TELEVISION QUARTERLY

VOLUME X NUMBER 1 FALL, 1972

TELEVISION'S SILVER ANNIVERSARY:
A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

THE JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS
AND SCIENCES

GOODMAN ACE • HEYWOOD HALE BROUN • EDMUND CARPENTER • FRED FREED • BETTY LANIGAN • WORTHINGTON MINER • AGNES ECKHARDT NIXON • CARL REINER • ROBERT D. WOOD

THE JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

EDITORIAL BOARD

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TELEVISION QUARTERLY

FALL 1972 VOL. X NO. 1

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If it's really "Special," it's on NBC

Fall '72:

World Series (beginning October 14)
NBC News' Election Night Coverage (November 7)
Neil Simon's "The Trouble With People" (November 12)
"America" with Alistair Cooke (Premiere November 14)
"The Hands of Cormac Joyce" (November 17)
Orson Welles as "The Man Who Came To Dinner" (November 29)
"The Snow Goose" (December 12)
NBC Reports: The Tasaday (December 19)
NFL Play-offs (December 23 & 24)
...and more than 100 more...

National Broadcasting Company

Hallmark Cards, Inc.

is proud to announce

the 100th presentation of the

Hallmark Hall of Fame:

Stephen Boyd and Colleen Dewhurst

in

"The Hands of Cormac Joyce,"

November 17, 1972, on NBC-TV.

Later in the Fall, Hallmark will present

Orson Welles

in

"The Man Who Came to Dinner."

And

Paul Gallico's "The Snow Goose,"

starring

Richard Harris

WE SPENT THREE HOURS ALERTING PEOPLE TO THE PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION.

AND A MONTH HELPING THEM FIND SOLUTIONS.

There's a crisis in American education. Busing. Day care centers. Integration. Yesterday these were local controversies. Today, they are national campaign issues.

Unfortunately, after you kick a political football around for a while, it becomes muddied. Even distorted. So by now, most people are as confused about the crisis in education as they are concerned.

Because we believe it's a broadcaster's responsibility to explore difficult problems clearly and objectively, Group W and its five TV stations initiated a month-long effort last spring: The Search For Quality Education.

It started with three one-hour specials.

BUSING: SOME VOICES FROM THE SOUTH. It shows exactly how busing works. How it affects white families. How it affects black families. And what happens to a community once a busing law is enforced.

A CHANCE FOR A LIFETIME presents the issue of day care centers in a new light: not in terms of a mother's right to work, but of a child's right to pre-school education.

CLASS...AND THE CLASSROOM explores a controversial new kind of integration. Not based on what color the child is, but on home background, parental education, and family income.

Ultimately, the changes in education will come not from the government or from the media, but from the community itself.

To help hasten the problem-solving process, each of the specials was followed by related local programs.

In addition, during the month, each of our five stations broadcast public service spots, mini-documentaries within our news programs, and station editorials. All devoted to The Search For Quality Education.

All of this – the specials plus the local follow-through – is part of the broadcaster's job:

To focus on the communities' problems and encourage their solution.

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WINO CHICAGO · KPIX SAN FRANCISCO · KFWB LOS ANGELES

TO OUR READERS

With this issue, Television Quarterly takes a new lease on life.

Like most academic journals, we expect to have our labors rewarded and our incentives sharpened by the response of our readers. We hope you will tell us how you like us—or how you don't.

We aim to reach not only professionals in the television industry but students, apprentices and thoughtful viewers. We'd even like to hear from sponsors. It is not our wish to become a coterie *magazine; we would rather be read to tatters, talked about and understood.*

Television, says an editorial in this issue, can have no higher purpose than the pursuit of excellence. Neither can a reflective journal devoted to television. Our readership may be small but we consider it to be select. We are not obliged to bend this way and that to amuse a mass audience. In consequence, the excellence we strive for may be subjective. As Montaigne wrote, "It is not only for an exterior show or ostentation that our soul must play her part, but inwardly within ourselves, where no eye shine but ours."

We like to fancy the shine of many eyes upon this, the first issue in the Quarterly's renaissance. Fittingly, it is a special issue, celebrating the 25th anniversary of commercial telecasting. Regrettably, we lacked space to dwell upon all the great names and high moments of this quarter century. We wish there were articles about Kukla, Fran and Ollie, Ernie Kovacs, Caesar and Coca, Playhouse 90, the Home Show, Steve Allen, Omnibus . . . and many more. But, for Autumn 1972, this is our letter to the world.

HARRIET VAN HORNE

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

AN EDITORIAL

The 17th century Dutch pundit, Spinoza, was light years removed from McLuhan and Minow, but he spoke to all time when he said, "All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare."

Television is a noisy affirmation of that dictum. Succumbing to what de Toqueville called "the tyranny of the majority," TV's islands of excellence are few. And it seems clear that the bulk of Americans find that condition tolerable.

As of today, there are more television homes, more sets per home and more sets in use than ever before. For most Americans television is an eye on the cosmos and an ear to the sounds of life. Television introduces people to one another and shows them the world, the dark side and the bright.

Politicians embrace television as ardently as their budgets allow. Business woos the consumer—tenderly, cleverly and at great cost—and the network profit picture is glowing.

Quantitatively, television is a smash, bigger than ever.

The minority audience that finds most of TV lacking in wit, grit and substance, is unimpressed by quantity. Regrettably, this audience has been all but mute of late. Most of these elite viewers are waiting, one suspects, for Public Television to grow up, to fulfill its specific promise of 1967: becoming an attractive alternative to commercial television.

Regrettably, the wait may be a long one.

Still, there are stirrings. There is heartening evidence today that excellence can make money. And there seems to be a feeling abroad that even when it can't, it may be a goal worth pursuing for its own sake. Once more, the decision makers seem aware that the business of broadcasting is more than just a business.

"All in the Family" maintains its lead as the Number One entertainment in the land as well as the Number One topic when conversation veers toward video. Everybody from cab drivers to doctors of psychology has a theory as to just what Archie Bunker is *really* saying.

The Bunker saga is as controversial a show as we have ever had. But it is not the daring of its themes—racism, bigotry, sexual morals, even perversion—that accounts for its great success. No, the wide appeal and the

staying power of "All in the Family" is, quite simply, its excellence. The acting, writing and staging are first-rate. Norman Lear understands the human comedy and he respects his craft.

"Sanford and Son," another Norman Lear production, displays the same careful texture. And like "All in the Family," it abhors prudence, hypocrisy and the Nice Nellie attitudes that were the hallmark of older situation comedies.

The Children's Television Workshop, where "Sesame Street" was born, has pursued excellence in defiance of all the old notions, beginning "You can't do that on TV because . . ." Joan Ganz Cooney and her muppets did it and have left their mark on children's programming for all time.

In the season now before us, both CBS and ABC will present dramatic "specials" which just might live up to the word. CBS, morever, has signed the colorful Joseph Papp to present his lusty Shakespearean productions as well as new work by his remarkable stable of young writers.

On another front, Walter Cronkite continues to be the news source considered most reliable by 65 per cent of all Americans. He has achieved this high esteem without trading quips with Eric Sevareid or dancing the Charleston in the house promotion spots.

The Cronkite secret may also be summed up as *excellence.* A viewer senses the fairness, the sincerity and the sureness born of long experience. If the world were coming to an end, says a lady of my acquaintance, she would prefer to hear about it from Walter Cronkite.

A hard, driving excellence has raised the CBS magazine, "Sixty Minutes" to the required viewing class. Even Life Magazine's man, Cyclops, likes it. On NBC, the mini-documentary, "Chronologue" is reaching for the same high marks. Slowly, doggedly, a few rich blooms have forced their way up through the rocky soil of the Vast Wasteland.

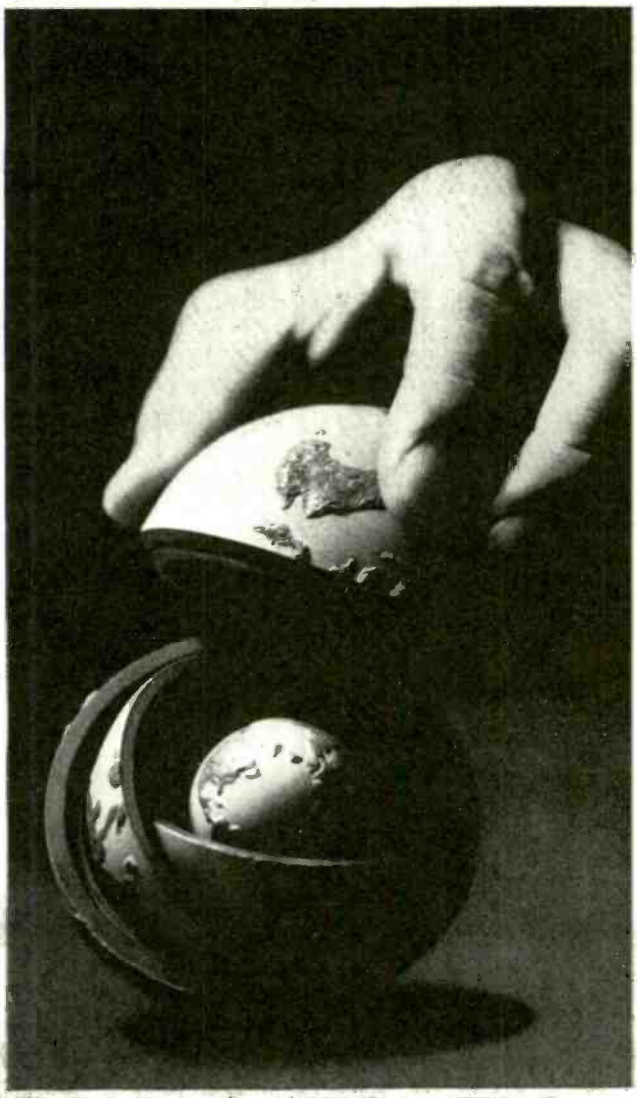
Television Quarterly, matching its own growth with that of the medium, intends to encourage all who strive for truth and beauty—the root and flower of excellence—on the small screen. Our pages are open to our colleagues for whatever they wish to say about the medium, its rewards and frustrations.

It is also our hope that the programmers, those faceless men behind the tube, the "final deciders" will also find a voice within these covers. And somewhere there must be a corporate executive capable of breaking a lance with Nicholas Johnson or T. Clay Whitehead.

Now, as another season unfolds, we should remind ourselves anew that the pursuit of excellence is the only worthwhile pursuit in life. The best that television is capable of becoming will be dazzling indeed. It is not an impossible dream.

—Hubbell Robinson
Chairman of the Editorial Board

IT GETS BIGGER AS IT GETS SMALLER.



The number of worlds we need to know about keeps increasing even as time and distance diminish. Millions of people depend on Walter Cronkite and the CBS Evening News to make sense of it all. For good reason. For dozens of good reasons. The whole team of correspondents we call Worldwatchers. Men like Charles Collingwood in London. Peter Kalischer in Paris. Eric Sevareid in Washington. Men like Dan Rather, a President watcher. Marvin Kalb, a diplomat watcher. Daniel Schorr, a city watcher. They know what to look for. And how to impart it with clarity and meaning. Keep your eye on CBS News. Don't let the world get away from you.

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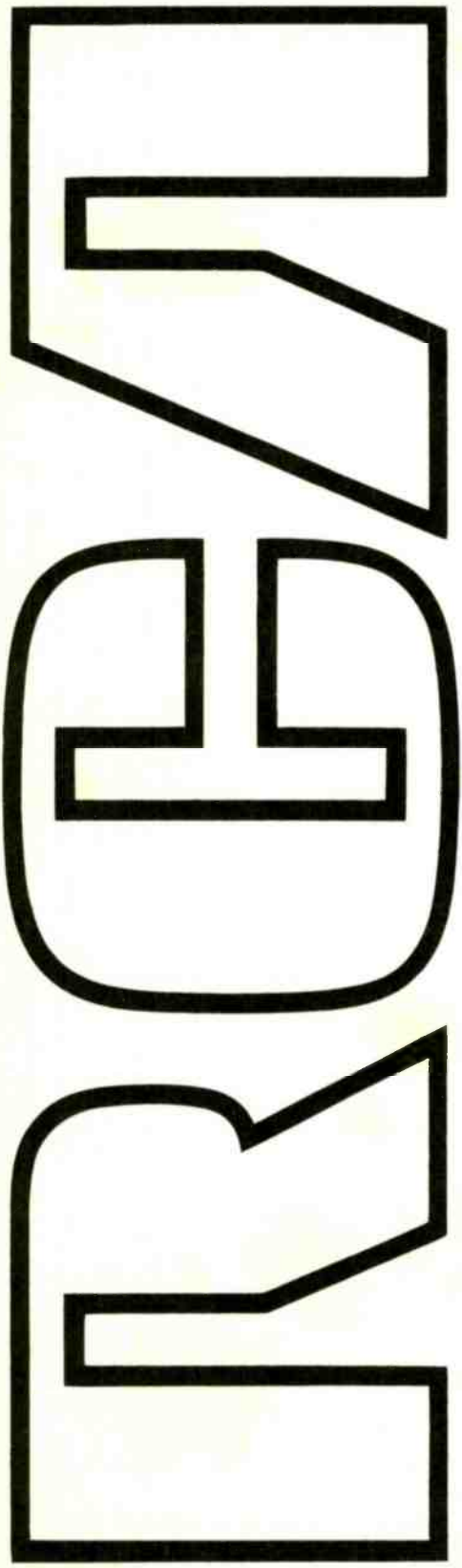

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WAS IT ALL SO GOLDEN?

BY WORTHINGTON MINER

I have no idea who first coined the phrase "The Golden Age," nor when. I only know that what is so ardently proclaimed by its advocates, as well as its detractors, is for the most part nonsense, highly prejudiced and ill informed.

There was an excitement in those early years, yes. But the forces that generated that excitement are discomfiting to those now active in the industry. They'd rather not look back. Perhaps that word "industry" lies at the root of the problem. In those crowded eight years, 1948 to 1956, television gave bright promise of becoming a theatrical art; once it reverted to the status of an advertising industry, the inevitable degeneration began. It's a melancholy tale.

Television was the off-spring of network radio. Thus, it inherited from an economic structure totally antithetic to the medium it was designed to serve. Radio broadcasting began as a sales pitch for the manufacturers of radio receivers. Since its sole aim was to stimulate a demand for its product, the broadcaster could scarcely ask its audience to pay for the amusement being served. It was soon apparent, that while its advertising impact was tremendous, the costs of maintaining broadcasting schedules were more than any manufacturer could bear. The answer was obvious: sell time.

And so it began—and a gold mine it proved to be for the brokers of time. By the mid-'30s, 90% of the programs on the air were produced and paid for by advertisers and/or their agencies with little remaining for the broadcaster to fill but a few news reports and the ghetto hours of Saturday mornings and Sundays, up to 6:00 P.M. All went well so long as the hard core of the schedule was limited to news, home-spun comedy and music.

Not until the advent of dramatic programming in the prime-time hours did the essential fallacy in radio's economic structure begin to show. No advertiser could be expected deliberately to offend even one potential customer, much less a broad ethnic or political block. Thus, anything controversial or even mildly provocative had to be exised.

But the theatre lives by intellectual stimulation; controversy and the clash

of ideas are its daily bread. Few can be found to dispute the dictum that only three topics are worthy of dramatic consideration—sex, politics and religion—precisely the areas the advertiser shuns like a pest-hole. And, if he is to pay the bill, why shouldn't he have the right to shun them?

The fact is, he should—if he pays. The corollary is obvious: he should never have been allowed to pay for anything beyond his own advertising time.

Who, then, should pay for the body of the program? The obvious answer is: the audience. Admittedly, this solution is fraught with difficulties, practical and political. The dangers of political control are grossly evident in France and Russia. But there are also viable solutions, as exemplified by the balanced structure of British television. The success or failure of a play is measured by the ducats paid into the box office. While this is not a reliable measure of every play's artistic merit, it remains, barring outright subsidy, the most durable stimulant to creative production yet devised.

How is this in any way germane to the early stages of television—or to television today for that matter? With radio economy as firmly entrenched as it was by the mid-'40s, was there ever even a flickering chance of its being dislodged by the emergent medium?

In retrospect the answer must be no. There was, however, a span of years when the control of production was wrested from the advertising agencies and entrusted to the creative people at the networks. That was the golden opportunity that gave the age its title.

It presaged a might-have-been that was too little recognized, too half-heartedly supported, too soon betrayed. What we have inherited is the rubble of greed, stupidity and neglect.

Few people remember that NBC-TV went on the air in 1938. CBS assembled its creative staff in 1939. Both were commercially licensed in 1941 and maintained some form of broadcast schedule from July 1 of that year till the recognized emergence of commercial broadcasting in 1948. What kind of creative people put their stamp on this era, and why were they chosen? The essential fact is that the overwhelming majority of them were of the theatre.

Deep irony lies behind both their selection, and their agreement to pioneer this uncharted wilderness. By all rights they should have come from radio or pictures, but those in radio were far too affluent and—mistakenly—secure to take the risk. It is, perhaps, as well they didn't, since, when the panic was on and they tried to climb aboard, the mortality rate was swift and staggering. While a handful of writers like Gertrude Berg and Irna Phillips managed to make the transition, it is hard to cite a single recognized producer, writer or director who survived. As for those in pictures, their turf was 2,400 miles away; the theatre was in New York. CBS and NBC had to fish in local waters.

Luck was on their side. It would be hard to exaggerate the disdain with

which the successful people of the theatre viewed radio duirng the late '20s and early '30s. With the exception of a few actors—Helen Menken, for example, only those desperately in need of work, any kind of work, succumbed to radio's lures. The fact that many of them achieved success only added to the theatre's derogatory amusement. By the late '30s the theatre had fallen on harder times. Playwrights, old and young, had dried up, and no new crop was visible.

It was precisely the moment when the siren song of television sounded sweetest. But what those young men and women brought with them was an innate, often inarticulate, and wildly impractical vision of where television was headed. They saw the new medium as an extension of theatre, a way to capture a vast, new audience, and to imbue it with a taste for something better than the inane jollities of radio.

If the networks were lucky in assembling such a crew, those who took the plunge were equally fortunate—for a time. There was no one to say them nay. Between penny-pinching and short-sightedness the advertisers and their agencies had invested nothing in program development. This put the networks in unchallenged control. The absurdity was that, with the sceptre firmly in their grasp, they had no idea what to do with it. The problem was compounded by their creative personnel which was so rigidly radio-oriented. No one had the haziest idea of how to tell a story visually, nor even what story to tell.

This was the accidental Nirvana in which the handful of pioneers charted the course television was eventually to take. The enemy in our midst was neither the account executive, nor the networks brass, but the equipment with which we were forced to work. It was only after the war that the image orthicon gave us a picture even close to our aspirations. Yet I look back with some astonishment at how well prepared we were by 1948 to launch a full and varied schedule. During those nine years from 1939, the basic principles of visual story-telling had been worked out and tested, principles quite as applicable to news reporting, sports coverage, political conventions and ballet as to straight theatrical production.

To grasp the significance of those early years, certain realities must be appreciated. Modern detractors say that the performance was so inept, the picture quality so crude, that no one today would tolerate the shows that won wide acclaim in their time. This is altogether valid. But were these same creative people given the equipment and the budgets available today, combined with the network support they then enjoyed, sizeable audiences might be won.

What lay behind that excitement was at the time seldom recognized and almost completely overlooked today. It remains of the essence. What was being sent out over the air was *theatre*. Reliance was placed on a clash of

ideas, not on synthetic stories built around the weekly appearance of some personality or familial group. In the clash of ideas, the outcome remains in doubt till the end. Once a star personality is injected, his eventual triumph is predictable, and dramatic values suffer.

What factors contributed to such a condition? Mainly the fact, already cited, that the creative personnel was of the theatre, respectful of dramatic standards and accustomed to applying dramatic judgments.

But there could have been no flowering in those years, had the networks not been in control. Had the agencies been in a position to interfere, contamination would have set in.

In every dispute I had with McCann, Erickson during my three and a half years with Studio One, my position was invariably supported by CBS at the highest level. I have always suspected that the Kraft Theatre should have been far less pedestrian had NBC been at the controls rather than J. Walter Thompson. Yet network control could, itself, have been a crippling handicap had the creative people in radio been granted even consultative authority. They weren't, and so the excitement persisted.

Last, and perhaps as critical as all the rest, was the audience to whom we were playing. A television set was a relatively expensive item in the late '40s and early '50s. As a result those who first became addicted to television were largely well-off, well educated and East Coast urban. Even when transmission lines began to bring in Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, the number of viewers was small and in the same limited category. The quality of kinescope reproduction being so abysmal, vast areas of the country were virtually blacked out for almost ten years. But the audience we did reach was the audience that had supported the theatre for years.

I suspect that most of us working in television in those years recognized, to some degree, that we were living on borrowed time. Our consuming fear was that what would happen if the West Coast ever got its hands on television. For myself, the night "I Love Lucy" came on the air, my stomach turned cold. It was not that I spurned the show—it was a block-buster for its time and deserved a place on any reputable schedule. What depressed me was its point of origin. I could envisage the grinning delight of account executives throughout the land. They were at home with the technical precision of film and the B-picture mentality that was Hollywood's bench mark. I foresaw waves of pressures that would engulf the networks. "Get television out of New York!—Go West, General!—Go West, Bill!—That's where the gold is!"

For many practical reasons, the great hegira did not begin for another three years. But by 1953-'54 the stampede was in full cry. But even then, some vestige of network control was retained; many of the major shows, such as Playhouse 90, were produced by talent trained in the East.

But the hand-writing was on the wall. By 1955 not one of the dramatic series that had captivated television's original audience was still on the air. Studio One, Philco Playhouse, Kraft Theatre, Robert Montgomery Presents, Ford—all had succumbed to a slow, ignominious death. Few tears were shed for their demise; indeed there was cause for celebration, since with each passing, some fraction of creative control was wrested from the networks by the advertising executives and their confreres at Screen Gems, Warner Brothers, Paramount, et al. The tragic waste for which the industry as a whole was responsible, was the loss of creative personnel

By the end of the '50s, the atmosphere of television was so stultifying to the imagination that 95% of the brightest talents had been driven out of the industry, never to return: Fred Coe, Franklin Shaffner, Sidney Lumet, Bob Mulligan, Arthur Penn, Ralph Nelson, George Roy Hill. I was one among the expendables, one of many veterans who watched a dream die. Equally hurtful to television's good name and condition was the loss of the audience whose allegiance had made the progress of our early years possible.

At its peak, I suspect that audience never exceeded 20% of the present viewing public. It was, however, a highly responsive and discriminating audience, numbering some 5,000,000 homes. From a theatrical perspective that's a somewhat massive clientele—roughly three times as many as ever saw "Life with Father" over a seven year stretch. Yet, measured by a yard-stick of cost per thousand, it's a negligible minority—and negligible it has become to the program planners in television for the last twenty years.

I know of no official survey that has explored this audience today, but from years of personal observation I must conclude that little more than a handful ever turn to television for anything but news or sports. A rather substantial number have assigned their sets to the attic or the scrap pile. Newton Minow was coolly accurate when he described television as a vast wasteland.

Subsequent efforts to convert that wasteland into a flowering landscape have been colored by ineptitude and downright ignorance. Wtih unbroken regularity, members of Congress and the FCC have cast the networks in the villain's role. Every effort has been made to strip them of production control and return it to the advertising agencies or local stations. No policy could more effectively foster a deterioration of program quality nor more surely guarantee the continuance of an arid wasteland.

If the Golden Age deserves any emulation, it is because, within that brief span of years, the networks were in unchallenged command. I cannot condone much of their conduct since; indeed I deeply deplore many of their practices. But I remain convinced that there is no effective way of improving the daily diet on television but to invest the networks with total authority, and then to hold them rigorously responsible for developing a schedule that better

responds to the needs of the people as a whole, even to that 10% now so denigrated and ignored.

The common assumption today is that most of us who pioneered those early years were fatuous idealists, so out of tune with the realities of commercial broadcasting our demise was foreordained. There are rebuttals to this assumption that are seldom given voice. First, the list of creative people I cited earlier suffered a defeat in no other branch of the entertainment world, only television. All have had distinguished and continuing careers in the theatre in pictures, or both.

Perhaps I would be less sanguine that television could ever recapture the excitement of its infant years were it not for two events, with one of which I was closely associated.

At an early date I was firmly convinced that, given time, television could mount a schedule of dramatic productions to challenge the best the theatre had to offer. Within a little over ten years I was granted the opportunity to test that conviction with "Play of the Week." During the year and a half of its survival there were many disappointments. Some productions were but pale replicas of the orginals. Three at least did, however, meet that challenge head-on:—"The Iceman Cometh," "No Exit" and "The Dybbuk." These I had seen in the theatre—some more than once—so that my reactions were severely objective. No production on the stage ever, in my estimation, came close to matching the impact of those three performances on television. Subjectively I knew that I derived a deeper creative satisfaction from "The Iceman" than for any of my 30-odd productions in the theatre, from "Reunion in Vienna" to "Both Your Houses." It is scarcely incidental to point out that, while "Play of the Week" had a sponsor, I never met him, never saw him.

The second event was "The Masterpiece Theatre" production of "The Six Wives of Henry VIII" and "Elizabeth Regina." With these efforts I had no connection whatever. I can report, however, that as a reasonably consistent theatre-goer for close to fifty years, this was dramatic entertainment of a very high calibre. Certainly nothing I have seen in the theatre in the last five years has matched the dramatic impact of these two series, and I suspect the performance of Glenda Jackson as Elizabeth I will take its place among the great achievements of this generation. Again, I point out that these productions were mounted without benefit of a commercial sponsor.

"The Masterpiece Theatre" brings me back to the essential problem of realizing television's promise as a theatrical medium. If no sponsor had a hand in the production of those series, who paid the bill? The answer is, of course, the British public. This does not mean that Britain has no commercial networks, nor that advertisers are frozen off the air. They do indeed have commercial television in England—but this was a BBC production, supported by the licensing of television receivers.

Even recognizing the complexity of revising the whole economic structure of broadcasting in this country, the resistance that would be summoned to combat such a suggestion, the habitual ineptitude of our Congress in releasing money to the arts without constant, disruptive interference, I yet maintain that some such condition must be achieved if television is to escape from the pervasive mediocrity of its present schedule.

Indeed there are already threats to TV's iron-clad economy that could impose a sea-change at any time. Pay television, CATV, cassettes, all represent some form of assessment on the public to finance the costs of production without reliance on advertising revenue.

There are so many estimates of cost vs. income in all these ventures, that I choose only the simplest formulas. A schedule of twenty hours a week (high) of dramatic entertainment at a cost of $200,000 an hour would run to $208,000,000 a year. An assessment of of 10¢ a week on 90,000,000 sets (low) would bring in $418,000,000 a year.

It could be done. If it were, the Golden Age would not be a time to look back on with nostalgia. It would be the years ahead for which too many have waited too long.

WORTHINGTON MINER can rightly claim that he has been in television as long as the image orthicon. He was program director at CBS in the late 1940's when all stations went dark at 9 pm. He was the first producer of the CBS dramatic series, Studio One. He has acted, lectured widely and is currently the President of the American Academy of Dramatic Art.


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"COMING TO YOU TONIGHT, LIVE..."

BY HEYWOOD HALE BROUN

Live theatrical television had its rude dawn in the year 1939, leaped to meridian height and dazzling luster in the late 1940s and early '50s, declined thereafter, and now exists only for the dissemination of election returns and moon landings.

Desperate, fear-driven, immediate, it was an art practiced by wet-handed actors—"In this shot, Woodie, I want you to come running across the room, stop in these footmarks, see the body, and give a terrible scream. As you do, drop your left shoulder about six inches so we can come in over you with camera three. Then, when you see the gun pointed at you from the window, jump two and a half feet to the left and crouch down. Don't go further than that, baby, or we'll be shooting past the end of the wall."

Then there were the harried directors: "Oh, my God, camera one just blew out. Somebody get out on the floor and signal the actors to stay close together, because I won't be able to manage any cross shots with two cameras. Two and three will have to divide one's shots in the fight scene. We'll try to work it out during the commercial."

And confined writers—"You're not writing for movies, Joe. You've got an actor getting out of a full-dress suit and into tennis shorts during the middle break. You better write a scene where he talks through the door while he's changing. You know, he says what fun it is to play tennis or something like that."

On the front of every TV camera is a little red light which glows when the camera is transmitting. Sometimes the camera rolls so close to the actor that he almost feels the glow of light warming his cheek, and he knows that some millions of people are staring into his eyes. This can be an unnerving thought, particularly if the message being sent by those eyes is, "My God, what do I say next?"

Ideally one might suppose that the camera should be ignored, but then the danger is that some great moment of acting will be lost because, by

ignoring the lens one has moved out of its narrow range, or because, by turning one's expressive features to the left instead of the right, one is giving one's all to a little red eye that is closed. The watching millions then, like the people at the wrong tangential spot of a theater in the round, can see only as much of your feelings as you can transmit through your haircut.

The TV actor then, could not, in the grand theatrical manner, rush into his role with the fiery abandon which takes the whole stage by right. Some part of his brain had to stay detached to think in practical terms of chalk marks, of angles, and even of artificial changes of pace. These were indicated to the actor by a man crouching just out of camera range. If it appeared that a little too much brio was bringing the show to a close a minute early, the man would make taffy-pulling motions with his hands.

Then some poor actor, about to launch into a breakneck speech of denunciation, would, on the spot, have to find a way to do it with slow and solemn majesty. If there had been a little too much solemnity and the show looked as if it might run too long, little circular gestures showed the actors that the philosophical pipe-smoking scene which had been planned to unfold like a beautiful flower, would have to be shot from a gun.

One famous director gave his cast such a talk about pace just before the show that despite all the taffy-pulling they finished a half-hour mystery drama with five minutes to spare. Fortunately, it concerned itself with the murder of a jazz musician, and the surviving members rounded out the show with a jam session, presumably in celebration of the triumph of justice. Not every show had a band, however, and all of us had the nightmare that some day we might be called on to recite something apposite while the clock crawled painfully to the appointed hour of ending.

At the same time that one part of the mind had to be set aside to take care of all these mantraps and spring guns in the artistic path, the other part had to make sure that none of these showed. It is possible for actors of grand manner on the stage to count the house while bringing thrilling meaning to Lear's "Let me not be mad," or Hamlet's "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt."

The limitation of live TV gave it, somehow, a special and exciting form. For all that it scattered its image across the country, it had a peculiar intimacy.

Movie cameras could go almost anywhere, could watch mobs from towers, peer up through oceans, sweep the horizons from airplanes, and through special effects go entirely outside the natural world. Time was plentiful, and screens were large. Living color of sense of structure from seeing the whole eye.

The clumsy TV cameras could make only horizontal creepings and a little limited booming up and down. Because an hour show had to be done

in an hour, they could not pause for regrouping and had to be careful not to photograph each other desperately crisscrossing the studio.

Forced to look at the world through a knothole, the directors and writers of this shortest of golden ages created a kind of sonata form which drew its intensity from the very simplicity of the materials at hand. Because the illusion was so limited, words and acting had a larger part to play. Shakespeare wrote scenery—"But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad, Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill." And although I don't remember anything quite up to that in what I did or saw, the TV pioneers made a great deal out of a two-walled room, a cardboard front porch, and a short stretch of canvas street.

Actors were found and developed who could keep the two minds of practicality and dream in simultaneous operation. If it was never easy, at least they never let you know.

It would be silly to deny that all this ingenuity was very often used to project piffle, but the real miracle of the fifties was how much first-rate and near first-rate stuff was done under the handicaps of censorship, insufficient time, and an insatiable demand for hours and hours and hours of novelty every week.

Censorship was not only the chief political nervousness of one of our less attractive decades, it was the most contagious. Sometimes it seemed the subject of murder might be banned if only a few lifers would write in to complain of the unsympathetic light in which their specialty was sometimes put.

I remember the first reading of a TV play where an actor came to the line, "Don't be an idiot," and the producer stopped him and said, "Better make that 'Don't be a fool.' "

"Are the idiots getting angry?" incautiously inquired the actor, and was crushed under the stern answer, "When you consider what a large percentage of American hospital space is given over to problems of mental illness, you realize that the word 'idiot' might easily give offense."

Television in those days often attempted to make its forbidden meanings clear by the Significant Expression. Closeups of an actor and actress looking at each other could make crystal-clear the existence of adultery on a show where you couldn't say "hell."

Sometimes you would hear a director say, "Now kids, in this section where you are talking about perhaps not going dancing tonight, I want you to let them see that you are tiring of each other, are beginning to feel that soon you will end the affair. Don't give me too much disgust, though, because in the next scene when you meet by chance in the hotel lobby I am going to have a shot of the clerk recognizing you, and when I cut to you I want you to show—when you are talking about Jim's new job—that you would

like to register and go upstairs once more."

Well, if it was all so terrible, you may say, why am I mooning on about it as if it were a big loss? Modern taping facilities give you all the continuity of performance and free you from the fear of saying something by accident, failing to make a costume change, forgetting a line, falling down while running across the studio, or any of the other fears that used to flit through the head after the director had said, "Sixty seconds, everyone. Have a good show and spaceman's luck." (This last was a line from a daily children's space opera and was frequently used as that bit of wit which ought to loosen the actors up a little. It did not.)

Taping is done as continuously as possible, stopping only for major changes of set and costume, but in the event of grievous error, the act is done over again.

There is, of course, a little less energy this time through and when someone else makes what seems a larger mistake, the whole cast pulls up and plays at rehearsal energy level in order to save themselves for the third taping. It is this piece of group lethargy which is immortalized, however.

The few theatrical TV shows which are still seen live have lost the daring fiber of the past, and as the actors go through their parts, men with large cardboard pages thrust the script at them from just outside camera range. These pages are called cue cards or idiot cards (that word again!) and the men are skillful enough so that you can appear to be staring into the girl's eyes while reading the words "I love you" over her shoulder; but people don't really look the same when they are reading as when they are wooing, and the more conscientious actors, even doing the shows every day as the soap operas are done, try to learn all but the medical jargon which makes up such a large part of these shows. Such stuff sounds as if it's being read even when the surgeon says it while reaching for the scalpel.

Even before the cue-card days some actors used to scribble a reminder or two on the floors, the furniture, and the walls; one man I knew spent hours transferring the whole of his part to every flat surface on the set. Even in a show where he had the single line, "Man Overboard!" cued by a sound-effect splash, he inked the cry on the ship railing where he was to lean.

"Why take a chance?" he said, but then, he is the actor who, on hearing that a dog was to be used in one scene, said, "Get a big white one so we can write on him."

The only means of preserving any of the prodigies that were performed in those full and frantic years was the Kinescope. This process consisted of setting up a movie camera in front of a television set and filming what appeared on it.

It soon became obvious that some better way had to be found to preserve and reuse TV shows.

Film came first, film which in the beginning had supplied TV with the stuff that was no longer acceptable fro second-run children's morning matinees in small towns, Western movies in which the heroes still wore white hats, and animated cartoons in which innumerable and identical cats and mice made endless war.

The studios began to turn out dehydrated B films to order and fitted them up with hosts (a host was a passé movie star in a fancy bathrobe who unflinchingly summarized the plot of what you were about to see) and "formats" in which groups of these little pictures were tied together: "Great Stories of Passion," "Classic Theatre" or—if the star who did the introductions was famous enough—"Derek Raythorne's Favorite Tales."

I shall never forget one of these in which an actor looked up from a fireplace in which a glass blaze flickered soundlessly and introduced to us a modern version of De Maupassant's "The Necklace." Presumably in order to make it one of his favorite tales, it had been fitted out with a happy ending.

"If we had not spent all those years slaving to buy the new necklace we should never have discovered each other, my darling!"

"Oh, how right you are and what a happy accident it was"—or words to that effect.

There is in Hollywood a square white house with a square foyer. A staircase with square railings runs up the left side wall of this foyer, and I have been in the house hundreds of times during the second half of double bills. Wholesomely zany families lived in that house, and they did things you wouldn't believe. At least, I never believed them.

When the movies began to decline the house was shut up for a while, but when TV moved to the coast, the funny families moved back in and began to do the half-hour series that were to make some of the performers more famous than presidents, prime ministers, and kings.

Here was the beauty of the filmed series. It could be shown again and again, and when it had reached a peak of popularity, its elements could be extracted and made into plays, novels and full-length theater movies, an example of the reuse of material unequaled outside a termite hill.

It seems to me, looking back, that old time live TV acting was crossing Niagara Falls blindfolded while people in helicopters tugged randomly at the ends of the balance pole. As we took our tentative steps along the narrow wire of the script, a terrifying swirl of activity took place just outside the edge of our concentration.

As we played scenes on lonely plaster mountaintops, hoarse voices just below the crest husked the news that camera three had burned out and that closeup crosscuts must be abandoned until camera four could be dragged over to take its place. Standing astride the Himalayas ankle deep in bleached cornflakes, we, and the watching millions, could hear the approach of the

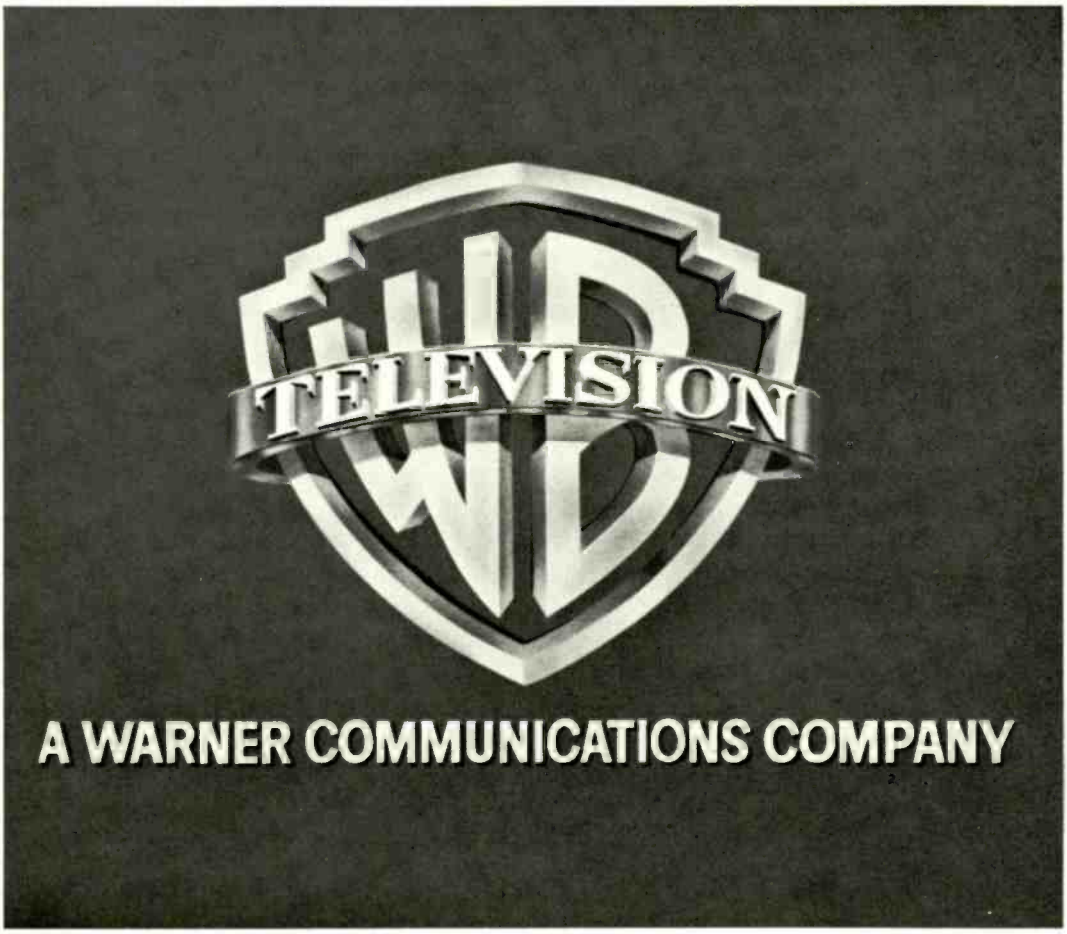
furniture-bumping, cable-jumping camera as it rushed to the rescue. It was at such moments that a claw colder than the wind on the mountaintop tore at our insides and we realized that our memories needed a St. Bernard with a little barrel of mimeographed pages around his neck.

Somehow, almost always, we made it, and exchanged trembling smiles and handshakes during that last commercial and the sacred moment when our names appeared on the credits—that proud roster of the brave who had fought their way through another death-defying TV show.

Everybody seems to be glad now that those terrifying times are over and we are able to etch our artistry onto the easily alterable tablets of the tape machine. Smoothly, giving our full concentration to the niceties of our art we, to return to the original metaphor, dance across the wire, turn an occasional fearless somersault, and—yet—is it ever as exciting as those trips across the Falls?

(Portions of this article are adapted from Mr. Broun's memoir, "A Studied Madness," published by Doubleday)

HEYWOOD HALE BROUN has been acting and writing for some 25 years. But his fame today is owing largely to his wit and style as a special assignment sportscaster on CBS News. He's the man with a thousand sports jackets, appearing in a different one every Saturday, to advise viewers what's new in football, baseball, racing, sailing or croquet. He is the son of the noted columnist, Heywood Broun.


TELEVISION
A WARNER COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

AND SO, KICKING AND SCREAMING, INTO THE TUBE...

BY CARL REINER

"How would you like to make one hundred and twenty-five dollars for an afternoon's work?"

"What do I have to do?"

"A five or six minute comedy bit."

"Hey, now, that's what I call a good job. Where do I do this?"

"In Maggie McNellis's Crystal Room."

"Where's that? A hotel?"

"It's a *television* show . . ."

"Oh" ("Oh" because I hadn't yet bought a television set.)

A hundred and twenty-five dollars for an afternoon! For doing *a few minutes* of my act! A hundred and twenty-five dollars was the last salary I was paid for doing my entire act for a full week at a resort hotel. And for that same one-twenty-five I had to take charge of the game nights and dance contests, m.c. the concerts and play social director to a horde of sullen guests, all manifestly uneager for direction. Such were the joys of what bearded young actors now call "learning one's craft." We learned a lot. And we starved a lot.

"I'll take it."

* * *

Time passes. Now it's a week or so later. If I weren't proud, I could say I'd been on the tube.

"How would you like to do it again on the Kyle MacDonnell show?"

"The same five minutes?" Sure.

"The same salary?"

I took it.

Say, now, this television isn't a bad thing! So, it's not legit. But it's a great place to pick up extra money while waiting for the right Broadway show to come along. People don't have to know.

It was the end of the 1940s'. Broadway was the artistic and financial marketplace for serious artists. Even for the less serious artists, for those who dreamed of Filmland's gilded splendor, Broadway was still the springboard into the Beverly Hills swimming pools. Television was all right for wrestlers, for Kid Galivan and Foodini. And, later, for some reason, Milton Berle. (Did he know something he wasn't letting on?) Television was also for bargaining:

"Now, just a minute, my client can get a hundred and twenty-five dollars doing a *five minute* comedy spot on TV. If you want Carl in your Broadway show ('Inside USA'), you'll have to pay him at least a hundred and a half."

Television was also a good adjunct, a nice lever:

"My client is getting *a hundred and fifty* a week in a bit in a Broadway hit ('Inside USA'). Now, if you want him to do your series on ABC ('The Fashion Story'), you'll have to make it worth his while. Eighty dollars a show? That's for 13 shows, right? . . . We'll take it."

Another client (Dick Lewine) who had been earning two hundred and forty dollars a week in "Inside USA" was offered seventy-five a week to m.c. a half hour on TV. The agent was insulted, "We," he said, "are insulted."

But actors can't always be choosers. Until Broadway beckoned again, all insults were welcomed and stoically endured.

CBS mounted a melange of comedy sketches ("The Fifty-fourth Street Revue") and dared to offer a hundred and twenty-five dollars a week.

"But Maggie McNellis paid that for an afternoon's work and she's not a major network."

"Look, Carl, take it until we can get you something in a Broadway show."

* * *

It was 1950. If one looked carefully, one might have recognized elements in this revue series that augured well for the future of television. Young, gifted writers and composers—George Axelrod, Max Wilk, Al Selden—were involved. But neither my agent nor I looked too closely. We were watching Broadway. We believed in the Stage. And in eight shows a week and suppers at Sardi's and matinee ladies who spent the first act taking off their overshoes (as Ethel Barrymore noted), and the third act putting them back on. We were Theatre. TV was for Howdy Doody.

* * *

To my agent:

"Sure, I know I have a 13 week contract but you've got to get me released. Tell CBS I'll pay them for the seven weeks still to run. . . . All right, I'll tell them myself. They're reasonable men.

"No, it's not that I'm unhappy. It's a nice little show. But I've just had a sensational offer to star in a new Broadway revue. It's called 'Pretty Penny' and George Kaufman is directing. The music's by Harold Rome and Michael Kidd is doing the dances. It's everything I've been dreaming about. . . . Well, no it's not a lot of money. . . . For the summer try-out I'll get the minimum . . . seventy-five dollars a week. . . . Give this up for *television?* Look, I said I'd buy out my contract. . . ."

* * *

Networks do have hearts. CBS released me. "Pretty Penny" was an almost instant flop. It never came to Broadway. Some of its musical numbers and sketches, as well as some of its performers (David Burns, Lenore Lonegan and I) ended up in the Broadway show, "Alive and Kicking." In six weeks we were still alive but no longer kicking. A disaster.

The decade of the Fabulous Fifties was under way. I bought a seven inch television set to see what Maggie McNellis and Kyle MacDonnell were doing. Instead I saw what Max Liebman, Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca were doing.

"That," I said firmly to my wife, "is what I should be doing."

At about this time, Max Liebman, who had seen me flailing about in "Alive and Kicking" had a similar thought.

"Max Liebman just called, Carl. He wants you to join 'The Show of Shows' as a regular."

"Is there an escape clause in case I'm offered a Broadway show?"

"I don't think so."

"I'll take it."

I took it and I never looked back. I was one of the lucky ones. I was there when the going was good.

CARL REINER needs, as they say, no introduction. He was one of the original company of Max Liebman's "Show of Shows." He has been a regular on the home screen for more than 20 years. He is also a novelist, playwright, director and TV panelist.

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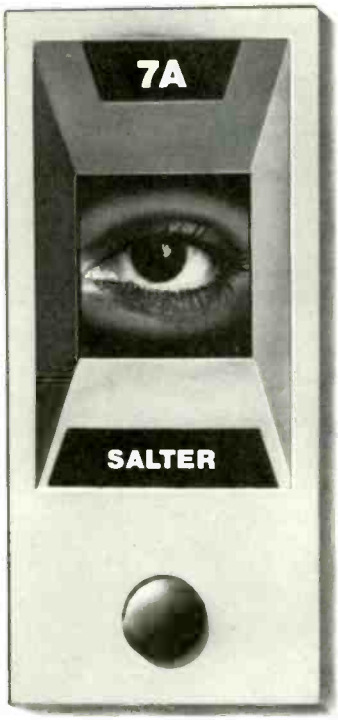

"THE STRANGERS IN 7A"

PALOMAR PICTURES INTERNATIONAL, INC. TV PRESENTS A MARK CARLINER PRODUCTION "THE STRANGERS IN 7A" STARRING ANDY GRIFFITH, IDA LUPINO, MICHAEL BRANDON, JAMES A. WATSON JR. AND INTRODUCING SUZANNE HILDUR SCREENPLAY BY ERIC ROTH BASED ON THE NOVEL BY FIELDEN FARRINGTON PRODUCED BY MARK CARLINER DIRECTED BY PAUL WENDKOS.

TO BE BROADCAST THIS FALL ON THE CBS NETWORK TUESDAY NIGHT MOVIE.

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A DIVISION OF BRISTOL-MYERS COMPANY

OF GLAMOUR, GRAMMAR AND GOOD TIMES GONE

BY GOODMAN ACE

Call me deprived, but I missed being a true pioneer in television. I never wrote for Roberta Quinlan, Gigi Durstine or Captain Video. Being pretty shrewd in those days, I knew the picture tube would soon blow over. Viewers—that funny new word—would shortly be returning to radio and the incomparable one-inch screen up there in their heads.

Naturally, it took some time for me to accept the reality of television. It was 1952 when my agent finally signed me on as writer for a TV comedian who shall be nameless. Milton Nameless.

The publicity attending my plunge into the new medium stopped no presses. The *Times*, at the end of a column announcing the start of the Number One comedian's fourth triumphant season, had this after-thought: "Goodman Ace has been signed as one of the writers."

We were a crew of six. Six brains for our fastidious star to pick. If he happened to find two or three jokes unappetizing—in a weekly smorgasbord of some 200, all rip-snorters—he would ask, "Can't you write something funnier?"

Since the one-liners were all of the same exquisite genre—insult jokes—the lot of them could have been deleted without upsetting our skimpy story line. Oscar Wildes we weren't. But it hardly lifts a writer's ego to find that he's turning out Funny Stuff on demand, like rolls of wallpaper.

In the early days of television, cynics now say, people would watch anything that moved. Sometimes that's all they got.

We did try to elevate the level of the humor and make the sketches "relevant." But it was soon apparent that we were operating under the Big Time Comedy Rule: "Man proposes, the Star disposes."

Mr. Television, who invented the hour variety show and was a household word long before Spiro Agnew, had a high sense of mission. That is, he knew every camera angle, every writers' angle, every upstaging trick and every sly device we were employing to lift the humor above the cretin level. He dis-

liked subtlety. Also wit, whimsy and the off-beat joke. Topicality made him edgy. His argument was that while *he* appreciated such jests they were far over the heads of the audience. As he put it, "The peoples won't get it."

If obliged to cast an eye back over the Golden Years, I'd prefer not to remember the jokes the writers proposed and the star disposed. But I'll cite one example.

We had a lively script on politics. As lively as one could have with Eisenhower in the White House. Anyway, the public was well aware that the President frequently flew out to Colorado for a game of golf. The joke: "She's so dumb she thinks Washington, D.C. stands for Denver, Colorado."

Our star shook his head. "We've been rehearsing since Thursday," he confided. "This is Tuesday and I just got it."

I said, "Congratulations." He said, "I mean, if it took that long, the peoples won't get it either. Better think of another joke to go here."

"How about saying, 'She's so dumb she thinks the Electoral College is a school for TV repair men.' "

"The . . . Electoral . . . *College?*", he puzzled.

"No, no, that won't do," I said quickly. "We'll come up with something else."

In the three years we wrote for Mr. Television, our brains were not only picked but washed and hung out to dry. As they say of the Paris peace talks, "There was no meeting of minds."

After I was fired, I finally decided to leave. Reluctantly. Somehow, I had grown to like the man. He could manipulate an audience as no other comedian ever could. He knew his trade because he'd invented it. We who wrote for him inevitably learned something. But now it was time to move on to greener —and pinker—pastures. (Green and pink were the only colors my early set dealt in.)

Compared to the chaos of most early TV, my next assignment was a deluxe accommodation at a rest home. It ran twelve years, and it was Nirvana all the way. The Perry Como Show, in restrospect, was the nearest thing to not being in television at all. The critics, whose affection for our star never wavered, called him Perry Comotose. The mood was contagious.

Perry was born relaxed. Mr. Nice-Guy, unlike Mr. Television, carried no whistle to blow at the troops. He didn't shout. Mostly, he didn't even talk. But when a song, a joke, or a dance number displeased him, his raised eyebrow was a clap of thunder out of China 'cross the bay.

To the writers, Como was better than tranquilizers. First, we had very little to write. Second, he read his lines casually, a few words dropped softly on his way to the next song. When he sang he was an artist.

It's incredible, looking back, but the Como show moved like a ballerina on ice from the very first line of the very first script. "Good evening, and

welcome to our first show for NBC. How do you like it so far? . . . Drags, doesn't it?"

Oh, we did have a few testy moments, we scriveners and the star. There were a few lifts of the brow each week as I read the lines aloud to Perry over lunch. We strived for *le bon mot,* not *le mot juste.*

When the small screen brings you a man who can sing like Perry, you hardly need dialogue by Noel Coward. In consequence, our scripts consisted of deathless lines like "And now, in a gayer mood, we take you to South America. . . ."

Or, getting a bit wordy, "Tell me, Rosemary Clooney, have you seen any good shows since you've been in New York?"

"Oh, have I ever," breathes Rosemary. "Last night I saw 'Fiddler on the Roof.' " To which Perry replies, "Isn't that a beautiful song in the second act?" Whereupon there's a bell tone and Perry and Rosemary are into "Sunrise, Sunset."

For this you need writers? You bet you do.

Song cues and other functional lines were regularly scrutinized by the producer and his staff for sneaky "plugs." Those were the years of the "payola" scandals, remember, and every writer was suspect. (Why, everybody knew that Joe —— had a six year supply of Scotch in his basement because he had casually mentioned Seagram's—or was it Johnny Walker?—so many times on the air.)

So suspicious was the mood in those days that we had to fight to get the most innocent jokes past the producer. Once we had a girl singer as guest and the joke called for her to look in her hand mirror, shudder, and say, "I look like the Avon Lady called and I wasn't home."

A small jest, but it's the small jests that sweeten life. And how we had to fight for that one! Until we demonstrated a willingness to sign affidavits, the producer was ready to believe that we were getting contraband cases of lipstick from an Avon courier every week.

There were other No-No's on the Como show. Controversy was strictly verboten. No messages, no opinions. Ethnic humor was taboo, also. The dialogue had to be choir-boy clean. Once we did manage to insert the line, "Heck hath no fury like a woman scorned" but that was really a private joke for the writers.

In contrast to today's highly permissive writing *(vide* Laugh-in and Dean Martin), the Como show was rather sedate. The only time a viewer ever took offense was when Perry sang Kol Nidre during the Jewish holidays. He sang it wearing a white yarmulke and standing in a soft white spotlight. The Gentiles deemed this solo a bit too sectarian—"that little cap and all." The following year, Perry sang the Kol Nidre without the yarmulke. This time the Jews complained! How dare Mr. Como sing this most sacred chant without

wearing a yarmulke!

Our beloved star knew a ticklish situation when he saw one. He resolved the controversy by announcing he'd never sing Kol Nidre again.

As the Golden Years rolled on, I was engaged to write a number of "Spectaculars," as the 90 minute variety shows were then called. Now they've been de-valued to Specials, which sounds less elegant—and they certainly are.

There was nothing really special about most Spectaculars, except for a roster of glittering Big Name stars. This meant that the writers had not just one towering ego to please, but several.

It's curious, but what remains most vividly in mind from those years is the horrible grammar of the Big Stars. No matter how soundly a line was constructed, it would come out, "A person has to take their chances," or, "I feel badly about this."

On one Special, our star repeatedly said, "Between you and I." Backstage after the first rehearsal, I found the cue card and double-checked. Yes, it did say, "Between you and me." Not wishing to diagram the sentence, explaining that between is a preposition taking the objective case, I simply underlined "me" in heavy black crayon. At the next day's rehearsal he read it again, "Between you and I."

Inspired, I changed the line. This time it read, "Strictly between *us.*" That would throw him. It didn't. The night of the show he read the line, with perfect aplomb, "Strictly between you and I."

Ah, well, even David Frost has lapses in grammar. And he went to Cambridge!

Grammar was no problem when writing for Tallulah. She talked too fast for anyone to notice her syntax. Besides, she was the sort who would have corrected *our* grammar, had the opportunity come up.

Miss Bankhead was, as the world knows, one of the stormiest, most volatile, characters in theatrical history. What became a cliche—"A day away from Tallulah is like a month in the country"—was all too true. Especially if you wrote for her.

None of the writing staff had ever met Tallulah when our work began. Our assignment was to capture her style, her wit on the basis of what we had read about her. There was plenty to read but nothing prepared us for Talluah in person.

I well remember her first entrance into our small office. She was wearing a black sweater and slacks at half mast. She carried a white caracul coat. Her hair was long and her lipstick had missed her lips by a chin. We stood up and she stared at us briefly. We had resolved not to be bowled over by her.

"Are you gentlemen the authors?", she asked.

Suddenly elevated from gag writers to gentlemen to authors, firm resolve vanished. What a lady! Then Tallulah put on her glasses and read our first

joke. "I don't think it's funny," she said. We objected humbly. We thought it was funny. Tallulah went on to the next joke.

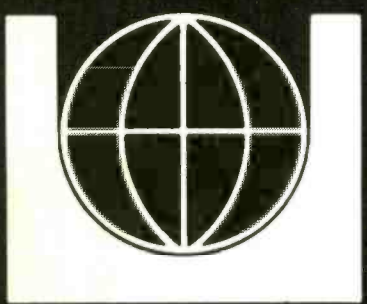
Rather than discard the script we had prepared with so much good will, I suggested Miss Bankhead wait until after the first rehearsal, then offer suggestions.

As she rose to go, she looked at me and said, "What's your name?" I told her. "Oh, darling!, she exclaimed. "It's *you!* I'm so glad."

Happily, Tallulah did get all the laughs we had promised her and from that day forward she was putty in our hands. She had grandeur and zest and she appreciated wit. I miss her.

There was a style in those dear, dead days that I also miss. Between you and I, as a certain famous entertainer would say, they were very merry.

GOODMAN ACE came to television comedy after 20 years of solid success in radio. He was writer, producer and co-star (with his wife, Jane) of the phenomenal "Easy Aces." He has been, at various times, a drama critic, a CBS executive and weekly essayist for The Saturday Review. He is now a regular contributor to the magazine, World.



Firsts from...
Universal Television

1962
First 90-minute series
THE VIRGINIAN

1966
First motion picture made expressly for television
WORLD PREMIERE

1968
First movie series with revolving stars
THE NAME OF THE GAME

1969
First rotating series with umbrella title
THE BOLD ONES
("The Doctors," "The Lawyers" and "The Protectors")

1970
First mini or limited edition series
FOUR IN ONE
("McCloud," "Night Gallery,"
"The Psychiatrist" and
"San Francisco International Airport")

1971
First two-part, four-hour
world premiere motion picture
VANISHED

Vi·a·com

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The latest word in television's lexicon.

REALITY AND TELEVISION: AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. EDMUND CARPENTER

NOTE: *Edmund Carpenter is a noted anthropologist with a special interest in the effects of mass media on society. Among his works are* Explorations in Communication, *which he co-edited with Marshall McLuhan, and* They Became What They Beheld, *written in collaboration with Ken Heyman, the photographer. Dr. Carpenter was interviewed at his home in New York City in June, 1972, by John Carden, Assistant Professor of Communication Arts at the New York Institute of Technology.*

Q. Dr. Carpenter, what effect do you believe television has on the viewer's concept of reality?

A. Well, I'm convinced that we judge television as if it were a modified form of print—and, of course, find it wanting. What we overlook is the reality it reveals. Unlike print, television doesn't transmit bits of information. Instead it *transports* the viewer. It takes his spirit on a trip—an instant trip. On live shows, it takes his spirit to real events in progress. But here a contradiction occurs: though television may make the viewer's spirit an actual witness to the spectacle of life, he cannot live with this. Thus, if the viewer sees a criminal making ready to murder a sleeping woman and can't warn her, he suffers and is afflicted because his being is phantasmal. So he participates solely as dreamer, in no way responsible for events that occur. *All television becomes dream.* This is the inner trip, the search for meaning beyond the world of daily appearance. It's the prophet "blinded so that sight is yielded for insight."

Television is actually a *blind* medium. We may think of it as visual, recording a world "out there." But it really records a world within. Sight surrenders to insight, and dream replaces outer reality. Television, far from expanding consciousness, repudiates it in favor of the dream.

Q. Is the effect of television as potent, for example, as that produced by the use of LSD?

A. Television is the real psychic leap of our time. It's a trip far more potent than LSD. It turns thoughts inward, revealing new, unsuspected reali-

ties. Those who prefer this inner reality live in a world apart. They find life heartlessly indifferent to the needs of their imaginative life.

Arthur Bremer, the would-be assassin of Governor George Wallace, wrote, "I like to think that I was living with a television family and there was no one yelling at home and no one hit me."

According to the *New York Times*, a commanding officer of a U.S. Army base in Germany attributed the high divorce rate of servicemen stationed there to the absence of English language television. "When they go home at night," he said, "there's nothing to do but talk to each other, and what they see and hear they don't like."

Let me quote from a video tape I recently screened:

Girl talking directly into camera: "Let me tell you how much I love you . . ."

Male voice interrupting: "Tell *me, n*ot the camera."

Girl: "I express myself better this way . . ."

Male: "Look, if we can't talk directly, maybe we shouldn't marry."

Girl: "It isn't that I don't love you. I do. But in real life you direct me. With your eyes. This way I can tell you how I really feel about you."

When television fans seek correspondence between television and reality, reality often surrenders to television. Recently two communities, each lying within the Salt Lake City broadcasting area, but in another time zone, petitioned the Department of Commerce for re-zoning. They wanted clock time to conform to broadcast time.

Q. Don't members of preliterate cultures also sometimes confuse dreams with reality?

A. No, not really. But dreams, for them, often constitute a focus for their emotions more substantial than reality itself. I don't mean to say that television is *wholly* divorced from external reality. Those who visit this inner world sometimes acquire interesting information. They respond emotionally at the outset of a new situation, believing they know in advance what that situation holds. They say, "Oh, I've seen that before," or simply, "Yes, I know."

I once saw some children who, in real life, had never ridden horses before, mount and ride off as if they had done this all of their lives, which, of course, they had, on television.

Q. You say that television is not totally separated from reality. Don't you think that viewers consider television images "unreal"?

A. Oh, no. In the past, people called print and film images "unreal." They experienced a great need to translate these images back into flesh. Mark Twain, if you'll recall, made his living from public speaking: his readers wanted to see him. Dickens' fans flocked to hear him read works they already knew. Film stars were mobbed in public. Fans wanted to see the "real" Joan Crawford. But no more. Television stars walk the streets unmolested. People

seem almost embarrassed to see them. They don't want to see Lorne Greene in a sports shirt on Maple Street. They expect him to stay in Bonanzaland, looking after those boys, and they hurry home to watch him on television.

Q. To what do you attribute this reluctance to translate television images into flesh?

A. With print, great areas of sensory experience are felt to be missing. Readers experience a necessity to translate images into flesh and statements into actions. Television, by contrast, seems complete in itself. Each television experience seems distinct, self-sufficient, utterly true as itself, judged and motivated and understood in terms of itself alone. Concepts such as causation and purpose appear irrelevant, basic only to the thinking of the past.

Q. Is this sort of apprehension of being familiar to anthropologists?

A. Yes, it is. Dorothy Lee, for example, writes that Trobriand Islanders assumed "the validity of a magical spell lay, not in its results, not in its proof, but in its very being . . . in its realization of its mystical basis." She says that to seek validity through proof was foreign to their thinking.

Q. Do you believe, then, that television viewers tend to "lose themselves" in the situation they see on the screen?

A. In a sense, yes. Because we assume the role of our costume, our information, and our information is our clothing: we clothe ourselves in information. Hence physical nudity is irrelevant.

The image of a public figure, detached from his body by electricity, is transferred to ours. His spirit enters us, possesses us, displacing our private spirit. We wear his image, play his role, assume his identity.

When Eisenhower suffered a heart attack, the stock market fell. On Moratorium Day in Washington, in April of 1971, tens of thousands of marchers, clothed in collective guilt, wore Lieutenant Calley masks. In the pre-literate world, "spirit possession" is thought to occur rarely, under circumstances fraught with mystery and danger. With us, it occurs daily, free from examination. "One only knows that one exists," wrote Goethe, "if one rediscovers oneself in others."

Q. It would seem, then, that television produces a magical system. Do you think this is true?

A. Yes, I do. Television, like radio, promotes magical systems where images, separated from bodies, exist purely in time, with no existence in space. Electronic media everywhere produce this effect. In the United States, the young partly offset it by emphasizing sensate experience. They seek to reunite body and spirit by rediscovering the body. As counterpoint to electronic images, they emphasize spiced foods, sex, nudity, wine, hair, bare feet, nature, tactility, body arts, private conversations, and the like. I say the young *partly* offset this, because to escape from media is difficult. You see, media are really environments, with all the effects geographers and biologists

associate with environments. We live inside our media. *We* are their content. Television images come at us so fast, in such profusion, that they engulf us, tattoo us. We're immersed. It's like skin diving. We're surrounded, and whatever surrounds, involves. Television doesn't just wash over us and then "go out of mind." It goes *into* mind, deep into mind. The subconscious is a world in which we store everything, not something, and television extends the subconscious.

Q. But isn't it possible to classify these experiences?

A. Such experiences are difficult to describe in words. Like dreams or sports, they evade verbal classification. Any picture is a mass of information in a flash. A written caption or narration may classify bits of this information, telling us what to look at and how to respond to it. But most information on television is unclassified—like a telephone directory that hasn't been alphabetized. This is what makes it splendidly attractive to artists and others who seek to create their own worlds. New media allow us to escape from old environments. But they soon imprison us in new environments, namely themselves. For one brief moment we have a clear image of ourselves and our environment, both hitherto invisible because of their proximity. A moment ago I quote Goethe's remark to the effect that one rediscovers himself in others. Technology lifts a man from the engulfing web of society and environment, and allows him to see himself in isolation, to examine himself in depth. But then, slowly, inexorably, it swallows him, binding him to technology as tightly as society ever held him. Where he once knew himself through others, now he knows himself through images over which he generally exerts little control. Our fascination with the life and death of Marilyn Monroe derives, I think, from the fact that the media stole her soul, and took away all personal identity until the only private act left to her was suicide.

Q. So television *does* extend the viewer's dream world.

A. Yes. Its content is the stuff of dreams and its form is pure dream. In fact, you might say that electricity has made angels of us all.

Q. Angels?

A. Not angels in the Sunday school sense of being good and having wings, but spirit freed from flesh, capable of instant transportation anywhere. For example, the moment we pick up a phone, we're nowhere in space, everywhere in spirit. The President on television is everywhere at once. That is Saint Augustine's definition of God: a Being whose center is everywhere, whose borders are nowhere. When a clerk stops waiting on us to answer a phone, we accept this without protest, yet it violates one of our most precious values—barbershop democracy. We accept it because pure spirit now takes precedence over spirit in flesh. In New Guinea, when villagers ignore their leader, the Government may tape record his orders. The next day the assembled community hears his voice coming to them from a radio he holds

in his own hand. Then they obey him.

Q. What further effects do you believe technology has on human behavior?

A. When technology makes behavior explicit, the resulting images often seem more important—even sacred or obscene. Most people swear, but when they hear blasphemy or obscenity on television, film, or radio, action becomes artifact, and the explicit artifact offends them more than the action itself. We know little about this, other than the fact that it's true. Any technology, including language, can make reality frighteningly explicit, especially human reality. T. S. Eliot tells us that human beings cannot stand too much reality, by which he means, I assume, too much explicitness about reality. It's a serious mistake to underestimate the trauma any new technology produces, especially any new communications technology.

Q. Dr. Carpenter, how do you think the young regard media environments?

A. As designs, patterns—what William Blake called "sculptures"—states that have no separate physical existence. We pass temporarily into one or another, and when in any one, it seems overpoweringly real and all other states shadowly. We imagine, of course, that any state we are in is physically real. This makes it most attractive. It doesn't occur to us that only our spirits can enter these realms, and that none of the events experienced there can ever be tested against observed reality. I believe this is one reason the young find nothing incongruous about conflicting reports in the press, radio, and television. That same absence of concern with the contradictory, on the part of preliterate peoples, led the French philosopher Levy-Bruhl to write an entire book in which he concluded that natives suffered from a "pre-logical mentality." He said they weren't bothered by the coexistence of contraries, that they let mutually contradictory reports exist side by side. When we examine closely the examples he offered, we find many remarkably close to modern experiences.

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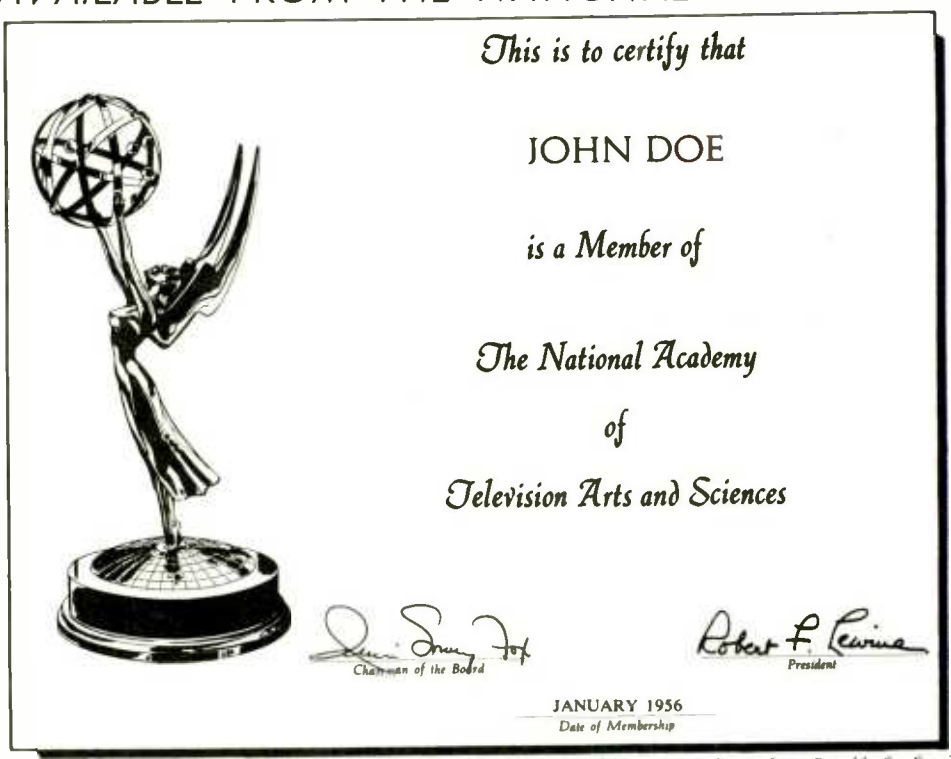

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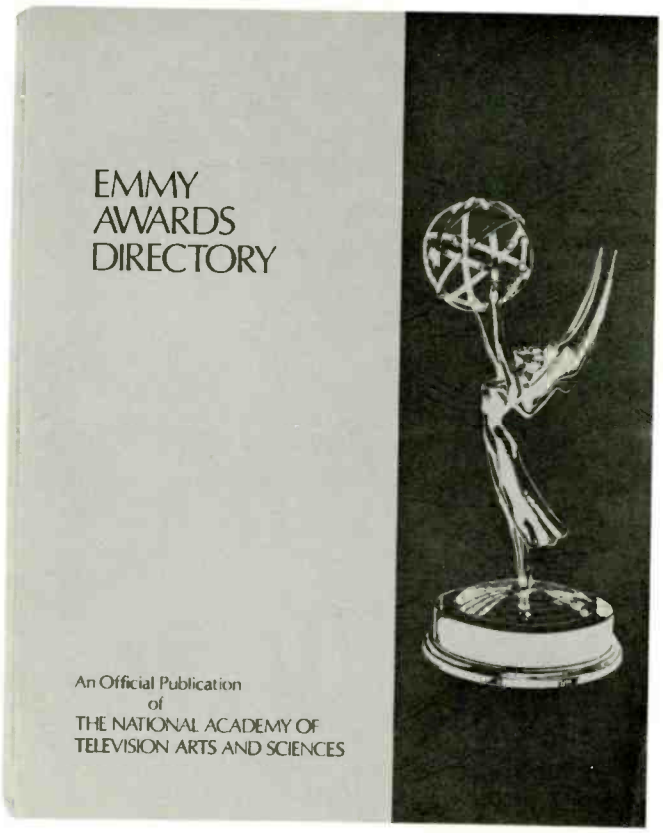

IN DAYTIME TV, THE GOLDEN AGE IS NOW

BY AGNES ECKHARDT NIXON

The term must be defined, of course, its usage analyzed. Since the phrase is customarily employed to designate the past, it would seem that a certain interval of time is required to give any era the full, connotative glow of those words.

Thus, one wonders if Aeschylus or Sophocles knew, while in the throes of creation, that *his* was a Golden Age? Indeed, did Paddy Chayefsky, Tad Mosel, or Horton Foote, as they struggled to fit their work to the dimensions of the small screen console themselves with the thought that they were making television history?

Or were they, rather, plagued by the medium's then inexorable limits of space, time and money? Did they anticipate the catastrophes which can befall a live show? Finally, were they upset by the sure knowledge that the result of their labors, no matter how brilliantly produced and acted, would—after that one performance—vanish forever into the ether?

To be sure the script remained, as did the director and the actors—save those who had been knocked unconscious by a boom mike, broken a leg by tripping over a cable, or suffered a nervous breakdown from those thirty second costume changes. And so, pragmatically speaking, the show could be *re*created. But the mystical coalescence of all that talent, the special moment of magic was irretrievably lost.

Still it *was* a Golden Age of creativity and credibility—as we all acknowledge now—perhaps *because* of the traumas as well as in spite of them.

Well, the trauma may have been forgotten, but it wasn't gone. . . . It simply moved to daytime, where the dramatic serials grapple with the same old perils and pitfalls five times a week, 52 weeks a year, with never a hiatus and nary a rerun.

In case you're interested, that's 260 original half-hour episodes per annum, each produced in a single day, either live or live-on-tape. And how we do it is a question we frequently ask ourselves, since all our nighttime neighbors

are too busy—doing 13 or maybe six originals a year—to inquire. We suffer all the illnesses, births, deaths, psychic traumas, accidents, and natural disasters known to man. Yet the show must—and always does—go on.

Now, I wouldn't want you to get the wrong impression; if the above sounds covetous it's only because we are. Not greedy, just envious. We envy evening hours their vaster amount of time and money, their lavish style of planning, casting and rehearsing.

We covet the space and freedom for interior shooting as opposed to our daily ration of four small studio sets. Upon occasion, we even become paranoid over the fact that our efforts, once aired—no matter how good—are gone forever.

We'd also enjoy the residuals. Having heard that daytime TV provides more than 60 per cent of the networks' profit, we may be forgiven for feeling unappreciated now and then.

Despite all these handicaps, the daytime drama with which I have been associated has held to a high standard of excellence. We're *professionals*, from stagehands to leading ladies. Still, our art has not been accorded the high respect it deserves, though it surely is rising in public esteem.

If we're unappreciated, you may ask, why do we work so hard in daytime TV? What drives us?

That our jobs pay well is surely part of the answer. But it is not the basic one. Moreover, our salaries are meagre alongside the prevailing nighttime scale. No, some other factor must account for the amazing esprit of these companies. I believe it is the pride and stimulation that comes of performing well in the face of all our restrictions and handicaps.

Aside from ability, our work requires a stamina, a tenacity and self discipline of which many people—even talented people—are incapable. Thus a sense of elitism, as intense as it is idiosyncratic, sustains us. (After all, if the Roman gladiators could have it, why not we?) Creative satisfaction also comes from presenting a type of dramatic fare—and often, in the process, performing a public service—which, by its very genre, is unique in television.

For a serial to be successful, it must tell a compelling story about interesting, believable characters. Characters with whom the audience can personally identify or emotionally emphathize. The ingredients are the same for any good dramatic presentation, except for one basic difference: the continuing form allows a fuller development of characterization while permitting the viewers to become more and more involved with the story and its people.

In a nighttime series, though the leads are placed in different situations and challenges week after week, their characters are fairly set. They do not progress or undergo mutations, as the program continues.

In the serial, however, some characters work toward maturity while others regress; they go through psychological cycles, run emotional gamuts from

weakness to strength, from love to hate, from cowardice to bravery. Gone are the days of the cardboard cast, the super-saccharine Helen Trents, Young Dr. Malones and Mary Nobles. Protagonists with whom the viewers most identify today, the ones they champion most, often take the wrong step, make the wrong judgment and must suffer the consequences. They're human.

That suffering of the consequences is, this writer submits, key to a serial's popularity and longevity. For any dramatic entertainment to be a success in 1972 it must be relevant. And relevance repudiates the cliché of the sunset fadeout, of Nirvana on earth. In contemporary society, the mind viewing the small screen knows, if it knows anything at all, that life is not perfect, and that man has caused the imperfections. Has caused them and must "suffer the consequences"—from a family quarrel to a global war. Thus a certain kinship is established between the fictional characters with their problems and the viewer at home with his. The viewer naturally wishes to see how these TV neighbors cope with their misfortunes, day by day, week in, week out, year after year. Audiences are bound, not by the chains of hero worship, but by the easily recognized common bonds of human frailty and human valor.

Naturally, staying contemporary and topical means that our plots and our style are more sophisticated now than ten, or even five years ago. But *all* forms of entertainment are more sophisticated today. Soap opera is simply keeping pace with that trend. We must, however, always bear in mind the motley nature of our audience, and the responsibility which that wide spectrum of viewers—from preschoolers to octegenarians—imposes.

Still, observing all guidelines we have gone far. We have done the story of a young college couple living together without benefit of clergy. We had the first legal abortion on television. We have dealt dramatically with the subject of male infertility and, in the near future, we shall explore the problem of female frigidity.

Perhaps the most gratifying aspect of "relevance," is the way it has permitted us to incorporate into our "soaps" many socially significant issues, to educate viewers while we are entertaining them.

One is not suggesting for a moment, however, that this service has been performed solely by daytime shows. But implicit in the serial is the opportunity to give an important subject an in-depth treatment, over weeks and months, which is impossible on any nighttime series that must have a new theme, or message, in each episode.

Thus, a five month campaign to inform women of the efficacy of the Pap smear test in detecting uterine cancer in its early stages brought a bonanza of mail from appreciative women across the country, many of whom, having followed our advice and discovered the condition in themselves, claimed we had saved their lives.

For almost two years we told the story of a young Negro woman of light pigmentation who passed as white. This sequence was done primarily because it furnished us with an intense, absorbing drama that attracted viewers. But the mail response substantiated our belief that it was absorbing *because* it was relevant and because it explained to the viewers the sociological motivations for such a denial of heritage and race, due to the rejections suffered by the young woman from both the black and white communities. The ultimate tragedy we were presenting was simply another instance of man's cruelty to man, instigated by ignorance and prejudice.

In a drug abuse sequence, after taking six months to bring a teenage character—in whom the audience had great interest—to the point of serious drug involvement, we made a daring departure from our fictional format by introducing "Cathy" into the reality of the Odyssey House Drug Rehabilitation Center in New York City.

Once on location there, with eight real-life teenage ex-addicts, no thought was given to prepared scripts or rehearsal. We simply taped, hour after hour, over three consecutive days, marathon group therapy sessions. Here these intense, highly articulate kids related their own experiences and the messages they had for young Americans, and their elders, on the subject of drugs. . . . The tapes of the sessions were then edited into briefer, self-contained segments, and presented throughout the summer in twenty different episodes.

When 17-year old Austin Warner calmly spoke of having slashed his wrists, not because he wanted to die but because he was a lost, confused youth seeking affection, his words had a devastating impact. An impact I challenge the best writer or actor extant even to approximate.

When Wendy Norins said, "Cathy, it's not a weakness to ask for help; if people hadn't cared about me eleven months ago when I first came into the program, I would probably be dead on a slab," young viewers knew, by the magic transmitted only through truth, that Wendy was not speaking soley to Cathy, but to each of them personally.

Our "pitch" to Dr. Judianne Denson-Gerber, executive director of the various Odyssey Houses in and around New York, had been that the medium of a soap opera—many of whose viewers, of all age groups, are not the sort who read periodicals or even their daily newspapers, and who would be apt to turn off a documentary program on drug addiction—could be the means of disseminating a vital message to the people most in need of receiving it.

The huge number of letters, telegrams and phone calls—for which we were at first totally unprepared either in manpower or emotionally—showed us how right our thesis had been.

More recently, we have had an eight month campaign to educate viewers—particularly the young ones—to the endemic proportions of venereal disease

and all its ramifications. We followed this with an article on the subject—supposedly written by a young reporter on the program—which we offered free to any viewer who requested it. "Venereal Disease: A Fact We Must Face And Fight" also gave the address of the Venereal Disease Branch of the Public Health Service for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, for anyone wishing to get further information on setting up some type of educational program in his (or her) own community.

Over 10,000 requests for the article were received by ABC and, according to William Schwartz, educational consultant for the Public Health Bureau, letters arrived at his desk from all over the country in a steady stream, all as a result of the story and the printed piece. To quote Mr. Schwartz, "We were never before able to reach, effectively, the teenagers who are most in need of this information but you have now shown us how it can be done."

Our next project, still in the planning stage, is the subject of child abuse which is rarely mentioned because it is so abhorrent even to consider. Yet it does exist, to a horrifying degree, and needs to be brought to light.

Other relevant topics we have dealt with include ecology, mental health—particularly the very common anxiety-depression syndrome—the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning in the home, a returned POW and a young soldier missing in Vietnam.

These are only some of the subjects treated on only a few of the soaps. There are many other fine serials, on all three networks, done by talented, dedicated writers, producers and actors, similarly motivated and equally effective. . . . It is surely superfluous to add that if they were not garnering an audience they would be taken off the air.

No form of entertainment receives more criticism, or ridicule, than soap opera. The term has become a cliché of literary denigration and we are the frequent butt of jokes and parodies within our own industry, even on the air. Certainly we should be the last to say that we have no faults. But occasionally we do wonder how nighttime's offerings would look, by comparison, if they had to meet our output and our production schedule? We ponder how much they might accomplish under the same circumstances.

It is what we manage to achieve in this regard, despite our failings, that fostered the temerity of my title. We *are* in a Golden Age and we are making the most of it.

AGNES ECKHART NIXON's television career began with live evening drama when she wrote for STUDIO ONE, HALLMARK, PHILCO, ROBERT MONTGOMERY PRESENTS, and SOMERSET MAUGHAM THEATRE.

In the daytime serial field, she created "Search For Tomorrow," co-created "As the World Turns" with Irna Phillips, was head writer on "The Guiding Light" and "Another World" and most recently created, and packages "One Life To Live" and "All My Children" for ABC. She has had at least one program on the air, five days a week, year round, for the past 17 years.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY

BY FRED FREED

In the fall of 1951, while I was working for Bill Leonard at WCBS Radio, we watched Ed Murrow and Fred Friendly invent the television news documentary.

Nothing like it had been seen before. It was not The March of Time and it was not Nanook and it was not The Plow That Broke the Plains. It was unique.

Most of the people who had been making so-called documentary films up to that time hated them. And with some cause. They re-enacted scenes long since past. They were advocates. They made up dialog, played upon emotions. Hard fact and rigid truth hindered their art.

The TV news documentary producers were journalists. They dealt in fact. They wanted to know how and why. They learned as they worked. Some had come from radio; some had been newspapermen. They were *not* filmmakers. Therefore they had much to learn.

Not surprisingly, those first TV documentaries were illustrated radio documentaries. The *words* of the reporter, of the people interviewed, were paramount. If it came to a choice between exciting pictures and clarifying words, the novice documentarian chose the words. He saw himself as reporter and teacher. At the beginning, he knew little about the technique of film.

Much later the film-makers came to our doors, but never in great numbers. They'd had no real training in journalism. It was too late for them to train as reporters. We had mastered this art. Now we began to experiment with camera angles, with sound, music and editing techniques. Our reporters became less didactic, less all-knowing. The camera moved, became part of the reporter's *persona*. The talking heads on the screen talked a little less.

But the style had been set. So, too, the essential belief in its purpose: to instruct, to enlighten, to report.

What has changed since 1951 is not much the form as the time. We are no longer in the time of Eisenhower. We are no longer innocent. We no longer believe in ourselves, each other, our country. For that television is much to blame, and the documentary partly, along with the nightly news, the commercials, the cable and the satellite that bring the world endlessly into our homes. There is no more privacy, no more shutting out the world.

See It Now began in 1951 with a split screen that showed us the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, live at the same moment. It seemed an astounding sight. Eighteen years later we watched a man walk on the moon. It seemed less astounding. By the time a few more men had walked there, we began to yawn, and tuned to another channel. Perhaps, as someone recently suggested, our circuits had been overloaded.

A great many fantastic and terrible things have happened since that night in 1951 and we have shown most of them on TV—on the news, on instant specials, in documentaries. People have become used to seeing everything, being told everything, going everywhere without leaving their living rooms. They have seen a village burn in Vietnam, an assassin murdered in Dallas, black children attacked by dogs in Birmingham, black rioters looting in Watts.

They have been inside a bookie joint as well as the Kremlin and the Louvre. They have learned the shame of migrants' lives, the terror of Stalin's death. They have learned about the U-2 affair, the decision to drop the bomb, journeyed to a war in Angola, followed heroin to the U.S. from Mexico, learned how the Pentagon is sold to a trusting, tax-paying public.

They have seen poverty and violence. They have seen their cities burn, their President dead. It is not surprising that in 1972 they are somewhat harder to astound, instruct and convince than they were twenty-one years ago.

When Murrow and Friendly began in 1951, the slate was clean. No one had seen anything. Murrow and Friendly invented the TV news documentary as they went along. They were ignorant about what couldn't be done. They were curious about what could.

The early programs looked something like the TV news magazines we have recently re-invented. something like a review of the news.

The first documentary that looked like a documentary was *Christmas in Korea* in December 1953. It was not hard news. It was not a reenactment. It was not anything that Flaherty would have recognized.

It tried to show what was behind the news, beneath the surface, what it was like to be out there in the line in Korea at Christmas time. It was a radio documentary with pictures, not a film. It was journalism, not art. That turned out to be crucial. It settled the way we would make news documentaries for television for the next twenty years. They would be in the hands of journalists. The important decisions would be journalistic. Ideas would come first. In a medium where emotion was so easy to create and

reason so hard, reason would come first. We were newsmen. Thus, *Hear It Now* became *See It Now*.

Some people remember those as the Golden Days. I don't, for they were the days when McCarthy was terrorizing us.

It is as hard to imagine the kind of terror McCarthy created now as it is to imagine a network correspondent being able to do what Murrow did.

See It Now had made brave, strong programs about the injustices done to Lieutenant Milo Radulovich and to Annie Lee Moss. But the one we remember went on the air on March 9, 1954.

I happened to be in an elevator with Murrow that day. I congratulated him on what he was about to do. He muttered something about not knowing whether he would be working here tomorrow. It was certainly partisan, certainly advocacy journalism. Eighteen years later it is easy to be critical of that program, as Gilbert Seldes was at the time. Yet, finally, it began to bring about the downfall of a man who had terrorized us all.

In the history of the television news documentary, *See It Now* did two basic things. The lesser thing it did was to establish a form, a style.

As time went by that style became almost a parody of itself: the insistence on using 35 mm cameras, the talking heads, the juxtaposed interviews, the explaining reporter, the immobility and stiffness. But it set the style. It created the form. We have modified it and changed it and worked it over but it is still at bottom what we all do.

The second thing *See It Now* did was more important. It established standards. Standards of objectivity. The ethics of our craft. What we would do and what we would not do.

In July, 1958, *See It Now* was cancelled. It had lost its sponsor. It began to cost more money. The network got tired of a program that caused it so much trouble. Murrow and Friendly got tired of struggling.

They were bland times then, despite what Murrow and Friendly kept telling us. Controversy and the documentary retreated into the Sunday ghetto. Nobody wanted to think about problems. TV in prime time, Murrow said, was trying to "insulate us from the realities of the world in which we live."

In 1959, disillusioned, Murrow took a leave of absence from CBS. Afterwards he came back occasionally. But it was never the same. The Murrow era was over. Nevertheless, in 1959, the second "golden age" began. Three things created it.

The first was scandal. Charles Van Doren confessed that he had been given answers to *The $64,000 Question*. Disc jockeys confessed they had taken payola. The chairman of the FCC confessed he had allowed himself to be entertained on the yacht of a holder of several TV and radio licenses. TV was under attack from educators, psychiatrists, sociologists, parents,

church groups and almost everyone else you could think of. Newton Minow would call TV a "vast wasteland."

The networks responded by setting out on what Jack Gould called "the pursuit of respectability." In May 1959, Frank Stanton promised that CBS would report, in prime time, "in depth significant issues, events and personalities. . . ." At 10 pm on Tuesday, October 26, *CBS Reports* began with *The Biography of a Missile.*

It may be worth nothing as a matter of historical perspective that we then lived in a consensus society. The Cold War was our chief concern. We agreed the Soviet Union was the enemy. We had not yet discovered the ills of post-Kennedy America. On this program no one asked whether the missile that was being born was really necessary. We assumed it was necessary. The bad guys were the ones who kept us from building more missiles.

Not all *CBS Reports* were "hard" documentaries. There were conversations with Sandburgh and Lippmann. There was Eisenhower with Cronkite at Normandy recalling D-Day.

But there were also programs in the old *See It Now* tradition. David Lowe's *Harvest of Shame.* Jay MacMullen's *Biography of a Bookie Joint.* There were programs on the dangers of cigarette smoking, civil rights, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring.*

The second thing that happened at that time was that Irving Gitlin went to NBC.

Gitlin had been a high school biology teacher. He answered a blind ad and got a job as a researcher at CBS. He worked for Friendly on *Hear It Now.* He did radio documentaries. He got into TV with *The Search.* He and Al Wasserman made a brilliant 90 minute film about a catatonic girl called *Out of Darkness.* He was as energetic, as driven and as driving, as brilliant an editor as Friendly. But he was more a film maker. Bob Kintner brought him to NBC to beat Friendly. In 1960 he started the *NBC White Paper* series with *The U-2 Affair.* It went on the air within a week or two of *Harvest of Shame* and Bob Drew's *Yanki No* on ABC, all in prime evening time. Al Wasserman produced U-2, creating a new kind of TV documentary. He told in great detail exactly how the U-2 disaster happened. He called in correspondents, he used stock footage and new footage. He edited with a style—a flair— that had been missing from documentaries until then. It was at this point that we finally got into the *film* business.

The ABC *Closeup* program *Yanki No,* also changed things. It showed us the possibilities and limits of the third great change that made this the second "golden age," namely, the technological revolution.

For the first time camera and recorder had become mobile and independent of each other. We had begun to use 16 mm film. The camera was on a shoulder brace. The sound recorder had been miniaturized. Camera and

recorder no longer needed to be attached to each other. We could move faster, get closer to our story.

We had all been thinking about how to use these new toys. Gitlin and his production manager, Bob Rubin, had been experimenting. Now Drew used them for the first time on the air.

In *Yanki No* we let the story tell itself. The reporter was neutral. He simply supplied facts. He said as little as possible. The results in *Yanki No* were uneven. The sound was bad. The pictures were jerky and blurred. Drew said, "Emotion is everything." *Yanki No* violated all of the rules Friendly had laid down. Friendly did not like it. As a documentary it didn't come off. But it changed the way we would hence forth make documentaries. Like Gitlin, Drew was an innovator.

Drew made us face what we all secretly knew; that TV was a medium of emotion and impact. We had tried to pretend it was an instrument of logic. The reporter telling you carefully what you were seeing, summing it up for you, explaining, asking questions. Now Drew was saying you didn't need the reporter. The story could tell itself. It scared a lot of us.

The next few years saw some remarkable programs. The most spectacular was Reuven Frank's *The Tunnel* which was the first news program to win an Emmy as Best Program of the Year.

In the mid 60's, what CBS had been, NBC became. Huntley and Brinkley dominated the news. We had Brinkley's witty journal, the first all color documentaries, produced by Stuart Schulberg, and Huntley reporting the White Papers. We had Ted Yates who took us closer to war on film than we had ever been before.

There were the "soft" documentaries of Lou Hazam—Van Gogh, The Nile, and Lucy Jarvis taking us inside the Louvre, George Vicas taking us around the Kremlin.

There were the instant documentaries—produced at CBS by Ernie Leiser and Les Midgley, and at NBC by Chet Hagan, the Roosevelt and Churchill series at ABC. Lester Cooper's *Hemingway*.

But the most astounding event in the mid 60's was Bob Kintner's invention of the *evening long* documentary. The first, produced in 1963 by Shad Northshield and Chet Hagan, ran three hours on the "Negro Revolution." In 1965 I did 3½ hours on U.S. foreign policy and in 1966, 3½ hours on organized crime in the United States. Jim Fleming produced a 4 hour program on Africa for ABC. CBS did three part programs on the Warren Commission, Justice in America and Health in America. In 1969 Northshield did the brilliant 2 hour *From Here to the 70's.*

By this time Gitlin and Friendly were gone. Their influence lingered but the Golden Age, in documentary art, was over.

Nobody was worried about quiz scandals any more. Documentaries were

expensive and they caused trouble. Kintner was gone from NBC and Friendly from CBS. The number of documentaries fell. In the 1971-72 season NBC did only eight where once we had done a dozen or more. Those we did were better in many ways, especially in technique. But it was harder now. The enemy wasn't so easy to define. The answers weren't so easy to agree on. Caution was in the air.

Where are we now in 1972, twenty-one years after the invention?

Some of us are working at the networks but some of our best men are not: Murrow, Gitlin, Lowe gone; Wasserman, Friendly, Defelita, Giovannitti, Jersey, Zegart, Hagan, working elsewhere.

Public television came along and was supposed to inspire us with new ideas and courage. We expected it to be brave and daring. So far as I can tell, it hasn't yet been any of those things, to any notable degree. But change has been in the air for some time now.

Let me list some of the changes:

First, documentaries cost more money, seven times what they did when I began. In 1959 Bob Rubin said to me, when I was producing *Woman* for $30,000 a program, "This is the last low budget show." He meant they might soon cost up to $60,000. They now cost up to $200,000.

Second, money again. The networks lost ½ hour of prime time. They lost cigarette commercials. Air time and the programs cost more money. Sponsors are more wary because everything is controversial now and everything gets you in trouble. You can sell da Vinci but not the tensions of the ghetto or the anger of the blue collar worker.

Third, we've been around a long time. We've talked an awful lot. At first the marvel was not what we said, but that we talked at all. Now we have to be good, too. People are smart about film. They bore easily. They've been to the moon. The old talking heads don't make it anymore.

Fourth, we're in prime time. We affect the program that comes before us and the one that comes after. We usually get on in "black week," when no ratings are taken. Even so we lose audience as well as money. People don't watch us the way they do entertainment. That's a simple fact. How much can a network afford of what most people don't want?

Friendly once said: "If these real struggles of men are not more dramatic, more interesting and more exciting than fiction then it's my fault and the fault of others like me."

Well, they aren't and so maybe he and we are.

Fifth, people react now. They talk back. They want a chance to talk themselves. They want access to TV. They don't want objectivity. They want to hear *their* side. Objectivity, the conventional wisdom now tells us, is impossible. Agnew has proclaimed the media the liberal enemy.

I agree with Brinkley. You can't be objecitve but you can be *fair*. I think

this is an important time for being fair, for being cool, for being civil.

Instead of more, I think we need a little less advocacy. A little less anger. A little more listening, a little civility. We live in a time when there are no easy answers. The less easy the answers, the angrier people seem to get. They don't want instruction, they want revelation.

Sixth, we don't live in a consensus society any more. When we began all the right people approved of us. There were bad guys like Southern sheriffs and Communist spies. And there were good guys like us. Liberals. And the liberal establishment loved us. They especially loved the idea of our lecturing the rest of the country. We did programs about civil rights in the South and Khrushchev in Berlin and Castro in Cuba and the U-2 over the Soviet Union. Those were the issues which we began. Now the issues are about things right in our own backyards. Crime, busing, hard issues with no obvious answers. Issues whose partisans are often choked with rage. For them, there is only one side—and they're on it.

Agnew said it badly, but I think he said something that struck a very deep chord in a lot of people. Namely, that the sorrows and passions of a great many people were being ignored. We said busing is good for you and a lot of people felt otherwise. Agnew said you have a right to tell the network you don't think so. What Agnew omitted was that both sides have a right to complain.

The point is we live in a bitterly fragmented society. People don't believe in their institutions, their leaders, their betters as they once did. Life has become terribly complicated. The experts we used to depend on—at the Pentagon or Harvard or the *New York Times*—don't seem to have ready answers any more. They, too, admit their perplexity.

No one knows how to wipe out racism, educate children, control technology, rehabilitate cities. We think about it and we do our best. But the time has come, I think, for us not to be so sure, not to take a position on every issue.

Finally, we have lost our constituency.

Douglas Cater has said: "The interesting thing about Agnew's analysis is that Stokely Carmichael and Jerry Rubin . . . would agree with him. So would George Wallace. The 'devil theory' of the mass media rallies a diverse band of brothers."

Any producer can attest to this. The young think we are the establishment. The establishment thinks we are radicals. To some blacks we are racists. To some whites we are nigger lovers. To the south we are carpet-baggers. To the Mid-west, effete eastern snobs. To the effete eastern snobs, midcult yahoos. The Pentagon, the medical profession, the cops, the college kids all *know* we are against them.

Agnew and Nixon don't trust us. Neither does McGovern. Congress doesn't trust us. The FCC doesn't trust us. People on welfare don't trust us. Neither

do Harvard professors or Kansas car dealers. Most of them, I get the impression, would like to see us censored in some way. We are not protected by the First Amendment. We are open and vulnerable. The air we use belongs to everyone. Everyone seems to want to tell us how to use it.

I close with a certain ambivalence.

I was an associate producer in radio in 1951 when Ed Murrow and Fred Friendly invented the TV documentary. Twenty-one years later I am about to begin a new season as executive producer of six documentaries, not radically different in form from what they invented, for a series called—not I suspect, without irony—*NBC Reports*. It will be on the air, perhaps not by coincidence, at 10 on Tuesday evenings.

There will be 19 of these prime time documentaries on NBC this season. Nineteen may not seem enough. But I suspect the problem will not be quantity but quality. I ask myself: have things got better or worse in these twenty-one years?

Contrary to what some of our colleagues may feel, I think some things today are better. The programs I am about to do will be in prime time. I will have a great deal of money to do them. I don't expect anyone to sponsor them. I have heard Julian Goodman, the President of NBC, who used to be a documentary producer himself, say no subject is barred. I assume he means it.

My first program will be a two-part examination of the United States' defense posture in the 70's—what arms we ought to have, why, and how their number and cost can be controlled. This seems to me a useful, compelling and I would think, controversial subject.

Yet, for all this, as I have suggested, the TV news documentary is, on several fronts, in very deep crises which I am not at all sure we will survive.

After twenty-one years the questions we began with about the style, content and purpose remain unanswered. And there are at least two grave new ones: How to resist pressure, especially government and congressional pressure, to tell us what programs we can do and how we can do them. And, equally important, how to win back the confidence (and interest) of the thinking viewers.

I think our problems in the next twenty-one years are not going to be how many programs we do but how well we do them. Not how strongly we take positions but how clearly we point out imperfect alternatives. Not how we give answers but what questions we ask.

If we fail I think the final blame will not be an interfering politician, insensitive network executives or an uneducated public. The fault, dear Brutus, will be in ourselves.

FRED FREED's most recent production was NBC's "Vietnam Hindsight." One of television's most distinguished documentarians, investigative reporting is his special forte and he has brought his keen eye and high courage to studies of urban crime, ghetto riots, the Pueblo incident and the decay of the environment. He is currently producing the new series, NBC Reports, seen every Tuesday night.

THE YEAR SPECTACULAR BECAME A NOUN

BY BETTY LANIGAN

When the definitive history of television is finally written, the 1954-55 season should be noted as the time color television came of age.

It was the year the adjective "spectacular" was elevated to noun—as in "another big NBC Spectacular." This change was decreed by Sylvester (Pat) Weaver, then President of the NBC television network. It was an inspiration that came to him by way of Broadway. In those days the lights of the Great White Way came largely from electric billboards, called Spectaculars. (Ultimately, the word went back to Broadway.)

The press department warned that critics might not accept Mr. Weaver's new grammar. Sure enough, reviews of the first show perversely declared, "Spectacular Isn't." After that disastrous premiere, however, some of them definitely were.

As an executive, Pat Weaver charged every new project with foaming excitement. He cared about the medium and he had a fresh idea every five minutes. Some of them were brilliant, all of them were set down in careful memos, later bound in fine leather. Nobody thought that especially odd; this was a time to remember.

With a zest that was always contagious, Mr. Weaver announced the projected Spectaculars (90 minutes of living color in prime time) to a closed circuit conference of affiliates.

"These 'Spectaculars' will wash out all age, economic and intelligence levels and appeal to everyone," he enthused. "Each show will get a big rating, attracting many non-regular viewers. All of them together will hit a cumulative audience of perhaps 99 per cent of TV families."

The "hitting" of a good many families was no small consideration in 1954. This was the year RCA sent forth the word that color TV sets were now available by the millions and must be sold. What better way to sell "living color" than to put on programs so dazzling, so novel, so talked-about, that an eager public would stint on the staples to see Ginger Rogers in the flesh tones?

Looking back, one may honestly say that the Spectaculars were almost as marvelous as Mr. Weaver's fantasy of them. The public loved them. And they did sell color sets.

All of us involved in the first Spectaculars partook of the excitement. We never worked harder on any projects. But we had the good feeling that comes of being there when the Golden Spike is driven. Every detail concerning the Spectaculars was extravagant, dramatic and first-of-its-kind-ever.

First, NBC built "the world's largest color television studio" in the heart of Brooklyn. It was, as the releases said, "unique in television engineering." Not only that, it was "a blueprint for color television studios of the future." It was the first studio with a push-button, electric hoist system for lights, the first with a 19-ton dimmer board, the first with a movie size color screen (15 by 20 feet), the first with a collapsible seating unit.

That Brooklyn Studio—built on the old Vitagraph-Vitaphone sound stages —was also the first TV studio to cost $3,500,000. Naturally, the shows coming out of there had to be Spectacular.

It should follow from all the foregoing that the premiere Spectacular was a smash hit. It was a bust. An original musical bust called "Satins and Spurs." The producer, Max Liebman couldn't say the fault lay in a breakdown of communication with the writers. He wrote the book, in collaboration with Billy Friedberg. Music and lyrics were by Jay Livingston and Rap Evans. Betty Hutton starred as Cindy Smathers, rodeo rider. Kevin McCarthy and Neva Paterson were also involved. A French singer named Genvieve—still to be discovered by Jack Paar—sang one song. In French, naturally. She hadn't yet learned to speak Fifi d'Orsay English.

The second Spectacular was "Lady in the Dark," with Ann Sothern. It was the kind of smash hit Mr. Weaver had in mind when he made Spectacular a noun. Later shows included "Tonight at 8:30" with Ginger Rogers, "The Merry Widow," "Heidi," "Babes in Toyland" and a Sonja Henie ice show. It was all hard, exhausting *fun* and I, for one, couldn't stay away from rehearsals. I spent half my life that year on the Brighton Beach Express. When Max Liebman eventually suggested I might skip rehearsal one day and write some show copy I was crestfallen. That, I protested was like barring George Jessel from funerals. Somehow the copy got written and I stayed on at rehearsals.

Despite all those push buttons and electronic hoists, the world's largest TV studio presented certain drawbacks. The dancers hated and feared the floor. It was concrete covered in a special hard tile. Precisely the kind of floor that gives a dancer "shin splints," an excruciating aliment.

The dancers learned to save themselves in rehearsal, executing their *grands jetes* on that punishing tile only when the cameras were rolling.

On almost every Spectacular, Bambi Linn and Rod Alexander danced

a special number, always punctuated by the great, breath-taking leaps for which Miss Linn was famous. Their coordination, their sensitivity to one another, were exquisite to see. Had they been less skilled, those glorious leaps could have been disastrous, given that tile floor.

Oddly, the $3,500,000 studio had no commissary. NBC made arrangements for a nearby delicatessen to cater our lunches. We ate in a dismal, dark green room with folding chairs and a huge trash can where we tossed our paper coffee cups. The food didn't matter; the show did.

Musically, the Liebman Spectaculars were superb. Irv Kostal's arrangements were brilliant; the singers and dancers were the best available. But the librettos and the acting verged on High Camp. It was sometimes an effort to play the lines straight.

But the NBC camera crews never laughed in the wrong places. The Spectaculars were their on-the-job-training. They devised new lighting techniques, learned what colors washed out and how to keep a bright red dress from "bleeding" across the screen when an actress moved an arm.

Max Liebman, like Pat Weaver, liked to do things in the grand manner. When a scene in "The Merry Widow" called for carriages to come clopping through the lamplight, stopping at a palatial door, Mr. Liebman sent his crews into the street. He persuaded the Borough of Brooklyn to black out all the lights along Avenue M and 14th St. while the scene was telecast. A similar effect simply could not have been achieved inside the studio. For television, it was all very bold and dashing.

For their time, the Spectaculars were costly. Budgets ranged from $150,000 to $250,000. In today's market, Specials (lineal descendants of Spectaculars) sometimes cost $700,000. But, thanks to tape, they can be re-run many times. The Liebman Spectaculars were *live* shows. Seen once, gone forever. Mr. Liebman today has kinescopes of all his productions. Students who were babes in baskets back in 1954 might, with profit, request a showing of the shows that made America aware of "living color." I suspect their charm is largely intact. As a vital part of television's history, reflecting the tastes and techniques of that pioneer period, they should prove priceless.

To one who was intimately involved in the old Spectaculars, it's the small, human details that linger in the mind. All old hands have fond memories of associate producer, Bill Hobin, the man who called the shots. Constantly sought out for advice and quick decisions, Bill took to wearing a bright red shirt to increase his visibility in the technical mob crowding the floor. On the final day of rehearsals, every man in the crew would also wear a bright red shirt. The ensuing confusion fulfilled all expectations.

The years, naturally, have taken their toll of our original company. Felicia Conde (Mrs. Nick Vanoff) ruptured a spinal disc and never danced again. Death has claimed costume designer Paul DuPont (who always wore

a tape measure aruond his neck), NBC supervisor Hal Janis and some of our stars, including Judy Holiday, Bert Lahr and Marilyn Maxwell.

We'll always remember Marcia Kuyper, a production assistant, who got married between dress rehearsal and the telecast. She chose a nearby church in Brooklyn and somehow managed to have her name in the closing credits read "Marcia Kuyper Schneider."

Has the march of television entertainment been upward and onward all the way? Compare 1972 with 1955: Then we had lavish musicals every week, brilliantly cast and beautifully mounted. Today there is not one weekly musical series originating in New York. There is not a single show employing a regular company of singers and dancers.

Arranger Irv Kostal, who went on from the Spectaculars to win both an Oscar and an Emmy, recalls wistfully that his orchestra budget for the Liebman shows was considerably more generous than the budgets he is given today. Equipment is more sophisticated now, he concedes, but 18 years ago there was more rehearsal time and less use of pre-recorded music.

Would a revival of the old Spectaculars draw audiences today, assuming the shows could be re-staged with fresh faces and all TV's new trickery? It seems doubtful. Somehow, America has lost the innocence that made "The Chocolate Soldier" and "The Merry Widow" such rich treats.

Possibly the character of audiences has changed as well. A nation that applauds "Hee-Haw" and "Stand Up and Cheer" might be bored by a fantasy "Marco Polo," with a score based on the melodies of Borodin, sung by Doretta Morrow and Alfred Drake.

On the other hand, it might not. But as we drift into the 1970's, it seems unlikely that we'll ever find out.

BETTY LANIGAN has been a member of NBC's press department for 20 years, the last six in Burbank. Prior to 1952 she served in the American Red Cross in the Pacific, worked as a disc jockey, a cocktail lounge pianist, a newspaper reporter, an elementary school teacher and a product publicist for J. Walter Thompson. She sings, paints, plays the classical guitar and cultivates roses. She has spent five Christmases overseas with the Bob Hope troupe, tours that included Vietnam and Thailand.

For more than 25 years (or since the development of the kinescope) the television industry has followed the sensible—and economically sound-practice of re-running its prime winter shows during the summer. Now this tradition is being challenged by a band of media critics, led by Barry Goldwater, Jr., whose motives remain obscure.

The following defense of television's re-run policy is adapted from a speech delivered by Robert Wood, President of the CBS Television Network, to a September meeting of the Hollywood Radio and Television Society.

—The Editor

WHY RE-RUNS?

BY ROBERT D. WOOD

With everyone's attention riveted on the new fall season and the new shows, you may find it curious that I pick this occasion to talk about the rerun pattern that characterizes so much of summertime television.

The Federal Communications Commission is now deciding whether it should formally consider a proposal that would prevent the networks from presenting reruns during more than 25 percent of prime time in any given year. In other words, they are being asked to consider whether reruns at niht should be limited to 13 weeks out of the 52—a rule which would force the networks to present about 12 more weeks of first-run product each year.

The petitioners have rallied enthusiastic support and endorsement in some quarters with the charge that broadcasters are "grossly unfair" to viewers—that the television networks are derelict in their responsibility because the public has no choice, month after interminable month, but to watch programs which they have already seen.

On the surface the argument seems reasonable. The logic seems compelling. And this is precisely why the proposal can do so much damage. For the charge is completely cockeyed.

The argument rests on the fallacious assumption that just about everyone everywhere watches a program the first time it is on the air.

Certainly millions do. Research shows the average nighttime program on its first network run is seen by 21 million viewers, teenagers and older. Such an audience would be "everywhere" in any other part of show business,

any other advertising medium, or any other means of communication. The largest magazine, for example, has a circulation of 18 million. The largest daily newspaper has a press run of 2,300,000. A best-selling paperback sells nine million copies. A typical Hollywood movie—first run, second run, and re-release—accounts for about two million paid admissions.

But television's universe is so big, 21 million is only a small fragment. In fact, it represents but 14 percent of the country's total potential audience over the age of 12.

To put it another way, when the average program is presented for the first time, 131 million people—86 percent of television's total potential audience—do not see it.

Millions and millions do not see a first-run network performance because of what takes place every hour of every night throughout the fall and winter season. Tonight at 8:00 will serve as a good example: About 60 percent of the pepole will not be watching television. They will be busy doing something else. That leaves four out of ten people with their sets turned on and tuned in.

Television forces a viewer to make only one program choice at one particular time. And once he has made that one choice, he simultaneously loses the chance to enjoy all the competing programs in the same time period.

The only possible way to give the viewer a chance to see his next best choice is to schedule repeat performances. They provide six out of every seven viewers with a chance to see programs for the very first time.

And viewers do see these rebroadcasts. The average rerun delivers an audience of 15 million viewers—over 70 percent as many people as watched the program when it was originally presented during the peak of the viewing season.

It's worth noting that the average rerun is seen by more people than the combined circulation of the 22 largest daily newspapers in the country.

Of course, not all of the 15 million are seeing the program for the first time. Despite what some of our critics say, the American public enjoys television so much, viewers often are eager to see their favorite shows a second time. For example, after Sammy Davis did a guest appearance on "All in the Family," thousands wrote to find out when the episode would be repeated, so they could be sure to catch it again.

And the same thing happens in the case of specials. Year after year families gather to enjoy once again a "Charlie Brown" or a "Dr. Seuss" holiday treat. Or they will be on hand for a return engagement of an entertainment special such as Anne Bancroft in "Annie: the Women in the Life of A Man" or CBS News Specials like "The Mexican Connection," the acclaimed exposé of drug smugglers which we rebroadcast two weeks ago.

So on closer examination, the charge that reruns are a shocking dereliction of responsibility turns out to be a shocking ignorance of the nature of tele-

vision and the viewing habits of its fans.

But in addition to the so-called public service argument, another line of reasoning has been advanced by those who have petitioned for rerun restrictions. It is claimed that a cutback of prime time reruns would be a bonanza to Hollywood production. This argument, I think, gets closer to the real motivation behind the complaint. It is advanced not in the public interest, but because of self interest. This is not to imply any criticism on these grounds. On the contrary, one can only understand and sympathize with those who hope that this argument will create more jobs and bigger paychecks.

Once again, here is an argument that sounds both reasonable and convincing, yet is totally wrong.

The proposal flies in the face of the economic facts of life. If forced on the industry it would not create a boom. It could bring on a bust. Twenty-four years ago, an hour-long variety show called "Toast of the Town" had it premiere on the new CBS Television Network. The M.C. was a newspaper columnist named Ed Sullivan. The guest stars on Sullivan's first "really big shew" included Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. The hour cost $7,050. This was for time and talent combined.

Over 1000 Sundays and 23 years later "The Ed Sullivan Show" closed its run. By that time the price per show had jumped from $7,050 for time and talent to $375,000.

What happened to the costs of "The Ed Sullivan Show" serve as a dramatic example of what has happened to the costs of all television programming. In 1960, for example, the cost of half-hour film series in its first season on the air averaged $50,000 per episode. Five years later, the cost had skyrocketed to $70,000. For the 1970 season, the cost had climbed to $90,000. And last season each episode of a new half-hour film series cost an average of $95,000.

Keep in mind that this doubling of program costs within a dozen seasons reflects only the cost of the average series during its first season on the air. It does not consider the staggering cost increase of hits that return, by popular demand, season after season. Take into account the hits as well as the rookies, and we find that year after year, for more than twenty years, the annual cost increase for our first-run nighttime entertainment has averaged about nine percent—a compounding increase that testifies to the negotiating skills of talent agents, program packagers and business managers, as well as to the bargaining power of some 75 craft unions.

To contend with runaway program costs broadcasters have been forced to increase the mix of reruns in proportion to original product. Only by averaging the high cost of a first run—with low cost repeats—could programming expenditures be kept under some measure of control. Tamper

with this fine line of balance and the entire broadcast economy is in big trouble. And, as day follows night, if we are disadvantaged so is Hollywood as a television production center.

Faced with such financial disaster, network television would have no alternative but to cut costs to the very bone.

No longer could television perform an effective journalistic role—because no network possibly could afford to devote the time or resources to mount as many major news and documentary specials. Nor could a network possibly afford to maintain the world-wide news gathering apparatus that has been years in the making. Nor could it provide extensive remote coverage of history-making news from Miami, the moon, or Munich.

The cost cutbacks necessitated by 12 more weeks of new programming would have equally shattering impact on the entertainment side of television.

No longer could television afford its biggest stars—not at their prices.

No longer could television compete with other media for the best writers, producers or directors. It could not afford to. Large production numbers in variety shows would be a thing of the past. Large casts would be eliminated. Stock footage would replace location shooting.

And not only the regularly-scheduled series would suffer. Even greater damage would be done to the big-name, big-production entertainment specials. In fact they would virtually disappear. During the current season alone this would represent the loss of some 200 hours of quality Hollywood production.

In short, a severe cutback in the number of reruns would force the networks to undercut the quality of Fall and Winter season programming: And this across-the-board cutback would affect not only the big-name stars who appear on the screen, but also all the craftsmen who put them on camera—stagehands, cameramen, electricians, extras—all those who the advocates of fewer reruns claim that they are trying to help.

But for the sake of argument, disregard the interests of the public. Ignore the economic facts of life. There is still another critical problem. The inevitable downgrading of television because of rerun restrictions would be taking place at the very time this art and industry is being called upon to meet its most exacting creative challenge.

Where does it all end? It seems to me that the weight of evidence against this petition is overwhelming from everyone's point of view. Contrary to what its advocates contend, the plan would not be in the public interest. When only one out of seven viewers sees a first-run performance, it would work against the public interest because only repeat performances provide the majority with a second chance to see most television programs for the first time. Furthermore, limiting reruns would be a hindrance, not a spur to excellence in television production. Under financial pressure, Fall and Winter programming quality would deteriorate. Summer entertainment would be

cheapened. Specials would virtually disappear. News coverage would be severely impaired.

It would be an economic calamity for this entire industry—few jobs—not more—smaller paychecks—not bigger ones.

In short, there are no segments of the entire television industry which would benefit from this well meaning but fuzzy and unrealistic proposal—and every segment, including those who proposed it, would suffer.

ROBERT D. WOOD, a graduate of the University of Southern California, has served the Columbia Broadcasting System as Vice President and General Manager of KNXT, Los Angeles, President of the CBS Television Stations Division, and, since 1969, as President of the CBS Television Network.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

ABOUT TELEVISION
by Martin Mayer. 433 pages. Harper and Row. $10.

By Herbert Mitgang

Several months before he died, Ed Murrow asked me, "How do you like television compared to newspapers?" Before I could voice a doubt, he grinned and said, "Don't answer that." A few good newspapers have died since then, but I haven't heard of any stations going under. In the British lord's phrase, a television franchise is still a license to print money.

There would not be much more to say about it except for this: while you're watching television it's watching you. The feedback is tremendous. When it works, as in a children's learning program, it is a worthwhile knowledge machine; when it doesn't, it's, well, *TV* or, a better crazy word, *video,* implying by the very sound a lantern without magic.

There is another random thought about television: it is pretentious in its official explanations about itself, protesting too much.

Perhaps this results from the fact that the networks seem to have more public image men and attorneys and Washington lobbyists and subalterns than house dramatists and journalists. As if the network boasting was not enough, there is something or other called the Television Information Office which advertises a monthly listing of all the great documentaries and educational programs and dramas about Michelangelo—without a Michelangelo show every season it wouldn't be official—but why is it that when you tune in it's always Marcus Welby and Andy Griffith and the Dating Game that are on at that time?

A couple of seasons ago the networks announced that the new schedule was loaded with "relevance" themes—storefront lawyers, young lawyers, black lawyers, Indian lawyers, lady lawyers, lawyers whose vibes were both poor and Kama—but when their time ran out a year or two later the Television Information Office forgot to report that the American public now had an opportunity to watch irrelevance again.

The ambience is, by contrast, very fine on the countinghouse side of the unmagical lantern. In his new book, "About Television," Martin Mayer finds his symbol in Black Rock, the C.B.S. pillar of office artifice on Sixth Avenue, where all the corporate drakes and ducks are in a row and there is a restaurant called the Ground Floor. It is conveniently cheek by jowl with a bank, useful for a loan before the check is presented. The silverware sits on a caddy, the service is French and even the matchbooks are thought-out. The contents of the meal, like the contents of the programs, almost seem an afterthought. Mr. Mayer says that William S. Paley used to poke around the kitchen before going upstairs for lunch in his own private dining room with his own personal chef. What Mr. Mayer does not know is that the chairman, a good eater, likes a nice sturgeon sandwich from a place on the upper West Side unknown to his numerous vice presidents.

There are a few other more serious matters the author does not know—or at least explain—"About Television." His book fails almost completely in probing how television covered the shooting side, but not the political and antiwar and anti-Administration side, of the Vietnam war. For a decade, this was the major story opportunity screwed, confused and feared by network television. For a long time the antiwar spokesmen were branded "Vietniks" by broadcasters—right up to former presidents of news divisions, despite their own puffery to the contrary.

On the major news shows, the idea was to "shoot bloody"—turn Vietnam into a Western—to gain ratings against thoughtful shots showing an occasional anti-war Senator or protester. Documentaries on the war stressed action rather than exposure. TV's "living-room war" was important because the cameras told it better than the anchormen and documentarians. There were, to be sure, good and brave correspondents in the field but there were not enough committed executives and producers to encourage and support them when it hit the fan in Washington or New York. Mr. Mayer devotes more space in his book to one program, "The Selling of the Pentagon," than to the coverage of the entire Vietnam War on television. Even here, he does not give high enough marks to the producer and program nor show the full meaning of the subpoenas by Government.

Mr. Mayer writes: "War, of course, is its own narrow focus, and much that was done on the fighting in Vietnam was admirable for the courage of the men who covered the story and for their art in organizing the material. But both those who thought the war a mistake from the beginning and those who came to that conclusion only much later (there is no third category) would agree that television coverage did little to set the context of the fighting." He is on the mark here, but any definitive history of television, as this book purports to be, demands not a paragraph but a long chapter and more on Vietnam.

The author is somewhat more thorough writing about public broadcasting, in this country and in Europe. The Ford Foundation's double and costly disasters—the proposal for a domestic satellite that claimed to bring a "people's dividend" but only launched self-promotion and the abortive Public Broadcasting Laboratory—are covered in some detail. Mr. Mayer says that the non-dividend's costs were figured wrong and that P.B.L., a vanity venture that Jack Gould used to call "the 10 million dollar misunderstanding," deserves a long-overdue inquest. That will happen, in Nikita Khrushchev's phrase, when shrimps whistle.

Self-flagellants who like to read about broadcasting would have more fun and learn more from the inside by reading Bill Greeley any Wednesday in Variety and Les Brown's book, "Television: The Business Behind the Box." Brown's conclusion even leaves a glimmer of hope: "The men in television are lashed to the system. But the public is not lashed to it. The freedom of the public, in fact, is the time bomb in television."

Herbert Mitgang, a member of The Times editorial board, in a light-headed moment once was executive editor of C.B.S. News. In his current novel, "Get These Men Out of the Hot Sun," he creates among other outrages a mythical "good news hour" for television.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING
by Al Morgan. 213 pages. Stein & Day. $6.95.

By Sumner Locke Elliott

At the Democratic National Convention in 1968, the usual vapid buffoonery and the psalms of sycophancy were violently interrupted by open combat between protesting students and the Chicago police.

This bloody melee, interspersed with the organized banality from the convention floor, produced a Kafka-style horror on the television screen. Never before or since has any event so eloquently dramatized the anguish—or the paradox—that is America.

Al Morgan, author of an earlier book about TV, "The Great Man," attended the convention as producer of NBC's morning show, "Today." He saw young demonstrators clubbed to the ground and innocent bystanders assaulted in mindless, savage fury by Mayor Daley's finest. He has set it all down with a tender eye and a hard sense of justice. His book is, in theory, a novel but the "story-line" is incidental to the expert journalistic account of the police riot (so classed by the Walker Commission that investigated it) that took place while the whole world watched.

The sickening details are all here: the Yippies, the Mobes, the Jesus Freaks, Abby Hoffman, Mayor Daley (whose inaudible and unprintable remarks on TV were instantly intelligible to lip-readers), the candidates (Hubert Humphrey safe in his suite, serenely shaving, and calling the riot "regrettable"), the TV commentators, angry and disturbed.

Mr. Morgan sets it all down in vivid prose, letting us hear the wail of sirens, the screams of young girls, the crack of billy clubs on young skulls. There is a fine, snapping irony in the writing. There is also moral indignation.

Though angry to the point of despair, Al Morgan retains a certain detachment. He was there, he saw it all and what he saw clearly seared his soul. Now he has put the summer of '68 into perspective but the basic horror remains.

In an obligatory foreword, TV veteran Morgan is at pains to point out that nobody involved with the real "Today" show is to be confused with his fictional crew who work on a show called "Now." It must be said, however, that the star of "Now" is sufficiently common, ungrammatical and phoney to become an instant hero to the millions.

Inevitably, the reader must identify Al Morgan with the novel's hero, Gary Sutton, the producer of "Now" who defies his network, making a stunning coup out of a vicious attack on one of his reporters by a free-swinging cop. In the end, Sutton is as much a victim of the system as the kids who were bloodied on Michigan Avenue.

This is an action novel, full of tension, violence and an old-fashioned Get-the-story-by-God excitement. But these are the qualities that also narrow Mr. Morgan's field and lessen the impact of his historical narrative.

Much of "The Whole World Is Watching" takes place in darkened control rooms. This means that many of the more horrifying scenes are viewed as they come over the TV monitors. This has the effect of reducing real life drama to a flickering 24 inch screen.

At times, also, the television team seems a bit over-civilized and too cozily chummy to be real—at least, if one has known such teams.

Novelist Morgan has also fallen victim to the love story imperative, weighting

his plot with an affair that seems more mandatory than amatory. But the book still stands up and offers a few characters who are realistically gamey. To sum up, the reader will find here a witty and penetrating analysis of a week that will live in infamy, a week of blood and tears and shame. It is written with dreadful truth, which is as it should be.

Sumner Locke Elliott was a television dramatist during the prime years of Studio One and Philco Playhouse. Australian by birth, he has written nostalgically of his home land in his novel, "Edens Lost," published in 1969. Mr. Elliott's newest work, "The Man Who Got Away," was published by Harper & Row in September. It is a suspense novel about a television producer who vanishes.

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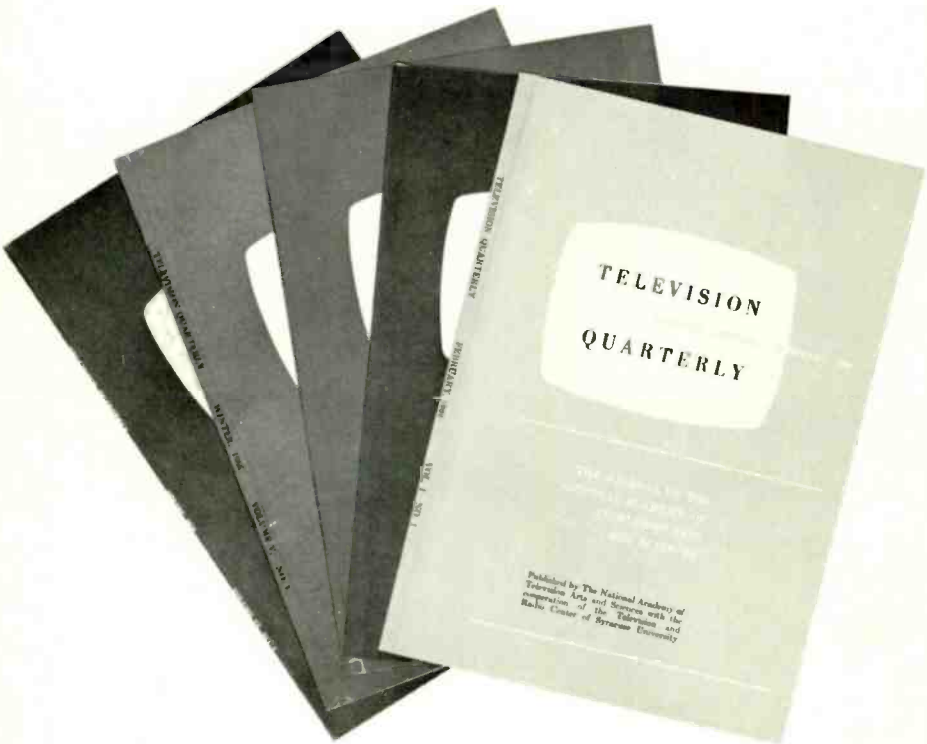


THE BIG BROADCAST, 1920-1950
by Frank Buxton and Bill Owen. Viking Press. $12.95.

By George Eels

Reviewing Frank Buxton's and Bill Owen's The Big Broadcast, 1920-1950 seems vaguely comparable to writing about the program listings in last week's *TV Guide*. What, after all, is there to say about listings of old radio programs? But strangely enough, time, the master magician, converts these listings, their casts, announcers, directors, writers, theme songs and tag lines into a rich vein of nostalgic reminiscence. Fascinating stuff, but we must call it by its rightful name—a non-book.

What the volume at hand is is "a new, revised and greatly expanded edition of *Radio's Golden Age*" (sale, 15,000 copies) which contains enough entries to provide candidates for inclusion in at least a couple of volumes of Richard Lamparski's *Whatever Became of . . . ?* There is an amusing introduction by Henry Morgan, as well as a number of mini-articles on commercials, soap operas, cowboys, sound effects men and a variety of other categories. An exhaustive index and 150 photos add to the interest.

What the volume fails to be is "the complete reference work" that the dust jacket claims it is. On the major successes of big time radio, Buxton and Owen offer easily accessible, well-remembered material. But on some of the lesser programs no hint is given of where, when or by whom the entertainment was originated. (Examples: "The Clyde Beatty Show *Drama*. This program dramatized incidents in the life of animal-trainer Clyde Beatty." Or "The Honeymooners *Drama* featuring Grace and Eddie Albert.")

While precise dates may be difficult to pin down at least the decade and point of origination could be given. Ironically, two short-lived programs, favorites of my childhood, Jesse L. Lasky's *Gateway To Hollywood* and Haven MacQuarrie's *So You Want to Be an Actor?* are both missing.

But enough carping about what the book is not. With the re-broadcasting of old radio shows already underway and a longing for the golden days of radio at full sail, this collection provides enough material to set off waves of nostalgia.

Remember "Miss Hush" and "The Walking Man" on *Truth or Consequences?* What about radio station E-Z-R-A, "the powerful little five-watter down in Rosedale"? Or Vic and Sade, who lived "in the little house halfway up in the next block" in "Crooper, Illinois, forty miles from Peoria"? Or Mrs. Nussbaum answering her door with "You were expecting maybe the Fink Spots?"

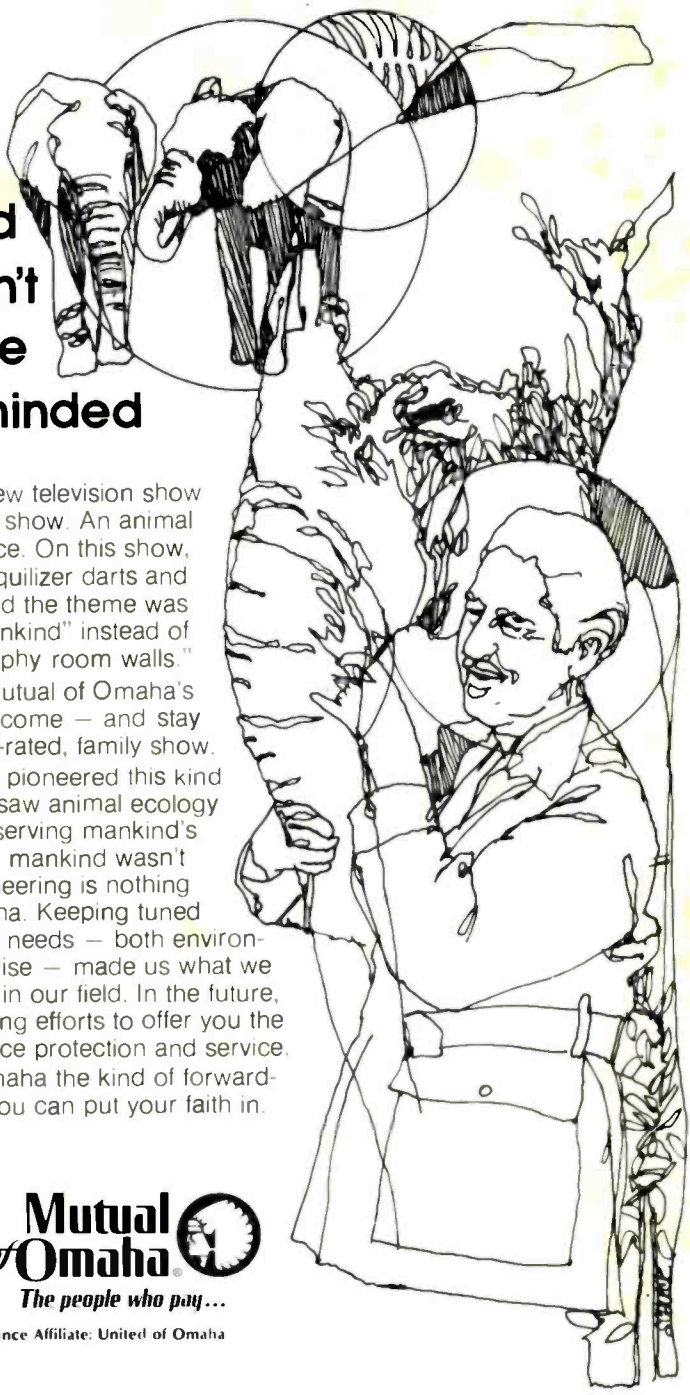
Personally, after browsing through the volume, I was amused to discover what a clear profile of a small-town Midwesterner my responses to various names and programs established. Who could have persuaded me that Fibber McGee and Molly—more than Fred Allen, Burns and Allen or Jack Benny—would come back loud and clear in an unreal, yet oddly comforting way?

Biographer of Cole Porter, author of the successful "Hedda and Louella." Mr. Eels is now at work on a book about Hugh Hefner.

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

A NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF TELEVISION

We were ecology-minded when it wasn't popular to be ecology-minded



It was January 1963. A new television show was aired. An animal show. An animal show with a difference. On this show, animals were shot with tranquilizer darts and film instead of bullets. And the theme was "save the animals for all mankind" instead of "mount the animals on trophy room walls."

That new show was Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. Soon to become — and stay — an award-winning, top-rated, family show.

At Mutual of Omaha, we pioneered this kind of show because we saw animal ecology as an important step in preserving mankind's environment, even though mankind wasn't too interested. But, pioneering is nothing new at Mutual of Omaha. Keeping tuned in to public wants and needs — both environment-wise and insurance-wise — made us what we are — the leaders in our field. In the future, we pledge our continuing efforts to offer you the same years-ahead insurance protection and service.

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