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TELEVISION QUARTERLY

THE JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

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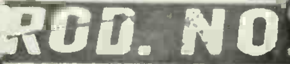

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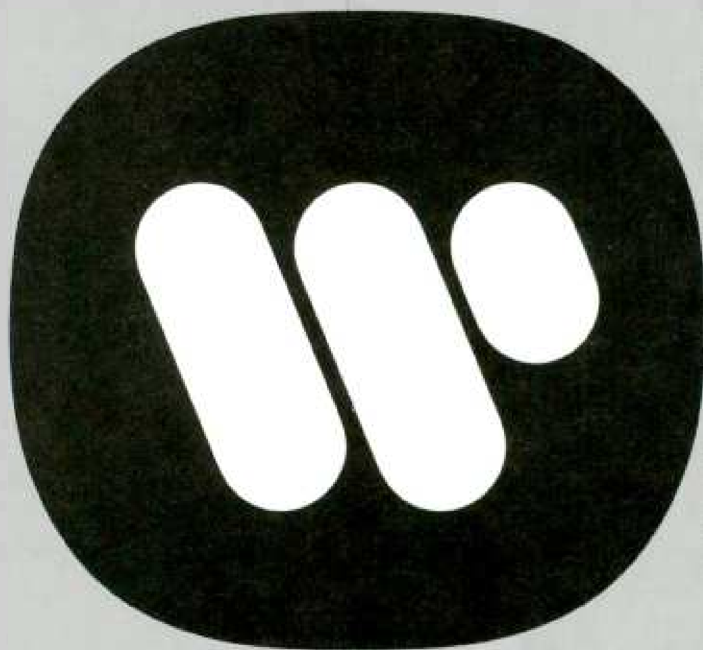

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Prison Riot—The Drama Behind The Documentary

By WILLIAM SHERMAN

In the dry dawn of February 2, the killing started. By noon it was done. Thirty-three inmates at the State Penitentiary of New Mexico at Santa Fe lay brutally executed by their fellows in the worst prison riot this country has known. Many of the victims were tortured before they died; burned with blowtorches, raped, beaten.

Of the eleven guards taken hostage, nearly all were stabbed, several were molested with pipes and other objects.

The prison itself, a squat, gray cement barracks leading off into the desert from a main corridor, lay in ruins. When the smoke cleared, damages were estimated at eighty million dollars.

The next day, having waited patiently outside the perimeter for Governor Bruce King's order, cadres of state police, national guardsmen and sheriff's deputies reclaimed the prison. It had been under the inmates' absolute control for more than 36 hours. Not a shot was fired. The governor declared the operation a success and praised the prison authorities. It was considered a great feat, particularly in view of what had happened at Attica in 1971.

After another 48 hours, the story faded from the newscasts and from the national consciousness. This was no Attica. There was nothing political in the riot, no police brutality, and no celebrities involved in the negotiations. Just another prison story, given prominent play for a time because of the violence and gore, but nothing special.

Or so it seemed.

Several weeks later, Pamela Hill, vice-president and executive producer of ABC documentaries, and Richard Richter, senior producer, were mulling over possible programs for later in the year. It is difficult to recall the precise genesis of any documentary, but somehow they fastened upon the idea of a full report on those hours of murder and mayhem in Santa Fe. They wanted to show the anatomy of a prison riot—how it happened and why.

Stephen Fleischman was named producer and Pat Cook director. I was to be the investigative reporter. None of us knew much about the uprising, beyond what we had seen on TV and read in the newspapers.

At first, the idea seemed to me parochial, a local New Mexico story that might well bore a nation that has seen too many prison movies on television. Who, I asked, would be concerned about 33 dead

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convicts in one of the poorest and least populated states in the union? This was no Attica, after all, with a rich and powerful governor caught in a moral dilemma. No famous journalists, lawyers and film stars would be campaigning for prison reform because of what happened in New Mexico. This was not, we assumed, a riot connected to the power bastions of the state.

To say that our assumptions were wrong is an under-statement. Over the next eight weeks we found ourselves deep in a story of murder, extortion, drugs, corruption and cover-up in which the prison riot was only one incident. ABC would become part of the story, blackballed in the state, shut out by a governor who, we assumed, had nothing to hide.

We would also become embroiled in a lengthy court case challenging the right of a state to withhold vital information from the press and to deny access to a public institution.

The outcome looked grim but we elected to fight anyway—with the state, with the network attorneys, with each other. Our problem was how best to proceed in court and on the story.

There was no warning of what lay ahead when Steve Fleischman flew to Santa Fe in March to explain our mission and arrange for access to the prison, its inmates and employees. Full access was promised.

"You have my cooperation, 100 percent", Gov. King told Fleischman in his rancher's drawl. Buoyed by this promise, Fleischman returned to New York and the wheels were set in motion. Anne Pedersen was named associate producer and Lynn Geller production assistant. As investigator, I would establish the facts, find out what happened on that bloody night in February—and why.

We still foresaw no serious difficulty. Through interviews with prison inmates, guards, victims' families and state officials we would knit together those fateful 36 hours inside the prison. On hand were more than 100 hours of background footage made at the prison during and after the riot. This, we thought, would provide the matrix of the report. We counted on twenty or so shooting days, a month of editing and then—on the air! The program was scheduled tentatively for late summer. Then curious things began to happen.

All investigative reporters know the pattern. You discover certain contradictions in eye witness accounts. You get a look at documents never intended for your eyes. You hear whispers. X warns you that Y is holding something back. This time it was a memorandum from the prison psychologist that stirred our suspicion that we weren't being told the full story.

The memo, dated before the riot, said unequivocally that a riot would occur and hostages would be taken. Subsequent memos actually named the likely day of the insurrection.

Why, we wondered, had nobody paid attention to this warning. Why were there only 15 guards—all unarmed—on duty the night 1136 prisoners ran amok? And why—this was the shocker—were the gates and grilles leading to the prison control center left open that

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that night? Was there collusion between the guards and the convicts? Who was actually running the New Mexico penitentiary?

We found out in mid-April when we began our work in Santa Fe. The new corrections commissioner, Adolph Saenz, had no previous experience in prison work. Like three of his six predecessors—none of whom had served much more than a year—Saenz was a political appointee. If the governor owed you a favor he let you run the corrections bureau for a brief term. Then the next man owed a favor took over.

Saenz had worked for the federal government as a police adviser. His predecessors included a newspaperman friendly with the governor and a psychologist. Turnover, at the governor's discretion, was high. Adolph Saenz would not make it through the spring.

The New Mexico prison had had six wardens in as many years. Each had come in with high hopes and had left—fired summarily or glad to resign—with bad feelings.

If there was no continuity in the corrections department, there surely was in the prison hierarchy. Here we found a permanent government, a ruling cadre of guards, captains and deputy wardens under the control of a former warden named Felix Rodriguez.

Rodriguez had worked at the prison for 23 years, though a previous governor had once banned him from the premises amid a jumble of corruption charges. But with a new governor in charge, Rodriguez was again warden. His brother-in-law and a string of relatives ran the Santa Fe facility according to their own lights. The citizens of Santa Fe referred to the prison as "out there"—it was 15 miles from town—and the tales they whispered to us were not pretty.

"Lemme tell you how much dope they got out there . . .," a story would begin.

Or, "This dude was set up to be killed because he didn't pay off the right guard when he got his drugs . . ."

Or, "I know this guy, they practically beat him to death for oversleeping . . ."

The prison was a venal place, indecently overcrowded. A dormitory built for forty men housed 90, with twenty radios tuned to different stations. ("One shower a week, man, and nothing to do all day but watch TV . . .")

The whispers were substantiated, with names, dates, smuggled reports from inside the walls.

Our staff was not notably sympathetic toward the long-term inmates. They included murderers, rapists, dope dealers, stickup artists and burglars. Many were repeaters. But there were novices, too—small time crooks, shoplifters, youthful bad check artists, all jammed in with the brutes and the killers.

However you cut it, here was our story. We had only to keep our own counsel and start shooting. Later, we would confront the officials responsible for the conditions.

So much for well-laid plans. Ours were suddenly torn asunder by the broadcast of a documentary from our ABC *Closeup* unit. *The Uranium Factor* was highly critical of the way the state of New Mexico

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was regulating its uranium industry. There were charges that state legislators had received free stock from industry officials, that dangerously radioactive facilities had gone uninspected and that water and land were being destroyed. Health care, in one mining town, was said to be in the hands of an incompetent physician—kin to Groucho Marx's "Dr. Quackenbush," in the view of the TV crew.

Needless to say, Governor King was upset. His promise of full cooperation was forgotten. By May we found ourselves totally shut out. No access to the prison, no interview with the governor nor any other state employee and no access to public records.

The decision to bar ABC researchers and cameras had been made by attorneys advising the governor on litigation growing out of the riot. Now, in their new, expanded role, these lawyers were asking for the right to edit our film before broadcast. We said no—and we said it three days before our crew was to start shooting.

Instead of the crew, Pam Hill and Dick Richter flew to New Mexico. We debated, we schemed, we weighed all the risks and decided to proceed with the film. What with the background footage, the scenery and the people available to us outside the prison, we could produce a show. We also decided to take the state of New Mexico to court.

The basis of our suit was simple. A prison was a tax-supported public institution. The public therefore had a right to know what went on inside its walls. We would ask for full access to the prison, to public records and to inmates who had previously agreed to talk with us. A second part of our suit charged discrimination. Other television and print reporters had been given a two-hour tour of the penitentiary (with the proviso that no questions be asked of inmates.) Our Lynn Geller was turned away at the gate with a curt, "No ABC . . . that's what the warden says."

Our local attorney, Gene Gallegos began plotting our course with Sam Antar, the ABC News house counsel. Whom could we subpoena, what were the precedents? How far did our First Amendment guarantees take us? The operative word seemed to be *precedent*. The last three times reporters had sued for access to prison before various courts (including the Supreme Court) the reporters had lost. Essentially, those cases resulted in a general rule that denied the press—both print and TV—free access to prisons. The court consoled the press by stressing the alternate sources open: records, letters, talks with former inmates. Alas, when the medium is television, such sources are not enough.

Still debating these issues, we began shooting our film. We had former prison guards, former wardens, inmates who had lived through the riots and relatives of inmates who hadn't. We had lawyers, legislators, a former governor and the medical examiner. We were content. We went to court.

Our brief asked the federal court to issue a preliminary injunction

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directing the state of New Mexico to let us in "out there", granting us access to inmates as well as records. After two lengthy hearings, we were turned down. It was the verdict we expected. The judge cited precedent, and that was that.

Our next step was to arrange interviews with prisoners from Santa Fe who had been temporarily transferred to federal pens around the country while the riot-scarred facility was being rebuilt. The Federal Bureau of Prisons granted our request. All the necessary papers were filled out, and shooting schedules were set up at Marion, Leavenworth and Lewisburg penitentiaries. But the state of New Mexico was still protecting its interests. The Bureau of Prisons was advised that all our interview subjects were targets or material witnesses to the 33 executions at Santa Fe. And so the federal bureaucracy shut us out as well—not malevolently but with profound apologies.

We were thrown only one. New Mexico agreed to allow us to tour the prison, but specified that no questions be asked of inmates and no reference be made to the riots.

Inside the walls that had seen so much rage and suffering, the scenes were all too familiar. Badly-lit cement corridors, shadows of cellblocks and decrepit dormitories. Men in blue overalls mopping, counting, eating, lining up, mumbling; shuffling along with their eyes on the floor as we passed.

Were these the men who had burned and killed? I wondered. None of them looked dangerous, but you could feel the sparks of Hell as we walked past the wreckage of the gym, past the ruined walls. Here was resentment gone wild, here was frustration, guilt and the convict's loathing for his keeper—and himself.

No doubt the state of New Mexico considered that it had triumphed over the snoops from the media. But we had our film, all those hours of interviews, all those prison scenes. If the state of New Mexico chose not to answer the allegations, well—we would still do our best to see that the program was fair.

In early July a new and historic Supreme Court decision established that the Constitution does indeed give the public the right to go into a public institution and demand to know how it is operated. That principle obviously could affect our continuing legal effort to gain full access to the Santa Fe prison.

Once again, we are heartened and we are pressing for our legal rights. The original August air date has been postponed to October. However we fare in the courts of New Mexico, this *Closeup* of a maximum security prison torn apart by its inmates, will appear on your TV screen. Most viewers, however, will never know the media drama behind the documentary.

William Sherman is a correspondent for the ABC News "Closeup" documentary unit. He was formerly on the staff of the New York Daily News where he won a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting.

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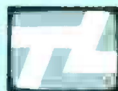

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Cameras in the Courtroom: The Florida Experience

By MARTIN C. BASS

Television has a bad reputation in the judiciary. Back in 1962 the televised trial of Billy Sol Estes turned into such a circus that the United States Supreme Court reversed the conviction. The cameras were huge, the lights glaring, and there were so many electrical cables snaking through the aisles that the courtroom resembled a television production studio. In Justice Clark's words, for a defendant, a televised trial was "a form of mental—if not physical—harassment, resembling a police line-up or the third degree."

Despite the occasionally harsh language, the 5-4 vote to overturn Estes' conviction was ambiguous enough that even today lawyers still debate its meaning. In part, the ambiguity concerns the arithmetic of the vote, which is often described as a 4 - 1 - 4 vote or a 4½ - 4½ vote: four justices said that Estes had received a fair trial; four said that televising a "notorious" criminal trial over the defendant's objection was *inherently* unconstitutional; and one justice voted to reverse the conviction, without committing himself to any broad doctrine as to television's constitutionality.

This crucial fifth vote of Justice Harlan recognized the possibility that some day television might be so commonplace and the technology so unobtrusive that broadcasting would no longer pose a threat to a fair trial. It was a decision that seemed to invite a reconsideration at a later date.

The decade of the seventies saw technological advances in broadcasting equipment. And it saw Watergate. At the same time that equipment improvements had made broadcasters certain they could televise without disrupting the decorum or dignity of the courtroom, the changed political climate had made open government a watchword. But although legislatures, school boards and city councils were all gradually being opened to television cameras, the judiciary continued to resist any televising in its domain. The entire Federal judiciary had rules prohibiting broadcasting, and the same was true of all state judiciaries except for Colorado's.

The public could watch the Senate Watergate Hearings on television, but it could not watch the trials of the Watergate defendants. The Supreme Court deliberated on pornography and parochaid, abortion and busing, but the oral arguments in open court were closed to cameras. Often the ban on broadcasting reached tragicomic proportions: Carl Stern, Le-

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gal Affairs Correspondent of N.B.C. News, tells the story of how he was prevented from photographing an *empty* federal courtroom for a story he was doing on the cost of building courthouses.

By the late seventies, things began to change. The U.S. Supreme Court still opposed any cameras in its marble palace; but thoughtful justices in the state Supreme Courts began to regard *openness* as a serious and consequential matter. Questions remained about what role, if any, television should play in reporting the judicial scene, particularly in light of the Estes experience; but these questions, it was decided, could only be answered by experimentation. In just four years, from 1976 to 1980, the Supreme Courts of 25 states authorized some form of study of television, from one-day limited tests in a single courtroom, to year-long experiments involving all courtrooms in a state.

Florida was one of the first states to authorize such an experiment. Unlike most other states that permit televising trials, however, Florida gives the defendant no veto power. Cameras can be brought into the courtroom even over his objection. In special cases, such as the testimony of a rape victim or an undercover cop, the judge may order the cameras turned off, but in general, Florida broadcasters can cover *any* public judicial proceeding they deem newsworthy.

In view of the tremendous leeway broadcasters are allowed in Florida it was almost inevitable that sooner or later a conviction would be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court on the grounds that because of the presence of TV cameras over his objection, the defendant had been denied due process of law. As we shall see, this has finally happened.

Can the right of a free press be balanced against the right to a fair trial? According to proponents, television is a part of the press, and the camera is its tool: the equivalent of the pad and pencil of the print reporter. But according to opponents, such electronic tools pose a definable danger to a fair trial. So the question becomes: Do electronic means of gathering the news differ in some special way from traditional means—the artist sketching or the reporter scribbling—in their effect on a trial?

The Florida Experience

In September, 1977, Ronney Zamora, a 15 year old Miami Beach boy, was tried for the murder of his next door neighbor, 82 year old Elinor Haggart. The trial attracted international attention because Telly Savalas had been subpoenaed and was expected to testify. Zamora's lawyer claimed that the boy had been "intoxicated" by excessive exposure to television violence: *Kojak* was his favorite program, Savalas his hero.

This was the first major trial to be telecast in Florida's controversial "cameras in the courtroom" experiment. Lured by the novelty of a televised trial, the issue of television violence, and the anticipated testimony of Savalas, dozens·

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of American and foreign stations sent reporters and crews. Miami's PBS station, WPBT, pre-empted its regular evening programming with videotapes of the day's courtroom proceedings. Public interest in the trial ran so high that on one night, WPBT's coverage actually beat the Johnny Carson Show in the ratings.

Meanwhile, guidelines that had been hammered out by the Florida Supreme Court and the media prior to the experimental year strictly prescribed acceptable equipment and behavior: one minicam, one operator, no glaring lights, no movement, no noise. The Zamora trial conclusively demonstrated that under such guidelines, broadcasting is no longer *physically* disruptive, no longer a distraction from the business of the court.

Today's "minicam" is less than a quarter of the size of the studio cameras of the Estes era. Compact and noiseless, it yields high quality pictures in ambient light. Since supplementary lighting can often be useful in dimly lit courtrooms, the guidelines permit replacing the bulbs in existing sockets with stronger ones—as long as this higher-intensity lighting does not cause heat or glare. According to presiding Judge H. Paul Baker, the equipment at the Zamora trial produced "no distracting sound or light."

The court imposed other common-sense restrictions: the camera could be brought into, or removed from, the courtroom only during "natural breaks" (i.e. at the start of the day or during a recess); it had to be placed in an unobtrusive location; and once there, it could not be moved.

The trial was covered on a "pool" basis: since only one camera and one crewman were allowed in the courtroom, broadcasters had to share the feed. It happened that WPBT was covering the trial gavel to gavel, so it took responsibility for providing the camera and operating it. In other trials, this responsibility was rotated among various stations.

The feed from the courtroom was conducted by cable to a separate media pooling room, where most of the equipment and personnel were located. There the signal was fed into a distribution amplifier that accommodated any number of videotape recorders. Stations covering the trial simply plugged in and taped as much or as little of the proceedings as they wanted. This arrangement both enabled all stations to get the pictures they wanted, and conformed to the rule that there be only one camera and one operator in the courtroom.

To relieve himself of any administrative burdens associated with broadcasting, Judge Baker designated Steven Tello of ABC News as media co-ordinator. His job was to enforce the guidelines, resolve disputes, and act as liason between the media and the judge.

Judge Baker said he encountered "no serious problems" with television, even though there were more than 60 media representatives at the trial. This success can be attributed to four factors: a modern generation of electronic equipment; common-sense restric-

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tions on movement and behavior; pooling; and effective liason (Steven Tello) between the media and the court.

The television presence at the Zamora trial produced some happy surprises. One of these was the *reduction* in the number of reporters in the courtroom. Reporters from the electronic media, who ordinarily would have been sitting in the galleries scribbling notes along with their print colleagues, spent their time watching the proceedings on monitors in the media room. Even some print reporters preferred to hang out there because they could take off their shoes, relax, smoke and talk. The media room was jammed, while the press presence in the courtroom itself was significantly reduced. Now, reporters are critical observers who begin scribbling furiously whenever something important happens in the trial. With the reduction in their number, there was a concommitant reduction in the level of tension in the courtroom.

Another set of critical observers is the corps of sketch artists. They stare fixedly at the judge, the jurors—all the participants—sketching on enormous pads with very obvious arm movements. At every recess or break they are likely to move to another seat to get different angles and perspectives. Attorneys are so aware of them that they often go over to see how their likenesses are being captured. With the advent of the camera, the sketch artists were completely eliminated.

The scene outside the courtroom was changed as well. In the past, crowds of reporters would wait for the participants in the halls, in the lobby, on the steps or in the parking lot. In the Zamora trial the important pictures were being obtained *inside the courtroom.* According to Norman Davis, Area Vice President of WPLG-TV, Miami:

> Before Florida adopted its new rules, the camera couldn't get into the courtroom, but the crews could stalk the sidewalks and pounce on witnesses going in and out. The herd journalism, the chase down the street was eliminated. All that hurly-burly, the competition of trying to get pictures and interviews, the witnesses being photographed trying to cover their faces, it was virtually eliminated.
>
> In the previous incarnation, we had the artists sketching away on the inside and the cameras waiting to pounce on the outside. Now we have a much more serene atmosphere in the courtroom and a much more dignified atmosphere outside.

The Media Relations Committee of the Florida Bar concluded that "Because of the pooling requirements and pooling arrangements, courthouses in Florida have been much less congested and quieter during the one-year experiment."

In short, not only did television *not* produce the disruption many had feared, it actually had the opposite effect. No one who has made a serious effort to become informed about "cameras in the courtroom" can make the argu-

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ment of physical disruption. As the Supreme Court of Florida bluntly stated, after evaluating an entire year's worth of televised trials, ". . . physical disturbance was so minimal as not to be an arguable factor."

There is a better way to cover trials, and the State of Florida seems to have found it.

Martin C. Bass is a freelance writer specializing in legal and media topics. The preceding article is part of a book-in-work, tentatively titled "Cameras in the Courtroom."

QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

How to Do It? . . . Stay Tuned

"We hear criticism that we spend too much time covering the foibles of candidates—and their tactics. We'd be delinquent if we didn't report these things. Part of the primary-election process, it seems to me, is to test the candidates' stamina and see how they perform under pressure and scrutiny.

"Neither have we neglected coverage of television's role in a campaign. We've used several pieces about the TV commercials candidates are airing and how they attempt to manipulate the medium."

—Walter Cronkite in Dateline
(A Publication of the Overseas Press Club)

A Thought for Today

"Even if one does not take *Dallas* seriously—even if one carefully makes a joke of it—nobody can afford too many such jokes. Matters of taste eventually become matters of character. For those who believe the '80s will be a test of character, it cannot be a favorable sign that *Dallas* holds the world's attention more successfully than Afghanistan or Teheran or Cuba. And while J.R. was skulking about, selling Asian oil leases, whatever became of the boat people? Did anybody hurry home from holiday to find out about them?"

—Melvin Maddocks, Christian Science Monitor

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Night and Day, Play by Play—It's the News!

By HARRIET VAN HORNE

It went on the air June 1 with three military bands and a dedication prayer comparing its founder, Ted Turner of Atlanta, to Christ of Galilee. It's called Cable News Network and it is the first around-the-clock all news television service. It begins with two million subscribers in 40 states, six regional bureaus, a staff of four hundred and the serene expectation of losing two million dollars a month during its first year.

In terms of publicity and euphoric expectation, there has been nothing like Turner's CNN since the coaxial cable first connected the East Coast to the West Coast, thereby obviating the old TV kinescope. Media experts are calling CNN the forerunner of tomorrow's television.

As more homes are wired for cable, the dial will eventually be clogged with 50 or more channels. The only answer to this proliferation seems to be—in the manner of radio—specialization. We may expect to see stations specializing in old movies, TV reruns, high culture, sports, education and above all, news. Ted Turner believes the big payoff lies with news. Audience surveys over the past year bear him out.

As 1980 established itself as another turbulent year, the public nose for news grew sharper. The most watched program in the land was not an escapist comedy but the solidly factual *60 Minutes.* When ABC introduced a late night network news show at 11:30 (EST) it outdrew Johnny Carson's opening monologue. The MacNeil-Lehrer Report on PBS saw its audience rise to 3.5 million, up 20 per cent over last year.

CNN's greatest asset is that it can "go live" to the scene of almost any breaking story. In its first two months it scored some memorable beats. When President Carter stopped in Terre Haute, Ind. to visit Vernon Jordan following the shooting of the black leader outside his motel, CNN cameras were there. When the President, the First Lady and daughter Amy visited the Pope in Rome, CNN cameras covered the visit live, via satellite. When Mt. St. Helens erupted for the second time, viewers saw the clouds of steam and ash as they were rising. A geologist, on standby alert, explained what was going on down in the rumbling throat of the volcano.

The networks showed the eruption next day on their regular newscasts.

No heat wave was ever covered

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more thoroughly than the one that struck Texas in July. Each day the CNN cameras showed us another view of what 100-degree-plus temperatures can do to ordinary people. We saw the buckled highways, the "popped" windshields, the rows of chickens slowly dying of heat stroke. The cameras went inside the small, shabby houses of the poor—no fans, no air conditioning—as ambulance attendants picked up elderly stricken citizens and rushed them to hospitals for ice baths. Here was "live coverage" as television's pioneers once dreamed it. In the fullest sense of the term, *we were there.*

Programming on CNN is arranged logically in one hour blocks, with headline up-dates following each commercial break. Hard news is supplemented by "soft features", interviews and panel discussions patterned on such shows as *Issues and Answers* and *Washington Week in Review.*

Reviewing the first month of this new service, John O'Connor of the New York *Times* wrote, "In a brief time, CNN has set a tone that is serious, professional and credible."

Besides hard news there are regular nightly programs devoted to sports, finance, show business and fashions. There are also five minute spots on medicine, pet care, calisthenics and tennis. Considerable attention is given to national news with Dan Schorr, formerly of CBS News, the chief commentator.

CNN has 13 anchor persons based in Atlanta, all of them youthful and handsome. A corps of young video journalists, most of them recent college graduates, are being trained in reporting, editing and camera work. All the crews are non-union. ("Unions better not mess with me", Turner told the press.)

The Atlanta broadcast center is an ante-bellum mansion converted to a broadcast center at a cost of $20 millions. Here CNN's president, Reese Schonfeld, holds forth. Until last year he ran the Independent Television News Association, a non-profit service that supplied 90 minutes of daily news to independent TV stations. Robert Wussler, a CBS veteran, is executive vice-president.

To date, subscriber response to CNN has been described as "90 percent favorable". To this steady viewer, the flaws are annoying but seem built into the system as long as its finances are tight. Because the commercials are so few they are repeated endlessly. There's a blonde woman with a headache who should be put to bed with a massive dose of the stuff she's pushing. She doesn't wear well. And there are public service announcements—for the United Way, the Negro College Fund—that one soon learns by heart.

Women who watch CNN complain that there's far too much time given to sports. This viewer agrees. When you do not know one baseball team from another the continous recital of the scores can be extremely tiresome. One moves on to another channel and, likely as not, forgets to return to CNN, thereby missing an interview or a live remote. But nothing is missed beyond retrieval, as CNN's schedule is now structured.

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Being on the air 24 hours a day means that the hours after midnight are simple re-runs of the hours before midnight. This can be disconcerting, if you are not familiar with the quirkier aspects of CNN. When, at 3 a.m. you are told, in excited tones, that the game between the Yankees and the Minnesota Twins is now in the fifth inning, you may feel that the world—or your TV set—has gone slightly mad.

Besides hard news and features, CNN offers its version of an editorial page. Brief opinion pieces are delivered by Sen. Barry Goldwater, William Simon, Bella Abzug, Ralph Nader and Phyllis Schlafly. Then the pieces are delivered again. . . and again. Repetition may yet prove the undoing of CNN.

Press reports say that Ted Turner has gambled his entire fortune on the success of Cable News Network. "If I knew anything about economics I probably wouldn't have done it", he told an interviewer. But he expects that in five years "we'll be the single most powerful news entity in America."

To break even, CNN needs eight million subscribers, nearly six million more than it has now. Still, 172 cable systems are now subscribing and the critical reception has been generally good. Turner's confidence seems unbounded. He points out that his nightly audience is larger than the combined circulation of the New York *Times*, the Los Angeles *Times* and the Chicago Tribune.

Blunt, volatile and highly opinionated, Turner may be the most quoted man in television today. And with good reason. "I'm not in this to make money," he told a reporter from *Broadcasting*. "I'm in this to straighten this country out."

Turner's stated aim is "to improve the quality of the television industry." He says he has staked his life and his reputation on this vow.

"I'm doing it as a crusade", Turner continued. "I'm not doing it for myself. I'm doing it for my children and their children and for the people in the world who are getting ripped off—the people who want to live in peace and harmony and want to see our problems solved before we destroy the planet."

Though he has been called reactionary and prejudiced, Turner's hiring policies would seem to deny that. The views of Bella Abzug and Ralph Nader hardly coincide with his. CNN's on-the-air regulars include a large number of blacks and women.

The manager of the CNN bureau in New York is Mary Alice Williams. She is the only woman in the country running a major TV operation. Besides acting as news bureau chief, Miss Williams is a producer and news anchor. With a staff of thirty-five it fell to her lot to set up the CNN studios in the World Trade Center.

Will Ted Turner realize his dream, i.e., make a lot of money and "straighten the country out"? Two million subscribers are staying tuned.

Harriet Van Horne is a television critic and columnist and the editor of Television Quarterly.

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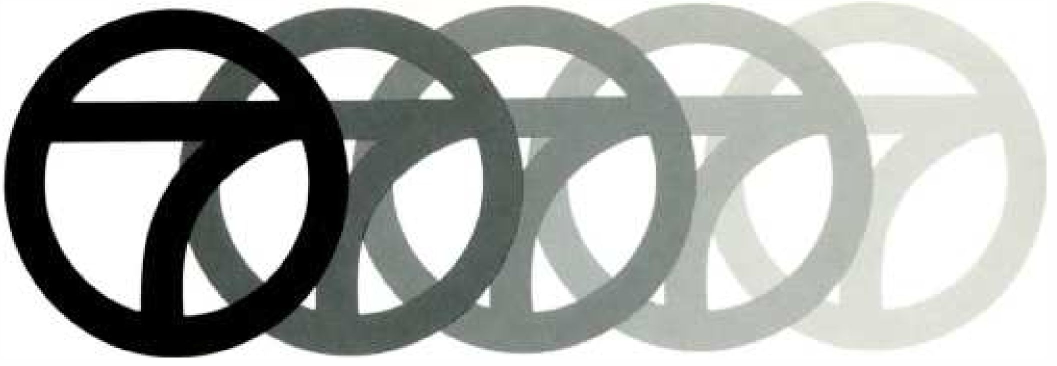

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Scenes from an Unhappy Marriage: WNET/13 and Independent Filmmakers

By ERIC BREITBART

From its meagre beginnings in the 1950s, Public Television has labored under the burden of its own idealism.

The first Carnegie Commission Report in 1967 projected the ideal as "all that is of human interest and importance which is not, at that moment, appropriate or available for support by advertising."

The idealism grew. In 1979, the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting concluded its report, "Americans have the capacity to rebuild their local communities, their regions and, indeed, their country with tools no more formidable than transistors and television tubes. They need only want to do so intensely enough to create a public telecommunications system that will bring it about."

The Report asked that Americans be remembered as "builders of magical electronic tabernacles" which would unify the country.

Calls for participation—and excellence—are all very well. Putting them into practice is quite another matter. Rhetoric is always cheaper than programming. From the beginning, Public Television has never had the backing of the general populace, nor the kind of government funding that would put it on a par with the BBC. Perpetually short of funds, stations have had to look elsewhere for support.

Because of its great size—it is the country's largest public television station, with an annual budget of $43.6 millions—WNET/13 lays bare the system's problems in giant closeup. At a smaller station some of the flaws would not be noticed.

WNET programs are virtually all on film or tape. Happily, WNET finds itself in an area with the nation's largest concentration of independent filmmakers. Since some are gifted and some are not, this has proved to be a mixed blessing.

During the past year, the relationship between the station and this pool of "local talent" has been stormy. One could compare it to a small, fierce army attacking a huge fortress. There is uneasiness inside the fort and out. No one, it seems, is happy.

Certainly not the management of Channel 13, which is tired of repeating that it does more for independents than any other TV station in the country. And not the filmmakers who criticize the station for low acquisition fees, editorial

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interference and lack of support in the face of criticism from outside agencies.

Unhappiest of all, are the filmmakers whose work has been rejected.

Many of these criticisms were brought up again recently when four films, part of a group of 28 recommended by a peer review panel and a programming consultant, were dropped from the show, *Independent Focus*. A few years ago, the four films, and probably a good number of the other 24, would have disappeared without a trace. But then, WNET would never have entertained the idea of a peer panel to advise them on programming, nor, probably, the idea of a show devoted exclusively to independent films.

The resulting flood of articles (the *L.A. Times*, the *Village Voice*—with a 3 part series, the *N.Y. Times* and the *Amsterdam News*, just to name a few) was, in one sense, out of proportion for a show whose entire budget (publicity, acquisitions, consultant fees, etc.) is less than $75,000.

In part, this reflects the increasing power of independent filmmakers, more of whom have been turning to television. Since, with few exceptions, their work is banned from commercial stations, public television has become almost the sole focus of their attention.

And, unlike the filmmakers of ten years ago, today's independents have a national trade association with over a thousand members, the A.I.V.F. (Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers), which has proven to be a persuasive and effective lobbying force where it counts—in Washington.

When Congress last held hearings on the Public Telecommunications Financing Act, the bill which provides the money for Public Broadcasting, the A.I.V.F. pushed for amendments in the act which, they felt, would benefit the viewing public, as well as independent filmmakers. These included active community advisory boards, open meetings for station policy discussion, and a request that "a substantial amount" of all programming funds be specifically allocated for work by independent producers.

Money is a sore point. It is less expensive to acquire films than to produce them, and independent producers have always been a source of cheap labor for Public Television.

In 1978, the A.I.V.F. did a survey of independent filmmakers whose work had been broadcast on public television and found that: 35 percent had received no payment; 31 percent recovered between 1 percent and 10 percent of their production costs; and 22 percent recovered between 10 percent and 59 percent of their costs. As the survey noted, many independents did not include the value of their own time and labor in computing production costs—a fact which would reduce these low percentages even further.

But the "threat" of independents goes beyond money and the ques-

(continued on page 29)

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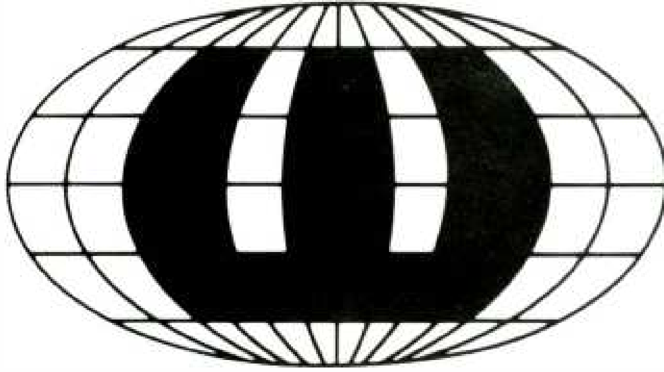

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—Elbert Hubbard.

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The need to try applies to broadcasting, too.

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Old solutions won't work in new times. Dare we try, then, new ideas?

Indeed, dare we not try?

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tion of which films get on the air. The goal is to open the station's decision-making process to filmmakers not in the station's employ—and to the public. This has touched a raw nerve at WNET. For even though public money (through contributions, tax monies, program sales to other public stations) provides 74 percent of WNET's budget, the station has an extremely private way of doing business. And even though every commission that studies Public TV calls for increased public participation, WNET seems to want them no closer than the telephone during Pledge Week.

Independent filmmakers generally produce films one at a time—not in the series favored by the large corporate funders who donate and dominate the prime hours of public television. All television hours are not created equal, and while Public TV may not have the stark reality of advertising rates to live by, corporations know when the people they want to reach are watching. Public television is allowed to have diversity, but not in prime time.

If WNET's budget is examined carefully an interesting pattern appears. Money from public sources (contributions and taxes) goes into general support funding. Channel 13 management decides how it is spent. Currently, 29 percent of this money goes to acquire and produce new programs; 30 percent goes for fundraising, 17 percent for promotion costs, and 11 percent for transmission costs.

Committed funding, such as corporate and foundation grants, can, on the other hand, be earmarked for specific programs. Understandably, few corporations are interested in funding pledge week or furniture. And, generally, their money goes where it can be seen—in programming.

WNET thus finds itself enmeshed in a system that calls for excellence and diversity, yet *insures conformity.* And a supposedly non-commercial television system finds itself dependent for support on the same corporations it is supposed to avoid.

Independent filmmakers do, of course, speak for their own self interest. Few want to be remembered as the anonymous stone masons who built the electronic tabernacles. But they are also reasserting the principles for which public television was set up in the first place, and tend to be forgotten in the funding shuffle.

And by arguing that WNET should be making an effort to reach the large, diverse audience in the New York metropolitan area, and that the station management should be accountable to this audience, independents seem to be driving some people into their bunkers.

In a memo to station managers (published in a recent AIVF newsletter), Robert Thomas, executive director of the New York Association of Public Television Stations wrote: "I found myself aghast at the ________ the independents have managed to pile on our doorstep in Washington, and the extent to which they have brainwashed Congress and the CPB . . . Part of

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the horror of this whole baleful mess is that a corporation (CPB) set up to promote the interest of public broadcasting must now by law (and inclination) promote the interests of non-broadcasters . . . " Thomas wants *all* monies from the new Program Fund to go directly to the stations, who will, presumably, decide whether it will be spent for programs or promotion.

Darkening the outlook for independents—and, some would say, another example of the station's "fortress mentality," —was the appointment of Walter Goodman as "executive editor" at WNET. The former New York Times man will be the cultural concierge, overseeing independent film acquisitions. Goodman's antipathy to the independent film community—which he regards as a hotbed of radicalism at the least—is well known, and one of his first acts in his new position was to suggest changing the name of the show Independent Focus to Independents' Choice—to make it clear that the material shown comes form outside the charmed circle. Mr. Goodman once said, "Every independent film I've ever seen has the same point of view."

For the time being it's still called "public" television. Among independent film producers, the name would seem to have ironic overtones.

Eric Brietbart received his B.A. from Columbia University and later did graduate work in French literature at Yale. He studied film at the IDHEC in Paris. He has been a film producer and critic for the past fifteen years. His articles on film and television have appeared in Film Culture, Cineaste, Film Library Quarterly, Seven Days and Catalyst. He is currently associate director of the Film Forum in New York.

QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

To Put It Bluntly . . .

"It's time we ended the fiction that the oil companies, like Mobil, are only helping Public TV a little with their money—like you and me sending a few bucks to the United Way. What gets on Public TV is what Mobil and the others want to get on. That's the bottom line in eleemosynary television."

—Marvin Kitman
Long Island Newsday

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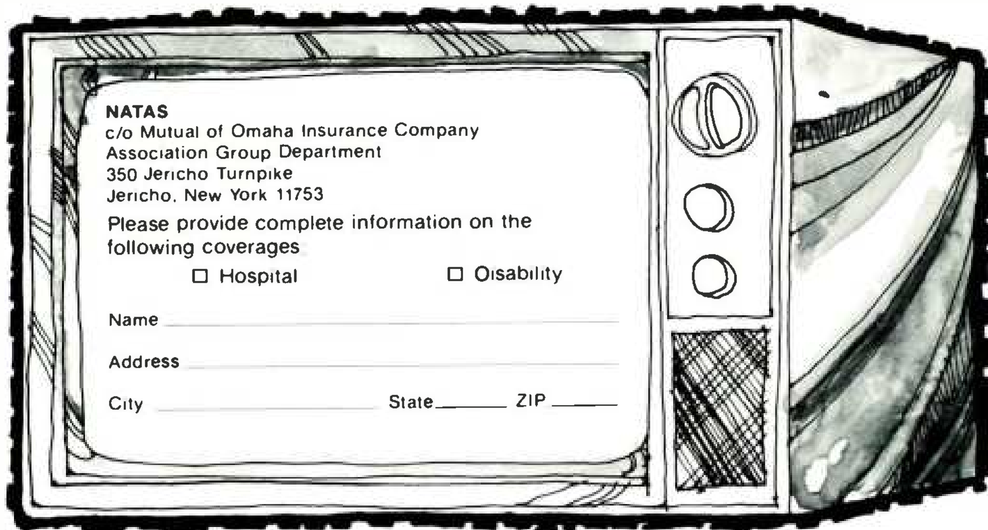

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The View from Channel 13: A Reply to Eric Breitbart

By WALTER GOODMAN

The arguments set forth in the preceding essay by film maker Eric Breibart merit a response from the accused.

If Mr. Breibart employs in his films the reportorial techniques he displays here, he is in trouble. Without exchanging a word with me, he delivers the judgment that my "antipathy to the independent film community—which he (Goodman) regards as a hotbed of radicalism, at the least—is well known." That sentence is a hotbed of hot air.

I have never said and I do not believe that independent film makers comprise "a hotbed of radicalism". True, I was struck by the fact that the films in last season's *Independent Focus* (which, overall, I thought, worked very well) did have a markedly similar political bent for a series designed to present the techniques and views of various and presumably independent-minded-people.

Our main consideration, however, is that each film, whatever its point of view, be done honestly and professionally.

Now a new season of *Independent Focus* is being prepared for WNET/13. Let Mr. Breibart rest assured that independent film producers will find no hotbed of antipathy here.

In fact, I'm confident that we shall discover a lot of talent out there.

Walter Goodman is Executive Editor of WNET/13. He was formerly a member of the editorial board of The New York Times.

QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

No Depth Charges

"Exposing a fraudulent anti-poverty program is one thing; *60 Minutes* does that. Examining the root causes of poverty and exploring solutions to the problem is quite another; *60 Minutes* doesn't do that."

—*David Shaw in the Los Angeles Times*

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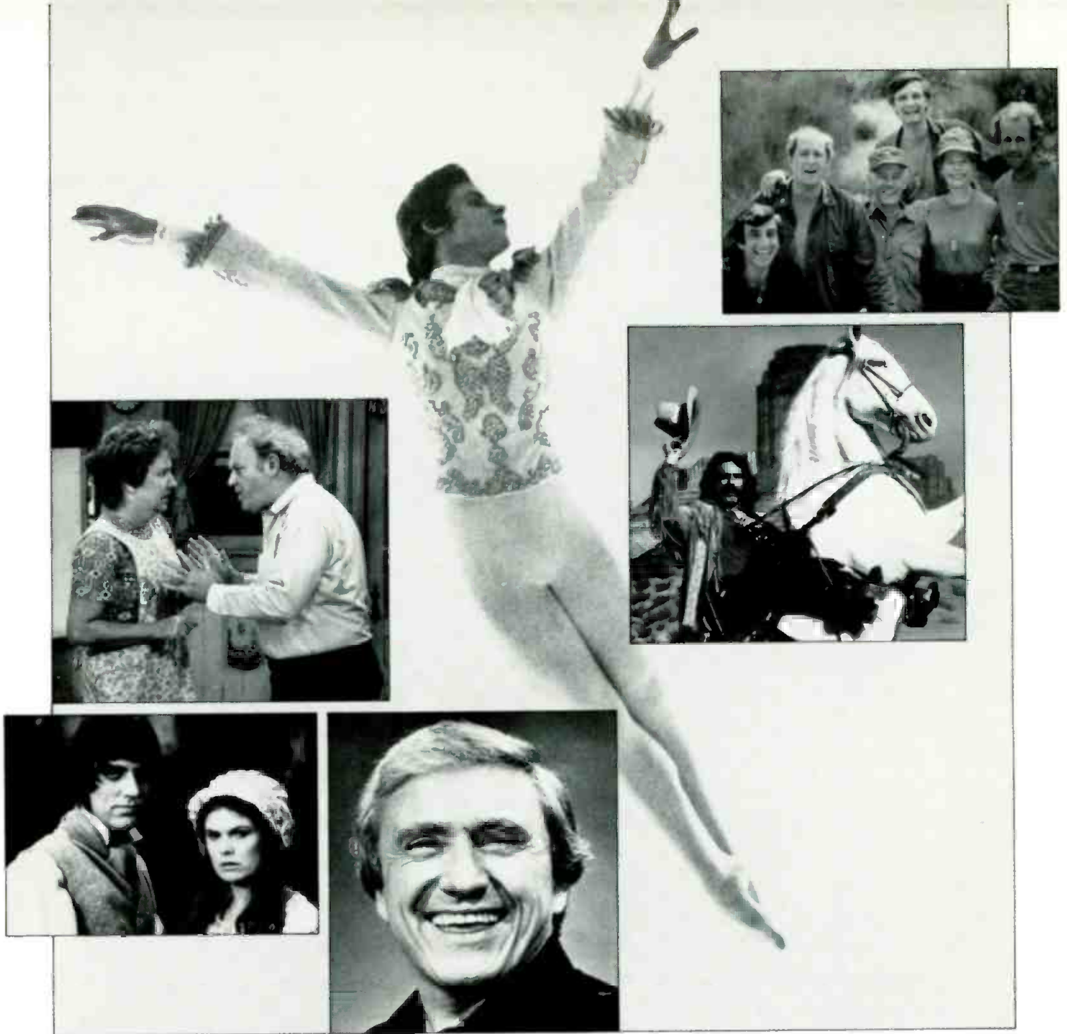

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On "Choosing Suicide"— Documentary as Confrontation

By RICHARD ELLISON

Some documentaries simply deliver information; some are aimed at social change. Few deal with taboo subjects so directly that they arouse strong, personal responses—fear, anger, sorrow—in viewers. *Choosing Suicide* proved to be one of those exercises in confrontation. It was, in consequence, highly controversial.

Writing about the program now, weeks after its June 16 airing on Public Television, I realize that objectivity is beyond my reach. While much of the response to this portrait of a suicide has been rational and thoughtful, I remain astonished by the vehemence—and bitterness—of those who denounced it. The intensity of their feeling is perhaps a measure of our success in confronting a subject so fraught with pain, terror and a sense of sin.

A quick summation of the facts is in order here.

In the summer of 1979, a 62-year old woman named Jo Roman ended her life with 36 sleeping capsules. Mrs. Roman, and artist, psychotherapist, and cancer patient, did not quit this life quietly. She sent out 100 farewell letters. She composed a suicide note and had it notarized. She sent her obituary to the New York *Times*. In the last hectic weeks before her death, she decorated a pine coffin with momentos of her past, a collage she called a "life sculpture".

Finally, in a gesture some found touching, others horrifying, Jo Roman invited 12 friends to a symposium (in her home) on "rational suicide". I was asked to produce the video tape of these conversations. There were 20 hours in all, which we edited down to one hour for the broadcast.

At the time, Mrs. Roman was writing a book about suicide. She feared that her illness might worsen, making it impossible for her to finish the book. She asked my help in getting her philosophy, her feelings on record. I agreed, with no idea of what the ultimate disposition of that record might be.

Jo Roman had a theory of suicide seldom expressed in our culture. I respected it without fully sharing it. I could only assist her as a documentarian, recording her talks with friends about death.

I now had to involve professionals who would be total strangers to Jo and her—to some—bizarre theories on carrying out one's own death wish. I was fortunate in enlisting Leah Siegel and Don Blauvelt, experienced "video-makers" willing to risk their time and talents in an uncertain enterprise.

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We met with Jo and her husband, Dr. Mel Roman, (a psychologist and teacher) to draw up plans for a weekend talk-marathon. Twelve friends were invited to the Saturday taping. Among them: psychologists, lawyers, painters, a literary agent and a restaurant owner. The Sunday taping was confined to the immediate family. With so many participants, we had to add an extra camera team, under Barry Rebo.

The setting was a sky-lit studio that ran the length of the Romans' apartment. We decided that Blauvelt's camera would focus on Jo, while Rebo would pick up the other speakers, and handle reaction shots. Monitors were placed so that each could see the framing of both cameras and make adjustments without further direction from me. Jo wore a wireless microphone and there were several fixed mikes as well as two "shotguns".

A few lights were pre-set in case the sessions ran into evening (which they did), and we started one camera ahead of the other so that one was always recording while the other was changing cassettes. That was the extent of our technical planning. Our basic strategy was to be as unobtrusive as possible. The participants said later that they were hardly aware of our presence.

To be present at this colloquy on death was an extraordinary experience, both exhilarating and draining. All of us involved in the taping felt great tension between our emotions and our professional concerns. Over that weekend we recorded some eight hours of discussion. Screening it repeatedly over the ensuing weeks, Leah, Don and I found that the talk still fascinated us, even after several viewings.

In May, the three of us took our camera equipment back to the Romans' apartment. This time we interviewed Jo alone. She urged us to "Ask anything you want." I had many questions: about her childhood, her religious upbringing; about the relationships between her careers in art and psychotherapy, her philosophy of life and death.

Above all, I was mindful that I was speaking with a woman who knew, almost to the hour, the time of her own death. How had she decided on the day? I found asking the questions difficult but Jo was perfectly at ease. As we packed up our equipment she invited us to return if we had further questions.

Jo's serenity and self-assurance at that juncture still surpass my understanding. I knew I could not make another intrusion upon her last few weeks of life. We did correspond—she was an inveterate letter-writer—and I met her one more time to bid her farewell.

One week after Jo Roman's death, the Sunday New York *Times* ran the story of her carefully plotted suicide on page one. And four days later we recorded an interview with Dr. Roman, which forms the last segment of the documentary.

Now we had more than 20 hours of what seemed to us highly significant video tape. We could not proceed further without financial help and a confirmed air date. We were fortunate in getting both from the

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Public Broadcasting Service.

As we analyzed the hours of talk, we discovered that each participant had his own personal agenda. Whether supporting Jo's projected suicide or opposing it, each one made the same points, over and over. We were able to select the core, the pure culture of each person's arguement, making the discussion fairly succinct.

What was more difficult—and never completely solved—was the mystery of Jo Roman herself. In the course of our sessions, she had told us much about herself. How much of that story should we retain for the light it shed upon her wish to die by her own hand? Should we emphasize her religious upbringing?

Mary Jo Clodfelter's grandparents were Missouri farmers and fundamentalists who believed in hellfire and brimstone for sinners. Her father, a minister of the Swedenborgian sect, had a gentler concept of the afterlife. In the edited tape we hear Jo say, "For me, it doesn't matter what each of us believes. We believe what we believe. . . ."

When a friend says, on tape, that she fears what may follow death, Jo replies, "That would stay your hand. It won't stay mine."

In the 17 weeks it took to edit the film we were aware of moving away from the anecdotal, and biographical material toward a summary of Jo Roman's position, vis-a-vis life and death. It was a process analagous to sculpting in stone. We chipped away the irrelevant, working toward the final, irreducible form.

The essentials of the Jo Roman story were simply these:

Here is a woman who says that suicide is a natural human right, like getting married or having children. She says, moreover, that she plans to exercise her right to suicide—and soon.

She is a woman who says she is sick with cancer, but she neither looks nor acts sick.

She declines to die like a wounded animal. She is planning to depart in comfort, surrounded by her loved ones.

Not only is she involving friends and family in her suicide, she is positively euphoric about it, enjoying the drama, the attention.

As a crowning touch, she is permitting a video tape to be made of a major event of her final days—a symposium on suicide with her best friends!

Now, this series of statements can only strike some people as offensive, even threatening. We did not expect "Choosing Suicide" to be greeted with universal acclaim. We knew only that we had made a truthful record on one woman's carefully plotted death. Still, we were surprised by the vehemence of some of the critics' comments.

The controversy gathered momentum slowly. PBS had the program in hand some three months before the broadcast date. A preview was fed to the network, with the announcement that "Choosing Suicide" would be followed by a responsible discussion on the pros and cons of taking one's life.

The result of the preview was predictable. Some station managers

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decided that here was the kind of "advocacy piece" from which they must protect their viewers. A few managers believed that the documentary could stand alone, with no coda or epilogue. In general, the follow-up was deemed a sound idea and I agreed to produce it.

In the search for panelists, I screened Jo Roman's story for several physicians, psychiatrists and other medical personnel. I also showed it to lawyers, clergymen and representatives of the American Cancer Society, The Samaritans, Concern for the Dying and similar groups. The overwhelming conclusion: here was a responsible, important work that deserved to be seen on television.

This view was not shared by all television critics. John O'Connor of the New York *Times* found the program "terribly unsettling." Kay Gardella of the New York *Daily News* called it "not only embarrassing but obscene". To Tom Shales of *The Washington Post* the hour was "repugnant" and "deplorable", as well as a "sickening and pointless spectacle." By contrast, Judy Flanders of *The Washington Star* saw it as "a provocative and stimulating documentary that brings into the open something that people have been talking about—and doing—for thousands of years."

When the dust of controversy settles, I hope that *Choosing Suicide* will be seen as having made a significant contribution to public understanding of a painful subject. I believe also that it will be useful as a teaching tool, illuminating some dark paths for students who, as professionals in many areas, will find themselves confronting issues of life and death.

Finally, I salute the Public Television Service as—alas!—the only electronic forum extant for this radically different and controversial genre of programming.

Richard Ellison has been a writer, producer and director of documentary films for the past 25 years. He has also served as staff producer for CBS and for Time-Life Films, and subsequently as director of current affairs programming for PBS.

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QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

To Put It Bluntly . . .

"I believe we must remove the 'equal time' and 'fairness doctrine' provisions from the books. They were wrong when promulgated, and they are wholly unreal today."

—William S. Paley, Chairman, CBS, Inc.
Address to AP Broadcasters' Convention

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The Black Image on TV

By RICHARD B. KOINER

When he wished to be seen, H. G. Wells' *Invisible Man* simply dons a few clothes. Style does not matter. Visibility is the goal, with the choice entirely in his own now-you-see-them, now-you-don't hands.

For the television performer, the ability to appear at will would constitute a thespian heaven with all union dues paid—especially for blacks who have been restricted not only by a scarcity of roles but also by stereotyped parts. In this essay I'll recount the black actor's balancing act between finding work and keeping integrity, and survey television's hiring of blacks and its projection of black life.

Many current viewers are too young to recall that when television first came into the living room around 1946, blacks were invisible men (and women). Hollywood, despite its immense potential for influencing social awareness, had opted instead for the one-dimensional shuffling buffoon as patented by Stepin Fetchit, the black mammy and similar stereotypes.

In the early 1950's, while blacks had regular appearances on some series—for example, the Billy Williams Quartet on the Caesar-Coca *Your Show of Shows* (1950–54)—audiences and advertisers weren't ready for programs starring blacks. ABC produced a pilot film for a situation comedy with Sammy Davis, Jr. and the Will Mastin Trio—at the same time that they were headlined at New York's smart Copacabana. However, the network couldn't drum up a sponsor to back it.

Thus, it was a giant step forward when in 1956 Nat "King" Cole appeared on his own TV show. Once a week the debonair Nat made his soft music and provided gentle patter between songs (Uncle Tomming was not part of his act). But he was "too much too soon." Sponsors were disappointed at the small audience—a 19 percent share versus 50 percent for Robin Hood on CBS and 21 percent for a travel show on ABC. NBC kept the show on at a loss. The top black performers—Sammy Davis, Jr., Count Basie, the Mills Brothers, Cab Calloway, Harry Belafonte, Mahalia Jackson, Pearl Bailey, Ella Fitzgerald and Billy Eckstine—appeared for minimal fees and so too did several white supporters, including Stan Kenton, Frankie Laine and Tony Bennett. After 13 months the Cole show fell victim to the ratings axe.

At about the same time the beauteous Barbara McNair teamed with the smoothly handsome Lonnie Satin in a similar format, only to meet the same predictable fate. Ditto pianist-singer Hazel Scott's 15-minute thrice-weekly stint in

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summer 1950. Miss Scott, incidentally, married Congressman Adam Clayton Powell and remains, as she was at the time of her short-lived show, a supper club favorite.

For a while, the only blacks appearing regularly on the home screen were Ethel Waters followed by Louise Beavers as a maid on *Beulah* (1950–53), Willie Best as a handyman on *The Stu Erwin Show* (1950–55), and the cast of the *Amos 'n' Andy* series (1951–53). Unfortunately or otherwise—depending on your viewpoint—the television version of that former radio show became the subject of social polemic. Although regarded by many as one of the funniest sitcoms ever, the series created by Gosden and Correll was finally taken off the air after critical blast from several black leaders who termed its humor racist. Nonetheless, years after its cancellation, afficionados, both black and white, still recall the conniving Kingfish (Tim Moore) with affection.

In the near total absence of blacks in regular series, the question of image became academic until the daring *I Spy* co-starring Bill Cosby and Robert Culp, struck instant pay dirt. In this cloak and dagger series, Cosby and Culp played CIA operatives moving from one hazardous assignment to the next. Throughout, Bill Cosby displayed qualities of courage, resourcefulness and intelligence heretofore denied blacks. So great was its appeal that any negative response was drowned out in acclaim. *I Spy* stayed around for nearly three years. Largely because of its success, a new black image had been mined.

In 1968 ABC premiered a Western,*The Outcasts*, with a black co-lead, ex-football star Otis Young, playing opposite Don Murray who portrayed a former Southern aristocrat after the Civil War. Although the two had an uneasy relationship, the show was one of the few TV vehicles to lift the curtain on the large part blacks played in the Old West.

In art, as in life, onward and upward is often accompanied by a great deal of sideways and back. The talented Flip Wilson dominated the network comedy scene of the early '70's, paving the way for George Kirby, Nipsey Russell, Moms Mabley, Godfrey Cambridge, and even crusty old vaudevillian Pigmeat "Here come de judge" Markham. Blacks seemed a happy, contented lot whose sole function was to make America laugh. Slightly more serious but equally out of touch with reality was the Diahann Carroll show *Julia* (1968–71), in which the lovely singer-actress was presented as a sort of sepia Doris Day. "One more example of the Negro as a fantasy figure," commented a major black publication. "Dangerous in its illusions." After three seasons, Miss Carroll moved on. Recently on a special she commented, "I don't know why I had to defend being in a fantasy, when white actresses in sitcoms didn't have to."

Yet, while all this was taking place, inroads were being quietly made. Blacks began to be seen in

(continued on page 43)

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FERRER☆MARTIN SHEEN☆EVA MARIE
DANNE WOODWARD☆RAYMOND MAS
☆JOHN HOUSEMAN☆JOHN GIELGUD☆
EVOR HOWARD☆ELI WALLACH☆JESSI
ESS MEREDITH☆ANTHONY HOPKINS☆
DRGE C. SCO ☆CYRIL RIT
WALL☆RIC TH ANDERS
THOMAS M BETTE DAVI
LEEN DEWH RSON WELL
TH EVANS☆ ARD BURTO
N ROBARDS GUINNESS☆
YNNE☆EVA LE GALLIENNE☆MAURICE
FONTANNE☆JAMES STEWART☆DAME
S☆SARAH CHURCHILL☆JULIE HARRIS
CHARLTON HESTON☆PATRICIA NEAL
INOV☆ALFRED LUNT☆HELEN HAYES☆
EGLEY☆MELVYN DOUGLAS☆GERALDI

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commercials, as newscasters, as contestants on game shows. Then within a fairly short span *Roots I* and *II* earned some of the highest ratings in TV history while Cicely Tyson gave an award-winning performance in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* and was equally effective in *A Woman Called Moses.* Of course, we were still being subjected to the loudmouthed bigot George Jefferson *(The Jeffersons),* the ignorant Fred Sanford *(Sanford and Son),* the fatuous J.J. *(Good Times),* and the ne'er-do-well husband in *Baby, I'm Back.* But, overall, positive forces were in motion.

Increasingly, black characterizations moved from outside to within mainstream America, enlarging the black image beyond mere comedy and past the limitations of absolute good or absolute bad, to include the shadings of gray which more truthfully reflect human behavior.

Part of the changing climate has been *All in the Family* which started a decade ago. That pioneering effort placed bigotry in a framework where it had to be examined and rejected because it is self-delusion. The original shows, now in syndication, and the current edition, *Archie Bunker's Place* do an effective job in undermining prejudice because they have the appeal of humor and the bite of satire.

During the 1979–80 season on CBS James Earl Jones, abetted by Lee Chamberlin, was forceful as a police captain in *Paris* while Tim Reid continued as a far-out disc jockey in *WKRP in Cincinnati.* ABC offered us Ron Glass as a detective on *Barney Miller,* Robert Guillaume in the title role as the redoubtable *Benson,* Hannah Dean as a housekeeper in *Out of the Blue,* Ted Lange as a bartender on *The Love Boat* and just plain funny LaWanda Page as a would-be private eye on *Detective School.*

NBC had Gary Coleman and Todd Bridges playing adopted kids on *Diff'rent Strokes,* Ruth Brown as a neighborhood woman and basketball great Meadowlark Lemon portraying himself in *Hello, Larry,* Ji-Tu Cumbuka as the hero's right-hand man on *A Man Called Sloane* and Byron Allen co-hosting *Real People.* All in all, a wide range of people and personalities.

Nor should there be any single image. While TV undoubtedly reflects prejudiced attitudes within our society, it is also capable of either helping maintain these attitudes or of helping eliminate then. Philosophically, broadcasters have chosen the latter, socially responsible course. As a result, the appearance of blacks in non-stereotyped roles has made it easier for whites to accept blacks in real-life positions and professions once unthinkable.

In writing about the "black image" I've confined myself to the entertainment side of television—images that are created—leaving news and actualities out of the picture. Yet television's news, documentaries and special events have presented pictures that have played a powerful role—a black schoolgirl in Little Rock, freedom marches, statements by black political leaders, for example. And daily on ABC's evening news anchorman Max

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Robinson is knowledgeable, competent, mature—what most people want in a TV anchorman.

And even television's sportscasts, its football, baseball and basketball games, have presented a view of black athletes competing and cooperating on an equal basis with white opponents or teammates.

To seek definition of the so-called "black image on TV" is to attempt to define that which, like time, changes even as you watch. When one sees blacks in many walks of life, and with many points of view, one no longer sees an *image*, but rather an *individual*. Television is big and diverse and its programming in some cases is as old as "Our Gang" comedy reels with the stereotyped Farina. But taking it as whole, I see television making significant progress and helping to keep the Great American Melting Pot bubbling—without ethnic or racial groups losing their unique identities. Incidentally, for more on the evolution of blacks in broadcasting, see George Norford's interesting article, "The Black Role in Radio and TV," in *The Black American Reference Book*.

What happens behind the TV cameras is of vital importance to blacks, too. Employment opportunitites have been increasing. Of the 114,000 full-time employees in broadcasting's higher paying jobs in 1979, more than 13,000 were minorities. Commercial television figures released by the FCC show that between 1975 and 1979 minority employment made significant gains in the following areas: Officials and Managers—from 6.6 percent to 8.5 percent; Professionals—from 13.1 percent to 15.2 percent; Technicians—from 12.6 percent to 16.5 percent; Sales Workers—from 6.1 percent to 8.3 percent; and Office/Clerical—up from 21 percent to 25.1 percent.

One organization that NAB Vice President of Special Services Dwight Ellis feels has greatly helped stations and networks find "qualified" and "qualifiable" minority personnel is the Employment Clearing House. This was established by the National Association of Broadcasters in 1973, as an outgrowth of a Broadcast Skills Bank already involved in working for similar goals.

Broadcast Skills Banks, which began in 1965 under the aegis of Group W and with other broadcast industry support, are still active in a number of cities.

ECH gets its funds from stations and networks. Headquartered at the NAB in Washington with Wanda E. Townsend as coordinator, ECH offers initial career counseling to job-hopefuls, information on broadcast careers, referring of resumes to broadcasters seeking personnel and follow-up counseling. It maintains resume files in 20 job categories, from camera operators to commercial sales. ECH is located at the NAB, 1771 N. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

While there are many black applicants for glamour jobs, there is a shortage of trained technicians and people with broadcast management skills. Helping to remedy this situation is New York's Institute of New Cinema Artists. Founded

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nine years ago, the Institute provides behind-the-scenes technical training for minorities in such areas as film editing, sound, recording and camera technique. This training, according to INCA president, actor Ossie Davis, gives minorities the opportunity to move into an area of television where they have a better chance to succeed than they would have in acting.

INCA is currently expanding through the efforts of the International Radio and Television Society. An IRTS committee, with support from ABC, CBS, NBC, Capital Cities Communications and other broadcasters, will work on enlarging INCA's curriculum to include "courses appropriate to broadcasting and advertising, providing qualified teachers for these new subjects and seeking employment commitments from broadcasting and advertising firms" for graduates of the two overlapping 30-week courses given each year.

In the area of management, there is steam being generated in getting more blacks into management and ownership. In 1979, two TV stations were transferred to minority interests—WAEO-TV, Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and WHEC-TV, Rochester, New York. In the latter sale, a significant feature was involvement of a "tax certificate"—which grants deferment of capital gains on profits of station sales. This can make it more attractive for a station's sellers to seek out minority purchasers.

Also in 1979, WLBT in Jackson, Mississippi (under black management after its white ownership was charged by the FCC with failing to serve the public interest), was granted a new license. It thus became the first black-owned VHF network affiliate in a sizeable market.

The NAB is also pushing to get more stations owned by blacks. It has established a Minority Assistance Investment Fund, with a goal of $15,000,000 from broadcasters. Each of the three commercial networks pledged $2,500,000, while the Westinghouse and Capital Cities groups pledged $500,00 apiece. Altogether, NAB's MAIF has almost $11,000,000 pledged. This can be augmented to $38,000,000 through Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Corporation loans under the Small Business Administration's new policy of making loans for broadcast properties. Samual D. Ewing, formerly a director of the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, is president and chief executive officer of the NAB'S Fund.

Meanwhile, Storer Broadcasting Company of Miami Beach, Florida, has got its Minority Broadcast Investment Corporation operational. Storer put up $1,000,000 and MBIC will be eligible for an additional $4,000,000 from the SBA for a total loan fund of $5,000,000. President/Chief Executive Officer is Walter L. Threadgill, former senior vice president of United National Bank of Washington. Headquarters are 1220 19th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

What does it all add up to? A small "Piece of the pie" right now—

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but the beginnings of policies and projects to get more blacks into station ownership, the establishment of "track records" and the breaking of new ground where others can follow. The reality of more blacks in TV management, in decision-making positions and in significant professional jobs should be reflected by a better image of blacks on the tube.

Richard Koiner is the author of the novel "Jack Be Quick." He headed the Minority Scholars Program at Polytechnic Institute in New York and is currently an associate with Ecodata Inc., a management consulting form. Concurrently he is writing a play.

QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

Brain-Numbing Time . . . Again

"Television may have made us a nation of spectators. That's the real danger. All those evenings, weeks, months and years of people sitting there passively staring at screens cannot help but numb the brain.

"This is not an indictment of talk shows, but I suppose many people cannot make conversation, so they watch other people talk on television. Or perhaps they have no sex or violence in their lives—but they would like to. So they watch television and are vicariously thrilled or repulsed by it. . . .

"It's amazing how people sit in front of a television set but never seem to laugh! The laughter comes from a sound tract but the average viewer never asks himself, 'Why am I not laughing?' "

—Dick Cavett
(Interview in U.S. News & World Report)

L.A. All the Way

"The whole alternate reality that television creates is not a coincidence or a result of random choice. It is the product of the thinking of TV producers and writers about life. We can see reflected on our video screens the attitudes of TV creators. More than that, we can sense the experience and 'feel' of a city replicated on television. For what we see on prime-time television is nothing than the apotheosizing of Los Angeles, and the spreading of the Los Angeles experience across the TV screens of America."

—The View from Sunset Boulevard by Ben Stein (Basic Books)

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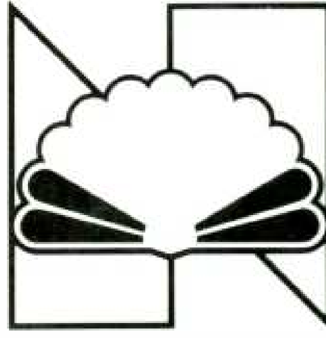
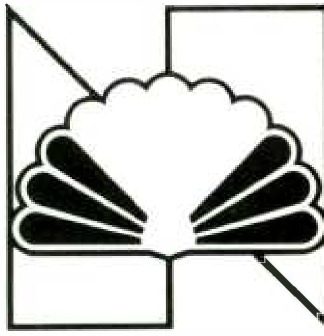

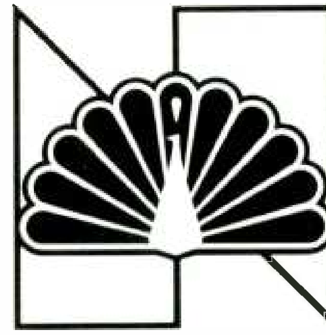

NBC PROUD AS A PEACOCK

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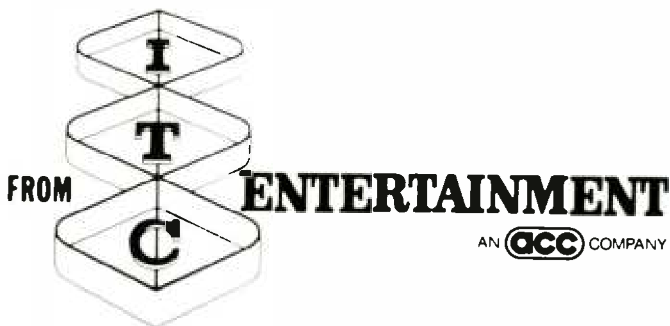
Entertainment For The World



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On the Making of a Documentary: "Picasso—A Painter's Diary"

By JUDITH TROJAN

The life spans nine crowded decades. How, then, does one begin to tell the story of Pablo Picasso in 90 minutes?

Faced with that challenge, Perry Miller Adato of New York's bold and innovative Channel 13, says she felt great trepidation. Though her walls are covered with awards for film biographies of noted artists, Mrs. Adato sensed that a film essay on Picasso—the man and his work—might be the crowning glory of her career. Failure was unthinkable.

As an art researcher, Mrs. Adato was deeply conversant with Picasso's life and times. She also remembered his eccentricities. While preparing her film on Gertrude Stein in 1970, she sent Picasso a letter asking him for an on-camera interview. "I spent several days composing the letter," Mrs. Adato recalls. Picasso, she learned later, never bothered opening the letter.

But it was the extensive research for the Gertrude Stein film *(When You See This, Remember Me)* that gave Perry Adato the foundation on which to construct her Picasso story. Miss Stein's collected papers, housed among the rare books and manuscripts at Yale, were a major source.

In addition, the much-admired Adato films on Mary Cassatt and Georgia O'Keeffe had instilled in the producer and her staff a strong feeling for the art movements of the late 19th and early 20th century.

Ironically, it was her immersion in the art scene that set Mrs. Adato atremble as she approached Picasso. She knew how rich, how varied and complex the story was. And she knew that others had tried to put the artist in perspective on film—and failed.

For 78 of his 91 years, Picasso was a wildly prolific and controversial figure in the art world. Working compulsively he built an *oeuvre* that has never been equalled in quantity or variety.

"For those who know how to read, I have painted my autobiography," Picasso told contemporaries.

The portion of that autobiography currently on view at New York's Museum of Modern Art is only a part of the total output. Still, you must walk three miles of museum marble to view the 1000 paintings, drawings and sculptures in the exhibit.

"I don't think any other painter in one lifetime has worked in as

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many styles as Picasso," says William Rubin, director of the painting and sculpture department at the Museum of Modern Art. (MOMA)

"At the beginning, these styles followed one another in time. But, by the latter part of Picasso's career, they exist simultaneously as a kind of vocabulary on which he can draw at any given moment," Mr. Rubin observes.

To Perry Adato it was this richness, this incredible fertility, that gave her so much anxiety about capturing the essence of Picasso in a 90 minute film. But she rose to the challenge, accepting the assignment with only 11 months to air date. Eleven months for research, travel, filming, editing, tracking down paintings, documents, and casting the voices for the off-camera narration. The playwright, Jean-Claude van Itallie, was assigned the delicate task of assembling the script.

Funding the film was not difficult. Grants were quickly forthcoming from IBM and the Robert Wood Johnson, Jr. Charitable Trust, underwriters of the MOMA Picasso show.

Mrs. Adato's aim from the start was to allow Picasso to speak in his own voice. To that end, a diary format was evolved, with actors assigned the roles of Picasso, Matisse, Jean Cocteau and assorted wives and mistresses. Preliminary research took the producer back to Yale where she came upon "wonderfully intimate correspondence" between Picasso and Gertrude Stein, and between Miss Stein and Picasso's mistresses, Fernande Olivier and Eva Humbert. To enhance the narration, additional quotes were culled from the vast library of books written by art critics and Picasso's French contemporaries. But the greatest source of diary material was—as Picasso had foretold—the life projected in the paintings.

To acclimate viewers to the man behind the myth, Perry Adato decided to focus first on the Picasso of the Fifties. She found some striking and endearing footage showing the short, bald painter playing in the sand with his children, dining informally and working furiously.

"I wanted to give a sense of Picasso's presence," Mrs. Adato says. "Then I wanted to back-track, to show the connection between the life and the work. A point made in the film is that Picasso was not, as people like to say, an abstract painter. Reality was very important to him."

Mrs. Adato also gave careful thought to the "supporting players," the living persons who knew the man, understood his work and had been influenced by it.

Some of the most touching interludes in the film are the conversations with Picasso's children, Claude and Paloma. They remember their father creating dolls and toys for them and drawing fierce, funny faces in the lather as he shaved.

Interviews with friends were helpful, too. David Douglas Duncan, the noted photographer, remembered Picasso fondly and al-

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lowed use of his photographs. Painters Joan Miro and Edouard Pignon and art historians William Rubin and Marilyn McCully are well placed voices in the narrative.

In casting the "voice over" parts—Picasso's friends and lovers—Mrs. Adato had few problems. She found the right actors with the right timbre and inflection. But finding a voice to read Picasso's words was a formidable task.

"Some of the top leading men of the theatre were eager to read for the part," Mrs. Adato recalls, "but they always sounded wrong. They were too American. Still, I didn't want a foreign accent. I had *real* accents on the sound track what with Picasso's friends and family."

Famous names were suggested—Jose Ferrer and Anthony Quinn among them—but their voices would have been too easily identifiable. Stage actor Hector Elizondo was the ultimate choice. Somehow his voice struck the producer as appropriate to the intense and vital Spaniard who was working at his easel every day until his death—in 1973—at the age of 91.

In the summer of 1979 Perry Adato spent three weeks in Europe, scouting locations—a week in the south of France, a week in Paris and a week in Spain. She found old houses in narrow cobbled streets where the young Picasso had lived, sometimes too poor to pay the rent. She went to Barcelona where young Pablo, a "petit Goya" literally stunned his father, a professor of art. And she went into the Spanish countryside, to the village of Horta whose earthy beauty Picasso never forgot.

Ever meticulous, Mrs. Adato contrived to flesh out every fragment of biography with appropriate film. The voice of one of Picasso's mistresses relates that she and the painter lived in a drab, uncomfortable house at 13 Rue Ravignan in Montmartre. And voila!—there we are in front of the house.

Regrettably, some of the key figures in Picasso's life declined to participate in the film. Dora Maar, once a celebrated photographer and political activist, said she was "too old and too spiritual-minded" to look back on her days as Picasso's mistress.

Mrs. Adato made a great effort to involve Jacqueline, Picasso's widow, but she said she preferred to remain "in Picasso's shadow." Jacqueline's face appears again and again in Picasso's later works. To Perry Adato, Jacqueline seemed to be saying, "If people want to see me, let them look me up in the art museums."

Critics agreed that Mrs. Adato's greatest coup was persuading Picasso's children, Claude and Paloma, to take part in this retrospective biography. At first they were reluctant. But friends were persuasive. Among them: David Douglas Duncan, the French Consul in New York and the staff of the Museum of Modern Art. Finally, an examination of Perry Adato's earlier films tipped the balance. The young Picassos said yes.

They proved to be affectionate and articulate spokesmen for their father. They spoke of their happy childhood at the villa in Cannes,

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La Californie. They shared old photographs and home movies. Picasso's only other child, Maya, (daughter of mistress Marie-Therese Walter) refused to meet with Mrs. Adato.

Francoise Gilot, the best known of Picasso's great loves and the mother of Claude and Paloma, does not appear in the film. "She was not a priority," the producer explains. She appeared in the CBS film, *Picasso Is 90* and she wrote her memoirs, *Life With Picasso.* "I felt that everybody knew what she had to say."

• • •

In September of last year, after the tourist season was over, Perry Adato and her crew returned to Europe for a three week "shoot." They allotted themselves a week in Spain, a week in Paris and a week in the south of France. Being fluent in French, Mrs. Adato was at ease with her French camera crew. Her chief camera man, Jean Monsigny, had worked with her earlier on the Gertrude Stein and Mary Cassatt films.

Filming Picasso's works required set-ups at four major museums—the Museo Picasso in Barcelona, the Musée Picasso in Antibes, the Grand Palais in Paris and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

As in all productions working on a precision time schedule, there were calamities that nearly cancelled the film.

"In the middle of nowhere" a freak accident smashed a major camera. And in the middle of nowhere, somehow the crew found a replacement.

Mrs. Adato's "big shoot" at the Grand Palais was very nearly aborted by a Parisian electrical strike. Then the production manager, Jacqueline Sigaar, saved the day by unearthing an electric generator.

The serendipity continued all the way. Some superb home movies turned up in an anonymous London flat. A phenomenal cache of intimate Picasso photos taken by David Douglas Duncan and Robert Capa fell into Mrs. Adato's hands. Capa's photos were especially helpful since the staff had permission to select whole series of shots from his original contact sheets. By quick dissolves from one photo to another an animated "filmic" quality was achieved with stills. The sequence was memorable—shots of Picasso frolicing with his family at the beach.

Though the Picasso film had no contractual connection with the MOMA Picasso show, Mrs. Adato credits the Museum staff with help beyond the call of duty. "They gave us transparencies of his paintings from all over the world," she says gratefully. "I never would have got my hands on them otherwise."

Any film that seeks to show the places a great man knew in his youth is bound for trouble. In Barcelona at the turn of the century the artists and intellectuals of the day gathered at a cafe, Els Cuatre Gats. Here Picasso had his first exposure to the avant-garde and Bohemian life-style. The cafe was also the scene of his first exhibition.

The cafe has vanished now but by studying Picasso's drawings of

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Els Cuatre Gats, Mrs. Adato recreated the setting, insuring the perfect ambiance with period tables and posters from the early 1900's. She borrowed much of the memorabilia, including the cafe's original mugs, from a local collector.

It was a major feat, bringing the old cafe back to life, since the original site is now occupied by a factory and a parking lot. The cafe was an important way-station in Picasso's journey toward fame and glory. His sketchbooks are filled with drawings of the beggars and street musicians, the outcasts of the neighborhood. At the Cuatre Gats he met, for the first time, artists who had spent time in Paris. They encouraged the young Picasso to go to Paris and see the works of Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec.

* * *

Emotionally, the most wrenching sequence in the Picasso film shows the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica in 1937. Here, the artist said, was his expression of the horror "which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death."

The Guernica sequence crystallized first in Mrs. Adato's mind as "sound effects." She recalled that this was the first time in history that unarmed civilians had been bombed. To capture the terror and the shock, she and music supervisor John Adams searched for music that sounded "weird, very dissonant and terrifying," music in whose chords one could hear the scream of death. The score they finally found—full of thunder and fury—was played over the newsreel films of the actual bombing. All this was intercut with Picasso's translation of the bombing to canvas, beginning with his preliminary drawings of Guernica.

The narration is vivid at this point. "Painting is not done to decorate apartments," says the presumed Picasso voice. "It is an instrument of war. A good painting . . . ought to bristle with razor blades."

With the shooting ended, Mrs. Adato was given the option: should the film run 60 or 90 minutes? She chose 90 and has no regrets. "I'm certain that 90 minutes is the maximum for a film of this nature," she states with conviction. "I prefer that people say to me, 'It seems so short!' than to have them growing restless. In a good documentary every second must be concentrated because there's no plot, no action to carry you along. You therefore demand more of the audience."

After an exhausting 11 months with Picasso Mrs. Adato admits that it's far easier to make a film about a living artist. "You've got the person there to give the film its spine, its central focus. It's a tremendous effort, making the dead come alive. With Picasso, it's very hard to know the man. Even now I can't say I really *know* Picasso. I would say, rather, that I have an image of him."

Judith Trojan is managing editor of Sightlines *magazine and editorial coordinator at the Educational Film Library Association in New York.*

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We'd like to interrupt
this Quarterly with
a couple of important
words for people in the
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PACE—A Proposal for a Non-Profit Cable Network

By SHEILA MAHONEY, NICK DeMARTINO AND ROBERT STENGEL

There is today a commanding opportunity to develop a new, national, nonprofit pay cable television network—an opportunity that we believe should be considered by public television.

For the first time in history, television technology and economics permit the creation of new networks at relatively low entry cost, because programs can be directly financed by viewers who will pay to watch them. It is now possible to serve the special interests and needs of these comparatively small groups whose tastes are not served by mass appeal, advertiser-supported television.

This new dimension of television came about in the 1970s with the networking made possible by the marriage of local cable television systems and satellite program delivery.

This development has fostered two new types of cable television networks in recent years. The most successful are the national pay cable distributors. They offer commercial-free popular movies, sports and performances, supported by a special fee added to the cable subscription price. Also growing in popularity and number are "basic" cable satellite networks—program services added at no extra cost to the package of channels covered by a cable subscriber's basic monthly payment. Among this second category of networks are channels devoted to religion, children's shows, sports, legislative coverage from Washington, sponsored films, programs for ethnic minorities, and, soon, an all-news network and a channel for viewers over the age of 50.

Despite this clear drumbeat for special interest services, no pay or basic cable network has yet targeted those viewers interest in programs that fit the broad category of cultural entertainment and performing arts.

Because the arts are a source of enormous satisfaction to millions of Americans, they have long been cited as a prime example of the kind of offering that should be expected from the new alternative technologies capable of catering to special tastes. Yet no private entrepreneur seems to believe that there is sufficient demand to make such programming profitable enough to undertake such a venture.

We believe that there will soon be a large enough audience of cable television subscribers willing to pay to support a channel offering performing arts, culture, and related entertainment programs. Fur-

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ther more, we believe that *only* a satellite-delivered pay cable network will, for the foreseeable future, offer favorable enough economics for a venture of this kind. Other new forms of program distribution—broadcast (rather than cable) pay television, direct satellite broadcasting, or even an advertiser-supported cable network—will not be able to support a high quality arts network for a considerable period of time.

The pay cable network we propose could become a self-sustaining enterprise in the mid-1980s if programs of the highest standards are produced and acquired, if the service is imaginatively and knowledgeably packaged and marketed to customers, and if its operators carefully manage it.

Such a network can bring a greater volume and diversity of cultural programs to Americans in all parts of the country. It will become an indispensable part of the unfolding world of new television industries, and will permit a dramatic expansion in televised arts programming financed by those who want it most.

Our study has indicated that there is a growing market for an arts and culture cable network, that such a venture could be attractive enough to customers to become financially stable in a relatively short time, and that the cable television industry would be receptive to the launching of such a service.

Who should develop, own, and control such a service as the one we have described?

We are convinced that it is only a matter of time until some entrepreneurs will bring to market some type of pay cable network based on consumer interest in arts and cultural fare. As cable television grows, the profit potential of more specialized programming improves dramatically.

While private enterprise is fully capable of packaging and creating high quality arts products—it is done in many fields beyond television—we do not believe that this particular venture would be developed as well in the private sector as it would by a nonprofit, tax-exempt entity. Nonprofit institutions like museums, performing arts companies, public broadcasting, and the like, must be primarily concerned with their role in fostering an educational and charitable mission—for example, the production, improvement, dissemination, and support of creative arts programs—and it is this mission that must be the central and ultimate objective of the enterprise.

The scale and cost of launching a new national arts cable network and its relatively modest return on investment compared to other options in the pay television business, have thus far limited the private interest in such a service. But, even if, as we expect, the evolution of the business changes private companies' assessments of an arts network, we believe that the pressure for profitability and basic dynamics of private enterprise will limit the quality and impact of the service. Day-to-day choices about programming policy, production finance, risk taking, and artistic

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taste and judgment can too often be subjugated to bottom line concerns. At the very least surplus revenues, i.e., profits, will more than likely be channeled to stockholders or to other new ventures. By contrast, tax laws and other strictures demand that nonprofit, tax-exempt institutions apply earned revenues to the fundamental mission of the institution.

A number of other institutions might be logical participants in a new pay cable network venture, including the cable television industry, noncommercial public broadcasters, performing arts centers and similar cultural institutions, program productions entities, and groupings of talent, labor, and artists. For many reasons, detailed in the following sections, we do not believe that any existing entity is likely to try to launch the kind of major new project that we are proposing.

We believe that a new organization must be created that will bring these important groups into a partnership with it. Because the service most closely resembles the professional and philosophical missions of noncommercial public broadcasting, we think that this institution should take the lead role in nurturing the new pay cable service.

The most logical vehicle for public television involvement in this pay cable venture would be through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Our estimates indicate that this new cable venture would require approximately $30 million in capitalization, which we project to be half loaned and half granted. We believe that CPB should become a lead funder, should assist in raising additional grants, and should act as the guarantor of the loans, as it did in the financing of public broadcasting's satellite distribution system.

Public television's role in the new technology and, in particular, in helping to launch a pay cable network, is a bold step that will undeniably alter the structure of the existing institution, and will have a major impact on the future directions of the main broadcast service during the 1980s. Why should public broadcasters take such a step?

Our analysis rests on two assumptions that we believe make this difficult decision absolutely necessary. First, public television is the only nonprofit institution in society whose mission, as well as its professional expertise, makes it a natural ally to a noncommercial pay cable network. We strongly believe that the service provided to consumers would be immeasurably enhanced with the strong participation of public television, whose reputation for quality and high standards is unmatched, and whose support of the artists upon whose work the service will depend is unequaled.

Second, most of the impact that a new, nonprofit arts service on pay cable might have on public television is likely to occur sooner or later—with or without public television's involvement. We believe that public television producers and the stations around the

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country can gain directly from the creation of new arts programming—much of which could be carried in sequence, first on the cable network and second on public television—and indirectly by giving the present noncommercial television system some role in affecting the future competition it must face. Moreover, by starting out with a sister organization, the new pay cable service will be much more inclined to work together with public television than a purely commercial venture would. Such cooperation could be further enhanced by formal, board-level ties between the two institutions.

What would the consumer of this proposed service be offered for his subscription dollar?

The new service would be an arts "magazine of the air" for people interested in various aspects of U.S. and world culture. We call it the pay cable network for the *P*erforming *A*rts, *C*ulture, and *E*ntertainment, or PACE, for short.

Like the magazine reader, a PACE subscriber would not necessarily be attracted by every item offered during the month. But enough variety will be offered under the PACE umbrella so that the viewer could keep coming back for his primary interests, while having the option to sample other material with which he might like to spend an occasional hour.

The common denominator among all subscribers is, therefore, different from that of network audiences, or even for those turning to the existing mass appeal entertainment pay networks. Subscribers will turn to PACE because of their love of the arts. Yet PACE's appeal can never become so exclusive as to fragment the audience into tiny minorities. The PACE philosophy would have to provide both the depth demanded by afficionados of a particular art form or interest area and an introductory approach for viewers with more casual interest in each of the specialties. Thus, PACE would offer all subscribers two categories of televised experience.

At the heart of the service would be performances and presentations of the works themselves. Each month the viewer would see theatrical motion pictures from the U.S. and around the world, both recent and vintage. There would be the best of the musical world, including opera, dance, symphonic and chamber music, vocal and instrumental soloists, cabaret and nightclub performances, jazz and other contemporary music. PACE would capture the magic of the legitimate theater—major plays from the commercial Broadway houses, regional theater and festivals, and avant garde performance programs from the great centers of aesthetic ferment in the U.S. and abroad.

The service would also feature original and adapted literary works produced specifically for television—specials and TV movies, mini-series and long-form serials, and other formats designed to present the viewer with literary, dramatic, comedy, and historical works as realized by television artists. PACE would also explore other forms of artistic expression—vis-

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ual presentations of special gallery or museum exhibitions, cultural and folk festivals, new presentations of fashion, architecture, and the decorative arts, and the video medium as a form of expression.

These direct experiences, always the featured programs in an evening's schedule, would be buttressed and surrounded by PACE'S unique "signature": arts magazines of the air. The PACE "magazines" would focus on a single aspect among this collection of arts genres. Typically, a half-hour program would inform viewers about PACE's own upcoming offerings in the field, as well as provide a current perspective on the worldwide activities in classical music, popular music, theater, film, dance, museums and the visual arts, design, fashion and style, travel and leisure—and television itself.

Each of PACE's several signature magazines would feature a well-known host—in effect, a "columnist" who can comunicate to a general audience, but who is widely known and respected by the experts. Each would have a strong identity with the PACE program service, and would be integrated into the month's most important events and developments, but would lead viewers into "behind the scenes" documentaries and interviews with leading figures. Some of these magazines might logically fashion special relationships with leading publications in the various specialty fields.

We do not purport to provide here and now a definitive approach to the offerings of a new pay cable network for the arts. We mean, instead, to suggest the direction pay networks are likely to take, with some detail to show how the trend toward identifiable and distinct program services would affect the launching of an arts and culture network. The character and emphasis of the service, especially in its early years, would be defined by its management, by the kinds of programming available for acquisition, and by the complex web of decisions about new production arrangements that we outline in the following section.

We do emphasize here, however, that the concept of the PACE network must be seen as a premium television service. Subscribers must be willing to pay a monthly fee for it because it provides a real addition to their television viewing. PACE must be distinctive, useful, and first-rate.

The present program service that has pioneered consumer interest in arts and cultural programs is, of course, public television. Many of public television's cultural offerings would fit well into the concept of an arts pay network, and for this reason we devote considerable attention to the potential interrelationship between that institution and the pay network.

PACE has to be concerned first and foremost with finding and satisfying the customer interested in arts and cultural programming. PACE customers will have available to them other material presented on public, commercial, and cable networks, such as news, sports, instructional material,

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"target" audience programs, investigative documentaries, mass appeal variety and episodic shows, and religious programming. Similarly, while certain strands of PACE's programs will appeal particularly to specific segments of the overall arts audience—young people, older viewers, members of ethnic groups, teenagers, urban residents, and so forth—the essential distinction for all programs is their artistic value and integrity.

This approach permits a narrower gauge of programming aimed at the PACE audience. At the same time, it demands greater depth and detail for each of the art forms presented on the service. Even within the more specialized scope of PACE's programming, a balance must be struck between programs appealing to as broad a base as possible, and those catering to more individualized tastes. Most PACE subscribers will probably want to watch an original production of a major Broadway play, for instance. But PACE will be able to range widely in its many areas of interest: regional theater, university arts festivals, ethnic cultural events, avant garde music and dance presentations, gallery openings, and retrospectives of established and controversial visual artists, international productions in translation. All this and more constitute the rich stock from which PACE could develop a program schedule of originality and diversity.

In short, PACE should alter popular concepts of "culture." While including the "high" arts like opera, ballet, symphony music, and traditional museum exhibitions, the service can broaden this definition of what has, in the past, been known as elite programming. Exploring the contemporary arts means a commitment to risk, to untried and unpredictable programming directions.

America has taken its place among the artistic capitals of the world, with a diversity, vitality, and sheer volume of activity unmatched in history. While not every aspect of this dynamic period can be captured for television audiences, we are convinced that there is far more than enough superior material, domestic and foreign, to sustain a service of unparalleled excellence—a service that people will pay for and enjoy month after month.

Sheila Mahoney, Executive Director of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting, holds a law degree from Fordham University. She was formerly a director of the Cable Television Information Center in Washington.

Nick DeMartino, was founder of the Washington Community Video Center and Tele-Visions Magazine.

Robert Stengel, is the former vice-president of the National Cable Television Association.

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The News from Abroad

By JAN STONE

Don Hewitt, executive producer of *60 Minutes*, remarked recently, "There was a time when CBS's foreign coverage could hold its own with any news organization in the world. I'm not sure about that now—not about CBS or any other network."

NBC's John Chancellor was even more apprehensive:

> Foreign coverage has changed considerably. When I went into the foreign press corps for NBC, we called it "the NBC Foreign Service." Then, the reporting was more thoughtful. We had more time.
>
> Now I am troubled with the way we cover foreign news. It is less thoughtful. American coverage of foreign affairs is declining—and that's dangerous.

By the end of the 1970s several factors—new technologies, inflation, editorial choices reflecting waning public interest in foreign affairs, and increased press censorship abroad—had changed network foreign news coverage from the days Don Hewitt recalled, "when CBS News had Schoenbrun, Smith, Hotellet, Sevareid, Burdett, and others." That was the same era when correspondents based in foreign bureaus were, as John Chancellor called them, "area specialists."

Foremost in causing the changes were a number of technological developments in communications as well as in transportation. Their emergence created a demand for more visual stories, delivered with greater speed than ever before. The tools—designed to aid foreign correspondents in their work—were perceived by some as a giant Pandora's box, creating new problems for correspondents, preventing them from doing their jobs as thoroughly and thoughtfully as they might, transforming the correspondent from area specialist to time-pressured, globe-trotting generalist. Among the items were:

1. **The satellite.** In 1969, the first DuPont-Columbia Survey reported that "network use of satellites, although still relatively slight, had jumped from 40 hours in 1965 to 666 hours in 1968." A decade later, commercial network use of the Intelsat-system satellites for the year 1978 had climbed to approximately 1,400 hours. In 1969, one regular satellite feed from abroad—carrying reports from Vietnam—was transmitted each day to New York, along with an occasional feed from Europe. By 1979, as many as five to seven overseas feeds—containing up to twenty separate stories for editors to screen—were beamed daily to each network. And the number of working Intelsat

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earth station antennas dotting the globe, transmitting and receiving signals, had increased from a handful in 1969 to 258 in 1979. Yet, at the same time, the space available to foreign news on the air did not grow substantially larger.

2. **Electronic news gathering (ENG).** In 1969, film was used to cover all foreign stories. By 1979, more than 80 percent of all foreign stories filed by network correspondents were recorded by electronic equipment. Stories gathered by video cameras and tape required no developing time; they could be edited immediately and transmitted as soon as satellite feed time was available. ENG's advantage over film was its ability to deliver late-breaking stories in time for the evening news. ABC's director of television news coverage, Stan Opotowsky, spoke enthusiastically about that capability. "In Nicaragua, for example, there are no film labs. We would have had to shoot our stories and ship the film out. But with ENG, we shot and broadcast the same day."

But Opotowsky conceded that ENG, particularly in combination with satellite transmission, posed some problems. Because the networks edit and transmit on New York time, reporters overseas worked all day on their local time to cover a story and then stayed up most of the night to edit and transmit; the next morning, the cycle began again. Hardest hit were correspondents in the Middle and Far East. The point can well be made that those backgrounders added depth to developing stories.

3. **The telephone.** Even the technology of the telephone made conspicuous strides. In 1969, all overseas calls were connected through a series of operators subject to delay and human error; in 1979 New York editors could direct-dial to seventy-five nations overseas.

4. **The airplane.** Lastly, the increase in frequency and ease of air travel made its contribution, enabling correspondents to jump from one location to another as a matter of routine.

The technological revolution placed a premium on speed in the gathering and delivery of more stories from abroad. As John Chancellor observed, "Now, foreign reporting is shallower. There is . . . a greater emphasis on young people with good legs." Foreign correspondents in 1979, according to Chancellor, were "firemen, rushing to the fire."

The nature of the news bureau, too, had changed. Bureaus were less often places for a correspondent to develop an area expertise; more and more they had become mere "jumping-off points." Despite a 25-percent increase in the number of network television foreign bureaus during the decade (up from thirty-five to forty-four by October 1979), eleven of them were not assigned permanent correspondents. In addition, the locations of some bureaus had been chosen not because they were centers of political activity but because they were centers for airline connections. NBC, for example, maintained a bureau in

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How a 3-minute medical report saved 1,000 lives.

In early June, 1974, Dr. Henry Heimlich, an Ohio surgeon, developed a simple technique that could save people who were choking.

Later that year, Dr. Frank Field of WNBC-TV New York—an NBC Owned Television Station—demonstrated the Heimlich Maneuver on the air. The response was immediate—and overwhelming.

30,000 people wrote asking for details.

Police departments started including it in their training programs.

An insurance company mailed over a million reprints to its policy holders.

And hundreds of people wrote to thank us for saving their lives.

The Heimlich Maneuver was demonstrated and re-demonstrated on all five NBC Owned Television Stations. And throughout the nation, news media reported the phenomenal story of this lifesaving demonstration.

Any television station can cover the news. But we believe our responsibility goes beyond merely reporting the day's events. That is why we take the time to broadcast information vital to our viewers' needs—and, in this case, their lives.

We'd rather do more than not enough

NBC Owned Television Stations

WNBC-TV New York/WRC-TV Washington, D.C./WKYC-TV Cleveland/WMAQ-TV Chicago/KNBC Los Angeles

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Frankfurt rather than Bonn, explained a network official, because "it's the O'Hare Airport of Europe." And ABC News's most important Latin America bureau was in Miami—because more flights to Central and South America locations flew from there than from any Latin American city. Foreign correspondents traveled extensively, and one of their chief complaints was of wasted time in the air and in airports. Don Dunkel, NBC's vice-president for news operations, said, "It can take two to three hours just to clear an airport sometimes in certain nations. The reporter can totally miss the fire."

As correspondents raced to get their stories, the network news organizations spent the decade trying to keep up with inflation. The cost of goods and services had doubled between January 1968 and December 1978. Abroad, the situation was worse as the dollar's value in many foreign markets dropped from day to day. *Variety* reported that each network was spending between $23 and $26 million a year to cover foreign news, double the amounts they had spent ten years before.

But the expansion seemed much less impressive in the light of total network programming budgets, tagged at $2 billion for 1978: Only 15 percent of that figure ($300 million) went to news programming. Given foreign news coverage's 25-percent share of the overall network news budgets, its piece in the entire programming pie was just under 4 percent.

Although some of the most thorough and useful foreign reporting was done in network documentaries and special reports, the season of 1978-79 saw a total of only six prime-time hours on the commercial networks devoted to overseas subjects.

A survey of one month in 1979 showed that the TV networks' evening newscasts carried a combined total of six items about South America—four of which dealt with Venezuelan oil supplies and prices. Commented NBC's Don Dunkel, "I think the interest in South America on the part of the American population is just about nil. Now, Central America is a different story." At the time Dunkel commented, the Nicaraguan revolution was in full flower. Stan Opotowsky described the process of story selection: "Our motive is to inform a clientele public. . . . We go out, get news, and sell it to the people who want to see it." Dunkel added, "If our newscaster opened tonight with the great truth about Ethiopia, somebody—probably in Ethiopia—might be delighted. But that would be the end of our newscast!"

Coverage of Africa rated slightly higher than that of South America during the same month. For all of black Africa—an area containing more than thirty nations and 350 million people—the networks carried thirty-one items; more than half of them, however, dealt exclusively with the Uganda-Tanzania conflict.

Such numbers added fuel to the arguments made by critics of Western coverage of developing nations. Former UPI correspondent Nicho-

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las King, in his book *The Third World Has a Point*, insisted that the Western press paid too little attention to "health programs, housing developments, [and] cultural maturity" in developing nations and too much to "bloodshed, unrest, poverty, disease, murder, and general violence."

Beyond the changes in coverage wrought by technology, inflation, and editors' predilections for visual stories and their general disregard for two continents, another problem—that of censorship—impeded the presentation of foreign news to the American public. Although censorship was not a new problem, its scope had widened in the 1970s, making much coverage difficult if not downright impossible. Richard Salant told *Broadcasting* magazine that in the area of world press freedoms things were going "very badly. Very, very badly. We lose ground almost every day. Progressively more countries are curtailing press freedoms."

In 1978, more than eighteen governments harassed, arrested, expelled, or denied visas to foreign correspondents, according to the Zurich-based International Press Institute. And in the first half of 1979, no fewer than eleven incidents of press violations against foreign correspondents were reported by the IPI and *The New York Times.*

Censorship continued to prevail in most of the world. ABC News's Stan Opotowyky commented on the forms of censorship that confronted and at times confounded television journalists overseas:

Only in Israel do we have a censor who sits and says, "You can do this, you can't do that." Everywhere else, governments censor us differently. They censor us by visa: if they want us to get a story, we get our visa; if they don't, no visa.

They censor us by customs: we may arrive to do a story and they may say that it will take three weeks to clear our equipment through customs.

They censor us by access: they may say, "Sure, you can come into our country, but the meeting is over there, and no reporters are allowed within a twelve-block radius of the building—though you're welcome to stay at the hotel and go to the cocktail lounge."

Ultimately, they censor us by facilities: if we're transmitting material from a government-owned station—and except in the United States, most stations are government-owned—a number of things can happen if the government doesn't like the story we're sending: a censor will fail to arrive; or the building's electricity will mysteriously fail; or a tape machine will suddenly break; or the line between the station transmission and the ground station will fail; or ultimately, the satellite will fail.

In Uganda, resistance to Western press coverage forced American reporters to "cover" the overthrow of Idi Amin from "observation points" thousands of miles away in Nai-

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robi and Johannesburg. Two other African despots fell from power—President Nguema Biyoto Masie of Equatorial Guinea and Emperor Bokassa I of the Central African Empire—but because American (and other Western) journalists had been expelled long before by those rulers, only sketchy reports trickled to America from Paris.

Other areas of strife in the Third World were covered from great distances because American correspondents could not gain entry. For that reason, American coverage of the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in February 1979 suffered. Only a CBS crew accompanying two members of Congress on a tour of Vietnam at the time of the invasion came close to the action. No Western reporters could enter from China. Bangkok, the intelligence center for Asia, was a nest of gossip and rumors. Refugee reports and press releases and film from the government-controlled news services of China and Vietnam fed to American news media became the chief sources of news for the American public.

When full-scale fighting erupted in Afghanistan in July 1979, the networks were denied entry visas. Alan Walden, NBC's director of radio news, said at the time, "Clearly there's a story there. It could be the Soviet Union's Vietnam. But even if we could get in, a crew would never get out alive." And so American news media continued watching events in Afghanistan from India and Pakistan until January 1980 when the newly Soviet-supported government allowed U.S. journalists in, only to expel them two weeks later.

Thus, censorship by foreign governments on American network news stories diminished further the number of foreign stories available to the American television news audiences and—where cameras were permitted with restrictions—made stories incomplete, hazy, and speculative. Censorship by the nations of the Third World shrank even more the minimal coverage devoted to them on American television network newscasts.

While a foreign government's disposition toward a free press was ultimately out of the hands of American network news, editorial decisions about the content and scope of news features, documentaries, and magazine segments were not. If the so-called average citizen did not think social unrest in Central America or the development of an African nation had meaning for him or her, it was the task of the networks' news organizations *not* to give in to that notion but rather to show its viewers why and how those events did indeed have an impact on the United States and its citizens.

And while inflation posed a problem to foreign editors, a bigger problem was posed by network executives whose budgetary dispensations and time allotments favored entertainment over news. Though technological developments had helped shrink the globe, political developments had expanded it by adding new nations

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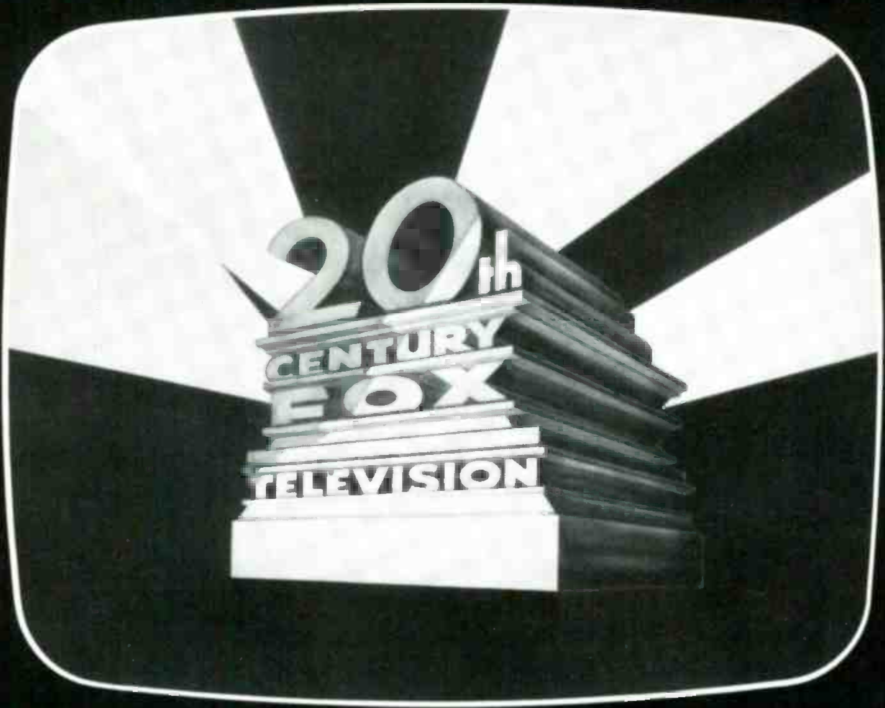

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with new problems and needs that were already having an impact on the ever-changing world order—including the United States.

The preceding article is excerpted from "The Eye of the Storm," the Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism, edited by Marvin Barrett and Zachary Sklar. It appears here by special permission of the publisher, Lippincott & Crowell, New York.

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Jan Stone, a DuPont Fellow at Columbia University's School of Journalism, was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, she is now on the staff of the ABC News series, "20/20."

QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

ANCHORS AWAY!

"But just what does an anchorperson do that makes the job . . . the most desirable in broadcast journalism? . . . Conversations with television news executives, anchormen and news consultants suggest several conclusions. Perhaps the most surprising one is that the job of anchoring the news, in the preponderance of cases, requires not so much journalistic skill as an actor's, and that it usually amounts to little more than reading a script from a Teleprompter. The mandate is not so much to be authoritative as to *seem* authoritative."

—Tony Schwartz,
Sunday New York Times *(Arts and Leisure)*

Too Many Boob-Tube Boobs?

"Television is following us into the theaters, affecting the conditions under which we watch movies and influencing powers of perception, standards and the quality of films being made.

"Consider the effect of being assaulted since childhood by rapid-fire commercials, flashing images, hyped newscasts, action-packed dramas. I frequently notice the difficulty some of my undergraduate university students have with films that demand a higher level of concentration than television programming."

—William Wolf in New York Magazine

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QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

The Cable in Your Future

"I think Public Television is in for radical changes. Cable is coming. Instead of four channels there will be forty or fifty. There's no reason to think that a smart cable operator won't pick up *Masterpiece Theater* or *Live from Lincoln Center*. . . . If the BBC can get $300,000 an episode, they'll take that instead of $30,000 from PBS."

—Frank Mankiewicz,
President, National Public Radio
(Quoted in Quest Magazine)

"Hundreds Die in Earthquake . . . Ha-ha!"

"I just read a study that allegedly finds that 'light-hearted" newscasting actually creates greater anxiety in viewers than does serious newscasting. . . . What's remarkable about this is not the findings but the fact that the study was done at all, and that it dares to stand there in naked contradiction to network popular wisdom, advertisers' hopes and the Nielsen ratings.

"Another finding was that anxiety was reduced when people watched 'resolution' news. Resolution is the same serious newscast as before, only with some suggested solution to the problem. Something as direct as a number to call made people feel better about the problems they were viewing."

—Joyce Sanila, Los Angeles Times

Mea Culpa

"I'm not a broadcaster. I don't even want to be classed with them. I *was* a broadcaster, and I'm ashamed of what I did. A broadcaster just puts on the shows. He doesn't care what the show is as long as it's cheap and gets the highest rating, so he can get the highest dollar. That *was* me, but not any more."

—Ted Turner,
President, Turner Communications Corp.
Quoted in Broadcasting Magazine

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BOOK REVIEWS

Merv: An Autobiography by Merv Griffin with Peter Barsocchini, Simon and Schuster, $11.95. Photos.

As success goes, Merv Griffin has it all. A prime time talk show with five-year (as opposed to 13-week) options, his own television production studio with a fleet of mobile units he leases to other production studios (branches in Las Vegas and Hawaii). He owns three radio stations and a company that supplies closed-circuit TV for horse- and dog-racing tracks all over North and South America. The quiz game, *Wheel of Fortune* is his property, along with the syndicated disco series, *Dance Fever*.

When in 1970 NBC offered Griffin "a lifetime of security" if he would take over the *Today* show, the answer was no. Merv has at least six lifetimes of security already. "I won't sign a contract for a lifetime of *anything*", he writes. It would rob him, he says, of his greatest asset, "the capacity to dream."

As you may gather from that quote, *Merv* is a book for fans, for people who would ask, if they could, "What was Marilyn Monroe like— really?"

Merv remembers Marilyn as a shy, sweet girl who almost sublet his apartment—the one he was subletting from Marlon Brando. She came to inspect it during her Actors' Studio days, "reverently touching" Brando's possessions. That was the true purpose of her visit, Merv realized later: to *touch* objects Brando had touched.

Reading this sprightly memoir is like watching Merv's show. No great intellectual effort is involved, and nobody—except Robert Q. Lewis and some unnamed CBS executives—behaves badly. Merv writes engagingly of his childhood in San Mateo, Cal., where he was, in his phrase, the P.T. Barnum of the neighborhood.

From the age of four, Merv was a backyard impresario. "I worked with bedsheets, milk crates, broken lamps and record players that skipped", he remembers. He also produced a neighborhood newspaper (via mimeograph) that graciously gave each production a rave review.

Merv's father was a tennis pro and the depression hit the Griffins hard. The mortgage was foreclosed but somehow piano lessons continued. After spending years with Beethoven and Bach, Merv made a discovery that changed his life. He found he could become the life of every party playing and singing popluar songs. Because he was on the short side and weighed 220 pounds, this was a heady experience. It made him a star on San Francisco radio and won him an offer to tour with Freddie Martin's band. The rest is history—not all of it easy.

Like all TV personalities, Merv

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has written a book of anecdotes. Some of them are hilarious, a few simply tasteless. The best stories concern political figures such as Bertrand Russell, Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin and Richard Nixon. In putting controversial figures on the air—i.e., Lord Russell calling our role in Vietnam murderous—Merv often showed high courage.

Dobrynin proved to be a pleasant folksy guest. He showed photos of his wife and children and later sent Merv a case of vodka.

Before his first appearance on Merv's show, Nixon sent over a rough sketch of the script he wished his host to follow. It consisted mostly of jokes, straight lines for Merv, punchlines for Nixon. Merv threw it aside and did the interview his way.

As his constant viewers knew, Merv takes more than a casual interest in food. What may surprise readers is the obscene way food is tossed about—literally—by excitable show folk.

If you care, there are stories of how Phyllis Kirk dumped a plate of spaghetti on Merv's head and how Merv threw a lemon pie at Montgomery Clift (to teach him to keep his finger out of other people's meringue.) Years later, at a dinner party, Clift evened an old score by throwing a platter of roast beef at Merv. Fun and games in Tinseltown.

Though he offers no intimate details—an agreeable change from most show-biz memoirs—Merv does describe the trauma of his divorce from witty Julann Wright. Julann will linger in my memory for two reasons: she grew sunflowers in her New York window-boxes and, as a lure to Merv in their courting days, she put a drop of vanilla extract behind each ear. Merv remembers affectionately that Julann always smelled like a cookie.

Merv will be dismissed in some quarters as another glib show-business memoir. It is, it is—but you will read it with fascination just the same.

—*H.V.H*

Station Identification by Donald Bowie, M. Evans & Co., 215 pages, $9.95

By Michael Winship

Donald Bowie, like all of us born after 1945, is a child of television. He has reveled in it, sorrowed with it and been totally taken in by it. This book concerns his life with television, a life in which his role has been largely passive.

You might call Bowie a cathodized Holden Caulfield. From the day his parents buy their first TV set—a 1949 Starrett—through the final episode of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Bowie is glued to the tube. Of course he must cope with distractions. School intrudes from time to time. And, later, women. But most of the time Bowie lives a Peggy Charren nightmare. She could have founded ACT with Donald Bowie in mind.

Bowie sees himself as a defender of television. Those of us who toil in the medium should be grateful

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to any defender. But *Station Identification* stirs the entreaty, "Please don't help us!"

Like an Archie Bunker, serene in his prejudices, Bowie waves his addiction as a badge of honor. In describing a campus trivia contest, he writes, "The history of television was no more nor less important than the history we're supposedly condemned to repeat if we don't learn it. In other words, everything that has been recorded in books is no more relevant or valuable than what you can recall from *Our Miss Brooks*."

Right there you have a fair sample of Bowie's thinking. Not deep, you could fairly state.

The voice of reason in Bowie's life is Andrea Blodgett, star of the high school debating team, whose family does not own a television set.

"Andrea objected to flouridated history", Bowie tells us. "Only Andrea was immune to the feverish influenza of the medium. She was never carried away by the stimuli that infected the rest of us, the great plague of public enthusiasm. Had Andrea not been immune, I might not have noticed my own susceptibility."

There are some wonderful, funny things in *Station Identification*. Bowie's writing is facile and he has a good ear for the telling phrase. His college adventures with characters named Tubeman, (whose addiction is worse than his own) Big Herman and Little Herman have a riotous *Animal House* charm.

Having grown up with television in a pattern almost parallel to Bowie's, I found myself hitting pockets of *déja vu* experiences, a shared nostalgia that made me smile. Such as: those wondrous Saturday mornings when you got up early just to see the test-pattern, the first time *Peter Pan* was aired, the eternal adventures of Mary Tyler Moore and the way you'd slip away from parties on Saturday night to see her show.

Still, I finished *Station Identification* with a hollow feeling. There is a great danger in writing a memoir at an early age. If your life has not been truly extraordinary, setting down all the details can be hazardous to your health. You might bore people. Your theory of television might strike some readers as preposterous. I kept wishing Bowie had written more about Andrea Blodgett.

Michael Winship is an associate producer and writer for the news and public affairs unit at WNET/13, New York.

Look Now, Pay Later: The Rise of Network Broadcasting By Lawrence Bergreen, (Doubleday & Co., New York, $12.95)

By Max J. Friedman

If I didn't know better, I would have guessed that this first—and admirable—effort by Larry Bergreen was the "story treatment" for a decidedly different sort of sitcom. It would make Larry Gelbart and Norman Lear blush with envy, and stagger TV critics with its sense of originality and continuity of theme

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and purpose.

Where but in America could one expect a melodrama to be enacted around a billion dollar industry the size, scope and impact of which is still something of a mystery.

The characters are gems: David Sarnoff, poor immigrant boy who managed to build a legend, a generalship and, ultimately, carve an empire out of a dubious myth linking him to the *Titanic* as she was going down, and to some patents vital to radio and TV technology. Then there was William Paley, stylish scion of a tobacco family, with his revolving executive suite and bold ideas. And Charles Van Doren, hero of the big money quiz shows whose *mea culpa* did in a whole program genre and a business ethic best described as shady. Add to the cast Mike Dann, Pat Weaver, Fred Silverman—and you've plot for a three volume novel.

Bergreen, former staffman at the Museum of Broadcasting, offers a useful and sometimes fascinating overview of broadcasting's history, dividing his thesis between radio and television. It's a studied and astute journey he takes us on, sorting out the frenetic world of programmers and stars from the corporate decision-makers.

Bergreen's prime-time thesis is that the business side of broadcasting was the only side that ever really mattered to the networks. Profit was, he says, and still is the driving motive of the medium.

By putting the networks' economic philosophy into historical perspective, Bergreen reaches the non-very-surprising conclusion that broadcasting has failed to be properly self-reflective. Were radio and TV more socially responsible—good, creative corporate citizens—the medium would be more culturally oriented and carry greater social significance.

The so-called Golden Age of television, with its Ed Murrow, Ernie Kovacs and Playhouse 90, wasn't really so golden, Bergreen writes. What the '50's offered, in his view, were a few golden moments, now wreathed in nostalgia. The golden moments became fewer as networks strove to placate advertisers and create mega-audiences. All eras in broadcasting, Bergreen maintains, have their shining hours. But under the glow—an inordinate greed, a voracious money-machine.

But all is not lost. Bergreen suggests that another Golden Age may lie ahead, as the new technologies expand, as more players enter the game.

Look Now, Pay Later should be viewed as more admonition than indictment. Indeed, one can hardly condemn entrepreneurs for being entrepreneurial. The business of America is still business. Still, can we not expect a business touching the minds, the lives of so many people to be socially responsible in the highest sense?

Bergreen provides many useful vignettes about broadcast personalities, and insights as to how their charisma fed the money machine. Whether you agree with the arguments put forth in *Look Now, Pay Later*, it's a book worth your respectful attention.

Max Friedman is a staff writer at WNET/13, New York.

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