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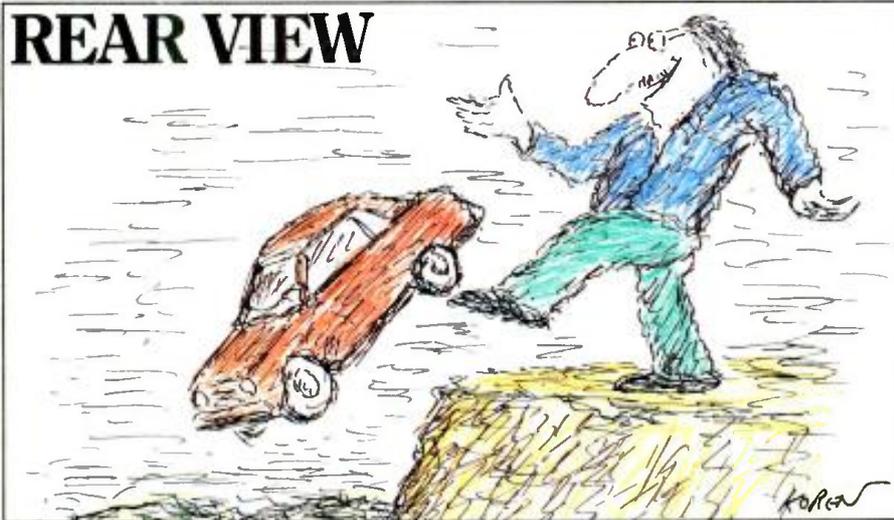
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REAR VIEW



Patriotic Smash Hits

When it comes to choosing the cars used for chases and crackups, Hollywood's motto is: Buy American!

By ED ZUCKERMAN

When my 1971 Opel began to exhibit terminal signs of disrepair, I resolved to donate it to Hollywood as a stunt car. After all the worrisome oil leaks, the mysterious and long-lasting stalls, and the repair costs that could have financed a moderate-sized invasion of Argentina, it seemed like a pleasant idea to switch on my favorite action-adventure show some evening and see the old Opel bumped from the rear by a Cadillac-load of villains in a high-speed car chase and sent tumbling, in flames, into a deep ravine. Automotive revenge is sweet.

Besides, this would be my car's chance to contribute to what may be *the* classic American art form. Jazz is nice and Andrew Wyeth has his place, but few Americans will ever see a poem as lovely as Rockford's Camaro spinning into a 180-degree turn while evading a carload of baddies in Malibu.

Perhaps my Opel could even advance the state of the art. I imagined it careening off a cliff onto the back of a truck 2000 feet below and the two vehicles being crashed upon by a flaming helicopter as they swerved toward a rotted bridge over a lake of quicksand. Or has

that been done?

In the old days, TV actors used to use their automobiles for transportation, just like you and me. Joe Friday and his partner drove politely from crime scene to crime scene without ever running a stop sign. When a show called for violence, they took a bit actor and hammered him to death. Nobody ever dreamed of murdering a Buick.

That was partly a matter of economics—in Hollywood, people have always been cheaper than cars. And it was before the antiviolence legions successfully lobbied for the removal of stabbings, shootings, beheadings and other entertainments from our television screens. What's a poor producer been left with? Inane dialogue and wet T-shirts can only go so far. Americans want *action*.

If that means desecrating the car, so be it. America's great romance with its cars is over anyway. Gone are the tail fins, the muscle engines, the convertibles and the roomy back seats where much of a generation was conceived (in recognition of which, perhaps, NBC once brought us the series *My Mother, the*

Car). Now we have bland interchangeable styling, OPEC, seat belts, economy unleaded. Remember for a moment how you once felt about your GTO, or your '55 Chevy, and then tell me true: Who could love a K car?

Some years ago, a TV writer named Howard Rodman created a series about a private detective called *Harry O*. Rodman sought to defy all precedent by denying Harry O a car. "I was sick of car chases," Rodman explained to a reporter. When Harry O had to go somewhere, he would just have to wait for a bus.

The network protested. "They said, 'But, Howard, car chases test very high'," Rodman recalled. "The day we sold the series was the same day we got instructions that Harry would have a car. So we gave him a car that was almost always in the shop. By the second season, he had a good car." The series was a success.

And so, confident that Hollywood would have good use for my Opel, I contacted the proper authorities and waited eagerly for them to take the damn thing away. Three days later, I was called upon by a delegation from Detroit.

"Lee Iacocca couldn't make it," apologized its spokesman, a large member of the UAW, "but you'll notice that the industry is otherwise well-represented. We understand that you've tried to donate a foreign car to Hollywood."

I nodded weakly.

"In case you haven't heard, buster," he growled, "things are not too rosy around Detroit lately what with creeps like you buying these Apples—"

"That's Opel."

"And we'd like to appeal to you, as a loyal American, to help us keep one of the few markets we can still rely on. Do you realize that Hollywood crash cars accounted for half of Chrysler's production last fall?"

I said I'd had no idea.

"And besides," he continued, eyeing my car, "who'd want to watch a dinky contraption like that go up when they could watch a Buick explode?"

I protested: "*You'd* want to see it blow up too if you'd driven it to Buffalo last winter with the heater broken."

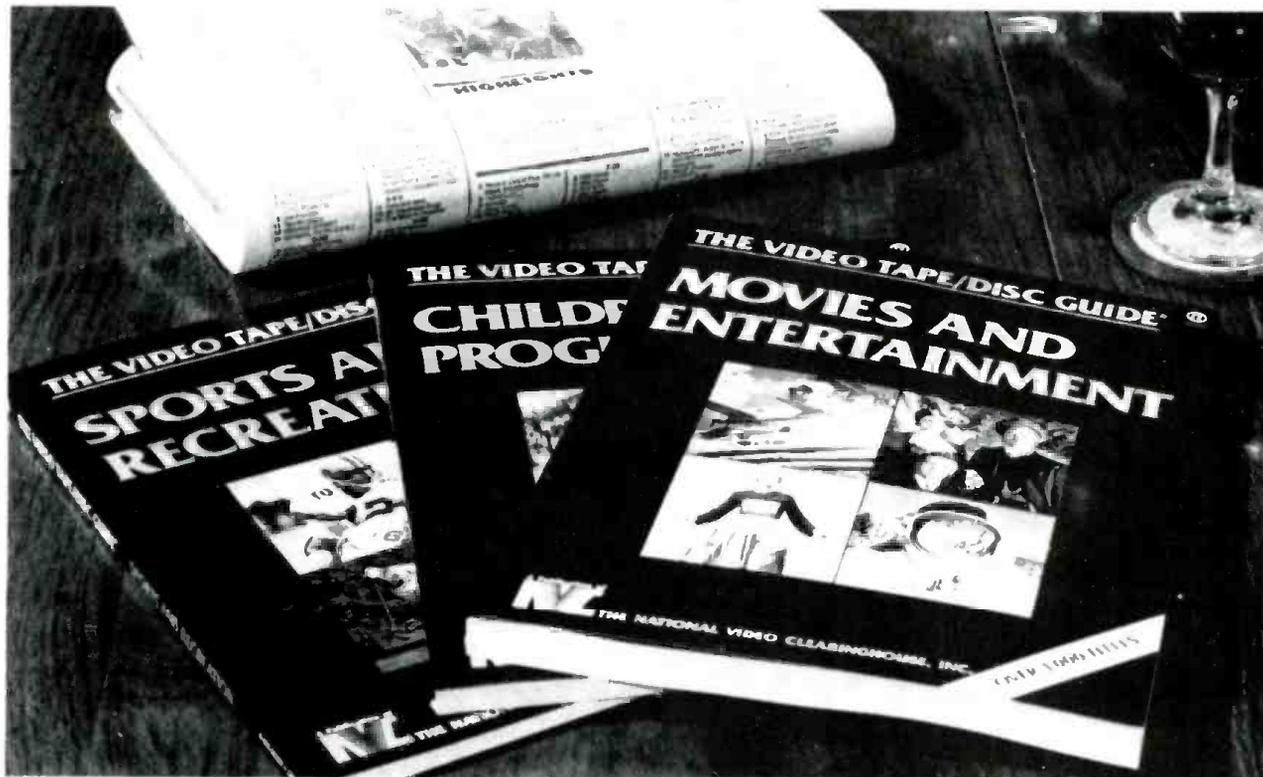
"Then blow it up yourself!" he replied sternly. "But keep your hands off *The Dukes of Hazzard*."

What could I say? I withdrew my offer to Hollywood and did the patriotic thing—I sold my Opel to a Russian. ■

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YESTERDAYS

Ralph and Norton tangle with a mambo teacher . . . A computer tracks fugitive Richard Kimble . . . CBS suspends newsman Daniel Schorr



Art Carney

25 YEARS AGO: MARCH 1956

On *See It Now*, Edward R. Murrow interviews Israel's David Ben-Gurion and Howard K. Smith talks with Egypt's Gamel Abdel Nasser. . . . Dr. Thomas Dooley, on *Home*, describes refugee camps in Indochina. . . . Laurence Olivier's *Richard III* appears on TV the day it opens in American movie theaters. . . . Ralph Kramden and Ed Norton feel threatened when a handsome mambo teacher moves into the Bensonhurst. . . . George Roy Hill directs *A Night to Remember* for *Kraft Theatre*. . . . *Robert Montgomery Presents* may go to film to allow its host time for his duties as TV adviser to President Eisenhower's reelection campaign. . . . *Mickey Mouse Club* begins "The Adventures of Spin and Marty." . . . Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Claire Bloom play the title roles in George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleo-*

patra. . . . Mister Magoo signs to make four beer commercials. . . . *Today* presents new fashions in Easter hats. . . . San Francisco, with Bill Russell, defeats Iowa for the NCAA basketball title. . . . A press agent predicts TV will kill off practically all nightclubs within five years.

15 YEARS AGO: 1966

California's Supreme Court declares unconstitutional the state's ban on pay-TV. . . . Barbra Streisand stages her *Color Me Barbra* special at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. . . . *The Twentieth Century* reports on an experiment being run by Synanon, the drug-rehabilitation group, for addicts at the Nevada State Prison. . . . On *The Fugitive*, Lieutenant Gerard uses a computer to trace Richard Kimble's whereabouts. . . . *Today* presents new fashions in vinyl. . . . Vice President

Hubert Humphrey is on *Meet the Press* one week after Vietnam-policy critic Sen. William Fulbright appears on *Issues and Answers*; House Minority Leader Gerald Ford presents the Republican view on *Face the Nation*. . . . Unheralded Texas Western beats four-time winner Kentucky in the NCAA title game. . . . NBC buys a series pilot about a rock group who call themselves The Monkees. . . . Live coverage of Gemini VIII's splashdown brings angry calls from thousands of viewers deprived of their regular programs.

5 YEARS AGO: 1976

CBS suspends Daniel Schorr from all reporting duties after his leak of a House report on the CIA to the *Village Voice*. . . . Bionic man Steve Austin saves the Liberty Bell. . . . ABC is reported to be considering a woman co-anchor for Harry Reasoner, with Hilary Brown as the leading candidate. . . . Three female detectives are the focus of the TV movie *Charlie's Angels*. . . . Illinois Rep. John B. Anderson advocates a proposal to televise House proceedings. . . . Indiana wins the NCAA championship over Michigan. . . . Edith Bunker insists on going out for an evening with Archie—and wearing her new pantsuit. . . . Jack Lemmon takes over the Laurence Olivier role in a television remake of the film *The Entertainer*. . . . *Dinah!* presents new fashions in denim. . . . HBO announces plans to tape 12 specials, all of comedians in live nightclub performances, for pay-TV. —Deborah Lyons

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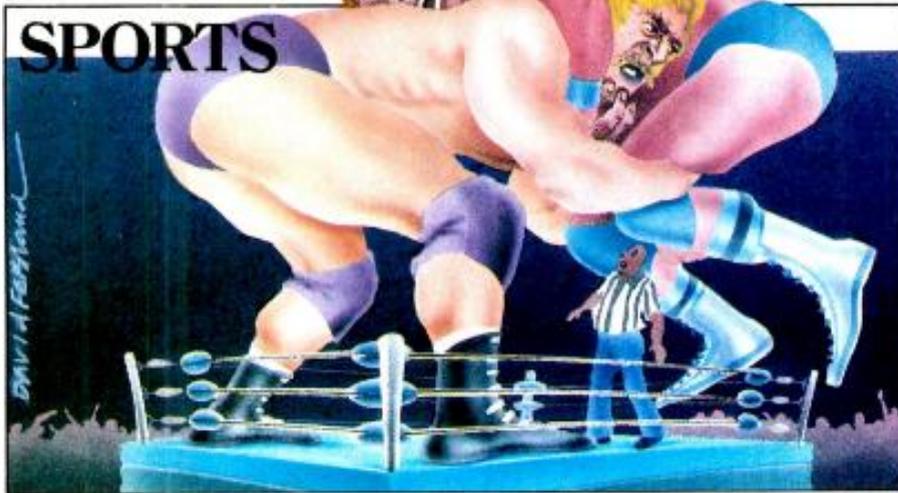
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Gorgeous George Lives!

Pro wrestling still has a stranglehold on its devoted TV fans

By JOHN SCHULIAN

I still wonder what Sky Hi Lee was thinking about the night he ate that light bulb. Maybe he was tired of the dire threats that passed for interviews on the TV wrestling show I watched every Wednesday when I was 11, or maybe he was just hungry. But now, 25 years later, all I can tell you is that he chewed the bulb right up without salt or pepper, and then he turned around and let someone throw darts into his back.

It was, without a doubt, the single greatest athletic feat I have ever seen on television. Forget about Willie Mays scaling an outfield wall to flag down a speeding baseball. Forget about Walter Payton making runs with a football so beautiful they resemble Byron's best sonnets. What Sky Hi Lee did was state of the art. And you know something? He didn't even bleed.

Surely this was some super being, for among wrestlers at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles—indeed, among wrestlers in every seedy, gut-bucket arena in the country—gore

was, and is, as much a part of the package as the figure-four toe-hold. It is why blue-haired grandmothers lurk at ringside waiting to jab villains with hatpins and why an otherwise solid citizen in Peoria, Ill., after watching the legendary Verne Gagne get maimed, pulled out a pistol and blew his TV screen to smithereens. The reactions are normal enough. They prove you must have blood in your veins to appreciate the blood in the ring.

Of course, there have always been naysayers. These heretics have actually suggested that the primary victim of wrestling violence is the truth. They claim the blood isn't real. They argue that wrestling would have a higher death count than the Spanish-American War if everything were on the up and up. They nag and nag until I have no choice but to quote Mr. Guido Mongol, the eminent pigtailed wrestler and deep thinker. "Pro wrestling is like sex," Mr. Mongol once said. "Those who knock it most know the least about it."

To which every television-station manager in the land should still be saying, "Hear! Hear!" Without wrestling to put a block of drama between the test patterns in its early days, you see, TV might never have advanced to the stage where it can offer us such sophisticated violence as *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

In those thrilling days of yesteryear, wrestling brightened screens in Los Angeles seven days a week. Most of the candlepower was supplied by the incomparable Gorgeous George. He was the Human Orchid, the Toast of the Coast, and anyone who doubted his stature needed only ask Frank and Joseph, the beauticians who marcelled the gorgeous one's bleached-blond tresses. Or the valets who entered the ring ahead of the former George Wagner of Houston, armed with mirrors, carpets and spray guns brimming with disinfectant to purify the beasts he wrestled.

In his own bizarre way, Gorgeous George meant as much to early-day television as Milton Berle and Howdy Doody. He was an attraction, a showman and, as we later learned, an inspiration to the most memorable big mouth of all time, Muhammad Ali. Moreover, Gorgeous George broadened his racket's sense of the ridiculous to the point where, even though wrestling is now too frequently relegated to Sunday mornings on UHF stations, Verne Gagne claims the total audience is bigger than the Super Bowl's.

Personally, I would never argue with Verne Gagne, master of the sleeper hold. As a matter of fact, I hope he'll read this, see how nicely I've treated him, and visit the wrestling show I watch in Chicago. It has a "Hold of the Week" segment—and I really would like to learn how to put my neighbor's rotten kids to sleep.

While I'm at it, I would also like to know if The Bat actually hid a piece of metal under his mask; what Bobo Brazil is doing making TV commercials for 24-hour grocery stores; and if it's true that Killer Kowalski, the foul fiend who tore off one of Yukon Eric's ears, has retired to become an artist.

On second thought, forget about telling me the Killer has gone straight. I'd rather remember him as a rat. Some things are sacred, you know. ●

done a great job. I just hope that those of us who have created Premiere can be just as bright."

If Premiere survives its stiff test in the courts, it will probably need all the business savvy it can muster from its corporate founders. One enormous problem it faces is that there may not be any more channels available on most cable systems. Roughly 70 percent of the nation's cable-TV franchises have only a 12-channel capacity. Another major problem for Premiere: selling its service to cable systems that are owned by the parent companies of its three biggest competitors—HBO (Time Inc.), Showtime (Teleprompter Inc. and Viacom International) and The Movie Channel (Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment).

And if Premiere doesn't survive its court case? Said one pay-TV executive: "Well, let's put it this way. When Premiere was announced, HBO got scared and acted nicer to us. But if the courts rule against us and we lose Premiere, HBO may feel that we've lost our ultimate weapon. Then we'll really be at their mercy."

EPILOGUE

As of press time, Premiere had no premiere.

On the last day of 1980, Federal judge Gerard Goettel barred the network's launch, scheduled for 8 P.M. (ET), Jan. 2. His reasoning: the venture seemed to violate antitrust laws.

Attorneys for Premiere immediately filed an appeal, and a decision could be rendered by the end of March 1981. However, industry feeling was that the venture was finished. Even Premiere president Chris Derick conceded that the company would go out of business if the ruling was not overturned quickly.

HBO released a terse, two-sentence statement applauding the decision, at the same time restraining its glee in order not to antagonize the studios over their apparent defeat. But behind the emotionless facade, they rejoiced. "The decision could not have been better if we wrote it ourselves," gushed one executive.

At Premiere, the atmosphere was considerably more subdued, the five member companies smarting over their \$15

million down the drain. The staff of 50 was being pared down to just a few key executives who will keep the gears oiled until a verdict on the appeal is rendered.

As for the others . . . in December, Paramount Pictures transferred Alan Fields to London, where he now works in European film distribution. . . . Arnold Huberman's company, Samoyed Productions, landed RCTV, a newly formed, culturally oriented pay-TV network, as a client. In his capacity as programming consultant, Huberman advises RCTV on staffing—and may well have set his sights on some high-ranking Premiere employees. . . . Steve Roberts continues his battles against HBO, recently telling a Hollywood trade paper that Fox may never sell to a pay-TV network again.

One movie-industry insider, reflecting on Roberts' threat, summed up the situation this way. "Premiere was round one and round one only," he said emphatically. "Both sides are as desperate as ever. The judge's decision is going to infuriate the studios so much that they're going to get HBO one way or another." □



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pay-TV network with Universal and other studios. In July 1979, several studios' executives met for the first time to decide how to launch such a network without violating any antitrust laws.

Eight months later, on April 22, 1980, four studios—Paramount, Universal, Columbia and Fox—along with Getty Oil, jarred the entertainment industry with a formal announcement of their own pay-TV network.

Within 24 hours, HBO issued a statement calling the venture "patently illegal . . . [and] unlawful under both the Clayton Act and Sherman Act." For many insiders familiar with HBO's monopoly-like control over the pay-TV industry, it seemed to be a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

"Those four film companies are not exactly angels."—Cable-TV entrepreneur Irving Kahn

It started, like most deals in corporate America, with an innocent business lunch. Stuart Evey, Getty Oil's vice president of diversified operations, had a lunch with Al Rush, president of MCA TV Enterprises, a subdivision of MCA Inc., one of the world's largest entertainment conglomerates. Evey and Rush shared a similar professional interest: television. Evey's attraction to TV stemmed from his philosophy that, because of the energy crisis, there would be an inevitable reduction in travel and a corresponding surge in the importance of the home as an entertainment center. On that afternoon in October 1979, he talked informally about his ideas with Rush. Already, Evey had put Getty's money where his mouth was. In February, under his direction, Getty had jumped into the TV business by backing ESPN, a satellite-delivered television sports network available to cable-TV systems.

A month after their first meeting, Rush invited Evey to lunch with two of Hollywood's most powerful men: Lew Wasserman, MCA's chairman, and Sid Sheinberg, the company's president. This time, however, the talk was more formal. Wasserman and Sheinberg questioned Evey about Getty's involvement in cable TV. But they did not mention anything about forming another pay-TV network.

Three months later, in February 1980, they got around to it. Getty wanted in: a pay-TV network fit perfectly with Evey's

plans. Very quickly, he met with the other interested parties. On April 12, Getty, Paramount, Universal, Fox and Columbia signed a pre-venture agreement that would finance the initial effort to launch the network.

The studio-conceived network would be similar to other existing pay-TV networks. It would show uncut, unedited feature films several times a night. Customers would be charged about \$10 a month for the service. But there was one crucial difference: the films from the four member studios, which accounted for 65 percent of HBO's programming, would have their pay-TV "premiere" on Premiere. Then, *nine months later*,

"If the courts rule against us and we lose Premiere, HBO may feel that we've lost our ultimate weapon. Then we'll really be at their mercy."

those films would be made available to other satellite-delivered pay-cable networks. This nine-month embargo was designed as the needed competitive edge to battle HBO in the vicious pay-TV market. It would also spark cries of antitrust violation from its critics.

One of the first priorities of the venture was to hire a chief. In April, Burt Harris, a likable millionaire with vast holdings in the cable-TV business, was telephoned by a friend on behalf of Rich Frank, president of Paramount Pictures Television Distribution. The friend said Frank wanted Harris to run a new pay-TV network. Was he interested?

"Tell him no, but I'm flattered," replied Harris.

Rich Frank wouldn't take no for an answer. To wage his war against HBO, he needed a general who would have the immediate trust of the cable industry,

someone who would give Premiere instant credibility. Harris was his man. Finally, after three no's, he got a yes.

Harris began work as Premiere's chairman of the board in early June and was soon hiring other executives, all of whom were going to work for Premiere with "pay or play" contracts: If Premiere fizzled in the courts, the five companies backing the venture would continue to pay their salaries for up to one year. More than 1000 résumés and job-related phone calls began pouring in.

Job applicants weren't the only parties interested in Premiere. Within days of the network's April 22 announcement of formation, the Justice Department launched an investigation of Premiere's proposal to withhold feature films from other pay-cable services for nine months. On Aug. 4, the Department filed suit against the five companies that formed Premiere, charging them with group boycott, conspiracy and price fixing.

Apparently ignoring the legal storms gathering above it, Premiere announced a Jan. 2, 1981, start-up. However, partners in the venture were braced for a fall hearing—and seething over the Justice Department's actions. "We went to the Government a year ago and asked them to do something about HBO," Rich Frank of Paramount told the newsletter Video Week. "We waited a year and [it] didn't do anything, so we started Premiere to find a marketplace solution. . . . The Government ought to be stopping them. They have 72 percent of pay-TV."

Other industry voices echoed Frank's remarks. "If there is an antitrust action for monopolization of product, it should be brought against HBO," thundered outspoken cable-TV maverick Irving Kahn. "Any company that controls more than 70 percent of a market is bad for business. But don't get me wrong about my feeling for the film studios. I have no love for them. They've manipulated and dominated many other entertainment markets. I'm not for Premiere per se. I am for competition."

Kahn, like most people who have dealt with HBO through its fascinating eight-year existence, sprinkles his criticism with praise. "Without HBO having the guts to go on the satellite, there would be no pay-TV business today," he concedes. Steve Roberts of Fox agrees. "I have a lot of respect for HBO," he admits. "They're bright, intelligent people and they've

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DAN RATHER *continued from page 45*

Europe; reports and interviews from the Middle East; not to mention his space reporting from Houston and his frequent shuttles to Washington.

Imposing his own authentic persona on top of this legacy will be neither easy nor automatic for Rather. He must achieve it instantly and sustain it without lapse—and Rather has experienced lapses in the past, each time at the peril of his CBS news career. His task is made more difficult because television, grounded as it is in contrivances and illusions, functions on *perceived* truth—and perceptions can change in a flash. (Remember Jimmy Carter, the political Outsider?)

In contrast to Rather, Walter Cronkite had the luxury of years in which to gain a theatrical understanding of his own reality. TV news' stampede toward show biz began in the early years of his reign, with him above it all, oblivious and uninvolved. Almost before he knew it, Cronkite had become a *symbol* of TV news: the Noble Exception. As he came to understand this role, he played it masterfully—to his eternal credit.

But Rather has had to learn on the firing line. His first lesson came at that now-legendary Houston news conference in 1974, at the height of Watergate. When Rather, then CBS's White House correspondent and known for his aggressive Watergate reporting, stood to ask President Nixon a question, he allowed reporters' applause and jeers and an off-the-cuff taunt by Nixon to goad him into an uncharacteristic—but, paradoxically, character-revealing—moment of insolence: "Are you running for something?" Nixon asked Rather. "No, sir, Mr. President, are you?" Rather snapped back. Terrified CBS affiliate managers around the country pleaded for his banishment. (Much more typical of Rather was his later recollection of the incident. "What I really regret about the whole business," he told me in an interview some months after the event, "is not what Nixon said or what my answer was, but that he didn't answer my [ensuing] question.")

Another such instance, and one even more devastating to his image, came on the eve of Nixon's resignation, as a panel of CBS newsmen conducted a live discussion of that momentous event. In this case, Rather was knocked off balance as he stepped too far to the other side of his normal demeanor. Noticeably nervous, obviously trying to compensate for the "anti-Nixon" reputation inspired in part

by the Houston quip, Rather essayed a charitable refusal to denounce the fallen President. "You don't shoot at lifeboats," he soothed.

Leaping at this piece of suddenly exposed throat was Rather's chief rival for Cronkite's throne, Roger Mudd. Before a national television audience, Mudd lectured his colleague on the stern response demanded by a damaged Constitution.

By stealing Rather's thunder in full view of the public, Roger Mudd appeared to steal as well the coveted spot as Cronkite's successor right there on that August night in 1974.

It was not to happen. Somewhere around this point, Dan Rather began to



In 1974, Rather journeyed to Cuba to interview Fidel Castro for CBS Reports.

understand a thing or two about the uses of television, its iconography, its symbols. He endured with grace what appeared to be a public sword-breaking: his removal from the prestigious White House beat. Rather accepted an assignment with the low-profile *CBS Reports*, later joining the team of *60 Minutes* before its glory days at the top of the prime-time ratings.

Intelligently and patiently, Rather used this period of exile to perfect his ability to project onto a television screen what he, in fact, is: a good professional reporter with a command of issues and an innate sense of social justice, an affinity for the individual against the system. This is the classic CBS News persona. It defined Murrow. It defined Cronkite. And it came to define Rather, standing out there on all those locations, in all those work shirts and all those

fatigue jackets, in a way Roger Mudd's business suits could never define Mudd's own sang-froid.

Rather used his exile to become the consummate actor, the consummate *interpreter* of Rather.

While acknowledging, then, that Frank Reynolds and John Chancellor are eminently legitimate anchormen indeed, one can fairly suggest that the course of TV news in the next several years depends on Dan Rather as on no one else.

He is the newest and most grandiosely salaried anchorman on the network scene. He carries the CBS coat of arms, making him the exponent of the network most closely identified with quality journalism. He will be watched—by the public and by the news chieftains at ABC and NBC.

If Rather manages to transmit to the viewing public his natural zest for serious journalism, and if he can simultaneously squash his tendency toward occasional melodramatic excess, the chances are good that his rivals will imitate him—as they imitated him during his White House-correspondent days. ABC's line of anchor succession may pass to no-nonsense White House correspondent Sam Donaldson, NBC's to ex-White House man Tom Brokaw (whose no-nonsense quotient is only a bit tarnished by his *Today*-show ordeal). In other words, "sincere" may remain a hot act on the network news.

But if Rather should fail—if his *60 Minutes*, on-the-scene mystique cannot be translated to a desk job, as many have speculated—then look for a seminal change in the character of network news. A signal that authority figures are "out" could cause some coldblooded recalculations by the networks as they seek to hold the mega-audiences spawned during TV news' "superstar" era. The long-awaited hour network newscast could make its entrance, ironically, on a flourish of programming ploys, production values, slick visuals and soft features that would obscure even further the values of clarity, pertinence and depth.

With that bleak prospect in mind, one can only hope that Dan Rather, preparing for his greatest role, heeds the advice of Hamlet to the players:

"Be not too tame neither; but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action. . . ." ■

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Passages

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Bruce Jenner, Olympic gold medalist and NBC Sports commentator, and **Linda Thompson**, a featured performer on *Hew Haw*.

DIVORCING

Mary Tyler Moore (*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*) and producer **Grant Tinker**, head of MTM Enterprises.

Linda Lavin (*Alice*) and actor **Ron Liebman**.

HONORED

Political historian and NBC News commentator **Theodore H. White**, with the Fourth Estate Award of the National Press Club, for a lifetime of contributions to American journalism.

Veteran newswoman **Pauline Frederick**, who served as NBC's UN correspondent for 21 years and is now with National Public Radio, with the Paul White Award from the Radio and Television News Directors Association.

Brandon Tartikoff, president of NBC Entertainment, as one of "Ten Outstanding Young Men of America for 1981" by the United States Jaycees.

Shogun stars **Richard Chamberlain** (*Dr. Kildare*, *Centennial*) and **Yoko Shimada**, as Male Star of the Year and Female Discovery of the Year, at the 50th annual Golden Apples Award Luncheon of the Hollywood Women's Press Club; also honored was **Mary Tyler Moore** as Female Star of the Year.

Burt Reynolds (*Dan August*), with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, by Florida State University in Tallahassee.

Jack Klugman (*Quincy*), with the 1980 Big Sport of Turfdom Award, by the Turf Publicists of America.

APPOINTED

CBS newsman **Walter Cronkite**, to the board of directors of Harper's magazine.

James Heyworth, president of Home Box Office, as vice president of Time Inc.

Literary agent **Stephen White**, as executive producer of motion pictures for television, ABC Entertainment.

Dallin Oaks, chairman of the board of the Public Broadcasting Service, as a justice of the Utah State Supreme Court.

SIGNED

Actress **Patti Davis**, daughter of President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan, to an exclusive contract with NBC Entertainment to star in TV movies and other special projects.



Patti Davis: NBC goes for a First Family exclusive.

Political columnist **George Will**, as a regular contributor to *ABC News Nightline*.

State senator **Julian Bond** (D-Ga.), as moderator of the Washington, D.C., talk show *America's Black Forum*.

Richard Drayne, press secretary for Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) from 1965 to 1975 and during his recent Presidential campaign, to CBS News, Washington bureau, as part-time press consultant responsible for press relations. **Ruth Batchelor**, film critic for *Hour Magazine*, as West Coast entertainment correspondent for ABC's *Good Morning America*.

Producer **Roger Ailes** (*The Mike Douglas Show*, *Steve Allen's Laugh-Back*) as executive producer of *Tomorrow Coast-to-Coast*, starring Tom Snyder and Rona Barrett.

RE-SIGNED

CBS Sports commentator **Tom Brookshier**, to a new long-term contract.

DROPPED

Don Drysdale, from ABC Sports' *Monday Night Baseball* announcing team.

REASSIGNED

ABC News Washington correspondents: **Sander Vanocur**, to the State Department, joining **Barrie Dunsmore**; **Susan King**, to the White House, joining **Sam Donaldson** and **Bill Greenwood**; **Brit Hume** and **Mike von Fremd**, to the Senate; **Charles Gibson** and **Ann Compton**, to the House; **David Ensor**, to the Pentagon, joining **John McWethy**; **Catherine Mackin**, to *20/20* and the special-assignment series on *World News Tonight*. **James Wooten** and **Barry Serafin** become national correspondents.

CBS News correspondents: **Bill Plante** and **Nell Strawser**, to the White House, joining **Lesley Stahl** and **Jed Duvall**.

NBC News correspondent **George Lewis**, to the Pentagon. CBS Sports broadcaster **Gary Bender**, to play-by-play commentator for *NBA on CBS*; Bender replaces **Brent Musburger**, who recently agreed

to a new long-term contract with CBS and becomes managing editor as well as anchor of a new sports magazine show that will replace CBS's *Sports Spectacular*. **Musburger** continues as anchor and managing editor of *The NFL Today*.

DIED

Marshall McLuhan, 69, writer, educator and pioneer communications theorist, whose works include *Understanding Media*, *The Medium Is the Massage*, and *War and Peace in the Global Village*.

Actor **Richard Boone**, 63, who appeared in more than 500



Richard Boone: Empty saddle.

television programs, 65 movies and 11 plays; Boone was best known for his role as **Paladin** in *Have Gun, Will Travel*. He also starred in *Hec Ramsey* and *The Richard Boone Show*.

Robert E. Kinter, 71, former president of both NBC and ABC.

Willie Gilbert, 64, co-writer of TV's *Howdy Doody*.

Collier Young, 72, producer of *One Step Beyond*, *Ironside* and *The Rogues*.

Merrill ("Red") Mueller, 64, veteran NBC-TV and ABC Radio broadcast journalist.

Manning Ostroff, 73, a producer of NBC's *Colgate Comedy Hour*.

Don Paul Nathanson, 66, writer, advertising executive, broadcaster and cable operator, best known for having developed the slogan: "Which Twin Has the Toni?"

Small Change (1976)—Francois Truffaut's salute to childhood and the resilience of pre-adolescents. Geory Desmouceaux, Phillipe Goldman.

(Warner Home Video; \$65) (PG)

The Space Movie (1980)—History of manned space exploration, featuring actual footage

of outer space, much of it not previously released from NASA and the National Archives. Music by Mike Oldfield. (Warner Home Video; \$50) (G)

Best Sellers

This list of the top 20 prerecorded videocassettes is based on sales figures from a survey of retail outlets around the country.

- (3) **1. Close Encounters of the Third Kind—Special Edition** (1980)—Steven Spielberg's expanded UFO spectacular. (Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment; \$69.95)
 (-) **2. 2001: A Space Odyssey** (1968)—Stanley Kubrick's milestone space epic. (CBS Video Enterprises; \$69.95)
 (1) **3. Star Trek—The Motion Picture** (1979)—Starring the original TV-series crew. (Paramount Home Video; \$84.95)
 (4) **4. Alien** (1979)—Haunted-house drama in outer space. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95)
 (5) **5. The Blues Brothers** (1980)—The satirical singing duo in their first feature film. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$89)
 (7) **6. The Black Hole** (1979)—A Disney sci-fi tale of the search for Ultimate Knowledge. (Walt Disney Home Video; \$59.95)
 (19) **7. Mary Poppins** (1964)—Walt Disney's fantasy tale of a magical nanny and her chimney-sweep friend. (Walt Disney Home Video; \$74.95)
 (-) **8. The Wizard of Oz** (1939)—The classic musical fairy tale, starring Judy Garland. (CBS Video Enterprises; \$59.95)



Charlton Heston: Wins antiquities version of the Indy 500.

- (-) **9. Ben-Hur** (1959)—Lavish remake of the 1926 original, featuring a spectacular chariot race. (CBS Video Enterprises; \$89.95)
 (-) **10. Doctor Zhivago** (1965)—Omar Sharif plays the title role in this epic Russian love story. (CBS Video Enterprises; \$89.95)
 (10) **11. "10"** (1979)—Featuring the first sex symbol of the '80s, Bo Derek. (Warner Home Video; \$65)
 (-) **12. Debbie Does Dallas** (1978)—Rated X. (VCX; \$99.50)
 (8) **13. Superman** (1978)—Super-budget film, starring the special effects. (Warner Home Video; \$65)

- (-) **14. M*A*S*H** (1970)—Robert Altman's antiwar farce. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95)
 (-) **15. Friday the 13th** (1980)—Six summer-camp counselors meet brutal deaths. (Paramount Home Video; \$79.95)
 (9) **16. The Muppet Movie** (1979)—Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy sing and dance their way to Hollywood fame. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95)
 (12) **17. The Rose** (1980)—Bette Midler stars as a tragic, Joplineseque rock queen. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$79.95)
 (16) **18. A Clockwork Orange** (1971)—Stanley Kubrick's vivid drama, starring Malcolm McDowell. (Warner Home Video; \$75)
 (20) **19. Every Which Way but Loose** (1978)—Clint Eastwood as a barroom-brawling truck driver with an orangutan as a buddy. (Warner Home Video; \$60)
 (15) **20. Coal Miner's Daughter** (1980)—Sissy Spacek in the rags-to-riches story of country singer Loretta Lynn. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

*Position last month

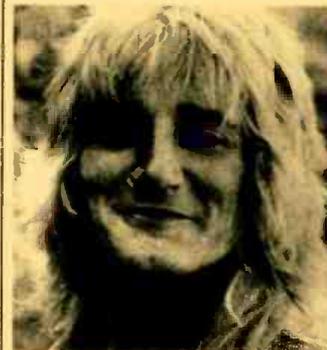
Sales figures are from the month of December. Retail outlets participating in our survey include: Associated Video, Houston; Audio Center, Honolulu; Audio Video Craft, Inc., Los Angeles; Barney Miller's Inc., Lexington, Ky.; Cinema Concepts, Inc., Wethersfield, Conn.; Communications Maintenance, Inc., Litchfield, Ill.; Concord Video Center, Stamford, Conn.; Cyclops Video, Sherman Oaks, Cal.; Discotronics, Inc., Cranbury, N.J.; Godwin Radio, Inc./Godwin Video Centers, Birmingham, Ala.; Jantzen Beach Magnavox

Home Entertainment Center, Portland, Ore.; Kaleidoscope Video Shops, Oklahoma City; Media Associates, Mountain View, Cal.; Media Concepts, Inc., St. Petersburg, Fla.; Modern Communications, St. Louis; Movies Unlimited, Philadelphia; Newbury TV & Appliances, New Bedford, Mass.; Nichols Electronics, Wichita, Kan.; Select Film Library, New York; The Sheik Video Corp., Metairie, La.; Stansbury Stereo, Baltimore; Televideo Systems, Richmond; Thomas Film Video, Royal Oak, Mich.; Video 2000, San Diego;

Video Audio Electronics, Williamsport, Pa.; Video Cassette, Phoenix; Video Cassettes, Etc., Lubbock, Texas; Video Connection, Boston; The Video Connection, Toledo, Ohio; Video Corporation of America, Edison, N.J.; Video Dimensions, New York; Video Library, Torrance, Cal.; The Video Library Company, Narberth, Pa.; Video Services, Towson, Md.; Video Specialties, Houston; Visual Adventures, Cleveland.

SPECIALS

Fleetwood Mac—Interviews with members of the renowned supergroup, plus recent concert footage. (Warner Home Video; \$40)



Rod Stewart: Assorted gems from his rock show.

Rod Stewart Live at the L.A. Forum—Highlights of Stewart's 1979 performance at the Forum. (Warner Home Video; \$40)

Gary Numan—The Touring Principle, '79—The English rock star sings *Cars* and other selections from his recent world tour. (Warner Home Video; \$35)

Centerfold—Documentary about a day in the life of a professional nude model. (VidAmerica; \$54.95)

Some movie descriptions courtesy of TV Guide magazine. Ratings are those assigned by the Motion Picture Association of America for theatrical showings.

Readers wishing to obtain more information from the distributors of the above-listed movies and specials may do so at these addresses: CBS Video Enterprises, 51 West 52nd St., New York, N.Y. 10019; Magnetic Video Corp., 23434 Industrial Park Court, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48024; VidAmerica, 231 E. 55th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022; Warner Home Video, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019.

What's Happening *continued*

Royal officials, aware of the kidnap attempt on Princess Anne and her husband a few years ago, and concerned about Prince Edward, the Queen's youngest son, who is at a private school, asked the BBC to alter the plot.

So now the series will be called *Hostage to Fear* and the kidnap victim will be the schoolboy son of a senior UN official. The alterations have led to reshooting of studio sequences costing about \$25,000. The Royal Family is happy with the changes, but author Winch described the idea that his serial would encourage would-be kidnapers of royal children as "ridiculous. Terrorists don't need me to give them ideas," he said. "If they do, then they are dimmer than I thought. Now I'm trying to make the boy the son of a sort of English Kissinger. It's not easy . . . For one thing, it means we have to lose the emotive power of having a Royal."

A Palace spokesman commented: "This was not a question of interference with the BBC's programs. The very great concern here was conveyed to the BBC . . . We are very satisfied with the result."

Why the BBC Turned Off PBS

The BBC's agreement to supply the new pay-cable service RCTV with first rights to its 5000-hour annual program output marks the most ambitious entry yet of the BBC into the lucrative American market. (See page 18 for the impact this move will have on PBS programming.)

The exclusive supplying of the programs starts at the beginning of 1982 and, from the BBC's point of view, it offers the penurious corporation a healthy guaranteed revenue for the sale of its most ex-

pensive shows. The BBC will pump the money it receives back into more program-making for its two TV networks. This extra finance will be welcome in 1982 when the Beeb's competitor, the independent ITV network, puts its second channel on the air.

Bryon Parkin, head of BBC Enterprises, who negotiated the deal with RCTV, said: "This opportunity stems directly from the development of new satellite and cable technology. It increases our ability to present the American audience with the full range of BBC programs." He discounted the loss of BBC programs to PBS, emphasizing that "We're not completely robbing PBS of our offerings. They will still benefit from the programs when they are off cable and when they have created their impact. The price will be cheaper, too, for PBS." The BBC also feels that PBS is now much more concerned with home-produced fare than it used to be and so is less dependent on high-toned programming from Britain.

The deal with RCTV is considered much better than the one the BBC had with Time-Life, its previous American distributor. Some broadcasters in London suggest that the new tie-up will eventually lead to a new range of programs being made by the BBC to be shown only on U.S. pay-cable and on a new British subscription channel, which will be technically feasible in the mid-'80s by direct satellite.

RCTV will be investing pre-production money in BBC programs. This raises the intriguing question of how far American money in the future will determine what shows get made for Britain's license-paying audience. Some viewers already complain about the Americanization of British programs. This deal could conceivably lead to more. ■

Videocassettes

New Releases

MOVIES

Amarcord (1974)—Federico Fellini's Oscar-winning film of everyday life in a 1930s northern Italian town. Bruno Zanin, Magali Noel. (Warner Home Video; \$65) (R)



Peter Sellers: Not quite all there.

Being There (1980)—Jerzy Kosinski's overnight success story of a middle-aged gardener whose worldly knowledge is derived solely from viewing television. Peter Sellers, Shirley MacLaine, Melvyn Douglas. (CBS Video; \$69.95) (PG)

The Black Marble (1980)—Paula Prentiss and Robert Foxworth star in Joseph Wambaugh's seriocomic police story. With Harry Dean Stanton, Barbara Babcock. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95) (PG)

Caddyshack (1980)—Chevy Chase stars in this comedy about free-thinking young caddies at a posh country club. With Rodney Dangerfield, Ted Knight, Bill Murray. (Warner Home Video; \$65) (R)

Cries and Whispers (1972)—Ingmar Bergman's complex tale of two women (Liv Ullmann, Ingrid Thulin) gathered at the deathbed of their sister (Harriet Andersson). With Kari Sylwan, Erland Josephson.

(Warner Home Video; \$65) (R)

Honeysuckle Rose (1980)—Willie Nelson as a successful country singer, with Dyan Cannon as his stay-at-home wife and Amy Irving as an on-the-road love interest. (Warner Home Video; \$55) (R)

Lovers and Other Strangers (1970)—Comic story of a wedding about which only the bride and groom seem happy. Bea Arthur, Gig Young, Cloris Leachman, Diane Keaton. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95) (PG)

Magnum Force (1973)—Clint Eastwood returns as "Dirty Harry" Callahan on a multiple-murder case. With Hal Holbrook, Mitchell Ryan, David Soul, Robert Urich. (Warner Home Video; \$65) (R)

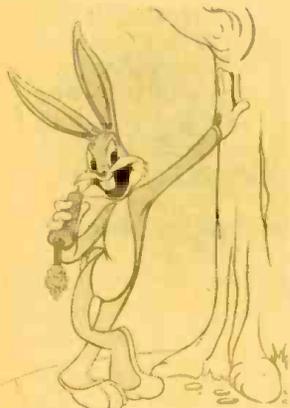
Night Games (1974)—Pilot film for the *Petrocelli* TV series, with Barry Newman as a lawyer defending a socialite accused of murder. With Susan Howard, Albert Salmi, Stefanie Powers. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95) (R)

Oh God!, Book II (1980)—God (George Burns) appears to the child of an advertising executive in another attempt to get his message to the people. With Suzanne Pleshette, Louanne, David Birney, Howard Duff. (Warner Home Video; \$65) (PG)

One-Trick Pony (1980)—Singer-songwriter Paul Simon stars in this tale of a once-successful band in need of a top-40 hit; songs and screenplay by Paul Simon. With Blair Brown, Rip Torn, Joan Hackett. (Warner Home Video; \$55) (R)

continued from page 14

other.") On Saturday morning, prime time for children, the top five on the Coalition's hit parade were: *Bugs Bunny/Road Runner* (CBS), *Superfriends* (ABC), *Jonny Quest* (NBC), *Mighty Mouse/Heckle and Jeckle* (CBS) and *Popeye* (CBS).



Bugs Bunny: Coalition takes Elmer Fudd's side.

Overall, NBC was found to show the most prime-time violence; CBS was deemed the most violence-prone on Saturday mornings. Sponsors too were singled out: American Cyanamid Co. (maker of Breck and Old Spice) is allegedly the most violence-oriented advertiser in prime time; General Mills gets the nod on Saturday mornings.

The Coalition's survey indicated that in prime time, NBC showed an average of nearly eight violent acts per hour. ABC and CBS each showed five. On the Saturday cartoon programs, CBS had 31 violent acts an hour, followed by ABC with 21 and NBC with 19.

Sally Steenland, a Washington, D.C., spokeswoman for the Coalition, said past surveys have brought little more than stony silence from the TV networks. As for advertisers, they tend to react in one of two ways: "The advertisers are much more sensitive to criticism than the networks," Steenland said. "One reaction is cordial, ask-

ing to meet with us to work together. The second reaction is one of outrage, sometimes accompanied by threats."

Lissa Eichenberger, an NBC spokeswoman, blasted the survey by citing "shaky techniques" and a pre-survey bias on the part of the Coalition's specially trained staff: "It's vitally important that the report be put in the proper context. That context is the [Coalition's] aim of decreasing violence by 75 percent."

No Butts or Booze for PBS

After a lot of agonizing, public-TV stations have rejected a scheme that would have allowed cigarette and liquor companies to get their names before the viewing public (see PANORAMA, Washington column, September 1980).

The Public Broadcasting Service board voted to retain the status quo—prohibiting program underwriting by companies with an interest in cigarette and liquor products—after three board committees, three advisory groups and a poll of more than 50 stations produced only a confused picture.

In the station poll, 24 favored relaxing standards against cigarette companies, but 27 opposed any relaxation. As for liquor company underwriting, 26 stations said yes, but 25 were opposed.

Cigarette-makers have been banned from advertising on TV by Federal law since 1971. There is no law against the advertising of liquor, but the National Association of Broadcasters Code calls for a voluntary prohibition by stations.

PBS officials have insisted for years that funding of programs for an on-air credit is not the same as advertising. They knew, however, that the plan would be controversial. Mark Harrad, a PBS spokes-

man, said the change in underwriting rules was proposed "because of a growing feeling about the moral arbitrariness of these bans, and in the context of trying to raise more money for programs."

LONDON
RICHARD GILBERT
REPORTING

Doctors and the BBC Wage a "Transplant War"

Tongues are still wagging over a recent installment of *Panorama*, the BBC's flagship current-events program. It seems that the episode in question—"Transplants: Are the Donors Really Dead?"—has stirred up a veritable hornets' nest within the British medical community.

What *Panorama* did was tell the story of four American patients who had been diagnosed as dead—and who went on to recover. It then asked if the British code for determining death was foolproof. Surgeons described the investigation as "irresponsible, inaccurate, inept and misleading." The program-makers vigorously defended themselves and pointed out that they were simply raising the question of whether the British code for surgeons and doctors was adequate for determining brain death.

The immediate effect of the program was a dramatic reduction in the number of kidney donors and, consequently, of kidney transplants. Doctors estimated that thousands of potential donors had torn up their transplant donor cards because of fears that the show had raised. The BBC offered the doctors the right of reply in a follow-up program, but they turned this down because they wanted

20 minutes of uninterrupted time on *Panorama* to put their case to the public. The BBC refused to surrender editorial control for such a long period. "If the doctors now, who next?" wrote the BBC's director-general, Sir Ian Trethowan, in a letter to The (London) Times.

A Labor Member of Parliament, Jack Ashley, fumed at the BBC, "People requiring transplants are soon going to die unnecessarily unless the misleading message of the *Panorama* show is corrected."

After strenuous negotiations, the medics finally agreed in principle to take part in a 90-minute studio discussion on British criteria and practices relating to brain death. But doctors and the BBC are treating each other very warily at the moment.

The final irony is that the editor of the controversial program, Roger Bolton, has always carried a kidney donor card with him—and still does.

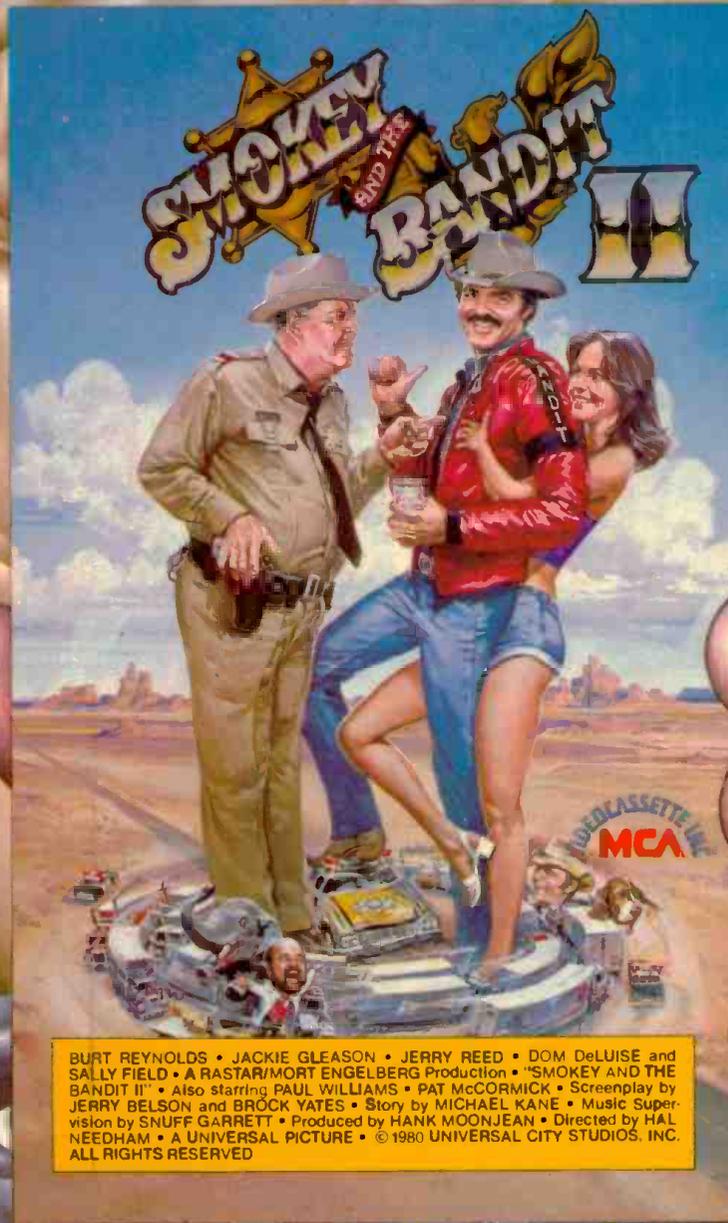
TV Kidnapping Gets Royal Nay

Remember the parable of the Princess and the Pea, the fairy tale in which royal lineage is proven through skin sensitivity? Well, it turns out that modern-day monarchs are no less touchy. After protests from Buckingham Palace, the BBC has had to make changes in a major new dramatic series called *Blood Royal*. The six-part thriller, to be shown this year, was to have told the story of the terrorist kidnapping of the fictional Earl of Balmoral (17th in line to the throne) from his junior school.

Apparently, the problem was that author Arden Winch—a former member of the British intelligence service—got too close for comfort with his story line.

continued

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scribbled down while watching the film may convey the tone and the feeling: "... packing people into prison like sardines . . . frustration builds for years and years . . . oppressive, demeaning atmosphere sets stage for violence . . . will show enduring ills, a nightmare world . . . evidence of fury unleashed . . . violence begets violence . . . mentality is all punishment . . . a routine of torment . . . prison built in 1955 to hold 800, now houses 1156. . ."

The narrator speaks of the "uncommon ferocity" of the riot, but says the causes are no different from those to be found in other prisons. He tells of the "particularly perverse practice" of rewarding informers with special privileges. A prisoner describes how this works: The guards put newcomers, especially young ones, in cells with the toughest convicts. After a dose of this, the inmate will do anything to improve his condition: "He becomes a Judas who sells his soul to the administration." The informers, main targets of the rioters, died horrible deaths. The mother of convict Joe Madrid, nicknamed "King of the Snitches," is suing the state of New Mexico for \$1 million for his execution by fellow inmates. No guards were killed in the uprising.

State officials from the governor and legislators on down had long been put on notice, we learn, about appalling conditions in the prison. Twelve separate grand-jury investigations resulted in reports citing intolerable overcrowding, staff corruption, and administrative malfeasance. The ACLU had brought numerous lawsuits charging brutality and systematic violation of prisoners' rights.

There are some lovely sequences showing legislators as they duck for cover, evade questions, deny having seen the grand-jury reports; and others with Gov. Bruce King, who also disclaims any responsibility and who at one point shouts at a mild young man advocating prison reform, "I've heard enough! Get out!"

The commentary ends on the theme that public indifference leads to "riot . . . ebbing back into despair," followed by more public indifference: "Will this tragic cycle repeat itself forever?" This, of course, is the question to which the viewing audience should address itself.

From the foregoing examples it seems likely that the subject of prisons will continue to fascinate the television industry. As I know nothing about film-

making—let alone techniques of designing programs that will sell more hair conditioners and electric razors—it is in all humility that I proffer a few suggestions to the august folk who arrange these programs for the edification of us viewers.

Clearly, all who venture into the realm of prisons would benefit from the advice of a *con*-sultant such as Clarence Carnes. But there are other useful sources. Does anyone out there in Hollywood realize that there are now 19 states whose prisons are under court order for violation of the Eighth Amendment (which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment), and that several more states are currently being sued by inmates? Which adds up to more than half the states in the nation. The American Civil Liberties Union, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, public defenders, and numerous *pro bono* lawyers could tell the producers a thing or two about what goes on in "that dark and evil world," as a Federal judge described one such prison.

Perhaps *Scared Straight!*, since it was

such a success, should be made over again, but this time with a different cast of characters. Instead of teen-agers as the real-life actors, why not recruit a group of legislators and judges? They, after all, decide who goes to prison and for how long; they frame our laws and hand down the sentences. They would enter the prison incognito, as run-of-the-mill inmates. It shouldn't be too hard to get their cooperation; politicians, like kids, enjoy hamming it up before the cameras. But instead of a mere two-hour session behind bars, this one should be long enough for the participants to experience fully the conditions to which they so readily condemn their fellow men and women: being subjected to body search, stripped of all identity, and eventually turned into nonpersons. Possibly they will emerge less ready to heed the mindless clamor for stiffer laws, longer sentences and more severe punishment as a panacea for crime.

I can visualize the advertising: "Tonight on Channel 5! The targets are lawmakers! The results are amazing!"

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ed you, who gave you their supportive understanding and eventually secured your release.

NBC's four-hour "docudrama" *Alcatraz: The Whole Shocking Story*, shown last November, is absolutely first-rate, despite its corny subtitle. Based on the real-life story of Clarence Carnes, an Indian who spent 18 years on the Rock, it depicts his original crime at the age of 18 (participating in a robbery during which a store owner is killed), his progression through two prisons, his numerous attempts to escape, and his eventual transfer to Alcatraz, the ultimate maximum-security fortress to which those deemed totally incorrigible were consigned. "This is for the useless and worthless—both in society and in the prison system," a guard tells him as he enters his new home.

The brilliant achievement of *Alcatraz* is its portrayal of the convicts as individual and believable characters, and its avoidance of prison clichés. Eugene Debs, who did time in two penitentiaries, wrote: "... a prison is a cross-section of society in which every human strain is clearly revealed. . . . Its inmates, in point of character, intelligence, and habits, will compare favorably with any similar number of persons outside of prison walls." The movie gives credence to this observation. Sure, there is a scene of horrendous carnage when, in the abortive escape attempt of 1946, a couple of convicts go berserk and slaughter guard hostages. But the predominant message conveyed by *Alcatraz* could be summed up in the words of the Attica insurgents: "We are not beasts, we are men."

For his role in the futile escape attempt, Carnes, incorrigible as ever, is locked up next to the famous Birdman (Carnes was spared the gas chamber for having saved the lives of some guards). Under the Birdman's guidance he reads every philosophy and psychology book in the prison library. But his mind is ever on escape. Should there be a successful escape, even of three or four inmates, he reasons, the concept of Alcatraz as an impregnable stronghold will be dead forever and the Government will be forced to shut it down. In one of the best—and tensest—sequences we see the elaborate preparations for the escape, masterminded by Carnes although he has regretfully decided not to go along. He is under such constant and close surveil-

lance that his participation could jeopardize the whole effort. Three do get away, and the film ends with Alcatraz shut down and Carnes transferred to Leavenworth.

Doubtless the producer's perspicacity in hiring Carnes as consultant was largely responsible for the success of this film. Too often the lay technical adviser to a film company finds himself frustrated at every turn by the professionals' disregard of his advice, and ends up hating the finished product. Not so in the case of Clarence Carnes, whom I met in a San Francisco-waterfront gift shop appropriately named "The Rock," where he sells souvenirs of Alcatraz. He was thoroughly



Perry King and Kate Jackson in ABC's *Inmates: A Love Story*.

delighted with the film, and gave the filmmakers full marks for meticulously consulting with him on every aspect.

"Michael Beck [who played Carnes] had long sessions with me before each scene, asking 'How did this happen? What was it like? Show me exactly.'" One review, said Carnes, described Beck's acting as wooden and emotionless—"but that wasn't Beck, it was me. He was trying to be *me* back in those days. So I showed him. When I was young I was pretty silent, impassive, and that's what came across in his acting."

I observed that the guards in the movie were on the whole rather shadowy figures; one did not get the impression of the brutal iron hand clamping down on the convicts at every turn. "If anything, they were *more* vicious in the movie than in real life," said Carnes. "Generally they spoke to you in a real nice tone. They were gentle, ordinary people. Of course there was another side to the coin: When some convicts tried to escape by swimming away from the island, the guards

went after them in boats and shot every one of them, killed them in cold blood. That was policy. Afterward I noticed that one of those guards was always washing his hands, but the Birdman explained that. 'He is trying to wash away his guilt,' he said. 'You'll find it all in Freud.'"

At one point the film company planned to have a scene showing an inmate murdering another, but Carnes dissuaded them. "It just wasn't typical of life on the Rock," he said. "In the whole history of Alcatraz there were only seven cases of inmates killing inmates. Why, at San Quentin there could be that many in a month."

We discussed *Scared Straight!*, which Carnes had seen when it was first shown. "I was in a similar program in Leavenworth," he said. "But I could never talk to kids that way. The Jaycees, who sponsored the program, wanted us to scare the hell out of kids, but I wouldn't do it. Some cons went along with the Jaycees' idea. They came down real hard on one kid, and he ended up in an insane asylum. We found out later that he'd had mental trouble all along. The cons who drove him over the brink were so disgusted that they hadn't been warned of this that they quit the program." (This would seem to me to substantiate the *Scared Straight!* parents' allegation of psychological damage to their children.)

"When I took the program over," Carnes continued, "I corrected that and insisted on a rundown on each kid. You've got to get *them* talking, ask them questions about their lives. That's how we approached it. It was nothing like *Scared Straight!*"

Perhaps Arnold Shapiro would have done well to take a leaf from the *Alcatraz* producer's book, and to have solicited the advice of a Clarence Carnes before perpetrating *Scared Straight!*

ABC's documentary about the February 1980 New Mexico prison uprising, *ABC News Closeup: Death in a Southwest Prison*, has been criticized as "oversensationalized." I disagree; it would be hard indeed to oversensationalize the worst prison rampage in the nation's history, a 30-hour period during which 33 were killed and over 100 injured.

The great strength of this film, shown last September, lies in the producer's effort to go behind the shocking event and look at its causes, to make some assessment of where the true blame lies. Some quotes from the narration that I

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behavior when compared with the control group, not to new arrests.

What about the parents' lawsuit? I asked. Mr. Shapiro became quite agitated. "That's a very sensitive subject—they've attacked my integrity as a filmmaker. I don't want to talk about it. I don't want any part of it. It's ugly. I hope you're not going to be writing about that."

Cashing in on the extravagant praise heaped on *Scared Straight!* by reviewers and public officials—and undismayed by Dr. Finckenaue's findings—Arnold Shapiro went on to make *Scared Straight! Another Story*, a fictionalized story inspired by the documentary and broadcast on CBS in November 1980. This TV movie closely follows the original "vidpic," as *Variety* calls it, with the addition of a sanctimonious white social worker and the obligatory love story. At one point in the drama a young black delinquent comes close to the knuckle when he asks the social worker how he can possibly hope to find a job, and how about those dudes in the White House who got off with a year in the Federal country-club prison? But the social worker fobs him off, tells him he must try harder and that the fate of the dudes in the White House is beside the point.

Watching these films, I wondered what conclusion the youngsters are supposed to draw about a society that condemns them to a life of unemployment and poverty; a criminal-justice system that bears down on the young, the poor, the black, while the big criminals are let off or mildly chastised; and a prison system designed to brutalize its inmates to the point where they become the raging predators shown on-screen.

The best thing about *Rage!*, an NBC TV movie shown last September, is its title: an emotion sure to be evoked in anybody who knows something about psychiatry as it is practiced behind prison walls. (In fairness, I should say that not everyone would agree with this appraisal: Arnold Shapiro told me he thought it was "magnificent.")

According to the producer, the movie is based on an experimental program at New Jersey's Avenel Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center. The plot: Cal, a youngish white man, is arrested for rape. Wife is shocked and disbelieving. Cal protests his innocence. Fade to a state correctional institution (unnamed) for sex offenders, to which Cal, found guilty

by a jury, has been sent to serve a 30-year indeterminate sentence.

Cal goes about looking extremely glum. A kindly, insightful, caring old shrink takes him in hand. Glumness persists until Cal is sent to group therapy, where kindly, insightful, caring black and white convicts "talk out" their problems; when one flips, and screams hysterically, the others cluster around him, stroke him, cradle him in their arms, reassure him. Eventually Cal, also screaming hysterically, tells them that he did indeed commit rape; in fact, he admits to several other rapes for which he was never caught.



James Whitmore as a prison therapist in *Rage!*

Now he's smiling! He goes about his work whistling. He comes before a review committee of kindly, insightful, caring psychiatric workers who decide he hasn't really got to the bottom of his problems, so they assign him to a sensitivity group. The wife pops in to visit from time to time, but now *she's* glum because Cal tells her about the rape. Finally, after seemingly interminable sessions with a shrink and sensitivity group who keep saying "Let go of it! Let it all come out!", we get to the crux of the matter: Cal was brutalized by his father at the age of 6, and hated his mother. He has been harboring rage for 30 years. Presto! Having discovered this, he is released as cured. As he walks out, the other cons embrace him and wish him well. The wife and Cal, we gather, are now reconciled.

What's wrong with this picture? as the kiddies' rainy-day books ask. Just about everything. That it is an incredible distortion of "therapy" as dispensed behind

bars can be attested to by any number of civil-liberties lawyers who have for years been fighting in the courts against the particular brand of cruelty meted out in the name of "treatment"—not to mention convicts who have been subjected to the ministrations of prison "therapists."

First, a glaring sin of omission: There is no hint here of the primary "therapy" dished out to prisoners convicted, as Cal was, of violent crime: i.e., psychotropic drugs delivered in massive doses. James F. Smith, a law professor at the University of California at Davis with an extensive background in prison litigation, told me that phenothiazine is almost universally prescribed: "It makes the prisoner drowsy, lethargic, unable to read or think, and often causes irreversible damage to the nervous system." But for prisoners with "problems," said Smith, "Prolixin is the drug of choice. Turns them into zombies, has palsy-like side effects from which they may never recover."

As for psychotherapy, *Rage!* was greeted with loud hoo-has by prison experts with whom I consulted. A sampling of their comments:

Quin Denvir, California state public defender: "There's only a handful of psychiatrists in the prisons, and they only see the prisoner at the yearly review. They don't treat people; they spend all their time writing reports for the courts. Group therapy is led by so-called psychiatric technicians, essentially guards with maybe two years of college. Since the courts have held that anything said in group-therapy sessions can be held against the prisoner, nobody is about to bare his soul."

Steve Berlin, California deputy state public defender: "The prisoner is in a terrible double bind; his perception of therapy is a nightmare. His revelations may put him at risk, but if he doesn't talk he's labeled recalcitrant. He dearly wishes he could serve his sentence in a state prison, and avoid therapy."

James Smith: "Prison psychiatrists are the most awful people I've dealt with on this planet. If I were a prisoner, I'd far prefer old-fashioned custody, however cruel that might be."

Cal, where were you when everybody else was lining up for the pill of the day waiting to be turned into the walking dead, or being spied on in the guise of group therapy? You were sobbing your heart out, you lucky dog, to the insightful, loving, caring people who surround-

continued on page 86

JAIL-HOUSE CHIC *continued from page 49*

breaking and entering; all he'd done was take some cookies from a truck."

Several families have filed a \$10-million lawsuit against the film company, charging psychological damage to the teen-agers and invasion of privacy. Said Dr. Finckenaue: "The parents are claiming that the permissions signed by them didn't indicate that the children would be portrayed as offenders, and parents were assured the film would not be broadcast in the East, where they live."

David Rothenberg of New York's Fortune Society, an organization that advocates prison reform, works daily with teen-agers who have been in serious trouble—"a long, arduous, supportive process," as he describes it. He was outraged by *Scared Straight!*: "The filmmakers manipulated the TV audience. They served up social cures as they try to sell us TV dinners, as genuine cuisine, but some of us smell the difference." He particularly deplores the depiction of all convicts as savage beasts, a stereotype the Fortune Society has long tried to overcome. He believes that convicts can

"The filmmakers [of *Scared Straight!*] manipulated the TV audience. They served up social cures as they try to sell us TV dinners, as genuine cuisine, but some of us smell the difference."

perform an important service in reaching youngsters, but not by yelling at them as in *Scared Straight!* "A convict talking to a youth also has to listen. What is his or her family, neighborhood, schooling like?" Of producer Arnold Shapiro's film he said: "*Scared Straight!* is a

public disservice and should be exposed for what it is."

I asked Mr. Shapiro where he got the information that 80 to 90 percent of participants in the Rahway program had gone straight, and whether, in light of Dr. Finckenaue's findings, he still thought that figure accurate. "At the time we researched the subject, no academic studies had been released," he said. "We got statistics from various sources—probation officers, police, social-work agencies, who kept their own statistics. Based on these I came up with over 90 percent 'gone straight,' but I gave it the latitude of 80 to 90 percent."

Mr. Shapiro directed me to a more recent study done by Dr. Sidney Langer of Kean College, which shows that "behavior" of 47 percent in the Rahway program had improved, versus only 26 percent in the control group. However, closer examination reveals that 85 percent of Dr. Langer's Rahway kids were "recidivist," meaning they had committed a new offense; the recorded "improvement" referred to *seriousness* of *continued on page 84*

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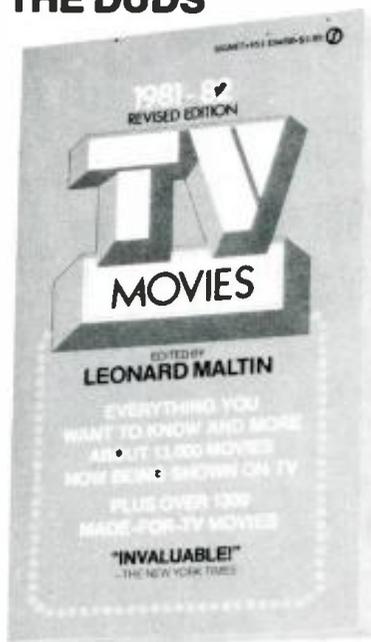
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UHF continued from page 81

to see *Perry Mason*." He, like other broadcasters I talked with, noted that old shows from the 1950s and early '60s are like new programming to the younger members of the audience.

So far, Gabbert isn't spending much money on news, traditionally weak on UHF because it is so expensive to do well. Many stations have only the most primitive news operations, or none at all. Others play it for laughs. KGSC-TV in San Jose, Cal., for example, has used Carol Doda—a lady known mainly for the remarkable size of her bust—to do editorials. But there are exceptions: Bill Putnam went to an hour of local news on his Springfield station 15 years ago; and

Competition from pay-TV and cable has driven the cost of programming to levels that give some broadcasters a bad case of vertigo

33 UHF stations subscribe to the *Independent Network News* service, which provides 30 minutes daily of respectable national coverage.

In general, it looks like we can't expect much new and exciting programming to come out of the UHF band. But maybe we have only ourselves to blame. Bud Rogers thinks so: "During one of the political conventions we countered with movies. One night we went with a Clint Eastwood potboiler called *Two Mules for Sister Sara*. We cleaned up in the ratings. The next night we ran *A Touch of Class* with George Segal and Glenda Jackson. I think it's one of the most sophisticated comedies I've ever seen. We bombed. Wiped out."

Gabbert, unlike many UHF broadcasters, has no strong feelings one way or the other about cable. "It's 65 percent cable in some areas out here," he says, "so I'm happy to be on it because it makes me an equal. But I don't want to be tied to cable. I think television is the portable radio of the future. People are going to be taking their sets to the beach, in the car and out to the pool. I want to be out in the air with them."

Is UHF going to survive?

"Well, I'm not planning to go belly up," says Bill Putnam, "but I'll tell you—stations that don't have a local identity are just going to get wiped out on UHF." Putnam is careful to build a family image for his station. He encourages staffers to become active in local affairs. He also hires the sons and daughters of staffers to work at the station. His own son works there, as do two of an associate's children. "We've got a firm policy on nepotism," he says. "We're for it."

Gabbert also feels a strong local attachment is crucial and he's optimistic about his chances for survival, although he adds, "Unless we get some changes on the FCC, I'll be buying Burger Kings instead of television stations." (Those recent FCC decisions, however, may not be as deadly as most broadcasters feel. Several media brokers I talked with noted that the prices of UHF stations haven't dropped since the FCC actions were announced.)

On the equipment front, there's good news for UHF. Both Texas Instruments and Panasonic have recently developed tuners that may make for much better pictures on UHF. And the calculator-style digital tuners being used on some new TV sets may, if they catch on, cut into lingering viewer prejudice toward a separate UHF dial.

On the programming front, however, the news isn't so great. Competition from pay-TV and cable has driven the cost of programming to levels that give some broadcasters a bad case of vertigo. Since many independent U's depend largely on local advertisers for revenue, they may be priced out of the market. (Of course, this may just mean that we get to see more reruns of *The Honeymooners* instead of expensive reruns like *Barney Miller*—not an unbearable deprivation.) The average U is already in a poorer financial position than the average V. The former spends 54 percent of its revenues to cover costs; the latter spends only 30 percent. Those financial facts are not likely to change in the near term.

So—will UHF make it?

"Oh, yes," says Washington media broker Jack Harvey. "U's keep becoming more valuable. There are a lot of people who went broke with U's 10 years ago. Now they wish they had them back."

"I suppose he's right," another UHF station-owner told me, "but still . . . I'd rather be a V." ■

eral studies found that, while nobody had ever given this style of tuning a second thought on radio, they reacted differently when it came to television. It seems that folks like their TV dials to click, because that's what VHF dials do. So the Commission had to require clicking dials for UHF.

The FCC also ordered that any set equipped with a built-in VHF antenna also had to have a U antenna. That's why a couple of years ago you started seeing those little wire hoops popping up on the backs of TV sets in the stores. In addition, the Commission recently ordered set manufacturers to reduce the "noise" levels of UHF receivers. (Electronic "noise" shows up as snow on the screen.) However, that ruling was subsequently overturned in court.

The fact is that all the FCC decisions in the world won't be able to overcome certain technical facts of life that conspire to keep UHF from ever attaining true comparability with VHF.

The technology needed to produce the higher-frequency signals of UHF is inherently less efficient—vastly less efficient—than that needed for VHF. To produce a signal of similar reach and quality to a VHF station's, a U needs as much as 10 times more electricity. That didn't mean much back in 1952 when power was cheap, but these days owners of U's are paying through the nose. UHF electric bills can easily run from \$50,000 to \$200,000 per year per station.

UHF also needs to put out higher power because its signal deteriorates more rapidly over distance than the VHF signal does. The average U, in fact, can never really achieve the reach of the average V. It would take so much extra power to reach the outer fringe of the viewing area that the effort would not be cost-effective.

The handicaps under which UHF may labor do not seem to have discouraged new blood from entering the industry. Having talked to veterans like Putnam and Rogers, I decided to go to the other extreme and called James J. Gabbert, head of KTZO (Channel 20) in San Francisco. When I interviewed him, his station (formerly called KEMO-TV) had been on the air for 28 days.

While Gabbert is a newcomer to UHF, he's hardly a babe in the broadcasting woods. He used to be president of the National Radio Broadcasters Associ-

ation, and is credited by some as being the main force behind FM radio's enormous growth. He plans to work an analogous transformation for UHF.

"I plan to revolutionize TV," says Gabbert. "I've never seen anything so full of sacred cows. Independent UHF people are always saying things like 'Never put anything good on against the networks in prime time.' Why not? I think UHF just has an inferiority complex."

KEMO, Gabbert says, "was \$6 million in the hole when I bought it. They were in such bad shape that the Coca-Cola man delivered C.O.D. For five years they had been operating at half power because their transmitter was burned up." The first thing he did was to close down the station—and come back on the air a week and a half later as KTZO.

Gabbert plans to create an image for KTZO in the same way that radio stations do. "We want to make it a favorite station for people in the 18-to-49 age bracket: the station they'll tune to first to find out what's on. That means we don't take any

paid-religion stuff or Veg-O-Matic spots, or anything else that's out of character."

And, says Gabbert, "We get rid of the hokey UHF image. UHF always looks amateurish. You can't get to the audience if you look like that."

To give his operation a sophisticated gloss, Gabbert immediately spent \$1.5 million on hardware: things like the best studio cameras (at \$110,000 each) and other top-of-the-line new equipment. He's running radio-type promotional games. ("We send out a crew to film randomly. Then we show bits of it on the hour and circle somebody in the picture. If that person is you, and you call in, you win a thousand bucks. Just like radio.")

Gabbert's programming doesn't look nearly as innovative as the rest of his operation. It's basically a mix of movies and reruns—*Mission: Impossible*, *Starsky & Hutch*, *Perry Mason*. Gabbert argues, however, that his reruns are carefully chosen to appeal to the audience he's trying to reach. "We've done surveys," he says. "And they really want

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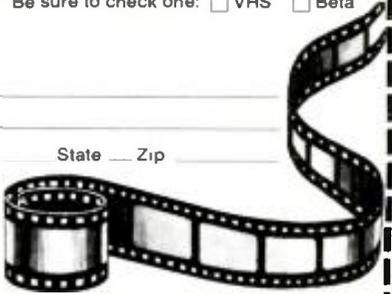
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sible and to provide as many business opportunities as we can to people who want to get into the television business." FCC chairman Charles Ferris even allowed as how the drop-ins might strengthen UHF. The existence of more strong full-service stations, he said, could encourage the creation of a fourth network on whose bandwagon existing U-band stations could hop.

While consumer groups have generally favored the FCC's continuing effort to create diversity in television, many UHF broadcasters feel the recent rulings may backfire. One station owner told me, "We may end up with the same 'diversity' in television as they've gotten in radio. Years ago on radio you had fewer stations, but each had a distinct personality. Now you've got a million stations and they all sound alike. If we get like that in TV, you'll end up with lots of stations, but they'll all be showing *Laverne & Shirley*."

In a way, the FCC's recent actions are an implicit acknowledgment that UHF has come of age. UHF, says the Commission, is now strong enough to compete head to head with VHF. It is ready to be kicked out of the regulatory nest.

After all, reasons Frank Washington, deputy chief of the FCC Broadcast Bureau, "Our primary responsibility is to the public interest, not to the profits of station owners. Our studies show that UHF stations won't go broke. You may be talking about shrinking profits because they'll have to spend more for diverse programming to hold their audiences. But that's the whole point: We're trying to make the industry more responsive."

Despite the FCC's good intentions, Washington lawyer Jonathan Blake, who often represents broadcast interests, calls the drop-in proposal "deadening and atrocious," but, like many broadcasters, he sees a bright side. "The FCC is so notoriously slow," he says, "that it may be from five years to infinity before the first drop-in gets on the air."

The UHF broadcaster's fear of more VHF stations stems naturally from decades of playing second fiddle to the V-band. UHF's historic weakness can be traced to a variety of technical and regulatory causes.

In the beginning (that is, in the late 1940s when the FCC began to dole out television stations) there was no UHF. All

the original station allocations were on the VHF band. But after a few years of granting V's—108 of them to be exact—the Commission was forced to confront a fact that it had somehow overlooked in its initial planning: Television was a mighty popular medium, and there were a lot more people who wanted to build stations than could possibly be accommodated on the VHF dial.

You see, you can't just sprinkle TV stations randomly across the landscape. A television signal interferes with any other broadcast on its same frequency for twice the distance that its own signal can actually be received clearly. For example, let's say that Channel 2 in New

"UHF people are always saying things like 'Never put anything good on against the networks in prime time.' Why not? I think UHF just has an inferiority complex."

York can be received adequately for a distance of 75 miles. That means it would interfere with any other Channel 2 that was within a range of 150 miles. Consequently, you couldn't have a Channel 2 in Hartford because that would be within the New York interference area. So you end up with a Channel 3 in Hartford, but that means you can't have a Channel 3 in New York. And so it goes across the continent. (The recent drop-in proposal aims to get around this problem by slipping in stations with a short enough range so that they won't interfere with existing signals.)

When you have to play by these laws of physics, you very quickly run out of space on the VHF band. And so the FCC's historic move, in 1952, to create the UHF band.

The exhilarating prospect of more TV stations blinded just about everyone to a crucial development: In the intervening years, thousands upon thousands of Americans had gone out and bought television sets that were made to receive the VHF stations that were already operating. They were not about to plunk

down more money for another set that could pick up the new U's.

It was as if a plague had hit the industry. By 1958 only 86 U's were still on the air.

"In those early years," Bill Putnam remembers, "there was talk of switching all TV broadcasting to the UHF band where there's more room. But during the four years that the FCC heard arguments on the subject it became politically impossible. More and more people bought sets to receive the first V's and those V's became stronger as the networks wooed them because of their larger audiences."

TV-set manufacturers, not being charitable institutions, did not go out of their way to produce sets that could receive both bands since the public wasn't demanding it and the extra band added to the cost of the set.

Over the next few years, the FCC tried to make amends for its initial misjudgment, but nothing really worked. UHF television moldered away in relative obscurity.

Things began to look up in 1962 when Congress decided (with some persistent urging from UHF broadcasters) to take matters into its own hands. Through the All-Channel Act, which ordered that action should be taken to make UHF fully comparable to VHF broadcasting, Congress gave the FCC power to *require* that manufacturers make TV sets capable of receiving both bands.

Putnam immediately applied to put a UHF station on the air in Dayton, and his Dayton station was one of the first to light up after the All-Channel Act was passed. But he quickly found out that the bill was no panacea. "The manufacturers just made the UHF tuners cheaper, not better," he says.

During the past decade the FCC has taken further steps to ensure that at least surface equality exists between the U and V bands on your television set. It ruled that both dials and the numbers on them must be comparable in size, location and legibility.

Those sorts of rulings may sound picky, but the public has some interesting prejudices. If you remember earlier TV sets, you'll recall that UHF dials used to operate like radio dials: You twirled them around smoothly until you brought in the station you wanted. Sev-

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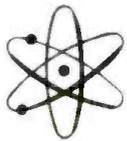
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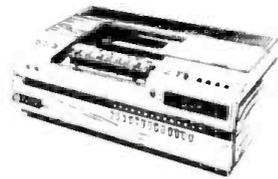
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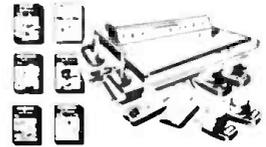
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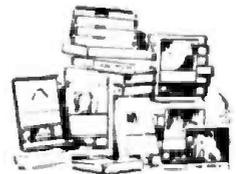
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VIDEO CAMERAS *continued from page 77*

nately, there's no standard camera-to-VCR connector plug, so one of the first considerations must be whether the camera you prefer is compatible with your VCR.

You can learn a lot about a camera by reading the specifications in the manufacturer's literature, which usually gives such characteristics as weight, type of viewfinder, lens, and so forth. The lens speed, for example, is stated in numerical f-values, just as it is in film cameras. This is a measure of the lens' ability to pass light through it. The lower the f-value, the faster the lens, which indicates the camera's ability to produce pictures under low-light conditions as well as generally sharper pictures with less critical focus requirements.

The specifications also will give a figure for "horizontal resolution." This is the resolving power of the camera under ideal lighting conditions—the amount of detail the camera can provide. The higher the number, the better.

All viewfinder cameras and most TTL types have zoom lenses, which permit you to move from a close-up to a wide-angle shot without moving the camera. A 2:1 zoom makes it appear that you are twice as close to the subject as you actually are. The best home cameras have infinitely variable 6:1 zoom lenses, which means you can move in up to six times as close. Some zooms are operated by a motor controlled by two push buttons on the camera body (zoom in and zoom out), while a nonmotorized zoom works by means of a lever on the lens barrel. While the motorized zoom is smoother and less likely to cause the camera to shake or move, it's also less flexible: The scene moves closer or further only at one fixed speed.

AUTOMATIC FEATURES

Like film cameras, video cameras are becoming increasingly automatic. All color cameras have some form of automatic system to adjust to the amount of

light available, usually called either automatic iris-control or automatic exposure-control. Some of these work much faster than others, and the only way to tell is to try the camera out in the store, moving from a bright scene to a dim one and watching the viewfinder to determine how long it takes for the dim scene to brighten up and show details.

Focus is a touchy thing. Most TTL cameras have double-image focusing aids common in still film cameras. With an electronic viewfinder camera, you focus until the little picture in the viewfinder is sharp. This is sometimes difficult in shooting long shots, but it's made easier when you zoom in on the subject (with the recorder still in "pause," naturally), focus on the subject close up, and then zoom out to start your picture-taking. Of course, if you're shooting indoors near your television set, you only have to watch the screen to determine the position of maximum sharpness. Just arriving on the market are several brands of automatically focusing cameras, which greatly simplify this most difficult problem in all photography.

Video cameras have a couple of adjustments that will be unfamiliar to casual film-camera users: namely, white balance and color temperature. These compensate for the differences in the type of lighting used: bright sunlight, shade, or fluorescent or incandescent light. Most cameras have "outdoor-indoor" switches to help take care of this, and all of them have some form of white-balance adjustment. This is usually accomplished by aiming the camera at any white object and turning a knob. The correct white-balance position is indicated either by a meter on the camera or by a line or other indicator in the electronic viewfinder, the latter being a more convenient arrangement. Once again, if you're shooting indoors with the TV set on, you can check the colors on the screen to make certain they're pleasing and realistic.

All cameras have their own built-in

microphones mounted at the front. These vary in effectiveness when used outdoors, particularly in scenes where the subject is at some distance from the camera. If the microphone isn't directional enough, the loudest sound you'll hear on the tape is your own voice, or even your breathing. A jack for an external microphone, or a mike that can be removed and used with an extension cord, is particularly valuable for shooting outdoor tapes where sound will be important.

CONVENIENCE AND WEIGHT

If at all possible, you should try any camera before you buy it, get to know the features, and above all determine whether its "feel" is right for you. Camera weight is a controversial subject. Manufacturers are aiming for lighter and lighter cameras, yet professional camerapersons often prefer somewhat heavier ones because they can be held more steadily.

When trying the camera in the store, determine whether there's a convenient way to carry it. You'll probably be lugging the damn thing around more than you'll be taking pictures with it, and it shouldn't twist your wrist or break your arm. Ideally, it should have a carrying handle or strap that balances it so the weight pulls downward rather than to one side. Carrying a camera by the pistol grip can be downright uncomfortable.

Picking a video camera sounds complicated, and it is. Cameras are getting better and better. They're good now. They'll be better, lighter and more automatic next year. New solid-state pickup devices are coming in a year or two to substitute for pickup tubes. After that, we'll see self-contained, hand-held camera/VCR combinations. To buy now or to wait is a completely personal choice. Either way, taking the third step in video will add a completely new and sparkling personal aspect to your home electronic environment. ■

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One of the biggest advantages of tape over film is the ability to see and hear the results almost immediately, without waiting for processing. With the best cameras, you don't even have to wait until you get home. You can view the rushes through the camera's viewfinder in time for retakes if they don't meet your critical standards.

INSIDE THE CAMERA

With any camera, film or video, you need some way to know what will be in the picture. The very simplest way is the optical viewfinder, which can be a glass window arrangement mounted on top of the camera, or even just a rectangular wire loop. Better cameras use reflex viewfinders, which let you look through the lens itself to compose the picture. (This is actually an "optical" viewfinder, too, but in video-camera parlance it's called a "through-the-lens" or TTL viewfinder.) In color cameras, this method has largely replaced the window or loop-type optical finder.

But with a video camera it's possible to do something you can't do with a film camera. Because video pictures are instantaneous, it's possible to see the *actual picture* while you're shooting it. This is what you do when you use a camera with an electronic viewfinder. This kind of viewer incorporates a tiny black-and-white picture tube, usually 1½ inches measured diagonally. By looking at this little closed-circuit TV set through an eyepiece, you can see what basically is the end result of your picture-taking, except for the color. You can gauge the focus, light level and contrast, as well as the composition of the scene.

In terms of general utility, there's not much question of choice between electronic and TTL viewfinders—all things being equal, that is. But things are rarely equal. An electronic viewfinder adds to the cost, weight and power consumption of a camera. So if light weight, long battery life and/or low initial cost are of primary importance, you'll probably want at least to consider a TTL. But the odds are still heavily in favor of the electronic.

CHOOSING A CAMERA

The choice of video cameras is extensive. At last count there were nearly 50 different models, although some were virtually identical to others: still, the more you know about them, the better choice you'll be able to make. Unfortu-

continued on page 78



Top: A scene from Stage Door (1937), Hepburn's only film with Gregory La Cava and her first successful one after a series of box-office flops. Hepburn (left) played an intelligent young woman trying to make it as an actress—someone very much like herself. Lucille Ball (middle) and Ginger Rogers (right) also played aspiring actresses, living with Hepburn in a theatrical boarding house. Below: Lucille Ball, Gregory La Cava and Hepburn take a break between scenes during the filming of Stage Door.

Gregory La Cava

He was a mysterious man. He did brilliant and original work when it became sort of "the thing" to write it as you went along. It was quite terrifying. He apparently liked to work with the gun at his head. So—as his actor you were on a blind date. Like living—really exciting. I did *Stage Door* with him. Got a bit puzzled, to put it mildly, about what I was doing.

"Who am I, Greg?"

He thought a minute. "Well, Kate—you're the human question mark."

"What does that mean, Greg?"

"Damned if I know," he answered.

It was definitely "You lead. I follow." When he was going great guns—*My Man Godfrey*, *Stage Door*—there was the original story, then there was Gregory's version of the original story. Quite different. I admired him very much. He terrified me. But he was sensitive—volatile and sweet and funny and outrageous. He kept you on your toes—ready to dive. That's a good place to be if you're an actor. ■

er/timer can also play prerecorded tapes—the only thing it can't do is record off the air.

The first recorder introduced primarily for making home video movies is the seven-pound Technicolor unit—the lightest on the market so far. It uses a tiny, nonstandard cassette that records for a half hour (an hour cassette is promised for this year), and, because it doesn't use conventional Beta or VHS cassettes, it can't play back prerecorded movie cassettes. (At press time, no companion tuner/timer was available for recording TV programs.)

If you should take the plunge into home video photography, what else will you need? A camera, mainly. But also probably a couple of extra batteries, since most need recharging after 60 or 90 minutes of use. If you're going to take the equipment on vacation with you, a separate charger/power supply is needed for rejuvenating the batteries in your hotel room or beach cottage. You'll also need a fairly sturdy padded case if you're going to schlep the recorder on an airplane, and probably a carrying case for the camera (which, because of its precision construction, must be carry-on luggage).

THE CAMERA

But the camera is the important thing, just as important as the VCR itself. Before we even get into the subject of cameras, let's eliminate a whole batch of them. Black-and-white ones. You've already paid over \$1000 for your portable VCR, which can play magnificent color pictures on your color-TV set. A home color camera is capable of producing images that look every bit as good as what you see off the air. You're simply not going to be happy with monochrome pictures on your color set. If your budget says it's a choice of black-and-white or wait—then wait. Black-and-white cameras sell for up to \$500, but you may be tempted by close-outs for as little as \$100 or \$150.

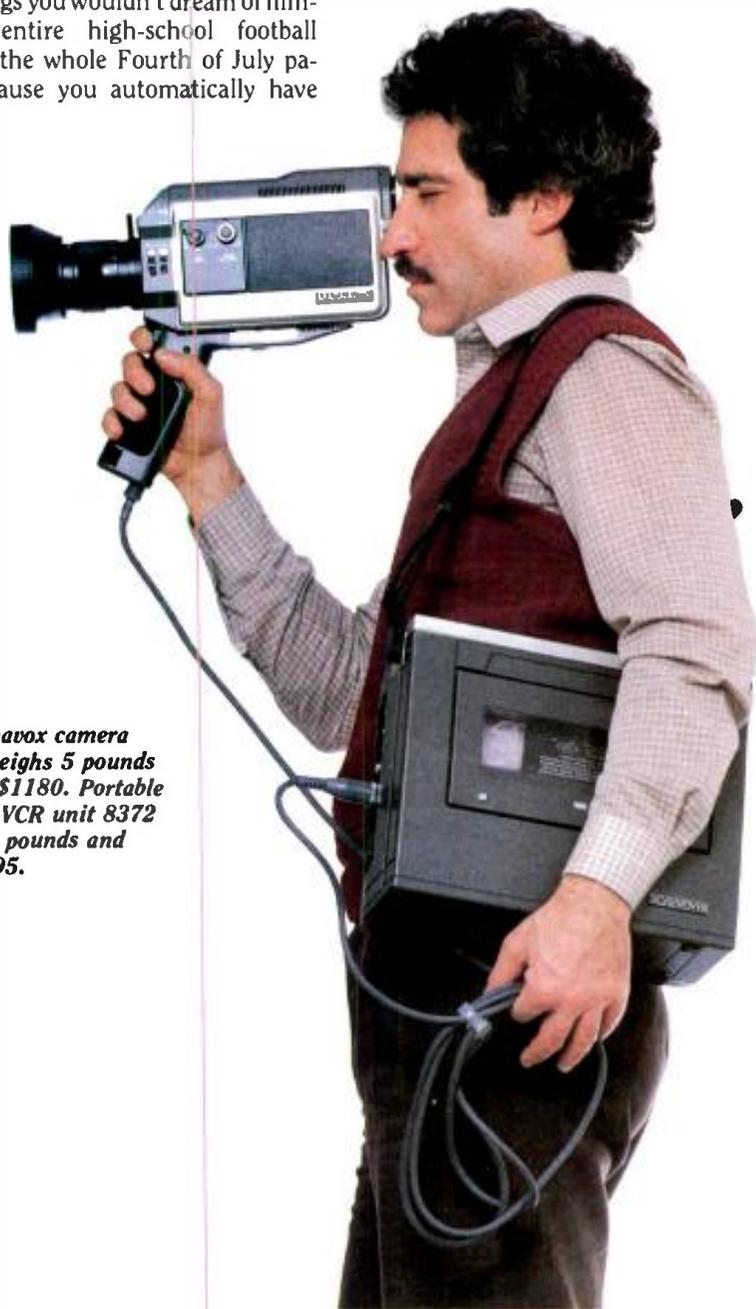
If you're accustomed to making home movies on film, the first thing you'll notice is the amount of impedimenta you must carry around to make the taped kind. There's the typical 11- to 20-pound recorder slung around the neck. Plus anywhere from three to eight pounds of camera. And a cable, connecting the camera to the VCR, which will always be getting snagged on something or tangled around your legs until you get the knack

of wrapping it around you.

Quite possibly the most notable difference in changing from film to tape photography is the switch from the economy of scarcity to the economy of abundance. While film is a commodity to be hoarded carefully, to be exposed a couple of minutes at a time, tape seems to be in almost endless supply. Therefore, you'll find you tend to make much longer "takes" and to shoot things you wouldn't dream of filming—an entire high-school football game, or the whole Fourth of July parade. Because you automatically have

movies, you can render them absolutely comatose with a two-hour cassette.

This points up videotape's biggest problem: so far, there's no really satisfactory way to edit your home tapes. You can make a stab at it by using two recorders—dubbing the scenes you select onto a second tape—but it's a tough, time-consuming, exacting process to



This Magnavox camera VR8245 weighs 5 pounds and costs \$1180. Portable Magnavox VCR unit 8372 weighs 13 pounds and costs \$1295.

sound with the picture, the video camera becomes an appropriate vehicle for making sight-and-sound recordings of family discussions, home-brewed dramas, school plays and the like. If you can bore your friends with 30 minutes of home

which home recorders really aren't well suited. Until a simple home editor comes along, the best answer is a VCR with rapid visual scan, so you can zip through unwanted scenes at nine or 10 times normal speed.

can exist in a socialist country.

Tonight, *Vremya* reports on a collective farm in Siberia that has fulfilled its five-year plan for meat and milk. In El Salvador, the Fascist junta continues its repressive tactics; in the latest violence, 33 have been killed. According to sources in Kabul, another band of Afghan rebels has been routed. It's not said whether or not Soviet forces were involved in the fighting.

On *Mabat*, more than 10,000 demonstrate against the Government's economic policy. Friday's announcement of

the 11-percent rise in the consumer price index caused a precipitous decline in the stock market.

Jordanian news reports that Israeli forces are tightening their grip on occupied West Bank towns to head off demonstrations against the closing of Bir Zeit University. Iraqi forces have stormed a key highway on the way to the Iranian town of Susangerd. For the second time in five days, Iranian jets have rocketed a Kuwaiti border outpost. There are fears that the war is about to expand in the oil-rich Gulf area.

It was Napoleon who deemed history "an agreed-upon series of lies." While we don't fully endorse this conceit, we do think that people—and nations—agree upon a collective world view that determines what is newsworthy, what is of historical significance, and what is not.

As is apparent, the sine qua non for a Soviet news story is that it furthers some goal of the state, be that goal production, social control or simple propaganda about Soviet accomplishments. In contrast, the ideal news story in the U.S. is one that's heavy on entertainment values and speaks to the polarized world view shared by many Americans, for whom East-West tensions are a given—it should be dramatic, highly visual, in a word, a Nielsen-getter.

Jordanian news has its own, vastly different functions: consolidate King Hussein's power, calm the fears of Palestinian Arabs, gain favorable diplomatic position in the ever-shifting sands of Mideast politics. Israeli news is no less skewed: Given their precarious situation, the Israelis want to know—and know in depth—only about those events that will have a direct impact upon them. As Dr. Naff puts it, Cambodian refugees are of little news interest, "unless Cambodia is going to take a lot of American resources that might otherwise go to Israel."

The upshot of all this? If it's true that TV has turned the world into a "global village," we should recognize that it's a village that is not uniformly illuminated. Depending on the hut you live in, you see different patches of light—and fail to see different patches of darkness. ■



Pope John Paul II's symbolic gesture of kissing German soil made good news footage for American TV.

CASSETTES IN REVIEW

continued from page 11

cably, at 32. The former gave one of his truly good performances in *The Sand Pebbles*, and the latter's biggest production is considered by far his best.

Enter the Dragon is reminiscent of James Bond's *Dr. No*, with an evil man on his private fortress island confronted by Lee and two confederates. They are a colorful trio: Lee (yellow), Jim Kelly (black) and John Saxon (white). This is a wildly paced picture with plenty of the

kung fu-lishness that delighted Lee's fans around the world. No matter what the villains do, Lee gets the jump on them and I get a kick out of it. The plot doesn't mean much, but it's such martial artful fun that it remains a fitting legacy from the master of acrobatic violence.

The Sand Pebbles is a sprawling saga set in 1926 China, where an American gunboat (called "The Sand Pebble" by its crew) is cruising the Yangtze River to show the flag and protect U.S. citizens. It is

often visually beautiful, with a few heartbreaking moments, but also with much stomach-turning violence, so you'd better hustle any young children out of the room. There are some Hollywooden standard characters, but at least two characters (McQueen and an Oriental named Mako) vibrate with life. They're joined by Candice Bergen, Richard Crenna and a cast of (literally) thousands. No wonder it took three hours and two cassettes to fit them all in. ■

"He's perceived," explains Dr. Naff, "as a powerful man, a man of influence. And influence is the *true* currency in the Middle East. With his shuttle diplomacy, Kissinger was more active, more visible than any previous Secretary of State. He talked to Sadat, Hussein, the Saudis. . . . He had presence and television magnifies that. Although he's out of power now, the Arabs expect him to be back."

SATURDAY, NOV. 15

Sitting in for Walter Cronkite, Bob Schieffer reports there is "mildly en-

had completed their targets for the current five-year plan. There's a report from India, where citizens are seen preparing for a visit by Leonid Brezhnev. A commentator from Madrid asserts that the work of the European Security Conference could have started much sooner were it not for disruptive U.S. tactics.

On *Mabat*, former Treasury Secretary George Shultz denies that he's a candidate for Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration. (In America, there's been little if any speculation that he'd been in line for the post.) In Poland, food

news staff has refused to report a story—it's even blacked out entire newscasts—in protest of Governmental pressure to toe the official line. Though the full spectrum of political opinion is represented on the board that oversees *Mabat's* operations, one could hardly call the Communications Ministry apolitical.

On Jordanian news, the lead item is that the ministers of the 21-nation Arab League will meet in Amman in five days to finalize the agenda for the Arab Summit. Iraq accuses Syria of trying to undermine Arab unity by asking that the date of the Summit be postponed. According to Jordanian TV, only Syria has made this request; in fact, Libya, Algeria, South Yemen, Lebanon and the PLO have all reportedly joined with the Syrians on this point.



During the Iran-Iraq war, which figures prominently in Jordanian newscasts, an Iraqi soldier greets Iranian refugees returning to their captured city.

couraging" news from Iran. A special Government committee is working on a reply to the U.S. response to Iranian demands. The Associated Press, quoting sources in Afghanistan, says the country's second- and third-largest cities have come under heavy attack from Soviet aircraft and artillery.

Pope John Paul II visits West Germany. Showing he understands the power of the symbolic gesture, the Pontiff kneels to kiss German soil as he exits his airliner. It was in Germany that Martin Luther split the Church early in the 16th century.

On *Vremya*, Party President Leonid Brezhnev greets the Communist Party's Moscow City Committee, which recently announced that all workmen in Moscow

and coal shortages have set off panic buying. Returned from his trip to Moscow, the Iraqi Deputy Premier accuses the U.S.S.R. of not supplying the war materials his nation needs.

One of the more detailed reports of the evening is devoted to those Israelis who now will have to leave their farms in the Sinai. For one-and-a-half years these settlers have been negotiating with the Government, while threatening to block normalization of Israeli-Egyptian relations. Finally, the farmers have won reparations that will amount to 11 million shekels.

Mabat's stand on settlements in occupied land has generally been far more liberal than that of the Government. In fact, on several occasions, the *Mabat*

SUNDAY, NOV. 16

Charles Osgood is sitting in for Ed Bradley. This is the proverbial slow news day, the day on which the national news takes on all the trappings of the local news. The rule of thumb here is that disaster and/or action film footage go right to the top of the show in order to capture the viewer's eye, if not his interest.

In California, Santa Ana winds gusting to 90 mph have fanned several brush fires into a major conflagration, destroying at least 100 expensive homes. . . . In Bangkok, Thailand, a munitions complex has exploded, leaving 38 dead and 350 injured. . . . In Yosemite, three hikers have lost their lives in a rock slide.

In Mainz, West Germany, Pope John Paul spoke at an outdoor Mass. He condemned the injustice, exploitation and humiliation that workers must suffer. Over and over again in his address to the workers of West Germany, he stresses the need for "solidarity"—a tacit message of support to the Polish Solidarity Party.

On *Vremya*, a slow news day is just like any other news day—except it's shorter. Even if there were man-made or natural disasters to report on, they would certainly be ignored. The Soviets consider such news "sensationalist"—a category that can include anything from a plane crash to an earthquake to a series of murders. Such news is thought to be too disconcerting to the populace at large and, in the case of crime, the authorities are simply not fond of admitting that it

Moshe Dayan, in an interview borrowed from Israeli TV, criticizes the quality of the U.S. Army. Up to the rank of sergeant, he claims, the armed services consist of "mostly blacks who have low intelligence and low education." NATO today has confirmed the launch of a new Soviet missile submarine that dwarfs the largest sub in the U.S. arsenal. NATO experts say they are "astonished" by the size of the 30,000-ton, titanium-hulled craft; it's nearly twice as large as the American Trident.

The rest of this evening's *CBS Evening News* bears an uncanny resemblance to a televised version of *People* magazine: Quoting from an interview in *Ladies Home Journal*, Cronkite tells us that Anita Bryant's attitude toward homosexuals has changed. Her policy is now "Live and let live. Just don't try to flaunt it or legalize it." In Louisville, an Illinois woman calling herself Elizabeth Kane gave birth, on behalf of a Louisville couple, to a baby boy conceived by artificial insemination—for which act Ms. Kane received an estimated \$13,000 to \$20,000. She is believed to be the first surrogate mother ever to be paid for her services. There's a film report on Gabriella Blum, the West German beauty who last night was crowned Miss World in London—and who 18 hours later returned the crown. She said she felt "imprisoned" by the duties of Miss World.

On *Vremya*, the Uzbek Union Republic has been awarded the Order of Lenin. A commentary on the Madrid security conference says that the Soviet delegate's speech was notable for its attempt to get the conference going, while that of the U.S. representative was no more than a low-key propaganda attack on the U.S.S.R.

Tonight's big news on *Vremya* is the absence of news on the huge, new Soviet sub. As another triumph of the ingenuity of Soviet labor, it might be expected to warrant an exhaustive film report or commentary. That is, it might be expected by a Westerner. Overall, news in the U.S.S.R. is disseminated on a need-to-know basis. This is particularly true when it comes to military-related information; news of major new systems is strictly off-limits.

"They even keep their own experts in the dark," says Robert Legvold. "Until the SALT negotiations started, the people in the Soviet Foreign Ministry didn't



Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa is carried on the shoulders of triumphant fellow workers, whose rebellion was largely ignored by Soviet news.

know the basic figures they were negotiating over."

Quoting Western news agencies, the *Vremya* announcer gives brief data on the atmospheric conditions recorded by Voyager I, which he does not identify as an American spacecraft. "Had Voyager I occurred in 1974," surmises Legvold, "there would have probably been more coverage. But with Afghanistan and Poland. . . ."

On Friday nights, *Mabat* goes from its customary one-half hour to an hour format. The major stories revolve around Israel's economic crisis. In the past month, the consumer price index has risen 11 percent; some economists think inflation may soon reach a staggering 200 percent.

The Belgian kidnapping is covered, as well as the Miss World fiasco. But the

heart of the show is a wrap-up of the week's events, including, of course, the Moshe Dayan interview in which he criticized the U.S. Army.

In Jordan, His Majesty King Hussein celebrated his 45th birthday. At Bir Zeit University, 1200 Palestinian college students will be barred from classes for a week because they organized a Palestinian Week celebration on campus. In Lisbon, former Secretary of State Kissinger has confirmed that he will meet the South African Foreign Minister in Paris.

This is the third time in three days that Kissinger has been mentioned on Jordanian News. That's more than Reagan, Brezhnev, Begin or Carter. It's more than anyone save for King Hussein. In point of fact, Henry Kissinger is something of a totem in the Arab media.

of propaganda. "It's more subtle, it's not as constant, but it exists." On this particular evening, for instance, the Israeli newscaster reads a brief item on how the Arab Summit will probably be delayed because Jordan appears to be on the verge of joining the Camp David talks. This reassures the Israelis, confuses the Jordanians and infuriates the Syrians.

THURSDAY, NOV. 13

Ultimately, U.S. television is an advertising medium. However else it may function, its primary purpose is to grab viewers—and hold them—for the people who peddle cars, toilet paper, denture

U.S.S.R.; cut to reaction shot of an impassive Soviet delegation. Begin and Carter trade panegyrics on the steps of the White House. The Poles, whose economic plight is worsening, ask the U.S. for a \$3 billion loan. On tape, an Abscam congressman leaves the door open for future bribes. There's a special report on middle-class heroin use, which features the confessions of a young woman, lit from the back, with her face obscured; though a visual cliché, this is still an *effective* visual cliché. In short, CBS seems to be bringing the apocalypse directly into our homes. And we simply can't tear ourselves away from the screen

Poland: Get Solidarity under control.

News from Lebanon has it that Israel has committed "another atrocity" by crossing the border and staging a raid on a peaceful town.

In Israel, *Mabat* describes the Lebanese "atrocity" as "a confrontation with the Army." Two terrorists belonging to Naif Hawatmeh's Democratic Front were intercepted and killed before they could penetrate a security fence. Military sources say they were carrying Russian-made Kalashnikov assault rifles, explosives and a Russian-made camera.

The hot story of the night in Israel centers around Bir Zeit University on the West Bank, long a flash point between Israeli authorities and Palestinian nationalists. Students there have tried to stage a "Palestinian Week" celebration. Fearing that it would be used as a "political forum" for left-wing elements, Israeli authorities settled the debate by closing down the university—but this has only spawned another controversy. (As it has in the past, the Begin Government will accuse *Mabat*, later in the week, of being "left-wing" in its coverage. Civil-liberty groups answer those accusations with cries of censorship.)

On the Jordanian news, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is quoted as saying that he opposes the idea of supplying Iran with spare parts in exchange for hostages. As for the two guerrillas killed on Israel's northern frontier, there's a terse announcement that an Israeli military spokesman claimed two Arab resistance men were killed in battle and there were no Israeli casualties. Why the restraint, especially in light of the Soviets' labeling of the incident as an "atrocity"?

"The Jordanians are grinding a different kind of political ax," says Dr. Naff of the Mideast Research Institute. "Even though half their population is Palestinian, there's been tension between the guerrilla organizations and the Government ever since King Hussein expelled the PLO from Jordan in 1971." The Soviets arm and supply most of the Palestinian guerrilla groups.

FRIDAY, NOV. 14

At the top of the *CBS Evening News* are Ronald Reagan and his transition team. In Brussels, three armed terrorists, two of them teen-agers, hijack a school bus to protest the fact that "some people earn thousands of dollars a month while others starve."



King Hussein (right) and Henry Kissinger, who is considered "something of a totem" in the Arab media.

cream. And tonight's edition of *CBS News* is nothing if not an object lesson in how to turn slick graphics, human interest and hard news into a top-rated TV show.

The hostages, no closer to release, are once more the lead item. Their predicament is played off against the backdrop of Iran at war: wailing, black-clad women mourning their dead at Iran's Behes-theza cemetery.

The next report is also guaranteed to get the gastric juices flowing: The Senate approves an anti-busing measure. For dramatic purposes, this already-explosive story is handled in point-counterpoint fashion with Sen. Lowell Weicker attacking the measure and Sen. Jesse Helms defending it.

At the Madrid security conference, U.S. delegate Griffin Bell lambastes the

for fear of missing out on some new tragedy about to befall us.

But if this world appears to be unraveling, another appears to be coming into sharper focus: Saturn. The *CBS Evening News* ends on an upbeat note with a series of stunning photos from Voyager I. One scientist says, "I cannot recall being in such a state of euphoria."

On *Vremya*—buried among stories of five-year plans that have been fulfilled or surpassed—there's a report on the proper role of trade unions in everyday life, illustrated by films of workers listening to a speech on this very topic. The narrator contends that not all production plans are being fulfilled, so some workers need stronger guidance and overseeing to carry out their socialist duty. . . . A not-very-subtle message has been delivered to the ruling hierarchy in

and open discussion of SALT. By the end of the time, the two men had pretty well agreed on a broad outline for a new treaty. Despite the use of an interpreter at Brezhnev's end, there were even a few sparks of humor between them.

Topeka had a light supper of veal and pilaf with Maria after he got home. They talked about that night's program—SALT—and also chatted about détente and the entire scope of East-West relations since the end of World War II. Over dessert he told Maria of the four network calls and of his conversation with Cunningham in Wichita.

"What are you going to do, dearest?" Maria asked when he was through.

He didn't answer. Tears were forming in his eyes.

Maria reached across the table and put a hand on his. "You have been so committed to public television as the greatest potential for good there is in America today," she said. "Is it possible, dearest, that it no longer is?"

"Yes, my dear, it is possible," he whispered.

"Then you must consider other alternatives."

"Yes, I know. I must."

"You are an honorable man, dearest, and I know that you will handle it in an honorable way. You will think of something."

He slept soundly despite the tears and by the time he awoke the next morning he had indeed thought of something.

At ten o'clock, after first locking in for that night an exclusive by-satellite interview with the Ayatollah Khomeini from his quarters in Qom, Topeka set up a conference telephone call with Arlen, Smalley, Lenhart and Rosenfield.

"Gentlemen, I am prepared to consider your offers. I speak not of money but of editorial control. I will join the one of you that permits me to write and edit my own copy, to compose and ask my own questions."

He paused for response. There was none. Only heavy breathing.

"Mr. Arlen, you called first, you may bid first."

"The best we could do would be something around 50-50—half of your

words and your questions could be yours."

"Mr. Smalley for NBC?"

"We could go as high as 60 percent on questions but no more than 55 percent on copy. Our producers wouldn't stand for any more than that in correspondent interference."

"To CBS and Mr. Lenhart?"

"We operate in the great Fred Friendly tradition of great minds and reporters as producers. Fifty-fifty is as far as we could ever go—and that would be stretching things a bit."

"Mr. Rosenfield?"

"As you may know, we follow the basic network pattern. We might be able to do a little better than 50-50 but not much."

Now the only heavy breathing was that of Randolph Scott Topeka III.

"You've got to understand, Tope-

"If we went along with you on this editorial-control business, Topeka, it could destroy the very system that has made television journalism what it is today."

ka." Smalley said finally, "that if we went along with you on this editorial-control business it could destroy the very system that has made television journalism what it is today."

"Right," said Arlen. "The word would get out and every correspondent in the world would be demanding the same thing. It just won't work. Let's get down to business. ABC offers a \$500,000-a-year no-cut five-year contract."

"CBS matches that and raises it 50 thou," said Lenhart.

"Gentlemen, no. Forget it," said Topeka. "To talk of money at a time like this would be inappropriate and tasteless."

"What are you going to do then?" asked Smalley.

"You give me no choice, gentlemen. No choice at all."

It ended quietly on a Friday evening six months later. Randolph Scott Topeka III said his "Thank you and good night" into the single black-and-white camera that was the program's sole surviving production tool. He had interviewed two Montgomery County (Maryland) Junior College associate professors on the meaning of the split among the Left in Portugal. Topeka shook hands with the two professors and walked toward the studio door. Michael Cunningham, who operated that last lone camera in addition to performing his now limited executive duties, stopped him.

"That was the last program, Randolph," he said. "Tomorrow the bank's coming for this camera. Your office has been leased to a real-estate agent; this studio will become a rock-band rehearsal hall. After tonight only one PBS station remains—KUON-TV in Lincoln, Nebraska. I'm very, very sorry, Randolph."

"Don't be sorry, Mr. Cunningham. You should be proud of your valiant efforts, your ultimate commitment to the commitment."

"My pleasure, Randolph, has been in working alongside you, watching you, admiring you through the tragedy of this last six months. It has been your finest, most heroic hour."

"Thank you, sir."

"I worry that your heroism will now go unrewarded. What will you do now, Randolph?"

"Worry not, sir. I will continue to follow the events of our time, to ponder what divides us as a nation, to compose the questions that our leaders and our thinkers should be asked—in short, I will continue to keep myself fine-tuned and ready for that day when public television, like a phoenix, rises from these ashes to fulfill itself as the greatest potential for good there is in America today."

"Yes, but *specifically* what will you do?"

"Well, I have signed a \$500,000 contract with William Morrow for four books—first, my memoirs, then my vision for American journalism, then a college textbook on interviewing and, finally, an historical novel about a principled network anchorman. I have also signed with a lecture agent to do 30 lectures for \$5000 each at universities and women's clubs and to moderate

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PANORAMA 71

In the seven years of *The Randolph Scott Topeka III Report* not a single word of criticism of it or him had ever appeared in public print. And either he or the program had won every major award in the field—among them two Emmys, a Peabody, two George Polks, three DuPont-Columbias, a Missouri Medal and a USC plaque. There had been steady growth in the size of the audience. After its first year of broadcast on the nation's 271 public-television stations, an estimated 2500 or so Americans watched it on any given night. By the program's seventh year, a survey showed that its audience had grown to 67,500. As *Time* magazine said, "Randolph Scott Topeka III has the courage to be dull and there is an increasing number of people in the country who honor and appreciate that."

Then came that fateful Wednesday in mid-February. Randolph Scott Topeka III, still in robe and slippers, retrieved *The Washington Post* from the front yard of his northwest Washington home. There on the front page, just below the fold, was the stark headline:

**NO MORE FEDERAL MONEY FOR
PTV, PBS ON VERGE OF FOLDING**

The story said the new Administration had decided to eliminate all Federal funding of public broadcasting. This decision, coupled with previously announced ones by the BBC and by Mobil, Exxon, Shell, Citgo, Arco, Phillips, Gulf, Texaco, Amoco, Fina and Marathon to switch their programs or funding to cable, said *The Post*, pretty much meant the end for both public television and public radio. The story said the key leaders of public broadcasting—all 1578 of them—were now in their sixth week of an emergency meeting in Wichita, Kan., to come up with a way to deal with the crisis.

Randolph Scott Topeka III discussed the news briefly and calmly over coffee with his wife, Maria Prokoff Topeka, the famous concert bassoonist, and then went on to work. Crisis or no crisis, *The Randolph Scott Topeka III Report* must go on. At 9:30 P.M. (ET) he had to be there in his chair ready to ask his direct, simple, piercing questions. There were 67,500 Americans out there depending on him.

At the office, he did what he did every day, checking the complete overnight AP, UPI and Reuters wires, reading six daily newspapers and that day's magazines and periodicals—*The New Republic*, *National Review*, *Airline Deregulations News*, *Motor Coach Age* and four others. At nine o'clock he met with his reporting and producing staff. There was talk of a U.S.-Soviet summit. It was clearly the story of the day, clearly the subject *The Randolph Scott Topeka III Report* should deal with that night. "Let's put a camera in the Oval Office with the President and another with Brezhnev in his office at the Kremlin and let them talk back and forth live," Topeka said finally and decisively. Off-camera, he was a brilliant editor.

The staff went off to set up the Oval Office-Kremlin interconnect and To-

"Moyers is already on board here at ABC for next year. Paul Duke's gone to cable. MacNeil and Lehrer are operating an antique toy store in Maine. . . ."

peka reached for his copy of the latest *Foreign Affairs*. He wanted to read an article on the new independence plan for Namibia. That was when it happened. Roone Arlen of ABC News called.

"That story in *The Post* says it all. ABC News wants you and needs you. The time is now. Come now."

"I am still committed to public television as the greatest potential for good there is in America today, Mr. Arlen."

"Sure. That's what they all said. But Moyers is already on board here at ABC for next year. Rukeyser's taken *Wall Street Week* into syndication. Paul Duke's gone to cable. MacNeil and Lehrer are operating an antique toy store in Maine. . . ."

Ten minutes later Bill Smalley, president of NBC News, was on the line,

"It's your turn, Topeka. We just signed up Moyers for next year. . . ."

It went just like the conversation with Arlen and ended with Smalley saying:

"Remember, Topeka, when the ship goes down nobody remembers the name of the last man on it—unless he survives."

Bill Lenhart of CBS News called just after lunch.

"I've just come from negotiating a contract with Moyers. He's coming aboard in July. I am ready to catch the shuttle to Washington now—*right* now—and sign you on as well for a position on the finest broadcast journalism team in the world. . . ."

Reese Rosenfield, president of Ted Turner's Cable News Network, was the last to ring. His plea was for Topeka to cast his lot with CNN, the wave of the television-news future. Topeka told him the same thing he told the others—that he was flattered by their interest and he would consider what had been said. Thank you very much.

Topeka then called his public-television boss, Michael Cunningham, who was attending the meeting in Wichita.

"How's it going out there, Mr. Cunningham?" Topeka asked.

"Well, after six weeks we're still arguing over the agenda. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting wants to present its survival plan first but so does PBS. . . ."

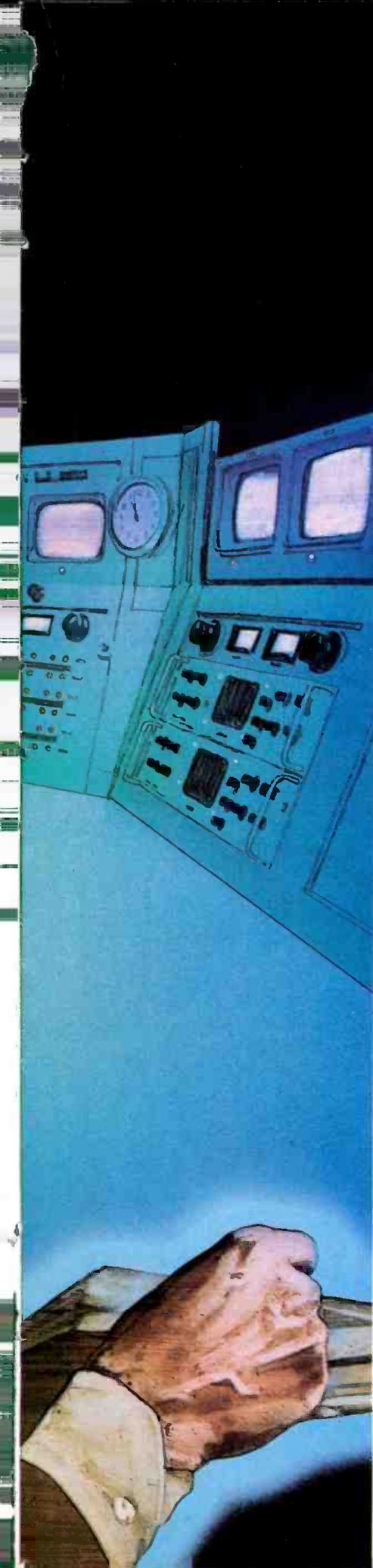
After a few minutes of small talk about the *Post* story and the crisis, Topeka told Cunningham about the four telephone calls.

"I wanted you to hear it from me before somebody else told you," Topeka explained.

"I appreciate that. I think this meeting should be over by Easter," said Cunningham. "If you haven't made a decision by then we can sit down and talk then."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Cunningham."

At 9:30 P.M.—5:30 A.M. in Moscow—*The Randolph Scott Topeka III Report* went on the air live. Topeka introduced his two guests, the President of the United States and the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He then skillfully guided the leaders of the world's two most powerful nations through a frank



The Last Anchorman on PBS

Follow the adventures of Randolph Scott Topeka III— as a real-life newsman delivers this fictional sendup of his craft

By JAMES LEHRER

Once there was a 48-year-old news anchorman on public television named Randolph Scott Topeka III. He was a dedicated, serious-minded, fair man of modest ego and unquestioned integrity and professionalism. Neither hair spray nor warm air from a blow-dryer had ever touched his dark-brown hair and no network limousine had ever picked up his athletic six-foot, 180-pound frame at the Eastern shuttle. The public's right to know was his only mistress, public television as the greatest potential for good in America today his only passion.

His program, *The Randolph Scott Topeka III Report*, was in a quality class of its own. Five nights a week for 30 minutes he asked questions of people in the news on live television. His questions were direct, simple and piercing, and they were asked in a polite but firm, friendly but exacting manner. He did his homework, he listened to his guests' answers, never revealing a hint of judgment of them through comment or facial expression. To his peers and television critics he was known as the best, the standard.

continued

James Lehrer is co-anchor of The MacNeil/Lehrer Report and the author of the books *Viva Max!* and *We Were Dreamers*.



Davis

that the station has a \$4-million annual budget, or that its owner has for decades been someone to be reckoned with in the caverns of the FCC and the halls of Congress.

On the autumn day that I spoke with him, Putnam was more than usually perturbed with the FCC, because of two of its recent decisions. The first ruling did away with exclusivity rights to syndicated programming; the second proposes to create as many as 139 new VHF stations, called "drop-in V's."

The former ruling means that a station owner can no longer purchase the right to be the sole broadcaster of a given syndicated (not network) program in his area. Formerly someone like Putnam could pay top dollar for a *Barney Miller* episode or a *Mike Douglas Show* and know that audiences in his viewing area could only see that program on Channel 22. Now viewers might find the same program coming in on their cable systems from Ted Turner's superstation in Atlanta or from the high-powered WBZ-TV in Boston.

The FCC ruling on exclusivity applies, of course, to the entire TV industry, but it hits especially hard at UHF, since that band has the largest number of independent stations, which rely almost exclusively on syndicated programming. Also, since U's are generally the weaker stations in any area, they are more likely to feel the pinch of competition.

UHF broadcasters throughout the country are up in arms over the ruling. Bud Rogers, who owns WOFL (Channel 35) in Orlando, Fla., is, if anything, more outraged by it than Putnam. Rogers is also a UHF veteran, having been president of Taft Broadcasting before buying WOFL a year and a half ago. "My exclusivity contract isn't worth the paper it's written on now," he says. "I've paid top dollar for shows like *Maude*, *Sanford and Son*, *The Bionic Woman*. Now all of a sudden the same shows are coming in on

top of me from Atlanta, Tampa and all over. It's a blatant assault on my rights."

And station operators don't see the situation changing appreciably in the near future. "I don't think there's a thing in the world we can do about it," says Rogers. His main reaction will be to hold off buying new programs for as long as he can, in the hope that the regulatory atmosphere will change. Springfield's Putnam takes a similar stance: "We just tell the distributors, 'If you've sold to Atlanta or any other station that's going to come in on local cable, don't bother making a pitch to us.'"

No one disputes that cable is having a strong impact on UHF. But there's considerable dispute over whether that impact is benign or malignant.

"I love cable," one owner told me. "In effect it transforms me from a U to a V in homes that are on the cable. All those people who couldn't get me because they had a lousy antenna or because they lived on the backside of a mountain or because they couldn't figure out what the hell UHF was all about, suddenly see me as just another station. I become a viable option. That little black box sits on top of their TV sets with its single dial, and I'm there with all the big guys."

But for stations like Putnam's Springfield outlet—where the public is already accustomed to tuning in UHF regularly—the increased competition outweighs any benefits. Viewers, says Putnam, just naturally drift to the larger stations on the cable. Face it, if you've got a choice between a talk show coming from Boston (with its large pool of articulate potential guests and traveling celebrities) and one originating from Springfield (which is not the type of town Sylvester Stallone feels compelled to visit to promote his latest movie), which would you choose?

"The regulators," Putnam contends, "just don't understand that cable redis-

tributes audiences from small markets to large markets. Their decisions just allow the rich to get richer and the big to get bigger."

Putnam's feelings about cable are echoed by FCC commissioner Robert E. Lee, who dissented from the Commission's ruling on exclusivity. "In the short run, cable helps UHF stations because it gives them carriage," Lee says, "but in the long run it hurts because it brings in so many competing stations."

Lee also shares the sentiments of the broadcasters when it comes to the FCC's decision on drop-in V's. "If the drop-in thing goes through, it could have a significant impact on UHF." He thinks the U-band as a whole may become weaker. "You're going to get some operators who will want to swap their U's for V's. I know if I were someone who was about to buy a U, I'd say, 'Wait a minute, maybe I can get a shot at one of the new V's.'"

The new stations would not be as powerful as VHF stations already on the air (so as not to interfere with existing broadcast signals), but they could, given the size of the markets they're being slipped into, become viable commercial operations. While the greatest number of markets could get one to three new stations, several—such as Fresno, Cal., Peoria, Ill., and Scranton, Pa.—could get as many as six or seven. Faced with such a beefed-up VHF band, it's not hard to see why UHF broadcasters might feel they're having the rug pulled from under them.

The majority on the FCC obviously does not view its recent actions in the same light as broadcasters do. In announcing the drop-in proposal, Richard Shiben, chief of the FCC's Broadcast Bureau, said it was incumbent upon the Commission to use the TV broadcast spectrum "in the most efficient way pos-

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This is a story about the *other* dial on your TV set. The one with the little numbers that go from 14 to 83. The one where the picture always seems to come in fuzzy. The one that seems to have more than its share of preachers who look like car salesmen and of people who speak languages I don't understand. The one where *Leave It to Beaver* seems to have found eternal life.

On any given night during prime time, about five percent of all American homes have a television tuned to a UHF station, while eight or 10 times that number are tuned in to VHF stations—channels 2 through 13. (The rest of the populace, presumably, is out doing constructive things like knocking over liquor stores or attending Tupperware parties.)

Such woefully low audience statistics might lead one to conclude that UHF is nothing but a depressed neighborhood in the otherwise thriving television community. But, in fact, since the mid-1970s, UHF has been one of the hottest growth areas in television. (After all, five percent of America is still a lot of people.) Nationwide, the band boasts more than 400 stations either currently in operation or gearing up to go on the air. And there's room on the band for almost 700 more stations.

While the band does, indeed, have a substantial number of small stations specializing in religious shows, ethnic programs and worn-out reruns, it also has some hefty network affiliates, prosperous commercial independents and the lion's share of the Public Broadcasting Service network.

A decade ago, the average UHF station sold for \$200,000. Since then the average has risen to more than \$4 million and it is not unheard of for a station in a healthy, medium-sized market to bring upward of \$15 million.

In the face of such financial glad tidings you'd expect UHF broadcasters to be about as happy as the folks in funny hats

Strike Up the Band... Cautiously

Though savoring new-found prosperity, broadcasters on UHF—the “other” band—are worried about cable and the FCC

By FRANK DONEGAN

who've just scored on *Let's Make a Deal*. Forget it. There's no joy in UHF-land these days. Broadcasters who for years labored under the handicap of being on the “other” band fear that a combination of rulings by the Federal Communications Commission, market forces and technical problems will puncture their new-found prosperity. They worry that UHF's golden age may be ending at just about the time that people discover they are alive.

Actually, UHF has been around for almost 30 years, and for almost 30 years it has been laboring to overcome a complicated series of technical, financial and PR obstacles to public recognition (about which more sorry details later). It was 1952, to be exact, when the FCC, having run out of space for new stations on the VHF band, decided to move further up the broadcast spectrum and create a new band. (Both UHF and VHF are part of the same spectrum; it's just that when you move from the very high frequencies to the adjacent ultrahigh frequencies, you need different transmitting and receiving setups to operate.) The Commission assumed that the new

UHF stations would be fully comparable with the VHF's already on the air. So did Bill Putnam. They were both wrong.

William L. Putnam is one of the most vocal UHF broadcasters you're likely to run across. If you were looking for someone to cast as the Grand Old Man of UHF television, Bill Putnam would be your leading candidate. He heads Channel 22 in Springfield, Mass., as well as stations in Dayton and Salt Lake City. Since St. Patrick's Day, 1953, when WWLP in Springfield first lit up, Putnam has weathered the lean years and savored the good ones from his hilltop cinderblock offices overlooking the Connecticut River Valley. He pads around in sensible shoes, files letters by throwing them on the floor and spent much of the time during my interview with him decorating his hat with mountaineering badges.

The station's offices and studios look like somebody's playroom, done up in cheap paneling and furnished with pieces that appear to have escaped from a Sears Roebuck catalogue, circa 1958. If you looked around you might not guess



**Plots and conspiracies, according to Dr. Naff,
“form the world view of the
whole [Mideast] region.”**



On Israeli TV, the spotlight is on 150 Jews in the Soviet Union who have begun a three-day hunger strike. Their dual aims are to call attention to the fact that the U.S.S.R. is ignoring the Helsinki accords and to dramatize their Government's refusal to let them emigrate.

In Jordan, King Hussein attends a graduation ceremony for new army officers. Due to the “plots” and “challenges” facing the Arab world, he calls for full solidarity in the Arab ranks. Both the form and content of this lead item are typical of Jordanian newscasts.

“First you'll usually get the calendar for the day for King Hussein and the Crown Prince,” says Dr. Naff. “What events they've attended, what foreign visitors they've greeted, et cetera.” As for the plots and conspiracies cited by King Hussein, Naff says they “form the world view of the whole region. The Arabs look back on their history and all they can see is one conspiracy after another. The Israelis—especially the Sephardic Jews—also tend to see the world in terms of plots.”

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 12

CBS begins its broadcast with the “flutterings and squawkings” of the lame-duck Congress. The chances of a tax cut, says Sen. Robert Dole, are now “slim to none.” Tom Fenton in London reports that one Iranian official today accused the U.S. of resorting to stalling tactics to delay the release of the hostages and thereby harm Iran's war effort. A Kuwaiti border post on the frontier with Iraq has been bombed by an unidentified plane. Voyager I continues to probe the mysteries of Saturn's rings; the next 12 hours will be pivotal.

Disasters, both natural and man-made, get thorough coverage: Hurricane Jeanne dumps almost 24 inches of rain on Key West. . . . A department store cave-in claims the lives of three workers. . . . Haitian refugees, too weak to resist Bahamian police, are herded aboard a boat back to Haiti. . . . A grisly car crash leaves victims so badly battered that the

dead were identified as the living and vice versa.

The Madrid conference, expected to run for six months, could grind to a halt by Saturday. Delegates still can't agree on an agenda. The most scathing comments come from Canadian delegate Mark MacGuigan, who accuses the U.S.S.R. of directly challenging the principles of “territorial integrity of states, nonintervention in internal affairs and equal rights and self-determination of peoples.”

Not surprisingly, *Vremya* has a different interpretation of the day's events. In a special report from Madrid, a commentator claims that the conference has been delayed “due to the negative position of the U.S. delegation,” which is “well-known to all the delegates.” No comment is made on the speech of the Canadian delegate.

There are film reports on workers at a metallurgical plant who have fulfilled their five-year plan and a director of a tube mill who explains some of the reconstruction difficulties he's faced and overcome.

“It's as if G.E. could control the media in this country,” notes Kremlinologist Legvold. All those production-oriented stories are “not really news as we know it. Their purpose is to point out the success of the Soviet system and, at the same time, to maintain production as a priority consideration.” As for the stories promoting luxury goods such as new radios and new cars, it seems they are not really advertisements as we know them, but rather a form of reassurance. “They're showing these things to the Soviet people because they've made a commitment to provide them with consumer goods.”

The deteriorating situation in Poland merits only a brief item: According to the Polish news agency, the consumer-goods shortage was discussed by the Polish United Workers Party.

Prime Minister Menachem Begin is in the headlines on Israeli TV. Tomorrow he is to meet with President Jimmy

Carter in Washington and the cognoscenti predict that the situation will be awkward for both men. President-elect Ronald Reagan has no plans to meet with Begin and, in some circles, that's being interpreted as a sign that Reagan feels the Mideast isn't all that important.

From Spain there's a report on the European Security Conference in Madrid, where dozens of human-rights groups have come to protest the U.S.S.R.'s policies. Included is an interview with Ilana Friedman, the Israeli sister of “Prisoner of Zion” Ida Nudel (Soviet Jews who have been refused emigration visas to Israel are often referred to in this way). Friedman explains that her sister has committed no crime—unless wanting to leave the Soviet Union for Israel is a crime.

On Jordanian TV, the lead story covers the upcoming Arab Summit Conference. According to the Jordanian Minister of Occupied Land Affairs, the major item on the agenda will be backing for the Palestinian cause. After an Iraqi TV report on the progress of the war, negative Israeli news is featured: 6000 Israeli union members demand the resignation of the Begin Government; cost of living rises another 11 percent; inflation and unemployment are both at record levels.

Living in such proximity, the Arabs and Israelis often watch each other's TV programming. So the question arises: Are the Jordanians trying to demoralize their neighbors?

“Not really,” says Dr. Naff. “The negative Israeli news is aimed primarily at Jordan's domestic audience. Remember, about half of Jordan's population is Palestinian.”

“Negative Israeli news is basically a form of encouragement. It says ‘OK, don't worry, we're still firmly in the Arab camp.’ Since the news is also beamed into Syria and Saudi Arabia, it's also a way of maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of the Arab world.”

Dr. Naff points out that the Israeli TV audience, though more “sophisticated” by Western standards, also sees its share



On CBS there's a fully orchestrated media event, one that might make even P.T. Barnum blanch



is necessary," notes CBS correspondent Robert Pierpoint at the State Department, "because the Iranians refuse to meet [face to face] with U.S. officials." If the Algerian connection provides hope, the CBS cameraman seems intent on tempering it. Pierpoint is standing in front of the same State Department lectern from which Hodding Carter III made so many optimistic predictions vis-à-vis the hostages.

Cronkite delivers the rest of the news in a more low-key fashion. Nearly two minutes are devoted to the Polish Supreme Court, which today ruled in favor of the Solidarity Party, Poland's biggest independent labor union. According to the Court, Solidarity needn't insert a clause into its charter pledging subservience to the Communist Party. Cronkite notes this has "temporarily defused a crisis that many had feared would result in Soviet military intervention."

On Soviet TV there's no mention of Solidarity. But then, there's no equivalent to Walter Cronkite. *Vremya* features one or two newscasters who never introduce themselves. They appear in no particular order, their schedules change weekly and the majority of Soviet citizens do not know their names. They are meant to be, not stars, but part of the masses.

Tonight on *Vremya* the lead item is on the joint communiqué that President Leonid Brezhnev and Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia signed. Nothing is said of the contents of the communiqué. Most of the eight-minute film report is devoted to Mengistu's departure from the U.S.S.R. It's the standard Soviet departure scene: Side by side, Brezhnev and Mengistu walk past an honor guard at Vnukovo Airport. They stand on two red carpets while a military band plays the national anthems of both countries. Mengistu then shakes hands with each of the 14 members of the Politburo. He climbs the ramp of the plane and, just before he enters, he turns and waves. The cameras show Brezhnev and other Politburo members smiling and waving back.

Next are: Belgorodskaya coal miners who promise to fulfill their five-year plan. . . . A brigade of young workers near Lake Baikal who have fulfilled their five-year plan. . . . A report from a Moscow factory, where workers are striving for higher quality consumer goods. . . . Afghanistan's Central Committee has met and approved the results of last month's meeting between Brezhnev and Babrak Karmal. The war in Afghanistan is not reported on.

In Israel, *Mabat's* lead story is a report from the BBC on Solidarity's Supreme Court victory over the Polish Communist Party. This is followed by an in-depth look at the Madrid security conference, where the West and the Soviets are still arguing over an agenda.

It's not at all unusual for Israeli TV to take such an interest in European affairs. "The Israelis," notes Dr. Naff, "take their international news very seriously. Anything that will directly affect them gets priority coverage." Like East-West tensions, which at the moment seem to be escalating, and which can influence everything from U.S. arms shipments to Soviet policy on the emigration of Jews.

The lead item on Jordanian TV is that all preparations have been completed for the 11th Arab Summit. Next up is a film report from Baghdad in which Iraqi President Hussein says that he's confident his country's economy will not only meet the needs of a long war with Iran, it will prosper. A 25-second update on the American hostages is followed by eight negative reports on Israel; inflation, unemployment and political isolation are prominently featured.

TUESDAY, NOV. 11

The hostages are once again the lead item on the *CBS Evening News*. And once again, yesterday's ray of hope has been dimmed by today's hard reality. Ali Nobari, the influential governor of Iran's Central Bank, is said to be disappointed with the American response to Iran's demands. The illustration CBS uses to introduce the hostage story—a bald ea-

gle trapped in a cage far too small for it—has never seemed more painfully apt. Cronkite ends this segment by noting that Iraq's Deputy Premier has made an unscheduled trip to Moscow; he's thought to be shopping for more military equipment to use in the 51-day-old war with Iran.

There are reports on the lame-duck Congress, the political maneuvering at the Madrid security conference and the progress of Voyager I. There is also a fully orchestrated media event, one that might make even P.T. Barnum blanch: In order to solve the murders of 11 black children, Atlanta officials have assembled an all-star team of detectives from across the country. Included are the men who helped solve the murder at the Metropolitan Opera House, the Symbionese Liberation Army killings and the famous case of the L.A. policeman who was slain in an onion field. Though great television, this could hardly be called great news-gathering. Shortly thereafter, the "super cops," as they are referred to, have all left town. Atlanta police are no closer to arresting the murderer of 11 black children.

On *Vremya*, there is no mention of the Iraqi Deputy Premier's shopping spree. Instead, the lead item is a two-minute film clip of Leonid Brezhnev meeting with the Italian Foreign Minister at the Kremlin. The voice-over is a verbatim repetition of a brief report that was earlier released by the official news agency, Tass.

Later in the broadcast, the *Vremya* announcer reads, in its entirety, a 23-page joint communiqué issued by Tass, in which Brezhnev and Ethiopian leader Mengistu affirm their friendship and express their mutual hope that African nations will continue their fight against imperialism, racism, colonialism and apartheid.

Meanwhile, in Riga, a new portable radio has been developed; the car and truck plant in Lutsk has already fulfilled its five-year plan; a new method has been developed for producing animal fodder.



tion. *Mabat's* roots go directly back to the 1967 Mideast War, before which Israel had no TV news and, for that matter, very little TV. On the air since 1968, *Mabat* was originally designed as a visual antidote to Arab war propaganda. Meaning, the best way to show Israelis that Jordan had *not* captured Bir Sheva was simply to show them an unoccupied Bir Sheva.

In comparing our week's worth of news from these four countries, we were able to anticipate some things—like the anti-U.S. tilt in Soviet reporting. However, there were other phenomena we found fairly astonishing. Like the Great Soviet Marketing Paradox: Why, in a country that has so much trouble meeting basic consumer needs, does Soviet TV news spend so much time promoting luxury goods such as new cars and trucks? Equally puzzling is that, on Jor-

danian TV, former Secretary of State Kissinger is treated as if he were the present head of the State Department. Closer to home, why is it that, at times, the venerable *CBS Evening News* seems to resemble nothing so much as *That's Incredible!?*

To help answer these questions, we called upon Soviet specialist Robert Legvold, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Dr. Thomas Naff, director of the Mideast Research Institute at the University of Pennsylvania. Our field correspondents were Joan Borsten (Tel Aviv), Anan Safadi (Jerusalem, reporting on Jordan) and John Moody (Moscow).

The seven days of news we observed were November 10-16th, the week following the U.S. elections. It was a week of the continuing hostage crisis, of the Iran-Iraq and the Afghanistan wars, of

the opening of the European Security Conference in Madrid and of Voyager I's fly-by of Saturn. In terms of TV coverage, it was also a week of surprises.

MONDAY, NOV. 10

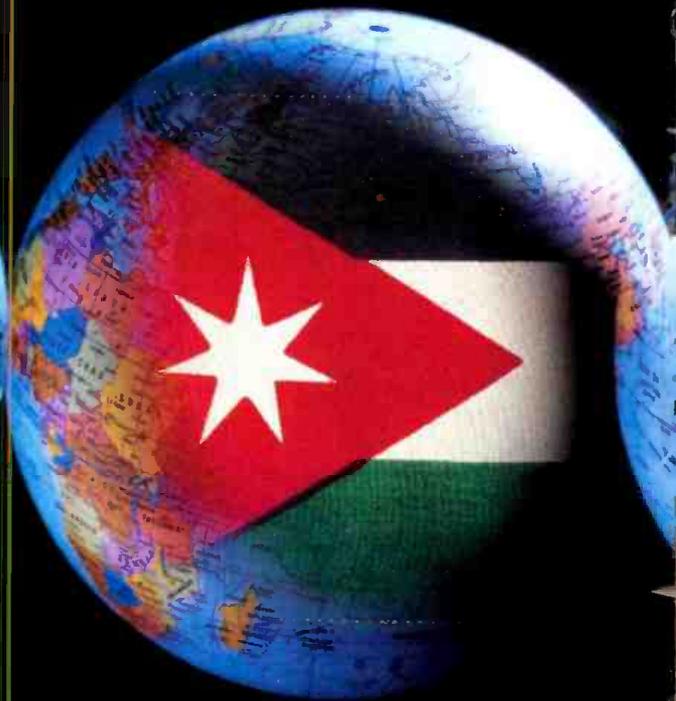
All day long there have been rumors regarding the U.S. hostages in Iran. By the time *CBS News* hits the air, it seems there may soon be a resolution to the crisis. There is obvious excitement in Walter Cronkite's voice. "Good evening. The United States has begun the convoluted process of formally responding to Iran's conditions for release of the American hostages."

In Algiers, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher is on a delicate mission. He and his top-level diplomatic staff are explaining the U.S. response to Iran's demands. Algeria will act as a middleman. "This cumbersome process

The World According to



Israel



Jordan

The evening news. It's often been called our nightly national séance. And for good reason. Each evening, an estimated 52 million of us partake of the world's mysteries as seen on ABC, CBS or NBC.

We get more than just the news, of course. Along with the words and pictures we get a full dose of cultural biases. The way the news is selected and presented has an uncanny way of reflecting our national fears, hopes, prejudices, desires.

And this is no less true in other countries, as we found when we tracked a week's worth of nightly news in Israel, Jordan and the U.S.S.R., and then compared the results with the U.S. version of televised reality.

As our American benchmark we used *The CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite*, for 13 years the top-rated net-

**We monitored
the way these four nations
covered the
same week's news on
television;
it was a lesson in
what might
be called Select-a-vision**

By JACK FRIEDMAN

work news program. In terms of constraints on its reporting, CBS is beholden only to the American viewing public—or, more precisely, to the A.C. Nielsen Company. *Vremya* (Time), its Soviet counterpart, runs for approximately 45 minutes each evening and, like all information media in the U.S.S.R., is under strict Government control.

Also under state control are the 15 minutes of Jordanian nightly news, which can best be characterized as a “rip and read” operation—an announcer reading wire copy (from both Arab and Western services) backed by stills or occasional film reports.

Although part of the state Communications Ministry, *Mabat Hachadashote* (Israeli Television News Magazine) is essentially independent; 30 minutes long, it's watched each evening by a staggering 90 percent of Israel's popula-



Above: Hepburn and director George Cukor in a picture taken by Jimmy Stewart during the filming of *The Philadelphia Story*. **Below:** Hepburn and Stewart in a scene from that movie.

George Cukor

He is obviously unique in my life and, let's face it, in others' lives.

He gave me my first job (in *Bill of Divorcement*). He presented me to the public in a way calculated to make me seem fascinating. He used very shrewdly what I had to offer: My harsh voice, which threw the sound department into despair—George said, "Get it"; my skinny face—"Make it look pretty, fascinating"; my eccentric ways (eccentric then, the rule now)—he made them seem like virtues.

He is a romantic. He is stage-struck. He is a romantic about actors. Loves all their unique personalities. Puts up with their foolishness. Loves them, ridicules them, frees them, gets the best out of them because he gives them confidence in themselves. Try it—do it. Now do it

again. Now do it faster. He is a real pushover for the performance, so he gets the performance. Keep it up. Get it going. Exciting! You do your best for him—it's thrilling to see the performances for which he has been responsible. What I owe to him!

And George runs a lively set fraught with the excitement and fun of creation. *continued on page 77*



George Stevens

Alice Adams. Woman of the Year. He really knew comedy as a science. Wheeler and Woolsey training. It was absolutely fascinating. I sat in wonder. Clear as one and one makes two.

When I was playing the rich widow in *Without Love*, there was a scene where Spencer Tracy, a scientist boarding in my Washington mansion, came and got into my bed. He was a sleepwalker. Well, this was supposed to be funny. But it wasn't. Finally I took it to George—who was not directing the picture but was my friend. "No," he said, "not funny if unexpectedly a man gets into bed with a woman. That's dangerous. Only funny if the woman gets into bed and finds a man there. Get her out of the bed." So we had me get up to get a hot-water bottle—Spence sleepwalked into my empty bed—I came back, innocently got into the bed and ran into him. I leaped out—it was very funny.

The dining-table scene in *Alice Adams*, the cooking scene in *Woman of the Year*—all a real technique of calculating how to whet the audience's appetite: It's going to happen—it isn't—oh yes it is. This is sheer delight.



Hepburn played opposite Fred MacMurray in Alice Adams (top), directed by George Stevens (inset).

I suppose he is remembered for his superpictures—*Shane. Giant* and *A Place in the Sun*—but the comedies were to me very special. It is so thrilling to make an audience laugh!



David Lean (above) on location in Italy while shooting Summertime.

David Lean

I think he knows more about film than a banker knows about money. He has a most wonderful eye and imagination. He really tells the story on film. Pictures—sounds—he sees them; he finds them; he tells the story with them. And you feel them. I did *Summertime* in Venice with him. Shadows—light—alleyways—sunsets—bells—chimes—music—sounds and sights. As an actor you become a part of this incredible use of FILM. I watched him cut some of it together—a miracle of precise knowledge and utterly sensitive feeling. You're the story he is telling and the medium.

Oh how exciting that experience was. Perfection—the search for the red goblet. That's what he wants—that's what he gets. It's always there if you work hard enough and if you wait for it—hunt for it. So it's a needle in a haystack, is it? So what? It's possible!



Huston and Hepburn clown between scenes in *The African Queen*.



On location for *The African Queen*, left to right: Hepburn, co-star Humphrey Bogart, Bogart's wife Lauren Bacall and director Huston.

John Huston

Over the jungle—100 feet in the air just over the treetops—tiny plane—Hank Hankins flying. Sam Spiegel furious—me, Kate, irresponsible but there—Heaven! Exciting—not allowed—thrilling—adventure.

Huston wild—impractical and with his sights set over the mountain tops: to ride with the hounds in Ireland—to have perfect boots and pink coats—a country estate—wives—children—Monets—Mayan treasures—African sculpture. Do it—try it—fight—write—act—direct—indulge—survive. John can do it all. And do it well. I disapprove—really. But that was a thrilling adventure, wasn't it? That *African Queen* thing. Wouldn't have missed that one. I followed John right into the jungle without a gun. And he rubbed my back when I was sick. Sweet—wicked—fun. He sets his work on fire! A comet.

continued

"I Discovered Early On— Get a Tough Director"



Director
John Huston
with Katharine
Hepburn.

By KATHARINE HEPBURN

On March 16 in the PBS special Starring Katharine Hepburn, a retrospective of the actress's career, several directors share their thoughts about Miss Hepburn. Here she shares her thoughts about them.

Well—here we go again. I'm opening in a new play—*West Side Waltz*. Get the old girl out of the garage, recharge the battery, blow up the tires, get her simonized and off she goes.

Shit.

What did you say, Kathy? I said shit.

That is the popular expression today for wonder—disgust—whatever. It means everything. Well, it is everything, isn't it? Here it means: "Come on. You're working again. Get fascinating."

And besides doing this play they have decided to have some sort of retrospective about how glorious I am and how unique and adorable and talented—a "Here she is, ladies and gentlemen."

Well, we know the truth, don't we? I've had some damned good parts. I got 'em—or I was given 'em and that's what luck is all about.

Oh, you say, I could play 'em. Well yes—but they were playable. *AND*—Oh, this is the big *AND*:

The directors were tough.

I discovered early on—get a tough director. One who can push harder than you can. One who knows that you're not that adorable, unique, remarkable creature—that image you've become. One who knows you for the pushy, difficult, determined bundle of hyperthyroidical elements which have kept you running around the reservoir for so long.

That's the thing you've done that's had sense. You've kept the door opened for the big "No, Kate, don't do that; do this!"

Now I'm not trying to say I like being told to do something which I haven't thought of—in fact, something which I really think is wrong. Ohhhh—I hate it. I go mad. I insult the director. I'm doing just that this very minute to Noel Willman who is directing the play I'm doing, *West Side Waltz*, by Ernest Thompson. I get a sort of a feeling about a line, a scene, and I do it and I'm bloody sure I'm right. Then the writer or Noel—they sit out front and they make notes and they come and tell me, "No, do it this way—it means this, not that."

Ohhhh—my teeth grind—I want to kick them or weep. I insult them. I denigrate them in front of everyone.

But—I do it, or at least I try to do it the next time. Yes I do—I think I do—I hope. I try to keep that door open to something new. If you close the door on your own house—however interesting the contents—you eventually use up the oxygen. And you shrivel.

What are you saying? Eventually we all shrivel. Oh yes, I agree—no question. It's a battle—oh yes. Life—I suppose—a losing battle. But you have to realize it's a battle—not a free ride. And for me the thing that drives me crazy—being an actor—there's always someone out there telling you what to do.

But face it, Kathy. There's always been someone you've had to listen to. It's Dad; it's Mother; it's the teacher; it's the professor; it's the director.

Well, hell, friends, it's life, isn't it? Don't block your ears. That's what I've learned. Listen.

burst of rage during negotiations. Appropriately, his 1000-word memo recommended everything short of recruiting S.W.A.T. veterans instead of MBAs. Fields suggested the creation of regional pay-TV networks that offered localized sports plus movies. He suggested possible partners in the venture. He suggested people to hire. He theorized about costs. The purpose of these networks, he wrote Diller, was to "erode HBO's ever-increasing leverage and eliminate outside middlemen from our business."

Four years later, Alan Fields' visionary memo came to life in a somewhat different form. Paramount, along with Columbia, Universal, Fox and Getty Oil, formed its own pay-TV network, called Premiere. By then, HBO was a much stronger foe, with more than four million nationwide subscribers and a year-end balance sheet that ran heavily in the black.

This would be no guerrilla skirmish. It would be a full-scale war. HBO was in one corner with about 70 percent of the pay-TV market, armed to the penthouse with the best brains in the business and backed by the mighty Time Inc. In Premiere's corner were four powerful movie studios that just happened to provide HBO with roughly 65 percent of its most popular films. Just for good measure, should they need a few megabucks, Getty Oil lined up with them—with \$30 million in liquid assets.

There was only one thing that stood between the combatants: the United States Department of Justice.

"I hope that King Kong ascends the Time & Life building and passes gas into your office. Then maybe you will get the drift of what I think of your schedule."—Subscriber letter to HBO president Nick Nicholas, August 1976

Hit movies were, and still are, the backbone of HBO's monthly service. Without them, subscribers write nasty letters. Worse yet, they cancel the service.

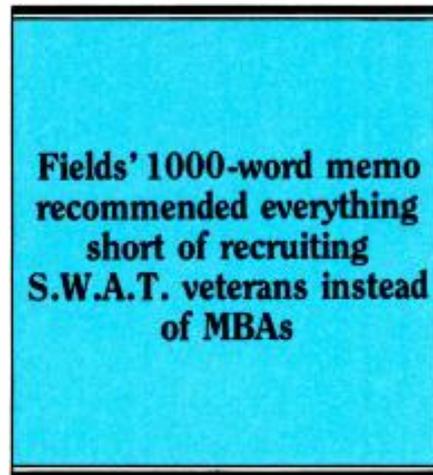
By most accounts, 1976 was not a very good year for Home Box Office. Rumors circulated that it might fold, and there was an unusually high disconnect rate, due largely to subscriber dissatisfaction with the quality of HBO movies.

According to an Aug. 26, 1976, memo written by Sally Orr of HBO's customer-relations department, "... one third of

the complaints are centered on too many repeats and not enough good movies." Five months later, in January 1977, Orr wrote another memo, based on the previous two months' letters, and concluded, again, that 25 percent of the complaints were about the quality of movies. "They [HBO subscribers] generally expected more current box-office hits—not ones that were hits one-and-a-half to three years ago. . . . This complaint is often coupled with the remark that they can now see the movies playing on HBO in their local \$1 theaters or on commercial television shortly after HBO's last play."

The message to HBO was clear: provide more and better movies. Americans obviously wanted—and would pay for—what they perceived to be a satisfactory movie service in their homes.

And so the studios, because of their



growing realization of pay-TV's potential market, began, reluctantly, to fuel the HBO machine that they would grow to hate and resent. Today, many studio executives repeatedly state, "We have only ourselves to blame for this monopoly in our midst. We didn't have to sell to them." It was easier said than done, however.

"Look at it this way," said one major studio executive who spent the last several years in the pay-TV trenches. "The movie studio has an obligation to everyone connected with a movie—from producers down to stockholders—to milk a movie for every dime it can muster. We could not stop selling to HBO because we thought in a few years they would be a monopoly that would push us around. That wouldn't wash with the accountants. We had to show more and more revenue each year. Like it or not, HBO

was a source of revenue."

By the fall of 1977 HBO turned its first profit, after five years of multimillion-dollar losses. Very quickly thereafter it began to turn the screws on the studios—to use its domination of the pay-TV market to control the prices it would pay for films. "When they said no to a price in a deal," says Steve Roberts, president of 20th Century-Fox, "there was no other significant pay-TV network to go to." (Showtime, currently the number-two pay-TV programmer, did not emerge on the national scene until March 1978.) Confided one industry lawyer about HBO's take-it-or-leave-it stance on price: "When you have the power to do that, you are wielding monopoly power. And, legally, you cannot wield monopoly power."

"After I smartened up, I discovered that HBO was doing the next best thing to stealing."—Producer Irwin Yablans, describing allegedly inadequate HBO licensing fees for his films

By the end of 1979, HBO was a fact of life in the entertainment business, a force to be reckoned with. Its subscribers had quadrupled from one million in 1977 to four million in 1979. Nine regional offices had sprouted up around the country to serve close to 2000 affiliates sprinkled across every state in the nation. The HBO staff, which in the mid-'70s had numbered about two or three dozen, swelled to more than 600, many of whom were market-research-oriented MBAs from some of the best Eastern colleges.

Movies, so crucial to HBO's existence, were being presented on a regular basis. HBO money was pouring into the studios. In 1979, according to The Pay TV Newsletter, six major studios grossed an estimated \$35 million from HBO. Yet they felt cheated.

"The studios had a consistent attitude from the beginning toward pay-TV," remembers Arnold Huberman, now president of Samoyed Productions. "They were not getting a bigger slice of the pie. They used to complain that with each successive deal their per-capita revenue decreased. What they didn't appreciate was their total revenue was increasing."

The two forces, HBO and the studios, squabbled constantly over the prices for pay-TV licensing of films. It was not a fight for survival, though. It was a fight to see who would grow fatter. By most

continued on page 97

efforts to gain some psychological advantage over HBO.

The movie-studio executive walked into Huberman's office, barely concealing his grin. "Hi, Arnie."

"What are you trying to prove?" asked Huberman. "You really shouldn't do that here. This is Time Inc."

"What's the big deal?" shrugged the movie man.

In one sense it was no big deal. Soft drugs were a fact of life in the entertainment business. On the other hand, the public pot-puffing was a flagrant violation of respect toward HBO and symbolized the animosity that existed between it and the major studios. At this stage, mid-1978, HBO and the studios were arguing so bitterly about how films should be licensed to HBO's mushrooming pay network that almost every insider described the conflict as corporate warfare. Some had even termed it "a pissing contest between skunks." Each side thirsted for the dramatically increasing percentage of pay-TV profits. The studios considered many options for solving their financial dilemma. Among them: putting HBO out of business.

We made a big mistake allowing a new medium like pay television to develop and not participating directly. We should have distributed directly to the cable systems through our own pay-television network."—Steve Roberts, president, 20th Century-Fox Telecommunications

In the beginning, there wasn't much to fight over. Only 365 measly subscribers of the Service Electric Cable TV system in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., signed up for a new entertainment service called Home Box Office. The mimeographed program guide they received showed a smattering of grade-B movies and sports events, for which they would pay a \$6 monthly tab. Opening night was Nov. 8, 1972. A National Hockey League game was shown, followed by HBO's first film, entitled—perhaps prophetically—*Sometimes a Great Notion*.

Jerry Levin, a sharp lawyer who once majored in Biblical literature in college, helped engineer the HBO plan of providing uncut, unedited films plus regional sporting events. Levin saw feature films as the fuel that would drive the HBO engine. Without recent blockbuster films, he sensed that the engine would

sputter and die. And so his organization contacted the Southern California fantasy factories: the rich, powerful film studios that produce and distribute the bulk of the world's most-watched movies. According to the studios, Levin's pitch was simple: "Come grow with us," he would tell them.

Their response was cautious. Hollywood tiptoed into the pay-TV business. Its blockbusters were withheld from the tiny pay-TV market for several years until studio executives could understand this new entertainment medium. In November 1973, exactly one year after HBO's debut, the network featured *The Mackintosh Man*, *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*, *Jeremiah Johnson* and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. Not exactly Tinseltown biggies. A typical night's programming would feature one movie and one sport-

In HBO's first three years, it showed mainly movies and local New York sports. What it didn't show was a profit

ing event. HBO, however, was adding subscribers every month, and by the end of 1973 it had more than 8,000. A year later it had more than 57,000 paying viewers in four states.

Through HBO's lean early years, a dozen or so people toiled to make the service profitable. Under Jerry Levin's direction, they were building more than a company. They were building a new industry. Their offices ping-ponged up and down the floors of Time Inc.'s Sixth Avenue headquarters in New York as the network searched for both an identity and a place to roost. In HBO's first three years of business, it showed mainly movies and local New York sports. What it didn't show was a profit.

But in 1975, Time Inc. changed the course of cable-TV history by giving HBO the green light to use a satellite to transmit its programming. Before that,

pay-TV networks had delivered programs on videocassettes or through geographically limited microwave networks that required cable operators to buy and maintain expensive equipment. Satellite delivery of entertainment to cable systems opened the door to a *national* pay-TV network.

Still, there were risks. HBO had to commit \$7.5 million to domestic satellite time over five years. Then the cable operators had to invest in the expensive receiving equipment, which at the time cost \$120,000. Nobody at HBO really knew if the transponder they'd leased would function properly for the seven years the satellite company said it would. HBO's research department didn't know if consumers would respond to a national pay-TV network. Hell, no one even knew if the damn satellite would stay in the sky.

Even though in the mid-'70s HBO was a money-losing venture, its bold, innovative method of delivering movies to cable systems via satellite jolted certain segments of the film industry. It was more than an effective way to show movies to households. Pay-TV was, according to a memo written by Alan Fields, then director of market development for Paramount Pictures, "our future."

But Fields saw dark clouds on the horizon. In a 1976 memo to Barry Diller, chairman of Paramount Pictures, he referred to a company that wanted to become the "fourth network and *only* pay network." He wrote that this company had established many beachheads and was on the move with a well-equipped corporate army, backed by millions of dollars from a corporate superpower. The enemy's identity was spelled out quite clearly. The company Fields was talking about was Home Box Office.

"We must attempt to . . . silence [HBO's] drums. . . . We will start with guerrilla warfare. . . . At this point in time, we will not compete in hand-to-hand combat."—April 19, 1976, memo from Alan Fields to Barry Diller

Fields' words reflected his aggressive personality, his readiness to do battle. Physically and mentally, the man was particularly suited to execute his goals: his 6-foot-3 frame and startling good looks gave him a commanding presence that bordered on overpowering. His roguish charm masked a fierce competitive drive, which sometimes erupted in a



HE

LEONARD

INSIDE PAY-CABLE'S MOST SAVAGE WAR

It's no holds barred in the battle to break HBO's domination of the movie-licensing business

By HOWARD POLSKIN

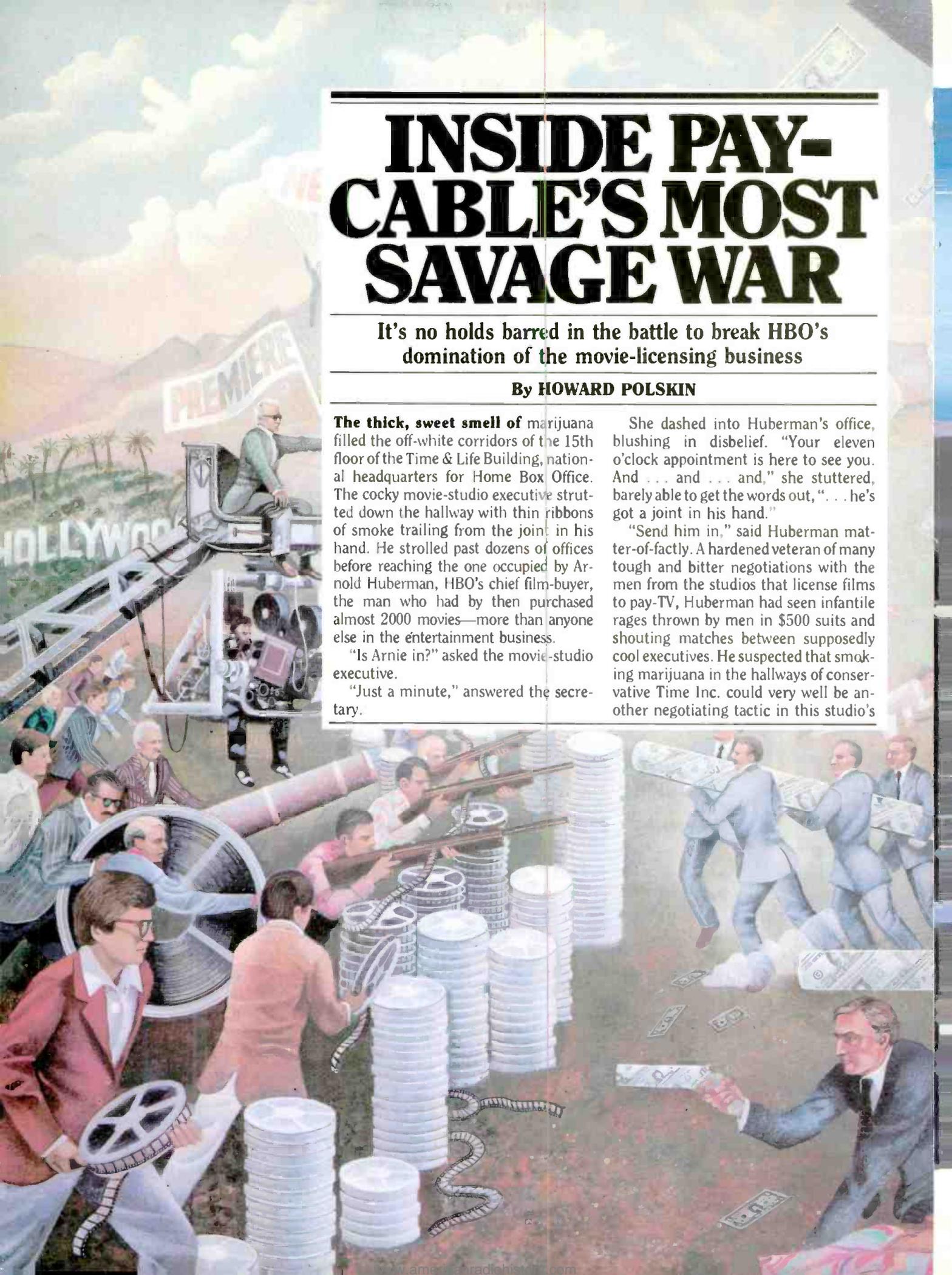
The thick, sweet smell of marijuana filled the off-white corridors of the 15th floor of the Time & Life Building, national headquarters for Home Box Office. The cocky movie-studio executive strutted down the hallway with thin ribbons of smoke trailing from the joint in his hand. He strolled past dozens of offices before reaching the one occupied by Arnold Huberman, HBO's chief film-buyer, the man who had by then purchased almost 2000 movies—more than anyone else in the entertainment business.

"Is Arnie in?" asked the movie-studio executive.

"Just a minute," answered the secretary.

She dashed into Huberman's office, blushing in disbelief. "Your eleven o'clock appointment is here to see you. And . . . and . . . and," she stuttered, barely able to get the words out, ". . . he's got a joint in his hand."

"Send him in," said Huberman matter-of-factly. A hardened veteran of many tough and bitter negotiations with the men from the studios that license films to pay-TV, Huberman had seen infantile rages thrown by men in \$500 suits and shouting matches between supposedly cool executives. He suspected that smoking marijuana in the hallways of conservative Time Inc. could very well be another negotiating tactic in this studio's

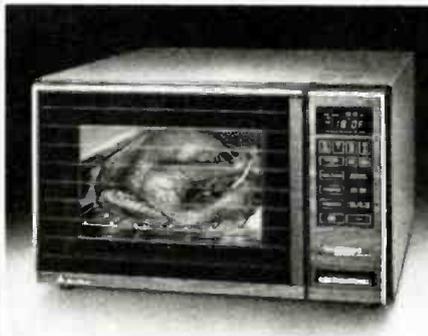


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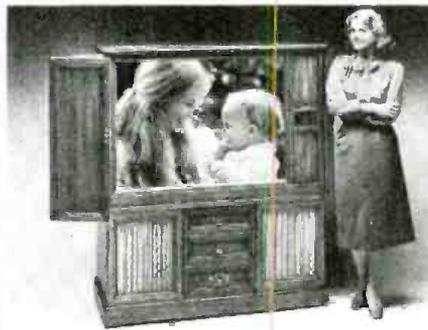
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States see 1981 as the first really big year for home video movies. Officials at RCA, which sells more VCRs than any other company, predict that 30 percent of the video recorders they sell this year will be portables. One J.C. Penney executive estimates that portables will constitute fully 50 percent of its 1981 VCR sales. Since anyone who buys a portable presumably has home video photography in mind, interest in the third wave seems to be high.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED . . .

If you haven't yet bought a VCR and there's any possibility that you're going to be thinking about owning a camera later, there's only one kind of recorder to buy: a portable. You *can* use a standard, nonportable home-type VCR with a camera, but only around the house. You can't take it with you because it operates from house current only, and anyway it's far too heavy to carry.

Until the current VCR models came out, portables generally lacked the special features of deluxe AC-only units. But today you can select portables with most or all of the special effects available in standard machines—features such as rapid scan, slow- and fast-motion, programmability and remote control.

There are two important differences between a portable VCR outfit and a standard homebound recorder. The most obvious is that the portable comes in two pieces—recorder and tuner/timer—which snuggle up against one another or ride piggyback on your shelf at home. The other difference is that the portable recorder contains a rechargeable battery to power it and the camera when it's beyond the reach of an electrical outlet and the tuner/timer contains a recharger to revitalize the battery.

A complete portable VCR outfit, including both the recorder and tuner/timer, generally costs about \$100 to \$200 more than a comparable all-in-one, AC-only home recorder. (If you're thinking of buying a camera eventually, it's worth the difference.) If you already own a home VCR, or are interested only in video photography and not in recording off the air, you can buy the portable without the tuner/timer. These generally sell for \$1000 or less (as compared with \$1350 to \$1600 for full-featured complete units) and usually come equipped with a combination AC power supply and battery charger. A portable without tun-

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PANORAMA 51

This should be the first year home video cameras come into their own; here are the facts about costs, equipment and performance
By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

This is the year of the third wave in video, the year when tape is starting to replace film in home photography.

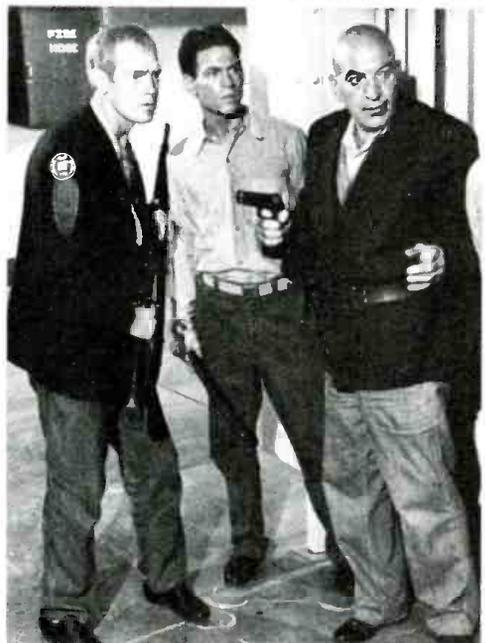
The videocassette recorder, or VCR, is really three separate instruments rolled into one. Most people are lured into VCR ownership by the promise of recording television programs off the air for viewing later. Having purchased VCRs, many families then plunge into the second wave: viewing movies and other prerecorded material on cassettes that they buy or rent. This year, manufacturers are betting that a substantial number of Americans are ready for the *third* wave: making their own electronic home movies with a video camera.

The first step is relatively inexpensive, requiring only a VCR (priced from under \$700 to about \$1500) and a few cassettes. The second, for those who become aficionados, entails continuing outlays for recorded cassettes. But the third major use for the VCR involves the most rewarding aspect of video ownership—being able to put family and friends on the telly—and the initiation fee is commensurately higher: A color camera costs about the same as the VCR itself. After that, however, the dues are low. Where it costs \$10 or \$12 to shoot and process three minutes of super-8 film with a conventional home movie camera, a \$15-to-\$25 cassette can provide from two to six hours of color video and sound recording, and can be erased and used over if the results are unsatisfactory.

It's estimated that fewer than six percent of American families currently make home movies; in contrast, while home VCRs have been around for fewer than five years, they're already owned and used by about two percent of American households. So how many people will want to explore the ultimate personal use of video recorders?

It's anybody's guess. But the companies that market VCRs in the United





ABC News documentary about the New Mexico prison riots of February 1980. David Soul (left) and Yaphet Kotto portray two sex offenders participating in an intensive-therapy program for rapists

in *Rage!*, an NBC TV movie. Ronny Cox, Michael Beck and Telly Savalas (left to right) play convicts plotting to break out of Alcatraz in the NBC film *Alcatraz: The Whole Shocking Story*.

and brag to Peter Falk, host of the show, about the crimes they have committed: muggings, theft, robbery. "I sliced somebody a couple of times," says one. How do they feel about their victims? Falk asks. "Don't think much about it. . . ." "Don't give a f_____ . . ." "In my future, I think I'll be a professional thief. . . ."

Now they are led through the prison gates, down a corridor of punishment cells from which maniacal convicts shout hideous obscenities and threaten the boys with homosexual rape: "Give me the one with the big butt! I'll do something real nasty to you."

In a conference room off the corridor,

the youngsters sit in a row for a two-hour session (shortened for the purposes of the film) with Rahway "lifers" who take turns insulting, humiliating and terrorizing them. "Damn nigger, I'll break your f_____ neck," and so on. The teen-agers wilt visibly.

Outside again, some of the girls are crying and the boys appear shaken. "This will change my life," says one. "This ain't for me," declares another, and the putative professional thief has changed his mind: he vows he will get a job.

Peter Falk elaborates: Of 2000 young delinquents who have participated in the Rahway Lifers' program, 80 to 90 percent have gone straight. The show ends with Falk's statement that a year later only one of the group of 17 has committed another crime, and she was given a suspended sentence.

That's the good news. And now for the bad news: It develops that this widely hailed documentary may itself have been a super con job. Dr. James O. Finckenaer of Rutgers University's School of Criminal Justice took a closer look. He compared a control group, carefully matched for family income, race and previous record, with a group of juveniles who had been through the Rahway program. He found that 41 percent of the ones who were supposed to be scared straight committed serious crimes within six months, compared with only 11 percent of the control group. "A 'delinquency-fulfilling prophecy' may be set in motion, in which the Lifers' project actually increases the probability of delinquent behaviour," he writes. "This possibility cannot be dismissed in light of the finding that experimental-group juveniles, including the nondelinquents, did considerably worse than the control group." He concludes: "There are no panaceas, no cure-alls. There are no simplistic solutions. It is not possible to simply scare kids straight."

As for the 17 who participated in the documentary, Dr. Finckenaer told me that most of them had never been in any serious trouble with the law. "All the whites in *Scared Straight!* were from one middle-class suburban community," he said. "They used to hang out in a park and were approached about being in a television film. Well! What kid wouldn't jump at the chance? Once before the cameras, they hammed it up and embroidered everything. For example, one kid was billed as charged with 'grand larceny

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an affair with the prison electrician, and so it goes.

There is no hint here of the principal bane of prison confinement, unrelieved boredom; for as dizzying episode succeeds dizzying episode there is never a dull moment. In short, just about as unrealistic a portrayal of prison life as *General Hospital* is of the medical profession.

Another action-packed melodrama is ABC's upcoming TV movie *Inmates: A Love Story*. This one is set in a coed prison where men and women spend their days (but not their nights) together. Roy, a rich insurance executive convicted of embezzling company funds, is given the assignment of keeping the prison accounts. He discovers that the warden has been systematically falsifying the records, filching from every department: medical services, kitchen supplies, inmate trust accounts.

Here we have an excellent portrayal of the corruption and thievery endemic to the administration of "correctional" institutions. But it's not all work and no play, for meanwhile Roy is romancing Jane, a beautiful but up-tight young woman whom he eventually wins over. This puts me in mind of a review of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in *Field & Stream*, which, while praising the book's informative account of the daily life of an English gamekeeper and its useful description of techniques of pheasant breeding, deplores the annoying intrusion of an "extraneous love story."

A footnote to *Inmates*: As I write this, the drama has not yet been filmed, so my comments are based on a script furnished by Henerson-Hirsch Productions. I telephoned the company to ask whether there would be changes in the final script, and was told there is one major change: scenes in which a black male inmate and a white female are shown making love were deemed "unacceptable" by the ABC Broadcast Standards and Practices department and have been deleted. "May I have a copy of the Standards department's memo?" I asked eagerly. At first the reply was yes, followed by a pause; then, "I have an uneasy feeling that perhaps I'd better *not* send it." A pity, because the directives of these dreadful Standards people make *such* good copy.

Golden West Television's Academy Award-winning documentary *Scared Straight!* (the Academy named it Best



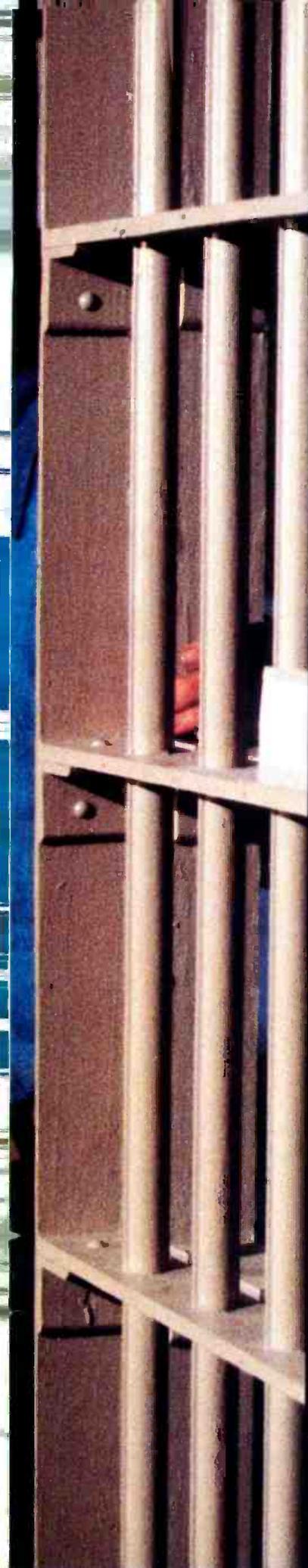
Clockwise from left: Playing an inmate, actor Stan Shaw (standing) offers some tough talk to a group of juvenile offenders in CBS's Scared Straight! Another Story, a fictional TV movie inspired by

Scared Straight!, the television documentary. Injured inmates wait to be shuttled out of the New Mexico State Penitentiary by National Guard helicopters in Death in a Southwest Prison, an

Feature Documentary although it was shown only on television) was first broadcast in Los Angeles in November 1978. An enormous success, it was later syndicated to stations across the country. "The language is explicit and crude! The speakers are tough, hardened murderers and rapists! The targets are defi-

ant juvenile delinquents! The results are amazing!" proclaimed the advertising.

The film, written, directed and produced by Arnold Shapiro, opens with a group of 17 cocky, smirking, teen-aged girls and boys (all but three are white) at the gates of Rahway, a maximum-security prison in New Jersey. They kid around



Jail-House Chic

Cell-block settings are now fashionable for TV dramas and an expert questions their value and authenticity

By JESSICA MITFORD

Why, over the past year or so, the sudden craze for TV projects dealing with prison themes? I find this puzzling. The prison movement of the late '60s and early '70s, led by black militants on the inside and supported by the New Left on the outside, has long since petered out, and with it much of the newsworthiness of life behind bars. Possibly the producers find that prisons, like hospitals and cruise ships, are encapsulated and hence manageable entities that lend themselves to TV's brief attention span.

But has the recent spate of prison films contributed to a better public understanding of what really goes on in the nation's prisons? Having been sentenced to a term of countless hours before the television set watching videotapes of some recent productions, my answer is a resounding NO and a qualified YES.

Of the six films I saw and the one script I read of a movie still in production, I would rate two as harmless entertainment, shedding little light on the realities of prison, three as dangerously misleading distortions of prison life; and two as creative, valuable additions to our understanding of that nether world.

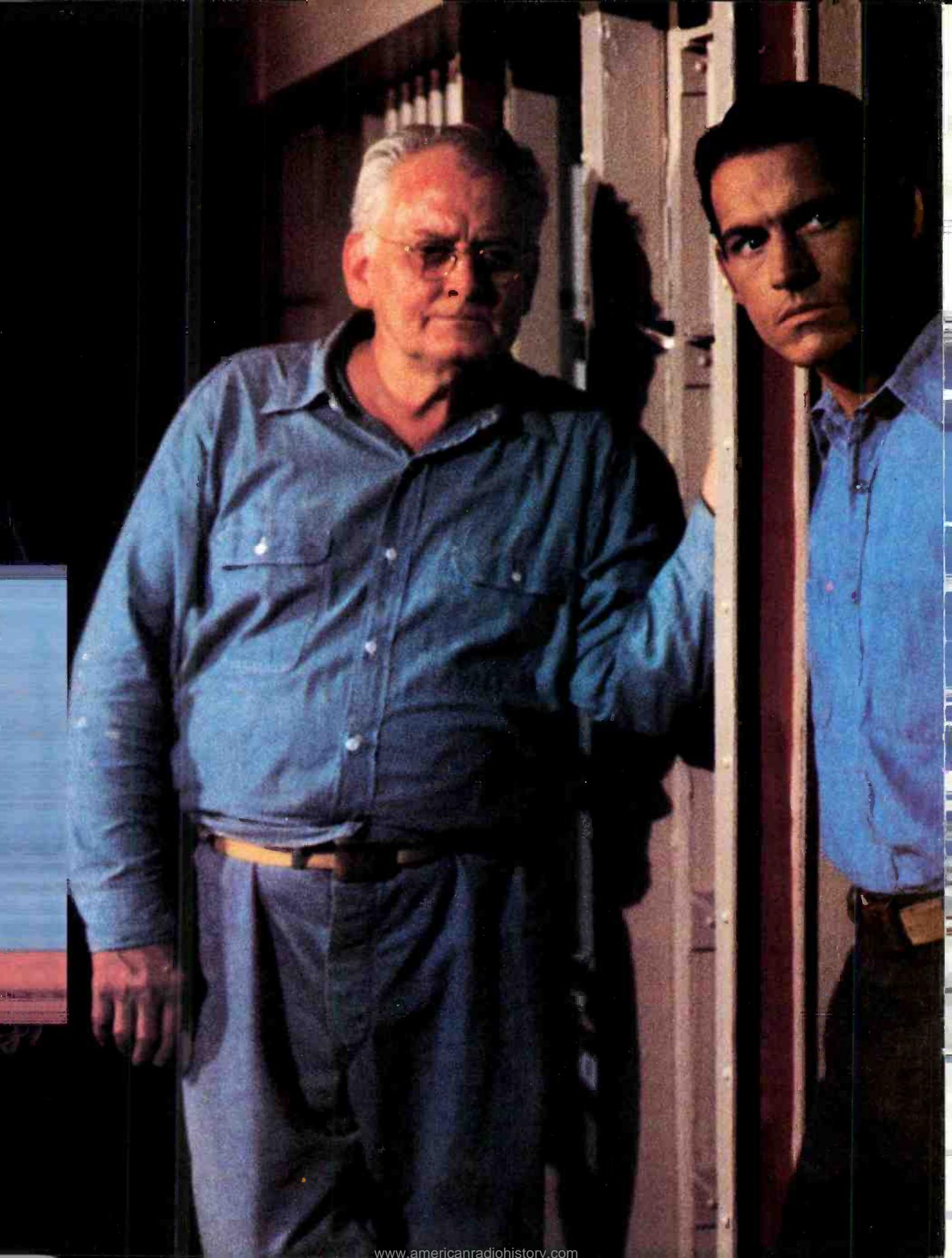
Jessica Mitford is the author of Kind and Usual Punishment, a study of the American prison system; and Poison Penmanship, the Gentle Art of Muckraking.

(Curiously, some of the worst films contained the best acting. But here I discuss only the content.)

For close to a year now, viewers across the country have been treated to a syndicated daily soap opera, imported from Australia, called *Prisoner: Cell Block H*. This series, set in an Australian women's prison, must have been more fun to make than it is to watch. I can visualize the story conference: "Now, to set the scene we'll have a prison van arriving with two new inmates. One a blonde, sobbing, protesting her innocence; the other, brunette, a teacher, calm and collected. There should be a cruel, flinty-eyed female guard and another with a heart of gold deep down. The teacher is put in with a tough lesbian who physically assaults her. The weepy young blonde was convicted of kidnapping a little boy. To teach her a lesson, a vicious older inmate deliberately burns her hand with the laundry iron. But the other cons, who witness this, terrorize the blonde into telling authorities it was an accident. . . ."

In fact, all this and much more happens in the initial episode's first five minutes. Later, happy endings abound: teacher saves lesbian from suicide, befriends her and teaches her to read; blonde is vindicated in her claim of innocence; another inmate finds love in

Art Carney as the Birdman of Alcatraz (left) and Michael Beck as Clarence Carnes in NBC's Alcatraz: The Whole Shocking Story.





You thought it was something else, something nobler? Well, let's take just a moment to review the job description. To perform the mechanical duties of anchorman, one must be able to read words aloud from a moving scroll while sitting down. This requires, at an absolute maximum, a high-school education. (Someone else even thinks up the words.) Look, you don't even have to worry about *not moving your lips*. (Tracing the lines with the tip of your finger is, however, discouraged.)

Of course, if that were the whole story—if news anchoring were about the *transmission of content*—then three guys named Smedley would be handling the chore at the three networks, for \$1.39 apiece. And CBS would still have Rather's \$8-million salary.

But the fact is that Americans like a little fantasy with their news. What they learn from television news is a minor consideration compared with *how they feel while watching* television news. Who is responsible for this situation? The very people who create television news—tinkering, pandering, extending the profit margin by blending the news into its advertising-and-entertainment context. Local newscasters are your *good neighbors*. They're your *Eyewitness Team*. ("How did *you* feel about covering that fire, Jim?") Network news has subtly adopted a few of the same audience-gratification techniques, the less blatant ones. (No news analysis, more action footage.)

Given a news-as-theater climate such as this—not to mention an actor-President who will define much of the network-news agenda during Rather's era—the notion of the anchor job as "acting" begins to make sense.

But which role, of the many available, will Dan Rather strive to create? We

Ron Powers is a prize-winning television news critic and the author of three books, including The Newscasters. His latest is the novel Toot-Toot-Tootsie Goodbye.

are in luck here. For Rather can best serve the cause of television journalism if he seeks, carefully and consistently, to play the role of *Dan Rather*.

That is: a somewhat conservative, romantic Texan; a former Marine who retains a Marine's respect for discipline and teamwork; an ex-print reporter (The Houston Chronicle); a shrewd if not conspicuously cerebral professional newsmen; a political sophisticate seasoned by years of elite service in Washington; an activist reporter, but not an ideologue.

Dan Rather earned his spurs as a front-line reporter. He was the first newsmen to tell America that John F. Kennedy was dead on that November day in Dallas in 1963. Since then, he has come to be identified as much as a *witness* to breaking events as a transmitter of them. And he has consolidated that activist image masterfully: his tour of Vietnam, his 1979 interview with Fidel Castro concerning the Soviet combat troops in Cuba, his dramatic, disguised entry into Afghanistan last year without CBS approval. Then there are his notable *60 Minutes* investigations into the Southern California meat industry, the dangerous insecticide Kepone, and several overreaching congressmen.

It is an open secret that Rather intends to be as mobile and peripatetic an anchorman as Henry Kissinger was a Secretary of State, shuttling to the scene of events whenever possible, escaping the hermetic confines of the anchor desk. "The scene" is Rather's natural environment, his habitat. He is smart enough to know that, without it, his image, his effectiveness, will be dangerously neutralized.

As an activist anchor, Rather will not be breaking new ground at CBS. He will, instead, be building upon a tradition established by Walter Cronkite. Uncle Walter, after all, got out of the office with fair regularity himself: three tours of Vietnam; trips to China, South Africa, Rhodesia, several capitals of Western

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Can Dan Rather make a successful transition from featured ensemble member of *60 Minutes* to star of the *CBS Evening News*?

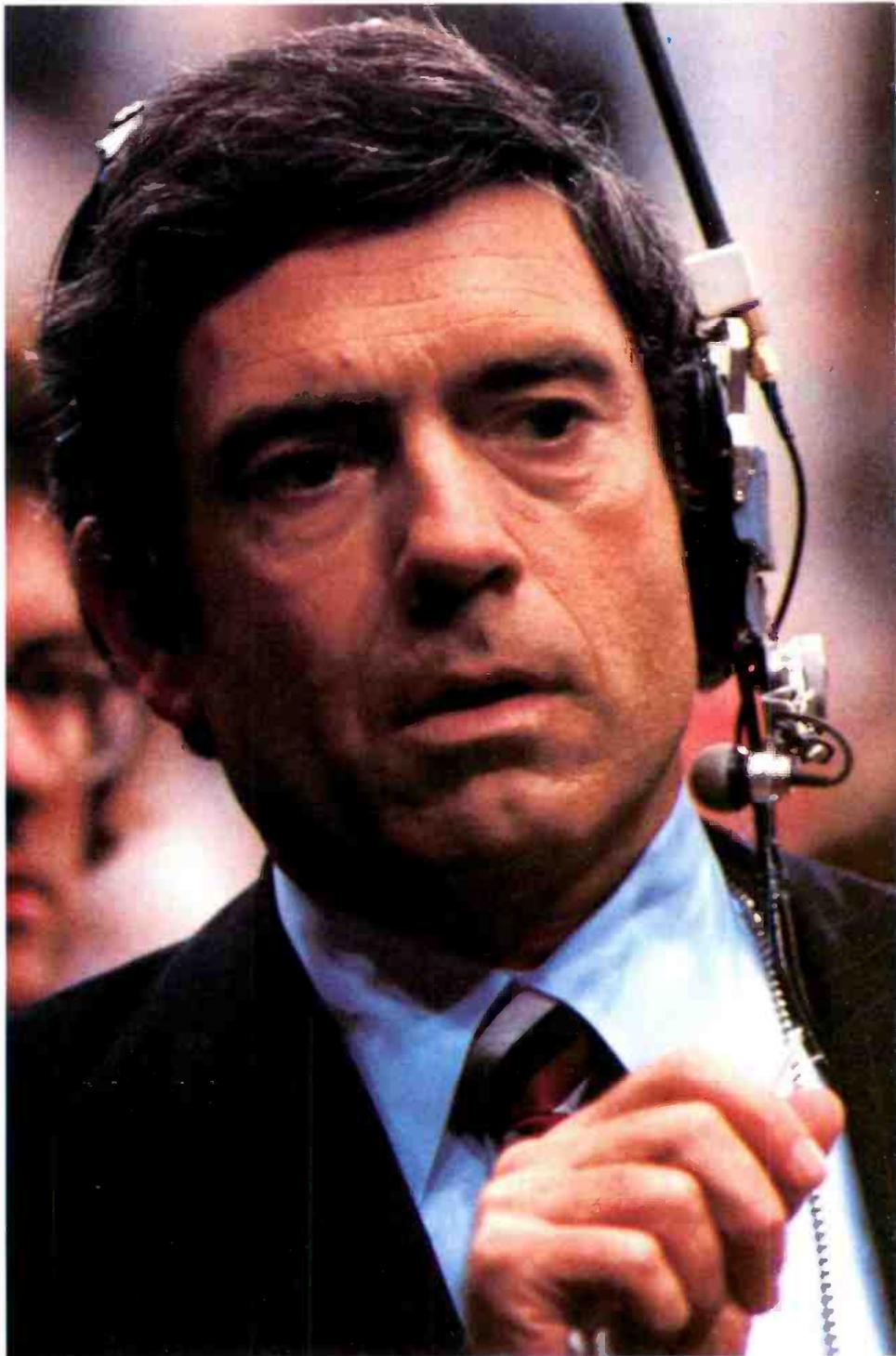
Why not? Ed Asner made it from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* to *Lou Grant*.

Ah, you say, there it is again: the cheap shot, the spurious link between TV news and TV entertainment.

Yes, but with no disrespect intended toward Rather. It is not his fault that the link exists and grows stronger with every passing Cronkite. In fact, the TV-news/show-biz connection may present Dan Rather with an historic opportunity as CBS's first post-Cronkite anchorman: the opportunity to reinvent the role of the television journalist at a time when that role badly needs reinventing.

Or to put the paradox another way: a good and sustained "acting" job by Dan Rather could restore a measure of legitimacy to TV news. And a bad job could strengthen its wholehearted embrace of entertainment values.

All of these recondite musings might come into clearer focus if we can all just agree on one simple and overlooked fact: The first priority of a TV anchorman is to project an image, to inspire fantasy.



Will Dan Rather Make It as

Cronkite's Replacement?

A media critic assesses
the anchorman's strengths,
weaknesses and prospects

By **RON POWERS**





of value even at those moments when we are mostly being highly entertained. Among our tutors are Jane Austen (smiling), Gustave Flaubert (scowling), Émile Zola (indignant), Charles Dickens (in stitches), and a score of others not unlike them. Their benign ghosts hover above our TV screens, and we do well to salute them.

Lillie

Over the years, *Masterpiece Theatre* has maintained an agreeable balance between dramatizations of classic works of fiction—*Jude the Obscure*, *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, and the like—and dramatizations taken from what we loosely call real life. Among the latter, a series called *The Edwardians* sketched for us such distinguished personages of the period as Mr. Rolls, Mr. Royce and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the incomparably deductive Sherlock Holmes. *The Duchess of Duke Street I* and *The Duchess of Duke Street II*

were based on the life of a Cockney scullery maid named Rosa Lewis, who by virtue of talents having very little to do with virtue rose to a comparatively high place in the world as the proprietress of a raffish London hotel. Still another series, *Lillie*, was based on the life of a great beauty of our great-great-grandfathers' day named Lillie Langtry. Nominally, she was an actress, but in those far-off times actresses triumphed more readily in bed than on a stage; prudently, one took lovers who were rich and powerful and able to do a pretty and affectionate woman certain valuable favors. At left is Francesca Annis as Lillie at the beginning of her famously naughty career.

Five Red Herrings

To become a successful writer of detective stories, one has to perform a simple and yet difficult feat, which is to invent a single strong character for your hero; once having won the reader's attention, he or she can be used again and again, in a score of books. For in detective fiction familiarity breeds not contempt but cozy comfort; according to formula, there is a more or less terrifying puzzle to be resolved and it is reassuring to know that Hercule Poirot or Miss Marple or Maigret is sure to solve it in the nick of time. Dorothy L. Sayers invented just such a perennially popular figure: Lord Peter Wimsey, who for all his well-bred dithering invariably succeeds in bringing stiff-upper-lip order out of bloody chaos. Lord Peter has appeared in five *Masterpiece Theatre* series: *Clouds of Witness*, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*, *Murder Must Advertise*, *The Nine Tailors*, and *Five Red Herrings*. How clever he is, and how cleverly he lets us know how clever he is! Here is Ian Carmichael as Lord Peter (left), charming the truth out of unsuspecting suspect John Ferguson (played by David McKail) in *Five Red Herrings*. ■





Upstairs, Downstairs

The highly varied productions of *Masterpiece Theatre*, written and produced in England, are brought to this country by Joan Wilson of WGBH-TV, in Boston. Wilson, who describes herself as a cynic by experience and a romantic by temperament, screens upwards of 2000 hours of British TV a year to choose the handful of programs she regards as worthy of *Masterpiece Theatre*. The programs are funded by Mobil, under the sharp but sympathetic eye of Mobil vice president for public affairs Herbert Schertz, who smokes big cigars, writes novels in his spare time, and has been described by friends as a cynic by temperament and a romantic by experience. Highlight of the 1973-74 season was the first of the series called *Upstairs, Downstairs*, the fourth and last of which was broadcast in 1977. The characters and settings were so delightful that an army of American viewers became obsessed with the goings-on at 165 Eaton Place, in Belgravia; at left are the Bellamy family and their retainers, including, as Rose (front row, left), Jean Marsh, upon whose family's history "in service" much of the series was based.

Cakes and Ale

W. Somerset Maugham was one of the most successful novelists ever to write in English. He lived to be very old as well as very rich and very cranky, and his stories, plays and novels are still much admired by the so-called common reader (if not by the common critic) for the skill of their composition. Old-fashioned though it may sound, they are exceptionally well-made, with plots that are always neat and sometimes surprising; for that reason, among others, much of his work is ideally suited to television. *Cakes and Ale* is a *roman à clef* in which we encounter, thinly disguised, such eminences of the early 20th century as Thomas Hardy, Hugh Walpole and Augustus John. Maugham's ironic contempt for his peers—some of whom made it clear that they believed themselves to be his betters—is well conveyed in the dramatization by *Masterpiece Theatre* of this short, venomous novel. Here (above, left) are Judy Cornwell as Rosie Driffield, a character based on the first Mrs. Hardy, and Michael Hordern as Willie Ashenden (Maugham himself), a family friend who takes a dark view of the second Mrs. Hardy.



I, Claudius

Robert Graves, whom many people hold to be the greatest of contemporary English poets, is now in his 86th year. For almost half a century, he has been a resident of the little village of Deya, on Majorca, and it was there that he wrote his best-selling historical novel, *I, Claudius*. On Majorca there are many reminders of the Rome of the emperors; from the cliffs of Deya, one looks out over that blue bedazzlement that we call the Mediterranean and that the Romans called *mare nostrum*—"our sea." Graves is at once a scholar and a fabulist, and nobody is ever quite sure when he is being which; no matter, for *I, Claudius* is at the very least a superior thriller, and it has proved to be among the most successful of *Masterpiece Theatre* presentations. The brilliant actor Derek Jacobi played the role of Claudius (above, right), a man who, once thought to be a stammering idiot, struggled hard against high odds in his corrupt royal household to preserve the heritage of Rome.

eled library in New York. And to what an astonishing variety of subjects he has introduced us over the years—the delicately anfractuious mind of Henry James, the sensuality of Lloyd George, women's suffrage, campanology in the fen country, life in Rome, London and Casterbridge!

We Americans are notorious for how little knowledge of the past we possess. Henry Ford once said, "History is more or less bunk," and many of his compatriots have appeared to agree with him. One of the many indirect benefits of *Masterpiece Theatre* has been its ability to lure us into the past and make us feel at home there. Because of the accuracy with which its productions are written and mounted, we learn something





Ten years of *Masterpiece Theatre*! I am reluctant to believe that this superlative enterprise has been a part of my life for so long, because all anniversaries are double-edged: they are occasions for celebration, inviting us to exclaim, with D.H. Lawrence, "Look! We have come through!" but also forcing us to note that time as we grow older seems to pass with an ever-increasing velocity. Well, I joyfully make my peace with an anniversary so important to me, for the fact is that since 1971, *Masterpiece Theatre* has brought to PBS audiences all over America a total of 56 TV productions, from *The First Churchills* to the current *Danger UXB*, and in looking over the full list I am impressed to discover what a sizable percentage of these productions I have either lightly sampled or gluttonously gorged upon.

Initially, I was drawn to *Masterpiece Theatre* by the pleasing circumstance that its host was an old friend of mine, Alistair Cooke. Many performers, whether on the stage, in movies or on TV, are radically unlike their true selves, but not he; the Cooke that one sees on the TV screen is the Cooke that one might be chatting with in some dusky, pan-

Brendan Gill is the Broadway drama critic of *The New Yorker*.



The Spoils of Poynton

In its second full season, *Masterpiece Theatre* devoted itself to five great novels in English—Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days*, Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, and Henry James' *The Golden Bowl*. The novels have in common a pitting of heroes and heroines against the conventional forces of a society that, pretending to scorn upstarts, found many ways of permitting outsiders to transform themselves into insiders. Henry James longed to become a successful dramatist in London and was literally hooted off the stage. His hopes have been posthumously ful-

filled by *Masterpiece Theatre's* exquisite dramatizations of *The Golden Bowl* and *The Spoils of Poynton*. In the latter novel, the second *Masterpiece Theatre* production, a desperate struggle is fought over a big country house called Poynton, every room of which is crammed with treasures. Some cherished bric-a-brac is visible in the background of the above scene, which shows Fleda Vetch (left, Gemma Jones) and Mrs. Gereth (Pauline Jameson) in a sunny mood. The struggle ends in a shared defeat, as Poynton itself goes up in flames.

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, a distinguished critic recalls...

Masterpiece Theatre's Most Memorable Moments

By **BRENDAN GILL**



Elizabeth R

From the beginning, *Masterpiece Theatre* has been ready to take formidable chances. In its first year, after getting off to what Alistair Cooke has described as a shaky start with *The First Churchills*—"all those black wigs," Cooke says, "and everybody speaking with his back to the camera"—it successfully dramatized works

of fiction by, among others, Henry James, Dostoevski, Balzac, Hardy and Tolstoy. *Masterpiece Theatre* also drew upon history for vivid accounts of the lives of Henry VIII and his daughter, the fierce virgin queen, Elizabeth I. (How Elizabeth would have hated our 20th-century addition of a numeral to her name! One imagines her grinding her teeth and demanding to know how any successor to her throne could have had the temerity to assume her name as well.) Here, in *Elizabeth R*, is Glenda Jack-

son as Elizabeth in age, grimly presiding over a conference with (from left) the Keeper of the Privy Seal (Clifford Rose), the Earl of Essex (Robin Ellis) and Sir Walter Raleigh (Nicholas Selby). Every detail is accurate, down to the last page of parchment and the least lacy ruffle.

way he sized up the offer, Stone had issued a "challenge" that was hard to refuse. Besides, he realized that no matter what hits he could produce at Marble Arch, it was still Lew Grade's company; if he made good at Columbia he would get the lion's share of the credit. His reaction to the feeler from Columbia was, "I'd be a fool not to at least consider it." Stone knew he had his man.

The man Rush was replacing, Larry White, had been the fourth executive in five years to take charge of Columbia's television production. White had been hired in 1977, succeeding David Gerber, who himself had succeeded John Mitchell, who, in turn, had taken over from Leonard Goldberg. Each of the four had come to the job with a different background: White had been a network executive, Gerber a producer, Mitchell a salesman at Columbia, and Goldberg the head of programming for ABC. And even though each operated Columbia Television with a different style, what they had in common, ultimately, was short tenure in the job.

Goldberg was a "pencil man." He would read every last script for every Columbia show and make copious notes for changes and improvements: "Do you think this joke really works?" "Wouldn't Danny be better off with this line?" Comments like that would be scrawled in the margins of the tattered pages that came back to his staff of producers. John Mitchell, on the other hand, concentrated on what *he* knew best: selling the programs once they were "in the can." It was said of Mitchell that he never saw a show he didn't like; certainly there wasn't a show the studio could turn out that he didn't think he could sell.

White's style was low-key and accommodating. He was a quiet, pleasant man, the sort who kept his office desk turned toward the wall, who could talk about ideas with ease and surrounded himself with enthusiastic deputies in charge of developing the company's shows. He began his tenure with great expectations, but ended it, two years later, defeated by what he perceived to be the sheer impossibility of the job.

Reflecting on his experience, White cites the long odds of getting anything on the air in the first place—the fact that for every five pilots commissioned by the networks, only one may get on the air. Then, he says, you deal with tempera-

mental talent and constantly are called on to make judgments about the relative value of various stars. At the network level, he says you have to act not only as a salesman but also as a psychiatrist, and deal with a cadre of young executives who issue directives on program content without a sense of what the results will look like on the screen. At the same time you have to deal with the corporate management as a businessman and deal with the whole business of budgeting an enormous studio operation.

On a typical day, says White, "the network is bugged because they don't like the material, or if they do like it, they don't like the way you're executing it. Then your business-affairs guy comes in and says they're trying to screw us on a deal and the legal department says, 'Uh-oh, we're being sued,' and then the accounting guys come in with a quarter-

"He's rolling on the floor," reported a friendly spy inside the NBC screening room where Fred Silverman was watching a Columbia sitcom. "It's sensational. Don't worry."

ly review that's 850 pages of 'Should we buy a typewriter?' Finally New York calls and wants to know why the studio doesn't have more action going, so you have to fly back and explain it to the board." The result, says White, is that you don't ever have time to do what you're paid to do as a studio head: sit down, think, plan and channel your energies so as to produce better TV.

White's strategy when he took charge seemed simple enough. He would concentrate on filling the obvious needs of the networks. Following a shakedown period—in which his own staff and his operation took shape—it was 1979, time to think of the 1980-'81 season. What the networks needed most was good comedy programming. NBC especially went out of its way to say, "We want comedies," so Columbia set about creating them. On

the lot in Burbank, producers Larry Rosen and his partner, Larry Tucker, of the Larry-Larry Company, were developing two ideas for series they thought had some potential. One was their updated version of the fable of Androcles and the Lion, *Ethel Is an Elephant*. The other was based on a series of events that were taking place in Rosen's own household. He and his wife had recently experienced happy relief because their children had at last left the nest and Rosen's mother had finally married a new man who was willing and able to care for her. All of a sudden, however, the kids returned home and Rosen's mother abandoned her new husband and also returned. The situation seemed to be ripe with comedic potential. The show the two Larrys had in mind would be called *Alone at Last*.

The development of *Alone* and *Ethel* followed the conventional Hollywood pattern. Each idea led to a meeting with a third Larry—White—so that the material could be turned into a concept for a series. The concept was pitched to a network executive who approved a deal for the writing of a script. The completed script led to the financing of a pilot. The pilot in turn was cast and taped and eventually sent to New York for screening by the network brass.

The network's reaction to *Alone at Last* placed White in the uncomfortable position of playing executive mind-reader. "We love the concept," said the NBC programmers. "But we don't like the cast." So White and the two Larrys found a fresh lineup of players and shot a second pilot to please the network buyers. Brimming with confidence, White then traveled to New York in April, 1980, to take part in the annual ritual display of the studio's wares. Even if CBS didn't think America would care about the misadventures of a baby elephant, he figured at least the other Larry-Larry show, *Alone*, would be a hit on NBC.

In Los Angeles, Tucker and Rosen waited anxiously for news about *Alone at Last*. The phone rang. It was a call from a friendly spy inside the NBC screening room where Fred Silverman was watching their sitcom. "He's laughing," whispered the informer. "He's rolling on the floor. It's sensational. Don't worry." Tucker and Rosen were elated. Then two weeks later another call came in. "You're not going to believe this," said the caller. "NBC isn't buying any new [Columbia] programs."

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cutter, he had a mandate from the Columbia board to tighten up the television operation. And since he was the kind of man who wouldn't tolerate failure, it wasn't long after the demise of the eight pilots that Stone concluded Larry White was "miscast" for the role of president.

Stone's "conclusion" set off a six-month talent search for a new head of Columbia Television, a search that began in late April 1980. The story of the fall of White and the recruitment of his successor reveals much about the way television studios operate, about how TV programs originate, and the methods of survival for companies in the entertainment business. It also raises a question relating to television quality: Does it make a difference who's in charge?

Bob Stone sat in his sunny digs at the Bel Air Hotel in the spring of 1980, preparing the short list of candidates for the job he had come West to fill. He was busy phoning friends and consulting with industry insiders to determine what kind of person he needed to head Columbia's TV division, as well as who in Hollywood might be available. Naturally Stone also had a few ideas of his own, since even though he was relatively new at Columbia, he wasn't a stranger to the television business. Early in his career, he had put in several years at ABC, and later he had served as general manager of NBC's network operations before being tapped to head Hertz Corp., another of RCA's subsidiaries. At Hertz, Stone improved the company's image while at the same time earning the nickname "Captain Queeg" for his relentless management style and bottom-line fever. He kept RCA's stockholders happy, and he would have remained at Hertz had he not offended another industry captain even higher in the corporate pecking order, RCA's board chairman, Ed Griffiths. Griffiths and Stone had just returned from a trip to Europe with their wives when they sat down for a meeting on a Friday in April 1977. Stone said something that Griffiths didn't like and the RCA board chairman blew up. By Monday afternoon Stone was looking for a job.

It took him 18 months to find one. At first, it was a gut-wrenching experience, but a friend of Stone's on Wall Street took him aside and said, "Don't worry, Bob, you're a heck of a piece of manpower." Eventually, the billionaire Hunt

brothers asked Stone to run their sugar company, Great Western, but instead he answered a call for help from Herbert Allen, the scion of the investment house of Allen & Company. The Allen firm and its allies held a controlling interest in Columbia Pictures Industries, whose top officers were the overseers of several divisions, including the Columbia movie studio and Larry White's television operation. In 1978 it had been Herbert Allen who engineered the firing of Alan Hirschfield, the then-president of the corporation, after Hirschfield lobbied against the reinstatement of studio chief David Begelman. Begelman was the executive responsible for a string of Columbia hits who was forced out when it was discovered that he had misappropriated \$61,008 of the company's funds. Following the Begelman fracas, Allen had installed an old college friend, Fran-

It was particularly disturbing to Bob Stone when industry pundits began saying that the Columbia job had been offered to at least six people—and all of them had turned it down

cis T. Vincent Jr., as president of Columbia Pictures Industries. Then, in September 1978, Allen persuaded Stone to take the number-two job, and now, a year and a half later, Stone had come to Hollywood to recruit an executive who would, among other things, be expected to cultivate good relations with the head of NBC, Fred Silverman, who answered to Ed Griffiths.

His tough-guy reputation notwithstanding, Stone began feeling the pressure as he made repeated trips West on his executive manhunt. He knew he had to come up with someone who could spark ideas for programs, handle budgets, smooth over relations with the networks and, most important, make the crucial program sales that would boost Columbia's future television earnings. Not that there weren't plenty of candi-

dates, but he knew he was recruiting in the most gossip-ridden industry in America outside of the garment business. Every move he made in Los Angeles, every call he initiated, set off waves of rumors and speculation.

"It was disturbing, upsetting, aggravating, even galling" recalls Stone of the backstage whispering. It was particularly disturbing when industry pundits began saying that the job had been offered to at least six people—network executives, rival production people, even an advertising executive—and all of them had turned it down. Columbia was a mess, they said. Besides, no one wanted to work for "Cap'n" Bob Stone.

Stone insists it took six months to fill the job only because he was researching the background of his candidates as thoroughly as he could to avoid, in his words, "getting divorced" a year after hiring someone. The post, he says, "was never ever, ever offered to anyone but one person: the man who's in the job today."

It was only after eight or nine trips to the West Coast that Stone connected with his man, someone he had known from his days with NBC in New York. A former agent, the man, Herman Rush, was working for British TV-mogul Lord Lew Grade's American production company, Marble Arch, when Stone called and said, "You may not know this, but I'm out on the Coast." Rush replied, "I know you're out on the Coast." Half the town was, after all, tracking Stone's moves.

They met for coffee, and Rush said he was happy at Marble Arch. So Stone asked him to describe the credentials of the ideal candidate. Rush ticked them off: someone with "packaging" experience, capable of assembling teams of producers, writers, stars and directors for individual projects; someone who had experience producing television programs independently; ideally, someone who had some experience running a studio. Rush may have been happy at Marble Arch, but he was describing himself—he had been a successful agent, independent producer and production executive. Stone said there was a great opportunity here for the right person to come in, take over the studio, and eventually get credit for turning a production company around; here was a production company, after all, "with nowhere to go but up."

Rush thought about it for a while. The

Life is perilous inside Hollywood's executive suites:
When Columbia went 0 for 8 in selling pilots . . .

Someone Had to Pay for the Debacle

By ANTHONY COOK

Larry White, the former president of Columbia Pictures Television, remembers the call so clearly it seems to set off alarm bells in his memory. NBC's Fred Silverman was on the line from New York, bearing the news that had kept the Hollywood studio chief tense for days, news of the fate of Columbia's pilots for the 1980 season. "I want to tell you what the fall schedule is," White remembers Silverman saying. "Unfortunately, you're not on it."

White was devastated. Columbia had conceived and nurtured eight pilot programs for sale to the network buyers, five of them for NBC alone. And now, with the final network reporting in, none of the series were even going to make it on the air. No network was buying *Nick and the Dobermans*, the story of a big-city private eye whose dogs are his constant companions; or *Ethel Is an Elephant*, the continuing saga of young Eugene Henderson, who befriends a baby elephant on the streets of New York and takes it home to his loft apartment. No one had bid for *Sawyer and Finn*, a show

that asked the question: What would happen if Mark Twain's immortal characters were reunited on the American frontier for a series of grown-up misadventures with a girl named Goldie? Every one of these shows and more were, to use a Hollywood expression, "in the toilet." For 1980, Columbia, with a stable of more than 25 producers, would have nothing to show for its efforts but two long-running soap operas and a piece of Spelling-Goldberg's *Fantasy Island*. The man presiding over the wreckage, Larry White, was well aware that the first rule for a television-production executive is to "get it on the air." He knew that his job was in jeopardy.

White's boss, Robert L. Stone, was known as a particularly no-nonsense manager, a man *Fortune* magazine had once called one of the "10 toughest bosses" in America, an executive with plenty of enemies and a reputation for getting results—his way. Stone had been brought to Columbia as part of the cleanup of the studio following the departure of David Begelman. A noted cost-

Larry White
President
Columbia Pictures Television
Burbank, California 91595

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VIDEOCASSETTES AND DISCS



At Long Last, the RCA Disc

Here comes the capacitance system,
accompanied by ballyhoo galore—and, maybe,
a few programming problems as well

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

RCA is launching its SelectaVision VideoDisc system nationwide this month. And the rollout is being accompanied by what may be the biggest promotion campaign ever waged for the introduction of a single product—a campaign designed to spread consumer awareness of videodiscs to every corner of the country.

Although optical videodiscs and players (incompatible with RCA's capacitance system) have been available since late 1978, RCA probably is spending more in a single month for advertising than the optical system's backers—Magnavox, Pioneer and MCA—have doled out since their unit first hit the market. It's also believed that RCA shipped more players to its dealers in advance of its Nationwide Demonstration Week (starting March 22) than Magnavox and Pioneer have sold to date.

The RCA player carries a suggested list price of \$499.95. The Magnavox Magnavision's is \$775, the Pioneer LaserDisc's \$749, plus \$50 for wireless

remote control. (Magnavision has been selling at discount in many stores, though.)

Already RCA may be having disc problems reminiscent of those that plagued optical-disc distributor MCA through 1979 and 1980, when only about one half of its 202 promised disc titles were available. Throughout 1980, RCA was forecasting that its initial catalogue would list 150 selections, with regular monthly releases bringing the number to 300 by March 1982, the end of the first year of sales. But RCA's actual introductory catalogue contains just 100 titles, and the company now says it will introduce 25 new ones in May, 25 in September and 10 per month thereafter—which, according to my calculator, adds up to 210 by next March.

RCA concedes that its disc production has been slower than anticipated and says that it made a conscious decision to offer fewer titles at the start but plenty of copies of each to avoid shortages.

The videodisc business is now nationwide, with two incompatible systems vying for public acceptance. A third is due late this year. A new home-entertainment medium has been born—but only time will tell whether it will grow up to become strong and healthy.

WILL THIS DISC FLY?

So far, feature films have made up all but a fraction of disc and cassette programming. But the industry is always peppered with optimistic announcements of original programming ventures. Now, like the sound of the first robins returning this month, there's chirping about a disc project based on preeminent ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds*—a book that has been the bird-lover's Bible since 1947. The projected disc comes out of Boston as a co-production of television syndicator BBI Communications and Houghton Mifflin, the guide's publisher. It will contain an introduction to bird watching, with Peterson himself as the host. The sound track will capture the birds' natural sounds as recorded in their habitats, and the disc will be indexed by frame for ready reference.

The producers haven't yet decided in which disc format the *Field Guide* will be offered. The price, they say, will be in the \$12-to-\$15 range, and estimated date of release is sometime this summer—just in time for the peak bird-watching season.

MORE CONVERSIONS TO RENTAL

Resistance of major movie distributors to cassette rental plans is continuing to crumble—not because the film people like rentals, but because dealers are renting cassettes whether they like it or not. (See this column, February 1981.) Two of the major holdouts have now decided to enter the rental market officially. The number-one producer of prerecorded videocassettes—Magnetic Video Corporation, a subsidiary of 20th Century-Fox—says it will soon introduce its own rental plan. And MCA Videocassette has started renting a score of its top titles.

By the end of this year, the rental market could represent as much as 75 percent of the prerecorded cassette trade. ■

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"...unusually good for any receiver."

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PANORAMIC VIEW

label, Perfect Records. "Our motto is: 'If it isn't great, it must be perfect.'" What does Lance do in his spare time? "I'm also acting in a couple of underground movies," he confides. Some things never change.

Unlike his older brother Lance, Kevin Loud, 28, decided early on that the life of a starving musician was not for him. So he got his B.A. in economics from UCLA and his M.B.A. from William and Mary, and now works in the finance department of the Texas Energy Reserve Corp. in Houston. "I really enjoy my job," he says, "and Houston's a fabulous town. Lots of good business opportunities." Kevin, it seems, is a man after his father's heart.

Grant, you may recall, was the Loud son who always seemed to have an electric guitar in hand. Today Grant, 26, resides in Los Angeles, where he is pursuing a career as a singer/songwriter/actor. In fact, he's just been given a small role in his first feature film, *Graduation Day*, set to come out this May. When he's in between singing and acting jobs, Grant works waiting tables in an L.A. restaurant. "Working as a waiter is my proof that I'm an actor," he laughs. "I don't even need a SAG card—all I do is put on my apron and everyone knows I'm an actor." Does he ever wish he'd gone into business, like his brother Kevin? "No," says Grant, "I prefer the long road."

Delilah, 25, produces TV and radio commercials for the

Chickering/Howell agency in Los Angeles. After five years with a small ad agency in New York, she decided that "my lifestyle was too high-speed" and made the move back to L.A., a decision she doesn't regret. "I love this area," says Delilah, "and I adore my job."

The youngest Loud, Michele, is 23 and a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles. She recently migrated to New York to pursue her design career there.

So there you have it. The Louds appear to be doing just fine. Better than most, in fact. But really, aren't they ever haunted by the specter of *An American Family*? Says Grant, "It's not something we're particularly embarrassed about. After all, that film was made ten years ago when we were nothing but stupid, jerky teen-agers." Hasn't the publicity helped them just a little bit? "If anything," Grant says emphatically, "it's hindered us all. It's something we've had to live down ever since." But the pressure has eased considerably since 1973, he reports. "Nobody recognizes us any more. In fact, we never even think about it. Except, of course, when someone calls wanting to do one of these silly updates."—A.N.

From Eternity to Here

The year: 1990. The scene: A small boy asks his mother

about his maternal grandfather, who died several months before the child was born. Leading her son into the family's media room, Mother lovingly removes a videocassette from a place of honor on a shelf and carefully inserts it into the VCR unit. The face of an elderly man appears on the giant screen. "There's your grandfather, Billy," she says, pointing to the screen. The boy watches in fascination as the man begins to address the grandson he never lived to see. "Hello," he begins. "I'm your mother's dad. You never knew me, but I wanted to tell you how much I love you, and also tell you something about my life. . . ."

Future shock? Maybe. But 10 years from now, videotapes of departed relatives may be as common as photo albums. Particularly if things go the way John Grenner and Carole Brill predict they will. Grenner and Brill are the co-founders (and sole staff members) of a two-year-old Beverly Hills enterprise called Videograph. Videograph is in the business of making "video histories," or, in the words of Grenner, "helping people of all ages and nationalities establish video libraries of their family's history, disclose their most cherished thoughts and emotions through video love letters, and share their sentiments and philosophy with the people they hold dear."

Here's how it works: For \$425, a subject is interviewed on videotape for up to an hour in Dr. Grenner's office (where he also practices family and marriage therapy). The fee in-

cludes an hour-long "pre-interview" at which Grenner and Brill help their clients develop "themes." Clients are allowed to discuss whatever they wish on-camera, with only one ground rule: "We won't allow anything that has to do with guilt, no 'you-let-me-down' statements," says Grenner. The interviews are recorded in color on three-quarter-inch videotape and then transferred to either VHS or Beta cassettes.

So who's shelling out for this "gift of a lifetime," in the words of the Videograph folks? Lots of people, apparently. Some people use the interview to say things that they find difficult to express directly (one client stunned his wife by telling her, on tape, "I love you" for the first time in their 35-year marriage). Others intend to preserve their tapes for posterity. Still others use the video histories to supplement their wills, recalling how they acquired their assets and why they are leaving certain things to certain people. (One 70-year-old man, who had written his will, used the tape to establish the soundness of his mind.)

There's little doubt that the use of videotape and home-video technology to preserve precious family memories has the potential to change the way we view our lives. But like all new technology, it also has the capacity to complicate them enormously. Just imagine the future 10-year-old who, while his mother is on the phone, accidentally hits the wrong button on the VCR and permanently erases Grandpa.—A.N.



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PANORAMIC VIEW

staying up past bedtime than they should. So television may not be the sole culprit. California is taking no chances, though; it has launched a Parent Participation TV Workshop, part of an NBC-backed nationwide effort to use TV in improving learning skills.

Meanwhile, up at Stanford University. Prof. Don Roberts says those test results were just what he needed: the first real, hard data to support that general feeling that TV is not good for schoolwork.

This spring Roberts will take his first sampling of 600 to 1000 elementary-schoolers whose TV-watching and grade-earning he plans to follow for the next several years. He points out, "You can demonstrate correlations till hell freezes over, but you still won't have shown causality. My first step will be to establish whether television itself actually *does* cause academic performance to drop. If it does, my second step will be to find out why."

Turning off *Welcome Back, Kotter* reruns is a third step we'll all have to take for ourselves.—*Deborah Lyons*

The Write Stuff

Who says good TV movies have to be authored by big-name writers, be produced in Hollywood and cost a small fortune? A TV station in Boston is out to prove that Hollywood isn't the only U.S. city that can turn out quality drama for TV.

It all began in February

1979, when ABC affiliate WCVB-TV decided to tap local talent by sponsoring a scriptwriting contest. Opening the competition to residents of New England, the station offered a \$5000 prize for the best one-hour teleplay, which would be produced as a TV movie for WCVB and sold for national distribution.



Myrna Loy and Henry Fonda as septuagenarian sweethearts in Summer Solstice.

Recalls WCVB president Bob Bennett: "When we announced the contest we thought we'd get 50, maybe 75 scripts." Bennett and his colleagues were in for a shock—by August of that year the station had received more than 600 submissions. With help from local critics, the station selected five, which were then judged by producers Norman Lear and David Susskind and ABC vice president Marcia Carsey. Their unanimous choice: a 60-page teleplay called *Summer Solstice*, written by Cape Cod resident Bill Phillips.

Before long, the project had snowballed into a full-scale but relatively low-budget

(\$500,000) drama starring Henry Fonda and Myrna Loy and directed by Ralph Rosenblum, whose credits include the ABC series *Breaking Away*. In the film, which will appear on WCVB this spring and eventually reach network air, Fonda and Loy play a couple in their 70s who reminisce about their long marriage at the beach where they met. In the many flashback scenes, the younger couple are played by Lindsay Crouse and Stephen Collins.

"It's basically a story about marriage and how it can survive despite many ups and downs," says author Phillips, 31, who had written medical and industrial films before he won the contest. Now Phillips lives in Claremont, Cal., and is pursuing a screenwriting career in addition to writing industrial films full-time. "I've got an agent," he says, "and I've been able to meet a lot of producers. Right now I have about 30 outlines worked up for possible screenplays."

WCVB executives are so pleased with the results of *Summer Solstice* that they plan to produce three more TV movies in 1981. Where will they get the screenplays they need? "I'm not sure," says Bennett. "Maybe we'll have another scriptwriting contest, only this time open it up to all of America!"

—*Alison Nelson*

No Crying Out Louds

If you think "The Louds" is the latest new-wave group out of New York City, then you don't remember the PBS series that created such an uproar in early 1973. The Louds were *An American Family* from Santa Barbara, Cal., who in 1971 allowed filmmaker Craig Gilbert and his camera crews to follow them around for seven months, recording

every aspect of their upper-middle-class lives: the happy and the sad, the dull and the dramatic, the typical and the atypical. The resulting 12-hour film became one of the most talked-about series in the history of American television.

But where are the Louds now, nearly a decade after the series that made them (in)famous? If you're expecting to hear a tale of woe—drugs, suicide, deviance—forget it. The Louds today are nothing if not typical. Although Pat and Bill have been divorced, and none of the Loud progeny have gotten married, they are, for the most part, stable, independent, employed and happy. They like one another; they keep in touch; they know one another's phone numbers.

Bill Loud, 59, has been happily married to his second wife, Carol Lee, for four years. He still lives in Santa Barbara, where he is owner and president of American Western Foundries, the industrial manufacturing firm he built up himself.

Pat Loud, 54, is single and living in New York, where she is a partner in the year-old Loud and Munroe literary agency. Pat is currently busy promoting *The Confessions of Phoebe Tyler*, a book by her client Ruth Warrick, the villainess on the soap opera *All My Children*.

Lance, dubbed the black sheep of the Loud family by millions of Americans eight years ago, is living in Manhattan. Now 29, Lance freely admits that he's currently "not doing anything." What that means is he's not getting paid to do anything; actually, Lance is in the process of forming a country-and-western band called The Secret Somethings. After playing in a rock band for five years, he now claims he's "forsaken rock 'n' roll forever." His new band will record on his own

continued

kinds of jokes on *Captain Kangaroo*."

"We've found that Broadway people are a wonderful well of talent," says Reichl, citing a standard one-take policy and little rehearsal time—common among all the children's shows—as major considerations. "Oddly enough, television talents translate the least effectively to our work. Many performers



Fat Albert's friend visits Captain Kangaroo.

feel they must do something different for children, but they don't have to. Broadway people are consistently the best because what we do here is very high-class vaudeville."

High-class, maybe, but not high-paying. Guest spots on all the shows rate the usual union wage of \$355.75 per episode. And the billing isn't the usual; as Fran Kaufman, director of information for *Sesame Street*, notes, "We never say, 'This is Itzhak Perlman, the world's greatest violinist.' To the kids, he's just a man who can play the violin."

So why go to the trouble of getting these people on the air? How much can Carol Channing really mean to the average 3-year-old? Bob Keeshan feels that "because these people are such seasoned performers, their presence raises the standards of the program. Children are entitled to a high standard of performance."

Fred Rogers, host of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, agrees. "What we want to give a child should be what we feel good about ourselves."

An audience of toddlers, tight schedules, low pay, little

publicity—what's in it for the stars? "It's refreshing for them to come in and do something different. After all," says Reichl, "how often does Roberta Peters get to play a giant chicken?"

—Karen Wooten Iacobucci

Place Your Bet at Your Place

Now that we've seen video experiments with Bank-at-Home and Buy-at-Home, it's only logical that someone has cooked up Bet-at-Home. The wagers are on horses, of course, and the location is, predictably, Louisville, a thoroughbred region that refers to itself as the "horse-racing capital of the world." Now it's the video- and telephone-bookie capital of the world, and everything is perfectly legal.

Here's how it works: To get in on the action, a bettor must establish an account at the Louisville Downs harness track with a minimum of \$50, supplying a permanent in-state address and phone number. Then he can settle back for the homestretch—on the living-room couch.

From noon to 6:30 P.M. every racing day, the "horse-racing channel" leased to the track by cable company CPI of Louisville displays the upcoming day's card and the previous day's results, along with phone numbers to call for betting. To place a wager, a horse-player calls the track no later than 6:30, identifies himself by his number and a code name and picks his nags, betting a minimum total of \$10. (There's no maximum; says one race-track official, "If they bet \$50,000, we'd love it.")

Louisville Downs produces the broadcast of the races. At present, most of the day's card is taped and played later—only the ninth and 10th races are shown live. Steve Arm-

brust, a former news anchor and current host of the race broadcasts, says the track hopes to go to "all-live" racing (which will allow for telephone wagering up to two minutes before post time) by July. Track management, which plans to find other uses for its channel between racing seasons, is looking forward to increased betting revenue and a share of money coming in from sale of commercial time on the broadcast.

Louisville Downs is talking with cable franchises in neighboring southern Indiana about expanding the reach of the races and might eventually go for a one-night-a-week satellite hookup. The Kentucky attorney general's office has expressed the opinion that this shouldn't violate Federal laws against betting across state lines (since all bets are actually placed at the track). Theoretically, then, *any* cable company could broadcast the Louisville Downs card, and viewers could establish standing accounts that would allow them to bet by long distance. And with two-way cable systems like Warner Amex's Qube, phone calls could be dispensed with and wagers made directly through the television. "If we had two-way in Louisville," says a track spokesman, "we'd be using it tomorrow."—Steven Levy

Uneducational TV?

Watching *Welcome Back, Kotter* reruns definitely affects kids' behavior in school—just ask any junior-high teacher. Beyond that, though, while many parents and teachers have long regarded the tube with distrust, little has been done to chart the relationship between TV-watching and success in school—until recently. Last spring the California State Department of Education asked

the half-million students taking its annual assessment of reading, writing and math skills how much time a day they spent watching television. Correlating answers with test scores, it found that "Students who watch a lot of television generally score lower . . . than [do] students who watch little or no television." Both sixth- and 12th-graders showed steady declines through the first three hours of viewing, with sixth-graders really plummeting after the four-hour mark. Though higher overall, scores of professionals' children dropped more sharply with each hour



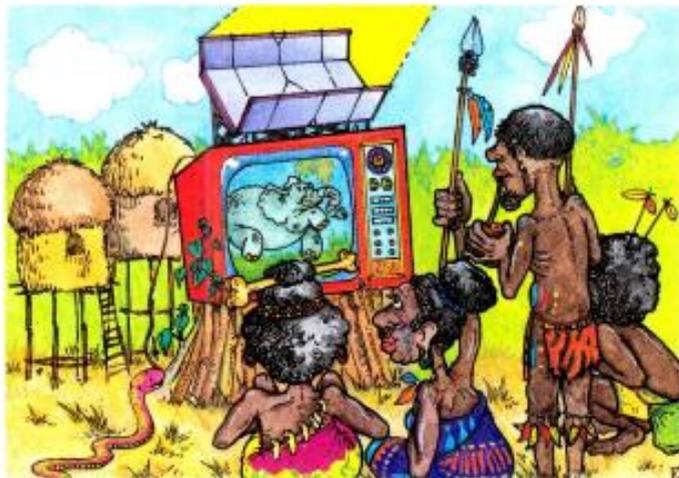
of TV than did those of blue-collar workers' offspring. Only students with limited English vocabularies showed any benefit from increased TV time, and even they started sliding after four hours.

Does it follow, then, that the tube is helping to produce a generation of boobs?

Not necessarily. Some fairly simple factors may be involved: Kids who watch more TV often do less homework, less outside reading and more

PANORAMIC VIEW

**Solar-Powered TV . . . Stars Shine on Kid-vid . . .
Handicapping via Cable . . . Is TV Failing Students? . . .
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Rising Sunset

It is 1985, and in a remote village in Africa viewers are settling down to watch *The Marie Osmond Special*. This despite the fact that there is no electricity in the village and the portable, black-and-white sets the villagers own have no conventional batteries. That's no obstacle to Marie's fans, however. They'll be watching.

How?

Thanks to two inventors named Barry Moss and Kurt Lewenhak, whose television receiver with the nickname "Sunset" may soon revolutionize the technology-poor areas of the rural Third World.

While on a recent visit to Africa, Lewenhak realized the potential in a solar television set that would absorb the strong sunlight by day, thereby making television viewing possible by night. His set has an array of 12 silicon cells. These convert sunlight into electricity, which in turn charges a battery housed inside the set. Placing the set in the sun for three or four hours will ensure enough power for two hours' viewing on Sunset after dusk. Sunset's prototype was recently exhibited in London and will soon be available in Third World countries for as little as \$180. And if the picture quality deteriorates in the evening, it won't be neces-

sary to call for the repairman. After all, he'd merely tell you to "leave your TV in the sun for a few hours."

—Richard Gilbert

Hey Diddle Diddle, It's Itzhak Perlman on the Fiddle

Eli Wallach as Ipsy Dipsy the Fixit Man? Gilda Radner singing Gilbert and Sullivan with a carrot? James Earl Jones reciting the alphabet? Sounds like a bunch of rejects from *Circus of the Stars*, right?

Actually, they're examples

of a widespread trend in children's programming. Kiddy shows, including such staples as *Captain Kangaroo*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and *Sesame Street*, are inviting celebrities to sing, dance, portray fairy-tale characters and tackle impromptu discussions with children on topics ranging from handicaps and competition to music appreciation and divorce. "We like people who have 30 things that they can do," says Steve Reichl, director of information for *Captain Kangaroo*. "We usually ask them to do six to 10 of them."

According to Dulcy Singer, executive producer of *Sesame Street*, the ideal guest "would sing like Stevie Wonder, play the fiddle like Itzhak Perlman, beep like R2-D2, count to 20 like Bill Cosby and wiggle her nose like Carol Burnett." A tall order, but not difficult to fill; most stars are anxious to appear on the shows. Producers, however, are careful in their selection. Though they seek celebrities who are "promotable" and "ratings-solvent," most are wary of featuring a personality whose sense of humor or public image does not coincide with the show's. Explains Bob Keeshan, a k a Captain Kangaroo, "I couldn't say to Buddy Hackett, 'No, Buddy, we don't do those



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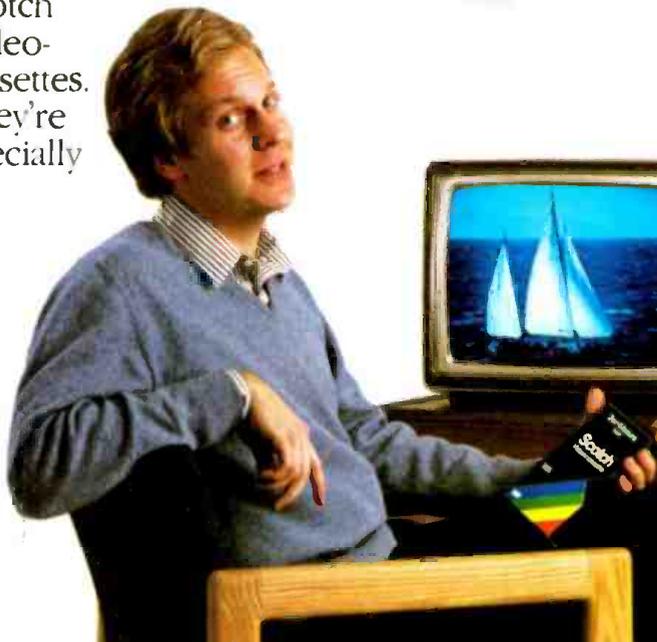
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Q&A

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statistics that are in the papers every day. But I don't think that you have to read anything contemporary to find out how people feel. People don't really feel a hell of a lot different than they felt 100 years ago. People still get hurt the same ways. People are still afraid of the same things.

PANORAMA: *You use the show to communicate with your daughter. Do you ever find yourself borrowing stories from your kids?*

LANDON: Oh, sure. Oh, gosh, my daughter, for example, when she got her eyeglasses. There are umpteen conversations that took place in that [Little House] loft that were conversations between my children. And they'll sit there and say, "Oh, stole another one. eh, Dad?"

PANORAMA: *What is the best thing about being a star?*

LANDON: I think it is being able to go in through the exit at Space Mountain and get right into the rocket. The front line is so long you can't believe it. My kids just went crazy. They loved going through the exit.

PANORAMA: *You traded on your success?*

LANDON: Oh, yes. It was great. I loved it. Just ran from one ride to the next.

PANORAMA: *Do you sign autographs?*

LANDON: When it's possible. I do my damndest not to hurt people. But say you are trying to leave a place and there are a few thousand people, and you know that you have to leave. Every one who asks for the autograph always feels that they are the only person who spoke to you that day. It is impossible to explain that if I do one, a line of people will form that goes to Pomona. So some people get upset. Usually I am very good about it.

PANORAMA: *Do you ever feel imposed upon when you go out to dinner with your kids?*

LANDON: If people are rude, I do. I used to not do anything about it. Now I do. I explain to the people that they are rude. They could go through the rest of their lives being a pain in the ass, if someone did not tell them. Some people just flat out cannot understand that you are sitting having dinner. They come and sit down at your table at the restaurant. And I can guarantee you what their first line will be: "I bet it must drive you crazy, people bothering you."

PANORAMA: *At the moment aren't you separated from your wife?*

LANDON: Yes.

PANORAMA: *Do you think that people are harder on you than they would be, say, on another actor because your show emphasizes the importance of family and relationships? Don't you ever feel that you are being asked to live up to the television image?*

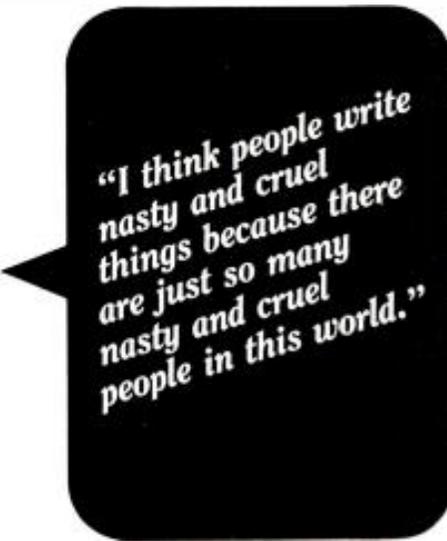
LANDON: No, I don't think so. I don't think so because the importance of the family and relationships doesn't alter. I

don't think people write nasty, cruel things because you are not living up to your image. I think people write nasty and cruel things because there are just so many nasty and cruel people in this world. It's a shame, but there really are. I mean really rotten people.

PANORAMA: *Are they all working in the media?*

LANDON: No. Probably some of them have never even been in the National Enquirer building.

PANORAMA: *Are you a grandfather?*



LANDON: No.

PANORAMA: *But you have children who are old enough to have children of their own.*

LANDON: Yes, they are starting to worry me. I am going to start fixing my oldest kid up. I mean, I don't know what is going on. I thought I was going to be a real young grandfather. I would love to have grandkids.

PANORAMA: *Speaking of the passage of time, aren't you letting your hair grow back to its natural color?*

LANDON: Oh, a little more than it has been, yes. I just got tired of having so many brown towels in hotels. I love medium ash brown, I'm not knocking the product, but it raises hell with your laundry. ■

extra half hour, because the Johnny Carson show is cut short.

PANORAMA: *What do you do during hiatus? You must go crazy.*

LONDON: I work all the way through. I don't work all the time, but I work every morning. I write. This year during my vacation, I wrote about five hours' worth of screenplays.

PANORAMA: *And then what do you do with the rest of your 20-hour day?*

LONDON: I like swimming, playing tennis, playing with the kids. I am very big into fishing now. I love to fish.

PANORAMA: *Are there limitations to doing 21 years of what is always described as a "family show"?*

LONDON: I really haven't had limitations in this show at all. As a matter of fact, NBC has—even on certain shows that they've been concerned about—still allowed me to go ahead. Some of the shows that we have on are really tough sometimes.

PANORAMA: *What is the most controversial story you have done or will do this season?*

LONDON: There is one that we did this year. It was a two-part show called "Sylvia." It dealt with a young girl's rape and ensuing pregnancy and the attitude of the town and the people about her. It was basically a love story of Albert and this girl, and, I think, a beautiful love story. It just showed the effect of that terrible crime on not just the girl, but what it did to her father and his attitude toward her. And because it is the biggest crime in this country, and is growing so rapidly it's frightening, I just thought it would be good. I think it was good because there was also opportunity for me to talk to my [8-year-old] daughter and tell her: "When I tell you to walk home, I want you to walk home this way." Parents can tell their kids that umpteen times, but sometimes if kids see something visual from someone that they like, week in and week out. . . .

PANORAMA: *There must be a discrepancy between the way people at that time dealt with the question of rape and*

how people deal with it now. Are you saying that the show can make the transition between then and now?

LONDON: Oh, sure. There is probably a larger percentage of rapes reported now than there ever has been before, but the percentage of unreported is still tremendous.

PANORAMA: *When you sit down to write a Little House script, what do you want it to be for people who watch it?*

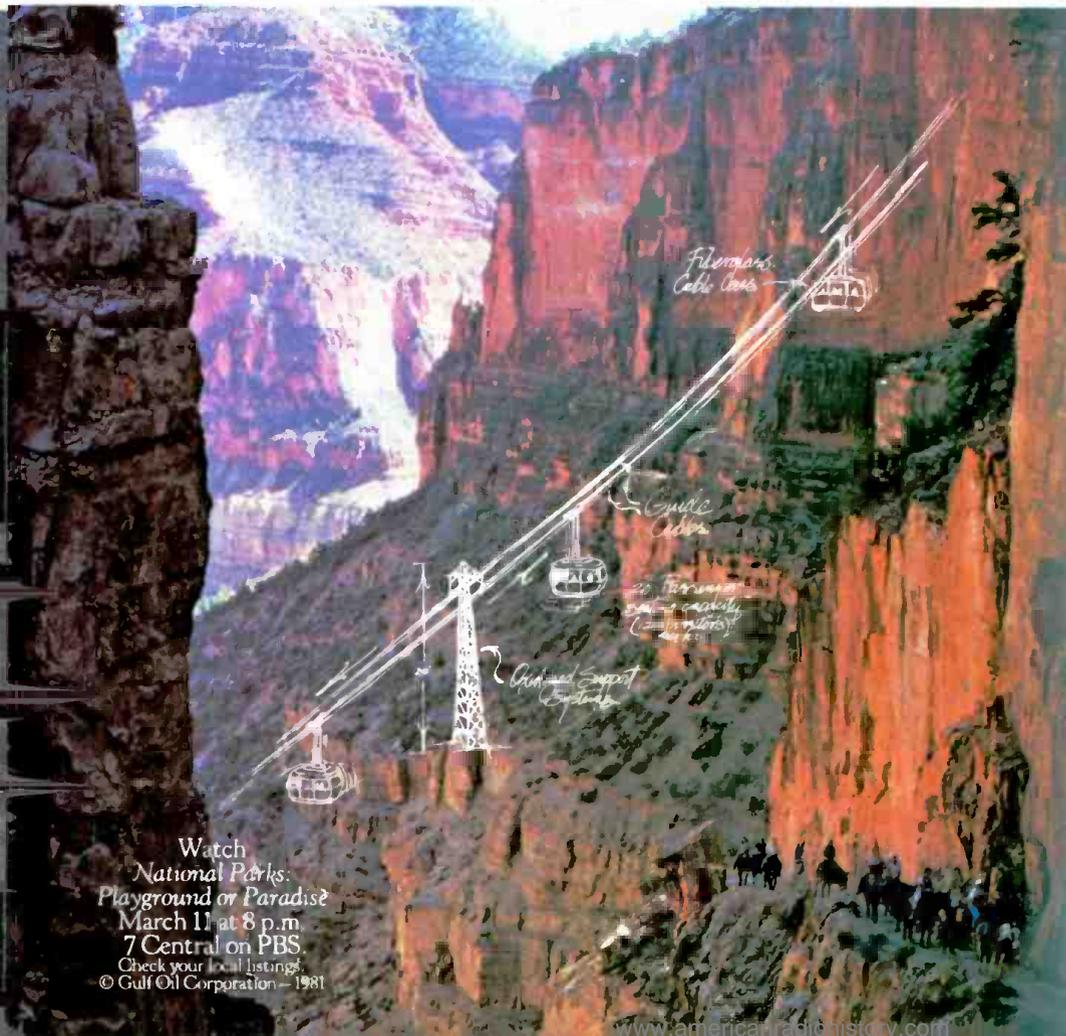
LONDON: Entertaining.

PANORAMA: *But always with a social comment?*

LONDON: No. Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't happen. But the show itself has to entertain.

PANORAMA: *As you said, rape is a very contemporary problem. Do you find yourself reading the newspapers, watching the news and looking for ideas that you can translate into stories?*

LONDON: Not really. You can't avoid the



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Q&A

continued



LANDON: No. But what I've done is have the same business manager for many years. And he is a very honest guy. I just pay my regular taxes like everybody else. I don't try to avoid anything. I'm terrible with money. I have one credit card and can't even get it in the machine.

PANORAMA: Only one credit card?

LANDON: Somebody finally gave me a credit-card holder but my credit card is so bent and destroyed that I can hardly get it in this metal holder.

PANORAMA: Then with all the other work that you do, why do you also make commercials for Kodak cameras?

LANDON: I kind of like the idea. They send me a reel [of the commercial] and it's got all my kids on it from one year to the next. It's like a great home movie. The kids see themselves on television and they see themselves grow up.

PANORAMA: A few years back you made some statements about how you didn't want your kids to watch TV. They could watch on Friday and Saturday nights because they didn't have school the next day, and they could watch Little House, but that was it. Does that rule still hold?

LANDON: If their school recommended that they watch another show or if there was an after-school special, then they would be allowed to watch that. But otherwise it is a combination rule, not just a rule of thumb in the house: It was also a school rule at that time and it still is in the school that they attend. They are not to watch television during the week.

PANORAMA: Are you still critical of a lot of what you see on television?

LANDON: I don't think I am any more critical than anybody else. There are some terrific things on. I mean there are some shows that I would absolutely not miss.

PANORAMA: What is your favorite?

LANDON: My favorite show is *Barney Miller*. I absolutely adore it. I just think it's the best-written show on the air.

PANORAMA: At one point, very early in your career, it seemed you were thinking of doing film work as opposed to television. Was it the appeal of a regular job that made you turn to series TV?

LANDON: Are you kidding? I was broke. When they came to me and said that they would pay me every week, I almost fainted.

PANORAMA: You did faint once. Was it from exhaustion?

LANDON: I had a few strange attacks. But that was in my younger days, when I had enough energy to keep going until my mind said goodbye. It first happened to me in a very grand fashion, on an airplane. You would have believed immediately that it was an epileptic attack and not a minor one. I mean, it looked like a grand mal seizure on the plane. It was very bad. It scared the hell out of everybody on the plane.

What happens is that when you are

young and your body is strong, it will keep going—but the mind won't. The mind gets so exhausted and so tired that it says, "I am going to do the best thing that I can for you: I am going to turn off." And it does. You just lose control of everything. It is a very frightening feeling.

PANORAMA: Were you just pushing yourself too hard?

LANDON: I would shoot all week long and I would fly out Friday night. I would fly all night to any little town back East that had a telethon. I would work the telethon for 20 or 22 hours straight, get

"When they came to me and said that they would pay me every week, I almost fainted."

back on the plane, fly all the way home and get right to work on Monday morning. If you are really in there slugging on a telethon, you just emotionally and physically beat yourself to death. I just couldn't take it.

PANORAMA: Do you still push yourself too hard?

LANDON: No, I don't think so.

PANORAMA: Do you get eight hours of sleep at night?

LANDON: Oh, I couldn't sleep eight hours a night. I mean, after four you can forget it: School is out. The eyeballs are just open. There's no way I could sleep. I absolutely don't know how in the hell people do it. I get up every morning, no matter where I am, between 5 and 5:30 and am wide awake. And I always see Johnny Carson, so it always turns out to be about four hours of sleep. Now I get an

when you are in your 30s you have got to stop asking Dad if you can leave the house when it gets dark.

PANORAMA: *Is it more of a difficulty because the age change of the Little House girls is more obvious than that of the Bonanza boys?*

LONDON: Yes, I think so. *Little House* is also on in an early time slot and there is a great deal of appeal to little kids, and we are just running out of little kids.

PANORAMA: *We heard there was a possibility of a spinoff series for Merlin Olsen, who plays a regular part on Little House.*

LONDON: We will be doing something with Merlin, but it won't have anything to do with the character of Jonathan Garvey. It would be a completely different series. I am writing it. It will be a period piece.

PANORAMA: *The same historical period as Little House?*

LONDON: Give or take a few years.

PANORAMA: *After about 20 years of being on series television, how do you feel about waking up one morning and not doing it any more?*

LONDON: Well, I wouldn't like it if I didn't have a schedule that was very similar to it, in terms of work. I would go nuts. I have to work quite a bit.

PANORAMA: *Are you a workaholic?*

LONDON: Oh, I love it. But what I really want is to work that hard but on other things. See, once you have gotten something off the ground, it is tough to keep the enthusiasm going all the time. The stories are different, but the sets are the same. The people are the same. There are certain limitations because the same people are back every week.

PANORAMA: *What is it about doing a series that particularly appeals to you?*

LONDON: Well, the thing that appeals to me is the continuation of associations with people, everybody involved in the making of the show. It is nice to come to work and have friends and people you

know, instead of bouncing from one place to another and meeting people for two weeks, four weeks, or six weeks and then moving on.

PANORAMA: *Beyond developing a series for Merlin Olsen, what other things do you have in mind?*

LONDON: I have a number of other things that I'll do for NBC.

PANORAMA: *Are you going to be making TV movies and miniseries?*

LONDON: Yes, a bit of everything.

PANORAMA: *What percentage of the Little House segments do you write and direct in a season?*

LONDON: Let's see. This year I'll write 11 out of 23 or 24—something like that. And I direct two out of three.



PANORAMA: *What would you say are the values that Little House embodies and tries to express to the audience?*

LONDON: I think, basically, to care about somebody else besides yourself, to show respect to your parents. That parents should show respect to children. Maybe to get people to feel a little more demonstrative toward each other; a little more touching and loving between parents and kids, and kids for one another.

PANORAMA: *You've been writing and directing your own scripts since the*

Bonanza days. It seems the Bonanza experience taught you to have as much creative control as possible.

LONDON: Yes. I think the thing that *Bonanza* probably taught me was the fact—right from the very first show that I did—that things were always done in a certain way. Especially on our show. It was still in the fairly early times of color television and the filming of color shows, and NBC was very concerned about the color because that sold RCA television sets. There were certain things, a look, that I wanted to have.

PANORAMA: *A physical look?*

LONDON: Yes. It had a great deal to do with some types of lighting that had not been done before. And a lot of people said don't do it. But it was my one shot, as far as I was concerned. I wanted them to either like it or not like it the way that I wanted it to be. It really turned out quite well, so I was able to continue on. But I realized that you really can't listen to a whole bunch of people—because a whole bunch of people are no more right than one person who knows what he wants.

PANORAMA: *The press has sometimes suggested that your drive for control was an ego thing. How did you feel about such snipes?*

LONDON: I have been incredibly lucky. I must say that I've worked hard, but you have to be lucky at the same time. But when you are lucky like that, there is a certain amount of jealousy. And I think anytime they can, they say, "The only reason he got a chance to direct was because he would throw a tantrum or give them a hard time or come to work late." But whatever people's reasons are, those things never really bothered me. I am never really too concerned about what people write about me.

PANORAMA: *There was a recent article stating that you were now one of the four top money-earners in television. Is that important to you?*

LONDON: It really is not very important.

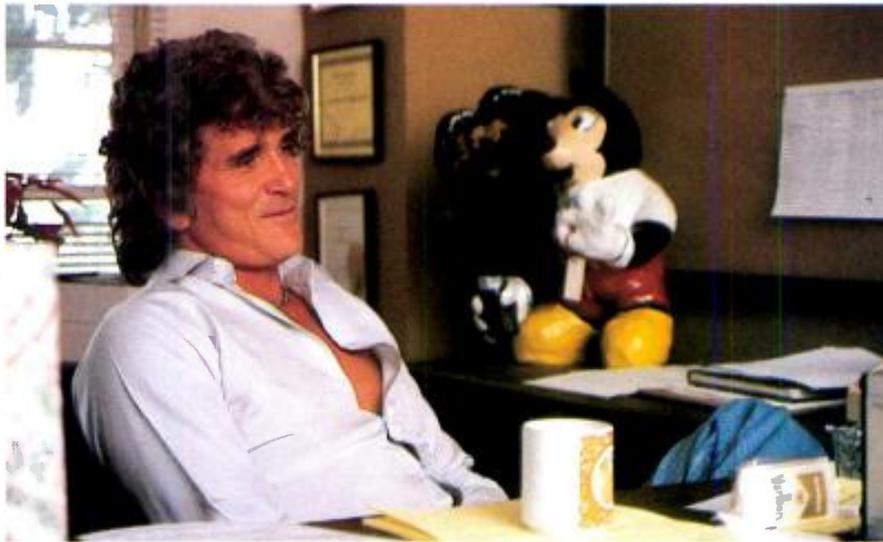
PANORAMA: *Were you concerned from the very beginning of your career that you should invest and be careful with your money?*

continued

Q&A with Michael Landon

There'll Be Less of the Old West— And No More Hair Dye

Michael Landon of "Little House" will soon be looking for new worlds to conquer



At 44, Michael Landon has spent almost half his life as the star of a TV series—14 years as Little Joe on *Bonanza* and seven years as Charles Ingalls on *Little House on the Prairie*. It has been a public and private crusade. Publicly, Landon wanted to communicate the importance of the American family—a need that stems, he admits, from his own unsteady childhood. Privately, he wanted to do it his way, which meant writing and directing *Bonanza* segments and also adding a producer's responsibilities on *Little House*. If you add up all the hours spent by the various Michael Landons—the ac-

tor, the writer, the director and the producer—he's lived the equivalent of several 9-to-5 lifetimes during his career.

The *Little House* chapter of Landon's public life is drawing to a close, though, despite NBC's enthusiasm for the series. He has informed the network that he's leaving next year, at the end of the 1981-82 season. Not leaving TV, of course, but leaving behind his Old West starring roles—and his bottle of hair dye, which he's had to use for years to camouflage his prematurely gray hair.

What have the years brought him? A new name (he was born Eugene Oro-

witz), a family of four children (ranging in age from 19 to 6), great wealth, great friends and some great enemies. Landon is now one of the four highest-paid television performers in the country, a millionaire several times over who has a house in Beverly Hills, one in Malibu and extensive real-estate holdings. He also is godfather to an informal extended family of cast and crew members, many of whom have worked with him since he was the baby-faced youngest son on the Ponderosa ranch. His longtime buddies on the *Little House* crew go with him from one project to another.

But he has his detractors, ranging from *Bonanza* producer David Dortort to Ed Friendly, former executive-producer of the *Little House* series, who left amidst accusations that Landon was insisting on a loose, overly sentimental interpretation of the Laura Ingalls Wilder stories. Landon also has been accused of arrogance and an almost obsessive need for total creative control.

Lately, separated from his second wife, Lynn Noe, he has seen questions raised, in print, about the gap between what he preaches and how he lives. None of which fazes him, or even slows him down much. Landon has so much work he wants to do that, he says, he can't fall asleep "unless I'm hit over the head with a hammer."

This edited interview, conducted by free-lance writer Karen Stabiner, took place in Landon's cluttered office on the MGM studio lot. For the occasion he was dressed in the uniform of Hollywood success: a powder-blue silk shirt, faded blue jeans, a lizard belt, gold neck chain, gold and diamond ring, and gold-mesh wristwatch.

PANORAMA: *Although NBC would probably like you to do Little House on the Prairie forever, you have other plans. Why is next season going to be the last?*

LANDON: Next season will be the eighth year. I think that is a fairly long run, and with this particular type of show, because of the ages of the girls, they are really growing out of the little-girl roles. And a lot of the people in the show would like to move on with other careers and be somebody else after eight years. It was different on *Bonanza*, where we could go on that long, although even that became an embarrassment after a while. I mean,

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Reggie Jackson

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CABLE AND PAY-TV



At PBS: “The British Are Going!”

The BBC discovers the newest land of opportunity is cable TV

By STANLEY MARCUS

You may be surprised to get this kind of advice from a cable-TV columnist, but if I were you, I'd watch public television very closely in 1981. It may never be the same again.

A predictable but nonetheless momentous development is taking place right now: money is pouring into cable television as fast as it is leaking out of PBS, and with the money goes the programming.

PBS has already lost its hold on the irreplaceable output of the BBC. The prestigious British corporation has signed an exclusive 10-year contract with a new pay-cable company, RCTV, which is rumored to have paid \$5 million for the guarantee of first call on the BBC's 5000 hours of annual programming. Developed by former CBS president Arthur Taylor and owned by Rockefeller Center Inc., RCTV opens its new cable service next January. And from that point on you'll have to pay around \$10 per month to see the kinds of productions that have

helped to make *Masterpiece Theatre* and *Nova* the crown jewels of the PBS schedule. (In addition, you will see a lot of quality movies—of the kind “that win at Cannes, but that nobody ever sees,” says Taylor—and U.S.-produced entertainment programming.)

I hasten to add that PBS won't be entirely denuded of its BBC gems. The already contracted-for Shakespeare plays will continue: old favorites such as *The Ascent of Man* will remain in the inventory and will no doubt be dusted off for rebroadcasting from time to time; then there will be programs that RCTV decides to pass up, and which will be sold to the highest over-the-air bidders; and even programs that do appear on the new cable channel will, after a decently tantalizing interval of one to three years, be offered to over-the-air broadcasters. But none of these minor consolations can take the sting out of PBS's loss: the new fact of life is that the best of the BBC

will, in the coming decade, make its debut on cable.

PBS spokesmen have been doing their best to assume an air of British sang-froid in the midst of the latest guerrilla raids from cable television. But the truth is that their blood is beginning to run cold. Although Nat Katzman, director of broadcasting at KQED in San Francisco, claims that the effect of the RCTV deal will be “minimal in the short run,” he admits, “There's a growing trend for the kinds of programming that public television has had to find more lucrative outlets. Cable and other delivery systems may, in increasing numbers, outbid us.”

There are other glittering British prizes that could fall into cablecasters' hands. With perhaps unconscious irony, Katzman cites as a cause of satisfaction at KQED the fact that “the BBC is not the only British producer of programming. Some of our strongest offerings, like *Upstairs, Downstairs*, did not come from the BBC.” Unquestionably, these offerings could be the next trophies of the cable-PBS tug of war.

However, it would be wrong to think that the two competitors see each other only as adversaries. The proliferating cable channels (including two new performing-arts services to be launched by ABC and CBS in the coming months) desperately need the kind of programming that PBS stations produce, while those stations stand in dire need of revenue transfusions.

Three PBS stations, WNET in New York, KCET in Los Angeles and WGBH-TV in Boston, have been negotiating with cable programmers (as yet unnamed publicly, but certainly familiar to careful readers of the preceding paragraphs) on the sale of programs from their huge inventories and on production deals.

And what do the impresarios of cable say about the prospect of teaming up with the opposition? Jack Willis, vice president for programming and production at CBS Cable, which will start beaming its culture-laden signals this summer, states bluntly: “We are open to joint ventures with anybody.” ■



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The Ratings Race

The Evolution of the Second Season

BY PHILIP BURRELL

We find ourselves smack in the middle of a period when the networks traditionally get a second chance in the ratings game.

The ritual of the "Second Season" was initiated by ABC in the 1960s, a time when the third-place web was chronically faced with a shortage of hits and a greater need for replacement programming than its rivals. Out of necessity, to turn a scheduling liability into a promotional bonanza, someone dreamed up the phrase—and the practice has flourished ever since.

One of the most dynamic examples of the art was invoked in January 1966, when ABC unleashed a live-action cartoon called *Batman* on an unsuspecting public. Ad-agency reaction quickly turned from "You've got to be kidding" to "We have to be buying" and, almost immediately, nearly half a nation was tuning in to watch name Hollywood stars fight for status booking as cameo villains.

With the right program carefully scheduled, networks realized that Second Season introductions could often achieve quicker audience sampling and higher visibility than is likely in the circus atmosphere of a September premiere week. As a result, the webs now create blitzlike promotions to hype viewer attention to midseason premieres, and this—in

Philip Burrell is vice president, TV programs, for the ad agency *Dancer Fitzgerald Sample, Inc.*

combination with an increasing rejection rate for September series—heightens the odds in favor of the new programs being at the very least widely sampled.

In many instances, the networks exercise more lead time in the development of midseason series, allowing for better scripts, more sharply honed characters and even stronger casting. The most successful of the Second Season series have often represented a creative breakthrough in subjects, formats and talent. The list of actors whose big TV breaks came via SS vehicles includes Carroll O'Connor, Hal Linden, Lynda Carter, Henry Winkler, Robert Blake, Robert Wagner and Redd Foxx—not to mention the TV rebirth of the career of Larry (J.R.) Hagman.

While the midyear strategies of the '60s were productive at ABC, it was the "golden age" of Second Season comedy development in the mid-1970s that had the greatest impact on the network's climb to first place in 1976. The accompanying chart shows that quite a few of ABC's long-term survivors were born in the Second Season.

The SS strategy is perhaps most dramatically demonstrated by CBS's January introduction of *All in the Family* in 1971. The same network's eye for variety gave us a Second Season gift of the controversial *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* in the late '60s.

NBC's experience with midseason success came

early with the unpretentious sleeper *Sing Along with Mitch* (1961-66), but the big gun in the NBC arsenal had to be *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, which zoomed to the top of the Nielsens in mid-1968, where it would remain the number-one show for the first two years of its run.

Currently we are evolving into virtually seasonless programming years. Networks often put projects developed for September on hold as designated replacements for short-lived fall flops. Another

variation on the theme is the "limited series," for which a network orders four to six episodes to be run off as an on-air test, usually in the spring; if results are satisfactory, the program will most likely reappear on the schedule the following fall.

For readers who think that Second Seasons have mined mostly gold, we hasten to acknowledge that the shortest-run show in the history of television was a midyear *Laugh-In* imitation called *Turn-On*, which had a single telecast in 1969. ■

SECOND-SEASON STANDOUTS

TITLE	NETWORK	FIRST SHOWING	LAST TELECAST
All in the Family	CBS	1/12/71	9/16/79
Barnaby Jones	CBS	1/28/73	9/4/80
Baretta	ABC	1/17/75	6/1/78
Barney Miller	ABC	1/23/75	—
Batman	ABC	1/12/66	3/14/68
The Bionic Woman	ABC	1/14/76	9/2/78
Dallas	CBS	4/2/78	—
Diff'rent Strokes	NBC	11/3/78	—
The Dukes of Hazzard	CBS	1/26/79	—
Emergency	NBC	1/22/72	9/3/77
Fantasy Island	ABC	1/28/78	—
Good Times	CBS	2/1/74	8/1/79
Happy Days	ABC	1/15/74	—
The Incredible Hulk	CBS	3/10/78	—
The Jeffersons	CBS	1/18/75	—
Laverne & Shirley	ABC	1/27/76	—
One Day at a Time	CBS	12/16/75	—
Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In	NBC	1/22/68	5/14/73
Sanford and Son	NBC	1/14/72	9/2/77
Sing Along with Mitch	NBC	1/27/61	9/2/66
The Six Million Dollar Man	ABC	1/18/74	3/6/78

What's On

SOME OF THE NOTEWORTHY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS THAT ARE SCHEDULED FOR TELEVISION THIS MONTH. (CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR DATES AND TIMES IN YOUR AREA.)

DRAMA AND MOVIES



Robert Duvall: Adds classical music to wartime arsenal.

Apocalypse Now. Francis Coppola's 1979 film epic about the Vietnam War, inspired by Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Stars Martin Sheen, Robert Duvall, Marlon Brando. The Movie Channel, Home Box Office, Showtime (cable).
The Lion in Winter. The 1968 Academy Award-winning film about the Royal Family in 12th-century England. Stars Katharine Hepburn and Peter O'Toole. PBS.

Mary Poppins. Walt Disney's critically acclaimed motion picture (nominated for 13 Academy Awards in 1965) stars Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke. Home Theater Network, Home Box Office (cable).

My Brilliant Career. A well-received 1980 release about a young woman's choice between her fledgling career as a writer and a handsome young suitor, set in turn-of-the-century Australia. Starring Judy Davis and Sam Neill. Home Box Office, Home Theater Network, The Movie Channel (cable).

The Last of the Blue Devils. A well-crafted 1979 portrait of the legendary figures who

created the Kansas City jazz sound of the '20s and '30s. Featuring Count Basie, Charlie Parker and Joe Turner as themselves. The Movie Channel (cable).

A Clockwork Orange. Stanley Kubrick's alarming vision of the future (made in 1971), shocking and violent in content, but of social and political significance. The Movie Channel (cable).

Cruising. A controversial 1980 murder mystery based on the savage homosexual killings that took place in New York City from 1962 to 1979.

Filmed on location in Greenwich Village. Starring Al Pacino. The Movie Channel (cable).

Vanities. HBO's first theatrical production, starring Meredith Baxter Birney, Shelley Hack and Annette O'Toole. Originally an Off-Broadway play in which three cheerleaders confront changing values as they grow up. Home Box Office (cable).

SPORTS

North American Soccer League Indoor Play-offs. Live. USA Network (cable).

Avon Women's Tennis Championships. Live from Madison Square Garden. USA Network (cable).

NCAA Basketball Tournament Coverage. Opening rounds live from various sites over Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (cable) and NBC. Semifinals and finals live from Philadelphia. NBC.

Superstars. Featuring a showdown between Super Bowl and World Series teams. ABC.

COMEDY

The New New York Laff Off. This

sequel to the national competition that took place two years ago was taped live at New York's Copacabana. *Saturday Night Live's* Father Guido Sarducci (Don Novello) is host. Showtime (cable).

The Picnic. A half-hour comedy film featuring British comedians The Two Ronnies. PBS.

The Joan Rivers Comedy Hour. Taped live from the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas. Showtime (cable).

SPECIALS

Masterpiece Theatre: 10th Anniversary Gala. Alistair Cooke presides over a presentation of 10 years of *MP's* dramatic highlights. PBS. (See page 38.)

The Academy Awards. Johnny Carson is the host of the 53rd annual awards ceremony, live from Hollywood. ABC.

Starring Katharine Hepburn. An in-depth docu/bio covering her career from the '30s to the present. PBS. (See page 58.)

Wine Country. This new half-hour show has its premiere this month. Aimed at wine connoisseurs, the show will feature tours of vineyards in northern California and the Napa Valley. Satellite Program Network (cable).

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

CBS Afternoon Playhouse. Teen pregnancy is the subject of "I Think I'm Having a Baby." CBS.

Christian the Lion. *Born Free* stars Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna are back together again in their own real-life story about a lion's rehabilitation in a wild-game preserve after having been born and bred in a zoo. Nickelodeon (cable).

Circles and Splins: The New England Ice Skating Championships. Amateur skaters (ages 8-19) compete in pair skating, dance, compulsory figures and free skating. Hosts: JoJo Starbuck and Bud Palmer. Nickelodeon (cable).

MUSIC

On the Stage at the Agora: The Charlie Daniels Band. Live from

Cleveland with the Charlie Daniels Band playing *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* and other favorites. Nickelodeon (cable).

Melissa Manchester In Concert. From the Wilshire Theatre in Los Angeles, singing her biggest hits. Home Box Office (cable).



Joan Sutherland: Live music hits a high note.

Live from Lincoln Center. This Emmy Award-winning series of live telecasts of the performing arts presents Dame Joan Sutherland, Marilyn Horne and Luciano Pavarotti together for the first time in concert. PBS.

Gala II. A salute to the creative relationship between public TV and the performing arts. Featuring Isaac Stern, Vladimir Horowitz, Mstislav Rostropovich. PBS.

Live from the Grand Ol' Opry I and II. A two-part show featuring America's top country-music stars. PBS.

NEWS AND DOCUMENTARIES

Adolf Hitler: Tyrant of Destiny. Hal Holbrook narrates this psychohistory, which includes film clips. Home Box Office (cable).

Some Call Them Freaks. Film footage of Tom Thumb, the original Siamese twins Chang and Eng, and the world's tallest man. Richard Kiley narrates. Home Box Office (cable).

National Parks: Playground or Paradise? A National Geographic Special examines the subject of national parks. PBS.

A Prospect of Whales. Krov Menuhin's documentary about the whales and other animals of the Bay of Valdez. PBS. ■

The Mike Douglas Show, Family Feud and The Hollywood Squares.

Last year's convention featured the battle of the talk shows, with newcomers John Davidson and Toni Tennille, among others, challenging old-timers like Douglas and Merv Griffin. But with some of those shows struggling in the ratings—Tennille has already gone under—several syndicators are disdainfully labeling them passé, first-generation stuff. If *Donahue* represents the second-generation talk show, these syndicators say, the third-genera-



John Davidson: Could be a wipeout if he doesn't catch the third wave.

tion has a more wide-ranging format, combining a host or co-hosts with consumer tips, gossip columnists, *Real People*-style features and *Donahue*-style issues.

One of the primary proponents of the generational theory of talk shows, Alan Bennett of The Katz Agency, Inc., believes the shorter segments fit more easily into the late-afternoon schedule of harried housewives, who can tune in and out as time and interest allow.

Robert Goldfarb of Viacom Enterprises adds that viewers are hungry for something more hard-hitting than the usual celebrity interview. "People want to feel they're learning something; they want some meat on the bones in the 1980s," he said. So it is that Viacom will be offering a new one-hour "human-interest magazine" called

Hittin' Home, which is billed as "upbeat and good-humored" and which stresses "the American dream—little people who have made it."

NATPE officials are counting on a record attendance this year of 5000 people, in part because programmers for videodiscs, videocassettes and especially cable TV will also be on hand searching for goods. Other relative newcomers will be representatives of public-television stations, who, in pursuit of much-needed revenues and audiences, are beginning to sell or buy products in the commercial marketplace.

Webs Tangle on Cable

The moment ABC and CBS announced their plans to start high-brow cultural channels for cable TV this year, skeptics started predicting their failure. Despite research by both networks indicating there are enough viewers to support such classy programming—by attracting advertisers who will pay to reach that up-scale audience—many in the industry scoff at the idea.

"We do not feel there is enough of an audience for one advertiser-supported [culture] channel, much less two," says Kathryn Pelgrift, an NBC corporate planning vice president who has been conducting extensive cable feasibility studies for the network over the past year. "You have to admire [ABC and CBS] for stepping up the way they have, but I have very serious reservations about the economic viability of it, particularly in the near to intermediate term. They may surprise us, but I think it's going to be a long hard row to hoe."

One popular theory making the rounds is that ABC and CBS are less concerned with having their maiden cable

ventures become smash hits than they are with simply establishing a foothold in the booming cable sweepstakes. High-culture channels, subscribers to this theory believe, offer the most acceptable way to gain that entry without creating resistance among regulators, advertisers and the networks' own affiliate stations.

"ABC and CBS have been careful to couch their cable announcements to keep their cable aims different from their broadcast aims," says Mike Weinblatt, president of the Showtime pay-TV network. "You could speculate that would be the way you would take your first steps to upset the least amount of people and get the most favorable effect on the public and in Congress. I wouldn't be surprised if we're seeing the tip of the iceberg in terms of their plans."

WASHINGTON STEVE WEINBERG REPORTING

New Coverage for TV News

Why do so many local TV stations shy away from hard-hitting, investigative reporting? According to a survey of the National Association of Broadcasters, the answer may be the threat of libel suits—and the concomitant difficulty in obtaining libel insurance.

"A number of stations told us," says Steve Nevas, First Amendment counsel to the NAB, "that businessmen threaten to sue over consumer reporting and that politicians will threaten to sue when the station is planning to use something damaging."

The problem, says Nevas, is that "legal costs are very high. So even if a station wins, a few libel suits can wipe out its annual profit—es-

pecially in smaller markets." Therefore, even the *threat* of a lawsuit can have a "disproportionate chilling effect."

In the past, coverage against libel has often been written in terms which broadcasters found unattractive. But that may be changing. Working closely with CNA Insurance, the NAB has devised a model policy for protection against libel. (The plan also contains coverage against invasion-of-privacy and trespass lawsuits that might result from digging out stories.) At extra cost, TV stations can purchase a First Amendment option that covers them for resisting search warrants, court-imposed gag orders and forced disclosure of confidential sources. Tied to advertising rates, premiums can vary anywhere from \$350 to \$10,000 per year. Thus far, the average cost for a year of coverage is at the \$1100 level.

Nevas feels that with the NAB's or a similar policy, "and a reasonable amount of care, broadcasters should feel comfortable when they provide controversial—even provocative—news, public affairs, public participation and editorial programming."

Buck Rogers Is Number One—In Violence

The on-again, off-again crusade against TV violence is on again. A new group called the National Coalition on Television Violence has, on the basis of three-months viewing, cited the five most violent shows in prime time. They are: *Buck Rogers* (NBC), *The Dukes of Hazzard* (CBS), *The Misadventures of Sheriff Lobo* (NBC), *Hart to Hart* (ABC) and *NBC Thursday Night at the Movies*. (Violence, incidentally, was defined as "the deliberate and hostile use of overt force by one individual against an-

continued on page 89

March 1981

Lennon Movies Nixed on Grounds of Taste . . . The New, Improved Talk Show . . . Libel Insurance for Newscasters? . . . Transplant Furor on the BBC

What's Happening

HOLLYWOOD
DON SHIRLEY REPORTING

Networks on Lennon: Let Him Be

The docudramatists of Hollywood are quick to jump on sensational news events, and—true to form—the murder of John Lennon last December brought at least a dozen proposals for TV movies about Lennon to the networks' attention within a week after his death. Untrue to form, however, the networks didn't bite.

"Everyone else will do one," predicted NBC TV-movies boss Joan Barnett. "But my decision is not to do one unless it's in connection with Yoko Ono. If she wants to do 'My Life with John Lennon,' I might do it. But I have no desire to do a movie based on someone who might have met him or knew a friend of a friend." Added another NBC executive: "We were offered all sorts of things. But it was decided it would be in bad taste to do something so fast. Lennon was not a Jim Jones; he was someone who was very important to many people."



John Lennon: Imagine, the networks opted for good taste.

Defying Barnett's prediction about "everyone else," ABC TV-movies chief Stu Samuels also vetoed "half a dozen" submissions on Lennon that crossed his desk. He pointed out that ABC already had presented *Birth of the Beatles*, a 1979 TV movie about the rise of the Fab Four: "Why should we do another? It isn't the most original idea." (Originality notwithstanding, ABC chose to rerun *Birth of the Beatles* several weeks after Lennon's death.)

CBS also reported a number of submissions on the subject and—at press time—sounded even more opposed to the idea than the other net-

works. "I hope no one gets rights to the books [about Lennon and the Beatles]," said a CBS source. "It's quite sick to try to exploit the poor man's death."

Will Prime Time Habla Español?

In TV-land, imitation is not merely the sincerest form of flattery, it's a way of life for programming executives. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that—following the smashing success of *Shōgun*, with its long doses of untranslated Japanese—at least one of the other networks would take a step toward bilingualism.

The network happens to be CBS, which has ordered a pilot script for a comedy called *Welcome in America*. If it survives as a regular prime-time series, *Welcome in America* would use some Spanish dialogue—with none of the dubbing, voice-overs or subtitles that are usually seen on TV.

The show is inspired by the public-television series *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?*, a program about a Cuban-American family, produced by Bernard Lechowick at Miami's public-TV station WPBT. Lechowick—who is not a native Spanish speaker and picked up the language while living in Texas—is the co-writer of the *Welcome in America* pilot, which is being produced by Henry ("Fonzie") Winkler

and Allan Manings at Paramount Television.

"I get really tired of hearing Latino characters say things like 'Gee wheez, meester'," says Kim LeMasters, the CBS vice president who ordered the script. Instead, the twists and turns of the plots in *Welcome in America* would be delivered in clear English, so non-Spanish-speaking viewers (like LeMasters himself) can understand what's going on, while many of the "reaction lines" will be in Spanish. Viewers would become gradually acclimated to the Spanish; the ratio of English to Spanish in the first half of the pilot would be 95-5, but in the second half it would drop to about 75-25. (*¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?*'s ratio is closer to 50-50.)

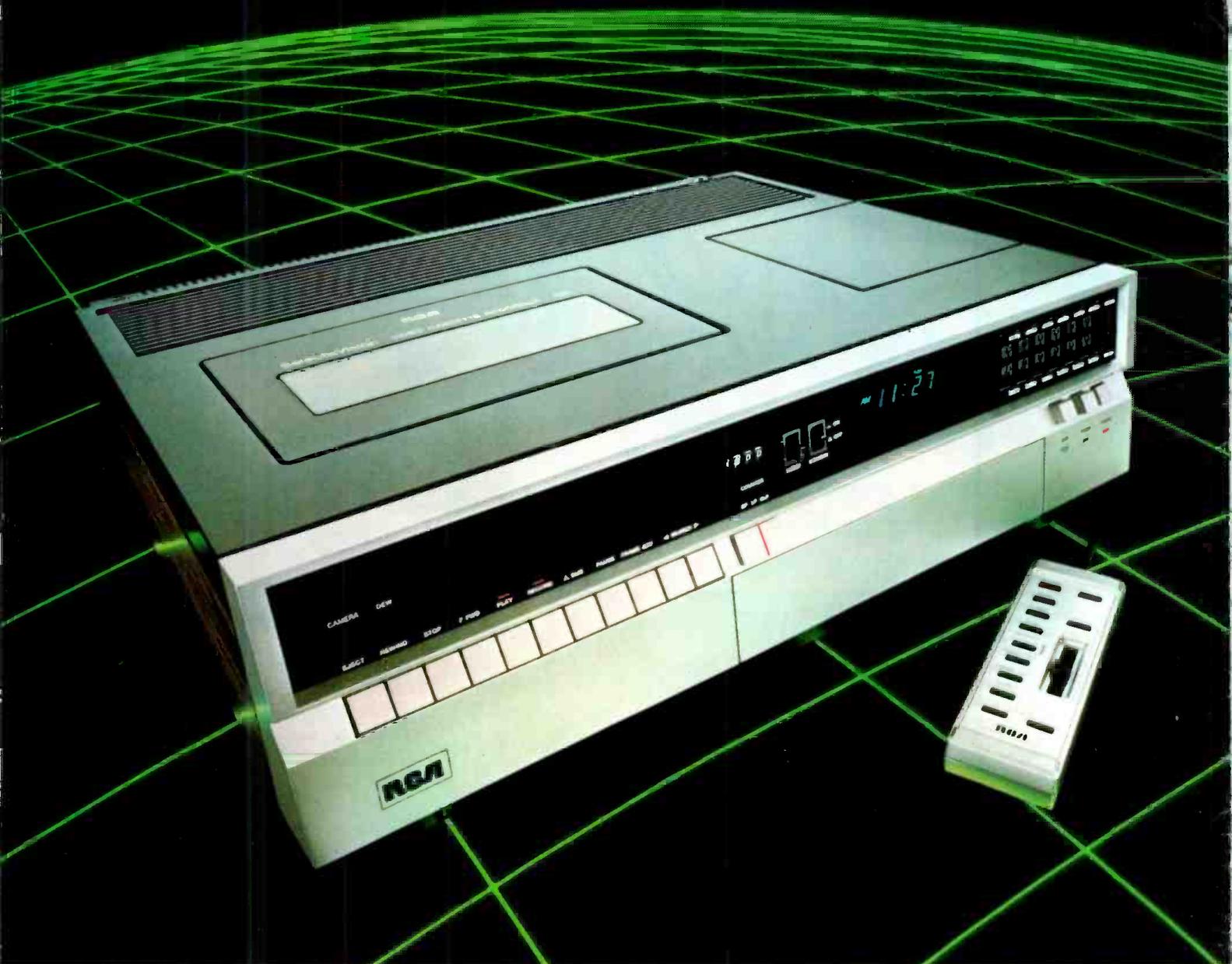
Of course, the CBS censor would have to be as bilingual as the writers and actors.

NEW YORK
DOUG HILL REPORTING

Mid-Life Crisis for Talk Shows?

Are you ready for the "third generation" talk show? That's one of the big buzzwords heading into this month's National Association of Television Program Executives (NATPE) convention here, where programmers from local stations around the country will gather to screen and buy syndicated shows like

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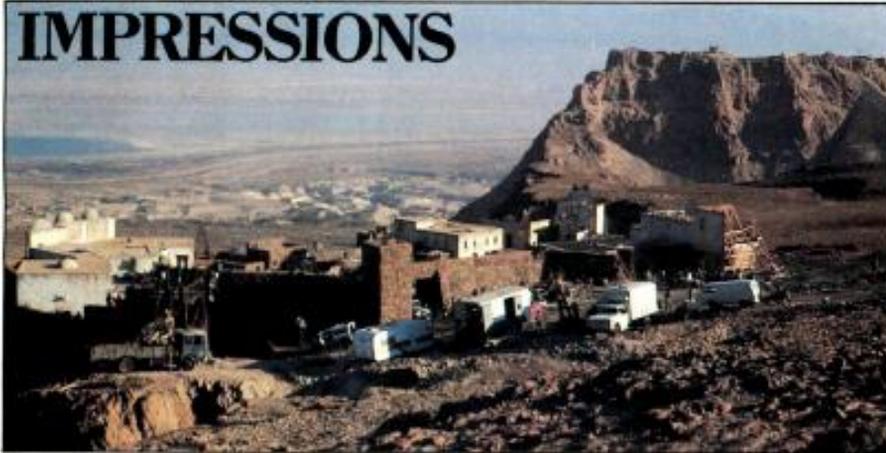
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IMPRESSIONS



The real Masada stands imposingly at far right, while the re-created fortress — “the real scene-stealer” — can be seen below.

“Masada”: A Monumental Achievement

Controversial, horrifying, leavened with humor, this eight-hour epic powerfully captures the Zealots’ stand against the Romans

By CYRA McFADDEN

One fact is unarguable about ABC’s *Masada*, an eight-hour epic scheduled for telecast on April 5-8. Controversial though it will surely be, this drama of the Jewish Zealots’ stand against the Romans, ending in 73 A.D., is stunning television. Grounded in a literate script by Joel Oliansky (who based his work on Ernest K. Gann’s novel *The Antagonists*), *Masada* is beautifully photographed in warm gold and brown tones that give it a Biblical look. It is remarkably well-paced. And it is fat with fine performances, especially Peter Strauss’s and Peter O’Toole’s.

Strauss (*Rich Man, Poor Man*) plays Eleazar ben Yair, leader of the Jewish resistance under the Roman occupation. O’Toole plays his antagonist, Flavius Silva, general of the Roman 10th Legion. These are large roles, full of the dramatic confrontations actors love, and Strauss and O’Toole have an expansive good time with them. So

gaunt he is hollow-cheeked, and with a cereal-bowl haircut, O’Toole is particularly compelling. His performance, and the script, give Silva—the-oppressor humanity and dimension—though there is no doubt whose side we are on.

The supporting cast is equally impressive. Anthony Quayle is Silva’s right hand, Gallus; Timothy West (Edward of *Edward the King*) adds another major role to his repertoire, this time the emperor Vespasian; and Barbara Carrera is the old-fashioned love interest. As Sheva, an Egyptian Jew who becomes Silva’s reluctant concubine, Carrera somehow endures the rigors of a desert army camp, in temperatures ranging as high as 130 degrees, looking cool as lettuce and Women’s-Wear-Daily chic. War is hell, but it helps to have a tentful of Halstons.

The real scene-stealer is Masada itself. ABC’s epic, which cost more than

\$20 million, was filmed for the most part on location in the desert. It meticulously replicates the ancient mountain fortress—one of the awesome sights in the world.

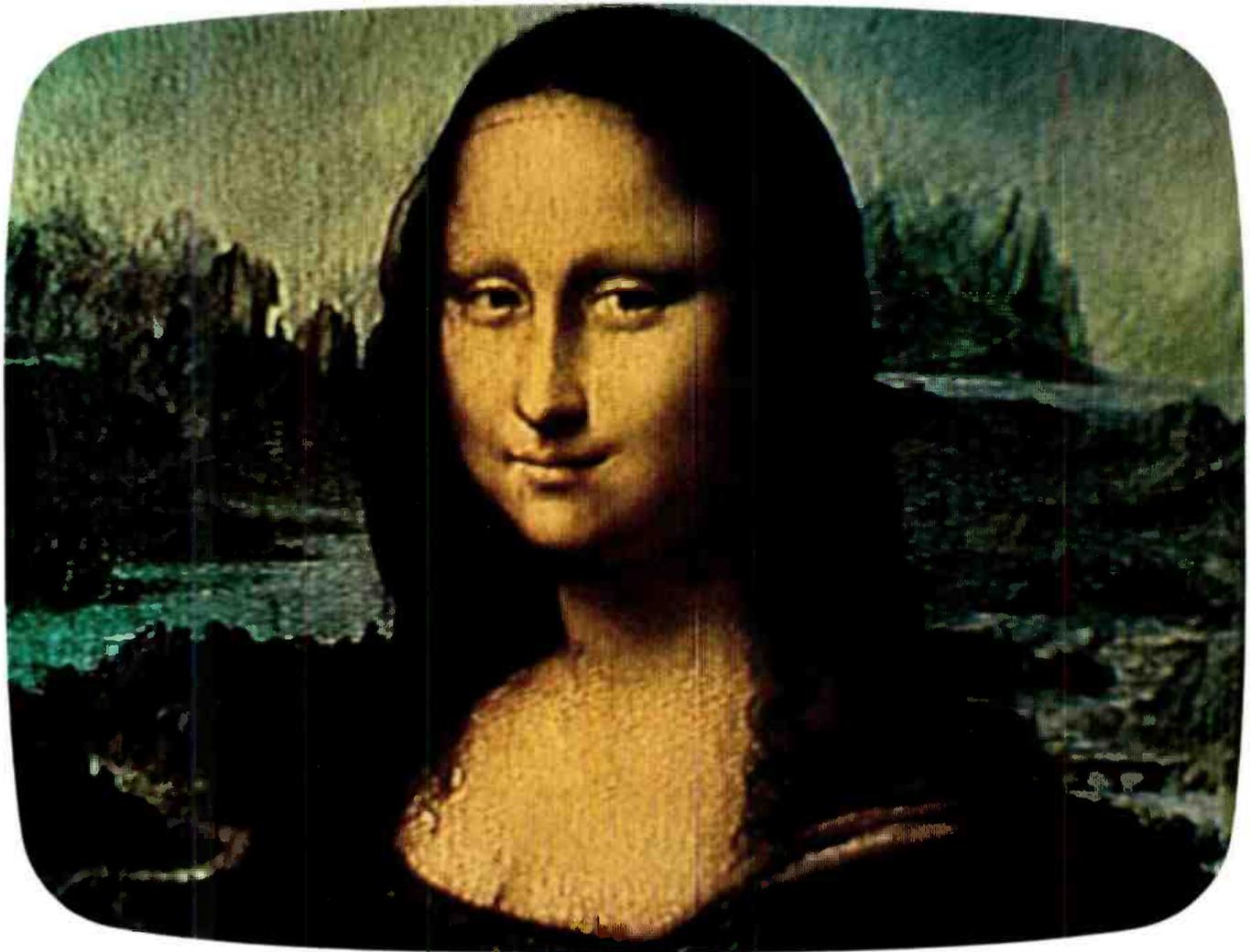
The heat shimmers just beyond the TV screen, and when the Roman soldiers stand at full-dress attention on the cracked dry ground, the ancient citadel dwarfs them; perched like an eagle’s nest on a rock outcropping that rises 1300 feet above the level of the Dead Sea, it looks impregnable.

It took six months and engineering genius for the Roman soldiers—5000 strong—to conquer Masada. They constructed a ramp and a battering ram to breach its walls and then entered to find 960 men, women and children dead, the Jews having committed mass suicide rather than surrender. The scene is discreetly filmed in the series but nonetheless horrifying; unavoidably, for this Bay Area viewer, it had echoes of Jonestown.

“This is stupidity in truth,” Silva cries, surveying it. “What does a thing like this prove?” Fearful of letting viewers decide that question for themselves, ABC framed the prerelease version of *Masada* I saw with a prologue and epilogue showing recruits in the modern Israeli army being inducted at the site. Masada, a voice-over concludes, represents “the spirit that has made the Israeli soldier the most daring and gallant defender of freedom in the world today.”

The framing device is both unnecessary and heavy-handed, no matter how one feels about the view expressed. Human drama on this scale needs no explication and no message-y overlay. And the story of Masada, in this powerful version, makes its point, unassisted, about freedom and the price the Zealots were willing to pay for it. How much more effective an ending to let Flavius Silva have the last word, as he looks upon the Jewish dead: “We have won a rock in the middle of a wasteland, on the shore of a poisoned sea.”

If all this sounds grim, I should note that *Masada* is leavened with humor; that it has scenes of true epic sweep and countless memorable vignettes; and that you won’t see better acting on television in this or any other season. Applaud it or take exception to it. But see it. ■



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Cronkite ("Is Walter Cronkite as Good as His Ratings?," January) was a moving, insightful tribute to a man who has certainly helped shape *my* view of the world. I can remember that when I was a little girl my dad would sit down religiously every evening to watch Walter Cronkite on the *CBS Evening News*. We lived in a small town with no newspaper, and although much of what Cronkite said didn't directly affect us, he was our main connection with the outside world. I have continued to watch him through the years and am still grateful that he never abused the power he held over many of us.

*Beth Williams
Jacksonville, Fla.*

MORE INTELLIGENT DRAMA

I would like to thank you for Paul Fussell's excellent article on *Testament of Youth* ("For All the War's Bloodshed, the Spiritual Wound Cut Deepest," December). Fussell was right—the series was not pretty; in fact, it was pretty grim—but it left me feeling that I know a lot more about World War I than before.

I hope PANORAMA keeps up its coverage of intelligent drama—the more people know about and watch these programs, the more of them we'll see.

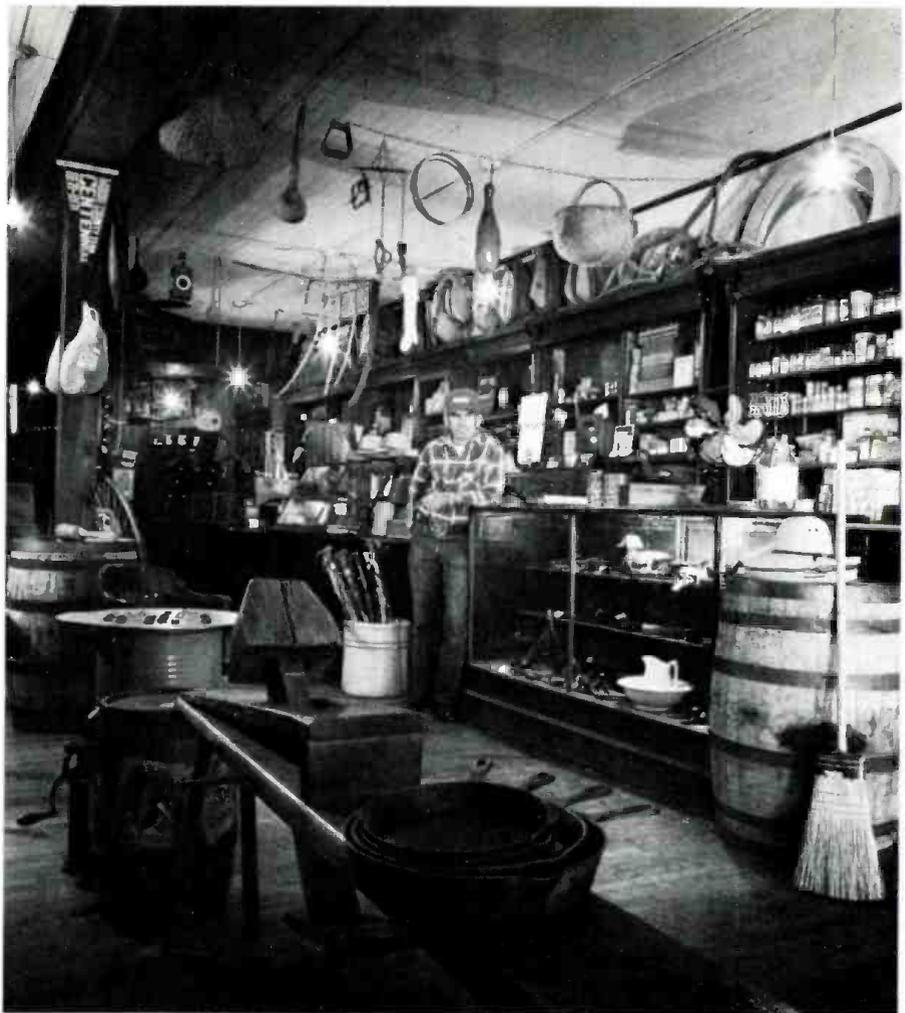
*Tina Michaels
Grand Rapids, Mich.*

STORMY WEATHER AHEAD

Regarding your December Impressions column ("Talk Shows: They're as Stimulating as a Dial Tone"): Somebody finally pointed out how great David Letterman's show was! It was the first nice comment I've heard about the program since its untimely demise in October. I was a great fan of the show's—David was never banal, he never interrupted his guests, and he made my mornings a lot sunnier. Letterman is a great performer and a terrific television personality. My one hope is that NBC realizes and utilizes his talents.

*Teresa Librande
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho*

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



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LETTERS



GOING APE

Your J. Fred Muggs Awards article (January) was the best thing I've read in PANORAMA since I began subscribing. Witty, imaginative . . . my only thought when I finished it was *gimme more!* Who was it that said an uncensored sense of humor is the ultimate therapy for man in society? Keep up the good work.

*Bruce Thomas
Los Angeles*

There are awards for just about everything, PANORAMA noted as it bequeathed its own J. Fred Muggs honors. Well, PANORAMA deserves some kind of award: I'd rather read your J. Fred Muggs selections than listen to the Emmy panegyrics any day.

*Charlotte Lewis
Dallas*

LISTEN UP, DOC

Thank you for publishing David Handler's story, "Eh, What's *Down, Doc?*", in your January issue. For many years I have proclaimed Bugs Bunny to be among the finest comic creations of the mind of man (or woman). My declarations are usually greeted by a blank stare and then a quick change in conversational subject matter.

Mr. Handler seems to understand that what passes for animation on TV is a travesty that warps young minds and narrows their vision rather than expanding it. And the little kiddies are also being taught that bad jokes are funny as long as a laugh track booms in the background. The zanies who wrote and drew Bugs and his buddies went for intelligent slapstick

and, thus, taught a level of humor that would have never produced that depressing amalgam of wretched tastelessness, the new *Saturday Night Live*. It all starts with Plastic Man.

That's all, folks.

*John Sheasca
Brooklyn*

KEEP A LOW PROFILE

In response to December's article "Has TV Tilted Against Israel? Is Television Helping—Or Hurting—Peace Negotiations?", it would appear that media coverage may not initiate contacts but certainly plays a role in eliciting responses from the protagonists. Sometimes, at delicate stages of the negotiations, however, it may be best to keep a low profile with little coverage, as, with special reference to the rhetoric-laden Middle East, some reporting may aggravate the difficult issues. This is especially true of the recent reporting of West Bank disturbances, where, on many occasions, demonstrations have been initiated for the benefit of the media; this does, in fact, work to the detriment of Israel and gives a false view of the situation. One can compare this to the way the Iranian students manipulated the U.S. media after the taking of the hostages.

It must be realized that while the media can play a constructive and democratic role in reporting events, the urgency to obtain "scoops" must not outweigh the seriousness of its effect. For this, the media bears a heavy responsibility.

*Anne Bruskin
New York City*

IRRESISTIBLE ED

Ed Asner looks like a lunatic in that picture on your December cover. He looks like he's just had a religious experience or walked in on Mrs. Pyncheon practicing checkbook journalism.

Anyway, your profile of him ("Angry . . . Driven . . . Guilty") was really a fine job. Guilt is a great motivator; if all actors were as conscientious as Asner, we'd all be better for it. And besides, he's so intensely sexy!

*Cindy Goldman
Venice, Cal.*

Regarding your December profile of Ed Asner: The poor man's health is failing because he doesn't realize that he owes

nothing to anyone for an accident of birth or for anything else that is not a result of his volitional action. He owes nothing to anyone for not having been creamed by the McCarthy witch hunts, or for having been born a Jew in America (except for possibly gratitude to his parents for their foresight).

*Thom Christoph
New York City*

HOLIDAY CARTOON SHOWS

I would like to bring to your attention several mistakes in Mr. Dann's ratings column on the annual holiday cartoon specials ("Holiday Cartoon Power," November). Mr. Dann bases his article on the "fact" that *Charlie Brown* and *The Grinch* are the two longest-running animated programs (both on CBS). This is completely inaccurate.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer debuted on NBC in December 1964, and has played each and every year thereafter for 16 consecutive runs. This makes it the longest-running animated show of all time, putting it number one on the chart. Additionally, *Here Comes Peter Cottontail* has run seven times (not six, as in your chart) and *The Night Before Christmas* has run six times (not five, as in your chart).

Furthermore, Mr. Dann states that 60- or 90-minute shows have ". . . proven a disaster for the networks." This statement is both irresponsible and totally inaccurate. Rankin/Bass has produced many hour-long specials that have been enormously successful and highly profitable for the networks.

*Jules Bass
Vice President
Rankin/Bass Productions, Inc.
New York City*

Michael Dann replies: Producer Jules Bass is highly respected, and so is his bookkeeping. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer did precede The Grinch. Doing a chart that meant dealing with hundreds of shows over two decades should give me some allowance for error. But, the fundamental point that half-hour animation shows become perennials and that longer animated forms are practically nonexistent is completely accurate.

TRIBUTE TO CRONKITE

Theodore H. White's article about Walter

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PANORAMA

THE TELEVISION MAGAZINE

MARCH 1981

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

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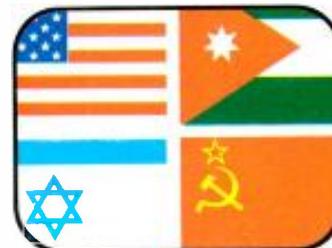
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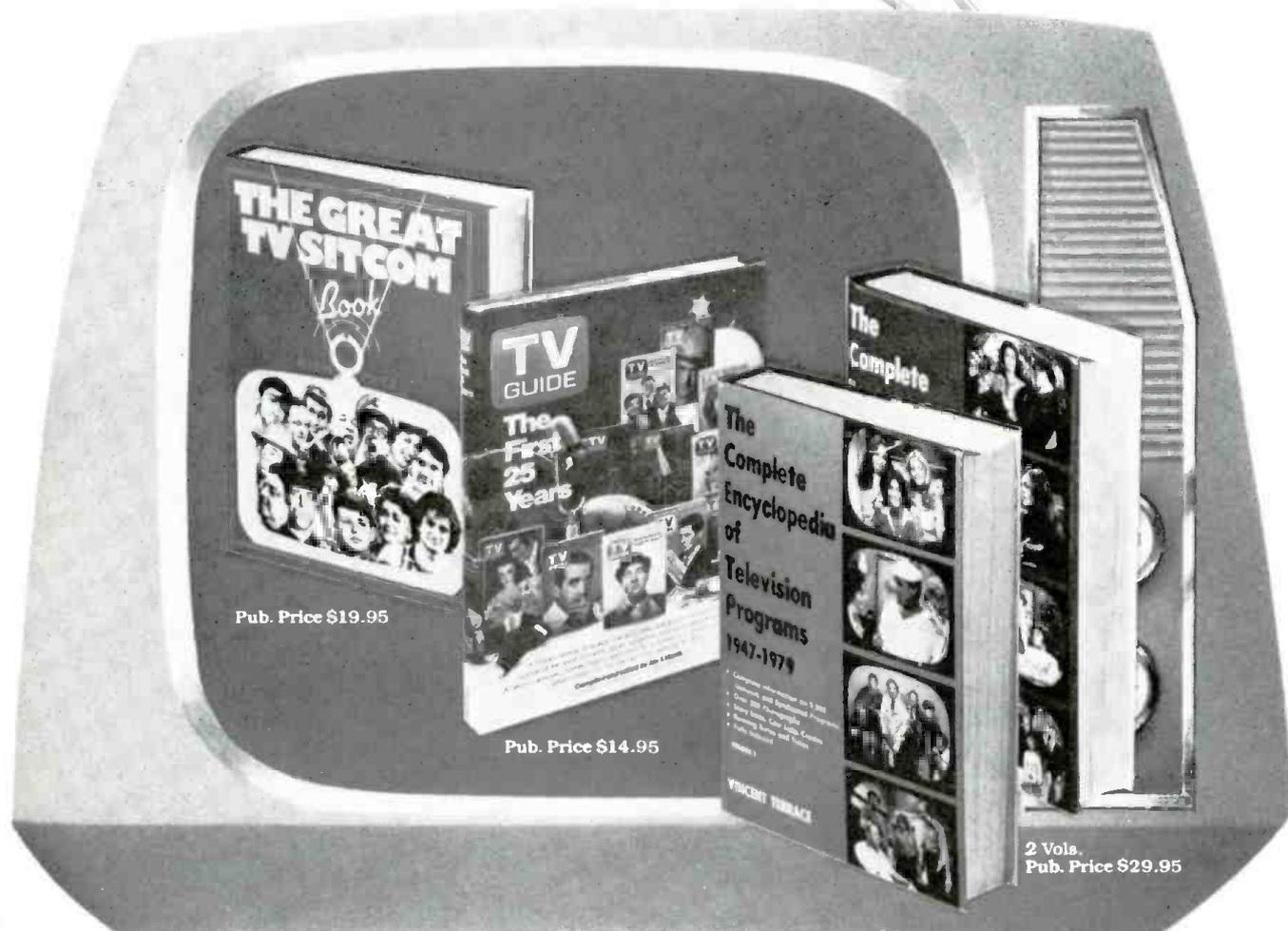


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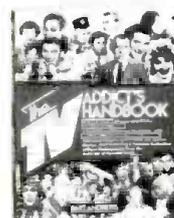
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