents' need to try out sexual roles, to test the waters for their attraction to others, and experiment with new found knowledge about sexuality finds a welcome home online. In chat rooms, social-networking blogs and on personal profiles, or simply through "talking" online teens can interact as themselves, anonymously or even as fictional characters to explore sexually explicit topics for their edification and/or titillation without risk of embarrassment. They also regularly use these resources to find out important information as well about safe sex and sexual health.

That said, having a virtual context in which to learn about and try out your sexual identity doesn't mean nerve-wracking mistakes are avoided. Given the natural preoccupation with sex and sexuality during adolescence, having real-time sex education a mere click away can be a Pandora's Box. Add to the enticement the fact that they can even do this anonymously through secret identities, and you are playing with fire.

The seductive and addictive qualities of cyber communication are well documented for any age group that uses email or chat rooms to share and gather intimate information. You don't have to be a shrink to know that the immediate gratification of electronic communication heightens desire exponentially. It doesn't even have to be of an intimate nature to be addictive for many of us. It's not hard to figure out why intimacy online easily turns into a feeding frenzy for many teens. Don't you remember getting your first love notes from potential suitors? Well, now teens don't have to wait for the next day at school to check their lockers for that hidden note, or a postal delivery that could take an unbearable several days to reach you.

Whether we like it or not, this is the dominant way our teenagers communicate with each other and the world. They have to learn how to do it with a comfort level that allows them to explore who they are without rendering themselves vulnerable. We have to give them to freedom to do so. A sure way to destroy our partnership with teens is to blame hormones alone for their online forays into experimenting with their sexual identities.

Certainly our worst fears are confirmed by the sexual crimes against minors that are perpetuated by digital communication. Though hormones are involved here, blaming the Internet for fanning the flames of adolescent sexual needs as the perpetrator of those relatively few online predatory crimes against minors is akin to blaming adult email love affairs for adultery. Obviously other factors are at play. Teens have to learn to protect themselves from predators they confront anywhere in their lives. Teaching our kids to be smart, cautious, self-assured and willing to get help when needed will insure that the benefits of these tools outweigh the risks.

On the bright side, looking back on some of the dating faux pas of my own teen years (that can still make me blush even when I am alone), having a non face-to-face mode of communication to try out my sexual identity would have been a very cool thing!

The need to take risks

Part of being a teenager is walking that fine line that allows you to have the thrill of risk-taking without paying any life-altering price for your (often brain-dead) actions. This may be one of the greatest virtues of having access to powerful communication tools and the Internet. It is so much better to try out lame pranks or dubious behavior in cyberspace. No doubt teens figure out this is the safest self-defense training ground available.

It is abundantly clear that the only way to protect youth from possible dangers online is to equip them with the skills for protecting themselves. Teaching them about online seductions or predation, how to protect their privacy online and ask for help when they need it are the key lessons of Internet safety. At the end of the day, no amount of control will teach them these essential lessons, only advice that respects them, their interests and needs as media consumers will. Adults have to be mindful that media is much more pervasive in their lives then it was in ours; it is certainly not ever going to become less so. Striving to keep lines of communication open with adults is essential, but when cyber push comes to cyber slug it is our teens who have to be able to defuse situations and protect themselves.

You can't teach your teenager to drive a car without putting her in the driver's

seat. Helping our kids become savvy and safe navigators in cyberspace requires the same parental supports: specific instructions and thoughtful guidelines, skill practice, trust and then, a lot of hand wringing.

My MO as a parent has always been: the more trust you convey, the more your child wants to be trusted.

A parental decision to cut a teenager off Internet access, on the basis of fear, is the equivalent of the proverbial finger in the dike. The Internet is here to stay. Along with the infamous preadolescent "birds n' bees" talk, discussing rules for Internet safety has become a "rite of passage". It should be part of every school curriculum starting as early as kids begin to go online, and be part of every family's "house rules". This is why every Internet service or site with a teen audience has a Safety Tips section with links to other online security resources (i.e. OnGuard Online/FTC, BlogSafety. Com, Netsmartz.org, SafeTeens.com, Common Sense Media, SafeFamilies. org). Parents and educators should insist that Internet- active teens know how to use these resources, but be careful not to assume the worst about what they are doing online.

My MO as a parent has always been: the more trust you convey, the more your child wants to be trusted.

Adults may be cynical about freedom being just another thing to loose, but for adolescents it's their lifeblood. To the extent that technology can facilitate teens' testing their wings before they jump off any cliffs, parents must learn to embrace it.

Is this an overly optimistic view of why teens are drawn to technology?

Perhaps. Many argue that there is a downside to having the capacity to be hyper stimulated 24 hours per day, inundated with information, habituated to a multi-tasking way of life, and given access to unfiltered adult content all at your finger tips. Could it be that teens dependence on technology causes them to procrastinate, become increasingly antisocial, conditioned to expect fast paced information delivery and immediately gratification, lack the self-control to moderate their use, and may even limit their physical contact with people and curtail physical activity? Possibly. Some of the dangers decried by adults of growing up in this media saturated environment could prove to be legitimate. There is much to discuss and study regarding both short and long-term influences of teen's media habits. However, given how bored, disconnected and anxious many adolescents feel during these tumultuous years, the productive and creative use teens make of technology strikes me as largely a win-win situation. (Call it a libertarian point of view?)

Most importantly, the educational power of multimedia technologies can level the playing fields by opening up opportunities for all kinds of learners to absorb information and express themselves. We know that teenagers learn in a variety of ways: some learn best with words, oral instruction or visualizations. The variety of methods for presenting information allows students to discover their own personal paths of inquiry and preferred styles of knowledge representation. It gives them a wider range of options for expressing this knowledge

then was previously available. If some teens' access to these tools is limited so is educational equity.

It is a tragedy that despite the enormous growth in youth technology adoptions 13% of American teenagers—or about three million people—still do not use the Internet. In addition, the entry cost for many of the wireless technology, communication devices and media services is prohibitively high for many families. Those teens who remain offline and have limited access to technology are clearly defined by lower levels of income and are disproportionately likely to be African American. Teens from lower-income households cannot afford the same technological advantages that the majority of young people have today.

When we talk about the digital divide being about the lack of access to technology we must acknowledge how this economic disparity causes an even more insidious type of inequality. This is the divide between children who grow up using technology in discriminating ways through developing the skills to use the powerful tools for communication and creativity in ways that enhance their lives and those who do not. These adolescents do not come of age with this new set of tools in hand, putting them at a significant disadvantage for educational and job success. Removing this chasm is a responsibility worthy of our precious job titles as parents, educators, media producers, industry gatekeepers and our nations government representatives. This is a fundamental concern that must be addressed in our society and around the globe.

All teens should have access to this rich connectivity and the capacity to make your own media. We must insure that the entire generation shares the same expectation: to be both discerning consumers and creators of media. As with every new technological advancement it's up to the consumers to determine its value to themselves and society. We have heard this wise critique before regarding other pervasive media.

As Edward R. Murrow famously said: "This instrument, television, can entertain, it can inform, yes, and it can even inspire. But it all depends on the will of the humans who operate it. Otherwise it is just lights and wires in a box."

Teenagers are setting new standards for how to use the leading-edge boxes of wires and light. My bet is on seeing some inspiring digital footprints along the shoreline in the wake of *this* storm.

The statistics on teen media and technology usage are compiled from recent studies conducted by The Kaiser Family Foundation Media Studies, KFF.org; The Pew Internet & American Life Project, pewinternet.org; Comscore Metrics report cited in BusinessWeek(http://www.businessweek.com/print/technology/content/nov2005/tc20051115_908925.htm), NowPublic (http://www.nowpublic.com/myspace_stats); and Bloomberg/ Los Angeles Times and Harris polls 2005 – 2006.

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Plowing the Field of Dreams

What is fueling the exploding growth of innovation and production in television's online future. | **By John V. Pavlik**

Television is in the midst of a new stage of inspiration and innovation. The advent of both digital technology and the Internet have led to a radical explosion in the development and distribution of television, or video, in an online environment.

The transformation of television involves at least ten dimensions, four of which were revealed in the first part of this article in the Fall 2006 issue of *Television Quarterly*: the medium of online delivery, the devices for accessing, displaying or watching video, the audience or users of video and the producers of video. On the following pages we examine video content, the distributors, financers and regulators of video, the digital technologies that are fueling the explosive growth in video production and the inventors and innovators of the next generation of television.

One of ten Americans watches broadcast television programs online, according to the Conference Board Consumer Internet barometer study released last October. The national survey of 10,000 households across the U.S. shows that news is the most popular form of online programming viewed. The reasons people watch TV online are personal convenience and avoiding commercials. Yet few indicate they would be willing to pay for online television programs.

Video Content Itself

In many cases, video content online is no different than that available through conventional delivery systems. In fact, in many cases television stations and network news operations produce the same type of television news reports that they produce for over-the-air or cable distribution, but deliver it instead via the Internet.

Online video is often the same shows, programs, movies and the like, simply made available online and viewed on computers, hand-helds or what-ever else the viewer likes. This can be valuable access to archival video material that might otherwise be difficult to find. Among the exemplars of this type is the collection of video interviews conducted since 1956 by Richard D. Heffner, long-time host of the public television program, *The Open Mind*, the longest-running interview program on television. Historian and University Professor of Communication and Public Policy at Rutgers University,

Heffner continues to conduct these important interviews and the program is still on the air. An increasingly complete archive of the program is available online at www.theopenmind.tv, with video, transcripts and more. A visit to the site on May 12, 2006 offered access to Heffner's classic interview with Malcolm X, conducted June 12, 1963.

Supplementing such archival video programming is extensive live streaming video of programs at various arts, educational and cultural institutions such as the Museum of Television & Radio. Illustrative is the May 15 web cast of a live seminar hosted by the Museum on the popular television series, *Boston Legal*. The seminar featured live commentary from the program's cast and creators, including stars William Shatner and Candice Bergen as well as creator and executive producer David E. Kelley.

In many cases, original video production is designed specifically for online distribution. One very good illustration of such original video production customized for the online environment is Viacom's mtvU, the original broadband web site produced by MTV for college and university students. Among the best video reports yet produced by mtvU is "Translating Genocide: Three Students Journey to Sudan," a 20-minute original online video produced in documentary style by three U.S. college students who traveled to Africa. Premiered online on April 7, 2005, the video featured an on-location examination of the genocide in Darfur, supplemented by original photographs online (www.mtvu.com).

Increasingly, major media companies are experimenting with original content produced for new media devices. In the case of News Corporation's Fox Television, the network has commissioned a cell-phone serial drama *24 Conspiracy* dubbed a mobisode (i.e., a mobile episode). Director Eric Young was hired to produce 24 one-minute mobile episodes for a spin-off of the hit series *24*. He was reportedly most vexed by the display of bullet holes, which are not uncommon on the violent drama series. Mr. Young learned that making video for a pocket-sized screen is quite different than producing for a 27-inch television set. His solution was to make the bullet holes extra large and use twice as much blood to make the bullet holes and wounds easily visible on a cellphone screen.

Well known for its music videos, MTV is also developing original video programming for cell phones. Its first domestic cell-phone production is a series of three-minute documentary style video reports on the world of hip hop. Starring Sway Calloway, "Sway's Hip-Hop Owner's Manual" debuted in 2006 (http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/28/magazine/28mtv.html?pagewanted=all).

Another example of a provider of video produced exclusively for mobile devices is NBC Mobile, which is producing original news and feature material specifically and exclusively for hand-helds such as cell phones (http://www.mobitv.com/). An example is NBC Mobile's Wine Tasting with Ed Deitch, whose mobile video reports have examined topics such as new electric wine bottle openers and new vintners. NBC Mobile also produces a video blog (vlog) for cell phones, such as a 3-minute December 16, 2005 report on the Iraqi elections, or Entertainment Buzz, a vlog on what's hot in Hollywood, a series 2- to 3-minute segments on movies, celebrities and such.

A number of news organizations are producing original live news coverage of breaking events delivered via the web, including either to the desktop or to hand-helds. Among them are WDEL television, which has debuted a live online video news program providing Delaware's top stories of the day. Similarly, WCBS2.com/KCAL provided live web-exclusive video coverage of Hurricane Katrina on August 31, 2005. Included was on-location and in-studio video. It marked a first for this station to go live online.

Not all the experimentation is by familiar news organizations. The Sherman Oaks, CA-based Gotv networks (www.gotvnetworks.com) is making video reports for mobile devices, with a stated objective of tailoring video news for viewing on two-by-two inch screens. A four-minute December12, 2005 Gotv report provided breaking news coverage of Golden Globe nominations in LA, combining still imagery with video close-ups of host and producer Athenia Veliz-Dunn.

Media organizations are also testing the online video waters of various television formats. Among them is the Late Night Fox Show, an online network talk show which on February 25, 2005 featured American Idol contestant Jon Peter Lewis (www.Fox.com).

Consider the online video under development at the Integrated Media Systems Center (IMSC) at the University of Southern California Under. Directed by media pioneer and veteran news executive Adam Clayton Powell III, the IMSC is engaged in creating the next generation of journalism technologies, including innovative online video applications. Through a partnership with the MacNeil-Lehrer Productions (MLP), the IMSC is exploring immersive, interactive, three-dimensional audio and video formats and tools for recording, production and transmission of news and information, including via the Internet (http://viterbi.usc.edu/news/news/2006/news_20060201.htm).

My partnership with Steve Feiner, a computer professor at Columbia University, has produced another avenue of online video applications. Using technology called mobile augmented reality, video and other multimedia is embedded into the real world but in virtual fashion. A user dons a mobile augmented reality system dubbed the Mobile Journalist Workstation (MJW). It involves a see-through head-worn display, the Global Positioning System (GPS) and high-speed wireless Internet access. Via the MJW, the user essentially enters an immersive story called "the situated documentary" exploring past events narrated interactively. My students have produced a series of these situated documentaries based on past events at Columbia's Morningside Heights campus on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, including the 1968 student strike, the story of Col. Edwin Armstrong, the Columbia engineering professor who invented FM radio, and the prehistory of the campus when in the mid-19th century it was home to the Bloomingdale Asylum for the Insane. Visitors to the campus who wear the MJW can walk the campus and in a sense relive the events of the past through a virtual video exploration, seeing the sights and sounds of the past overlaid in translucent fashion on the campus as it exists today. Examples are available online at (http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/graphics/projects/mars/mjwSd.html).

The emergence of original video

Backpack of the future: Experimental equipment for mobile augmented reality systems. A much more compact system has since been created.

programming for mobile devices has not gone unnoticed by the national organizations that recognize and award excellence in the media. The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS), for instance, in November, 2005, announced a new category for the Emmy Awards, a category that would recognize outstanding original programming for computers, cell phones and other hand-held devices, including the video iPod (Carey and Greenberg, 2006, *Television Quarterly*). Academy president Peter O. Price said 74 entries were received from newspapers, magazines and movie studios, the greatest number ever in any category. "In this digital world, everyone is capable of launching video programming," he said.

Notably, TV or video online is not usually called programming, the term usually used in television parlance. Rather, online video is typically called content. Online programming would refer to the software code the runs the Internet or other computer-based applications.

The distributors of online video

Many producers of video are simply making their video available online through their own web sites. For example, CBS News makes its video available online at http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/i_video/main500251.shtml

as do the other networks (e.g., see ABC News video on demand at http://abcnews.go.com/ or CNN video at www.cnn.com). Particularly popular at the networks and their affiliates is supplementing stories reported on evening newscasts with additional web video related to those stories. One example from May 12, 2006 on NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams was a report on Broadway celebrity Maria Friedman, star of "The Woman in White," who was interviewed about her battle with breast cancer. Augmenting a brief interview on the evening news Williams invited viewers to visit the NBC web site for additional video from his interview with Friedman (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12761265/).

News media are also inclined to make their video available through online video aggregators. MSN video, for instance, provides an extensive combination of video from a variety of sources (http://video.msn.com).

Another increasingly popular video aggregator is Google video (http://video.google.com/). Based in Mountain View, California, Google groups its video into a variety of pre-sorted categories, including the Top 100 (most viewed videos). High on this list last May was the complete video from the annual White House Correspondents Association dinner, featuring a roast of President Bush in 2006 http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4973617448770513925. This year's dinner drew extensive news media coverage, particularly of a Bush impersonator who wore a facial prosthetic to complete his impersonation. Little attention was paid to the politically incorrect satire of Stephen Colbert, who was the officially featured comedian of the night, but his lampooning of the President is available in its entirety on-demand online. Next is Google Picks, which Google describes as "a small section on Google Video that highlights videos that have been selected by Googlers as suggestions for cool videos that users might want to watch. Think about it like the 'Staff Picks' section at a video store. Selection criteria may include, among others, the following: uniqueness of content, user value, newness to index, seasonality, and quality of video." Then, there's random, animation, comedy, commercials, educational, movies, music videos, news, sports and TV shows.

Google video as well as other search engines such as Yahoo permit users to search for video. Searching for video is generally limited to keyword searching of the title or text descriptions of the video, but experimental tools are emerging that permit searching based on video content itself.

Nielsen/NetRatings Inc. reports that Google drew 7.3 million unique visitors in April, 2006, making it the fourth largest online video provider (www.nielsen-netratings.com/pr/pr_060511.pdf -). Number one is San Mateo, CA-based YouTube (www.youtube.com), which attracted 12.5 million unique U.S. visitors that month. YouTube invites individual users to upload their own personal videos for sharing with other interested persons. It is as much a social networking site as a video provider, and it may be in large part its function as a social networking site that is drawing the large number of unique visitors. Last September YouTube Inc. solidified its position as the leading video-sharing site when it signed a deal with Warner Music Group to air its music videos and share advertising revenue. With its $1.65 billion acquisition of YouTube the following month, Google has strengthened its

commitment to the delivery of online video. Numbers two and three on the online video list with more than ten and seven million unique visitors respectively in April are Microsoft's MSN and News Corp.'s MySpace.com. MySpace is also largely a social networking site.

Many bloggers and podcasters are also including video on their web sites (e.g., http://www.mtv.com/podcasts/#/podcasts/). A number of websites serve as aggregators or directories of the thousands of video on blogs and podcasts, including mefeedia (http://mefeedia.com/), podcastvideos (http://www.podcastvideos.org/) and vlogdir (http://vlogdir.com). Although much of this video can be of dubious quality, narrow or personal interest, there are occasional times when video blogs and podcasts have been valuable. When the tsunami hit Banda Ache, Indonesia, in 2004, much of the most viewed video of the destructive impact of the video was provided via personal video blogs (http://www.waveofdestruction.org/?s=Phuket).

Aggregators of motion pictures are also drawing a growing amount of online viewers. CinemaNow and Movielink are among the premier movie aggregators. CinemaNow (www.cinemanow.com) provides movies from Sony, MGM and Lionsgate, with current features such as *Fun with Dick and Jane*, as well scores of older movies in a wide range of categories. Movielink (www.movielink.com) provides movies from five studios, including Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Universal Studios and Warner Bros. Studios. Current features include movies such as *Brokeback Mountain* and *Memories of a Geisha*, as well as a large collection of old movies. Prices for both services range from a few dollars to rent an older movie to $20 or more to rent or buy a current release, with viewing restrictions in effect. Viewers have various payment options, including per minute viewing for certain types of video content (e.g., mature). Warner Brothers says it will make hundreds of its films and shows available this summer for paid download through the file-sharing site BitTorrent. Peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing networks are especially popular for downloading television programs. Sites such as *Limewire* (www.limewire.com), well-known for sharing of music files, are also heavily trafficked by users downloading popular television programs, from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to the *Gilmore Girls*, much of which is available at no cost and it is not always clear as the legality of the downloads. A wide variety of sites also offer legal downloads of television programs for a fee (e.g., http://showsplanet.com/, http://fasttvdownloads.com/, http://www.tvcentral.org). Viewers join these sites, pay a fee, and then download any of thousands of television programs and view them on the computer or a television set connected to an Internet access device.

Another increasingly popular video aggregator online is Apple's iTunes Music Store, which made its name selling copyright-protected music files for download to iPods or other MP3 devices (www.itunes.com). With the video iPod (and other video capable devices) on the market, selling videos for downloading was a logical next step. Among the options available for the online consumer are buying an entire season of a TV show such as *Desperate Housewives* at a discount, downloading any of more than 3,000 Music Videos, or hundreds of

television shows to download and watch, ad-free at $1.99 an episode. Programs are provided from a diverse array of TV providers, including ABC, NBC, MTV, ESPN, Sci Fi Channel, Comedy Central, Disney, Nickelodeon and Showtime. Fox Entertainment provides via iTunes downloadable episodes of *24* and *Prison Break*. Viewers can also Create iPod-compatible versions of their home movies using iTunes and can buy and send music videos and TV shows as gifts to anyone with an email address. They can organize their videos into playlists, and limit children's access to videos. Viewers can also access reviews and ratings of shows from other viewers.

In this age of TV-show downloading will the role of the affiliate be undercut?

One question that arises for network affiliates in this age of TV-show downloading is: will the role of the affiliate be undercut? If viewers can easily download a show after it has aired, will they be less inclined to tune into a re-run on a network affiliate? The answer seems obvious.

Stimulating the growth of video distributed online is digital video start-up Brightcove, whose technology enables anyone who produces video to easily and inexpensively distribute it for viewing or downloading from various web sites. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that groups as diverse as a Yoruba language and culture center in Nigeria, a news site in the Slovak Republic and a political blog in the U.S. called Wizbang (www.wizbangblog.com) are all distributing their video via the web using Brightcove technology. Brightcove is not the only provider of Internet video technology spurring the wave of diverse online producers. Others such as XOS Technologies are making it possible for universities large and small to let their alumni or others tune in online to collegiate sports from anywhere in the world.

The financers of online video

Much online video is available at no cost to the viewer. Some of this video is produced by individuals or organizations not particularly concerned with the cost of production or distribution since it may be private citizens producing the video for their own interests. Or some of the producers of the online video may be groups with a public relations, public affairs or publicity agenda.

Yet, much of the most-viewed online video, or the video with the highest production value or news focus, is produced by established or emerging news or media companies seeking to make a profit or to at least off-set their video production and distribution costs. In these cases, there are three main business models taking shape in the online video space. These models are advertiser-supported video, sponsored video and premium on-demand video content either produced originally for online distribution or recycled from television or motion pictures. In the case of advertiser-supported video, this business model is maturing rapidly.

An example of a popular online video service free to the user but supported by advertising is Yahoo Music (http://music.yahoo.com/). At this site, users can access thousands of free music videos on demand, but before the music video starts the user has to watch a 30-second commercial, typically the same

commercials produced for television. Users have a variety of options at Yahoo Music, including registering (users can view one video without registering and logging in, but after viewing one video they must log in, which requires registration) and customizing the site, searching for a particular music video, or watching top 100 videos, including Shakira's number-one-ranked "Hips Don't Lie."

One commercial online video broadcast network in May, 2006 announced the introduction of an online video upfront buying system for advertisers trying to reach online audiences via web video. ROO delivers more than 40 million video impressions each month via more than 130 web sites, permitting targeting audiences by lifestyle or demographics and delivering spot advertising (http://biz.yahoo.com/iw/060501/0125983.html).

Sponsored video production has also emerged as a significant force in the online arena. Among the leading sponsors has been German car manufacturer BMW, which established BMW Films to produce a series of award-winning films that were made available for online distribution at no cost to viewers (http://www.bmwusa.com/bmwexperience/films.htm). At a cost of an estimated $9 million, The Hire series featured short movies (five or six minutes) about a risk-taking professional driver, driving a BMW (http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,44323,00.html).

The movies star major Hollywood actors such as Madonna and Mickey Rourke, and are directed by a series of well-known directors, such as Guy Ritchie (*Snatch*), Ang Lee (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*), John Frankenheimer (*Ronin*) and Wong Kar-Wai (*Happy Together*). BMW worked with its advertising agency, Fallon Worldwide, to oversee the production. The Hire action films are no longer available for viewing online but a new series of six comic Hire films is in production (http://www.bmwusa.com/bmwexperience/films.htm).

Premium on-demand online video is also widely available. Prices range from about a dollar for previously aired television shows to high priced anime features and new Hollywood motion picture releases. Among the most financially successful online video franchises to date is Major League Baseball's MLB.tv, which provides live near-broadcast-quality streaming video of all its games for a single-season or monthly fee. Only non-local games are available to avoid competition with local TV game broadcasts and attendance at the games themselves. Millions of viewers have already signed up for www.mlb.com, making it a financially lucrative arrangement for professional baseball. An estimated 800,000 subscribers are paying $79.95 for the video on the site, bringing in annual revenues of at least $68 million (http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bal-video0403,0,369978.story?coll=bal-business-indepth). Other sports have brought in millions of online viewers for network video streams, including more than 5 million to CBS Corp.'s web site to watch the NCAA tournament college basketball games for free.

The regulators of online video

From a production point of view, online video faces essentially the same legal and regulatory environment as conventional broadcast television. Issues such as rights, royalties and residuals,

potentially libelous speech and the First Amendment all pertain to online video. From a distribution perspective, online video faces relatively fewer regulatory restrictions than conventional television, because much of the prevailing FCC restrictions on content indecency do not apply. The principal regulatory restrictions are in the form of limiting under-age access to mature video content and other sex-related matters (e.g., eliminating online child pornography) and preventing pirated video distribution. Two relatively comprehensive legal guides to blogging and podcasting, including video, are available for free from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (http://www.eff.org/bloggers/lg/) and Creative Commons (http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Podcasting_Legal_Guide). Some FCC rule changes may have an indirect impact on online video distribution. CyberJournalist.net reports that the FCC's changes in cross-media ownership rules have the potential to increase the number of converged newsrooms that share resources to create stronger Web presences. CyberJournalist.net Publisher Jonathan Dube observes, "We may see more local sites like tbo.com, the excellent Media General site in Tampa that serves as the online home for both the Tampa Tribune and WFLA," he said. "If that happens, we'd see more robust local news sites—with better ability to package newspaper and video content—but we might also see fewer local news sites and thus less competition." (http://www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000420.php)

One possible regulatory threat to online video is the global nature of the Internet. This global quality makes any online video producer and distributor potentially subject to restrictions from any country, regardless of whether that country is part of the video providers intended audience. Unless access is blocked by the provider, a local government might interpret some downloadable video files as offensive to local tastes or in violation of local laws, and might impose punishments, ranging from fines to imprisonment. In addition, some governments such as China have blocked access to web sites, including some that provide news video from the U.S.

Unlike most earlier generations of television, the age of online video innovation is a playing field open to virtually anyone.

The digital technologies of production and protection

Fueling the explosive growth in online video is the emergence of increasingly affordable and powerful, low-cost and easy-to-use digital video-production technologies. The price of high-end digital video cameras has fallen dramatically in recent years, making it far more cost effective to shoot quality video rather than film. At the same time, consumer-friendly devices such as cell phones and digital cameras capable of shooting decent quality video have flooded the market. Editing digital video has also become easier and cheaper, whether using systems running Macintosh, Windows or Open Source software, video post-production has never been simpler, at least from a technical point of view.

Many companies are providing low-cost video editing software or bundling video editing software at no cost with the purchase of new computers. Examples

include iMovie from Apple, Premiere from Adobe and Studio from Pinnacle Systems. A variety of web sites offer free video editing online, as well as virtual communities for sharing video. Examples include Videoegg.com, Eyespot.com, Jumpcut.com and Grouper.com. All that is required is registering with the site. In addition, most video software now makes it relatively easy to embed digital watermarks and other devices to protect copyright and intellectual property for online distribution.

Unlike most earlier generations of television, the age of online video innovation is a playing field open to virtually anyone. Little technical expertise is needed to experiment. Nor are huge amounts of cash or other resources required, although access to millions of dollars certainly doesn't hurt. Yet, when Philo Farnsworth invented electronic television, the germ of the idea came when he was just a 13-year-old farmer's son, with little in the way of resources beyond his own creative mind and initiative. The question today is where can the next generation of pioneers find their inspiration, their field of online video dreams? There is no simple, single answer.

I found his inspiration for this article one day many months ago when I had a few moments to explore the then newly launched Google Video search engine. Browsing under the television show heading, and after slogging through dozens of episodes of Charlie Rose, I discovered a series I have long enjoyed: *The Twilight Zone*. Scanning through the descriptions of the various episodes available on-demand (full program in high resolution for $.99 or $1.99 each), he located a favorite: "Perchance to Dream." With a title derived playfully from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and a screenplay written by Charles Beaumont, the episode tells the story of a sleep-deprived man terrified of the dreams he might encounter if he falls asleep. It begins with a familiar voice inviting the viewer to enter "the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition … between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge." As television enters the online age, Rod Serling's invitation might still serve as a guide to those seeking inspiration in the television dimension of imagination.

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A Rare Breed: The New Documentary Makers Tackle Major Social Issues

By Greg Vitiello

Who among today's filmmakers ignites the flame of social justice on the television screen? Who asks tough questions about our entrenched institutions – the overlords and fat cats of our society – and, more important, who demands answers? Who argues on behalf of a better life for our indigent and disenfranchised?

For almost two decades, from the early 1950s to the early 1970s, the three networks and public television regularly presented the work of documentarians with strong social consciences. I described that era in an article for this publication's Spring/Summer 2006 issue. And, in conclusion, I asked of our current age: Where are the documentaries of yesteryear?

To answer that question, I've engaged in a random sampling of social and political documentaries from the past decade. The good news is that I've found occasional documentaries that are worthy successors to the work of Edward R. Murrow and his ilk. Overall, however, the medium has shirked its social responsibility in favor of reality shows, celebrity gossip and other profit-making, politically innocuous topics. And yet virtually everywhere I flipped my remote, other than on the networks, I found a plethora of documentaries spannng virtually every historical era and personality (see the Sundance Channel, HBO, the History Channel, Discovery Channel, Arts & Entertainment, the Biography Channel, CNN and Court TV).

On this wave of non-fiction television, why aren't there more in-depth examinations of key social and political institutions? A glib answer, which I often hear and read, is that the days of social activism passed with the end of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. While it's true that the political environment changed, what then accounts years later for the emergence of tough social documentaries appearing increasingly at film festivals and in movie

theaters – work by filmmakers like Errol Morris, Michael Moore and Robert Greenwald? Clearly, injustices exist and some documentarians are prepared to root them out.

Here, based on my sampling, is a selection of outstanding social documentaries that actually made their way to the television screen in the past decade:

Bill Moyers' "Capitol Crimes."

In this 2006 PBS film, Moyers investigates the lobbying scandal that ultimately led to jail terms for lobbyist Jack Abramoff and Congressman Bob Ney, the unseating of House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, and the besmirching of other Republican leaders. With Abramoff as the central figure, Moyers traces the story of how "the men who came to Washington in the 1980s to lead the conservative revolution wound up running a racket." The documentary tracks Abramoff's involvement in an influence-peddling scheme based on his ties to senior Bush Administration officials and prominent conservatives such as Ralph Reed, former head of the Christian Coalition, and Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform. In one of the documentary's most telling scenes, Abramoff is shown making deals to ensure that a Native American tribe that he is representing will *fail* to get a gambling casino in Texas. Their loss, for which he is richly rewarded, is a gain for another tribe that Abramoff represents. Moyers describes the events involving Abramoff, DeLay and other opportunists as a "swashbuckling spectacle of corruption." But despite their eventual fall, Moyers sees little reason for optimism in a climate in which the lobbying interests are so large and so entrenched.

Jack Abramoff leaving Federal Court in Washington

"Capitol Crimes" represents Moyers' return to public television after a two-year hiatus. His return, after almost 35 years on public and commercial television, is clearly overdue. As former NET president James Day writes in his history of public television, *The Vanishing Vision*, "Moyers does more than observe with a critical eye and analyze with a keen intelligence. He applies a moral and ethical yardstick to the issue or event, taking its measure in terms of human values." Moyers applies that yardstick effectively to the money laundering scandal depicted in "Capitol Crimes." The documentary also has a strong online educational component for viewers who wish to learn more about Congressional ethics, lobbying and other related public policy topics.

Spike Lee's "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts."

Shown on HBO in August 2006, one year after the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Katrina, Lee's film seethes with

Terence Blanchard is featured in "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts," for which he also composed the score.

David Lee/HBO

recrimination at the human indifference that compounded a natural disaster, leaving the city of New Orleans to suffer widespread deprivation and loss. Lee relies on "witnesses"—residents, meteorologists, academics, celebrities—who provide their eloquent, often obscene testimony about the failure of government at all levels to act in responsible, humanitarian fashion.

While HBO isn't the first place on the dial where we might look for socially conscious documentaries, the cable company scored high marks for its previous Lee documentary, "4 Little Girls," about the children killed in the 1963 Birmingham, Ala., bombings. "When the Levees Broke" is a work that we will remember—unlike so many current documentaries that substitute grave voice-overs for rigorous analysis and tread carefully to avoid stepping on the powerful toes of government and business.

Much of the footage of the destructive winds, flooded city, suffering and looting is familiar from television news coverage. Indeed, even the naming of names is hardly new—from Louisiana Governor Kathleen Bianco to New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin and from former FEMA head Michael Brown to President George W. Bush. What distinguishes Lee's film is his artist's sure hand and the unstinting quality of his outrage, as expressed through more than a hundred interviews intercut with scenes of the devastated city and the evocative music of the Hot 8 Brass Band. Other documentaries about our government's failure to address the impact of Katrina pale by comparison. For example, Discovery Channel's "Surviving Katrina" relied on a handful of interviews, extensive stock footage and dramatized incidents, which by themselves would disqualify any documentary from serious consideration.

Frederick Wiseman's Public Housing.

Aired on PBS in 1997, Wiseman's 195-minute film is a masterly account

of daily life in a single public housing complex—the Ida B. Wells development in Chicago. Using his trademark *cinéma vérité*, Wiseman captures the rawness, pathos, struggle to maintain pride and self-respect, and difficulties of coping that mingle in this social milieu. He travels with the Chicago Authority police as they seek out drug dealers and other possible criminals (sometimes with excess zeal) and when they are required to evict a man from his apartment (with considerable sensitivity). He listens in on conversations of social workers and other tenant advocates. As he weaves together his tapestry of life within the complex, individuals emerge as main characters, much like protagonists in a novel. For, in fact, Wiseman has the gift of a fine novelist for depicting a social institution in all its complexity. In the end, he doesn't judge, but he gives us a troubling sense of the wages of poverty. "Public Housing" is one of some 35 institutions that Wiseman has featured in his documentaries, which date back to "Titicut Follies" (about a Massachusetts mental institution) in 1967. In the past decade, his work has included such other strong social documentaries as "Public Housing II," "Domestic Violence," and "Domestic Violence II." The development of lighter cameras and sound equipment works to Wiseman's advantage as he creates a rare intimacy with his subjects, whether he is filming an abusive relationship or the interaction between law-enforcement officers and their subjects. But Wiseman's achievement is less to do with technology than with insight and sensitivity. The late documentary historian Erik Barnouw wrote of Wiseman's work, "As an educational force, the films were, above all, destroyers of stereotypes. Issues were always shown to be more complicated—and more fascinating—than dogma was inclined to make them."

Ofra Bikel's "Burden of Innocence."

In this 2003 Emmy-winning documentary on PBS' *Frontline* series, Bikel updates an earlier *Frontline* report on shortcomings of the civil justice system. She focuses on five men who have been wrongfully imprisoned and eventually released on the basis of DNA evidence. "Burden of Innocence" tracks their lives since their exoneration and finds enduring pain caused by the realization of lost years and continuing social stigmatization. This is, in the narrator's words, "the heavy price they paid for their innocence." Unable to get or keep jobs, bedeviled by memories of prison brutality, labeled "throwaway people," most of the men in Bikel's film retreat into themselves, playing video games, watching television incessantly, turning away from their families and other potential support. Only one man rises from the pain of his experience: Anthony Robinson, who served 10 years for a rape he didn't commit, is enlisted as a "poster child" by a Texas state senator pushing through a bill to reform the criminal justice system. When the legislature passes a statute granting $25,000 per year to those who have been wrongfully convicted, Robinson is vindicated – and financially compensated. He subsequently goes on to law school. His is the only upbeat story among the five men in Bikel's film who have been exonerated. Through their stories, the documentary instills viewers with a strong social message about the pressing need for criminal justice reform.

Bikel is one of a cadre of some 30 independent producers whose work has appeared frequently on *Frontline* since

executive producer David Fanning first created the series for WGBH/Boston in 1983. Michael Sullivan, another *Frontline* regular, calls the group "a very contrarian organization." He explains that the trend in news broadcasting is "the 24-hour news cycle, which bombards us with a story, then moves on." *Frontline* excels by "taking a second look after the crowd moves on." What *Frontline* creates is "a second draft of history."

Over the past two decades, *Frontline* has consistently been television's premier documentary series, often treating such important social issues as racism, poverty, hunger, oppression, corporate malfeasance, and the abuse of governmental power. "The Farmer's Wife," produced in 1998 by David Sutherland, is a poignant account of the plight of the small farmer. It focuses on a couple in rural Nebraska for whom the failure of their family farm leads to personal tensions, frustrations and near collapse of a marriage. The couple, Darrell and Juanita Buschkoetter, becomes a microcosm of the dilemma of small farmers across the nation—what the program's narrator describes as "a vanishing corner of the American landscape." Other memorable recent programs from the *Frontline* series include programs on drugs ("Busted: The War on Marijuana," "The Meth Epidemic"), education ("Public Schools, Inc.") and political manipulation ("Karl Rove, the Architect" and "The Dark Side," a profile of Vice President Cheney's role in galvanizing support for the Iraq war).

Al Perlmutter and Elena Mannes' "God and Government."

This 2004 PBS film explores the uneasy relationship between religion and politics in the contemporary world. The film focuses on the United States, where conservative Christians are "pressing for a greater infusion of religion in public life," despite the constitutionally mandated separation between church and state. It reports on ways in which the Bush Administration has taken positions that would contravene this church/state separation—such as the faith-based initiatives that provide financial support for religious organizations. Though the grants to these organizations are ostensibly targeted to social programs, there is no way to ensure that the money won't be diverted into proselytizing. From the global gag rule that denied aid to any international group favoring abortion to the scare tactics that suggest that women who have abortions are more apt to contract breast cancer, the administration is seen to be promoting its religious agenda in the political arena. "God and Government" also charts the complex relationship between religion and politics in three countries without a church/state separation—India, Israel and Iran.

In 2002, Perlmutter and Mannes collaborated on "Muslims," a two-hour documentary for PBS' *Frontline*. Airing less than a year after the 9/11 attacks, "Muslims" spanned several countries — from Indonesia and Iran to the United

God in Government (2004): A teenager joins a demonstration in Washington, DC for the inclusion of prayer during the school day.

Video Still from God in Government, 2004

***Frontline*: Muslims (2002): A young child accompanies his mother while she prays at a rally outside the former American Embassy building in Tehran, Iran, commemorating its takeover.**

States—to demonstrate the range of views and behaviors within the global Muslim community. "Personally, I'm interested in spirituality," says Mannes. "And because of my experience with 'Muslims,' Al brought me back to work on 'God in Government.' In that film, we were looking at the commonalities and conflict among the three major Abrahamic faiths and what arises where God and government get intertwined. We interviewed a lot of conservatives and liberals from the respective faiths. As with any documentary, you make every effort to be fair and balanced. And you have to have a story to tell." Mannes' early experience with *CBS Reports*, combined with her long working relationship with Bill Moyers, has made her acutely aware that "though you certainly can have a point of view, you have to make sure you're not misrepresenting facts or manipulating things."

Iain Overton's "Bad Medicine."

In this 2005 BBC film, reporter Olenka Frenkiel reveals the shocking story of fake drugs that destroy lives and bring millions of dollars in profit to unscrupulous pharmaceutical makers. The film begins in Nigeria where Dr. Dora Akunyili, the fearless regulator of the nation's Food and Drug Agency, embarks on a personal crusade to drive out the counterfeit drugs that are killing so many people. Shrugging aside attempts on her life, she tracks the profiteers to India, Britain and elsewhere. Using hidden cameras, the filmmakers expose the rationalizations of profiteers who are part of the "culture of denial and secrecy." By the film's end, Frenkiel reports that "Dora is winning in Nigeria, at least," since the regulator is ensuring that fewer fake drugs are making their way into the country.

This bold, crusading film appeared on Link TV, a satellite channel serving over 29 million homes with global perspectives and news and public affairs programming not available elsewhere in the United States. Its co-founder is Jack Willis, award-winning producer of such unflinching documentaries as NET's "Lay My Burden Down" (about the 1968 Selma, Ala., civil rights march) and "Appalachia: Rich Land, Poor People" (about the economic exploitation of mine workers). Willis explains, "What distinguishes Link is that a lot of our work is controversial — it's good, old-fashioned investigative reporting. We look for documentaries that put issues in context and analyze them, rather than just giving them a spot, the way the networks do." Link was launched in 1999 as an international channel. But, says Willis, "After 9/11, we felt it was essential to make connections for viewers between domestic and international issues." Among Link's other distinctive documentaries have been "Hijacking Catastrophe" (about how the Bush Administration manipulated national fears following 9/11 to dramatically increase military spending and contravene civil liberties), "Occupied Minds" (about

Anisa Mehdi, 2001

two journalists, a Palestinian-American and an Israeli, on a personal odyssey in search of peace in the Middle East), and "Afghan Massacre: The Convoy of Death" (about how the U.S. military secretly oversaw the killing of 3,000 Afghans)..

Those of us without satellite dishes may ask: What's wrong with this picture? Why wouldn't such tough, revealing documentaries as "Bad Medicine" be available to all viewers? That's a question we might all ask of the many other public and private television outlets. Meanwhile, bravo to Link for its enterprise and independence.

This is my short list of outstanding social documentaries from the past decade. If space permitted, I would certainly include works from PBS' *Independent Lens* and *POV* series, as well as films that had commercial distribution and also aired on HBO, Showtime, Sundance or other outlets. Liz Garbus' "The Farm: Angola, USA" is one such example. A probing work about a Louisiana prison, it won an award at the Sundance Festival and was later seen on A&E.

Writing in the *New Yorker*, David Denby describes a "documentary explosion" among feature filmmakers. He adds: "…as in the sixties, the political atmosphere is ripe for film journalism: public life is awash in scoundrels, liars, and deluded ideologues; all over the world, cultural conflict is playing out on the streets. The adventure of filmmaking has become irresistible again."

We can hope that this "adventure" will spread across the spectrum of television broadcasters—and that it will continue, rather than sputtering out as the medium allowed documentaries to do in the early 1970s. In a climate rich in documentary producers and social issues, viewers deserve the opportunity to be enlightened and captivated by this enduring form of filmmaking.

A frequent contributor to *Television Quarterly,* Greg Vitiello is a New York-based writer and editor whose books include *Eisenstaedt: Germany, Spoleto Viva, Twenty Seasons of Masterpiece Theatre* and *Joyce Images*. From 1966 to 1972 he wrote for National Educational Television and the Children's Television Workshop.

Why Tom Brokaw Quit

NBC Nightly News ex-anchor illuminates his career and explains why he changed direction.

By Mort Silverstein

Tom Brokaw, like all the anchors who preceded or succeeded him, knows what a red light on a camera means: the television industry's metaphor for *begin*. That was the case for him, not at an *NBC Nightly News* studio, where he anchored from 1983 to 2005, but in his office at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, where he was now being invaded by a crew intent upon an interview for the Steven Scheuer archives, seen on public television: *Television in America*. Brokaw graciously asked that our *red light* must go on promptly since he was soon off to Pakistan to report on the consequences of a February 2006 earthquake for his new series: *Tom Brokaw Reports*. Excerpts from the interview follow.

MORT SILVERSTEIN: I'd like your comments as a former White House correspondent on how the media itself has recently taken a beating, and then fought back, since the issue was one of credibility. I refer to the government using media, often fake media, especially in Iraq, to create and pay for some Iraqis to write happy news about the post-Saddam government. It's often said that in war, truth is the first casualty.

TOM BROKAW: Well, I think it was very important that all of that was disclosed. The fact of the matter is, I don't think it had much of an impact on news coverage there or here. The commentators here that were in the employ of various departments of this administration were going to say nice things about [their clients] whether they were paid or not. But you've got to be constantly vigilant about what administrations are up to.

People forget that the great champion of American liberties, Franklin Roosevelt, didn't like it very much when the truth was told about what was going on. Reporters felt lots of restrictions in those days on war reporting; correspondents who appeared in uniform had a lot of their material censored before it got back. There was a lot of self-censorship that went on. There's a much more robust environment now.

MS: One of your best-known books, *The Greatest Generation*, is written about and told, in eloquent oral history, by the veterans of World War II themselves. Also eloquent at that time—and presumably not eviscerated by censors—were such correspondents as Ernie Pyle and others

in Europe, and Richard Tregaskis, whose *Guadalcanal Diary* made even more vivid the Pacific War, as did ultimately John Hersey's article for *The New Yorker*, and then a book, *Hiroshima*. What distinctions do you make in the coverage and the freedom, or lack of it, given reporters in World War II with those of Vietnam and today's so-called embedded correspondents in Iraq?

TB: I think far too much was made of the embedded correspondent being potentially compromised. We monitor that very carefully. And they told the truth. And it was a wide range of reporting coming out of there [Iraq]: *The Washington Post, The New York Times*, Michael Kelly died while he was embedded. We lost a guy, David Bloom, one of our most promising young correspondents. He wasn't pulling his punches. His stuff was not being sent through some kind of a military filter before it got here.

We've always been extraordinarily careful about troop movement; tipping plans. If American forces are going to be put unduly in harm's way by our reporting, we're generally inclined to hold back. But the war reporting, from Vietnam on, was much more aggressive, much more revealing, much more candid than anything that happened in World War II or in Korea. Ernie Pyle was a wonderful war correspondent. But the people that I've talked to say: You know, Ernie Pyle told feel-good stories. They were stories about the GI. But he didn't talk about the atrocities that were committed, mostly by the other side, but occasionally by Americans as well. War is a terribly vicious, violent, god-awful business. And the public deserves to know that. It should not be sugarcoated.

MS: [after you left the anchor chair] in July 2005, you're doing *Tom Brokaw Reports*. The title of the documentary was "Deep Throat: The Full Story," referring to Woodward and Bernstein's key informant. It aired on NBC's *Dateline*, then on Sundance. Have you ever had a similar situation, where, as did Woodward and Bernstein, you had to reveal to a news division president a source whose identity you had pledged to protect?

TB: I've never had that. I remember a couple of instances in where I was told to go get a second source; that one source was not going to be good enough. Bob and Carl really invented the two-source rule with Ben Bradlee. A lot of the time, during Watergate, I'd have a very, very good source, who would tell me some things that I was sure were irrefutable. But they were powerful. And so the editors up here would say, "Go get us a second source on that. Let's just be sure."

Sometimes I wasn't very happy about it, because I was on deadline, I knew, I was confident about the source that I had.

Tom Mason and Lorne Lieb

But I would find ways to get it reinforced by a second person in some way.

And there are a lot of ways of doing that, you know, I'd call the second source, I didn't ask him what he or she knew. I would say something to the effect: Isn't it amazing? And they wouldn't know where I'd gotten it, and they'd say, yeah, how did you find out about that? And then I'd have my second source, and I'd go with the story.

MS: Another prime-time documentary, more in the tradition of *The Greatest Generation*, was your "To War and Back." It's a remarkable story, since it's centered on seven childhood friends who grew up in Glens Falls, New York, and together served in Iraq. Six survived; one did not.

Critic Alessandra Stanley of *The New York Times* wrote: "Often longer news features about the war are so overpackaged and slickly produced that they seem more like movies than real life. 'To War and Back' is a cinematically shaped documentary that threads a narrative from basic training to post-traumatic stress disorder. It never steps over the line into show business."

Yet the greatest praise came from someone at NBC, who once supported you as sole anchor of *The Nightly News*, someone we lost just recently. You heard from him in December. Can you tell us about that?

TB: After "To War and Back" was on the air, the next day I opened up my e-mail. And Reuven Frank, who was the founding father of NBC News—the first executive producer of, of *Huntley-Brinkley*; the man who really invented the new form of covering election nights and conventions and other matters, and a very sharp-witted critic, in the best sense of the word, of what goes on the air—said, "Dear Tom: Stunning. Reuven. "

It was a very gratifying message to have gotten from Reuven [Frank, late NBC News chief]. He was never one who succumbed. He was quick to praise that which was worthy. But he also had a keen eye about those things that could be improved.

MS: He could be a tough city editor, too...

TB: Oh, he was. I know that.

MS: You resigned your anchor seat on December 1st, 2004. Why did you leave? Was it a mandatory age requirement? You're still a kid. Broader career horizons? You certainly weren't chair-bound or sedentary at 30 Rock. You were globetrotting, and reporting from afar. Doesn't the Jack Benny age of 39 fit with the networks' demographic aspirations anymore?

TB: Right before 9/11, I thought about

Tom Mason and Lorne Lieb

leaving. But I knew that I couldn't leave after that happened. I wanted to see it through. I wanted to have more time to think about fewer things. I wanted to give a new generation a chance, as I'd had an opportunity. It wasn't entirely altruistic. I have a lot of interests outside the television news business. Most of them require a certain amount of sound physical health. And I wanted to be able to go do them while I still had my legs.

MS: Can you tell us what some of them are?

Right before 9/11 I thought about leaving but I knew I couldn't after that.

TB: One of the things I did was to go down to Patagonia in southern Chile right after I left *Nightly News*, and went fly fishing; went to New Zealand to go fly fishing, in the middle of what turned out to be sweeps. I couldn't have done that before. I spent more time skiing. Mostly I could pick and choose when I wanted to go.

People forget that Walter Cronkite used to go sailing for two months in the summertime, and John Chancellor would take off six weeks in the summertime. I would fill in for him. Those days are gone for anchors now. Brian Williams, my successor, had the tsunami, the death of the Pope; Katrina. I presciently had given him a sleeping bag when I left *Nightly News*, saying, you're going to need this more than you may realize. And it got a lot of workout in the first year.

If I had been still sitting in that chair, I would have been happy to go to those places. But I wouldn't have been able to go to New Zealand; I wouldn't have been able to go to Chile; I wouldn't have been able to spend as much time on my ranch in Montana as I did this summer. And mostly, I would not have been able to spend as much time with my grandchildren as I did.

MS: Can you remember for us your family, your parents, your friends, your early influences or mentors; what you listened to on the radio? Ted Koppel told us in an interview that upon hearing Edward R. Murrow reporting on the Blitz, he knew what he wanted to be, to do, in his life.

TB: Those were simpler times. And there were not a lot of diversions, like video games. We didn't even have television where I lived [South Dakota], it was such a remote part of the world. And there was this intimacy about radio. We only had one radio set in the house, so we'd all gather around it. And before I'd go to bed at night, the 10 o'clock news would come on. And one of my all-time favorite newscasters was Whitey Larson, from WNEX in Sioux City, Iowa, who would say: "Well, ladies, it's gonna snow tomorrow, but it won't be the shovelin' kind, so you'll be able to do the wash in the morning, and probably get it out. But get it out before noon, because it's gonna get wet in the afternoon." And that's how he would open a newscast.

MS: In that same autobiographical book, you quote author Kathleen Norris about what you call "the contradictions and tensions in the Dakota [cultures]," which she defines as, "between hospitality and insularity; between change and inertia, between hope and despair; between open hearts and closed minds."

TB: What really resonated with me was

that last phrase, "open hearts and closed minds." The people who moved to the Great Plains as far out west as where I lived, in the Dakotas, were mostly pretty isolationist. They were, I wouldn't say they were asocial, or antisocial. But that was not the big part of their lives. The big part of their lives was going out and doing hard work, all day, every day, and forming certain opinions and values in their lives.

In the Dakotas if you didn't adhere to a kind of ritualistic pattern in your community, there was not a lot of tolerance for you.

The closed mind thing was always a little hard growing up. If you didn't adhere to a kind of ritualistic pattern in your community, there was not a lot of tolerance for you.

MS: And "open hearts"?

TB: My parents both taught me tolerance, at an early age. And my dad, in part because he'd not been expected to succeed in life; he was the last of 10 children in a very rough, environment., and he had fought against the stereotype that had been imposed on him and had done well.

And my mother, who was really educated much beyond her secondary education, by her own design, she constantly emphasized to us the idea that you have to explore new ideas; your mind must be open to new people, and not to make judgments about, just what you see. Because others see it one way, you don't have to see it that way as well.

MS: I'd like you to take us with you on that journey from Yankton, South Dakota, to NBC. I noted your earliest job in broadcasting was at station KYNT. What did you do at that station?

TB: At KYNT, when I was 15 years old, I did a little bit of everything. I had a teenage record show in the evening. After basketball practice, I read the news, mostly because the disc-jockey mentor that I had was a little bit lazy, and he'd, give me lots of liberty. I was fascinated, not just by the sound of my own voice, but by the reach of this very small radio station. It was an exciting time in American teenage music. Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino; they were all coming online at that time. Bo Diddley. It was no longer my parents' music. Among the girls in town, I was kind of a big deal, because I was a disk jockey playing their favorite music.

MS: How and why do you get to NBC News, which was, at KNBC in Los Angeles?

TB: I got to NBC in part because in those days, once you got into a network system, you pretty much stayed there. If I'd gone to work for a CBS affiliate at a young age, I might have ended up at CBS News. But I went to work at KGIB in Sioux City, which is an NBC affiliate.

And when I graduated from college, the news director there handed me off, as it were, to the NBC affiliate in Omaha. While I was working there, the NBC affiliate in Atlanta heard about me, and asked for a tape, and then decided to hire me.

So I go to Atlanta, at age 25, to become the 11 o'clock anchorman. I'm racing around the South in the middle of the

night, covering the civil rights stories; until the network can get somebody there. Richard Valeriani, or whoever happened to be on the way. And then they would take my material, and put it on *Huntley/Brinkley*, or on the *Today Show*, or on radio.

After about eight months of that, NBC thought, we're paying him all this extra money to go do this, and the station is paying. Why don't we just hire him and take him out to Los Angeles and, and let him start?

I said, I really didn't want to go to Los Angeles. I always wanted to be a Washington correspondent. I was also very happy in Atlanta.

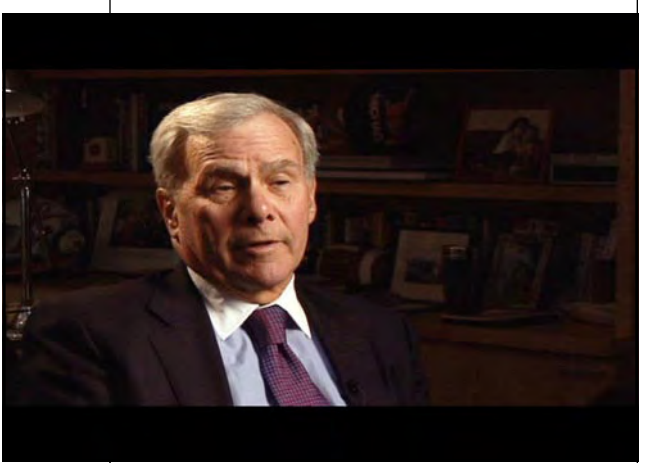
And then they made the deal richer and more advantageous to me, so I went to Los Angeles, and spent seven years in California, working at KNBC, but also working for the network. I did a fair amount of feeds to *Huntley/Brinkley*, before Chet left and to the *Today Show*.

It was an odd, pilgrimage. I left Los Angeles to go to the White House. Dick [Wald] and Bob [Mulholland] decided I should [be there]. In 1972, at the convention in Miami, I had scored a lot of exclusives, reporting from the floor. Even though I wasn't one of the floor correspondents, I had very good political contacts. And at the end of the [convention] week, Chancellor said to me: "It's time for you to give up that good life in California and come back East and be a grownup." That was his very phrase.

And then Watergate develops. Dan Rather is doing extremely well for CBS, and they decided they wanted to throw fresh young meat into the grinder, I guess, and so they said, why don't you come to Washington; be our White House correspondent; and cover Watergate?

I didn't have any reservations about taking on Dan. But I knew what I was up against. He was a very formidable reporter. But I knew the Nixon crowd from the California days, and I thought, this is a story that's so big and it's breaking out in so many directions that if you're just skillful as a reporter, you should be able to compete.

I'm so grateful I did that, because it was the single best reporting job anybody could have. This is constitutional crisis of the first magnitude. First president ever to resign. High drama, every day. Lots of domestic and extraordinarily important international considerations. And I was in the middle of it.



While I'm doing all of that, Barbara Walters leaves the *Today Show*. And they say, well, why don't you come up and substitute for a week? So I do. And it goes very well, and they said, well, would you consider doing the *Today Show*?

And I said, do I have to do commercials?

And they said, yes, that was part of the requirement in those days.

And I said, no, no way. And I don't want to leave Washington. I love what I'm doing down here.

Barbara leaves; and they decide, at the end of Barbara's departure that they really did need to make some more change, and they came to me and Dick [Wald] said you don't have any choice this time.

* * * * *

In our next issue, Tom Brokow tells Mort Silverstein about the rest of his career at NBC – who his role models were, what he really thought about the Presidents he interviewed, from Nixon to Carter to Reagan to Clinton. He also gives us his take on the history of network evening news, as well as his prophesies on its chance of survival.

Morton Silverstein is an eight-time Emmy Award documentary filmmaker whose television career began with *Nightbeat* with Mike Wallace and continued at all the networks, with a stint as public-affairs director for the CBS flagship station WCBS-TV New York. At National Educational Television (1963-72) he produced *Banks and the Poor, What Harvest for the Reaper, The Poor Pay More* and *Justice and the Poor*, among many other investigative reports. He is today Senior Writer/Producer at the Independent Production Fund where with Executive Producer Alvin H. Perlmutter he continues to produce for Steven H. Scheuer *Television in America: An Autobiography*, which can be seen on many public television stations.

She Made It: Recovering the Woman's Voice in Radio and Television

By Ron Simon

From the earliest days of broadcasting, women have had a major impact on the artistic growth and financial success of radio and television. They have been responsible for the development and evolution of many genres crucial to the broadcasting industry, including situation comedy, the soap opera, and, most recently, reality. These contributions have been largely ignored in standard textbooks. For example, Irna Phillips created one of the most resilient genres in the history of broadcasting, the soap opera, crafting the techniques to sustain the serial narrative that is now a fixture on prime time. She is not mentioned in Eric Barnouw's sweeping, three volume history of the media; the two titans for whom she generated unprecedented profits, David Sarnoff of NBC RCA and William Paley of CBS Television, gave her no credit in their respective autobiographies. In her 1973 obituary the *New York Times* revealed the prejudices of the day by describing her as an "elderly, wispy spinster."

Since 2005 The Museum of Television & Radio has attempted to rectify the situation by offering a storyline of broadcasting history that integrates the achievements of women with its most extensive exhibit, *She Made It: Women Creating Television and Radio*. The exhibition pays tribute to the visionary pioneers and contemporary innovators and is a multi-year project that annually spotlights the accomplishments of exemplary women in four distinct realms: entertainment, news, sports, and the executive suite. The project focuses on women's contributions as producers, writers, and directors as well as heads of networks. The Museum will use all of its resources—screenings, seminars, permanent collection, and the Internet—to document the struggles and triumphs of the women who have made a difference in the electronic arts. The biographies and selected programming of the first hundred women are published on its website www.mtr.org.

The Pioneers

The Museum has been working with a steering committee of industry leaders and academic specialists to select the women who have made a difference. Its honorees represent three distinct eras of women's engagement in broadcasting. The first generation encompassed the true pioneers, often the lone female in the company of men. Even without moral support, these women envisioned possibilities for media that had starling consequences. Two dimly remembered women notably innovated new forms of radio programming. Radio executive Anne Hummert, who was one of the mostly highly paid women in the country, revolutionized daytime programming by not only reshaping the soap opera narrative but also crating a production process marked by efficiency and specialization. Hummert became so dominant in radio broadcasting because she coupled an acute business sense with what writer James Thurber called, "a sound understanding of how to catch the ear of the woman radio listener." Nila Mack was the first producer to cast a children's series with child actors and her landmark series *Let's Pretend* ran for twenty years with Mack doing it all as creator, writer, producer, and "directress," the term the industry coined for a woman who aspired to the man's job of directing. Child actor and now historian Arthur Anderson assesses all her talents: "Besides Nila Mack's scripts, her genius for choosing and working with her juvenile cast was the main reason the show survived longer than any other dramatic program on American radio."

Another trailblazer almost totally forgotten is Bertha Brainard, who was there at the creation of network radio. Brainard, the first head of programming for NBC radio in the late 1920s, established radio as a cultural medium by developing the Saturday afternoon Metropolitan Opera broadcasts and Walter Damrosch's *Music Appreciation* programs. Brainard was a habitué of the theater and concert halls, trusting her well-tuned ear for the best of all sorts of music. She changed the direction of the radio programming by hiring the medium's first superstar, Rudy Vallee. Singer and bandleader Vallee demonstrated that radio was also made for contemporary music and that the public hungered for those new sounds enhanced by the microphone. Brainard later reasoned that only a woman could understand the seduction of Vallee's voice and foresee its power on the airwaves.

Some pioneering women were initially uncomfortable running the show, but, after an early reluctance, transformed themselves and the industry. Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz built their small production company, Desilu, into a major Hollywood empire. When they divorced, Ball was forced to become a manager: "I never wanted to be an executive, but when my marriage to Desi broke up after nineteen years, I couldn't just walk away from my obligations and say forget it. We were an institution. So I took on all the responsibilities." She became the first women president of a major television production company and later sold Desilu Studios to Gulf + Western Industries for a handsome profit. Another executive pioneer, Ethel Winant used her legendary casting expertise to become the first female vice president in network television. She relished working on such series as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *The Bob Newhart Show*, but realized that changes were necessary on the top floor. Becoming a VP at CBS, she was upset that the single restroom in

the executive dining room did not have a lock. Winant recalled: "For a year and a half I would take the elevator down to the ladies' room. One day, I decided to just leave my shoes outside the executive bathroom door. They got the message fairly quickly."

U.N. Correspondent Pauline Frederick, 1946

With the Law on Her Side

The second era was impacted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's enforcement of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Now it was not a matter of choice for corporations to hire women and minorities, and females entered workplace en masse, not as lone individuals. Cokie Roberts has written that the feminist revolution was successful in breaking down many barriers: "Now there is an entire generation of women, and we came in all together. We came in with the law on our side, and we've been working our way through the workplace for the last thirty-plus years." National Public Radio made its debut in May 1971 and its beginnings paralleled the emerging women's movement. NPR became a model organization in which women were promoted to challenging and creative positions as producers, directors, and journalists, including Roberts, Susan Stamberg, Nina Totenberg and Linda Werthheimer. Totenberg understood how hard it was for a woman reporter before the Title VII: "In those days, it was very difficult to get a job as a journalist if you were a woman. It was prior to the Civil Rights Act even passing and women didn't hire women. They just didn't. And people said that to me."

Before this community of women came the pioneering journalists, often powerless in a male-dominated industry. Roberts and other reporters were certainly mindful of the work of such early newswomen as Dorothy Thompson and Pauline Frederick. Thompson was one of the first commentators to question Hitler's rise to power (calling him the "very prototype of the Little Man") and her radio broadcasts were considered "an intriguing blend of Oxford and Main Street." In 1934 Thompson achieved the distinction of being the first journalist, male or female, to be thrown out of Germany. Frederick established a series of firsts for women: she was the first woman to cover politics for ABC (1946),

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Connie Chung on the set of "Saturday Night with Connie Chung" in 1989.

CBS News correspondent Marlene Sanders in 1981 for "Where Are You" *CBS Reports.*

the first woman to cover a national political convention (1948), the first newswoman on staff full-time for a TV network (1948), the first newswoman to win a Peabody Award (1954), and the first woman to moderate a presidential debate (1976). But she was turned down by the legendary Edward R. Murrow, who commented in a memo that her voice is pleasing but I would not call her manner or material distinguished." Perhaps Murrow was influenced by a 1947 profile in Newsweek, entitled "Spinster at the News Mike."

Lesley Stahl was working for a Boston affiliate when she heard about the new hiring policy of CBS, receiving her big break when the news division hired her as a general-assignment reporter. She was part of CBS News' "affirmative action babies," whose team included Connie Chung and Bernard Shaw. As a team they struggled against newsroom veterans, who objected to the new employment practices. In 1975 sixteen women brought a sex discrimination suit against NBC on behalf of all women employed by the company from 1972 on. Two years later NBC settled the bias suit, agreeing to a two million dollar out-of-court settlement and promising to set specific affirmative goals for woman, including fifteen percent of the top position below the rank of vice president. A long-time documentary producer at NBC, Lucy Jarvis, clearly understood the corporate and personal ramifications of such a suit: "I fought hard to help women move up the ladder because I always felt that the more successful women there were around me, the better it reflected on me."

Even the most celebrated women have

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had to overcome obstacles that now seem unbelievable. When Barbara Walters began interviewing guests on *Today* during the 1960s, she was forbidden to ask questions about such "male" topics as politics or economics. Walters pointed out to the *New York Times* in 2004 that *Today*'s host, Frank McGee, required that in the studio "if there was a hard news interview I could only come in after he'd asked three questions." In 1976 Walters made history. She became not only the first woman to helm a nightly newscast, but also the highest-paid journalist in the industry. Walters' salary created a firestorm of debate while she also failed to achieve a chemistry with coanchor Harry Reasoner. In fact, the chauvinistic Reasoner would not speak to the newcomer off the air. Walters later admitted: "I was drowning without a life preserver." A year later, she recovered, smashing any vestige of the old rules by arranging the first joint exchange between Egypt's President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Advancement as Evolution

Despite changes in the law, women advanced slowly. In the pre-feminist era producer Marian Rees stated that she was "overlooked, bypassed for promotions, always underpaid, and dismissed when I asked to produce." Before she founded her own production company in 1981, she had to overcome years of self-doubt and anxiety. For years actor Betty Thomas yearned to direct. While she was performing on *Hill Street Blues*, she spent countless houses absorbing the directorial process: going to castings calls, story meetings, and editing sessions. She finally got her chance to direct in the late eighties, helming such series as *Hooperman* and *Dream On*, and now realizes that advancement of women is "an evolution; it is not a revolution." Even in the new century with the law on her side, advancement in the crafts is still difficult for women. After a successful career in film and television, Martha Coolidge was elected president of the Directors Guild of America—the first woman to hold the post. She campaigned for greater women and minority employment, but became frustrated with the results: "The DGA and its African American, Asian, Latino, and women's committees have held countless meetings with producers, networks, and studio representatives, conducted nine networking mixers in 2002 to introduce women and minority directors to key showrunners in order to develop new relationships, and have created extensive women and minority director contact lists to counter the argument that quality women and minority directors are difficult to find. With few exceptions, these efforts have not translated into action by the producers and the networks."

Journalist Marlene Sanders remarked that being the only woman in a television newsroom was a distinction, "but a lonely one." Sanders would later become the first women to go to Vietnam and the first women to anchor a nightly newscast for a major network, but will always remember the beginning in the fifties: "I was the only woman in my category of work. In those days, the newsrooms and the studios did not employ women in any capacity, except for secretaries or an occasional production assistant. There were no women writers, producers or broadcasters." The Museum's *She Made It* initiative was created to acknowledge the ample history of women's achievements in radio and television, from the pioneering individuals to the empowered generation. The third generation of

women in the industry can now see their roles as a continuum, making the future less lonely: The accomplishments of Gertrude Berg, who starred on the radio and television series *The Goldbergs* while writing thousands of scripts, let Roseanne and Ellen DeGeneres know that a women can produce, write and star in her own comedy. Founder of King Broadcasting Company Dorothy Stimson Bullitt helped to open the executive suite for Kay Koplovitz (President and CEO of USA Networks) and Pat Fili-Krushel (President of ABC-TV). Writer Madelyn Pugh Davis's comic touch on *I Love Lucy* paved the way for the sketch comedy of Gail Parent on *The Carol Burnett Show* and later Anne Beatts and Rose Shuster on *Saturday Night Live*. During the First Annual Comedy Hall of Fame festivities, Carol Burnett was explicit about the contributions of Lucille Ball: she "opened the door for us." The Museum hopes that learning the invaluable contributions of all the *She Made It* women will open doors in all media for many generations to come.

Ron Simon is the radio and television curator at The Museum of Television & Radio. He can be seen moderating two *She Made It* seminars at www.mtr.org: *From The Goldbergs to 2005: The Evolution of the Family Sitcom* with Gertrude Berg biographers Aviva Kempner and David Zurawik as well as comedy writers John Markus and Bell Persky and *The Women of NPR* with Melissa Block, Maria Hinojosa, Cokie Roberts, Susan Stamberg, and Linda Wertheimer.

¿Qué Pasa, USA?

Thirty years ago this series showed American television how to create bilingual programming for a diverse audience.

By Humberto Delgado & Lorna Veraldi

A worried mother, Juana Peña, sits on the orange velvet couch in her modestly furnished living room in Miami's Little Havana. Her dilemma? She wants her teenage daughter, Carmen, to have a traditional *quinceañera*, an extravagant celebration of a girl's 15th birthday traditional in Juana's native Cuba. But daughter Carmen was born in America, and Juana's teenage son, Joe, while born in Cuba, has grown up in America. Juana knows that like many of his generation, Joe would scorn such a throwback to the old ways, and perhaps Carmen would, too. Grandparents Antonio and Adela, who also inhabit the house as part of this extended family, will no doubt approve of an impressive party. But Pepe, Juana's husband, is likely to balk at the price of a fancy catered event, its lavish choreography, limo, dresses and tuxedos—all of which can add up to a budgetary disaster.

So began "Fiesta de Quince," the pilot of bilingual comedy series *¿Qué Pasa, USA?* Originally produced for public television in the mid-1970s, the series was intended to be—and remains—an "educational" experience—coaxing viewers over the boundaries of language, culture, gender and generation with broad humor, appealing characters and universal themes. It was created in an era in which most of the television industry and the rest of America thought of Spanish-language programming as a transitional phenomenon, a way to help ease the passage of recent Cuban immigrants to the English-speaking American mainstream. It was aimed at the wave of exiles who had come to Miami beginning in the early 1960s seeking what they thought would be a temporary refuge from Castro's Cuba.

Today, the Cuban community has become a dominant force in Miami business, cultural and political life. Hispanics have become the largest and fastest-growing minority group in the United States, and Spanish-language television an established and growing part of the television industry. And through all the changes, *¿Qué Pasa, USA?* has endured to become an evergreen classic still aired on both non-commercial and commercial stations around the world. In 2005, author Bert Delgado interviewed many of those who helped create this ground-breaking series. Here, in their own words—thirty years later—is the story of the making of *¿Qué Pasa, USA?*

Origins

Luis Santeiro, who was Head Writer of *Qué Pasa*, says the proposal for a sitcom

Qué Pasa family portrait: the grandparents (standing), Luis Oquendo & Velia Martinez, the parents (sitting), Ana Martinez Casado & Manolo Villaverde and the children (on the floor) Rocky Echevarria & Ana Margarita Menendez

aimed at "teenagers in the acculturation process" originated with two professors at Miami-Dade Community College in response to an announcement by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) that grants were available for the creation of television programs by and for minority groups. However, Santeiro continues, "Anyone can have an idea. The problem comes in its execution."

It was not until the series was in pre-production in 1975 that Santeiro became involved. "They had already hired a head writer but they were not happy with the scripts. I had already written for PBS and wrote a 'spec' episode for this series, which they liked so much that it was used as the pilot program." Once the pilot was produced, studies of the target audience were conducted, and results of the studies were submitted to the Project Officer in Washington. Jose "Pepe" Bahamonde, who served as Executive Producer for the series, recalls, "Once we got the green light, 'Fiesta de Quince' was stored until shows 2-9 were completed so we could air the whole block."

HEW required the series to be bilingual. When the show was first conceived strictly for a South Florida audience, the ratio was weighted toward more Spanish. "For South Florida, 60:40 favoring Spanish was comfortable for the audience(s)," says Bahamonde. When it looked as if the series would be broadcast nationally, the balance was changed to favor English. "It had to have 60 percent English and 40 percent Spanish," says Santeiro. "Sometimes they had to even count words."

But what exactly was "bilingual" supposed to be? Bahamonde remembers that finding the right formula was difficult: "The Request for Proposal specified monies available for 'bilingual, educational TV programs,' and the proposal writers simply picked a 60-40 balance…They didn't have the foggiest idea how this was to be accomplished." A bilingual children's program then being produced in Texas "depended mostly on back-to-back repetition." But Bahamonde wanted to avoid such

WPBT

"excessive repetition":

"Thanks to my background in comparative linguistics, I came up with a color-coding scheme right on the script" he says," to ascertain that the balance was observed, as it was now a contractual term—and worked closely with Luis Santeiro, my Writer/Story Editor, to make sure we presented the plot points in both languages without getting into excessive repetition. Sometimes Spanish monolinguals would miss out on a joke, and at other times English monolinguals would miss out, but everybody knew where the storyline was headed all the time. A little Latin 'broadness' in the acting helped keep everybody on track. Yes, that was intentional."

The grant writers forgot budget lines for support areas. Half of the set was propped and dressed with the executive producer's personal items.

Challenges in Producing the Program

In 1975, when preparations for the series began, the average half-hour sitcom produced in Los Angeles cost $300,000 to $400,000 an episode. Executive Producer Bahamonde still finds it hard to believe that "we [were] so daring as to try to do the same thing for less than $25,000 an episode!" A grant of $250,000 from HEW's Office of Education was supposed to cover the *entire* first season (10 episodes), provided they thought the pilot "proved we could produce a bilingual sitcom with audience appeal and at the same time convey educational content."

The grant writers had never produced a television series on the scale of the Norman Lear "live audience sitcoms" like *All in the Family* that inspired *Qué Pasa*. "They forgot budget lines" for support areas, including props. "Half the *Qué Pasa* household (set) was propped/dressed with my personal home accessories," Bahamonde recalls. "And there were many wardrobe items that the cast brought from home, or I bought at Goodwill or the Richard's bargain basement with my personal money."

"Imagine. I went to LA to see how Norman Lear was producing 'live audience sitcoms,'" he says, "and came home to wear 10 hats because I had to get involved (assist hands-on) in every production aspect, except maybe the most technical …like boom operation or camera op. I even did the audience warm-ups, and casting on a weekly basis, plus supervised all the editing and audio sweetening, here and in LA where we postproduced, at places such as MetroMedia and CFI."

Bahamonde emphasizes that *Qué Pasa* was intended to target a *local* Miami audience, and so was provided only a *local* budget. "There were other ESSA grants for regional and national productions." George Dooley, now retired, was an executive at Miami public television station WPBT when the program was produced there: " [W]e did not have any idea of its possible success…I never thought it would play in North Dakota. In Miami, yes; but it has played in every state in the union."

Writer Luis Santeiro adds that *not* only was the federal grant not intended to fund a national series, but in fact those in charge of the grant had no national ambitions or long-term contingency plans. HEW, in Santeiro's view, specifically

targeted minority populations in specific locales with the grant money that made the series possible:

"[T]he money was allocated to South Florida,"he says. "HEW had money for minority groups…HEW was trying to develop biculturalism, or perhaps was trying to pacify minority groups. Nobody ever thought that these programs were going to be successful, nor were [the people] at HEW ready to deal with success. When *Qué Pasa* became successful, they did not lend us a hand, no help whatsoever. They gave us the grant for five years. At the end of the five years, and regardless of the success of *Qué Pasa*, [HEW] did not renew the grant."

Because this was a government contract, everyone signed contracts waiving their rights in perpetuity.

Executive Producer Bahamonde confirms that the program was not cancelled for poor ratings or the typical factors that affect a decision not to continue a commercial series (lack of success, disputes over stars' salaries, artistic differences, or content). This was public television, funded by a government grant. "Only my HEW Project Director could have 'cancelled' *QP* on the grounds of ineffectiveness in reaching its target audience, as measured by our annual market studies (obligatory under the grant process). But our assessment/ audience surveys always returned with the highest of ratings." At the "cessation or natural expiration of grant funds," WPBT decided not to reapply for continuation funds.

Qué Pasa has enjoyed lasting popularity beyond anyone's expectations. Santeiro is happy that the project has achieved such success, but admits to frustration that those who made the series have not reaped financial rewards. Because this was a government project, everyone signed contracts waiving their rights in perpetuity. On his first job as head writer, Santeiro recalls, he was happy to waive residuals for what was a unique opportunity. "It was not for CBS or ABC, so it was not so absurd not to ask for residuals." But it is frustrating to Santeiro that in the years since "nobody has made a penny" except the commercial networks that continue to air the series to this day.

So how did a nationally televised series survive on a shoestring? Fortunately, recalls Bahamonde, talented friends were "totally supportive." They pitched in to do make-up (Carlos Gomery), hair (Iris Perdomo de Castro), and wardrobe (Antonio Gonzalez). Bahamonde believes his personal connections to other local artists were critical to the success of the series: "[A]ll my friends from theater and my dancer days worked for peanuts because they knew me. In a way, they came to my rescue, and by extension, to the show's."

The series' unexpected success launched more than one emerging Miami actor to national prominence. Rocky Echevarria, who played teenage son Joe, went on to make a name for himself in Hollywood as Steve Bauer. And perhaps the biggest success story to emerge from *Qué Pasa* was that of the Cuban-American actor/director Andy Garcia, who was "discovered" playing Carmen's boyfriend in an episode of *Qué Pasa*. Ironically, Bahamonde's inventiveness in trying to do more with less eventually

cost him career opportunities: "*Después de QP*," he recalls, "everybody wanted to pick my brain, but nobody would offer me a job because they thought they couldn't offer me 'the big bucks I was making while doing *QP*.' Ha! ha! ha!" Eventually, Bahamonde learned to begin negotiations by "making sure I sounded affordable, " He told potential clients that "*QP fue. . .trabajar por 'amor al arte!*'" ("*Qué Pasa* was . . . to work for 'the love of art!'")

Some would say that the lasting appeal of *Qué Pasa* stems largely from its nostalgic look back at a time that is no more. Head writer Luis Santeiro, who now resides in New York City, views *Qué Pasa* as a tale of times gone by:

"You can watch *Qué Pasa* from a historic point of view,"he says. " It was an era of the Cuban immigration when the 'melting' was at its maximum. Today it is different. *Qué Pasa* represents a period of the Cuban immigration when the large bulk of Cubans was landing in the melting pot. *Qué Pasa* is like a graphic testimony of the period. We have changed from then. We are at a different level. At the time of *Qué Pasa*, we were still naïve. I believe people watch it today as a remembrance of an era…there is comedy, but the series is also nostalgic…what we had…it is like a record of that time."

But *Qué Pasa* is more than a time capsule. While it successfully portrayed the reality of the era and continues to evoke memories special to those who grew up in the Cuban community as it existed in 1970s Miami, the series transcends its era. The generational differences and conflicts it portrays, the longing for old ways and places, is the continuing American story of displacement and adaptation. In that sense, the series also rings true for other Americans with immigrant roots. Rick Loconto was in charge of audio at WPBT during the taping of *Qué Pasa,* and when interviewed in 2005 still worked as senior audio engineer at the same Miami public television station. He spoke about his personal response to the program as the son of Italian immigrants: "I could easily relate to the program, because in my household there was a lot of Italian spoken…I think everybody can relate to it, because everybody has a background and is not native from this country." While *Qué Pasa* may deal with themes that appeal to Hispanic or Latino households, it has a universal appeal as well. The themes of *Qué Pasa*—tensions between cultures, generations and genders, family struggles, and a search to become an American on one's own terms—exist not just in Hispanic households, but are universal issues underlying the American experience.

Moreover, despite a limited production budget, broad acting and the absence of "adult" language or graphic sex and violence, *Qué Pasa* rang true to viewers. Ana Margo, who portrayed daughter Carmen, says the series mirrored her life as a teenager in Miami:

"I was raised with two groups of friends, Americans and Cubans," she says. "We all shared together, but I personally was living in high school the very same situations I was portraying in *¿Qué Pasa, USA?* Exactly the same: the chaperone, the American friends. I left home to go to the studio to record; to me it looked exactly the very same. Real life and the studio were the very same situations and topics."

As Margo sees it, *Qué Pasa*'s honest portrayal of diverse cultures is a key to its lasting appeal.

"My Cuban and Latin friends felt honored by the way we portrayed them on the screen," she says. " Never did the

series humiliate Latins, or insult our race. I believe that is why *Qué Pasa* has been so successful. We laughed at ourselves in a way that no one felt insulted or misrepresented. We were doing real life, as it was at the time in Miami. We respected our culture even though we poked fun at it."

Que Pasa succeeds at being truly bicultural because it is truly bilingual. Both English and Spanish monolinguals can enjoy their fair share of the jokes.

Qué Pasa succeeds at being truly bicultural because it is truly bilingual. Both English and Spanish monolinguals can enjoy their fair share of the jokes. But those who make an effort to understand both languages are rewarded with a richer experience. Spanish is not merely sprinkled occasionally into the story to flavor it, nor is any viewer treated as an outsider by being asked to read subtitles. Spanish and English (and Spanglish) share the spotlight.

The series encourages monolingual viewers, English-speaking and Spanish-speaking, to stretch beyond their comfort zones. Actress Barbara Martin played Sharon, Carmen's blonde, wide-eyed, Anglo classmate. Asked what her American friends in 1970s Miami said about the series, Martin replied, "Some told me that they did not understand it…Some said they understood only half. Yeah, I said, that IS the point." Martin, a native English speaker, continued a television acting career after *Qué Pasa*. She surprised herself by winning Best Actress in a Hispanic Sitcom for her appearance in a Spanish-language sitcom for Univision. Martin modestly suggests the award came in part because people still remembered and loved *Qué Pasa*. "I thought it was a sentimental vote."

Thirty years ago, *¿Qué Pasa, USA?* showed American television how to create bilingual programming for a diverse audience. Not every viewer may understand every word. However, *Qué Pasa* delivers humor on a level playing field. Both sides struggle to understand and to be understood. Neither "Anglo" nor "Cuban" culture or language is mainstream or marginalized. The result? A series that is still young at 30—providing a whole new generation laughter and insight about what it means to be part of "the new USA."

Humberto Delgado and Lorna Veraldi are on the faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Florida International University, the public university in Miami, where they teach in the television program.

Let Me Entertain You

Thanks to television, household expenses for entertainment have tripled in the last century. | **By Kenneth Harwood**

Back in 1901 life for the average American was shorter, less comfortable, more confined and more rural than it is today. Television was half a century ahead. An average household's expense for entertainment was about 2% of all the expenses. The same household spent about another 1% for reading.

What changed most was that paid professional entertainers came into small towns and the home with the rise of movies and radio. The average household was spending 5.4% of its total expenses for entertainment in 1934-1936, as the economy began to awaken from the great depression. Reading and education together fell to less than 1% of all household expenses.

Along the way, stage and bandstand gave way to movies and radio, while the nation waxed larger and wealthier. Older media such as books, magazines, and newspapers did quite well, thank you, and newer media grew speedily. Professional entertainers grew in numbers while they grew in wealth, as many were drawn to motion pictures and radio.

Entertainment in 1901

Picture the life of an average person in the United States in 1901. Life was shorter then, being on average some 50 years, while now it is nearly 78 years. Diet, sanitation, and medicine were less than they are now. Fewer comforts and conveniences graced the house.

Most kitchens were rural, because most people lived on farms or ranches, and in towns of fewer than 2,500 people. Automobiles were scarce and largely unloved, for they spooked horses and cattle. Cooking tended to be done on a wood burning cast iron range or in a fireplace. Water came from a spring, a well, or a cistern and was hand carried to the range. An advanced kitchen might have a hand pump. Drain water might be tossed outside or piped to a septic tank.

Today's refrigerators were not around, for electricity remained to arrive. Kerosene lamps and candles were the main kinds of lights. Broadcasting was years away, so the kitchen had no radio or television. DVD players and MP3 players were not imagined.

The parlor in 1901, if the house was grand enough to have a parlor, might have a hand cranked talking machine with its large horn for amplification and its cylinder recordings. You could buy a Gem brand gramophone from the

Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert in "It Happened One Night"

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Sears catalog for $21.95 plus shipping. A popular cylinder of 1901 was the novelty tune "Who Threw the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder?"

The stereopticon viewer in the front room had those printed, slightly curved double-view photographic cards to offer three-dimensional scenes of exotic places such as Egypt and Borneo. Some of the cards were in color, but most were black and white.

The main entertainment was self-entertainment. Sheet music made the printing press the chief mass medium of home entertainment. Many people sang and played musical instruments, including harmonica, guitar, violin and piano. Home recitations, skits and magic helped to pass the winter evenings.

Public entertainment included choral groups and bands in schools and churches. Paid admissions opened the way to everything from traveling theater on a local stage to circuses when they came to town, and slide shows with travel talks in a nearby Grange hall.

New Media of 1934-1936

World War I and the economic good times following the war helped to build a majority who lived in towns and cities. The census of 1920 showed that rural places and towns of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants for the first time in the history of the U. S. contained less than half of everyone. Cities sprouted movie theaters, followed by radio stations. Small towns grew their own little movie palaces. People in rural households listened at night to radio entertainment and news from distant big cities.

Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert entertained movie audiences of 1934 with *It Happened One Night*. The film was first to win all five Oscar statuettes for picture, director, actor, actress and screenplay.

Minnie Pearl and Rob Brasfield, stars of *Grand Ole Opry* (NBC Radio)

Radio favorites of 1934-1936 included *Lux Radio Theater* (drama), *H. V. Kaltenborn News* (news and comment), *Grand Ole Opry* (country and western music), *The Bing Crosby Show* (popular music), *Little Orphan Annie* (children's serial), *Burns and Allen* (comedy), *Metropolitan Opera* (opera), and *University of Chicago Round Table* (discussion).

Christopher H. Sterling and John Michael Kittross in their *Stay Tuned: A History of American Broadcasting* noted that radio soap opera daytime drama grew quickly, beginning with the success of *Back Stage Wife* in 1935. By 1940 four national networks offered 75 hours a week of these 15 minute programs. *The Guiding Light, Lorenzo Jones, Our Gal Sunday* and *Road of Life* were among the hits.

Books got a boost from the depression years when leisure was enforced by unemployment. Circulation from the public library of Muncie, Indiana, rose by 108% from the peak of economic activity in 1929 to the trough of the depression in 1933. Cardholders rose by 17%, some three to five times as quickly as the rise in population. In 1933 an average cardholder withdrew twenty books a year compared to eleven a year in 1929.

In their classic studies of Muncie, Indiana, then a city of some 13,000 people, Robert and Helen Lynd found that the depression years saw declines in direct payment for entertainment and news. Newspaper circulation fell by more than 20% from 1929 to 1933.

The recording industry grew from the introduction of electrical amplification of sound in place of the older mechanical amplification, and from the introduction of plastic discs to replace recorded cylinders. Popular songs performed by professionals and played back from disc tended to have growing audiences in the home, while there were fewer live performances by members of the household who performed the latest hits from sheet music. Cole Porter's "I've Got You under My Skin" was a hit song of 1935.

At the same time, radio continued to be in more and more homes. Electricity was in 96% of Muncie's homes by 1935. For the cost of a radio and the electricity to run it, the whole family could have news and entertainment at most hours of the day and night. The percentage of households in the U. S. having a radio in depression times almost doubled from 34.6% in 1929 to 68.4% in 1935.

Householders in the United States, on average, more than tripled the fraction of total budget for entertainment from 1.6% in 1901 to 5.4% in 1934-36. Consider that 1901 was in economic good times, and

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Bing Crosby on radio (top) and on television, celebrating his 50th year in show business.

1934-1936 in economic depression times. During that span of more than 30 years the expense for food went down from 42.5% of the average budget to 33.6%, making way for other kinds of expense to go up, including expense for entertainment.

The declining share of consumer budgets for food reflected greater agricultural productivity from use of improved farm machinery, fertilizers and seeds. Quicker and cheaper distribution by rail and road played their parts in lower cost of food to the consumers, as did the reduced cost of borrowing, and new efficiencies in packaging, storing, and selling food.

The Age of Television

A new vista of the world opened with the rise of television in the years after World War II. By 1972-73 television was the main new medium in households across the United States. One or more television receivers glowed in 96% of homes. Colors splashed across television screens in 53% of homes, and cable television served 10%, while satellite services to the home were in the future, as were video cassette tape recorders in the home.

Movies moved into the living room and the bedroom with television, while radio moved out of the living room to share the bedroom with television. Meanwhile the number of movie screens per theater increased, theater widescreen projection systems added better color and sound, the number of movie theaters decreased, and movie attendance in theaters declined from its peak in 1948.

Lower budgeted movies made for television competed with delayed release to television of the higher budgeted theatrical motion pictures. Some of the Oscars of 1972-1973 for theatrical film

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went to *The Sting, American Graffiti,* and *Cries and Whispers.*

Total number of radios sold for use in home, automobile, and workplace declined after 1969. Popular radio programs transformed themselves to continue in television, among them the *The Bing Crosby Show, The Jack Benny Show,* and *Queen for a Day*. A few, such as *Grand Ole Opry,* continued in the radio version with the added television version. Numbers of radio programs disappeared as audiences turned to television. Broad appeal radio programming changed to specialized program formats such as rock and roll music.

The look of American homes changed from that of 1934-1936. When World War II ended in 1945 many members of the generation who went to war returned to flood into mass-produced suburbs, have children and settle down to raise the members of the baby-boom generation who are coming to retirement ages now. Some homes were air-conditioned, almost all had hot and cold running water, and most were insulated against heat and cold. Electric refrigerators, washers, dryers, and dishwashers were usual.

Media amenities in 1972-1973 tended to include color television, transistor pocket radios, transistor automobile radios, and 8-track audio tapes. Transistor radios replaced the tube radios of 1934-1936, and vacuum tubes for old radios became hard to find. Some automobile radios also played 8-track tapes. Oldest media mainly were in the forms of books, magazines, and newspapers. Stereopticons might be found in antiques shops, along with wind-up turntable gramophones and vacuum tube radios.

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Jack Benny (left) with Isaac Stern

Daily newspapers were shifting from evening editions to morning as the effects of automobile, radio, and television cumulated. Main news stories on average were longer and carried more detail than the versions on radio or television.

Emmys of 1972-1973 for outstanding new series went to *America* on NBC, *The Julie Andrews Hour* on ABC, *Kung Fu* on ABC, *M*A*S*H* on CBS, *Maude* on CBS

(l. to r.) Gary Burghoff, Alan Alda, Loretta Swit on *M*A*S*H*

and *The Waltons* on CBS. News and documentary awards included, among others, those to Walter Cronkite, Dan Rather, Daniel Schorr, Roger Mudd, and Eric Severeid, all of whom worked for CBS.

Half-hour drama filled half of all tallied quarter hours on commercial television networks in the U. S. in 1973. Daytime television offered an average of 340 hours of programs each week, of which 148 hours, or somewhat fewer than half, were daytime drama. Network television news was about 10% of all network programming, as it was almost a decade earlier in 1964.

Grammys of 1973 went to Roberta Flack for "Killing Me Softly with His Song," to Stevie Wonder for "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" and to Carly Simon for "You're So Vain," among others.

Consumer outlays for entertainment in the U. S. came to 8.6% as residents bought color television receivers to replace aging black and white ones. Expenses for reading and education amounted to 1.6% of outlays from an average household.

The World-Wide Web Rises

Skipping along another 30 years to 2002-2003 brings us to the rise of the World Wide Web and the Internet. The long 40-year Cold War was gone. The War on Terror arrived in 2001, coinciding with an economic downturn as the balloon of investment in information technology deflated.

The American home was bigger and more richly equipped than ever. Baby boomers who were in their peak earning years built McMansions, while average houses continued to have larger footprints, as they did in much of the 20th century. The Bureau of the Census reported that the number of square feet in the average house in 2003 was 2,434, compared to 1,660 in 1973, making a gain of 47% in 30 years.

McMansions tended to fill their building lots, be larger than some nearby houses and shelter fewer people than they might. Would-be Mediterranean looks also could be French, Tudor or a mix. They had large entry halls, bedroom suites, open family kitchens and little-used dining rooms and living rooms. Media theaters were in many of them, offering digital screens, custom audio systems, lighting controls, custom seats and other equipment, including the complete refreshment bar. Screens and other communication devices were linked by high speed fiber optic connections throughout the house. Average houses had some of these features and smaller scale.

Sound, motion pictures, radio and television often moved into a room of their own as the 21st century began, leaving their places of 1972-1973 in the living room, if not the bedrooms and kitchen of 2003. With them went computers, digital

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recording and digital storage.

Mobility was a principle of new media as wireless telephones added television, camera and other features. Personal headphone tape and disc players of 1979-1997 began to make way by 2003 for iPod recorders and MP3 players featuring compact digital storage of sound and pictures. The World Wide Web delivered recordings to computers and mobile phones while it streamed live television.

The Web and the Internet changed news media by offering news with advertising to computers in 55% of homes in 2003, plus instant deliveries to public libraries, schools, and businesses. Weblogs or blogs offered news, opinion, and discussion. Classified advertising tended to migrate to the Web from newspapers. Advertising funded free daily and weekly newspapers appearing mostly in tabloid form in many metropolitan areas of the United States.

Television in 2003 included deliveries to 98% of households from broadcasting stations, 68% of households from cable systems and perhaps 20% of households from satellites in space. Terrestrial broadcast television offered general programming in main, while most cable television services specialized. Cable networks included several for news, while others specialized in comedy, drama, children's programs, home shopping, religion, and more. *Arrested Development* (Fox) and *The Sopranos* (HBO) won outstanding numbers of Emmys for programs in 2003-2004. Reality programs of broadcast television attracted large audiences as networks sought to limit expenditures.

Four films of 2003 were among the top 100 all time domestic box office favorites when ticket prices were adjusted for inflation. They were *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King, Finding Nemo, Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl,* and *The Matrix Reloaded*. Home videos, most of them on digital video disc, yielded greater return to motion picture studios than domestic box office ticket sales.

Top-selling console-video games in the U. S. during 2003 were *Madden NFL 2004, Pokemon Ruby, Pokemon Sapphire, Need for Speed: Underground,* and *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker.* Retail sales of console games were estimated to be about equal to domestic sales of movie tickets.

Sales via the Web in 2003 were about 24 % of all retail sales value of books, 19% of retail sales value of event tickets, 16% of retail sales value of videos, and 12% of retail sales value of music.

Average households in the U. S. in 2002-2003 spent 5.4% of their outlays for entertainment, and less than 1% for reading. Remarkably little variation appeared in the share of household spending for entertainment and reading in 18 years from 1985 to 2003, as shown in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 2006*. Percentages ranged between 5.3% and 5.8% for almost a generation. Meanwhile the average share of expense for food declined from 19.3 % in 1972-1973 to 13.1% in 2002-2003.

Michael L. Dolfman and Dennis M. McSweeney reported in May, 2006, results of their study for the U. S. Bureau of the Census on 100 years of consumer spending. They found that, "In many ways, the only thread of commonality between U. S. households in 1901 and 2002-2003 is their geographic location." They might have added that the center of U. S. population continued to move west and south, as it had since the first U. S. census in 1790.

The Century and Beyond

Looking back through a century of consumer spending for entertainment, we could see the change from much self-entertainment in the parlor of 1901 to much professional entertainment in the digitally equipped media room of 2002-2003. The home itself on average was larger and better equipped. Occupants of the house were fewer and lived longer.

Older media made way for newer ones by adapting to the changed circumstances as they continued to attract audiences. Entertainment outside the home became a wonderland of special effects and illusions, including those of the theme park, the Las Vegas showroom, and other venues, while traditional theatrical presentations found better sound, lighting, temperature control and more.

Television rose to prominence in the years after World War II, attracting, replacing, and adding to many offerings of radio. News-seeking habits changed. The World Wide Web, the Internet, and other digital media of 2002-2003 transformed entertainment and news in the home. Household spending for entertainment reflected the changes as it settled down to a long plateau from a peak in 1972-1973.

Signals changed from analog to digital. Computers and telecommunication made possible streaming video through the World Wide Web. Mobile wireless telephones could and did receive and send television images and sounds as the 21st century began.

Few of these developments were foreseen in any but shadowy form as 1901 dawned. The word "television" itself came into the American lexicon in 1907. Looking back to 1901 suggests that like our predecessors we have little ability to foresee entertainment and television in the country's average home of 2103.

Certainty about 2103 perhaps is greatest in foreseeing that entertainment through storytelling about human comedy and tragedy, with music and without, will be at the forefront, just as storytelling has been before and after the heyday of Greek theater nearly 2500 years ago. Likely we shall continue the division of storytelling into fact and fiction, yearning to take our news as fact more than fiction.

The story of media since the coming of the printed book to the West more than 500 years ago seems to suggest continuing places for television and newer media in the world of 2103. As more media arrive each one seems to adapt to changing circumstances. Less certain might be the added capabilities of television equipment in 2103, although we are able to see easier and nearly universal presence of television where and when we wish.

When all is said and done, expenditures for entertainment ranged between 5% and 6% of all household expenses in the United States in the economically depressed years of 1934-36 and in the 18 years ending with 2003. Otherwise the average ranged from 1.6% in 1901 to 8.6% a little more than 30 years ago. Hence the share of entertainment expenses in the average American household in 2002-2003 was more than three times larger than it was in the simpler days of 1901.

Adjunct professor of communications at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Dr. Kenneth Harwood was the founding dean of the School of Communications and Theater at Temple University in Philadelphia and founding director of the School of Communication at the University of Houston.

"Fats" Domino Survived Hurricane Katrina and R&B Lives in PBS Specials

"I'm walkin' to New Orleans. I've got no time for talkin'. I've got to keep on walkin'. New Orleans is my home…"
— Antoine "Fats" Domino, Imperial Records (1960)

By Richard G. Carter

In 1986, after more than three decades of turning out hit records, Antoine "Fats" Domino was among the first inductees into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. A vocal giant from the days of yore, the rotund Domino also was a boss-stride pianist with a bluesy, boogie-woogie style, unique singing accent, effervescent personality and camera-ready smile that endeared him to millions.

But for several days in September 2005, Fats' friends and fans feared the worst. It appeared that we had lost this celebrated New Orleans native and long-time resident in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. And with the reopening of the Superdome for a nationally televised Monday-night football game on Sept. 25, 2006, his story is worth recalling.

At age 77, Fats had chosen to remain at home with his family due to the ill health of his wife, Rosemary. As the devastating Katrina made landfall, his house in the heavily flooded Lower 9th Ward went under. On September 1, his agent said he had not heard from Fats since before the monster storm appeared.

Happily, CNN later that day reported that he had been rescued by a Coast Guard helicopter. Then Fats' daughter—gospel singer Karen Domino White—identified him from a photo shown on television. Fats and his family were taken to a shelter in Baton Rouge and stayed in the apartment of JaMarcus Russell, the quarterback of Louisiana State University's football team.

Fats returned to his waterlogged home to discover that it had been looted. Among missing items were 18 of his 21 Gold Records—each signifying a million

"Fats" Domino in 1973.

sales from his days as the best-selling black singer of the 1950s and '60s. And like the title of one of his biggest hits: "Ain't That a Shame…"

Indeed, once Domino burst onto the black music scene in 1950 with "The Fat Man"—which gave him his nickname—"Goin' Home," "Every Night About This Time" and "Be My Guest," he epitomized original black rhythm and blues, which evolved into rock 'n' roll and changed the world. His later success with the likes of "Blueberry Hill," "Blue Monday," "I'm Walkin'," "Whole Lotta Lovin;" "Yes It's Me and I'm in Love Again" and "Walkin' to New Orleans"—these were frosting on the cake.

After digesting TV reports of the bad and then good news about Fats' fate in the hurricane, I breathed a sigh of relief. When I was a young reporter with the *Milwaukee Sentinel* in 1965, the legendary singer gave me a memorable interview following his sold-out concert at the Eagles Club. As we sat side-by-side at the club's bar, he sported his signature flat-top tight wavy hair style, a ring on every finger and he never stopped smiling.

And now, 40 years later, Fats' close call in Hurricane Katrina reminded me of the music he helped popularize, which was the subject of two amazing late-1990s public television specials. These shows spotlighted the innovative, four- and five-part harmony of '50s and '60s vocal groups, as well as the role of black entrepreneurs.

Not to be confused with that era's network rock 'n' roll TV series such as *American Bandstand, Hullabaloo* and *Shindig*—or the black-oriented *Soul Train*—the PBS specials were performance

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documentaries called "Record Row: Cradle of Rhythm and Blues" and "Doo-Wop 50."

I often show excerpts of both specials to my continuing-education classes at New York University. The adult students are enthralled, and they are amazed to learn that R&B's golden era lasted only from 1953 to 1963. After that, many of the talented original artists fell by the wayside. But some of the survivors returned to glory on the PBS shows.

"Record Row," broadcast in 1997, examined the '50s-'60s record company innovators who turned a 10-block section of South Michigan Ave. in Chicago into a microcosm of the most innovative American music this side of jazz.

Narrated by legendary R&B and jazz diva Etta James, the bittersweet "Record Row" documented the meteoric rise and fall of black- and white-owned R&B labels with names such as Chess, Vee-Jay, Brunswick and Chance. Along the way, song stylings of a host of fabulous artists were presented, including Ms. James, Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry, the Moonglows, Spaniels, Dells, Jerry Butler, Curtis Mayfield, John Lee Hooker, Bo Diddley, Jimmy Reed, Major Lance and Howlin' Wolf.

Aired in 1999, "Doo-Wop 50" honored the 50th anniversary of original black R&B. And it was the cat's meow. A number of the surviving performers who ushered in the rock 'n' roll age gained new fans and recognition as a result.

"Doo-Wop 50" was hosted by Jerry Butler of the Impressions, whose sensational 1958 recording of "For Your Precious Love" introduced America to soul music. Millions of mature Americans who love original black R&B rejoiced at the chance to again see, and hear, the music of our youth. And younger people who had heard the names of pioneering greats but never experienced the artistry, got the best kind of introduction imaginable.

In "Record Row," a number of great performers were interviewed"—along with visionary record-company moguls such as Marshall and Phil Chess (son and brother of the label's founder Leonard Chess), Vee-Jay's Ewart Abner, Dick Clark of *American Bandstand* and noted black musicologist/historian Portia Maultsby, of Indiana University.

"Record Row" also offered long-overdue insights into the disgusting rip-offs of young black artists back in the day by some record companies, and shed light on little-known or long-forgotten facts. This included the pivotal role of disk jockey Al Benson, of Chicago, in bringing urban blues and R&B to black people aching to hear their music on the radio.

In addition, viewers learned that Vee-Jay Records preceded Motown in the '50s as the first successful black-owned label, and was the first American company to record the Beatles and Four Seasons. Viewers also learned that bribing DJs to play certain records, a.k.a. payola, was an accepted way of doing business at the time.

Finally, the phenomena of "cover" records was discussed, whereby average white singers such as Pat Boone, the McGuire Sisters and the Crew Cuts made big bucks recording the work of superior black artists for white consumption.

Incredibly, some people still believe rock 'n' roll began with Elvis Presley and the Beatles. Such misinformation is mind-boggling. "Record Row" helped dispel these myths.

In "Doo-Wop 50"—a delightful evening of historic musical artistry performed live in Pittsburgh"—PBS

tapped-into a priceless vein of Americana. Along the way, it doubtless attracted countless channel-surfing viewers who stopped, looked, listened and stayed.

The show opened with the Platters—led by diminutive bass man Herb Reed—doing their awesome version of "The Great Pretender." Since I grew up hearing my late father sing bass in his church choir in Milwaukee, nothing could have been finer.

Although loving every aspect of the show, perhaps my favorite part was when Butler introduced the Marcels with bass man Fred Johnson doing their signature 1961 smash "Blue Moon." Said Butler:

"Doo-Wop music has many great singers, but it was usually the bass man who kept the group in time. When singing on the street corners, if the bass man didn't get it right, everybody else was going to mess it up."

To me, the best bass singer of all was the late Gerald Gregory of the Spaniels, whose booming first five notes on "Goodnight Sweetheart, Goodnight" (1954) introduced R&B to white America. Fittingly, the show ended with Butler's moving introduction of lead singer-songwriter James (Pookie) Hudson, as the Spaniels performed their signature song.

In the 18 months since Hurricane Katrina, whenever I watch my tapes of these two specials, I think of Fats Domino. Indeed, without his dozens of R&B hits in the 1950s and '60s, the music may have died. But just as Fats survived the monster hurricane, original black R&B has survived five decades of changing music tastes. And it still sounds great.

Richard G. Carter is the author of "Goodnight Sweetheart, Goodnight: The Story of the Spaniels" (August Press-1995). He was a columnist and editorial writer with the *New York Daily News*, has appeared on *Larry King Live* and *The Phil Donahue Show* and co-hosted *Showdown* on CNBC with the late Morton Downey Jr. He was Vice President-Public Affairs with Group W Cable and in 1986 received the Marquette University By-Line Award for distinguished achievement in journalism.

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Christmas on Television

By Diane Werts

Praeger, Westport, CT
(272 pages, $39.95)

By Paul Noble

Christmas and television were made for each other. The best and worst elements of both become even more apparent and yet even more appropriate as December twenty-fifth approaches.

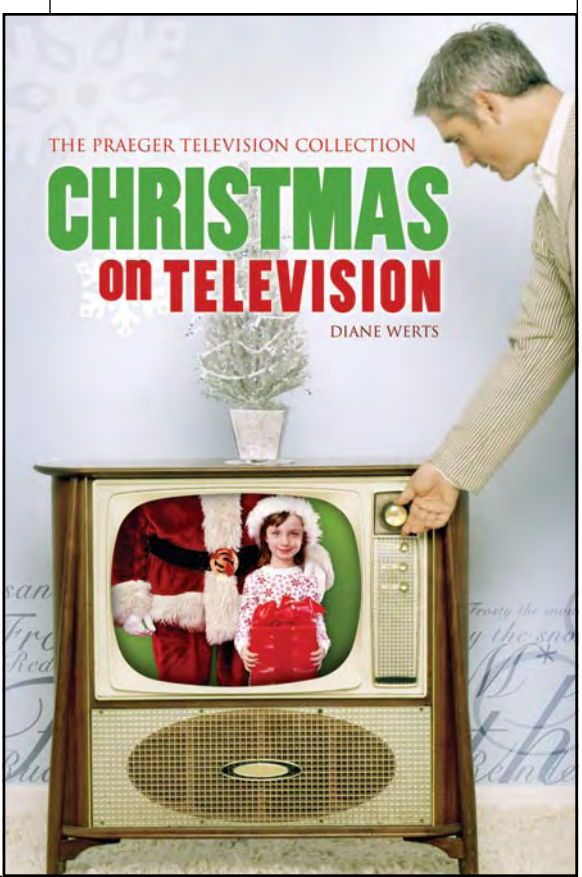
Christmas, with its "promise of perfection–of peace, brotherhood, warmth, and generosity, of good things to come, and bad things kept at bay," also brings us "crass consumerism." And television, at that time of year, balances its sometimes tawdry taste and everyday commercialism with programming that truly touches the spirit and provides a place "where people put aside their differences, where all is right with the world."

Diane Werts, the respected television writer for *Long Island Newsday*, is elevated to the role of holiday guru with the publication of her very unusual and all-inclusive retrospective of television's contributions to America's favorite holiday. *Christmas On Television* is the latest in the Praeger Television Collection books, and it is literally indispensable for anyone—viewer, fan, or fanatic—who wants a complete catalogue of the medium's yuletide output over the past sixty or so years.

Ms. Werts has been taping (now TiVo'ing) Christmas shows for the past twenty years, and she now has access to DVD's and cassettes from syndicators and producers. How she managed, however, to amass enough episodes from far-flung series and specials from over the years, is a miracle of dogged investigation.

While I'm not the target audience for all of the sitcoms, hour dramas and television events she enumerates, I'm surprised at how many of the program descriptions she provides rang a bell with me.

First and foremost was the brilliant



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"It's a Wonderful Life", James Stewart and Donn Reed, 1946 (left)
Kirk Jordan and Rosemary Kuhlmann in "Amahl and the Night Visitors" (right)

NBC Christmas eve premiere (1951) of the Gian Carlo Menotti opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. I'll never forget seeing that moving and lyrical hour. Of course it was live, as most television was in those days, but it was also original. And to those of us who were able to share that intimate presentation, we'll never be able to duplicate the thrill of such a creative and satisfying event. "It was an enormous sensation for a medium barely half a decade into its existence," Ms. Werts writes. "[It] was lauded for both its cultural and emotion impact, telling of a lame boy who follows the three magi to the manger of Christ and offers up his crutch as tribute. That such an artistic work could be seen by millions of Americans in one night—and present such a high level of creativity—marked a turning point in perceptions about television."

Television didn't just accommodate Christmas; TV enveloped it, developed it, and literally re-invented it. For many people, pre-television family traditions were eclipsed by what television provided. Bing Crosby and his family serenaded us; Bob Hope visited our troops in war-torn locations around the globe; movies which had been made for theater audiences became rituals; books and stories were adapted, re-imagined and reborn in animation, musicals and dramas. America's greatest performers became the focus of annual holiday gatherings, from Perry Como, Judy Garland, Red Skelton and Liberace to Andy Williams, Dinah Shore, Arthur Godfrey, Kate Smith, Rosemary Clooney, Eddie Fisher, Mitch Miller, and, of course, Lawrence Welk.

As someone who worked in programming in both local television (Channel 5 in New York City) and basic cable (Lifetime), I can tell you that each summer we worked feverishly to acquire the Christmas-themed episodes and the two-hour films which would make the month leading up to Christmas more enticing and powerful than the previous

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year's holiday period.

I would say that Diane Werts' focus on the Christmas themes in the episodic half-hour and hour series is what makes her study most impressive. By analyzing the nature and content of those programs, she, in effect, provides a very enterprising history of network television's most celebrated shows and their contributions to the American way of life.

For example, her chapter "Christmas With a Conscience: Time for Social Statements," she demonstrates how Archie Bunker's bigotry can show the real meaning of Christmas and how the divisive issue of Vietnam could be put to rest; how *M*A*S*H* could have an anti-war attitude and yet still "respect the efforts of those forced to fight." She looks at the Christmas efforts of *Highway to Heaven, 21 Jump Street, Touched By An Angel, Nothing Sacred, My So-Called Life, The West Wing,* and *E.R.*, which touched on issues from organ donations, domestic abuse, homelessness and gang warfare to hate crimes, cultural clashes and substance use.

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the old Yule standby before television, became perhaps the greatest source of stories for writers and producers, and Ms. Werts describes the episodes and films which derived their strength from it. Scrooge has been portrayed in one show or movie or another by everyone from Susan Lucci to Mr. Magoo to Jack Klugman (as Felix Unger in *The Odd Couple*), Kelsey Grammer to George C. Scott to Cicely Tyson.

From the literally hundreds of shows which the author quotes, I offer a generous selection of my favorite lines which help define the shows, the characters, and the holiday themes, as well as the stresses, tensions, greed, nostalgia, caring and sharing. Do you remember them?

Tim Allen, *Home Improvement*: "Christmas is not about being with people you like, it's about being with your family!"

Brad Sullivan, *Nothing Sacred*: "I don't care much for Christmas myself. Expectations—they're too high. My mother always wanted us to be so joyful. And Father would drink himself into a rage. Now it doesn't even feel like Christmas until the first punch is thrown."

Stockard Channing, *The West Wing*, describing the holiday rancor of her relatives: "We were never Currier and Ives."

Alan Alda, *M*A*S*H*: "You know, between decorating the tree with thermometers, and Radar singing those Christmas carols on the PA, and that little below-zero nip in the air, this place really manages to capture that good old-fashioned Christmas depression."

Lucille Ball, *The Lucy Show*, angry at Vivian Vance's choice of a tree color: "Well, I might have known anyone who'd have a white tree would be a goose-eating package peeker!" (The retort from Viv, "What else would you expect from an evergreen-loving chestnut stuffer!")

Doris Roberts, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, about her bragging cousin Teresa: "You'd think she pulled the Pope out of quicksand or something."

Kelsey Grammer, *Cheers*: "By this time tomorrow, millions of Americans knee deep in tinsel and wrapping paper will utter those heartfelt words: Is this all I got?"

Bob Newhart, *Newhart*: "Let me get

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this straight. This is Christmas Eve, and you show up with a pregnant wife and there's no room at the inn… On behalf of innkeepers everywhere, I think we owe you one."

Carroll O'Connor, *All In The Family*, responding to atheist son-in-law: "All over the world, they celebrate the birth of that baby, and everybody gets time off from work. Now if that ain't proof that He's the son of God, then nothing is."

Bart Simpson, *The Simpsons*: "If TV has taught me anything, it's that miracles always happen to poor kids at Christmas. It happened to Tiny Tim, it happened to Charlie Brown, it happened to The Smurfs, and it's gonna happen to us."

Christmas On Television also pays attention to the counterparts to the holiday, factual (Chanukah, Kwanzaa) and fictional (Festivus and Chrismukkah). And to the usurper of *A Christmas Carol*, the Frank Capra film *It's A Wonderful Life*. Not only has the movie become the standard against which all holiday programming is measured, but it has generated dozens of plotlines and has shown up in the background of many television episodes. In the words of the Baileys' young daughter, "Teacher says that every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings!" Congratulations, Clarence!

Paul Noble is a five-time New York-area Emmy winner for discussion and documentary programs. He has produced programming at WGBH-TV Boston and for Metromedia and Fox in New York. Now retired from his position as vice-president of film acquisitions and scheduling for Lifetime Television, he serves on the board of the Palm Beach County Commission on Film & Television.

Reality Television

By Richard M. Huff

Praeger, Westport, CT
(200 pages, $39.95)

By David Marc

Somewhere between the impenetrable analyses of academic theoreticians and the breathless praise of incorrigible fans there is a readable, informative television criticism that helps viewers understand what they have been watching and how they might connect it into a bigger picture than the one in their home theater entertainment environments. Richard M. Huff, who covers television for the *New York Daily News* and teaches journalism at Manhattan's New School, is a TV critic working in just that elusive zone. In his new book, *Reality Television*, part of Praeger's Television Collection series, Huff combines the resources of a working journalist with scholarly perspective to offer readers a survey of the reality TV phenomenon.

Like many critics, Huff marks the seminal moment of contemporary reality as the unexpected summer success of CBS's *Survivor* in 2000. Unlike many of his colleagues, however, Huff understands that reality programming has been an element of network TV schedules since the earliest days of the medium, and capably demonstrates the heritage of reality shows, subgenre by subgenre. Ted Mack's *Original Amateur Hour*, for example, was presenting show business hopefuls competing against each other on the DuMont network half a century

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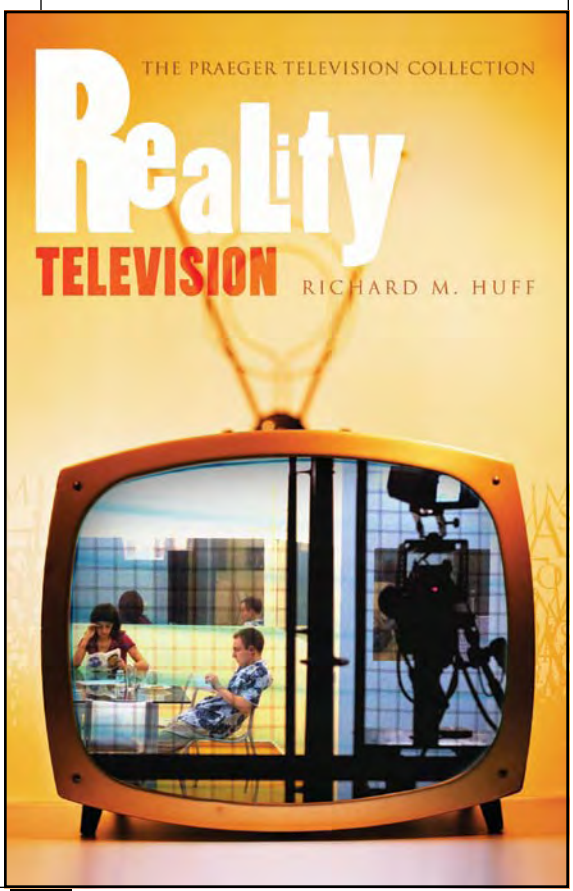
before Simon Cowell's *American Idol* premiered on Fox. *The Dating Game*, a Chuck Barris production, pre-dates *Blind Date, Elimidate, Next, Greed* and other cutting-edge matchmaking vehicles by almost as many decades. Makeover shows? *Queen for a Day* (NBC, 1956-60; ABC, 1960-64), in which studio audiences rated the pathos of winning sob stories by means of an applause meter, is the mother of them all.

So what's so new about reality? Is it possible that the genre universally touted as the most revolutionary commercial television phenomenon of the 21st century is, in reality, just a series of repackagings of well-proven products, just like all the other popular TV genres? Well, sort of.

Art Linkletter, who created, produced and hosted a string of early television hits—not one of them a sitcom or scripted drama of any type—goes so far to claim that he and Ralph Edwards (*This is Your Life*) invented reality television during the 1950s. In Linkletter's long-running prime-time series *People Are Funny* (and in ancient daytime game shows, such as Mark Goodson's *Beat the Clock*), non-celebrity contestants were routinely called on to perform ridiculous stunts. This sounds a lot like *Fear Factor,* but as Linkletter notes, "We never dreamed they would have people eating bugs on TV." And there, perhaps, is the difference between old reality and new. Why didn't they dream of having people eating bugs? Because they knew that Standards and Practices would never have allowed it. The disappearance of Standards and Practices (and, some would add, the disappearance of standards) made it possible to bring back all those old concepts with such a "fresh" look.

Television, which was born as a mass medium during the McCarthy era, was a painfully timid medium during its first decades of existence. Reality in just about any form, whether it was human sexuality, original thinking, or ethical ambiguity, was not high on the list of network priorities. The stylized, painfully familiar genres of the broadcasting era looked sillier and sillier as cable widened the frontiers of content. Reality shows, beginning with Fox's *Cops* in 1990, offered the networks a way of dropping out of the "dramatic" reality they had been building for so long—and offered the added benefit



of lowering overhead.

The most fetching chapter of Huff's book is titled, "Liars, Cheaters, and Scandals." In it, he reveals the extent of artifice necessary to create reality TV. *American Idol* contestant Corey Clark, for example, was cut during the second season of the series not for a lack of singing talent, but because he was facing charges of beating up his sister. A bit too real, even for the cable era? Morals clause, anyone? In the first case of a contestant striking back at a game show since Herbert Stempel took down *21* in the quiz show scandals, Clark claimed he had been having an affair with *Idol* judge Paula Abdul, who had grown tired of him. This was an especially egregious threat to the Fox mega-hit since Abdul had developed the reputation (or played the role?) of the fair and caring judge on *American Idol*. CBS had its lesson in the hazards of the hiring unrepresented, non-professional talent for prime time in 2000 when one of the housemates on *Big Brother* forgot to mention (on his 13-page application form) that he had a long history of making anti-Semitic speeches, and a web site full of the same, for anyone who wanted to read it. "The network reportedly spent more than $100,000 on background checks for *Big Brother*, but failed to turn up Collins's past," writes Huff. "After word of Collins's background got out, viewers voted him off the show."

Reality-show fans are likely to enjoy reading Huff for his encyclopedic knowledge of the genre, including overall development of the genre and scores of particular factoids and anecdotes associated with individual programs, including both hits and failures. The book should serve as a reality check for those who believe that the castaways on *Survivor* are in actual danger of starving, as well as for those who are convinced that every moment of MTV's *The Real World* is scripted.

David Marc is currently working on his sixth book, which concerns eros and cable. His most recent book, *Television in the Antenna Age* (Blackwell), was co-written with Robert J. Thompson.

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Only Joking: What's So Funny About Making People Laugh?

By Jimmy Carr & Lucy Greeves

Gotham Books
(288 pages, $23.00)

I Shouldn't Even Be Doing This: And Other Things that Strike Me as Funny

By Bob Newhart

Hyperion
(256 pages, $23.95)

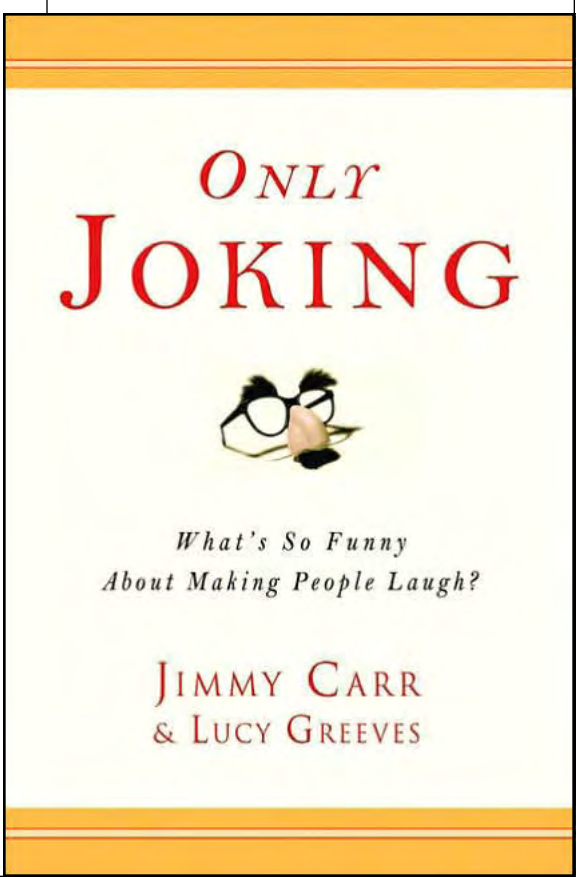
By David Horowitz

Trying to determine what's funny is a challenge. As E.B. White said, "Analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies."

Animal cruelty aside, British comedian Jimmy Carr and his colleague Lucy Greeves, authors of *Only Joking: What's So Funny About Making People Laugh?*, set out to answer the question, "what's funny?" Clearly, there's clearly no one, definitive answer, and therein lies the rationale for this wide–ranging, scholarly, fun examination of the answer(s) to that question. The authors of *Only Joking* aren't out for laughs in their discussion, but a comprehensive look at the theory and practice of humor.

Besides trying to determine what's funny and why, the biggest challenge facing Carr and Greeves is that reading about humor is not the same as hearing or seeing it. What's funnier, hearing a comedian tell a story about a guy walking into a bar with a frog on his head or reading about it?

Only Joking provides a broad survey of both the history of humor as it evolved from pranks of the gods in a variety of cultures to modern jokes. The book occasionally gets bogged down, especially in the early going, in a detailed examination of what could loosely be called humor—if your idea of a good laugh is watching the gods torment a member of the tribe.



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Readers less interested in the totemic origins of humor in mythological trickster spirits than why people laugh will find a nice blend of articulate discussions of the "joke" and how and why people find them funny. As they note, "Jokes are partly an expression of the alienated outsider who lives in all of us… In a sense, every joke expresses something about what it feels like to see things from an extraordinary point of view: what it feels like to be a foreigner."

The authors loosen up a bit when comparing how cultures can shape an individual's perception of what's funny and what's not. It's clear that the dry British humor found in many of that country's television shows, for instance, doesn't always translate directly with American audiences, but that's what show doctors are for. Equally, some jokes don't travel well simply because of local references.

Given the authors' British background, they're quite aware of this and their discussion of British versus American humor is quite perceptive. Some North American readers might find some of the references to less-well-known British comedians a bit confusing, but while this book is clearly directed to a U.K. audience, there's plenty of content for North American readers.

According to conventional wisdom, all comedians are products of an unhappy childhood. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't, but as might be expected from a scholarly examination of humor, the authors investigate the psychological aspects of comedy, with subjects ranging from Sigmund Freud to Lennie Bruce. Along those lines, the authors do a fine job of examining the mindset of a standup comic, from the desire to please to the depths of rejection when a performance bombs.

The book's strengths lie in the examination of modern humor and who makes it in chapters devoted to stand-ups, gender-based jokes, offensive jokes, ethnic jokes and political humor. Given Carr's career as a standup comic and Greeve's background as comedy writer, they're on firmer territory here.

The discussion of what might make a joke offensive to some people and not others is particularly astute. Sure, many people don't like bad language or jokes directed at stereotypes or minorities, but plenty of people do. Why? The authors come up with a number of interesting theories, although some readers might still get offended at a few of their examples. (There's one word my mother wouldn't say even if her mouth was full of it.)

What's a book about humor without some jokes? There are literally hundreds of jokes that appear throughout the book. Despite the point that jokes don't "read" funny as much as when they're heard, their sheer volume and quality is a terrific counterpoint to the text.

And what's a review about an examination of humor without a joke from the book? Here's what the British Academy for the Advancement of Science determined what was the "world's funniest joke" through online voting in 2001.

"A couple of New Jersey hunters are out in the woods when one of them falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are rolled back in his head. The other guy whips out his cell phone and calls the emergency services.

"My friend is dead! What can I do?"

The operator, in a calm soothing voice, says, "Just take it easy. I'm here to help.

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First, let's make sure he's dead."

There's a silence, then a shot is heard. The hunter's voice comes back on the line.

"OK, now what?"

Newhart, on the other hand, is much less interested in discussing theories of comedy. As he writes, "I'm not a fan of books that examine humor in a scientific fashion. If I ever see another book called *The Serious Side of Comedy*, I'm going to throw up."

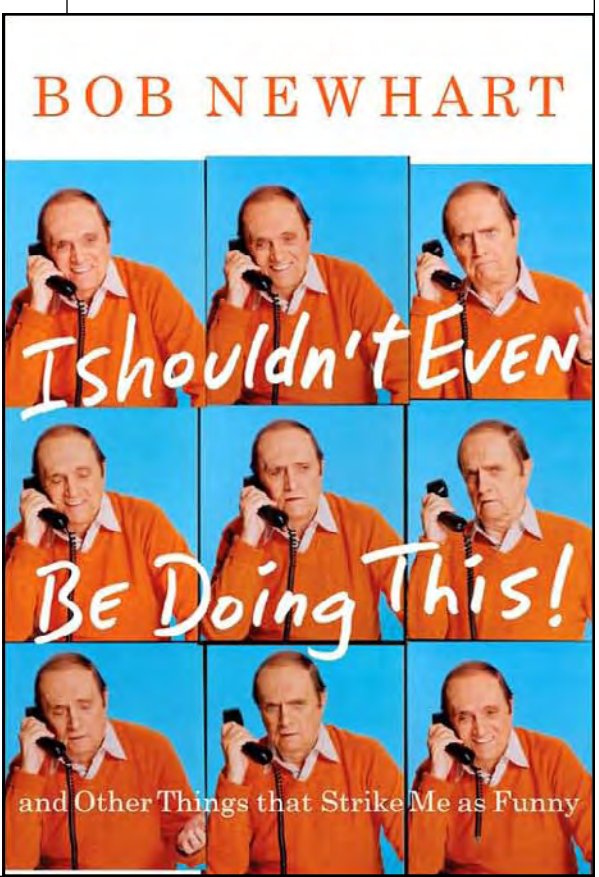
No puking here. Newhart takes a low-key look back at his life, both on- and off-stage. The book clearly reflects Newhart's laid-back style, which he used to great success in early years as a standup comedian. In those days, his buttoned down mind…" comedy albums were the first to top the pop charts. As expected, there are the requisite behind-the-scenes anecdotes about other performers like Johnny Carson and *Get Smart*'s Don Adams, as well as about Newhart's early years and later television shows.

Some of the more pleasurable reads are transcripts of his early routines, like the classic conversation between Abraham Lincoln and his press agent: "Abe, you got the speech… Abe, you haven't changed the speech, have you… You what? You typed it! Abe how many times have we told you—on the backs of envelopes… I understand it's harder to read that way, but it looks like you wrote it on the train coming down."

Because Newhart's delivery is so familiar, readers can easily imagine him doing these routines right off the page.

As many fans know, Newhart held a job as an accountant in Chicago before going into comedy full time. His practice in balancing the petty-cash books, for example, was simply to put in his own money if the account was short and take some out if the account was over. This is funny material, but Newhart covers it in just over a page.

Perhaps looking for deeper information about the man and his craft is the wrong approach, since the essence of Newhart's appeal is his everyman persona. Whether he's doing standup, sketch comedy or one of his "Bob" television series, he's just a guy who's



doing the best he can to deal with what life has presented to him. As he writes at one point about his approach, "I've always likened what I do to the man who is convinced that he is the last sane man on Earth." Taken in that vein, there are enough vignettes in the book to satisfy even a casual reader, as Newhart is seemingly a bit more comfortable writing about his work than about who he is. To be fair, though, Newhart isn't too proud to offer some insights on his occasional overindulgences in alcohol and tobacco or his feelings toward some of the people he's met along the way.

For his fans, and for fans of comedy in general, one of the touchstones of Newhart's career was the last episode of the *Newhart* show, suggested by Newhart's wife, Ginnie, and named as one of the five most memorable moments in television history by *TV Guide*. In that series, Newhart played the owner of a Vermont inn. In what is arguably one of the most unexpected series final episodes, he awakens in the familiar bedroom of his previous series, *The Bob Newhart Show*, next to his TV wife in that series, Suzanne Pleshette, and starts telling her about his amazing dream that he had been running an inn in Vermont.

In all, the book is an interesting tour of the man's life, with details about his fear of flying, fun in Las Vegas, and golf. It might have been nice to have a little more excitement pop off the page, but then again, that's not Newhart's style. And millions of his fans are clearly just fine with that.

As for the title, it's the punchline to a joke: A guy is having an affair with his boss' wife. They are making mad, passionate love, and she says, "Kiss me. Kiss me!" He looks at her very seriously and replies, "I shouldn't even be doing *this*!"

Glad you did *this*, Bob.

David B. Horowitz is a free-lance writer and marketing consultant in Ann Arbor, MI, where he writes about electronic media and other topics. A 25-year TV veteran in the U.S. and Canada, he also teaches writing and advertising at Washtenaw Community College.

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You're Lucky You're Funny: How Life Becomes a Sitcom

By Phil Rosenthal

Viking/Penguin, New York
(243 pages, $25.95)

By Earl Pomerantz

Phil Rosenthal was meant to create and run television sitcoms. Aspirants to that coveted but elusive position abound; I'm one of them. But Phil hit the jackpot. His successful and much-praised *Everybody Loves Raymond* (1996-2005) yielded multiple awards, a loyal following and syndication immortality. Rosenthal's entertaining book, *You're Lucky You're Funny,* illuminates the mystery of how he pulled it off.

Let's start at the beginning. Common factors in professional funny people:

1: Funny relatives.

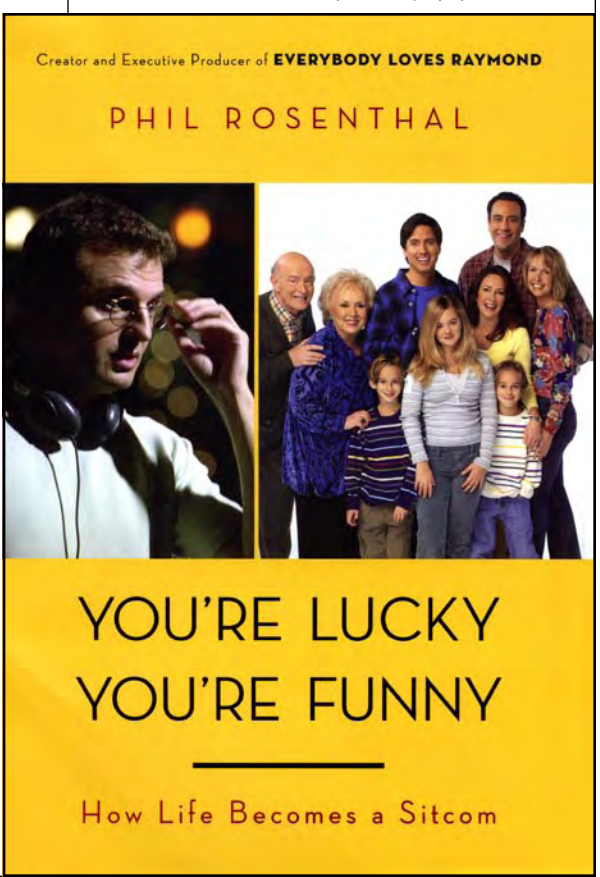
Rosenthal had plenty. His grandmother, pointing to her nursing home's resident kleptomaniac furtively stuffing contraband into her purse, advises, "If I'm ever missing, look in there."

2: A passion for quality comedy entertainment and an ability to distinguish the good stuff from the shows about talking cars. Rosenthal steeped himself in the classics: *The Dick Van Dyke Show, The Honeymooners, All in the Family, The Mary Tyler Moore Show, Taxi.*

3: A good reason to stay indoors watching television. Rosenthal's reason was neighbor kids who enjoyed hitting him in the head.

Combine these elements with a iron-willed determination and you're well on your way.

Rosenthal's education in comedy was augmented by an essential lesson in storytelling: Keep your comedy relatable by grounding it in identifiable human behavior: "Kindness. Love your family (no matter how crazy). Enjoy your life."



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Any *Raymond* episode you look at will show that this lesson had a deep and enduring influence. Considering how the show's family members often treated each other, if it weren't for the loving, there might have been murdering.

Even for ultimate successes, however, the road to the top is rarely stumble- or humiliation-free. For me, the funniest parts of *You're Lucky You're Funny* are "The Early Years in New York," where Rosenthal gamely struggles to make his mark. We're told of a rocky stint as a museum security guard, his struggles as a clueless bartender, his leadership training experiences as a deli manager and a dog-sitting opportunity with strings attached. Though his passion was acting, Rosenthal learned that writing too, had its satisfactions. While devising and editing trailers for his employers, a small film-distribution company, Rosenthal discovered "It was a kick to have a whole audience laughing at something I wrote and put together." Sometimes, what you're meant to be is not what you want to be. But it can still turn out pretty good.

In L.A., terrible experiences on forgettable sitcoms had Rosenthal fearing he might be on the wrong track. But even while struggling, he was learning. He learned story structure, most importantly that "The story must be driving forward. The audience should not be aware of the structure while they're watching, they should just be entertained, but subconsciously, the strength of the story's structure will make the episode resonate with them fare more than an unformed collection of jokes and funny faces." However disastrous, every experience helped sharpen his skills. Incorporating what he liked, rejecting what he didn't, Rosenthal was gradually developing his style, taste and judgment. It would all come into play when his Big Chance arrived.

And arrive it did, on Page 72. A journeyman comic whose "act is relatable" was looking for a writer to collaborate with on a series in which the comedian would star. Rosenthal's meeting was the Mother of all Big Breaks. The luckiest thing that can happen to a writer is the chance to provide words for a performer who's pretty much exactly like him; like him in his view of the world, like him in his comic sensibility, like him in the way he puts words together – the funny way he says the funny things he observes. Phil Rosenthal, the writer, and Ray Romano, the comic, were very, very much alike. Their fortuitous pairing would result in one of the greatest, and truest, family comedies of all time.

When his chance came, Rosenthal knew exactly what he wanted. He decided "…if this was going to the first show I ever created, I should write what I was comfortable with…[a show] that didn't depend on topical jokes, or the social rituals and foibles of the day, [a show] where the humor came from character, where the story came from character, and there was a story—beginning, middle and end." Rosenthal was inspired by the words of a former boss, Ed. Weinberger: "Do the show you want to do, because in the end, they're going to cancel you anyway."

Not that it was clear sailing. (It never is.) A number of Rosenthal's suggestions for the story that would serve as the pilot were shot down. It appeared the network was pushing the wrong actress to be cast as Ray's wife. When the show was sold,

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Ray was informed that they wanted him to be supervised by an experienced show runner. There was a studio executive determined to get him fired and take over his job. In every case, Rosenthal stood his ground and got what he wanted. It would be his show, for better or worse.

Fortunately, it turned out for better.

A substantial section of the book —season-by-season breakdowns of key episodes—is more suited to *Raymond* groupies than to the casual fan. There's also an extended retelling of a less than successful vacation at a Mexican resort, which, to me, seemed more whiney than hilarious. What's inevitably picked up is the clear sense that, through the run of the show, only one thing made Rosenthal truly happy—sitting in the Writers' Room, doing the work. On more than one occasion, Rosenthal admits he would gladly have done the job for free, and there's little doubt he would have. *Raymond* was his life, and his life brought him great joy and immeasurable satisfaction.

Not to mention vindication. A kid who was constantly told to leave the TV and go outside was finally proving everyone wrong. He wasn't wasting his time back then. He was learning. And now, it was all paying off.

Though disparaging the network requirement that all characters must be likable, Rosenthal's book substantially adheres to the requirement he disparages. He's likable all the way through. With perhaps one disclaimer. There is in Rosenthal's description of how he directs the actors and supervises the elements of the show a hint of micromanagement and a caring till it hurts. Consider this revealing Mission Statement: "Fred Astaire would practice dancing until his feet were bleeding…so that when you watch it, it appears effortless. Same with this." Many in a similar position would stop short of the bleeding feet. But maybe that's what it takes.

I have only one reservation in recommending *You're Lucky You're Funny* as a study guide for creating great sitcoms for the future: the future may not include these kinds of shows. *Raymond* may be the last "well-made, traditional, classic type of sitcom" to grace the airwaves. The genre is failing and desperation has engendered an, as yet unrewarded, flight to the extremes. Though Rosenthal made light of (Inside the Actors' Studio's) James Lipton's saying about *Raymond*, "It's f----ing history, man", the pontificating interviewer may, in fact, have been right. The well-made, traditional, classic type of sitcom may very well be history.

What remains then are the reruns and this lively and informative book. That may just have to do.

A frequent contributor to *Television Quarterly,* Earl Pomerantz was executive producer of *The Cosby Show*. His comedy-writing credits include *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Cheers*. He has won two Emmy Awards, a Writers' Guild Award, a Humanitas Prize and a Cable Ace award.

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Prime-Time Television: A Concise History

By Barbara Moore, Marvin R. Bensman and Jim Van Dyke

Praeger, Westport, CT
(260 pages, $44.95)

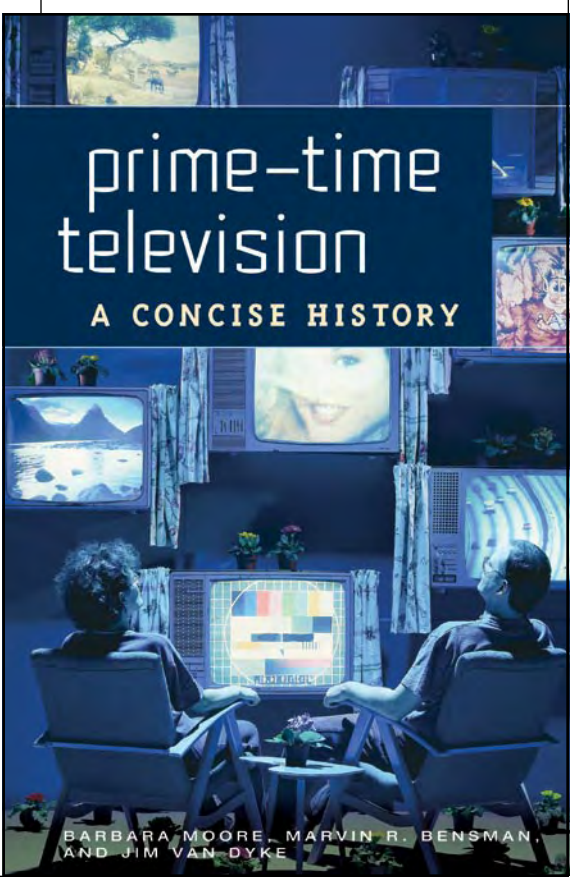
By Norman Felsenthal

Prime-Time Television is not a history of television, nor is it a book about programming. It is, however, a book about programs – over 800 of them. The authors, three academics, have written an eight-chapter book that traces the history of prime-time television by listing and, in most cases, briefly describing the genre and contents of specific TV programs. A few classic programs such as *I Love Lucy* and *All in the Family* are discussed at greater length, but the remainder – whether familiar or obscure – rate a few sentences or one or two paragraphs at most.

It's difficult to determine the audience for this book. Is it a supplemental textbook for students studying programming or the history of broadcasting? Or is it a trade book geared to a more general readership looking for a trip down television's memory lane. In a previous issue of *Television Quarterly*, Earl Pomerantz noted that: "academics seem determined to break into crossover publishing." *Prime-Time Television* appears, to this reviewer, to be one of those crossover books. In their attempt to cover so many different programs, the authors fail to generate much real excitement for their topics.

The authors do try to relate the programs to the popular culture of the period. And they are not hesitant to probe relationships that are sometimes speculated. For example, was *Gunsmoke*'s Miss Kitty (Amanda Blake) merely a saloonkeeper or the proprietor of a brothel? Was Della Street (Barbara Hale) simply Perry Mason's ever-loyal legal secretary or something more?

The four-page introduction is very good at stating basic principles and defining terms. This is followed by a 25-page opening chapter, "The Heritage of Radio Programming (1927- 47)," that lists programs, performers and genres that successfully crossed over from the



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audio to the video medium. A brief second chapter, "The Experimental Days of TV Programming (1939-47)," recalls a time when few people had television sets and few programs were aired by the fledgling networks. Among the most successful programs of this early period was a program featuring Arthur Godfrey that was simulcast on both radio and television.

"Finding an Audience (1948-52)" remembers Ed Sullivan and Milton Berle, children's programs like *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*, the anthology dramas of a very brief "Golden Age," early Murrow and a number of primitive TV shows that predate the memory of most readers.

Chapter four, titled "The Rise and Fall of Live Drama and Quiz Shows (1952-59)," is self-explanatory. The section on the quiz-show scandals is particularly instructive because it clarifies how the scandals were exposed and analyzes the differing backgrounds of the principal protagonists, Charles Van Doren and Herb Stemple. Film and tape replace live TV as the production methods of choice and the adult western migrates from the movie screen to the television tube.

"Detectives, Cowboys, and Happy Families (1960-69)" is the longest, and for this reviewer, the most enjoyable chapter, probably because the programs are more memorable than those of earlier periods. During this period, the adult western peaked in popularity with *Gunsmoke* and *Bonanza* leading a herd that included seven of the top ten programs in the 1958-59 season. TV programs may have gained technical polish and acquired sophisticated story lines, but it was also a period characterized by FCC Chairman Newton Minow as a "vast wasteland."

"Controversy in Prime Time (1970-84)" takes its name from the issue-oriented sit-coms (*All in the Family*), the innuendo-laden "jiggle" programs (*Three's Company*) and renewed concern about TV violence. Also discussed is the FCC's attempt to diminish network control of programming and open the marketplace to independent program producers by enacting both the Prime Time Access Rule and the financial interest/syndication rule.

One particularly amusing section creates eight different categories for situation comedies: happy family sitcoms (*The Cosby Show*), divorce in sitcoms (*One Day at a Time*), inverted family (*Maude*), workplace (*Cheers*), ethnic (*Bridget Loves Bernie*), independent woman (*Mary Tyler Moore Show*), nostalgic (*Happy Days*) and military-themed (*M*A*S*H*). Dramas are grouped by similar categories: legal dramas, sports dramas, medical dramas, etc.

Chapter seven, "Changes in Competition (1985-1995)," deals with the emergence of the Fox network and expanding number of cable channels while the final chapter, "More New Voices (1996-2005)," examines network ownership changes, vertical integration, and the effect these changes have on programs.

The strongest portions of the book are the highly readable shaded inserts that examine specific program episodes in some detail. One such insert describes a *Gunsmoke* episode in which a hard-nosed "shoot-'em-all" U.S. marshal comes in conflict with Matt Dillon's more moderate rule-of-law orientation. Another relates the plot of an amusing *Bewitched* program where Samantha uses her witchcraft to

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deal with a demeaning dinner guest. Still another links *77 Sunset Strip* to 1960s America and describes Kookie, one of the well-remembered if tangential characters, as a "hipster, too late in historical time to be a beatnik but too early to be a hippy."

One particularly thought-provoking insert recalls a *Twilight Zone* episode during which the Conalrad early-warning system has been activated and a group of neighbors, fearful of the impending nuclear disaster, vent their anger on one another, become a mob, and try to force their way into the single 10-foot-by-10-foot bomb shelter built by the one prescient member of the community. Later Conalrad announces a false alarm and the neighbors, filled with chagrin, apologize for their actions. Rod Serling, off camera, delivers the central theme of the episode: "No moral. No message. No prophetic tract. Just a simple statement of fact: if the civilization is to survive, the human race has to remain civilized."

One of the disappointing elements of this book is the photographs, stock pictures of television actors and casts from the Photofest archive collection. These photos are reprinted in a muddy black and white that lacks detail and frequently obscures the images. The best portions of the book are the sections that explain the "why" (audience and economic factors) rather than the "what" (the programs themselves).

The book restricts its examination of programs to those aired by ABC, CBS, NBC and later Fox. No attempt is made to discuss PBS programs, nor would such programs fit into the classification categories used by the authors. Programs created for cable networks are also not discussed.

Near the end of the book, the authors recall a basic rule of programming. "If a program is cheap, easy to produce, and successful, it will be imitated quickly, if not especially well." They also provide a useful warning against the nostalgia that makes us think more fondly of past than current programs. "The truth is that there has been no one time when TV programming has been wonderfully superior to all other times. Certain genres have blossomed and others have failed over the decades, but the overall content has remained, with a few exciting exceptions, determinedly mediocre."

This book reminds us of the many programs that have filled our prime-time screens and encourages us to savor those few exceptional programs.

Norman Felsenthal is Professor Emeritus of Broadcasting and Telecommunications at Temple University in Philadelphia. He represents the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of NATAS as a National Trustee and also serves as Chair of the Scholarship Committee.

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A Great Feast of Light: Growing Up Irish in the Television Age

By John Doyle

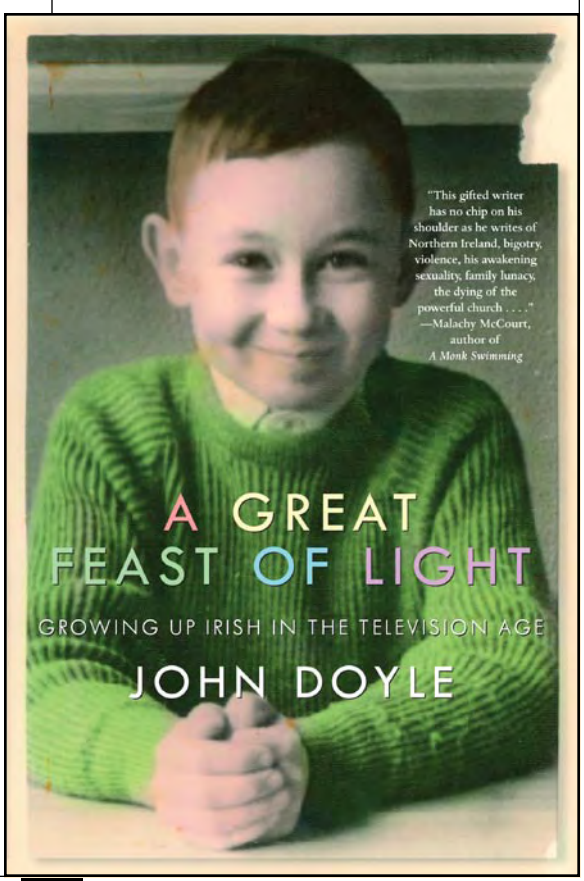
Carroll & Graf, New York
(336 pages; $15.95 paper)

By Fritz Jacobi

This is an absolutely wonderful book. Whether or not you have the slightest interest in Ireland or television, this coming-of-age memoir is completely captivating as it provides a three-dimensional portrait of a country and its people in the 1960s and '70s. And John Doyle's prose is pure poetry—graceful and elegant, with a real Irish lilt.

Doyle was six years old and living in the small town of Nenagh, County Tipperary, when his father, who sold insurance policies, brought home their first television set. It profoundly affected his life from then on. A fan of *Gunsmoke* from the start, the author notes that when he was punished in school for a crime he didn't commit, "the unjustice stung like the red welt on my hand. Bat Masterson might laugh it off but Marshal Matt Dillon wouldn't stand for it. He'd sort out the truth and make sure that innocent people weren't blamed for a crime they hadn't committed. You could rely on the truth coming out in Dodge City."

And from the start Radiotelefis Eirann was great company to the Doyle family, "a boon on fall and winter afternoons, warming the house with talk and music as darkness settled." But at Easter television almost disappeared completely. "Then RTE would just close down until Easter Sunday morning. It was to remind us that the anniversary of the resurrection of Our Lord was more important than anything going on in the world…Nenagh was full of religion. The town seemed to have an army of priests, Christian Brothers and other organizations devoted to the Church… They were hard men, the mission priests. Spittle and foam flew from their mouths as they promised hell to people who listened to foreign music and danced to it. Television was to be used for the news



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only, and for important announcements by bishops and cardinals. Everything else on television was rubbish and filth to be avoided."

Yet despite such intolerance young Doyle was profoundly and permanently affected by television, whether it originated in Ireland, England or America. "Television arrived," he writes, "and with it the hints of glamour, modernity and sophistication. The angelus bells still rang on Irish television to remind everyone of the faith of their mothers, fathers and forefathers, but in my house the angelus was only an interruption between entertaining programs and stories."

From television he learned about Ireland's bloody history, on which he trains a brilliant spotlight. Television broadened his horizons: "When people saw *The Donna Reed Show, I Love Lucy* or *Jack Benny,*" he writes, "they saw people comfortable in their skins, untrammeled by Church expectations and traditional pressures." When sex reared its appealing head on the popular RTE *Late Late Show*, the program was attacked by the conservative politician Oliver J. Flanagan, who famously declared that "there was no sex in Ireland before television." Television made Doyle immediately aware of Ireland's fight for civil rights, with the sight of deadly riots and men being dragged off to internment camps. Television brought him Monty Python, whose "comedy was an assault on everything that made the Irish angry at the British establishment." Television for young Doyle was living history.

Television introduced Doyle to *The Muppet Show*, whose two ancient hecklers, Statler and Waldorf, "were ideal for the Ireland of the time." And *Dallas* was an instant hit in Ireland. J.R. was the man everybody knew and secretly admired. "Holy mother of God, but that J.R. Ewing was a rogue," Doyle writes. "From the beginning, I watched [*Dallas*] with greedy attention, and it was wonderfully broad television, its luxurious quality delectable in pinched and gloomy Ireland."

Television finally changed John Doyle's life forever. His professors at University College Dublin—where he was studying English, philosophy and history—had been encouraging him to continue his education in the United States or Canada. One night an RTE documentary about Canada focused on the charismatic politician Pierre Trudeau, who reminded Doyle of Bat Masterson, "swinging through the doors of a saloon, looking for trouble and afraid of nothing." Transfixed by Trudeau's candor and charm, Doyle looked at the screen and said to himself, "I'll go there."

And he did. Today John Doyle is a television critic for the Toronto *Globe and Mail* and is one of Canada's most popular newspaper columnists,

Deservedly so.

Fritz Jacobi is the editor of *Television Quarterly*. He has been writing about television since the days (and nights) of Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, *Howdy Doody* and *Victory at Sea*.

Edward R. Bradley, Jr. My Friend

What made him such a consummate reporter was that he loved the profession and he loved life and each complemented the other. **By Charlayne Hunter-Gault**

Ed Bradley wasn't famous when we first crossed paths in 1969, but he did dream that impossible dreams were possible.

What drew us together was that we were both following the same dream—to be a part of "the action and passion of our times," as Oliver Wendell Holmes once put it. We didn't think of ourselves as journalists—in those days, you had to EARN that title. And while ours was the first generation of black journalists to take our place in the newsrooms of mainstream media—I at *The New York Times*, Ed at CBS radio—we happily called ourselves reporters, proudly accepting the additional responsibility of bringing black people and their news into mainstream media for the first time, in ways that were recognizable to themselves.

And even as his reporting repertoire expanded to include the world, Ed never forgot or apologized for who he was and where he came from, telling the adoring audience at the National Association of Black Journalists last Fall, when he was honored with its Lifetime Achievement Award:

"I grew up in Philadelphia rather protected from life in the South…Emmett Till and I were the same age when he was killed, and that was my introduction to the reality of life in this country for a black person in the mid-50's. When we were awarded an Emmy earlier this year for this story, I said it was the most important Emmy I had ever received. I would say the same thing about your recognition tonight."

Bradley with the Emmy he was awarded in September, 2006.

From the very beginning, Ed showed the kind of enviable ingenuity that would, in fact, earn him not only the title of journalist but would make him a journalist's journalist and an icon who was a down-to-earth human being. In the first blush of that journey, he showed up at local CBS radio in New York, after working part time as a disc jockey and reporter in his native Philadelphia. Although he had the grit to go for it, he didn't have a critical ingredient: an audition tape. But when the request was made, he quickly grabbed that day's newspaper and identifying the most easily accessible newsmaker, the same day produced an audition tape and was off and running.

And run he did—from Harlem to Battery Park and beyond, he inhaled New York and its people, not only their stories that made news, he also inhaled their culture, which made New York New York. Music, art, poetry, food—Ed packed them all in the bags he carried and added to as he made his way to the top—walking the walk and not just talking the talk—from New York to Paris, where he packed in the language and its culture, not least its jazz and fromage, if not foie gras. From Paris, where he didn't succeed in writing the Great American novel, but eventually signed on as a stringer for CBS News, he went to Vietnam, where he did the kind of stellar work that added to his expanding repertoire and growing reputation, at one point, dropping his notebook and his professional distance to aid Vietnamese struggling to get on shore through treacherous waters; at another, showing grace (and a tiny tear) under fire as he was felled by flying shrapnel. Wherever he was, as former President Bill Clinton recalled during the Riverside Church celebration of his life, Ed "always sang in the key of reason."

Over the next two decades, we would see incarnations of Ed Bradley all over the world and his own backyard, at the White House or behind the anchor desk, on the convention floor and many other places, likely and unlikely, with an earring added along the way—from the Khyber Pass, to Africa and the Middle East, China's forced labor camps to little towns in America and big ones, into prison cells and psychiatric hospitals, on the basketball court with Michael Jordan and the golf course with Tiger Woods, onto the stage as the "fourth Neville brother," or as Teddy Badley, a name given to him by musician Jimmy Buffett, who invited Bradley with a tambourine onto the stage sometimes and who recalled that Ed had more than a little Mardi Gras in his life. And I think that's what made Ed such a consummate reporter—he loved the profession and he loved life and each complemented the other, adding balance to a life of many parts, to a man his wife, Patricia Blanchet, thought of as a "complicated melody" of the India.Arie's tune.

What made Ed such a consummate reporter was that he loved the profession and he loved life and each complemented the other.

Ed was a good reporter because he loved the excitement and the challenge of the work, but he stood out in the profession because he also packed in his bags the respect for people he learned at his beloved mother, Gladys', knee. He might be interviewing one of the world's most disgusting villains, like Jack Henry Abbot or Timothy McVeigh, or a vixen whom he adored like Lena Horne, or

Ed Bradley reports on the sub-Saharan AIDS epidemic for the Peabody-Award winning *60 Minutes II* documentary, "Death by Denial."

cooking in the kitchen with Aretha Franklin, but he treated them all with the same respect. And that's why they let him into otherwise forbidden spaces. They trusted him. And he talked and, more importantly, *listened* to them, not on behalf of Ed Bradley, but on behalf of the people he also respected who were his audience.

As much as I remember bumping into Ed on assignments for our respective news organizations in the early days, I also remember Ed by night. A cool-as-you-wanna-be Pied Piper leading a motley crew of us downtown to the Lower East Side, to Verta Mae Grovesnor's house, where she was beginning her long journey to becoming one of the country's most gifted culinary artists. Her apartment was tiny in size, but large on hospitality, where she fed an ever-growing crowd of New Yorkers like us—wanna-be's and getting-to-be's in journalism and jazz, poetry, philanthropy and polemic. And we got to witness a Teddy-in-the-waiting at another East Side haunt, the funky Filmore East, where we would sit for hours on end, grooving to the mellow sounds of the likes of Taj Mahal, Nina Simone and Isaac Hayes—Ed's all time favorite artists.

And Ed loved sharing his passions with his friends. Another was sports. The fact that playing basketball at Cheney State ruined his knees that would cause him pain for life did not daunt his love of the game. One of my favorite times was when Ed used to broadcast half-time color from the New York Knicks games at Madison Square Garden. We used to gather in his one-bedroom high-rise apartment on New York's Upper

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West Side, with its expansive view of the Hudson River and listen to his broadcast, but more eagerly await his arrival back at the apartment where he regaled us with locker room stories that he couldn't put on the air. And Ed always took his friends with him, in one way or another, not least because we relied on each other to help us through the challenges we faced as what some would later call black pioneers.

Even as Ed got his foot in the door of CBS News, wearing a suit and looking smart, big hair, big beard and broad shoulders, my soon-to-be husband Ron Gault and I would take time out from our respective "serious jobs" and meet regularly on a big rock in Central Park, watching the Dawning of the Age of Aquarius, sharing deli sandwiches, and bolstering whichever one happened to be fighting professional or personal demons at the moment. As it was, though, we shared more jokes and laughs than horror stories and tears. And could Ed laugh—a big, deep baritone roar that was infectious.

But after that hour was over, it was back to work and working hard at being the best we could be.

Although Ed was an intensely private man, he never walked alone. Friends from Philly days, from New York days when hardly anybody knew his name, friends from Paris and Vietnam and Aspen and Sag Harbor, CBS friends and friends who were big names and unknown names, and friends who found out they didn't have to ask when they were in need. I knew some of the many charities he helped, and I knew there were many individuals he helped, including some wiped out in the New Orleans Katrina disaster, and one who created a program for AIDS orphans in South Africa for which he provided seed money and ongoing support, but I knew very few of the names of the people close and not so close he helped. Ed's support, like that stare over the rim of his glasses when an answer from an interviewee didn't ring true, was not for show. It was for real.

But Ed's largesse was not limited to money. He kept his arms around friends like my husband, Ron, and me. We shared our honeymoon with him in Paris, and many years later, I performed the ceremony in which he married his long-time companion, Patricia Blanchet. She took her marriage vows seriously and walked his best and worst miles by his side. And when we went to live in South Africa where they didn't show the TV programs we all loved, Ed would tape them and *60 Minutes,* and once a month, we'd get a FedEx box from him that would keep us in front of the tube late into many nights.

But what I admired most about Ed and the accolades and awards was another of the defining things about him: No matter the heights to which his talent and celebrity justifiably took him, and no matter how proud he was of all those achievements, including Emmys (a record 19!) and the highest awards in Broadcast Journalism—Peabodys and DuPonts among dozens of others—Ed never rested on his laurels. He was always trying to go himself one better. He had competition all around, but the stiffest was the Ed inside his own head.

I could almost hear that little man when Ed fought to come back after his quintuple bypass a few years ago and as he fought to overcome his latest medical challenges.

"One more river to cross," was what he said when I first approached his bedside during his struggle to hold on. And when

my husband followed me, he was even more graphic: "I'm going to beat this mf," he told him. I knew then, the Ed we knew was, as we used to say, still on the case.

And thus it was Ed, himself, who got us through the worst of times. He used to make fun of some of us when we reverted to habits we should have long discarded by quipping: "Nothing changes but the date." And as he walked that last mile, I thought of his quip in a different way. Despite his diminishing health, Ed was still the Ed I had always known and in the most important way, nothing had changed but the date. Ed made us hold on to hope, inspired by the faith and the courage he had in himself—even though sometimes he was the last to realize what a strong man he was.

At his bedside, I started to quote from Sterling Brown's poem, "Strong Men," and as I whispered to him, "Ed, 'Strong Men'…" he whispered, "Keep a comin' on."

I hope his example will inspire young men and women coming into our profession, and those who are not so young and already there, to embrace his values and keep a comin' on.

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