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PANORAMA

THE TELEVISION MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 1981

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THE 10 BEST TV-MOVIES EVER MADE



By Tom Shales

Covering America's Blacks Has TV News Learned Anything from the 1960s?



Tone It Down! Sex It Up! Tone It Down!

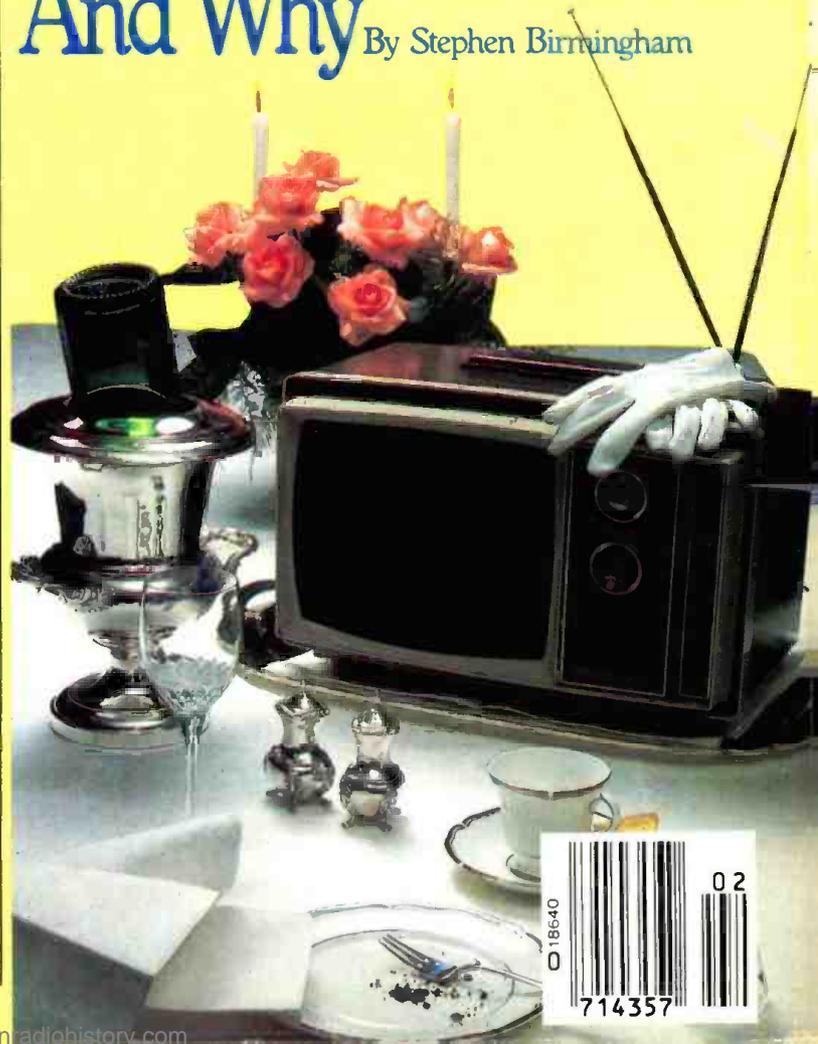
A TV Writer's Lament
By David Jacobs, creator of 'Dallas'

Columbus Speaks Up The Verdict on Two-Way Cable

Presenting 1981's New Videocassette Recorders

TV and the Very Rich: What They Watch — And Why

By Stephen Birmingham





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FEBRUARY 1981

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

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Carol Burnett in "Friendly Fire," courtesy of ABC; photo by Ron Schwerin; Larry Hagman and Linda Gray, courtesy of CBS. Other picture credits are on page 105.



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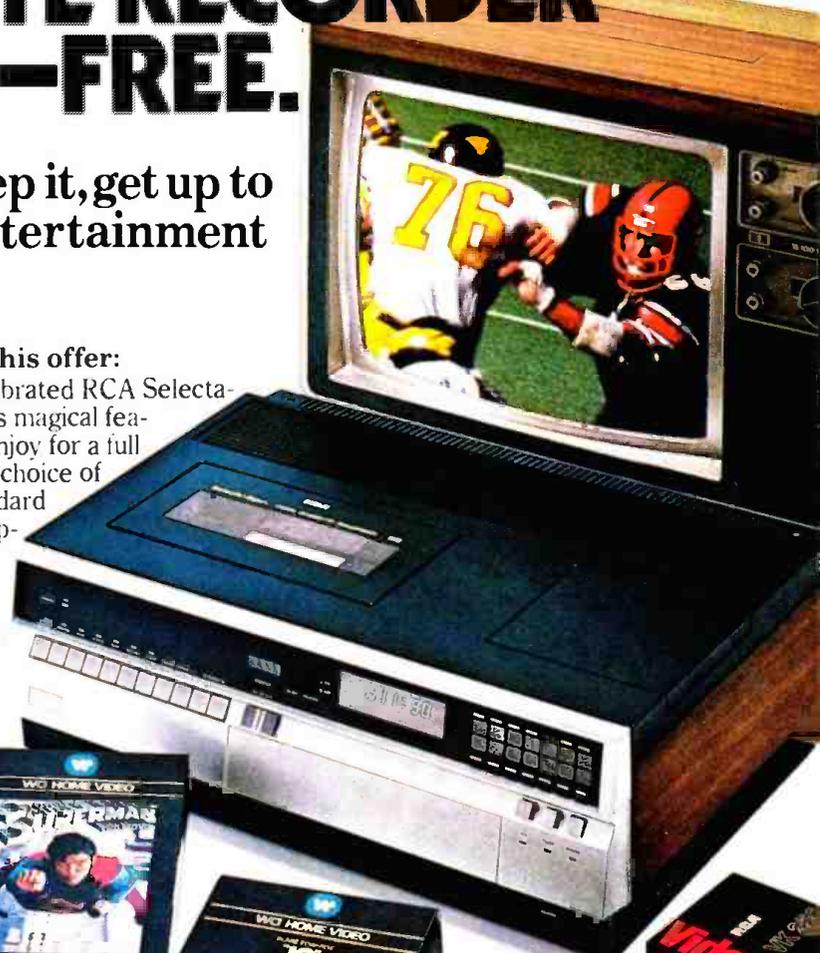
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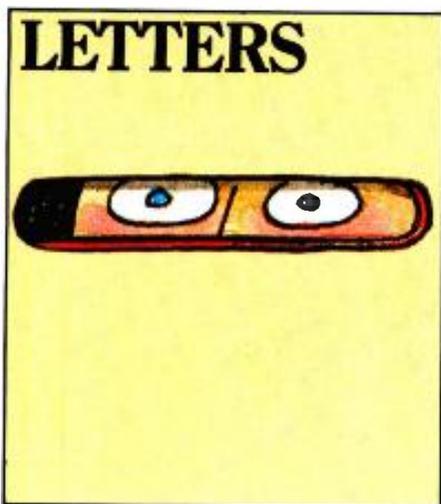
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ELECTRONIC NEWS

Today, I read Ron Powers' article in the November issue ("They Surely Won't Throw *This* Newspaper on Your Doorstep"). Citing predictions that video-display news will offer no controversial reports, no depth, no analysis, no opinion, Powers asks: "Will journalism survive?" The melodramatic glissando of a soap-opera organ could be heard to resound as the article faded to black. Doom and gloom sells newspapers, but it doesn't belong in a discussion of journalism's place in the emerging technology.

I, for one, hold hope that video-display news will actually further the cause of journalism in a participatory democracy. There is no technological barrier to providing in-depth reporting in data display; if there is a barrier, it is a psychological one.

Automobiles were not the death of bicycles. Television did not kill radio. Home data retrieval will not kill journalism. Only the face will be different.

Donald Blohowiak
Associated Press
Detroit

"They Surely Won't Throw *This* Newspaper on Your Doorstep" reminded me of when I was a copy boy at The New York Times, back in the dim past of 1946. There was a machine being demonstrated in the lobby called "The Newspaper of Tomorrow."

It printed a facsimile of the special capsule edition of the Times. The receiver was supposed to be placed in the home; at 3 A.M. it would begin to silently print the main stories from the Times'

late city edition and any breaking stories too late to make the edition.

By the time the customer was up and ready for coffee, he or she could read the Times' facsimile newspaper at the breakfast table, without having to stare bug-eyed at a TV screen as one has to do with today's electronic newspapers.

I keep wondering why The New York Times' "Newspaper of Tomorrow" experiment has been forgotten. Perhaps some reader may know the answer. No one at the Times seems to remember it.

Ernest Weatherall
Potomac, Md.

Ron Powers errs when he states that NewsCable of Danbury, Conn., is the first "electronic newspaper" actually to reach the TV screens. In fact, the owners of the Danbury system flew to Ottumwa, Iowa, several years ago to inspect my system of "Courier Cable." In Ottumwa we pioneered a 24-hour electronic capsulized news and advertising service.

For the record, I have never claimed to have developed the first electronic newspaper, but from the international reaction, it had to be among the first.

Jerry Moriarity
Publisher, Globe-Gazette
Mason City, Iowa

BATTLE OF THE VIDEO GAMES

As an owner of both Odyssey² and Atari for over a year now, I found your article in the November issue, "Video Games—Telling the Good Ones from the Bad Ones," very limited and unfair to the Odyssey² machine.

While I do agree completely with the evaluation of the cartridges mentioned for each machine (i.e., Invaders from HyperSpace and Thunderball from Odyssey²; Space Invaders and Air-Sea Battle from Atari), you have compared the worst cartridges from Odyssey² with the best from Atari.

I have found these machines to be nearly comparable in regard to both controls and cartridges, with perhaps a slight edge to Atari. The key is in finding the better cartridges for each.

Dan Smith
Canton, Mich.

In "Thomas Corbett's 'Silicon Chip' Video-Game Rating System," six chips represent the highest evaluation, but not a single video game was given six chips. Permit me to nominate for six chips a

standard deck of 52 playing cards.

Judge Richard N. DeGunther
Rockford, Ill.

GENTLE GEORGE?

What can I say except, "You've done it again"? You have once more alluded to *Diffrent Strokes* as an inferior television program ("Hope for TV's Black Series Is 'Up and Coming,'" November). I ask you, what is wrong with Gary Coleman's character, Arnold? He's good, but the way Ms. McFadden puts it, all blacks *should* be "smoking dope or stealing hubcaps." And as for George Jefferson being a loudmouth, I have seen most of the 130 episodes of *The Jeffersons* and can testify to the fact that George has a gentle, quiet, sentimental side.

David Alan Mackey
Oakhurst, N.J.

REAL REFEREEING

I was glad to see your sports columnist tackle the question of umpiring via videotape ("The Instant Replay Conspiracy," November). Too loudly and too long—and too often—do the pundits in the broadcast booth overrule the folks out on the field, to no end but the additional frustration of the TV sports fan whose team lost out on the call.

If you want to watch real people playing a real game, you ought to leave real people in charge of making the calls. Those who are dissatisfied with the officiating do have an alternative, after all: the video-cartridge games mentioned elsewhere in the issue, where playing and officiating both obey the calls of the microprocessor.

Mark Fisher
Bowie, Md.

A FIXED OPINION

I enjoyed the amusing editorial in the Rear View section by Harry Stein ("Hints for the Helpful," October). As TV's "Mr. Fix-It" and a real-life repairman, I understand Mr. Stein's disdain for informational "experts" who not only give information but try to be stand-up comics.

Most certainly, TV has more to offer than cops, robbers, sitcoms and pretty girls in bikinis (although they're nice). For those audiences who are sincerely interested in learning new skills and saving money, these "how-to" reporters can perform a valuable service.

As for Mr. Stein's suggestion for my upcoming syndicated TV show, I am sure

audiences expect more than instruction on how to "straighten a picture that is hanging crooked on a wall." (By the way, the best approach is to use a carpenter's level.)

Thanks for mentioning my name.

*Mr. Fix-it
(Dave Jenett)
Los Angeles*

SATISFIED CUSTOMER

As a television-news reporter, I'm pretty familiar with broadcast-quality equipment, but when it comes to home entertainment . . . PANORAMA knows best!

The day before my wife and I began shopping for a color television set, your September issue arrived. David Lachenbruch's article . . . "If You're Buying a New TV Set . . ." taught us everything we needed to know in very simple terms, so simple, in fact, that the salesmen we talked with didn't know half the answers to our questions (almost all direct from your article).

After three trips back to one local dealer, we made our decision based mostly on the features discussed in your issue. As we watch our new 25-inch color console with remote control and super picture, we think back to how great it was to read PANORAMA that day, and get the best TV for our money.

Thanks, again, not only for the Lachenbruch article, but for the continuing excellence in writing about television. Keep up the good work!

*Paul S. Roth
WDBO-TV
Orlando, Fla.*

CORRECTION: In our December article "Watch the New Kid on the Block Show Off," we mistakenly referred to Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment as Warner Amex Cable.

Correspondence for this column should be addressed to: Letters Department, PANORAMA, P.O. Box 950, Wayne, Pa. 19087. No anonymous correspondence will be published. Letters may be abridged because of space limitations. We regret that it will not be possible for us to reply individually to letter writers.



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IMPRESSIONS



Linda Hamilton and Lorenzo Lamas wax provocative for teen-agers in *Secrets of Midland Heights* (left); and Mark Harmon, Cristina Raines and Howard Duff make the South sizzle in *Flamingo Road*.

They're Enjoyable— For 30 Seconds

Surely there's a place on TV for those
Flamingo Rodents and Midland Heights'
rabble without a cause

By CYRA McFADDEN

Intentionally or otherwise, two network offerings of the current season may become camp classics, in the same league with "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" and "Bedtime for Bonzo." One is CBS's *Secrets of Midland Heights*, a new entry in the nighttime soap-opera sweepstakes. The secret is who wrote it, and why. [See page 65 for answer—Ed.]

Midland Heights is an updated "High School Confidential" aimed at teen-agers and any adults who still miss homecoming games, frat parties and acne. An odd mixture of sex and innocence, *MH* poses the question: "It's eight o'clock, and where are your children?" Though its teen-age protagonists talk of little else, the sex is largely innuendo of the "nudge-nudge wink-wink" variety. "Why put off till tomorrow what you can do tonight?" says one young woman, intent on losing her virginity. "I'll just get in bed and . . . think of you," says another to her boyfriend, with a wicked leer.

The action is largely in the mind of the beholder, though, and despite a cast of performers who are all masters of the suggestive smirk, *Midland Heights'* hot-blooded teen-agers seem more like throwbacks to the Fifties. When, in the last two decades, have you seen adolescents pile into a wagon for a hayride and burst into a wholesome chorus of "I've Been Workin' on the Railroad"?

What the series does offer lovers of unapologetic awfulness is a vintage villain and some dialogue of the kind rarely heard outside low-budget horror movies. One featured teen-ager, Ann Dulles (acted by Doran Clark), is a young heiress who lives with her grandmother and her evil uncle. Played by Jordan Christopher, Uncle Guy is the slimiest thing this side of *Dallas*.

Ann's mother went crazy, he reminds her in one scene, slithering around the family's ornate drawing room. "It's possible your poor moth-

er's illness is hereditary. That's why grandmother and I want to keep you in this house . . . so we can watch you."

Move over, Baby Jane, before Uncle Guy pushes your wheelchair onto the freeway—or worse, into the swamp gas rising from another potential camp classic, *Flamingo Road*.

Also something of a period piece in its resolute unoriginality, NBC's *Flamingo Road* makes one feel sorry for the South. First the Civil War, then Billy Carter, and now this—a series whose depiction of small-town Southern life makes the version presented in *The Dukes of Hazzard* look like Greece in the Age of Pericles.

FR is the kind of sex-and-Spanish moss epic in which the women go to bed in their slippers and the villain is the man in the white suit. This time, evil incarnate is Howard Duff as—guess what?—a scheming sheriff; Stella Stevens plays the requisite whorehouse madam with a heart that is at least gold-filled; and Cristina Raines plays the girl from the wrong side of the river. I suppose no one is going to believe me, but her name is Lane Ballou.

Duff could play a role like this one in a heavy coma. He has a good time with *FR*'s nonstop clichés and recites lines like "I want that floozy out of here" straight-faced. And Raines manages to be both intelligent and sexy; what's a nice girl like her doing in a series like this?

Because both *Midland Heights* and *Flamingo Road* are such unabashed trash, they're enjoyable—for 30 seconds; and surely in the vastness of televisionland, there's room for Midland Heights' high-school rabble without a cause and those too-familiar Flamingo Rodents. I'm also half-convinced that both shows are meant as sendups. How else to account for a line like "Mix that with your grits and eat it"?

I could be wrong, however, and in that case, we have a different kettle of catfish. If *Midland Heights* and *Flamingo Road* look-alikes pop up all across the prime-time dial, one can only echo yet another line from the latter: "Lordy, lordy, deliver me from small-town minds." ■

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 The Rose • Poseidon Adventure • King Kong (1933) • An Unmarried
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PERSPECTIVE

Who Owns Videotext?

As newspapers begin showing up on your home screen, reporters are demanding a piece of the profits

By RICHARD REEVES

The wording in the contract between the Chicago Sun-Times and the Chicago local of The Newspaper Guild, the union representing reporters and other editorial employees, had been standard for as many years as anyone could remember: "Any employee whose work is sold after publication in the Sun-Times shall be given additional compensation therefore as the employee and employer may agree, but amounting to no less than 50 percent of the proceeds."

Last September, negotiators for the newspaper proposed dropping that clause from the contract with the union. "We weren't sure what was going on," says Jerry Minkinen, executive director of the Chicago Guild. But he quickly concluded that the paper must be planning to go into the electronic-news business—and didn't want the trouble or expense of paying reporters for "work sold after publication."

At the same time, in Minneapolis, the management of that city's jointly owned newspapers, The Star and the Tribune, told the Minneapolis Guild that it would like to drop a clause giving reporters \$75 or 25 percent of the profits, whichever is greater, if the company sold their stories after publication. There the reporters went on strike for 27 days and electronic rights became the strikers' big talking issue.

Everyone wants a piece of the electronic-information action. The Minneapolis newspapermen proclaimed common cause with members of the Screen Actors Guild, who were then striking for royalties when films and television series are reshowed on cable television, or sold as videocassettes or videodiscs. "Just as actors wanted payment for their perfor-

mances when 'resold' on videodiscs," wrote Michael Anthony, the music critic of the Minneapolis Tribune, "striking reporters demanded compensation if their work wound up on computer screens around the country."

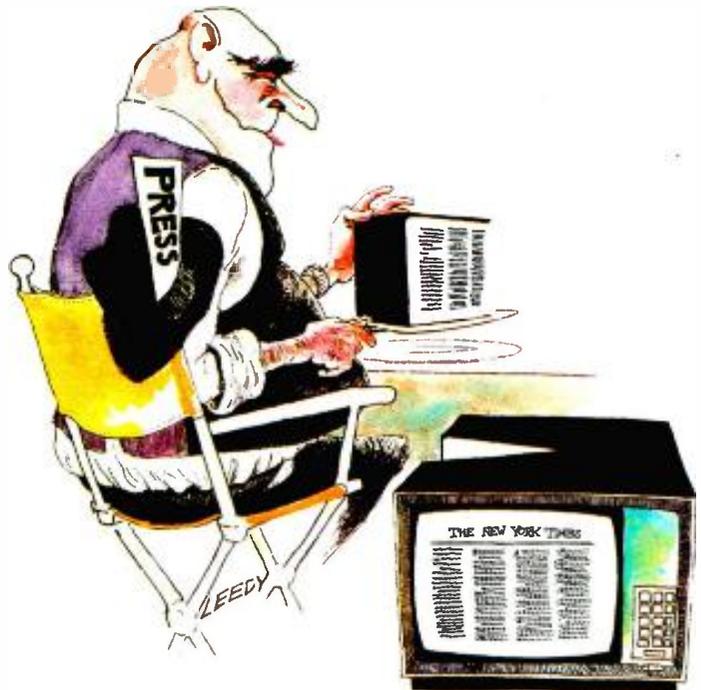
The Star and the Tribune are two of several newspapers experimenting with videotext, the electronic distribution of news and information; both have entered into an agreement to have all their news, every word, processed and sold for a six-month trial period by an aggressive little—350 employees—data-processing company in Columbus, Ohio. The company, CompuServe, expects to have 14 papers, as well as the national and international output of the Associated Press wire service, going out to 5200 home-

computer owners by the middle of this year. That's a lot of news—available to subscribers for a \$9 one-time subscription fee, plus \$5 per hour of usage—gathered, written and edited by thousands of reporters and editors around the world.

"There is a growing awareness among reporters," says Michael Anthony, "that electronic news—judging from the companies' actions in wanting to drop the reuse and republication clauses—could turn into an enormous moneymaker in years hence. A lot of us don't fully understand the potential of it, but the feeling among reporters is we better get in right away, because once the thing starts to roll, it may be too late."

Nobody's getting rich on electronic news now. Newspapers like the Knight-Ridder chain are doing it for survival: the future of their business may depend on the results of videotext experiments currently underway. The fact is that in recent years American newspaper circulation has remained constant while the population of the country has increased by more than 20 percent. "Newspapers have been fighting a losing battle with TV news," says Anthony. "TV news is considered the primary reason that afternoon dailies are dying around this country. Videotext is a way for papers to finally start using this technology to their advantage."

There is a contradiction, of course. The



same publishers who are willing to sell their news product to the information entrepreneurs are desperately anxious to prevent those same people from getting their electronic hands on newspaper advertising—particularly classified advertising. In Texas, newspaper publishers have banded together to try to block an AT&T home electronic experiment that would carry classified, display and catalogue ads. Classifieds account for 30 percent of all newspaper revenues; losing them would put hundreds of papers around the country out of business.

But newspapers know they can't afford *not* to explore the new technology—and they want to explore it unfettered by the demands of the reporters who write the stories. The Newspaper Guild recently adopted a resolution that said, in effect, we recognize that papers need to experiment, but they've got to recognize our people's right to share in the fruits of what those experiments yield. Dick Ramsey, the Guild's top collective-bargaining man, says, "The principle is that newspapers are going to be receiving *new* income for the resale of our members' work. Why shouldn't we have a share of the profits?"

No one knows when electronic news will explode commercially, but everybody's scrambling for the biggest piece he can get. "Basically," Ramsey says, "what's happening is that newspapers don't want us to get our noses in the tent. If they can keep us out, they will."

Management succeeded in part in keeping the Minneapolis strikers out of the tent—at least for a couple of years until contract negotiations come up again. Although the Minneapolis Guild managed to keep the reuse and republication clause, the wording was altered to exclude the resale of work to electronic newspapers. "The mood was bitter among reporters on returning to work," Anthony says. But the Guild did score one victory in Minneapolis: it won jurisdiction over electronic-news employees, meaning the Guild can negotiate for them in the future.

Sitting across the table from the reporters in Minneapolis was the management of the Twin Cities' newspapers. "Look," says Stephen Isaacs, the editor of The Minneapolis Star, in defense of his company's position, "with our \$75 or 25 percent clause, paying the reporter whichever is greater, the \$75 is almost always going to be greater in low-profit

experiments like CompuServe. We could end up having to pay a reporter \$75 or \$150 extra a day. That would make experimentation impossible."

In effect, he's saying that the Guild could kill videotext before it gets off the ground, and might, with prolonged labor strikes, ultimately kill shakier newspapers that are struggling in the marketplace. "Obviously the Guild's goal is to get as much money for its people as possible," says Isaacs, "but sometimes they do it blindly. The blindness could result in one paper after another folding, like in England. In the long range, it's their necks that will be on the line."

The Guild's director of administrative operations, Ellis Baker, obviously disagrees: "It's nonsense to say this could be a make-or-break situation for papers."

The Guild met with more success with the Chicago Sun-Times than with the Minneapolis papers. The contract was settled 45 minutes before the strike deadline; the reuse clause was retained unaltered. "The Sun-Times caved in," says Isaacs, "and they're probably not going to participate in the CompuServe experiment because of it. What may eventually happen with papers that can't get the clause dropped, or at least get a waiver for electronic news, is that they may just refuse to pay and let the Guild fight it legally. Labor lawyers have told me it's a very close call."

There are more questions than answers in this field right now. One is how successful videotext experiments will be. Another is how many people will pay for home computers and how soon—there are an estimated 500,000 now in use in the country. And as Richard Baker of CompuServe says: "Who gets a slice of the pie from whom? Us? The telephone company for providing transmission lines? Newspapers for collecting information? Reporters for writing it?"

Looking at the list of CompuServe's newspapers, I realized that five of them buy my syndicated column. CompuServe subscribers will be able to read the column by paying 25 cents for three minutes of viewing time. The computer company gets some of that quarter. The telephone gets some and so do the newspapers. I don't get anything—and now I know why those people in Minneapolis decided to go on strike, and why the communications revolution is going to bring both revolt and revolution to American newspapers. ■

PANORAMA

THE TELEVISION MAGAZINE

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CASSETTES IN REVIEW



Twin Killing

Here are the first big hits from two of America's comic geniuses. Watch Mel Brooks and Woody Allen, and you can die laughing

By GENE SHALIT

The Producers: (1968) color; 88 minutes; Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95.

Take the Money and Run: (1969) color; 85 minutes; Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95.

My two favorite movie comedians released their first features within a year of each other—Mel Brooks in 1968, Woody Allen in 1969. Each kept his first film fast: Woody's "Take the Money and Run" ran for 85 minutes, and Mel's "The Producers" 88 minutes. When I was first convulsed by Mel's movie, I remarked that "No one will be seated during the last 88 minutes of 'The Producers'—they'll all be on the floor, laughing." That still goes, and if you pick up this cassette you'd better put cushions on the floor so that when you pick *yourself* up you won't be bruised. And you may as well leave the cushions there if you also buy the cassette of "Take the Money and Run."

These men have dominated movie comedy in the past decade, running

the gamut of hilarity from A to B . . . Allen to Brooks. Among Allen's hits: "Take the Money and Run," "Sleeper," "Bananas," "Annie Hall," "Manhattan." Among Brooks' best: "The Producers," "Blazing Saddles" and "Young Frankenstein." These dominant comedies resulted in my Dominant Theory: take an audience, show them this picture, and when the first person falls down laughing the whole row falls, especially if they're watching in Southeast Asia.

From his early flat-out farces, Woody has grown, changed, developed—use your favorite word—into "Annie Hall," which swept the Academy Awards, and "Manhattan," which was inexplicably ignored by the Academy. Woody uses his newest movie, "Stardust Memories," to answer those who want to know why he turned somberly inward with "Interiors" instead of funning forward. Woody once told me that he could get rich just by making "Annie Hall" over and over

again, but he is in constant creative ferment.

Woody is an exceptional comic writer. His pieces appear in a wide range of journals, from the popular New Yorker to the scholarly Kenyon Review. Pick up his new book, "Side Effects," but don't read it in public because one effect of "Side Effects" is to make your sides ache. When you laugh out loud, the people around you will think you're crazy. I was reading "Side Effects" while I stood in the bookstore line waiting to pay for my copy. I laughed so maniacally that the other shoppers backed away in alarm thinking I was a lunatic. (No remarks, please.)

Mel and Woody are vastly different from each other. Woody is quiet in public. Mel is "on." If Mel's telephone conversations of the past 10 years had been taped, we would have the all-time comedy album and a best-selling book. The man's mind is a Roman candle of incredible inventiveness, so his films are fast and frantic.

"The Producers" is based on the wacky notion that a Broadway producer can make more money with a flop than with a hit. Zero Mostel is the producer, Gene Wilder his accountant, and "Springtime for Hitler" is their uproarious musical flop. In "Take the Money and Run," Woody is an inept bank robber whose soap gun turns to suds in a rainy escape attempt.

Allen and Brooks have achieved what is hardest to achieve: good comedies. It is easy to make an audience cry. It is very difficult to make an audience laugh. There have been a hundred celebrated dramatists for every one celebrated humorist. Brooks and Allen are rare: each is a director, writer and actor. That kind of gift does not come from Macy's. It comes from heaven, and we should nurture and nourish it.

These videocassettes give you their first major films and they're worth having for their joy and their historical hysterical interest. The movies came out early in my career and, looking back, I see that I predicted giant futures for each at a time when some learned critics held back with a "wait and see." I didn't have to wait. I saw. Take these honeys and run 'em. ■

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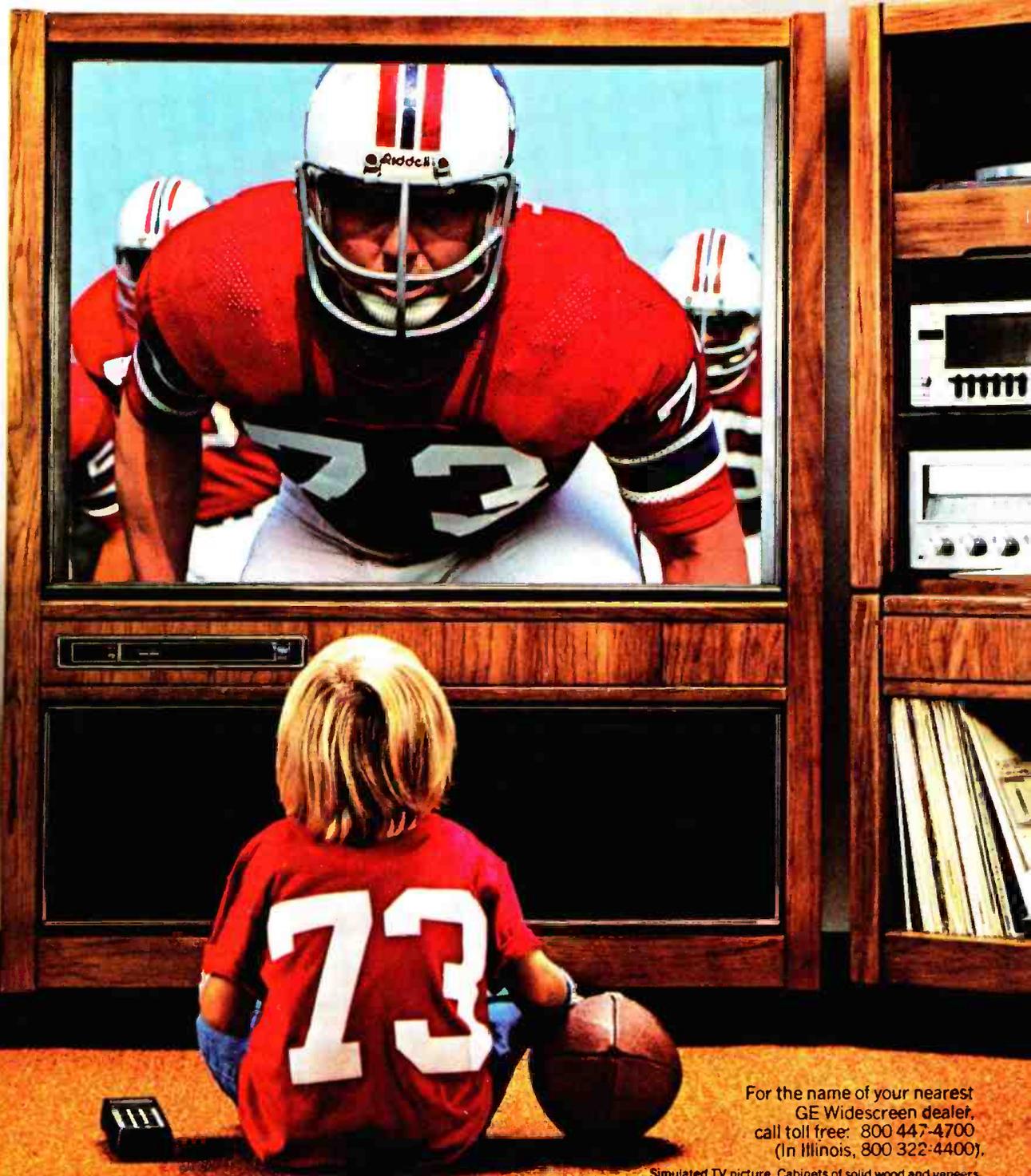
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Feb. 1981

Teletext Hits L.A. . . . Agatha Christie Comes to Television . . . Are More Channels on the Way? . . . Britain Sees the Underside of U.S. Programming

What's Happening

HOLLYWOOD
DON SHIRLEY REPORTING

Teletext: The Future Is April

Finally, the long-awaited teletext revolution has arrived—or at least it's about to. This new technology—which allows viewers to command words and images to appear on their TV screens—will receive its most important American audition in April, when decoders will begin operating at TV sets located in public places throughout the Los Angeles area.

At such potential sites as libraries, schools, local government offices and stores, passers-by will be able to summon forth screen-size "pages" of frequently updated "magazines" produced by CBS (which will be transmitted by its Los Angeles station, KNXT) and by public-television station KCET. Next fall, 100 decoders also will be placed in selected private homes.

CBS will use its magazine to explore how to make money out of teletext: classified advertising, local versions of

national ad campaigns, airline schedules and other such potentially lucrative features are being considered along with the news, weather, traffic, sports and other reports. Additionally, some CBS network programs will be seen with sophisticated teletext captions for the hearing-impaired, prepared at a new Los Angeles branch of the Captioning Center run by Boston's public-television station WGBH-TV. The network is pumping roughly \$1 million into its teletext-magazine venture.

The KCET magazine will focus more on the educational uses of teletext, with special attention paid to games and quizzes that could make television-watching a less passive experience for viewers. The \$100,000 KCET is using as seed money comes from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations.

The project will be a showcase for Antiope, the French-developed breed of teletext that has been proposed as the national standard by CBS. In recognition of the potential size of the American market, Telediffusion de France is lending the Californians \$1 million worth of Antiope equipment.

Project Peacock Set to Strut Its Stuff

"The Joy of Pigs"? A musical special on the history of postage stamps?

These were among the 1500 ideas pitched to Edgar Scherick for *Project Peacock*, NBC's prime-time children's anthology, which is scheduled to start broadcasting this month. Scherick, *Project Peacock's* boss, didn't go for the pigs or the stamps. But among the programs he has slated for this year are a look at animal trainer Gunther Gebel-Williams and his son; a live-action comedy by Charles "Peanuts" Schulz; a Phil Donahue hour with children who have been stricken by serious illnesses; a toast to the old and the young, starring Jack Albertson and Quinn Cummings; a special based on Delia Ephron's best-selling book, "How to Eat like a Child"; Ray Bradbury's "The Electric Grandmother"; and "Skeezer," a yarn about a dog and some emotionally disturbed children.



Phil Donahue: Talks turkey with kids for Peacock.

The ideas submitted to Scherick came from throughout the country, he says, "but just because you do a local kids' show in Spokane doesn't mean you're up to doing this. Of course, it doesn't mean you're not up to it, either."

Scherick himself has very little kid-vid experience, though he has produced children's theatrical films. One former NBC executive said Scherick got the *Peacock* assignment only because the head of the agency that sometimes represents him—Sy Fischer—is "the closest thing to a friend that [NBC president] Fred Silverman has." Nonsense, retorts Scherick: "Fred has known my work for years." (NBC is currently sitting on another Scherick production—a four-hour drama called "Born to the Wind," made two years ago and still not seen on NBC.)

Children's TV activists are rooting for *Project Peacock*, but they also sound several cautionary notes. "It won't get many brownie points from younger children if it's on so late," says Action for Children's Television's Peggy Charren, pointing out that some of the *Peacock* efforts will sign off at 10 P.M. And noting that *Peacock* will appear only twice a month—if that—she adds that it will be hard to build a loyal audience among children who are accustomed to seeing their fa-

vorite shows weekly or even daily. "They may tune in to specific shows that are well-promoted," she predicts, "but they won't tune in to *Project Peacock* just because it's on."

NEW YORK
DOUG HILL
REPORTING

Mysterious Absence of Christie Solved!

Whodunit fans will be delighted to know that *The Agatha Christie Mystery Theatre*, based on the Grand Dame's mind-twisters, is on its way to television. The project, announced recently here in New York, marks not only the first major attempt to bring the Christie oeuvre to the small screen, but also the successful conclusion of a negotiating marathon with the guardians of her estate—a process that took an unusual twist or two of its own.

The quest for the TV rights began not long after Christie died in 1976, when Alan Shayne, president of Warner Bros. Television, traveled to England to meet with Christie's grandson, Mathew Prichard, and later with her daughter, Rosalind Hicks. From the beginning, Shayne says, he had to overcome considerable family prejudice against Hollywood, engendered by Christie's distaste for Dame Margaret Rutherford's Miss Marple films of the early 1960s. An urbane man, decidedly unlike the image of the typical Tinseltown hustler, Shayne spent three years wooing the family, making visits to Hicks' country estate in Devon and Prichard's home in the south of Wales. "I spent a lot of time with them," Shayne says, "over tea, over dinner, over lunch. They began to have some feeling for how we would treat the material, that we

would not try to hoke it up or phony it up."

Despite the good feelings, the family abruptly canceled the negotiations in 1978, when it was announced that Warner Bros. would distribute "Agatha," a speculative biographical portrait of Christie starring Vanessa Redgrave and Dustin Hoffman. The Christie clan eventually overcame its pique, however, and Shayne finally secured his deal.

The agreement calls for the TV adaptation of one of two scripts ("They Came to Baghdad" and "Murder Is Easy"), with the option to do a total of five. Producers David Wolper and Stan Margulies, whose credits include *Roots* and *Moviola*, are currently at work on both scripts. CBS will choose between them, and the first of the films is expected to be on the air by early next year.

Will *The Agatha Christie Mystery Theatre* go beyond the original agreement to become a long-running TV staple? It depends on what the family thinks of the first batch, says Shayne—and on what the viewers think.

Feeling for Dollars

Emotion is coming out of the closet in America, and that means it ought to be more visible in TV commercials, too. So believes one of New York's top advertising research experts, Larry Light, executive vice president of the BBDO agency. After analyzing a series of lifestyle and behavior surveys conducted for the agency over the past year, Light has concluded that "feelings are fashionable again" among consumers. Thus, commercials that take notice of those feelings will in turn be noticed by viewers. "The 'only me' has become the 'lonely me,'" Light says.

"More and more people are discovering it's time for teamwork. We will see a return to personal relationships: how I relate to other people, how I relate to my company, how I relate to the brand I use will be very important again."

BBDO's campaign for General Electric illustrates how products as unfeeling as appliances can be given an emotional charge. "Up until last year, we featured features and pounded the price," Light says. Now GE has a new theme: "We bring good things to living; we bring good things to life." Other examples include Coke's Mean Joe Greene spot and AT&T's "Reach out and touch someone" campaign. "We can't just reach people; we have to touch them," Light says. "We will see an increase in advertisements that respect people's emotions. One good way to get a share of the market is to get a share of the heart."

WASHINGTON
STEVE WEINBERG
REPORTING

The FCC Plays with a Full Dial

If the FCC has its way, there will soon be many more TV stations on your dial. But that's a *big* if. Proposals for both "drop-in" and "low-power" stations have stirred considerable controversy.

Drop-ins would go on the VHF band—Channels 2 to 13—which is already near the point of saturation. In the top 100 TV markets, for instance, there are only four vacant commercial channels (which were recently added by the FCC); in the second 100 markets there are just three commercial channels unapplied for.

Essentially, drop-ins would work like this: At the moment, VHF stations with the

same frequency—say Channel 2—must be spaced at least 170 miles from one another to avoid interference. For the same reason, adjacent channels must be spaced 60 miles apart. Proponents say that new stations— as many as 135—could be "dropped in" closer to existing stations. They claim that the technology is now available to allow broadcasters to curtail their signals in certain directions. In other words, a Channel 2 in Philadelphia needn't interfere with the Channel 2 95 miles to the north in New York.

As for low-power stations, they would be used to serve much smaller areas than do existing full-service stations. Broadcasting at no more than 10 watts on VHF (a standard VHF station broadcasts at up to 316 kilowatts) or one kilowatt on UHF (the largest UHF stations broadcast at five megawatts), low-power stations could be aimed at special audiences—like minority neighborhoods within cities.

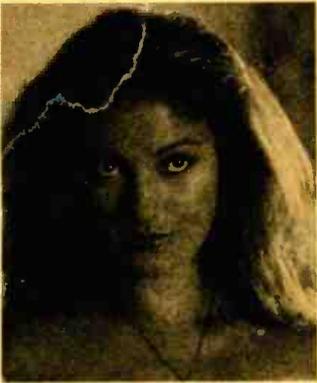
Many questions remain to be answered about low-power TV, but chances are better than even it will become a reality. The often-divided seven-member Federal Communications Commission attained a rare unanimity in approving the concept. Engineers say they foresee no technical problems such as interference with existing full-power stations. And uncounted potential applicants—from shoe-string community groups to Sears, Roebuck and Co.—are expressing interest in getting in on the ground floor.

The future of drop-ins is somewhat cloudier. The FCC vote approving the concept was 4-3. So, if President Reagan's first appointment to the FCC disapproves of the idea, it could be dead for years to come. Influential broadcasters are up in arms about the proposal, saying interference with their signals would be

What's On

SOME OF THE NOTEWORTHY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS THAT ARE SCHEDULED FOR TELEVISION THIS MONTH. (CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR DATES AND TIMES IN YOUR AREA.)

DRAMA AND MOVIES



Jane Seymour: Seductive serpent in Eden.

East of Eden. An eight-hour miniseries based on John Steinbeck's 1952 novel. The made-for-TV epic stars Jane Seymour, Lloyd Bridges and Bruce Boxleitner. ABC.

The Shakespeare Plays. The series, which began its third season with "Hamlet" in November, resumes this month with "The Merchant of Venice." Gemma Jones is Portia. PBS.

Look Back in Anger. An installment of the *Broadway on Showtime* series, this 1980 revival of John Osborne's 1957 play stars Malcolm McDowell. Showtime (cable).

Mr. Lincoln. A *Hallmark Hall of Fame* presentation, starring Roy Dotrice as Honest Abe in Herbert Mitgang's one-man show. PBS.

Being-There. An Oscar-nominated performance by Peter Sellers is the highlight of this 1979 theatrical film farce based on Jerzy Kosinski's novel. The Movie Channel, Home Theatre Network (cable).

Up in Smoke. Cheech and

Chong in their 1978 film about (loosely) marijuana and music. The Movie Channel, Home Box Office (cable).

Tom Horn. Steve McQueen stars as an aging cowboy in this 1980 theatrical film. The Movie Channel (cable).

Guests of the Nation. A dramatization of Frank O'Connor's short story about the Irish "troubles" of 1921, this *Great Performances* production stars Frank Converse and Estelle Parsons. PBS.

COMEDY AND VARIETY

Gilda Live. *Saturday Night Live* alumna Gilda Radner brought staples of her TV act to Broadway in 1979; this film, released theatrically in 1980, includes the highlights of her on-stage performance. The Movie Channel (cable).

Gallagher: An Uncensored Evening. The comic who makes jokes out of garbage (literally), taped in performance in Los Angeles. Showtime (cable).

With Ossie & Ruby. A 13-week series, starring the husband-and-wife team of Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, has its debut this month. PBS.

Blockheads: The Fourth Annual Adult Ventriloquism and Comedy Show. Mariette Hartley is the host. Home Box Office (cable).

SPORTS

The Pro Bowl. Stars from the American Football Conference battle those from the National Football Conference in Honolulu. ABC.

Daytona 500. Live coverage of the Florida auto race. CBS.

The Beanpot Tournament. College hockey, live from Boston Garden. Entertainment and

Sports Programming Network (cable).

The Grand Slam of Tennis. The winners of the Grand Slam tournaments (Wimbledon plus the U.S., French and Australian Opens) compete. CBS.

Bing Crosby Golf Tournament. The famous Pro-Am, live from Pebble Beach, Cal. CBS.

Only the Ball Was White: Paul Winfield is the host of a half-hour special on the Negro baseball leagues, in existence from the turn of the century until the 1950s. PBS.



Basketball: The best of the West and East in a shoot-out.

NBA All-Star Game. The East plays the West for the 31st time. CBS.

SPECIALS

The Grammy Awards. The recording industry honors 1980's best songs and artists in a live telecast from New York City's Radio City Music Hall. CBS.

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

Project Peacock. A series of prime-time children's specials begins this month. NBC.

ABC Afterschool Special. In "A Matter of Time," a child must cope with his mother's imminent death from cancer. ABC.

Franco: From Shepherd to Superstar. A documentary on Mr. Universe, Franco Columbu. Nickelodeon (cable).

MUSIC

Aida. The 1955 film version of Verdi's opera. Sophia Loren plays the title role on-screen; off-screen, Renata Tebaldi sings it. Bravo (cable).

Sylvia Fine Kaye's Musical Comedy Tonight—II. The second in a series on the history of American musical comedy. PBS.

Loretta Lynn in Concert. The

country-and-western star in a performance taped in Reno. Showtime (cable).

The Cleveland Orchestra. In a prerecorded performance, guest conductor James Conlon leads the orchestra in a program of Mozart and Berlioz. Bravo (cable).

George Shearing at the Carlyle. The pianist does a set from New York's famed supper club. PBS.

Live from Lincoln Center. Violinist Itzhak Perlman plays Bach, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky with the Chamber Music Society at Alice Tully Hall. PBS.

From Ormandy to Muti. The first of a five-part series on the Philadelphia Orchestra's 1980 passing of the baton from Eugene Ormandy to Riccardo Muti. PBS.

Standing Room Only. Cher in her nightclub act, taped in Monte Carlo. Home Box Office (cable).

NEWS AND DOCUMENTARIES

Remember Harlem. *Non-Fiction Television* continues its third season on public TV with this four-night series covering Harlem's history from 1600 to the present. The show kicks off PBS's observance of Black History Month; another program on this theme is **The World of My America**, in which black history is recounted through poetry and dramatic readings. PBS.

Living Treasures of Japan. A *National Geographic Special* examines Japanese art and artisans. PBS.

Clipperton: The Island Time Forgot. An installment of the *Cousteau Odyssey* series takes undersea explorer Jacques Cousteau to Clipperton Island, southwest of Mexico. PBS.

John Wayne: The Duke Lives On. A documentary on the late actor's life and career. Home Box Office (cable).

Wise Guys. A new week-in-review program emanating from an actual New York bar (see page 30). Individual cable systems. ■

continued from page 14

disastrous. They have allies at the FCC itself. Commissioner Abbott Washburn, in his dissent, said drop-ins aren't feasible in every city; the engineering studies relied on by the majority don't take into account conditions in individual markets. Or, as Washburn puts it: "It's like taking a year's January temperature for 100 U.S. cities of 50 degrees and concluding from this that motorists in Detroit, Duluth and Cheyenne won't need snow tires and chains next winter."

PBS's Congress Show

Public television has finally undertaken what the commercial TV networks have long ignored—regular, in-depth coverage of Congress with a half-hour weekly pro-

gram that began last month, plus almost-daily news spots carried by PBS.

The plan to cover Congress, begun last year on a trial basis, received a boost recently when the Corporation for Public Broadcasting awarded \$2 million to WETA-TV, the PBS station in Washington, D.C. Supplemented by \$250,000 from LTV Corp., the station has enough money to produce the weekly program, called *The Lawmakers*, through July. The funds pay the salaries of program host Paul Duke and National Public Radio correspondents Cokie Roberts and Linda Wertheimer, plus those of an assignment editor and two reporting crews. The show includes commentary from former New York congressman Otis Pike; Charles

continued on page 93

son and Peter Jennings of *World News Tonight*, by contrast, date back to shortly after Roone Arledge's takeover at ABC News three-and-a-half years ago, and Arledge's penchant for jumping from one anchor or correspondent to another seems markedly unsettling to some, especially next to the competition. Not surprisingly, then, ABC is less popular among the older folk, but it regularly attracts more young urban viewers than does either CBS or NBC. The chart reveals younger viewers' preference for ABC, and, in fact, ABC often beats CBS in many of the Nation's largest cities.

What does all this mean to Dan Rather? The inherent loyalty of CBS's audience should be an advantage. But replacing an icon is never easy, and it could prove to be less so with some viewers. Rather has said he will take a more activist role as

might pull some of ABC's fickle young viewers into CBS's camp, especially with his following from *60 Minutes*.

CBS hopes that's just what will happen, of course, and ABC's head of research, Marvin Mord, admits there's a chance it will. But he's betting that the changing of the guard at CBS, simply by shaking up the established order of things, will work against Rather. Mike Eisenberg, director of audience measurement for CBS, counters that CBS's ratings showed no decline when Rather substituted for Cronkite in the past, proving, Eisenberg believes, that viewer loyalty extends beyond the anchorman to embrace the correspondents, the local news show that precedes the national news, even the news set.

Still, few deny the importance of the personality who is the focus of the newscast

The Ratings Race

Who'll Prevail After Cronkite Leaves?

BY DOUG HILL

Most Americans are aware by now that we're losing an institution next month: Uncle Walter Cronkite won't be reading us the news any more. Occupying his anchor chair instead will be Daring Dan Rather, whose task it is to keep the *CBS Evening News* on top of the ratings heap. His success or failure will surely be one of the more carefully scrutinized TV stories of the year, but what exactly is the lay of the land as Rather takes over? What kinds of viewers is he inheriting? Are they suited to him, and will he suit them?

As a whole, the evening-news audience is weighted toward older viewers living in rural areas. The reason is simple: many younger adults, who gravitate to the cities for the jobs there, are still driv-

ing home, jogging, drinking or otherwise involved when the evening news comes on. CBS's lead in the news ratings derives to a great extent from its success in attracting a significantly larger share of those older rural viewers than does either ABC or NBC. The chart on this page shows CBS's commanding lead among older age groups.

Besides his soothing style, Cronkite's longevity has helped: older viewers tend to be loyal viewers; they generally like consistency and are less apt to try something new. John Chancellor of NBC benefits from a similarly comfortable presence and viewer perseverance, since his network also scores heavily among the older population. The tenures of ABC's Frank Reynolds, Max Robin-

EARLY-EVENING NEWS AUDIENCE BY AGE GROUP

(In millions of viewers per average minute, Jan.-Oct. 1980)

	ABC	CBS	NBC
Men 18-49	3.020	2.890	2.690
Women 18-49	3.300	2.900	2.920
Men 25-54	2.910	2.940	2.690
Women 25-54	3.110	3.260	2.800
Men 55+	2.240	3.220	2.870
Women 55+	2.980	4.410	3.750
Total Homes	9.180	10.580	9.025

(Source: ABC/A.C. Nielsen)

anchor; he wants to report stories from the scene of the action when he can. That could alienate those who enjoyed having Walter cozily telling it like it was from the studio for so long. If CBS's audience finds Rather a dose of cold water to Cronkite's warm bath, they may decide they're more at home with Chancellor on NBC. On the other hand, Rather's vitality

night after night, and perhaps a better sobriquet for Rather, until he's officially adopted First Nephew, would be Dangling Dan, the Anchorman. It will be recalled that Cronkite did not emerge as the undisputed ratings champ until NBC's Huntley-Brinkley team broke up in 1970. That was before ABC News was really in the running, and before Walter became an Uncle. ■

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CABLE AND PAY-TV



Shooting for a New Goal

After its ratings disaster on network TV,
the NHL has found a friend—
and a future—in cable

By STANLEY MARCUS

Anyone who has ever lamented the dearth of hockey on television can take heart. Cable TV is proving itself to be wide-open to hockey, and the National Hockey League is beginning to look upon cable as its long-lost rich uncle.

The problem with hockey, as the NHL's director of broadcasting, Joel Nixon, is the first to admit, is that "it's a game that doesn't enjoy a widely based national audience like football and baseball." Fans are concentrated in what Nixon calls "pockets of local intensity," notably the cities of the Northeastern states; outside those pockets, audience response is glacial. (You used to be able to watch hockey weekly on NBC and CBS; then the two networks consulted their ratings.)

The good news about cable, from the NHL's and the fans' points of view, is that a mammoth national audience is no longer a sine qua non for profitable TV, because revenue comes ultimately from the viewers rather than from head-counting advertisers. National satellite services like the USA

Network and the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) can thrive on audience figures that would make the over-the-air networks blanch. The result, as Nixon says, is that "the ability to have a network contract is no longer a determining factor in the success or health of a sport. A few years ago, it was."

Subscribers to the USA Network can now see a major hockey game every Monday evening during the season, while ESPN offers regular live telecasts of games from six clubs around the country. In addition, a number of teams, such as the Buffalo Sabres, have arrangements with local cable systems. Their games form part of the basic-cable service in their communities.

But these are only appetizers in what eventually could become a hockey smorgasbord. The real breakaway will come with the development of local pay-TV channels such as Philadelphia-based Prism, which can afford to pay generously for telecast rights and can also bring a high degree of profes-

sionalism to production.

In the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, Prism offers its subscribers the only kind of hockey they really care about—the kind involving their beloved Flyers. Prism has exclusive TV rights to all the events it telecasts from Philadelphia's Spectrum arena, where the Flyers play, and has recently invested \$2 million in a gleaming new control center. State-of-the-art Ikegami cameras with powerful close-up capability are producing pictures of the game that have "stunning clarity and color," according to Philadelphia Inquirer hockey correspondent Al Morganti.

The NHL is looking forward to the emergence of Prism-type operations in other regions where hockey interest is strong. Joel Nixon has no anxieties about the threat to gate revenues from TV. "We won't worry about our gates," he says, "until cable's in, say, 70 percent of all homes. That day's some way off."

...AND LOTS, LOTS MORE

If viewers of the Satellite Program Network find themselves glued to their sets for 10 consecutive days in April, it won't be because some writer has come up with a screenplay of Dostoevskian depth. The explanation will lie, quite simply, in the universal human longing for a bargain.

From April 3 through April 12, SPN is devoting its entire evening's programming, and most of its weekend hours, to the National Benefit Auction, a charitable fund-raising event that will be the first phone-in auction ever to be seen on nationwide television.

Ten highly diverse organizations—everything from Opera America to the Child Welfare League to the Sierra Club—will benefit from this marathon bazaar, in which some of the Nation's most prosperous corporations are donors of the goods and services to be auctioned. Among the offerings: refrigerators, TV sets, condominiums, boats, European vacations, shopping sprees, and, yes, much, much more. One of the earliest donations was a \$7000 residential lot on Lake Lure, N.C.

Enthusiastic bidders please note: Luciano Pavarotti, whom you will see on your screens on April 9, will be there only to plead the cause of Opera America. He is *not* a donation from Lincoln Center. ■

Q&A with Suzanne Somers

“I Don’t See Myself as a Raquel Welch”

Suzanne Somers writes poetry, plans to star on Broadway and in her own TV series—and hopes to be recognized as more than a sex symbol



When *Three's Company* became an instant success on ABC five television seasons ago, its high ratings were not due to the critics' response to the show. The sitcom became an immediate target for the ongoing barrage of criticism against television in general. Intellectuals despised the show for what they deemed its adolescent, innuendo-filled approach to sex in an asexual *ménage à trois* made up of the likable John Ritter, the attractive and capable Joyce DeWitt and, of course, Suzanne Somers, whose "dumb blonde" character, Chrissy, stood out as much for her shorty night-

gowns and her casually draped bath towels as for Somers' acting ability. Media watchdog groups like the National Federation for Decency also attacked *Three's Company*, but not for being adolescent; they feared it was too adult and might well be leading the Nation toward a rapid moral decline. Television viewers did not seem to care. *Three's Company* consistently has been among the most popular shows, although its ranking did slip early in the 1980-81 season.

Somers' career was spurred by a fast-selling poster and, TV critics and mo-

reality groups aside, media attention to Somers began favorably enough with the inevitable comparisons with Lana Turner and Marilyn Monroe. There was even some grudging admiration for her negotiating a contract with the rival CBS network for her own *Suzanne Somers Show*, to go into production when *Three's Company* goes off the air. Occasionally the press did carp at the idea of a blonde "sex symbol" in the enlightened Seventies. "If you've got it, bump it with a trumpet," was Somers' often-quoted response.

But the bad press also began, with news of long-ago bounced checks in San Francisco and the publication of decade-old Playboy magazine audition shots. Somers' then-manager Jay Bernstein was able to turn that setback into what amounted to a P.R. coup gaining sympathy for Suzanne, who had grown up in San Bruno, Cal., had married and mothered a son at 17, divorced at 18, and spent 10 years waiting for her overnight success on *Three's Company*. Both the bad checks and the Playboy shots, said Bernstein, dated from a difficult time in Somers' life when she'd had to raise \$20,000 for hospital expenses after her son was hit by a car. After hearing that explanation, America was on Somers' side again.

In spite of that, her movie debut as a costar, with Donald Sutherland in "Nothing Personal," produced by Bernstein and Somers' second husband, Alan Hamel, was not a success. The movie bombed. And at the beginning of this television season, rumors began to surface about troubles on the *Three's Company* set. Suzanne, the stories said, was not showing up for work. Then word leaked out that Somers, who a few months before had fired Bernstein and was now being managed by her husband, was demanding \$150,000 an episode instead of the \$35,000 her producers say was agreed upon in her last contract. The producers had turned her down, said yet more stories, and were introducing a replacement character, Chrissy's cousin, while negotiations continued.

Recently, the day before she was to take off for Korea to entertain U.S. forces, Somers, now 33, spent some time at her seven-story beach house with free-lance writer Louise Farr, discussing the current state of her career and her negotiations with *Three's*

Company. Alan Hamel, who recently gave up his Canadian talk show to manage his wife's career, sat in to answer questions that Suzanne's lawyers had advised her not to discuss.

PANORAMA: *What's behind the troubles resulting from your contract negotiations with Three's Company?*

SOMERS: If you're working in an office and someone asks for a raise, the rest of the office doesn't get mad. That's the American way. That's what the country's built on. Free enterprise, the right to strike, the right to ask for higher wages. I never wanted this to get in the press. We've been having these negotiations since last March, and I never mentioned it to anyone, including my co-workers. If there's been any mistake, it's that the producers [Michael Ross, Bernie West and Budd Grossman], from day one, should have said to everyone, "This is between Suzanne and ourselves," and we all could have worked very easily together.

PANORAMA: *What were your physical problems that led up to the dispute?*

HAMEL: Suzanne hurt herself on *The Tonight Show* in the last week of September. It turned out she had broken a rib and pulled some musculature. She went to Las Vegas wearing a brace, in great pain, came back, did one or two *Three's Companys*, then suffered a relapse with the back, so she took a couple of days off. The producers and ABC took that as meaning she was trying to leverage the negotiations by faking it. They effectively said she was lying. They said, "We want to have our physicians examine her." We said, "Fine." They have never up until this moment come forth with a physician to examine her. They were operating not on a business level but on an emotional level. It's conventional and traditional in this business to renegotiate. Suzanne earns less money than the other two principals on the show. It's just not fair. It's as simple as that.

PANORAMA: *If it's that conventional, why all the fuss?*

HAMEL: The producers started this terrible cold war. We are still engaged in turmoil with these people, mainly

because of the way they reacted emotionally. They made an offer to her which was a four-figure offer [reportedly a \$5000-an-episode increase], which is fine—they can make an offer for 15 cents. But the way they did it was a little on the smarmy side. What they said was, "We'll give you a raise, but we won't give you the money till the beginning of the sixth season to make sure you're a good girl this year and that you turn up for work next year."

We interpreted that as an insult. so we told them we'd like \$150,000 an episode plus 10 percent of all the gross profits. They said, "You're crazy," and we said, "We may be crazy, but we're not any crazier than you are relative to the offer that you made us." Even though asking for \$150,000 was somewhat of a wild overstatement, it was there essentially to balance the offer that they had made. They went public with our offer and used it as a tool to try



"This is my opportunity, and if I didn't maximize it, they could call me a dumb blonde with justification."

to beat us over the head. Somewhere in between is where we want to have some serious conversation.

SOMERS: The producers just didn't take control. They are men who don't have children of their own. If they're going to treat you like children, they should know how to deal with you as children.

When I go off to do my own series, which will be next year or the year after—it's inevitable—I want to leave real good feelings behind. What's been great about the show is how well we

work together. And if they bring a new character in, like, "Ha, ha, ha, this is your replacement," it will cause unnecessary friction that is not conducive to comedy. And I want the show to be conducive to comedy, because that is what I do. That's what I always wanted to do. Even back when I filled out my Playboy questionnaire I said that's what I wanted to do. At the same time, I want to be a smart businesswoman. This is my time to score. This is my opportunity, and if I didn't maximize it at this time, then I truly would be dumb. They could call me a dumb blonde with justification.

PANORAMA: *Do you want to leave Three's Company?*

HAMEL: No. She would like to be with the show as long as it runs. She has a deal to do her own series, *The Suzanne Somers Show*, on CBS when *Three's Company's* over, but I believe in the bird-in-the-hand principle, and *Three's Company* is the bird in the hand. But in doing a comedy series it's the fun the audience picks up on, particularly when it's an ensemble show, and unfortunately that part of it was gone when she went into the studio last week. Prior to her coming in one day, after she was ill, the producers called a meeting and said, "We know you're all mad at her." The fact of the matter is that nobody was mad at her, because our difficulty was with the producers. So by them suggesting that everybody was mad at her, by the time she got there, nobody was talking to her. Now that part has been resolved. Now everyone is talking. The producers don't talk to us, but that's OK. They're not what you'd call engaging conversationalists.

PANORAMA: *There have been reports of enmity among you, John Ritter and Joyce DeWitt. How do you handle it?*

SOMERS: John Ritter and I have been dear friends. I kiss him hello in the morning and hug him goodbye at night. I've been less close to Joyce, but there hasn't been friction. I think what friction there may be was created by the National Enquirer. They create all the friction in this town. Joyce didn't want publicity the first year of the show. In the second year, she decided she did

Q&A

continued



want it, but by that time she had turned it down so often that the media weren't as anxious to do stories on her. That created a false sense of friction between us: the feeling that I was getting all the publicity and she wasn't.

When we first started working together, I was intimidated by her—she's such a good actress. That's what she wants to be—an actress, and play down the celebrity aspect.

PANORAMA: *Do you think that a celebrity image can become a trap?*

SOMERS: Yes. But I think it's your attitude. I don't even know what a sex symbol is, and it's an embarrassing term to explain why you are or why you aren't. But I think it's all very handleable. You walk into the house, close the door and you stop being the star. Otherwise you're really believing that you are who people have been writing

about, and that isn't so.

PANORAMA: *Have you ever gone through a stage where you started to believe in the image?*

SOMERS: In the first two years of *Three's Company*, I started to believe the competition. I was on those magazine covers that said "Who's Hot and Who's Not." Some months I'd be hot and some months I'd be not, and I found myself going through a great trauma. I don't believe it was for ego reasons. It was because I had a goal. I felt, "I haven't even touched the surface and they're already saying I'm not hot." But then I started to realize that's just the game that's played to keep interest in television and so there's something to write about in the *Enquirer* and those other gossip magazines. Once I stopped reading them, I lost my anxiety. I have Alan read everything first. Now people accuse me of being over-protected. I'm not. It's just survival, because they attack your most vulnerable areas and you can't help but feel crushed.

PANORAMA: *What are those vulnerable areas—just so that we can attack them?*

SOMERS: I was hoping you would! Well, I don't know. I suppose the most vulnerable area is being misunderstood. Having people think that you're something that you're not. And you can't change people's opinion of you, and you can't make everybody like you. But you know something I found out this summer in traveling across America? I have a wonderful group of fans who like me. Most of them like me because I'm Chrissy, and that's when I came to grips with Chrissy. I thought, I don't have to go around and say, "Hey, do you know that I can cook? And do you know that my personal life is intact? And that we're investing our money wisely?" I realized that I don't have to beat that drum because they like that character so much, and I'm never going to get to know all of them on a person-to-person basis. It's nice to do a talk show once in a while, nice to get the book of poetry I've written on to show that aspect of myself.

PANORAMA: *But at one time you did*

feel you had to separate yourself from Chrissy. Is that what you meant by being misunderstood?

SOMERS: Yes. I'd worked so long at being a full, growing, complete woman. I always wanted to be the best woman I could be. It took me about 10 years before I landed this role—it meant a lot of knocking on doors, trying to get work—but during that time I read all those books: "How to Be Your Own Best Friend"; "I'm OK—You're OK"; "Psycho-Cybernetics." I read every self-help book, and I really felt that I had it figured out. And I still

"I don't even know what a sex symbol is, and it's an embarrassing term to explain why you are or why you aren't."

feel that's why I got Chrissy when I walked in, because I no longer had that same desperation about me.

For a long time I felt that I was all the things I believed I had failed at. I felt that by getting married at 17 and having a baby at 17 I blew it. Yet I knew that I had talent, and I always felt this determination that somehow my life was going to end up a happy one.

PANORAMA: *You'd done nine unsold pilots before Three's Company. What kind of roles did you play? Were any of them like Chrissy?*

SOMERS: On one pilot I was the first female game-show host. I was co-host on a couple of talk-show pilots. I did one pilot for a dramatic series called "Sky Heist." I was co-host for another game-show pilot called "Take My Life—Please." I'd never played a role like Chrissy. I'd done musical comedy



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Q&A

continued



in high school and college, then summer stock. I played Adelaide in "Guys and Dolls," and there's a bit of Adelaide in Chrissy. I knew exactly how to do this Chrissy. She's quite a nice lady. She's got honor and her humor comes from a circuitous route to logic.

PANORAMA: *How did you know exactly how to play her?*

SOMERS: You know, I was a model in San Francisco, and I had many jobs that I considered degrading at the time, but I needed the money, so I did them. I used to work at conventions. Remember hot pants? That's all they ever wanted you to wear. One of my accounts was the AMA convention, and I'd be exhibited hanging in traction twice a year for two weeks. I passed out nuts as a squirrel on Market Street. I was a 17-year-old pregnant Avon lady. But when you're not making any mon-

ey and you're offered \$400 for a weekend to go stand in front of Chevrolets, you do it. Then at night you get the account executive knocking on the door saying, "Why don't you come have a drink, and maybe we can talk about working together more often." Of course, you slam the door, and you realize that that's the last time you're going to work for that person.

Maybe doing all those conventions with all the guys coming on to me gave me range as an actress. Whatever it was—having a child that early, his accident, the degrading jobs, the evictions, having my phone taken out, Playboy, having grocery checks bounce—all those, in retrospect, are important to who I am now.

PANORAMA: *Did you discover that when the stories broke about Playboy and the bad checks?*

SOMERS: Actually, Alan helped me by saying, "It's not important. You're above that." I wasn't hurt by that at all. I certainly didn't like it, although I knew those stories would come out because my personal life was being probed into so deeply. It was a sense of relief. I could say, "OK, America. I did it." And America said, "Hey, we've all done it. Who hasn't bounced a check?"

PANORAMA: *A few months ago, you fired your manager, Jay Bernstein, and Alan is now managing you. It seems like the classic sex-symbol move. What led to it?*

SOMERS: Jay Bernstein did wonderful things for me in three years. I call him a star-maker. I think that's what his talent is. Some people don't like his tactics, but I think the whole thing is to get public visibility, because if you're sitting quietly and patiently at home, they're not going to know who you are. After I got *Three's Company*, I said to my manager at the time, "I want to maximize the opportunity. Let's hire the best publicist in town."

It just reached a point where there was nothing else for Jay to do, so we parted. He knew it was coming; he even told me it was coming, which planted the seed in my head. A lot of people think that maybe he doesn't have the finesse they would like, but the fact of the matter is that I think he was very

successful with me. He made money for me for the first time in my life.

PANORAMA: *What career moves do you plan so that you don't become—*

SOMERS: A forgotten star? Well, I was watching Raquel Welch on television last night. I love to look at her. I think she's just exquisite, and maybe that's what she does for us. Maybe that should be enough. But I don't think it's enough when you're the one doing it. It's not enough for me. I think Raquel Welch is a sex symbol, and I don't see myself as a Raquel Welch. "Sex symbol" is not what I was going after at all. I

"Maybe doing all those conventions with all the guys coming on to me gave me range as an actress."

think it happened by accident. Except I know that I have this sexy quality. It's just there. I've been told that since I was a girl. But Alan and I said two years ago that I wanted to do a nightclub act, and now I'm doing an act.

There are lots of other goals down the line. I've always wanted to do a Broadway play, and this year I've had four offers to do Broadway musicals. I can't take them right now, because it's not the time, but I know it's out there. I don't have any burning passion to do heavy drama. I feel there are a lot of actresses who can do it and do it well, but I think there aren't too many who do what I do well. We're looking for the perfect movie script. After doing one movie ["Nothing Personal"] that wasn't a success, both of us will go over every aspect of the next one.

PANORAMA: *What went wrong with the last one?*

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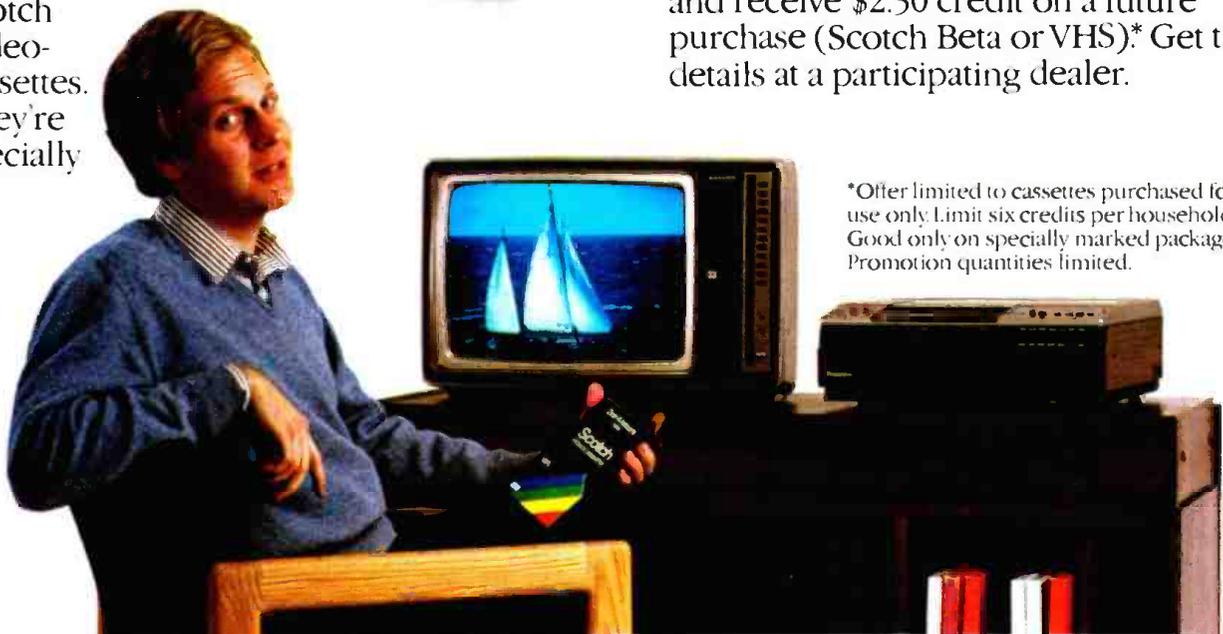
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Q&A

continued



SOMERS: At first I thought it was a good movie. Then, after it got bad reviews, I went back and watched it and it seemed slow. I read a review that said I wasn't vulnerable and I thought, "That's right: you didn't make her vulnerable, and you should have. Chrissy's vulnerable."

PANORAMA: *Does it affect your personal life when your husband's your manager?*

SOMERS: Working with Alan is wonderful. Nobody dominates the other. I wanted to marry him the day I met him, but I'm glad I didn't because during those 10 years that we went together, we worked it all out: we had all the fights, we had all the threats. Mainly the fighting came from me: "Don't treat me like your little tootsie; treat

me as an equal partner in this relationship"—the same thing most women are going through right now. My home life is bliss, so I can go off and do my work without any of that tension that usually accompanies work. We've been fortunate enough to grow in the same direction. And if he, in his growth, takes a sharp left, and I take a sharp right, it certainly could be the demise. But I hope that we stay on the same path, because I like life with him.

PANORAMA: *Could your CBS contract for The Suzanne Somers Show hasten the demise of Three's Company?*

SOMERS: No. It's very gentlemanly, actually. Nobody's pushing anybody. It's just that when *Three's Company* is over, then we go on. One of the reasons that I'm anxious to do my own show is that I'll continue to do Chrissy. I love doing the character, and I don't have to worry about her growing old—she'll become more and more charming as she gets older. I think a 50-year-old Chrissy who's a little chunky will be endearing. I can see her getting to the age of an Edith Bunker. I would love to create a character who could hold up, like Lucy. If you want to do comedy, that's what you strive for.

PANORAMA: *Do you ever worry about the criticism of Three's Company and your character for presenting a juvenile, sniggering approach to sex?*

SOMERS: I just don't think of the show that way. I think of the show as comedy, as entertainment. I mean, my character is certainly not giving any social message. It's just escape entertainment. That's all I want to do. I don't want to be a politician. I don't want to go save the whales and do all of that.

PANORAMA: *You have a 15-year-old son. Do you think it's all right for him to watch shows, like Three's Company, that emphasize sexual innuendos?*

SOMERS: Well, the one thing I can say pro the show is that it really does represent to kids what's just around the corner for them. You know, you and I were raised to grow up, get married, have children and live happily ever after. I never hear my son say, "When I grow up and get married. . . ." It's "I

want to learn to cook." What *Three's Company* represents to kids is that they will probably be moving into a similar situation. And this is wonderful. It's safe, because it's not sexual. It's not a love relationship. It's just a secure base.

PANORAMA: *Do you ever influence the way that Chrissy is written?*

SOMERS: Most definitely. The producers are really good about that. When they give me a line without that circuitous route to logic, I balk and say, "You're just making her dumb, and dumb for dumb's sake isn't funny." I don't even have to fight about it.

"I think a 50-year-old Chrissy who's a little chunky will be endearing. I can see her getting to the age of Edith Bunker."

PANORAMA: *Do you have any advice for aspiring sex symbols?*

SOMERS: Take whatever comes. If you're an up-and-coming sex symbol, actress, monkey—it doesn't matter what—you've got to use the opportunity as a springboard. I don't think being a sex symbol is going to haunt me. It doesn't make me unhappy now. I don't walk around saying, "I'm more than a piece of meat." I don't feel that kind of anger because I actually find it a compliment. You just learn to use it to your advantage. And don't fight it, because people get uncomfortable listening to someone they think is a sex symbol saying "I'm not." You can't protest it too much: "I'm not dumb!" So what? They like you dumb, so be dumb. Eventually the public will figure out who you are. ●

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Roasting . . . Saloon Journalism. . . Light Beer Wars*

Tending the Ivy

It's fourth down and goal to go at the Harvard 25. Yale quarterback John Rogan fades back and hits lanky split end Curt Grieve in the right corner of the end zone. Touchdown! Yale takes the lead and its loyal fans assembled in Philadelphia erupt into a feisty version of "Boola, Boola."

Philadelphia!?!?

Wait a minute, wasn't last November's classic Ivy League match-up—*The Game*, as it is called in Ivy circles—played in Cambridge, Massachusetts?

Indeed it was, but the more than 200 alumni of Harvard and Yale who paid \$8 apiece to sit on folding chairs and watch the action on three monitors in the Philadelphia studios of Wilmington, Del., station WHYY-TV were part of an experiment that may herald a new era of pay-per-view in televised college sports. They and approximately 1500 other fans in four far-flung cities—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, D.C.—were viewing *The Game* live via satellite hookup on the Ivy Sports Network. Now the network is exploring the possibil-

ity of presenting crew races, as well as hockey and basketball, on closed circuit.

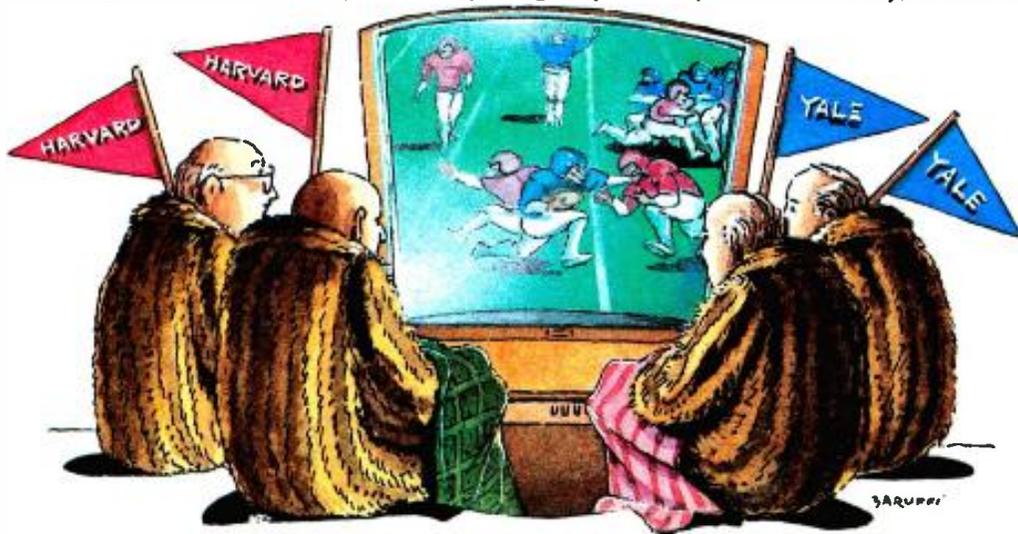
ISN, says its vice chairman Tom Stemberg, is expressly set up for alumni who can't get to the games in person—and who won't see many Ivy teams on TV at all unless they live in the Northeast. A privately run corporation with profit-sharing participation among Ivy schools, ISN is the brainchild of Ivy League athletic directors, who, says Stemberg, wanted to find a suitable TV outlet for a product without the appeal to the networks of, say, a USC vs.

Notre Dame game. For advertisers, points out Stemberg, the appeal is in the fans: the average income of Ivy League alumni is around \$45,000 a year. Thus, Stemberg, Harvard '71, hopes that advertisers will "spend the premium" on up-scale audiences. During the Harvard-Yale broadcast, viewers saw ads for, among other products, The New York Times, Taylor wines and Mercedes-Benz; sponsors were given closed-circuit time gratis when they signed up to advertise on tape-delayed broadcasts presented to home viewers in six markets nationwide. (It must be noted that there was some grumbling among the faithful, who had shelled out up to \$17 a ticket in some cities, when they were subjected to the commercials.)

Stemberg also sees possibilities in cassette sales. A questionnaire passed out at the closed-circuit telecasts asked whether viewers had access to a VCR and whether they'd be interested in buying or renting cassettes. "We could tape a Saturday game," says Stemberg, "and send it out to the Harvard Club in Des Moines, Iowa, so they could see it the next week at their luncheon."

Well, maybe they should send the tape of last year's *Game* to the Yale Club. The Elis prevailed, 14-0.

—Dick Friedman



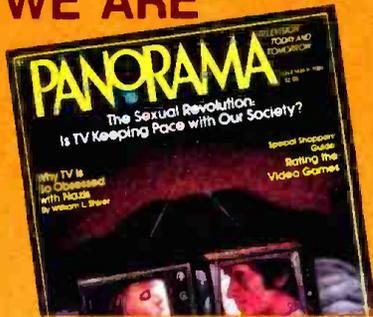
Heartless 17- Year-Old Zaps 6000 Invaders

Bill Heineman, a 17-year-old computer buff from Whittier, Cal., is America's foremost fighting ace against aliens. Heineman won the national finals of Atari, Inc.'s *Space Invaders* competition in New York City recently, hardly taking his finger off the button as he plugged some 6000 space invaders within the two-hour

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But Heineman, breez-
ing at a rate of nearly
wader per second, pulled
early and finished with
0 points at the buzzer,
head of Frank Tetros of
own, N.Y., with 133,300.
n Francisco's Hing Ng,
53,300. For his elec-
sadamism, Bill won a
il-table-model Aster-
video game (worth
. And, in a burst of
ty that was a real treat
e hordes of "happy-
TV and radio reporters
he exclaimed, "I can't
this happened!"
alas, Heineman was
ar too modest. He later
ed to having reached a
of 250,000 while prac-
at home, and in the last
nths he had disassem-
l of the Atari cartridges
ned—including Space
ers—and tested their
s, taking ohm readings
forth. "So I knew where
aucers [worth extra
) were going to come
he said, "and when."
man also admitted that
cartridge setting where
vaders can be made in-
, he had, in the past,
score of 20,000! Clearly,
aid was an archetypal
chool science fiend,
down to his Barry Gold-
glasses and incipient
che. When I asked if the
had become boring, he
as a slur on silicon-chip
ology. "I'm gonna put
ght here!" he snarled,
ng to a spot on the rav-
TV battlefield.
neman wants to be a
ter programmer when
ishes school, but right
e's one of America's top
warriors. In the world of
games attachable to
color TV, Bill has the
lent of what Tom Wolfe
"The Right Stuff."

—Len Albin



So, How's Business?

Come on, confess. Haven't you been just the teeniest bit curious to know what the president of your utility company brings home per annum? Or why the company's profits are so high, if they are? Wouldn't you like to play interrogator just once on live television?

If you lived in Honolulu, you could do just that. KGMB-TV, the local CBS affiliate, affords viewers a chance to call in these questions and more to any one of five executives starring on the thrice-a-year, 90-minute "Hotline to Business." What started out in 1977 as an effort to give Big Business a more positive image has turned into a show that's beaten out *Barney Miller* and *The Love Boat* in the ratings, and has viewers begging for a monthly version.

Jim Doney, who had been host of a locally produced travelogue called *Adventure Road* in Cleveland for 13 years, is doing far more adventurous things now as moderator of the Hawaiian show. Doney is there to probe evasive guests and to make executives feel at ease under klieg lights and public scrutiny; he is also there to interpret—as he had to do recently when the words coming over a phone line were so garbled a guest couldn't understand the question. The guest? The president of Hawaiian Telephone.

While the line to be a guest on the show does not extend

around the block, the five hot seats have always been filled. "It's not a matter of people wanting to get on the show. We decide who we want and attempt to persuade them to agree," says creator and producer John Cavanagh. "We've had Sears, Sheraton Hotels, Pacific Resources Inc., Aloha Airlines. The audience wants the big guys, and we want to bring the businessman out of the closet, eliminate the myth of the evil executive in the corporate board room."

"Businessmen are like members of the judiciary," says director John Wray. "They don't like being on the spot, not in control of the situation. It's why judges don't like cameras in the courtroom. Jim is there to stroke them. If he came on like Mike Wallace, it wouldn't work."

Some of the questions have come as a surprise. "We've had questions so complicated that the company head couldn't answer them," says Doney, adding that "in cases like that, we suspect an 'inside job'."

"Only 10 percent of the 300 to 400 questions get on the air," says Wray. "So at the end of the show, Jim says, 'If you haven't been able to get through, or want to pursue something further, feel free to write or call these people at their offices tomorrow.' We always pan the camera on their faces when he says that. It sort of catches them by surprise." —Teresa Schwab

PANORAMIC VIEW

That Was, Hic, the Week That Was

"The networks have forgotten their own heritage," says TV producer David Osterlund. "They've left behind the people, the pace, the town that created them. They've forgotten that the golden age of TV began in New York."

Osterlund plans to do something about that. At the moment, he's sitting in the Green Derby—one of the more prominent watering holes along New York's Second Avenue—while describing his next project: a New York-based week-in-review cable program. Tentatively entitled *Wise Guys*, the show is scheduled to appear on most major cable systems in early February.

"It'll be different," promises Osterlund. "None of that sterile pontificating you get on most weeks-in-review. We'll be going for humor as well as insight. And instead of the same old politicians and academics, we'll be getting businessmen, sports figures, people in the arts, show business and journalism. You've got some of the sharpest minds, sharpest wits in the world sitting right here. Imagine," he says, his eyes glazing over for the moment. "Herb Schmertz [vice president for public affairs of Mobil Oil] discussing the latest OPEC price rise with columnist Jimmy Breslin."

Another way *Wise Guys* will be different from your garden-

variety week-in-review is that the show will emanate from a bar—an actual *working* bar—in the basement of New York's Automation House.

"We're looking for that real-world ambience," explains Osterlund. "I want the show to feel like the bar where everyone goes to pop down a few on a Friday afternoon. That's the way real people get together and compare notes at the end of the week."

Osterlund is no stranger to what you might call saloon-*verité* television. He and his partner Mark Hollo were the producers of "Election Night Live," a three-and-a-half-hour cable-TV show/media event/black-tie soiree that featured some of New York's most dazzling glitterati, including columnists Pete Hamill and Liz Smith, attorney Roy Cohn and feminist Betty Friedan. Shown on USA Network (via Satcom 1), "Election Night Live" (described by Osterlund as "a televised version of Elaine's") was available to some 12 million cable subscribers.

Billed as an "insightful" and "humorous" alternative to the networks' election coverage, "Election Night Live," suggests Osterlund, can be viewed as the prototype from which *Wise Guys* will be spun. If so, that would indicate both promise and pitfalls for the new venture. Under the influence of roving hosts Jim Brady, P.J. O'Rourke and others (as well as strong spirits), "Election Night Live" veered from the sublime to the ridiculous.

An example of the former might be Marvin Kitman, TV critic for Newsday, on the pervasive influence of television on American politics: "They [the pols] should live by the rules of TV *after* the election. Like if the President doesn't work out, he can be canceled after 13 weeks."

As evidence of the latter, we turn to Christopher Reeve of "Superman" fame: "You should vote because it's a privilege you shouldn't blow."

Toward the third hour of "Election Night Live," the working-bar aspect of the show began to take its toll, with some of the sharpest minds and wits in the Big Apple in apparent danger of unraveling.

"But that sort of thing won't be happening on *Wise Guys*," claims Osterlund. "I mean it's only an hour show. And we're not promoting *boozing*—we only want people to loosen up a bit. We're looking for the sophisticated atmosphere of the Round Table at the Algonquin."

With that, Osterlund drains his glass and summons the waitress. "Another large Coke," he tells her. —*Jack Friedman*

Ex-Jocks on Tap

There are no signs of imminent surrender in the Light Beer Wars—those much-publicized sudsy battles between the Miller Brewing Company's

Miller Lite and Anheuser-Busch's Natural Light. The hostilities, you may recall, began last March, when Busch convinced Mickey Mantle, Joe Frazier and Nick Buoniconti to switch from Miller Lite to Natural, a weighty decision that Natural's publicity agents called "the greatest defection since Solzhenitsyn." One could add pounds just digesting the hyperbole. Natural also placed its jocks in the same clubby taverns that helped Miller dispel the time-honored notion that Real Men won't put their lips of steel to *any* diet drink, much less diet beer. When Busch subsequently signed one of the most respected beer-bellies in sport—that of Tommy Lasorda, manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers—it seemed the ultimate confirmation that swiggers of distinction could stomach a few less calories, too.

Some reports estimate that Miller has been spending a hefty \$28 million or so a year to push Lite, and that Busch had more than matched that amount, though those numbers couldn't be confirmed. Miller's industry sources claim Natural's commercials are so imitative of Lite's that consumers are actually confusing them with the originals. Natural's industry sources find that a bit hard to swallow, but they acknowledge. "It takes a minimum of six to eight months to get the full impact of a campaign going." Translated, that means Natural has yet to make a significant dent in Miller Lite's bulging sales.

Busch promises to persevere, and its research has apparently found that the Natural campaign has "deflated the image that athletes only drink Miller beer—they *do* drink other things." And, let's face it, deflating images is what light beer is all about.

—*Doug Hill*



FOUR HEADS ARE BETTER THAN TWO.

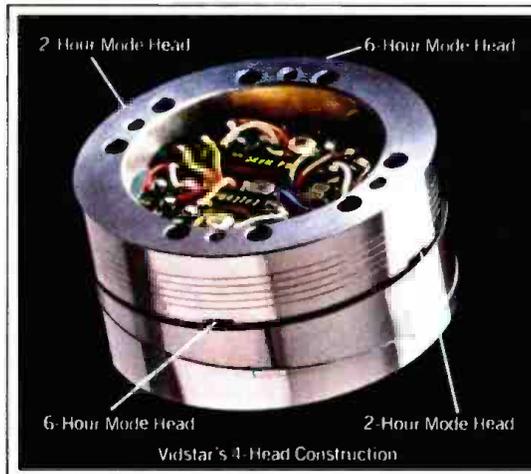
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and other features that let you add your own audio to recorded material. Vidstar has features you may not even know you want yet.

But you'll want them the minute you get your hands on them. You can do exactly that at your nearest JVC Vidstar dealer.

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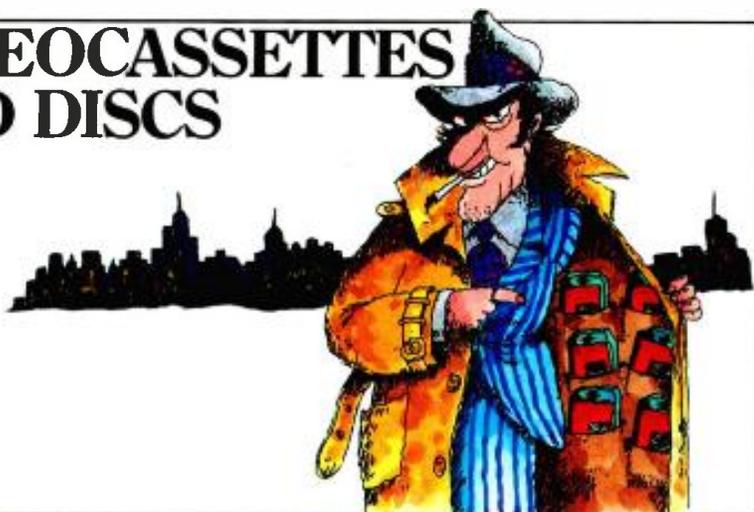


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VIDEOCASSETTES AND DISCS



Notes from the Rental Underground

Some suppliers resent that retailers seem
more anxious to lease than to sell

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

Last year, VCR owners in this country bought some three million prerecorded videocassettes, at about \$40 to \$85 and up per throw—or did they? Officially, yes, they did. Unofficially—well, no, they didn't.

In actual fact, an unknown percentage of the movie cassettes listed as being "sold" today (and almost all prerecorded cassettes *are* of movies) probably aren't sold at all, but rented in one way or another. And the movie companies that make and/or distribute the cassettes are finally being forced to acknowledge this rental underground.

You see, until very recently, most suppliers' contracts with dealers have specifically barred rentals. But, increasingly, dealers have been violating those contracts by setting up videocassette "clubs," or taking used cassettes in trade, to satisfy clients who may be eager to watch "Alien" at home—but not every night, thank you. After all, the purchase of approximately 16 cassettes equals the original price of a VCR!

Now, these "for sale only" contracts haven't been tested in the courts: where a movie company has found a dealer renting its product, it has simply terminated the agreement and taken the dealer off its list. So far, however, retailers have had little trouble finding substitute sources for the same cassette titles, generally from distributors who don't bind them to the "no-rent" stipulation.

A few movie companies have licensed their movies for rental from the start, but usually they have dealt exclusively through special retail outlets, such as the VidAmerica mail-order rental club or Fotomat. It was Fotomat that proved the appeal of rentals: although the outfit sells cassettes, it offers certain titles cleared for rental at \$5.95 to \$9.95 for a five-day period—and its rentals have been outpulling sale cassettes by as much as 6 to 1.

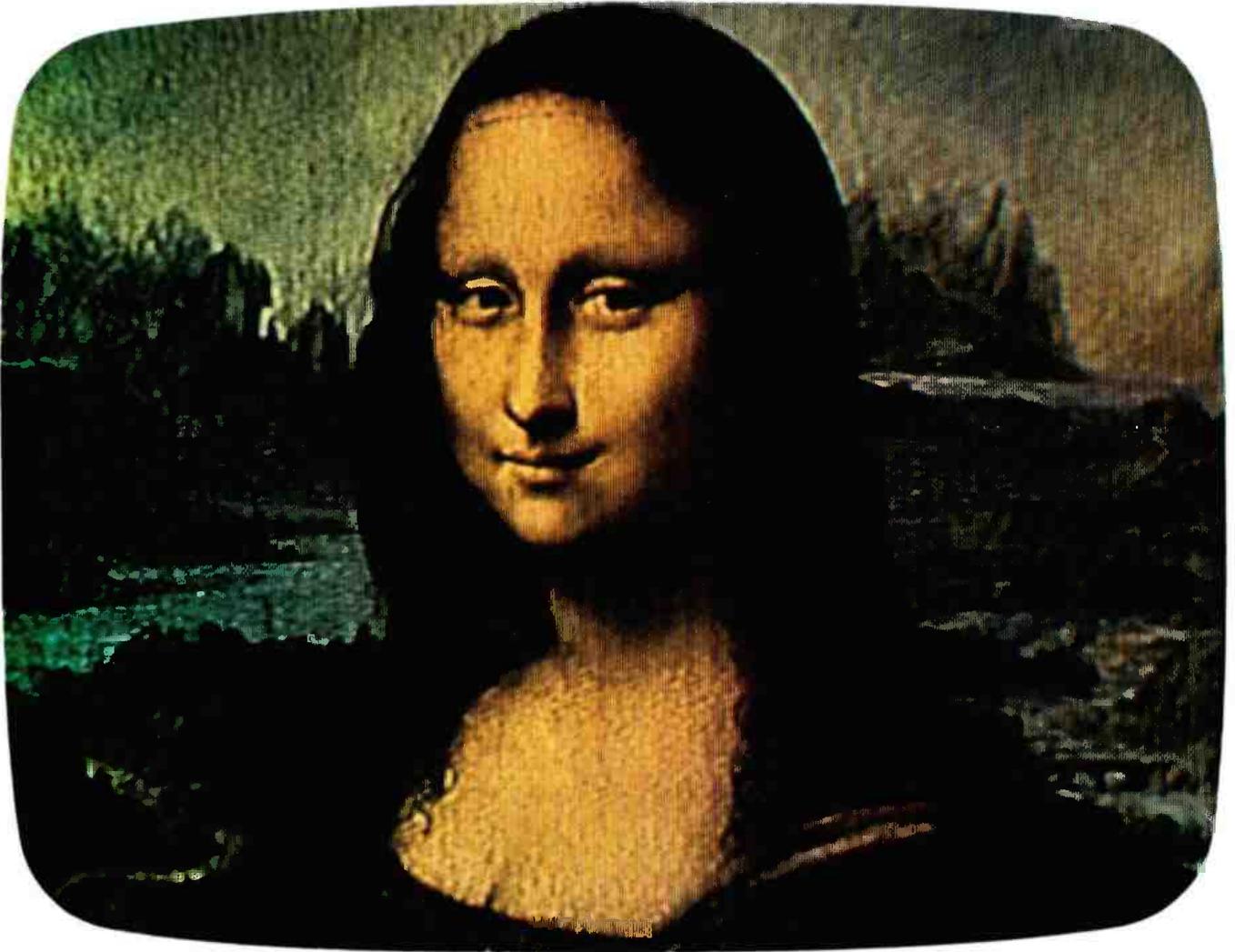
The popularity of the Fotomat operation and the pressure from illicit

rentals eventually prompted the reluctant movie companies to review their sale-only policies. And then came the move by Columbia Video in Highland Park, Ill., a Chicago suburb.

Columbia, like many other major video dealers, found its movie-cassette business being taken away by less scrupulous competitors; last September, it registered a sudden 30-percent drop in sales. Columbia's president, Gene Kahn, decided to act. He notified all of his sale-only cassette suppliers that he planned to start a rental club, Rentertainment; if they didn't like it, they could remove their cassettes from his store, and he'd buy from a distributor who wouldn't bind him to a no-rental policy. Only MCA, the distributor of Universal Pictures, withdrew its cassettes—but conceded it couldn't enforce the policy against rentals if Columbia chose to buy from an independent authorized distributor.

Columbia's declaration of independence may have been the shot heard 'round the industry, a shot that will finally result in the complete legitimization of what has been going on anyway. Walt Disney Studios, a proponent of rentals from the start, has developed a two-tiered distribution scheme, with cassettes specifically marked for sale or for rental (the only difference being how the dealer is charged). Paramount has come along with a different plan, adding a small surcharge to the dealer's cost and giving *him* the option to sell or rent. Columbia Pictures and WCI Home Video both are bringing out their own plans to permit rentals. The major holdouts at press time were MCA and Magnetic Video Corporation, the 20th Century-Fox subsidiary that is by far the largest prerecorded-cassette company. But their cassettes are finding their way into the rental market anyway, and the companies know it.

If ever there was much of a sale business in the first place, it would have evaporated by the time video-recorder ownership penetrated below the Texas-oil millionaire level. The mass-market movie-cassette business is in rentals, and if there isn't soon a landslide in rent-or-swap plans, I'll eat my VCR. (I'll have to. With the cost of cassettes, I won't be able to afford food.) ■



SONY BETA CASSETTES. PICTURE-PERFECT PICTURES.

The Mona Lisa, by Sony Beta cassettes. Note how this master tape captures all the delicate shadings and subtle color.

The fact is, the sharper your eyes, the more you'll appreciate the Picture-Perfect Pictures on Sony Beta cassettes. So perfect we call them "original copies."

Sony knows more about Beta video tape than anyone. After all, we invented the Beta machine and the cassettes that go with it.

The way we make Sony Beta

cassettes is unique. No one else polishes their tape to a perfect mirror-finish the way Sony does. No one uses the Sony formula for the perfect binding that holds the magnetic particles.

Sony has special touches from start to finish that no other tape manufacturer uses. (Remember, it was Sony who pioneered the home video recorder system!)

When you're not home, but want to record that game of the year, that State Of The Union address,

that once-in-a-lifetime event — you need a tape that will record everything perfectly.

And when you look at it later it will be even more exciting, with Picture-Perfect Pictures on Sony Beta cassettes — of course.

SONY



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TARGET

The Social Force of Television



AMERICA

(Third of a series)

TV and the Very Rich: Why Dog-Food Commercials Are—If You Please—De Rigueur

Television caters to some very special needs of
the upper crust

By **STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM**

The richest person I know is Mrs. Piedmont Applegate III. If that name does not ring an immediate bell, it is intentional. Mrs. Piedmont Applegate exists, but that is not her real name; and if I say that Mrs. Applegate lives in New York the reader must assume that she actually resides in some other city. Mrs. Applegate is actually a very nice woman, and very philanthropic. But she is also very rich. And a little odd.

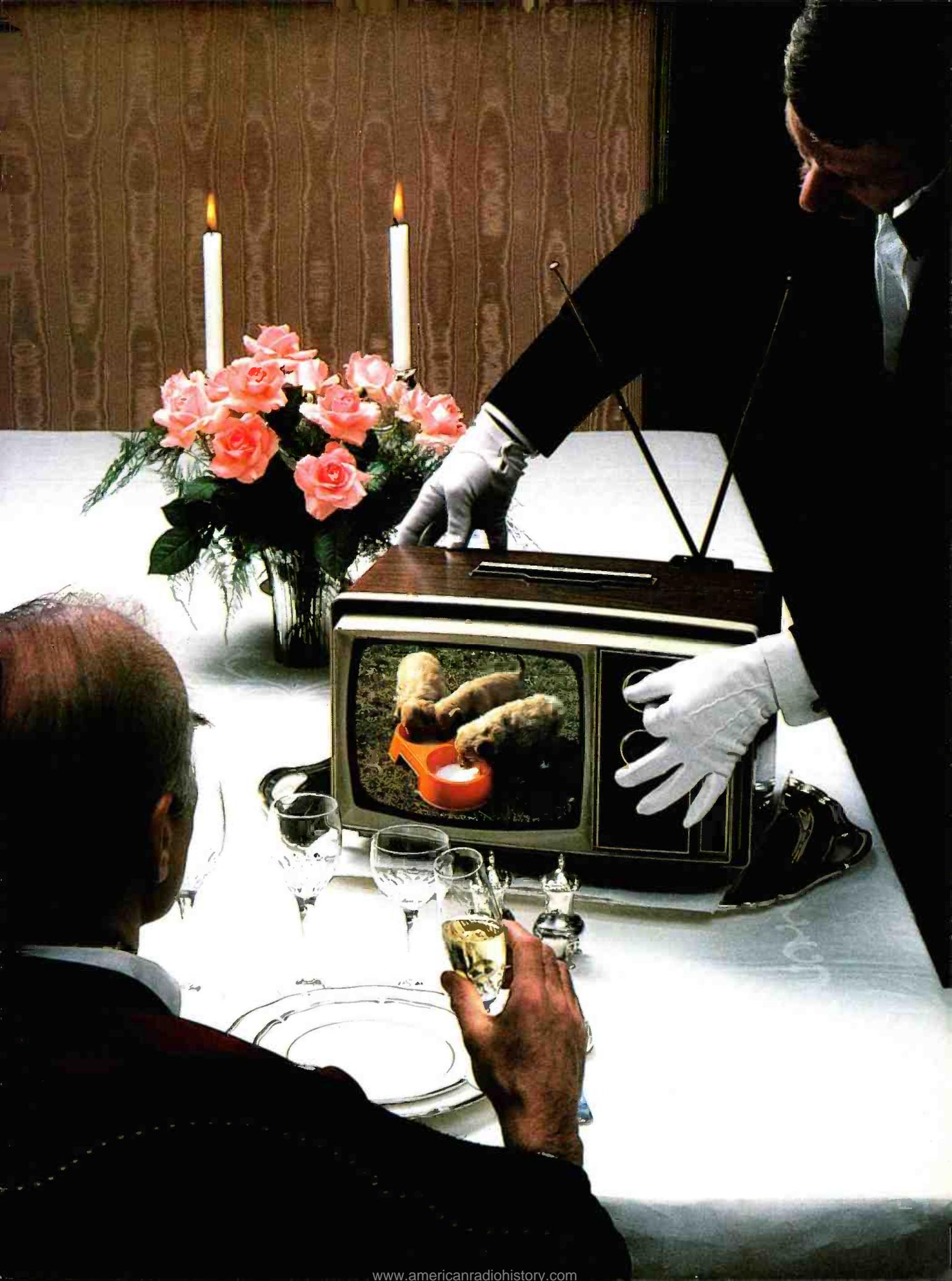
You could say that Mrs. Applegate is a marathon television viewer, but that would not be quite accurate. The fact is that in each of Mrs. Applegate's several houses there are many television sets, and they are all going all the time, but Mrs. Applegate never appears to be watching any of them. In her rooms, the

Stephen Birmingham is the author of "Our Crowd" and "The Right People." His latest book is "California Rich" (Simon & Schuster).

television sounds and pictures appear to be used as part of the decor, and her homes are filled from morning to night with a cacophony of voices, songs, news reports and commercial claims and jingles from every receivable channel. It has been speculated, but not proven, that Mrs. Applegate sleeps with the television going in her bedroom. Occasionally, as though out of boredom (though, since she is never watching, how could she be bored?), she will switch channels with her remote-control gadget. But she is not like the simple-minded Chauncey Gardiner in "Being There," because whether what is on the screen is a soap opera, a yoga class or a Philharmonic concert—or, from several competing screens, a combination of the above—none of it seems to engage her interest or even penetrate her consciousness.

Furthermore, upon asking around, I have found that the Mrs. Applegate syn-





The late Nelson Rockefeller used to close his office door at two o'clock every weekday afternoon. His staff would say he was "taking a nap," but in fact he was watching *As the World Turns*

drome is not entirely confined to one woman. Several other rich people, it seems, have the same disconcerting habit. From this, I suppose, advertisers might conclude that the rich, though avid consumers of television sets, are poor sales prospects for the various products hawked on television, and the advertisers would probably be right.

I mention Mrs. Applegate's case primarily to illustrate a point I have observed about television manners among the rich. Just as the rich occasionally behave in ways alien to lesser mortals when it comes to other matters, so have they developed their own brand of television etiquette. For instance, if you or I were watching a favorite program, and friends dropped by for cocktails, we would immediately switch off the set and turn our attention to our friends—well, wouldn't we? Not so the rich. The rich will not even turn down the volume, operating on the simple assumption that their guests will be just as interested in what is on the screen as they are—or, if not, that the guests will just amuse themselves until the program is over. The butler will fix the cocktails.

It is very much like the ways of the rich with the telephone. The rich, you may have noticed, seldom bother to identify themselves when calling on the phone. It is assumed that the wealthy timbre of their distinctive speaking voices is immediately recognizable, and the person called must often spend several minutes trying to decipher, from the drift of the conversation, the identity of his caller. Also, when the rich conclude a telephone conversation, they do not say goodbye. Having said what they have to say, they merely stop talking and hang up. It is something that comes of a lifetime of getting one's own way.

Not long ago, lunching at New York's La Grenouille, a foursome of fashionably turned-out women was avidly discussing NBC's miniseries *Shōgun*. The rich, it seemed, loved *Shōgun*. But then, as it turned out, so did a great many other

people. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the television tastes of the rich are the same as those of the not-so-rich. A great many more rich people, for example, enjoyed *Shōgun* than enjoyed *Roots*. *Shōgun* was a story of power, a subject the rich enjoy hearing about, while *Roots* was a story of slavery, a topic that makes the rich feel guilty, and nervous, though they would never come right out and say so. Slavery, after all, made many people rich.

There are other facts about the viewing habits of the rich that the rich are loath to admit. To hear them tell it, for example, the rich care most for television programming that is high-minded and uplifting—Zubin Mehta conducting Verdi, *The MacNeill/Lehrer Report*, *Masterpiece Theatre*, and other offerings of PBS. But it is important to remember that the rich did not become rich by being totally honest and telling the whole truth. It is a little-known fact that the late Nelson Rockefeller closed his office door at two o'clock every weekday afternoon and declined telephone calls for an hour. The office staff explained that the Governor was "taking a nap," but the staff knew that in fact he was watching a favorite soap opera, *As the World Turns*. Paul Mellon, the art patron and philanthropist who, on a good day, is estimated to be worth between \$500 million and \$1 billion, also breeds thoroughbred racehorses. A shy man, he hardly ever goes to the track, but he watches every important racing event on television, placing imaginary bets on each race and totting up his paper winnings and losses at the end of the day. Henry Ford II, an earthier type, spends most weekend afternoons at the football game, via television, as did the late Duke of Windsor. Gloria Vanderbilt is addicted to *The Dick Cavett Show*, though when she knows one of her jeans commercials is being shown she switches channels to watch herself. Jacqueline Onassis is another Cavett fan.

These, of course, are individual tastes. Sweeping generalizations are always

dangerous, but a list can be drawn up of the types of television shows that usually will appeal to the rich, as well as those that will not. Sports, for example, are very important—particularly football, with baseball a close second. Skiing and tennis used to be rich men's sports, right up there with polo and beagling, though in recent years they have been taken up en masse by the middle class. Still, the rich will watch tennis matches and remain loyal to the sport. After all, small fortunes have been invested in private tennis courts. Golf stopped being a rich man's sport years ago, and televised golf matches elicit yawns from the rich.

The sports-mindedness of the rich seems to increase as one moves out of the city of New York into the less effete Middle and Far West. In Columbus, Ohio, Ohio State football games form the nuclei of major social occasions, with lavish entertainments tossed in the parking lots outside the stadium as well as in front of television sets in living rooms of the affluent suburbs of Bexley and Upper Arlington. In macho Detroit, the fashionable team is the Detroit Lions. (One wealthy Grosse Pointe woman is such a Lions fan that her husband presented her with a diamond wristwatch, custom-made with the letters D E T R O I T L I O N S spelled out in diamonds to represent the 12 digits on the dial.) The all-time record for the number of television sets going at a single Lions party may belong to Ray Whyte, the head of a number of multimillion-dollar electronics businesses. Once, at a gathering at his Grosse Pointe home, it took 18 sets to keep his guests informed of the action on the field. This beat Benson Ford by four sets. Mr. Whyte's wife, Celeste, always travels with her own tiny TV set so that she can never be more than a button's push away from a Lions game. As for other sports, the rich pay little attention to boxing matches or hockey games, and have no interest in basketball.

Other television topics that tend to attract the rich are:



Anything at all that has to do with dogs. The American upper crust consists, almost to a person, of dog lovers. Cats, for some reason, are a middle-class pet in this country. Not long ago, at a party tossed by Mrs. George F. Baker on her Long Island estate, the hostess confessed that her favorite author of all time was Albert Payson Terhune, who wrote dog stories. This revelation was greeted with glee from her assembled friends. Albert Payson Terhune, it seemed, was *everybody's* favorite author. Similarly, a number of rich people admit that when they have nothing better to do, they scan the television listings for reruns of Lassie movies. As a result of this enthusiasm,

the rich pay close attention to dog-food commercials, and there are oohs and ahs and cries of "Isn't he adorable!" whenever the star of the commercial is one of the fashionable breeds—Yorkies, Jack Russell terriers, unclipped standard poodles (no miniatures, please). Benji, being a mutt, creates less excitement. Of course, the rich are traditionally horse lovers too, and would no doubt also pay close heed to horse-food commercials, if there were any. Shows about wildlife in general have little appeal to the wealthy.

The rich often sleep late, but will usually be awake in time to take in Phil Donahue with the breakfast tray, particularly if Donahue and his guest are

discussing something that has to do with sex. (In a random list of topics designed to discover what the rich would like to hear more about on television, sex-change operations came out high on the list of preferences.) A number of rich people indicate that they also watch the game shows, but tend to prefer those where the prizes are large sums of money. If the giveaways amount to washing machines or expense-free trips to Las Vegas, there is less interest.

Of the afternoon soaps, *The Guiding Light* turns out to be a winner with rich people. Perhaps this is because it comes on at 3 in the afternoon, helping to fill that yawning hole in the day when luncheon is over and it is not yet time to change for cocktails. *General Hospital*, with which *The Guiding Light* competes, has far fewer supporters among the wealthy, probably because they do not like to be reminded of illness, aging or dying. As a rule, the rich prefer viewing fare that does not deal with serious problems. True, the afternoon soaps are full of problems, but they are problems (amnesia, abortion, infidelity) that do not seem like real problems to the rich, whose lives are often happily amok with abortion and infidelity anyway.

Dallas, as might be expected, is a popular rich person's show. It is about money and power, commodities that rich people understand and are glad to see still amount to something. *Dallas* is the favorite show of Stanley Marcus, who lives in Dallas, and who is also fairly rich and powerful.

Following are seven categories of television entertainment that have almost zero appeal to the upper crust:

1. Late-night talk shows and movies, except occasionally on weekends. It is important to remember that the rich go to parties on weekday nights—Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in particular—while it is the working classes that whoop it up on weekends. On weekends, the rich retreat to their country places to relax with their horses and their dogs.

continued on page 105



ANN JILLIAN

"She's a comedienne, she sings, she dances . . . enormous potential in several fields . . . the face of a baby and the know-how of Mae West."

TV Credits: It's a Living (regular), series guest shots. Elsewhere: child star, club act, Chicago theater, "Sugar Babies" on Broadway.

After success on Broadway, Jillian, 31, is back in Hollywood—where she was featured in "Babes in Toyland" and "Gypsy" as a kid—as a ward of ABC. "If ABC calls, I'm going. At ABC, there's no such thing as bad taste." She's hoping her series will bring her instant stardom—"That's what I'm here for."



*Predicting
the
Stars
of the Eighties*

**Our panel of experts
singles out those most likely to emerge
as the decade's top TV performers**

*I can catch the moon in my
hand.*

*Don't you know who I am?
Remember my name.*

—Title song, "Fame"*

Remember eight names. Out of the thousands of young television actors who aspire to catch the moon—to wrest from a fickle public the lasting fame and adoration that only true talent and grit can hope to win—PANORAMA has selected eight of the most likely to succeed in the coming decade.

The names of the actors showcased on these pages may soon be household words; already they are mentioned repeatedly by Hollywood casting executives and producers when the conversation turns to potential luminaries. We know, because we asked. (Specifically, our consultants were: Gary Pudney, ABC talent vice president; Jean Guest, CBS talent and casting vice president; Eddie Foy III, NBC new-talent vice president;

Milt Hamerman, Universal TV talent vice president; Reuben Cannon, independent casting director; Pat Harris, independent casting director; Stan Margulies, producer; and Freyda Rothstein, producer.)

Now, casting people are not scientists; their vocabulary is more often intuitive than precise, relying heavily on words such as "presence," "magnetism" and "star quality." We got the message. These young people each have what it takes to become not only rich and famous, but—given luck and discriminating guidance—spellbinding, electric, versatile: in short, the complete star.

Our consultants point out that success frequently depends more on the vehicle than on the star, and that fads in vehicles *and* stars come and go. The same undoubtedly will prove true of a few of the actors we have chosen. But some of them, perhaps most of them, we're sure, will touch the moon, will be remembered.

continued

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Al Corley

Stars of the Eighties

AL CORLEY

“Enormous sex appeal . . . strong, vulnerable, a little bit of kookiness . . . like a younger Nick Nolte.”

TV credits: Dynasty (regular), “The Women’s Room,” “And Baby Makes Six,” The Love Boat, “Women at West Point.”

Elsewhere: Off-Broadway, films—“The Warriors,” “Honky Tonk Freeway.”

“If I can last till 30 [in Hollywood] without being pinned down like the Fonz, I’ll probably be satisfied,” says Corley, 24, who thinks the New York stage “is the best thing for anyone interested in acting.” Does he want to be a star? “No way . . . I have no intention of becoming what people around me want me to become.”

DEBORAH MORGAN

“Adorable . . . when you see her on the screen you like her. . . . There’s a lot of depth beneath those dimples.”

TV credits: Roots: The Next Generations, “Love’s Savage Fury,” “Thornwell,” guest shots on What’s Happening!.



Deborah Morgan



Barrie Youngfellow

and The White Shadow, commercials.

Elsewhere: “What the Wine-Sellers Buy” (on Broadway and on tour), other plays.

Her role in the *Roots* saga lifted Morgan, 25, out of anonymity, and she still judges money offers by a post-*Roots* standard. But, she says, roles for blacks “come and go like waves, and now there isn’t much happening.”

BARRIE YOUNGFELLOW

“Reminds me of a young Colleen Dewhurst . . . more like Carole Lombard . . . strong and earthy and sexy, as well as warm and funny.”

TV credits: It’s a Living (regular), *Moviola*, “A.E.S. Hudson Street,” “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do,” “Vampire,” series guest shots, commercials.

Elsewhere: regional theater.

Her series role is satisfying enough for now—“though the [skimpy] costumes might get a little tiring”—but Youngfellow, 30, is not anxious to do fluff: “Without challenges you get bored and do tricks.” She’s after “wrench-your-guts-out drama” and considers herself “much saltier” than most roles she is offered.

continued

Stars of the Eighties

HART BOCHNER
“Very serious and intense . . . think of Tyrone Power . . . one of the most commercially promising young actors.”

TV credits: “Haywire,” East of Eden, commercials.

Elsewhere: Films—“Islands in the Stream,” “Breaking Away,” “Terror Train,” “Rich and Famous.”

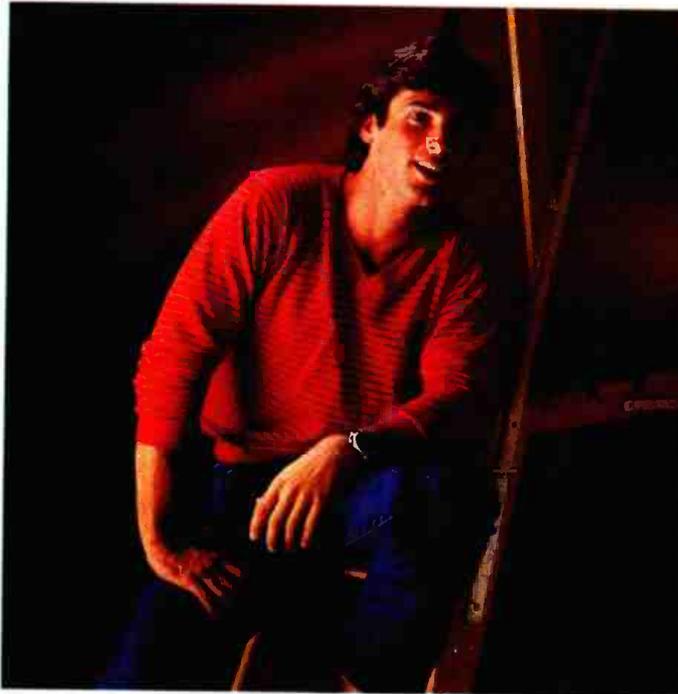
Bochner tries never to play the same character twice—so no series—and would like to avoid TV altogether. “I don’t think there’s a moment I’ve done where I said ‘Yep, I’m satisfied’.” But, at 24, he can afford to be choosy. “I hope I never take or turn down a job because of what I’m making.”

KEVIN GEER
“An absolutely astounding animal magnetism . . . a natural naiveté that is very appealing . . . could be the next Brando.”

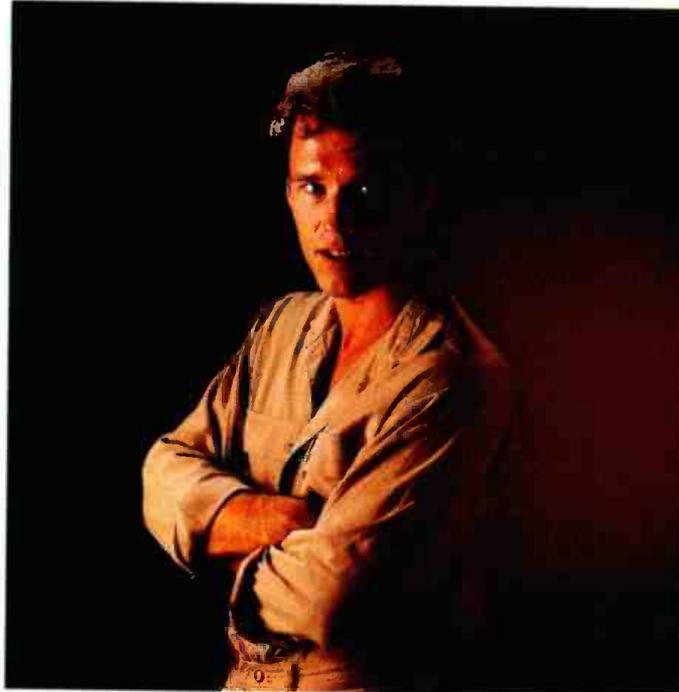
TV credits: “Marilyn,” “Rage,” “Friendly Fire,” M*A*S*H, other series appearances.

Elsewhere: USO, Off-Off-Broadway, Los Angeles stage.

Geer, 27, wants to be a “pioneer,” to do “things that inspire and astonish people. No more compromises”—referring to his *Operation Petticoat*



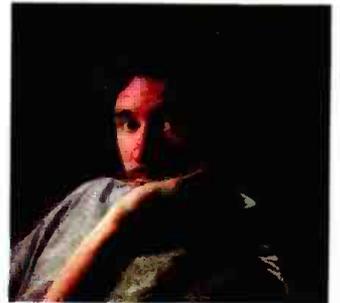
Hart Bochner



Kevin Geer

coat days. “I’m on the hump, not over it. It’s a scary place because you can still go all the way back down.”

KEVIN KLINE
“Has great range, very perceptive about every kind of role . . . a debonair quality . . . one of the best young farceurs in the business.”

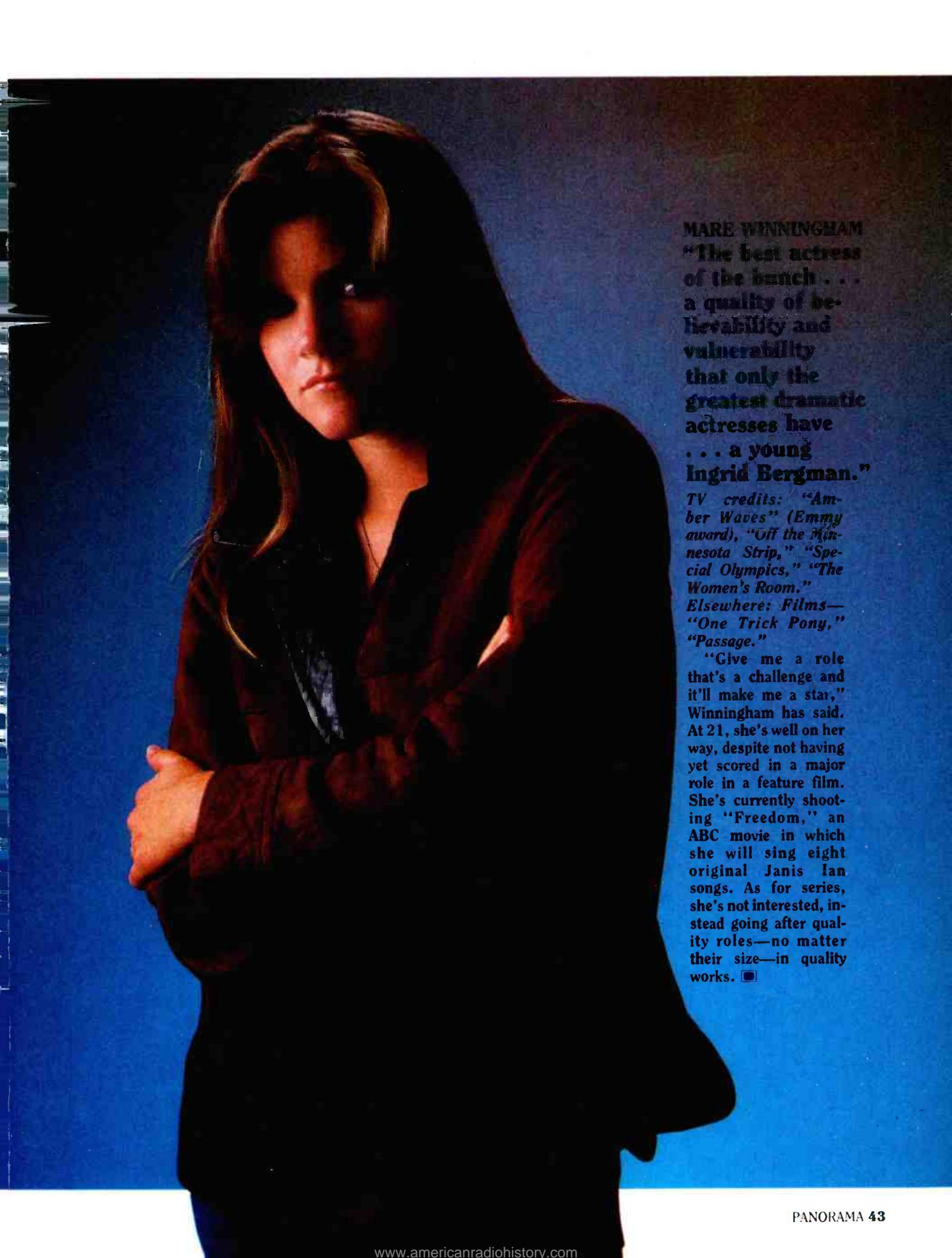


Kevin Kline

TV credits: Search for Tomorrow, “The Time of Your Life,” commercials.

Elsewhere: “On the Twentieth Century” (Tony award), “Loose Ends” and “The Pirates of Penzance” on Broadway, other stage roles.

Because of his physical comedy abilities, Kline, 33, has been offered “a lot of series about guys who hump into walls a lot.” When he said no, “they would offer to make it a brain surgeon who bumps into walls a lot.” But “my TV appearances will live longer than I will, so I want them to be good.”



MARE WINNINGHAM
"The best actress
of the bunch . . .
a quality of be-
lievability and
vulnerability
that only the
greatest dramatic
actresses have
. . . a young
Ingrid Bergman."

TV credits: "Amber Waves" (Emmy award), "Off the Minnesota Strip," "Special Olympics," "The Women's Room."
Elsewhere: Films—
"One Trick Pony,"
"Passage."

"Give me a role that's a challenge and it'll make me a star," Winningham has said. At 21, she's well on her way, despite not having yet scored in a major role in a feature film. She's currently shooting "Freedom," an ABC movie in which she will sing eight original Janis Ian songs. As for series, she's not interested, instead going after quality roles—no matter their size—in quality works. ■

What's that? You say you've never heard of a television superstar named Tex Fenster? The name Morris Fonte rings no bells? Relax. I hadn't heard of them either until recently when I was asked to personally check out a New York City cult phenomenon known as public-access cable.

This was my first time, too. I live in New York City but I still don't have a cable hookup. My reasoning is that a clear picture plus a dozen more channels will mean that my TV will completely take over my life. I'm also cheap.

I start my public-access investigation by phoning an expert, a friend of mine who is surgically attached to his home video center. "My editor says it gets pretty loony-tunes, this public access," I tell him.

"It gets *outrageous*," he laughs. "You have to understand—anybody can go on the air and do anything they want. You won't believe some of what you see."

"Elliott Gould," I volunteer, "sniffed his dirty underwear on *Saturday Night Live* last week."

"That's still network, buddy boy. Watch *Crank Calls*. Watch *Ugly George*. Now *Ugly George* is gross."

Next I call Manhattan Cable to find out which stations to watch. The cable has three so-called public-access channels—C, D and J. People can sign up to appear on Channels C and D free of charge. Many of the shows are in black and white, and there are no commercials. Channel J is lease access, which means you lease your half-hour slot for \$25, in exchange for which you may carry commercials. Most of Channel J is in color. Public-access shows crank up at around 3 P.M. and run until 1:30 A.M. I arrange to park myself in the cable households of friends for two days and nights. I'm ready.

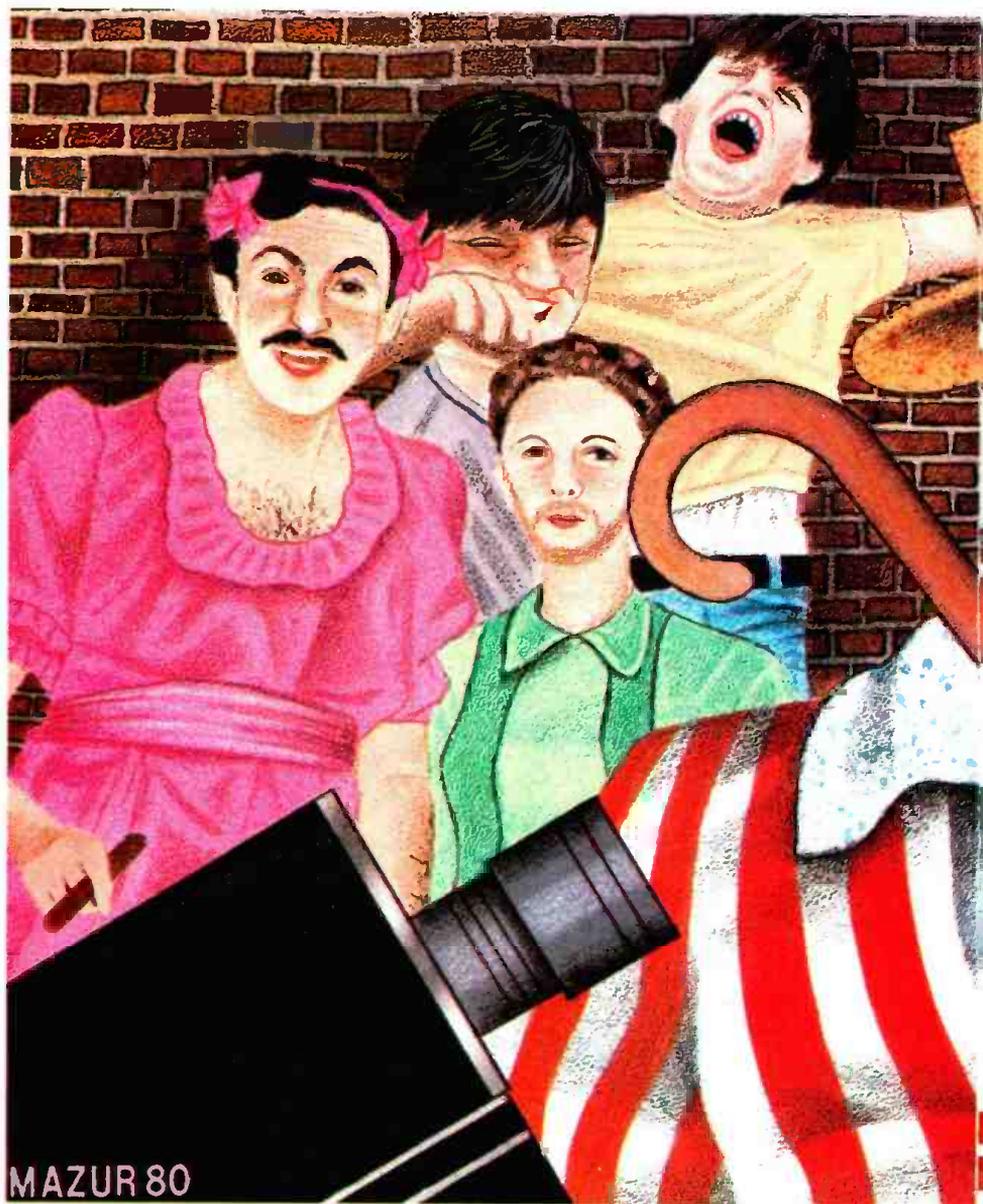
And disappointed. The afternoon and early-evening entries are ninth-rate imitations of what's on at the same time on "straight" TV. There's a game show, *Sports Pyramid*, hosted by Anthony Greene, a teen-age jock who stands in front of a pyramid-shaped bulletin board that has sports trivia questions stuck to it. (Like "What did Babe Ruth call his bat?" Answer: Black Betsy.) People phone in and go right on the air, just like talk radio. This is a J show, which means commercials and prizes. One guy wins a pair of binoculars.

But most of the public-access offer-

Where the Odd Man's In

Public-access cable features the likes of Morris, the Telepsychic; Daniel J. and his nude talk show; and Uncle Justin, 13, reading his orthodontist's newsletter

By DAVID HANDLER



ings at this time are showcase talk shows for singers and comics who can't crack the big time. I watch *Laugh Factory*, *Comedy and Company*, *Flo's Place* and it's the same story every time—torture. A young impressionist enacts an entire scene on the bridge of the U.S.S. Enterprise. The problem is that all his *Star Trek* characters sound like the same person. Him. One singer after another comes out to lip-sync his best number (they lip-sync because there are no orchestras on the premises). Each looks sharp, has the body movement down, the personality. They just can't sing. I'm unable to watch comics who aren't funny or crooners who can't carry a tune. The desperation depresses the hell out of me, especially with these production val-

ues—heads cut off, fuzzy close-ups of shaking hands, sniffing, throat-clearing. The sound is tinny, when it's on: sometimes people talk for as long as five minutes into dead mikes. Sometimes the mikes are on and the picture is dead.

I suppose this form of programming reaches its purest state on Saturday nights on *What You See Is What You Get*. This one's an amateur night—an open camera for that porky 12-year-old boy whose impersonation of Edward G. Robinson has been knocking his folks dead for years. A teen-age Italian girl sings "To Life, to Life, L'Chaim." I watch a fry cook/singer in tight body shirt and grid chains; I watch high-school bands, trios, quartets. Everybody makes the big pitch for stardom, families gathered

around the tube at home, applauding and waiting for the phone call from the talent scout. It's kind of like watching *The Gong Show*. Except this is real life, and there's no gong.

It's 9 P.M. and I'm not enjoying myself. I phone my expert again. "This is dull and bad," I complain. "What's the big deal?"

"It gets better," he assures me. "I promise. What's on next?"

I say, "Something called *The Telepsychic* on Channel D."

He laughs. "Yep. Just getting warmed up. You're in for a treat, buddy boy."

Am I. Meet Morris Fonte (pronounced Fon-tay), a k a "The Telepsychic." Morris gives live phone-in readings on "love, health, wealth, marriage, career or whatever." He wears a toupee that should be walked on a leash, has an unfortunate speech impediment where his "s" comes out "sh," and his routine is hysterical.

The Telepsychic is a real-life Tim Conway bit. For one thing, Morris often presses the wrong phone line, causing his director to bark, "Not line one, Morris! I told ya! Line two!" Which immediately puts Morris's powers of prescience a bit in doubt. But it gets better. A small sample of one of his over-the-phone readings: "I'm involved with two men, Morris," says a distraught woman, "and I don't know what to do." Morris narrows his eyes in concentration. "I feel . . . that you met one man before you met the other . . . yesh . . . I feel you are upshet about what to do now."

"Yes, Morris, that's absolutely right."

"I feel . . . that you feel one relationship ish more shecure than the other . . . the firsh ish the shecure one . . . the shecond ish more dynamic."

"No, Morris. Actually it's the other way around."

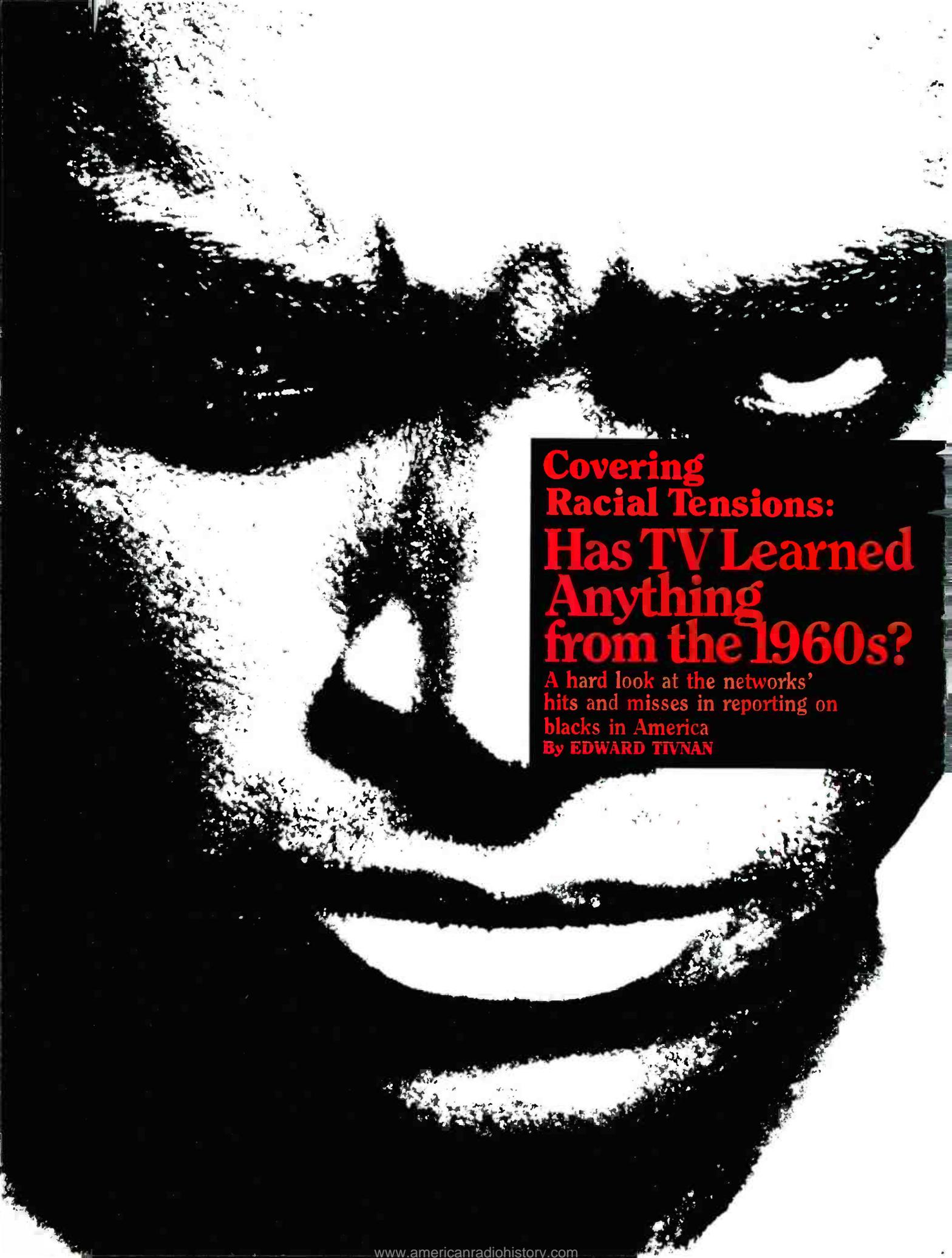
The telepsychic furrows his, rather his, brow. "Yesh. That ish what I meant."

Now we're rolling. On to other shows, with lots of talking heads, each a bit stranger than the previous. "I'll be playing Dvořák for the first half of my show," announces a woman with prominent buck teeth and a "Junior's Cheesecake" T-shirt, "and then if you call in during the second half I'll be giving Tarot card readings." (FLICK) A messianic Jewish evangelist, Lewis Kaplan, spreads the gospel on Channel D. He sounds like Billy Graham. "To our Jew-

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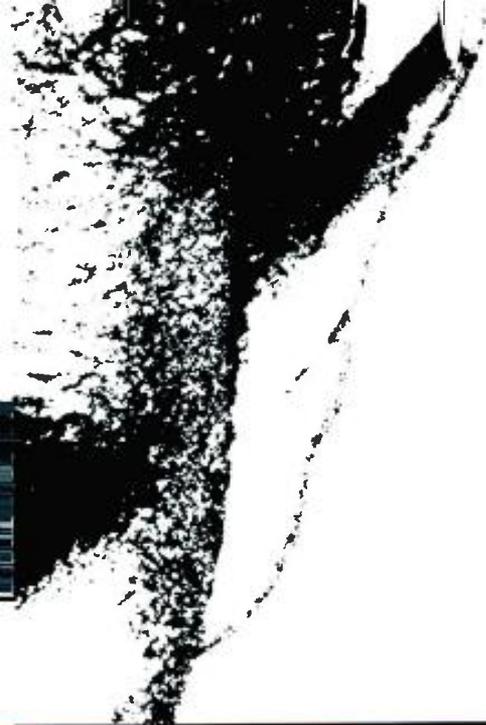
PANORAMA 45





**Covering
Racial Tensions:
Has TV Learned
Anything
from the 1960s?**

A hard look at the networks'
hits and misses in reporting on
blacks in America
By EDWARD TIVNAN



"Black folks live with racial violence day to day. That story needs to be told until white folks understand, until they can't run or hide from it, but have to deal with it."—Rev. Charles Stith, Boston black leader

Nothing, but nothing, makes for more shocking, more riveting, more visual television than an American race riot, and for three days last May viewers of the evening news sat in their comfortable living rooms watching yet another one in action. This time Miami was burning, and cameras from ABC, NBC and CBS were there documenting it all: police sirens screamed through the night, black billows of smoke filled the television screen, and then, on ABC, the



A city in trouble: a Florida National Guardsman stands watch as the northwest section of Miami burns out of control.

camera picked out a gun, a lonely pistol, lying on the street . . . followed quickly by pictures of black looters running out of stores, cars ablaze, bleeding men, more smoke erupting from burning buildings and an angry black face shouting: "I wanted to believe in the American system. No more. Never again." And then a picture of a trigger, then the rifle, an M-16 cradled by a National Guardsman standing warily at a street barricade.

All these startling images flashing across the TV screen seemed to tell the story about racial violence. But from what the networks were reporting, did "white folks" understand what those pictures were really saying about the status of race relations in 1980?

Edward Tivnan is a free-lance magazine writer and former writer for ABC's 20/20.

On CBS, Dan Rather called the explosion in Miami "the Nation's worst outbreak of urban disorder in a single city since the riots in Detroit and Newark in the so-called long hot summer of 1967." The television images from Miami jolted the country into the realization that black rage had not disappeared with the Sixties. Angry blacks had taken to the streets within hours after an all-white jury acquitted four Dade County policemen charged with the fatal beating of a black insurance man named Arthur McDuffie.

"We despise that verdict," said McDuffie's sister Dorothy, who was not alone. The evening news programs covered the results of that hatred, just as they had done 13 years before when similar instances of what blacks saw as police brutality and a double standard of justice triggered riots in Newark and Detroit. The pictures of violence, the interviews with black leaders and government officials, the reports of casualties, were much the same. So was their major defect.

In 1968, after examining 955 network and local television reports on the previous summer's riots, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Commission, criticized television for spending too much time covering the visual drama of police trying to control riots rather than examining the tensions and grievances in the black community that caused them. The commission bluntly concluded that newspapers, radio and "especially television" had "thus far failed to report adequately on the causes . . . of civil disorders and the underlying problems of race relations."

For television, "thus far" is now 1980. Miami certainly did not jolt any black leaders or ghetto residents across the country or even black newsmen. That anyone was surprised by this most recent example of black rage only confirmed to them that the Kerner Commission's 12-year-old indictment of television news coverage still holds. "Unless there is burning or raping, the black story is yesterday's story," says Roger Sims, a CBS news producer who is black. "There is still no commitment on the part of the networks to shed additional light on the problems of blacks."

Pleading time limitations and pressure to beat the other guys, the men who

run the evening news programs prefer their stories short and punchy, pegged to breaking news. They're inclined to leave the sociologizing to the pipe-smoking chaps in documentaries. And to be fair to the networks, during the Seventies ABC, NBC and CBS did do their share of creditable documentaries on issues that affect black America, such as juvenile crime, drugs, prisons and unemployment.

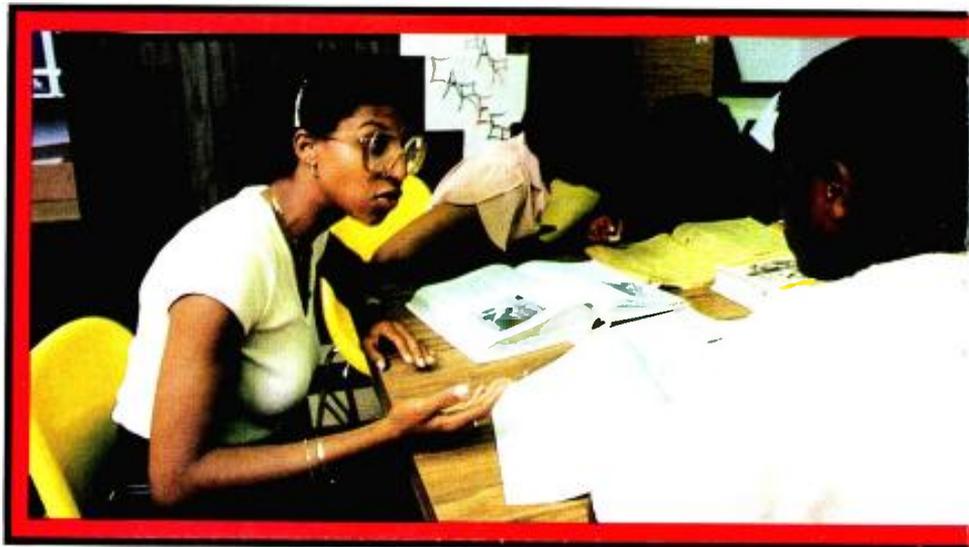
Even now it seems that it takes a riot as furious and bloody as Miami's to rate national television coverage. In 1980, sparks flew, bottles were thrown, angry blacks hit the streets and many were injured in racial flare-ups in Philadelphia; Orlando, Fla.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Flint, Mich.; and Wrightsville, Ga. Most Americans never knew they happened because those stories got either no or minimal network coverage. When the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross at a rally in rural Connecticut last September and several people were injured when 400 demonstrators protested the presence of the Klan, NBC decided not to run the story—on its weekend report, usually a slow news time—although the network had news footage from the rally. The reason, according to NBC's vice president of news coverage Ed Planer: "It's not a big enough story now."

Even the violence in Miami was treated only as a breaking news story. ABC, NBC and CBS treated the riot as just another disaster. Indeed, on the second day of the riot, NBC preceded its coverage with *three* other disaster stories: the eruption of the Mount St. Helens volcano, a helicopter crash in Hawaii and a follow-up from the chemically poisoned Love Canal area of New York. On the final day of coverage, both ABC and CBS decided to pair the Mount St. Helens and Miami disasters—"natural and man-made," a description used by both networks.

There was no effort to connect the violence in Miami to black problems elsewhere in the country or to place it in the context of persistent racism throughout the Seventies. Each network offered separate reports on the causes of violence in Miami, which were portrayed as local causes. NBC's analysis was typical: the McDuffie verdict was, as one black official interviewed put it, "the last straw" in a series of frustrations for Miami's 223,000 blacks, including other

cases of police brutality, the conviction of a prominent local black for second-degree theft in diverting school funds, and the influx of Cuban immigrants who threatened to take away the few jobs left in that high-unemployment area.

What was missing in all this coverage was any effort to tell "white folks" that big-city ghettos across the country were only a few straws away from another long hot summer. Friction between the police and blacks is an especially high-charged, nationwide phenomenon; the Justice Department has actually received more complaints of police abuses from cities such as Philadelphia, Houston and Memphis than it has from Miami. Boston has had so many racial incidents—approximately 200 in the first half of 1979



alone—that the police have created a special unit to handle "community disorders." Miami was the perfect "news peg" to examine the continuing struggle of blacks to grab their share of American democracy, but not one network took advantage of it. After three days, as the fires smoldered, the cameras left the riot zone; the next intensive evening-news installment of the black story would have to wait for the fire next time.

Why? The answer lies in the nature of television news and its obsession with striking pictures, beating the competition and holding its audience. That it takes a riot for the cameras to focus on black faces also has plenty to do with the news judgment of the men—virtually all of them white—who decide what gets on the air. "News directors have been very irresponsible and insensitive about covering news in the black community,"

charges Pluria Marshall, chairman of the Washington-based National Black Media Coalition. "It's mainly because very few have the ability to decide what's important in the black community, what ought to be covered."

At some mysterious moment during the past decade the black story went out of fashion. "It's not the overriding story it was in the Sixties," says Stan Opotowsky, director of news coverage at ABC, who covered his first civil-rights story in Little Rock for the New York Post 23 years ago. "It's now an economic story, a broader social story." Laws have been changed, rights affirmed and blacks have entered schools, neighborhoods and jobs never before open to them.

Television's coverage of the race problems of the Sixties can take partial credit for educational and economic reforms. Upper left: Elizabeth Pollard, a

Many whites, including news directors, seem to believe that blacks have finally gotten the chance to share the problems nagging the rest of the country.

"It's no longer exclusively a black story," says NBC's Ed Planer. "The story is now about housing, unemployment, inflation, public hospitals, all sorts of issues that affect everybody."

Black leaders, even black newsmen, beg to differ with such conclusions. "Nothing has changed since the Sixties," says Claude Matthews, a black news producer in NBC's Washington bureau. "That's the story." Matthews and others point to problems whites don't share with blacks: black income has dropped relative to white income; black unem-

ployment is twice that of whites; black teen-age unemployment—also twice that of whites—has approached 40 percent; the number of blacks below the poverty line remains steady between 25 and 30 percent; blacks have shorter life expectancies; and budgets of the Federal programs that had once helped blacks cope with all those grim statistics have been cut drastically. Some blacks, of course, have made progress, but for most the facts confirm what Vernon Jordan, the executive director of the National Urban League, recently concluded: “The Seventies were not a time of progress within the black community.”

And the reason, according to black leaders, is the same one that has kept blacks stymied since the end of the Civil

War, Pleistocene politicians, redneck sheriffs, snarling dogs, flailing truncheons, burning cities—great drama, great pictures.

“It’s a fact of life in television news that what makes good audio and good video gets on TV,” says Fred Friendly, who learned his television facts of life producing programs for Edward R. Murrow in the Fifties and running CBS News in the early Sixties. “Some of the most important minority stories are ho-hum stories. The deadly serious story is more important than the spectacular unimportant story. But the spectacular story will win out every time because the news editor knows it will get the ratings.”

The spectacular and downright grue-

ics of the police, weeping mothers and a New Jersey psychic who declared to the cameras that she wouldn’t give up until she found the murderer of “my little angels.”

Great stuff. But neither story did anything to advance the Nation’s understanding of what was happening in the black community. Buffalo and Atlanta merely provided juicy old-fashioned tabloid stories, the sort that glut local news programs every day. Clearly both stories had national TV coverage only because they were so utterly shocking. Yet the fact remained that 14 black children had been missing in Atlanta for 15 months before the cameras arrived.

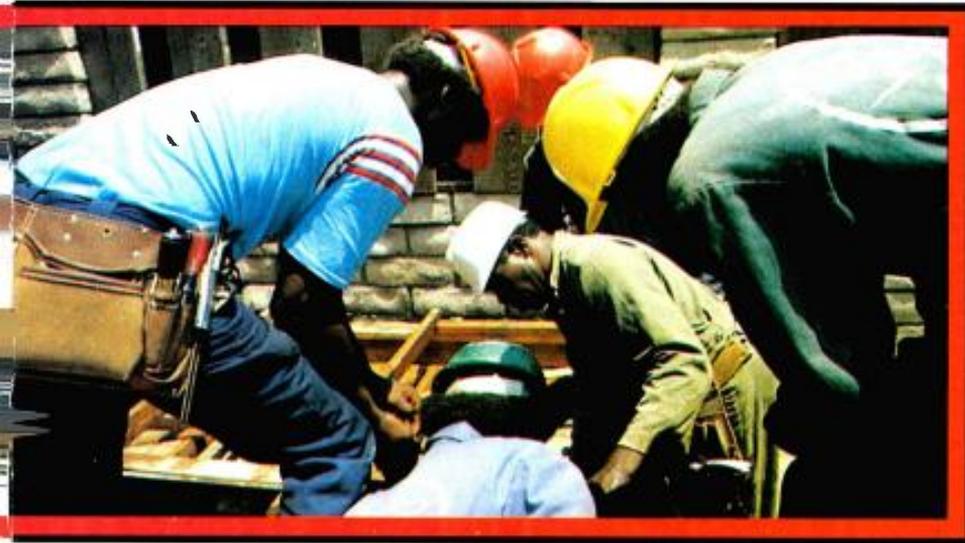
Meantime, important stories about discrimination in banking, jobs, housing, insurance and government go unreported (or worse, get reported but don’t get on the air) because evening news producers decide they need a “news peg” or the stories are judged to be boring.

“There’s too much concern about getting great pictures in this business,” says Shad Northshield, senior executive producer of CBS’s much acclaimed magazine show *Sunday Morning* and the former producer of the Huntley-Brinkley news on NBC during the late Sixties. “My own experience has taught me that a black teen-ager back-lit, sitting on a stoop in a Baltimore ghetto saying he is unemployed because of his color, can be an enormously moving symbol of anger and despair—as heart-wrenching as a kid bleeding in the streets of Birmingham.”

“We’ve done all those stories,” contends ABC’s Opatowsky. “We’ve informed people that problems exist. We’re journalists, not reformers.” Though newspapers and magazines never seem to worry about how many times they do the same story, television news programs live in constant fear that viewers will brand a report “an old story” and switch the dial for more fireworks on another network. “Saying ‘We’ve done that story’ is a disease peculiar to television news,” explains Fred Friendly. “But doing stories over and over again is the only journalism that really works. If Murrow had said, ‘We’ve done the McCarthy story,’ what would have happened? Instead, he did eight to 10 programs on McCarthyism, and he followed McCarthy’s activities night after night on his radio show.”

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PANORAMA 49



career-resource technician in Los Angeles, counsels youths on career planning. Upper right: An experienced construction worker teaches building techniques.

War. “De Tocqueville said it in the 19th century,” points out the Rev. Charles Stith, a Boston minister who has played a central role in keeping things cool in that racially hot city. “William E. B. Dubois said it at the turn of the 20th century. Gunnar Myrdal said it in the Fifties—that the biggest problem America faces is the problem of racism. And each step along the way it gets worse.”

It also gets more difficult to detect, especially with a television camera. Television news remains a reactive medium, dead air waiting for a live story to fill it—preferably a story with great pictures. The civil-rights story of the Sixties was made to order for television news: massive demonstrations, charismatic black

some brought the network cameras back to the black community twice last fall. “Slaughter of Blacks Veils Buffalo in Fear” screamed the New York Daily News headline, and soon network correspondents were in Buffalo where six blacks had been brutally murdered; two of the victims had had their hearts ripped out. Somebody had also erected a burning cross in the middle of the black community, and black leaders were trying to keep the city from blowing up.

Then, within days, a boiler exploded in an Atlanta nursery school, killing four black children and focusing attention on the fact that 14 black children had disappeared from that same neighborhood during the previous 15 months; 10 bodies had been found. The networks rushed in again to cover the story—and stayed with it for *more than a week*, interviewing puzzled police, angry crit-



After agonizing deliberation, a leading critic reveals his picks of . . .

The

10

Best TV-Movies Ever Made

By TOM SHALES

TV-movies and pornography have one thing in common: neither form has yet to produce a masterpiece. The prospects

Tom Shales is the TV critic for The Washington Post.

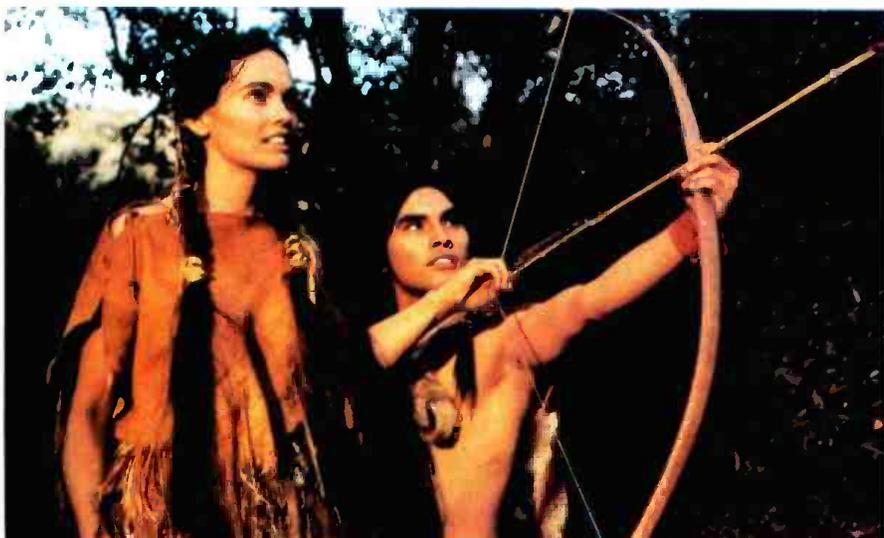
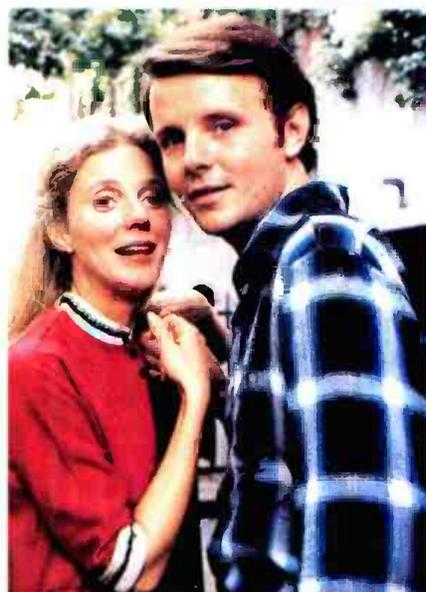
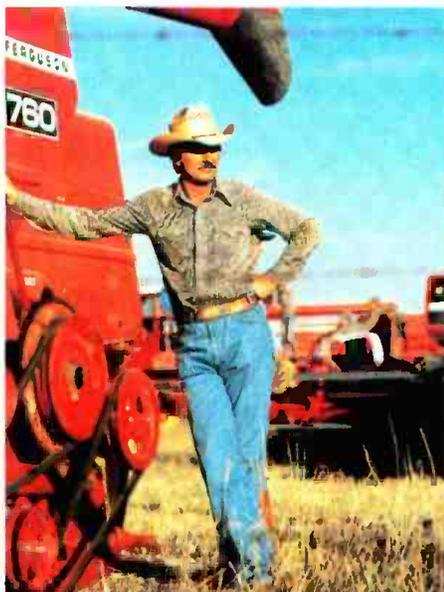
of that happening may be better for porno than for TV-movies, but then "masterpiece" is probably one of those old-world words that will have to be retired for the scaled-down age of television anyway. Nobody turns on a TV set

expecting to be astonished or ennobled or thrilled. Most people turn it on merely hoping not to be bored.

There has been no "Citizen Kane" of TV-movies. There has been no "Casablanca," no "Gone with the Wind," no



Above: Cicely Tyson and Thalmus Rasulala in CBS's "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman." Opposite page: Carol Burnett in ABC's "Friendly Fire."



"Bringing Up Baby," no "North by Northwest" either. Maybe there never will be and maybe the comparisons are inherently unfair: it is not demanded of TV-movies that, even as popular entertainment, they succeed on the scale or in the dimension of Hollywood's crowd-pleasing lollapaloozas of yore.

But if bad pop art drives out good pop art, theatrical features made in Hollywood are going to look more and more like TV-movies. The age of the stylist appears over; even though the old Hollywood goldies were also made for a mass audience, television as a medium seems less amenable to distinctive, innovative, expressive filmmaking. There is no such thing as expressionism in TV-movies, and there is barely such a thing as imagery.

So, when I once wrote that "TV-movies are to cinema what the rolodex is to literature," the only complaint I got was a letter from the Rolodex company reminding me that Rolodex is a registered trademark.

ABC gets the credit or blame for inflicting TV-movies on us on a regular basis. The network once had a series called *Movie of the Week*, in which "movie" meant a one-hour drama stretched to 90 minutes. Though the series is gone (and TV-movies are now at least two hours long, including commercials), Hollywood actors still talk about landing a role in an "M.O.W."—a fitting term, considering that in the picture "A Thousand Clowns" O.W. meant "out of wedlock."

For TV-movies are movies out of wedlock: illegitimate children of TV and Hollywood that are here to stay. One could well ask why so many people in television are in the business of producing bad movies and so few in the business of producing good television—live drama, taped plays, experiments with visual

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Scenes from the best (clockwise from top): Louise Latham and Victor French in "Amateur Night at the Dixie Bar and Grill"; Blythe Danner and Michael Moriarty in "Too Far to Go"; Devon Ericson and Joe Running Fox in "Ishi, the Last of His Tribe"; and Dennis Weaver in "Amber Waves."

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The brightest ideas in the world are here to play.

Sophia Lynn Elizabeth Fiallos is 3 now. Her mother describes her as “pretty, intelligent, and kind of a tomboy.” You would not think of her as an avatar of a new age. Yet she is. When her mother was in labor, people from the Warner Cable company approached her father with a proposition: would you want your child named by a mass of anonymous television viewers? It was something that never had been attempted before. Only on the day of Sophia Lynn Elizabeth Fiallos’ birth was this feat possible. Dec. 1, 1977, was Qube Day.

For weeks, Warner had been flooding the 115,000 households in its Columbus, Ohio, franchise area with advertisements and inducements to become “Qube” homes. A house could become a Qube home by agreeing to pay a monthly fee for a terminal the size of a telephone, a box loaded with buttons. These buttons would allow the viewers to do two things: choose one of 30 channels, and respond to questions that the television might ask them. A computer would monitor the responses and make tallies within seconds. This was called “interactive television.”

According to Warner Cable, allowing this terminal into one’s home would give one a hammerlock on history. Advertisements depicted an old man, looking very much like Gepetto, offering the terminal to a small child. The caption read, “Touch the button and someday you’ll tell your grandchildren about it.” The presumption was that when the little girl’s grandchildren were ready to hear about it, they would be in a society that was “totally wired.”

They would keep in contact with their bank accounts, reading material, friends, bill collectors, government agencies and entertainment sources by a cable connected to their TVs. The services these grandchildren would get from their television screens would be so boggling to our antique 20th-century minds that describing them here would be a serious breach of journalistic responsibility. Suffice it to say that, 50 years from now, talking about what happened on Dec. 1, 1977, would be akin to discussing Ben Franklin’s kiting excursions during a nuclear meltdown, evoking something so seminal that it would have been relegated the one-cell state of consciousness.

Steven Levy is a New York-based free-lance writer.

But Ms. Fiallos has an even stiffer claim to history. While she was engaged in the business of being born, thousands of Qube households were choosing a name for her. They decided on “Elizabeth,” and so that became her name, albeit the latter of two middle names. The Qube viewers also chose an item to go into a time capsule—a book by Woody

this remains to be disclosed to Sophia Fiallos, who has quite a legacy to live up to.

As does Qube. Columbus Qube is three years old now, but universally described as a system in its infancy. Still, three years is long enough for at least a preliminary evaluation of the first cable system that allows viewers to answer

Speak Up, Columbus

Now three years old,
Qube’s cable experiment
offers some surprising answers
on two-way communications
and other advanced services

By **STEVEN LEVY**



Hayes—and got a chance to play interactive Gong by giving an electronic hook to a rather pathetic Elvis Presley imitator. The master of ceremonies for this initial program was Flippo the Clown. All

questions, state preferences, select movies and special programs on a pay-per-view basis, and even order merchandise, simply by “touching in” on a row of buttons on their Qube terminals. Much

of what has occurred in Columbus is experimental, but the results have already had an effect on the future of the cable industry and its eventual impact on our lives.

Dick Wolfsie is a talk-show host. He looks a bit like Mike Douglas. But no other talk-show host in the world can

Dick Wolfsie, live and interactive from Columbus, looked at the monitor to find that more than half his audience had pushed button one.

"I would have denied that," he says now. "But the viewers were telling me something about the show. And it helped me improve."

A heady thing, talking back to the TV.

questions. And what has come of this wealth of material? A very, very mixed bag.

Take Wolfsie's show, *Columbus Alive*. Originally, Qube had tried to offer a steady flow of live programming so that viewers could keep in touch with their television sets as they carried on at-home routines. But facilities were stretched thin, and with Qube offering 30 channels, the competition was too tough to maintain a rambling, unstructured program. So programming was cut back, and now *Columbus Alive* runs for one hour, four nights a week. The typical show features authors with books to plug, demonstrations of fire safety, and a segment where four area residents (chosen from those who have touched in the week before) discuss a movie, with the home audience disagreeing or agreeing with their conclusions on the plot and the acting quality.

Last fall, I watched the show with a Qube family. I suspect they were not regular viewers of *Columbus Alive*, because they had to punch a few channels (not including P-10, the adult channel) before they found T-1 and Dick Wolfsie. The guest that night was the author of a book called "Lawyers on Trial." Coincidentally, my host was a lawyer who did not like the idea of a layman putting him on trial. At one point, Wolfsie asked a question that was printed on screen:

Do Lawyers Make Things
More Complicated?

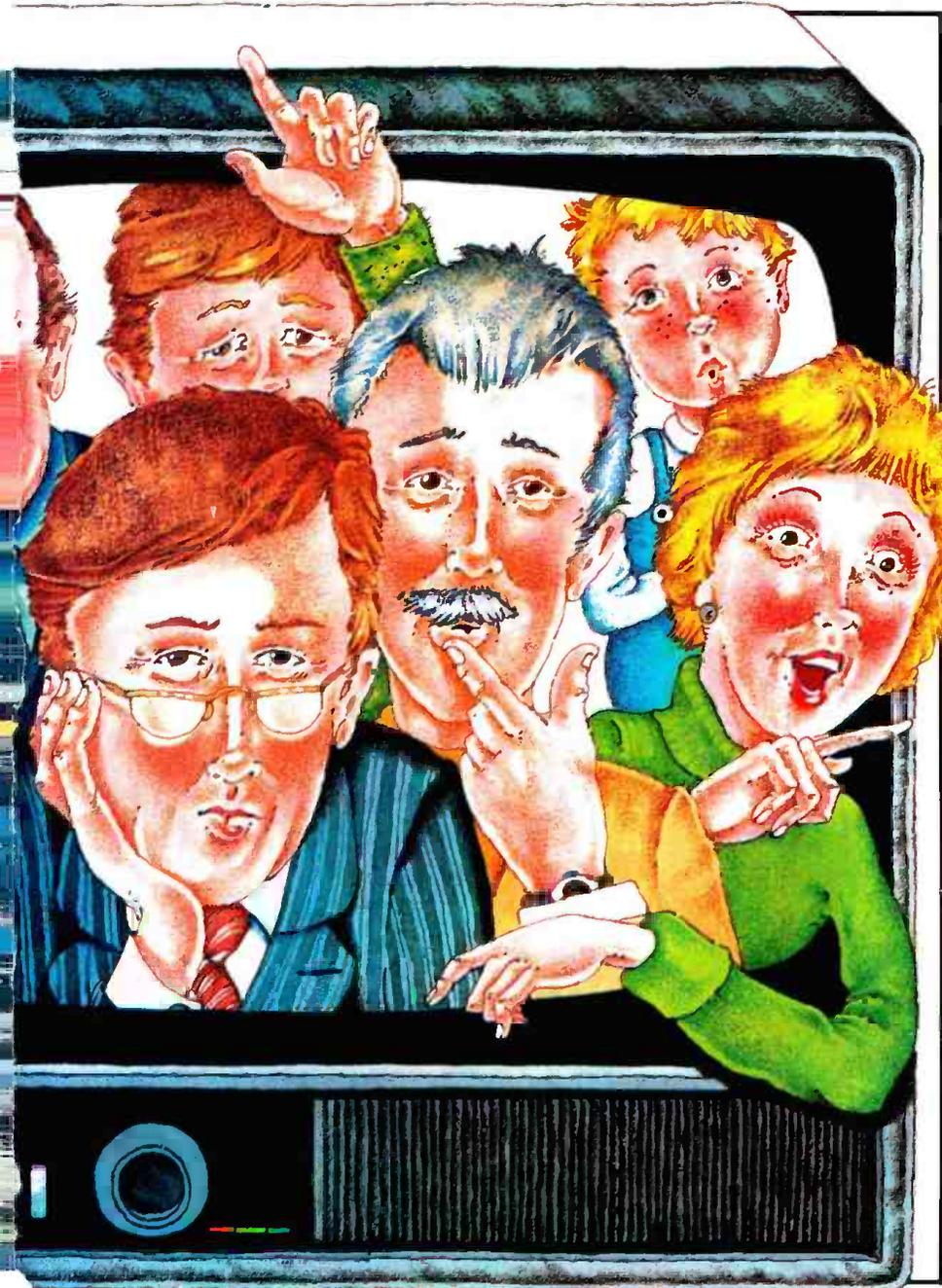
1. Yes
2. No

TOUCH NOW

My host walked over to the terminal and pushed button two. As it turned out, he was among only eight percent who had pushed that button. But that hardly seemed to matter. "I like to express my opinion," he said. "There's a value in it, and there's a value in knowing what your neighbors think."

But after some conversation, I found that this Qube family, at least, only rarely used the "hot buttons." They liked, it seemed, the *idea* of responding to the television, but didn't seem to think it worth doing too often. Talking back was not why they paid for Qube. They subscribed for the variety of programming in movies, sports, public affairs, and non-network shows.

And they are not unusual. Despite



make this claim: once he asked his audience if they thought he was "too silly" as a host. "Push button one if you think so, button two if not." Within six seconds the computer had the result; and

Qube programming director Scott Kurnit estimates that viewers are asked to "touch in" at least 10 times a day. That means that Qube's computer has tabulated responses to more than 10,000

much ballyhoo about the talk-back function, the concept of "interactiveness" has not caught on like wildfire among the citizenry of Columbus. To read press notices of the Qube system, one would assume that all of Columbus sits by easy chairs, carrying on continual multiple-choice dialogues with Sonys and Zeniths. Actually, Warner, recently renamed Warner Amex, is only one of four cable companies in Columbus; and of the 115,000 potential subscribers in its franchise area, fewer than 37,000 had chosen even the basic, noninteractive cable services by August 1980. Of those, about a fourth have not chosen to spend the extra \$3.45 a month (for a total of \$11.95) for Qube, which gives them 20 more channels than basic cable, along with interactiveness. Qube spokespersons explain that pre-Qube Columbus already had a basic-cable system, and the notion had set in that cable television meant retransmission, not new programming and technology. Some Warner employees admit, though, that the unimpressive "penetration rate" is a disappointment, especially since the number of Qube subscribers has been *decreasing* in recent months. More significant, the people who live in the areas of Columbus covered by the other, non-interactive cable systems have not stormed their cable companies demanding response buttons.

Last spring the Scripps-Howard news organization commissioned a detailed study to see if Qube was affecting newspaper readership (it wasn't). The three main reasons subscribers cited for signing with Qube, the survey found, were programming variety, more movies and more sports. As for the touted talk-back function, one of the Ohio State professors who conducted the study says, "I don't recall anyone mentioning that as a reason." When asked why they maintained service, subscribers gave similar reasons, again omitting interactiveness as a factor.

Why, after 10,000 questions, are viewers pressing the "ho-hum" button?

"Qube is a perfect example of technology outstripping the imagination that created it," says Jeff Borden, television critic of the Columbus Dispatch. "It hasn't done one significant thing since I've been watching it." Others call Qube nothing more than an expensive toy. "I expected to get in on all kinds of partici-

patory democracy," says one disappointed subscriber. "But in the six months I had Qube, the only thing I voted on was a tanning contest at a local pool."

It's not that the programming whizzes at Qube haven't been working overtime to think up new uses for the system. It's just that until the system grows to the point where many more people use it, interactiveness has a limited value. Apparently, the most popular of the several "touch-in" shows is *The Magic Touch*, a game show where the only contestants are the at-home viewers.

Another notable use was a football game where the viewers called the plays for the semi-pro Columbus Metros [the Metros lost; see PANORAMA, Dec. 1980]. And the next big Qube "event" was a co-production with public-station WGBH-TV Boston, an "interactive drama" where viewers chose the course of action. At certain times, the tape was stopped and button-pushers were asked, for example,

"Qube is a grave misuse of survey technique," says Dr. Sharon Dunwoody.

"They say it's not a scientific survey, yet they treat it like it is."

if they wanted more sex, more violence, or both. The appropriate segment of videotape was inserted and shown. Dramatists of the future might worry about some of the implications of this ("Should Hamlet kill Claudius? Touch button one for yes, two for no, three for another soliloquy"), but Qube's Scott Kurnit assured me that it was a harmless experiment, a way to "have fun with interaction."

Well, fun is fun. But more interesting uses of Qube deal with issues of substance; they take some kind of reading of the viewer's feelings, opinions and judgments. And it is here that Qube gets itself into real trouble.

Throughout Qube's history, Warner has kept America informed on the results of its admittedly nonscientific polls, and at times national television has used Qube "to see what Columbus is thinking." We are warned that these results have no real validity, yet press releases

with the results are disseminated. And Qube officials still boast that the Columbus viewers, responding to questions after President Carter's 1979 energy speech, duplicated within one percent the results obtained by a traditional poll conducted later.

"Qube is a grave misuse of survey technique," says Dr. Sharon Dunwoody, who teaches research methods in Ohio State's School of Journalism. "They say it's not a scientific survey, yet they treat it like it is. Your average American will misunderstand this. They might say 80 percent respond in a certain way. Eighty percent of what? You never know."

You don't know because Warner Amex does not want to tell you how many people are "touching in" to the questions. This is information readily available to Qube, since all terminals report to the computer whether the television is on and which channel it's tuned to every 20 seconds, whether the viewer wants to be polled or not. (Once the Qube viewers were asked if they minded being part of a continual rating system—25 percent said they'd disconnect from it if they could.) These Qube viewership figures are regarded by Warner as the kind of market research their competitors would die to obtain.

Qube employees say that some of the shows have extremely limited viewership; on cable television that is not necessarily bad, since cable at its best appeals to special interests seeking alternatives to mass entertainment. But a very small sample can yield misleading results when only *percentages* are released. There have been a few cases where Qube has given viewership figures—for example, when the mayors of Baltimore and Columbus, along with their respective cabinets, had an inter-city summit meeting, Qube disclosed that 231 viewers were tuning in. But this is uncommon. Qube employees have told me to watch out for a preponderance of "round" percentages on a show—50-50, 60-40, 75-25, etc.—to see if very few people are touching in. In some cases, five people can represent a virtual groundswell of opinion. It was that kind of information that Presidential candidate George Bush wanted when he appeared on Qube and viewers were asked, before and after he spoke, whether they would vote for him. Though Bush did

well (scoring whopping percentages of 60 and 79 percent), Warner would not tell him how *many* viewers those percentages represented.

Warner is also selective about the figures yielded by questions asked during *Tony Brown's Journal*, a black-oriented, nationally syndicated public-affairs show that used Qube 15 times last year. Brown is pleased with Qube: "The only place in the world to get immediate feedback," he says. But he says that of the responses evoked from his questions on issues like the draft, busing, and racial bias, "all I know are the percentages. I don't know the number of people responding."

And then there was NBC's *Speak Up America*. Producer George Schlatter thought Columbus stood for the "real" America ("It's Middle West; it's not New York City"), and used what he calls "television of the future" on the show. "Qube was part of the reason the show terrified the network news departments," he says. "Don't talk to *real* people, and, for God's sake, don't take surveys [say the news people]. You can shake up the very roots of the industry." The show was referred to by some Qube staffers, who had little input, as "*Spit Up America*," and here's an example why. During a session with Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the atheist activist's statements were countered by passionate audience responses ("Go back to Russia!") which in turn were greeted with wild applause. A taped interview of Mrs. O'Hair's son repudiating his mother was shown. Even co-host Jayne Kennedy took pains to imply that Mrs. O'Hair was a godless fiend by loudly proclaiming her own devout love of the Lord. After this virtual stoning, the Qube viewers were asked if they agreed with Mrs. O'Hair's views on religion.

She had expressed many views, ranging from a belief that Americans should enjoy freedom of religion to her conviction that Christians were murderers. Eleven percent of the Qube viewers said they agreed. With what? How many viewers did that represent? How would they have voted if the question had been presented differently? (When Dick Wolf-sie once asked his viewers if they thought Qube questions were generally oversimplified, 68 percent said yes.)

As troublesome as all that is, it is more excusable than giving out the *wrong* figures, as Qube did when Phil Donahue, doing his show from Qube's

studios, asked how many households were watching. The number superimposed on the screen turned out to be inflated; a computer readout later obtained by a Columbus newspaper revealed that the home audience was considerably smaller. Warner executives said that the studio audience had been mistakenly added to the computer total (though no one mentioned this on the show). Even after adding that number to the computer total, a discrepancy remained. "This cuts to the heart of the Qube operation," says David Drake, television critic of the Columbus Citizen-Journal. "If you can't believe their totals, what good is any of it?"

Well, assuming that the Donahue total was no more than an isolated mistake, Qube has made *some* inroads into responsible uses of interactivity. At times, the system has been used as a stunning example of how television of the future might be used to our benefit.

Says Columbus mayor Tom Moody: "Yes, I watch the adult channel—I watch the dirty movies. It's part of my job, like going out to look at the site of a flood."

One of the best technicians of the touch-in buttons is Qube's John Steinberg—"Mr. Qubesumer" to his minions. Steinberg avoids the meaningless "What-do-you-think-of-that?" questions and instead uses Qube to buttress his cases against the enemies of the consumer. When he finds a rip-off artist, he will ask his viewers to touch in if they have been victimized; the computer will take note of their names and Steinberg will contact them to gather further evidence, or even enlist their help in bringing the offender to court. Another consumer advocate, Ralph Nader, asked Qube viewers if they would like to offer their time to him, and Nader left the Qube studio with a computer printout with several hundred names of potential volunteers.

The Qube system has also shown some value in bringing people closer to local government. Qube has a "narrowcast" capability, enabling it to limit a channel to only certain subscribers. Most often,

this is done geographically, for town meetings of some of the suburban communities in Qube's service area. "I'm very enthusiastic about Qube's potential," says Richard Moore, mayor of Upper Arlington, whose planning board has frequently utilized Qube. "But as of now, the value of the response is somewhat limited—we don't know who is responding. It could be a 4-year-old hitting a button."

The mayor of Columbus, Tom Moody, is similarly cautious. "But it's a virtue for people to be able to participate," he says. "Any system like this can be used for good or evil, but you shouldn't stop it because of its potential." Moody is pleased with his experience in the Columbus-Baltimore summit, and he considered changing the longstanding prohibition of alcoholic beverages in Columbus's parks after more than 60 percent of Qube viewers touched-in in approval. But that 60 percent represented barely over a hundred viewers, and who knows if they were Columbus residents? "I know it's not scientific," says the mayor, "but I can apply my political judgment to the raw data."

Moody has several Qube monitors in City Hall, and he frequently keeps watch on Qube as he carries on his business. "What do I have on?" he says. "Well, not the network channels, not conventional television. I primarily watch community channels and the premium channels. Yes, I watch the adult channel—I watch the dirty movies. It's part of my job, like going out to look at the site of a flood." His Honor estimates that observation of erotic civic disasters takes up 25 to 50 percent of his viewing time.

Mayor Moody's preference for premium channels is indicative of what Columbus viewers really like about Qube—and what Qube really likes the viewers to watch. Despite all the hype about the vote-in aspects of Qube, their time has not arrived. Qube's success has more to do with other features of two-way television, among them pay-per-view capabilities. And Columbus's ready acceptance of premium channels and other two-way add-ons is what has convinced Warner Amex to expand Qube this year to franchises in Cincinnati, Houston and Pittsburgh.

Premium viewing is a gold mine for cable television, and Qube offers 10 pay-per-view channels, including an educa-

continued on page 90

PANORAMA 59

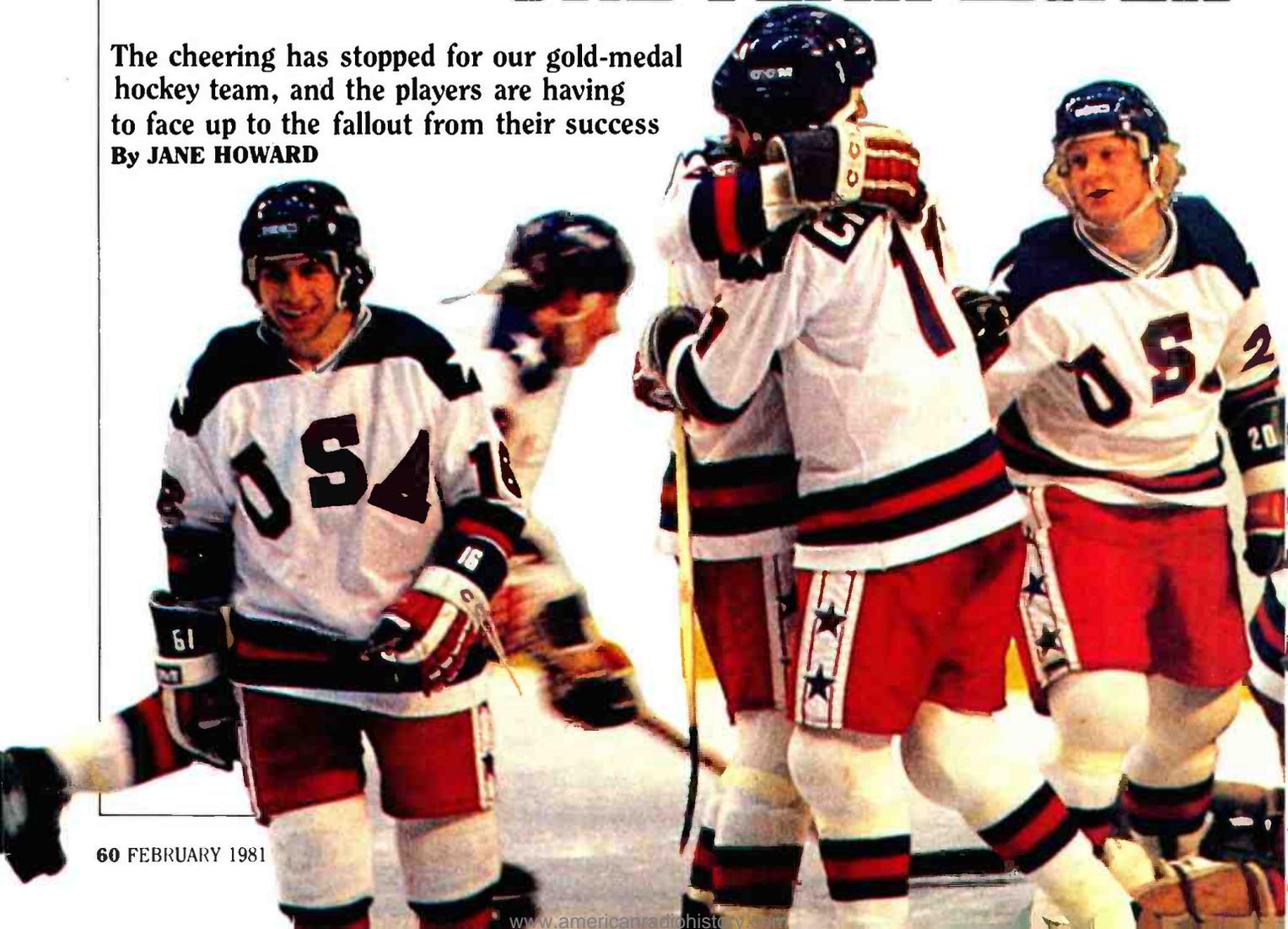
One year ago, on Sunday, Feb. 24, 1980, some 17 million people watched on television as the U.S. Olympic hockey team skated its way to victory against the Finnish team at Lake Placid—and, incidentally, to the first gold medal in hockey won by the U.S. in 20 years. This spring, ABC will present "Miracle on Ice," the story of the 20 players whose magnificent effort did so much to resurrect Americans' pride in their country in a troubled time.

How, in the months between these two television events, has their stunning achievement affected these young men who burst into the public eye with such explosive force? Has their fame brought with it riches, success, happiness? Has it made of ordinary life something more—or less—than a 20- or 22-year-old hockey player might otherwise expect? Where does one go from such an emotional and physical peak—up, or down?

AMERICA'S BOYS OF WINTER ONE YEAR LATER

The cheering has stopped for our gold-medal hockey team, and the players are having to face up to the fallout from their success

By JANE HOWARD



"I don't care what you're in the middle of," said the friend who phoned me that Friday evening a year ago this month. "Stop it right now, and turn on the Olympic hockey game. Hurry!"

Hockey? Why should I, who never read the sports pages, want to watch a bunch of padded brutes pushing a puck around an ice rink, endangering what's left of their teeth? But I did turn on my television and watch as the American team, rated seventh among 12 contending for the gold medal, defeated the Russians, who were rated first, by a score of 4-3.

That left the Finns for "us," as I quickly came to think of the American team, to beat on Sunday morning. We did, 4-2, and I watched that, too. I watched and, of all things, I cried. The crowd was chanting "USA! USA!"; on-lookers were calling the victory the greatest upset in sporting history, the proudest moment since the moon landing, since Iwo Jima, since Jesse Owens. Somebody even said something about the Alamo.

Why the tears? In part, because we had defied the odds and achieved the highly unlikely. But family also had something to do with my getting so caught up in all this. Several players were said to come from strong families of the sort it is fashionable to think of as obsolete, but that I became convinced in researching my book "Families" are not so at all. Somewhere in that book I wrote that,

although water isn't thicker than blood, our well-being depends on acting as if it were. Well, what about ice? Surely, these 20 young men had become a family, of sorts, to win their gold medal. But how do they feel about one another now? Twelve of them now play for teams in the National Hockey League; are those teams families? Are the European teams that have lured another four abroad, or is the Big Ten team, where still another Olympian is? And what family feeling, if any, connects the three men who aren't playing hockey at all this year, except for fun?

Fair questions. Finding some answers sounded like a lot simpler proposition than it turned out to be.

TENSION ULCERS AND CHICKEN SOUP

If you only remember one gold-medal winner, it is probably Jim Craig, the goalie, whose huge, weird mask made him look like some tribal shaman. Without it, after the final game, he was suddenly a beguiling, bewhiskered Li'l Abner—but why was he skating away from the victory huddle to the edge of the rink to scan the crowd? TV cameras zoomed to his face for all the world to lip-read his soon-famous question: "Where's my father?" Talk about touching a national nerve.

So much attention has since been focused on the bonny goalie that the young man has suffered a tension ulcer. He also has started making a lot of money: \$85,000 a year for playing hock-

ey, more thousands for making commercials. Does it balance out? Well, it depends on whom you ask. Ask pro hockey experts and most of them will tell you that Jim Craig is going to be just fine, thank you, as far as his professional career is concerned; that his notoriously rocky beginning with the Atlanta Flames was the natural result of excessive pressure combined with raw youth, a case of too much too soon.

"Craig was like Atlanta's last stand," said Joe Fitzgerald, executive sports editor of the Boston Herald American, explaining how the failing franchise, since sold to Calgary, tried to use Craig. "They had him going to all these promotional appearances, opening shopping centers and making speeches to civic groups—they ran him into the ground."

Craig himself once said that "the hardest thing was putting my priorities in the right place. I put pressure on myself, wasn't mentally ready to handle all the things that happened to me." Now, having been traded to his childhood idols, the Boston Bruins, Craig seems to have learned something about pacing, about priorities, about the sustaining of self: "I feel like I'm a survivor," he said last August. "Everybody's asking me to do this and that; if I jumped every time the phone rang, I'd be nuts. I try to go at it slow and remember the most important thing is hockey."

His concentration is apparently paying off, despite an unexpectedly tough

Jane Howard is the author of three books, including "A Different Woman" and "Families." She is currently working on a biography of Margaret Mead.



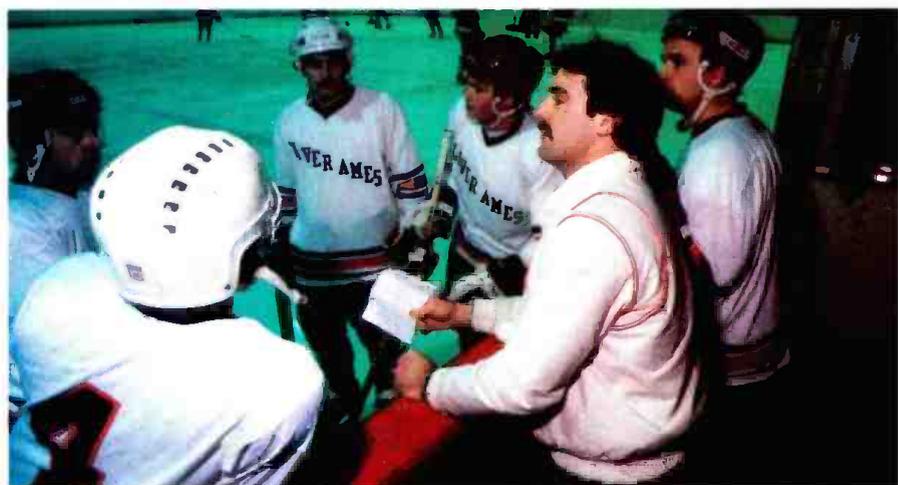
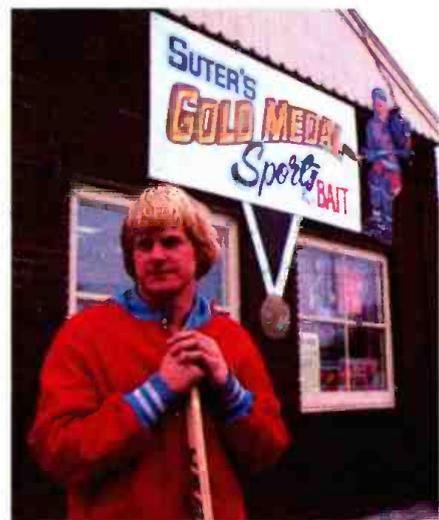
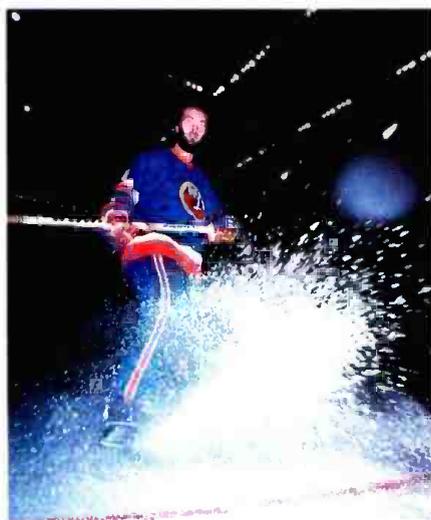
season for the Boston team. "The kid has everything," says Fitzgerald. "He goes out there believing he can win, and the whole team picks up. He's got authority and confidence on the ice. Of all the things people are looking at to explain [Boston's poor record], nobody's pointing a finger at Craig."

With so many people saying so many warm, positive things about Craig, with Craig himself sounding so confident, it came as something of a shock to ask The Hockey News' columnist Stan Fischler about the goalie's prospects in the NHL and hear his flat "zilch." He doesn't think Craig has what it takes professionally, although "it's conceivable he can improve." So how come Fischler's sportswriter colleagues are largely going along with the Jim-Craig's-finally-settling-down-and-becoming-a-darn-good-player line? "Putting Craig down is like putting down the American flag. It's not fashionable."

No, it's not. And how could it be? How can you knock a guy who went on talk shows and told the whole world about going back to his mother's grave, behind his father's yellow frame house in North Easton, Mass., to "thank her for the gold medal and the Bruins and ask her to now just please find me some nice girl"?

Many girls, some of them no doubt nice, at once wrote to apply, and the pile of 450 or so fan letters Jim already got every week grew preposterous. His father Donald was sitting there addressing answers to those letters, in envelopes stamped PREPAID BULK RATE, the afternoon I paid him a visit. Jim never did show up, which, considering his experiences with the press, was not surprising, but his father gave me chicken soup he had made himself and showed me the poem you get, entitled "Many Thanks," if you write a fan letter to the sixth of his eight children. It ends "Whatever you did, from the bottom of our hearts/We thank each and every one, whatever the part" and it's signed "Don Craig and Family."

"Jimmy's been subjected to so much pressure that he's developed almost an immunity," Don Craig told me as he



Life after triumph (clockwise from top): Olympic team captain Mike Eruzione on the rubber-chicken circuit in Utica, N.Y.; Bob Suter, proprietor of Gold Medal Sports in Madison, Wis.; Olympic goalie Jim Craig, now a Boston Bruin, coaches former high-school teammates in a game benefiting a scholarship fund named for his late mother, Margaret; gold-medal and Stanley Cup winner Ken Morrow of the New York Islanders.

served the soup. "Sometimes I wonder if I could take what he's had to take. That's why I got him a nice little pad of his own in Boston, and furnished it myself when he was in L.A. He needs to get off by himself. Still, his best times are with the family, with his nieces and nephews." No family of his own yet for Jim—no steady girlfriend is mentioned—but no more talk of tension ulcers these days, either.

Craig showed me the Chevrolet Caprice Jim gave him, and the Betamax on which he replays great televised moments of Jim's career. He played me the tape cassettes people have sent in along with the fan mail: an original song called "Where Is My Father?", a spoken letter of thanks from a self-styled "Long Island dad," telling Jim how before the Olympics he had come "close to being ashamed of being an American," with a catch in his voice and an instrumental version of "The Impossible Dream" in the background.

"Never mind hockey," Don Craig said; "this whole Olympic thing has done so much for family it's unreal. To me, a big family is the heart and lungs of this country. Sacrifice is love and love is family and family is country. When the Islanders played the Bruins, I went back to their locker room to throw my arms around my Kenny"—his son's Olympic teammate Ken Morrow, whom another player referred to as "so mellow of a guy."

40 BOTTLES OF CHAMPAGNE

"Oh, you'll like Ken Morrow," said the cashier at the shop outside the rink in Hicksville, Long Island, where the New York Islanders were practicing. "He's so nice with the kids." She was right. As soon as the practice session was finished, a swarm of small children gathered around Morrow, who bent down, with his skates still on, to sign his autograph for every last child. "I'll just get a Gatorade," he finally said to me, "and be right with you."

By joining the Islanders right after the Olympics, this bearded defenseman, the tallest (6 feet 4) of last year's team,

became the only hockey player ever to have won both the gold medal and the Stanley Cup in one season. Not surprisingly, he's been asked to compare the two achievements a lot; not surprisingly, he said he doesn't think it's fair to do that. He will say that "winning the gold was a little bit more of an emotional experience. In the Olympics there's pressure on every shift; in the play-offs you can afford to lose a game."

According to Stan Fischler, Morrow isn't likely to be responsible for the Islanders losing many games. "In my estimation," said Fischler with the same measured authority with which he had dismissed Craig, "Morrow is the sleeper of the entire group. When he came up to the Islanders, he was very awkward; he seemed to have all the failings of a collegiate player who is a good three years away from the NHL at best. Yet by the time they reached the play-offs he looked very much at home. . . . My feeling is that he is going to be one of the genuinely formidable defensemen in the next decade; not flashy, but he does the job efficiently, with a minimum of fuss and fanfare."

It's easy to imagine Morrow flushing at such words. They are nothing like the words he speaks, which are uniformly soft-spoken and modest. "I have a hard time puttin' it in my mind that I'm a star," he said. "I've kind of put the Olympics behind me; you can't live in the past. From now on we're going to be judged by what we do [in the present]. Sure, it was a great year; we flew a lot of places I wouldn't have got to see otherwise—not just Europe, but Wichita and Houston and Des Moines. We carried our own bags; we didn't get spoiled, that's for sure." Not only modest, but levelheaded.

Morrow didn't stay up too late the night of the Olympic victory because "I didn't want to look like a bum at the White House the next morning." But the most exhilarating time at Lake Placid for him was the "three hours before we received the medals, when all the players and families got together with about 40 bottles of champagne. . . ."

Many players' parents lived together

through all of the Olympics in what they called the "hostage house," becoming a family of sorts themselves. The family theme is unescapable. "My wife and I spent the summer fixing up our house here in Long Island," Ken told me. ". . . the Islanders have treated me real well, made me feel real comfortable. I really couldn't picture me playin' with any other team."

Loyalty is strong in hockey players, I was learning, but not necessarily deep; allegiances are very much a matter of the moment. Morrow, like the others, sees less and less of his Olympic colleagues; they play for different teams, travel on different schedules, vacation with their own families. I was curious about whether Morrow thinks about his old teammates in a special way when the Islanders play against their teams. "I don't think about it at all once we're out on the ice. When I'm sitting down I may look down at them and see how they're doing, may check their statistics. . . ."

ROOKIES ON THE ROAD

Those of Morrow's fellow Olympians who are playing professional hockey in this country, 11 others besides Craig, four of them in the minor leagues for now, are not doing badly. Talk to sports people and you get a variety of opinions: the majority of them generous, some reserved. Dave Christian (Winnipeg Jets), Steve Christoff (Minnesota North Stars) and Mark Johnson (Pittsburgh Penguins) are all bona fide pros. . . . Steve Christoff was the most productive of the Olympians last season. . . . Rob McClanahan has been playing well for Buffalo's minor-league franchise. . . . Steve Janaszak (currently bouncing back and forth between Colorado Rockies farm teams in Fort Worth, Texas, and Fort Wayne, Ind.), the only member of the Olympic team who did not get to play at Lake Placid, may have greater potential as an NHL goaltender than does Craig. . . . Jack O'Callahan (with Chicago's farm team in Moncton, N.B.) has a good chance of making it in the NHL. . . .

Talk to the players themselves about

their lives right now and you hear a limited range of notes sounded: cautious confidence in their ability, gratitude for the chance they've been given, fondness for their fellow Olympians, and, persistently, fatigue. These young men are on the road constantly, living a life circumscribed by ice rinks and motel rooms, snatching moments with their families in the little time they have off, resting up from injuries, working on their game, traveling, traveling. They are rookies, *American* rookies, competing for coveted spots in the NHL with Canadian players who aren't too knocked out by any gold medals. The Olympics were yesterday; this is pro hockey; *this*—not the Olympics, after all—is, as Mark Johnson said, “the dream of every kid who ever put on a pair of skates.”

“I don't think I can rest on the Olympics,” said defenseman Bill Baker, with the Montreal Canadiens. “These guys here are a whole different ball game. It's kind of tough getting together with the Olympic guys. . . . I won't forget them, though, even if all we have are 10-year reunions.”

“Till I die,” Mark Wells told me solemnly in New Haven, where he is playing with the minor-league Nighthawks, waiting for the major-league Rangers to call, “till I die I'll always be in touch with those guys.”

Their obvious sincerity is touching—and just a little boring. They're all so sincere, and young—most in their early 20s, Mike Ramsey (Buffalo Sabres) just 20—with the concentrated focus on the moment, the task at hand, of the very young. Most of them are predictable. Not Dave Silk. A lot of sportswriters are, in fact, somewhat surprised by Dave Silk.

A COMPLETE HOCKEY PLAYER

“Dave Silk gave *this* number as *his* number? Really? Wow!” The young woman at the other end of the line sounded flattered. “No, he isn't here; the Rangers are on the road. But I'll probably see him when they get back in town, I hope, and sure, I'll give him your number and have him call you back.”

My next phone call, to Norm MacLean, executive sports editor of Sports News

Wire, elicited a more considered response. “Dave Silk is a complete hockey player who has gotten more mileage from his talent than you might expect. His weakness is a lack of skating speed, which he has more than compensated for with savvy, slickness and brainpower.”

A strangely ambiguous remark, I think: “more mileage than you might expect.” And how about this from Lou Nanne, general manager of the Minnesota North Stars: “Dave Silk is one of the pleasant surprises of the season.”

What has been happening to this 23-year-old defenseman? He was signed right after Lake Placid by the New York

“Till I die,” says Mark Wells, now playing with the New Haven Nighthawks, “till I die I'll always be in touch with those guys.”

Rangers, was thought by some NHL scouts not to skate well enough for the pros, was reportedly almost in tears when the Rangers sent him down to the minors, was then brought back to the Rangers and, finally, last fall, told that it was safe to take an apartment in New York City—he'd be sticking around.

Rich Friedman, who covers the Rangers for The Hockey News, patiently explained about Dave Silk. Up until the middle of last fall, it seems, everyone assumed that as soon as the Rangers, who had been decimated by injuries in 1980, got back in one piece, Silk would be going back to their farm team in New Haven. “But now,” Friedman wound up, “everyone's assuming he'll stay.” The new Rangers coach, Craig Patrick, who was assistant coach of the Olympic team, says, “He's played extremely well; he's very good in terms of puck control.”

Bill Mazer, a sportscaster for WNEW-TV in New York, fills in another piece of

the puzzle: “The Rangers have a youth movement and Silk is a very important part of it.” As such, I wondered, does Silk feel any special responsibility as a, well, hero, to put forward a good image for the next generation of hockey players? Not exactly, it turns out. But—“I love kids, and I can see myself getting into coaching. Even if I just keep one kid out of trouble by helping him get into hockey, it would be worth it.” Silk worked in a hockey school, teaching, last summer; he may do so again this year. Or he may just hang around New York and get to know the city. He was afraid to move in before.

“Right after the Olympics, I went to the Rangers and then to New Haven, so I had to put the whole gold-medal experience on the back burner. But then when I got back to Boston for the summer was when it hit me—I really enjoyed the summer. But in the back of my mind, I had the obsession with making the Rangers, and I didn't know where I stood, and so I would feel guilty thinking about the gold. I'd say to myself, ‘What am I doing; am I living in the past?’ ”

Now that he's made it, he doesn't get much chance to see his old teammates, but “even if I don't see a guy for three or four years, when I see him it's going to be like the old days. It's true that we all think of each other as lifelong friends.” Not, however, on the rink; not when they're playing against each other. “I try to block it out then; it's not fair to the other guys on my team even to be thinking about it. But it's not going to fade. Craig [Patrick] and I have a lot of good times together; we still look at each other and smile sometimes, and we know we're thinking about it.”

I had guessed that the four members of the Olympic team who are not playing pro hockey might be thinking about those days more often than Silk; that they might have had a harder time putting the gold behind them and filling their lives, finding new family to replace the old. I was wrong.

Well, I can't say for sure about Neal Broten, the only one who is back in school. He never returned my calls. May-



Tone It Down! Sex It Up!

Tone It Down!

**Take it from the writer who
created "Dallas":
Making TV characters
believable often runs afoul
of network confusion
By DAVID JACOBS**

December 1979. The first draft of my newest pilot script, "Secrets of Midland Heights," is too long. In the second draft I eliminate an introductory sequence establishing geography and atmosphere. The network's program-development executive agrees to the deletions, with one exception: we should put back a shot of a teen-age couple necking in a parked car. Indeed, says the executive, this should be the show's first shot: he likes the idea of "opening hot."

January 1980. The network's Program Practices department—in effect, the network censors—declares that "Secrets of Midland Heights" is too sexy. We negotiate, compromise, generally tone down

the script. A particularly sticky area is an affair—alluded to, not dramatized—between a high-school student and one of her teachers. We don't want to drop this element from the series altogether, so we agree to make the meaning of the specific scene in the pilot oblique. Maybe the student and her teacher are having an affair; maybe they aren't.

February. As we are preparing to shoot the pilot, the network broadcasts its sexy miniseries *Scruples*, and the ratings are tremendous. A high-up network executive telephones: sex obviously is selling, so we are to restore "Secrets of Midland Heights" to its former, sexier condition. Including, I ask, the student-teacher af-

fair? Yes. What about Program Practices? I'll deal with Program Practices, he says.

February-March. We shoot "Secrets of Midland Heights," sexy scenes intact.

March. A Program Practices editor sees a rough cut, objects to all the material we failed to tone down, especially the student-teacher scene. I'm sorry, I say, but you will have to take that up with the high-up executive; we were only following his orders. She takes it up with him, calls me back in a few minutes; we are to make all her suggested trims in order to tone down the show's sexiness. As for the student-teacher scene, we are to recut it to make it oblique. Maybe the student and teacher are having an affair; maybe they aren't.

April. The finished print of "Secrets of Midland Heights" goes to New York to compete with other pilots for a slot on the network's fall schedule. A tense week, then word comes: we've made it! Triumph! We'll have to make a few changes, though: the network's senior executives in New York found the show too sexy. The student-teacher affair, for example, must be completely eliminated—not only from the pilot but from our long-range plans for the series.

May. Now that "Secrets of Midland Heights" is on the fall schedule, network supervision of its development is turned over to the executives in charge of current programming. The student-teacher affair is gone by now, but the new group of executives has additional observations, objections, suggested alterations.

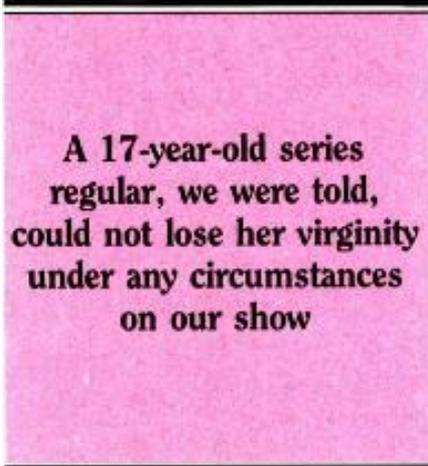
CBS and I have been good to each other. Since December 1977, I have written four dramatic pilots for the network; all four have been shot; all four have been picked up as series. *Dallas* is—well, *Dallas*: a phenomenon. *Married: The First Year*, the only critical success of the group, flopped, but nobly. *Knots Landing* is off to a good start. *Secrets of Midland Heights* has just begun.

Four times I have submitted a pilot script to the network, and each time I expected the process of converting script to film and film to series to be easier than the last. Each time I've been wrong.

When I created, in my first pilot for CBS, the character of Lucy Ewing on *Dallas*, she was supposed to be about 16 years old and sexually promiscuous. Abandoned as a baby by her father, snatched away from her mother by her evil uncle J.R., raised by virtual captors,

oversheltered and underloved, she slept around because sex was her only means of obtaining the undivided attention of another human being; it was the substitution of body warmth for real love. Her promiscuity, however, increased her loneliness and self-loathing when she *wasn't* having sex; her escape from these feelings was more sex . . . and, of course, more loneliness, more self-loathing.

The first episode of *Dallas* retained a suggestion of this Lucy, although we were forced to make her older—a high-school senior—and to veil her promiscuity. In the episodes that followed, she was further toned down. The network's Program Practices people simply could not accept the idea of a series regular being a promiscuous teen-ager. When I appealed to the programming executives for support, I was told that Program Practices



A 17-year-old series regular, we were told, could not lose her virginity under any circumstances on our show

had a point: that we are, on series television, making role models. By the end of the fifth *Dallas* episode, Lucy had been cleaned up. She emerged a coquette.

To me, the Lucy of the first pilot script was the most morally responsible Lucy. She was too young to handle sex, yet she was sexually indiscriminate. Had we proceeded to develop the original character, she would have been cynical, mean-minded, self-destructive. There was no way that this miserably unhappy girl could have emerged a role model. Her pathetic behavior would have been televised proof that sex is no substitute for love.

Instead, we were given a flirtatious, sexy-eyed Lucy—a tease. And because she seemed to have a pretty good life, she became rather appealing to some younger members of the audience. This Lucy *could* be seen as a role model. Why not? She wasn't unhappy; she seemed to like

sex; she got her own way by playing the little girl to her hard-as-nails grandfather. An unhappy teen-ager might well select her as someone to emulate.

Four pilots later, I still have the same arguments with Program Practices, only I am a little more savvy now and understand the real function of that network department. Recently, we submitted a *Knots Landing* script to the network in which Diana Fairgate, the 17-year-old daughter of Sid and Karen (Don Murray and Michele Lee), makes love with her boyfriend. She loves the boy; he loves her; they are both mature and well-adjusted kids. But the experience is not good for either of them because they did it for the wrong reason: because it was expected of them, because their friends were urging them on. Diana becomes depressed; the experience contradicted everything she had expected sex to be—even her mother had told her that sex between loving people is a form of sublime communication, so special that it must be treasured, never taken lightly. To me, this was a responsible treatment of the subject; there was no way an impressionable teen-ager would watch this show and then go looking for sex just to be like Diana Fairgate. It wasn't preachy; we weren't saying don't ever have sex, a message kids with sex on their minds would have laughed at anyway. It said, in effect, that making love requires maturity, a clear head, love and understanding.

We couldn't do it. A 17-year-old series regular, we were told, could not lose her virginity under any circumstances on our show. I felt strongly about this. I appealed to a programming executive without success: he felt that the story would work as well if the young couple's lovemaking was not actually consummated. I attempted to reopen my argument with Program Practices. Look, I was told, advertisers don't like sponsoring a show on which a teen-ager has sex.

Eureka! Now the Lucy controversy made sense to me. Advertisers. Or fear of their response. The advertiser may not even watch television; he is not interested in the reasons why Lucy is promiscuous or Diana depressed. But he doesn't want to risk letters from someone who complains about his sponsorship of a show on which there's a 16-year-old girl who sleeps around, or a 17-year-old girl who had sex with her boyfriend. In both

cases, I believe the most morally responsible attitude was the attitude expressed in the original script. In both cases, we were forced into a less morally responsible position by the very department charged with maintaining the network's moral standards.

At the present time I seem to be creating—with my partner, Mike Filerman—the kind of show that is being watched. However respectable our track record, I keep reminding myself that we don't *know* anything about the tastes of the audience. We've hit a nerve; it's as simple as that. If we try to analyze why, the analysis may dull the instinct.

Network executives, in contrast, constantly analyze "the audience" and are full of pronouncements about the nature of the medium—this despite the fact that the industry track record is less than extraordinary. Last season (1979-80), no fewer than 20 new dramatic series played, each a candidate for a permanent place on the schedule. Only three—*Hart to Hart*, *Trapper John, M.D.*, and *Knots Landing*—have returned so far this season. The previous season gave us two survivors: *Vega\$* and *The White Shadow*; the season before that also two: *Dallas* and *Fantasy Island*.

One network pronouncement that has given me trouble says that every ongoing series must have characters for whom the audience is rooting. I don't disagree with that, but I do quarrel with an amendment proclaiming that the rooted-for character must be virtuous and heroic.

In my original conception of Dallas, the character of Bobby Ewing was a spoiled brat, charming, playful, occasionally irresponsible—a playboy. His marriage to Pamela was a threat to his brother J.R. because Pam wanted Bobby to grow up and assume his place in the family business. Not wanting to have a pesky brother privy to his dirty dealings, J.R. was anxious to keep Bobby out. At first Bobby's response to his brother's resistance was to say "Who needs this?" and back off, opting for a trip to Vegas. But then Pam would say, "No, Bobby, you've got to stand up to him; it's time to stop being a boy." Pam was the character who would make things happen.

The executives assigned to the show told me that audiences wouldn't accept this. We need someone to root for, they

said. They'll be rooting for Pam, I suggested. Yes, but Pam is a woman, and audiences might resist accepting a woman as hero; to make matters worse, Pam is a woman with A Past, and women of uncertain virtue are not acceptable candidates for rooting. Besides, some viewers would feel threatened by Pam and resent her pushiness. We could root for Pam, I was told, but only as an adjunct to Bobby; Bobby would have to be the hero, and to be a hero he would have to be virtuous and strong. This didn't sound right to me, but they were the network and I was new at this, so I made the changes.

This shift from the original concept made Bobby dull. Strong and responsible from the start, he had no place to go as a character. The potential for dramatic conflict between Pam and J.R.—as they

In my original conception of Dallas, Bobby Ewing was a spoiled brat, charming, playful, occasionally irresponsible—a playboy

bounced Bobby back and forth—was lessened; gone was the dramatic process that would have led to the *emergence* of the heroic Bobby and the long-awaited moment when he would stand up to everybody and declare himself no damned tennis ball. As a result, the show, at first, lacked a center. But not for long. Into the unoccupied middle stepped J.R. Ewing, propelled by the boundless energy and considerable skills of Larry Hagman.

The emergence of J.R. as the center of *Dallas* and as a world celebrity does not seem to have affected the department of pronouncements. I like to create prismatic characters, interesting people who have flaws, who make mistakes and have blind spots. To this day I still have trouble selling such characters. For whom will the audience root? I am asked. When I answer, I'm told that audiences won't root for her because she's married

and having an affair, or him because he drinks too much, or the other because he has a wart. But what about *Dallas*? I ask; for whom are we rooting on *Dallas*? Bobby and Pam, they say.

We are, of course, rooting for J.R. That doesn't mean we're rooting for the triumph of evil; it means only that we are intrigued by this rogue: we want to test him. Will he really chisel his lifelong friends? Will he wreck Lucy's life by arranging a marriage that will serve his purposes? Will he forge his daddy's name on a fake will? Yes, he will. He wouldn't really sleep with his wife's little sister, would he? Oh, yes, he would! The writers stretch and stretch and it turns out there is no limit.

I could be wrong about this. The other day I was being interviewed in a Beverly Hills restaurant, and I expounded on this notion—that J.R. is the rooted-for character on *Dallas*. Three women at the adjacent table spoke up to contradict me. They emphatically do *not* root for J.R., they said (while adding that they *love* to watch him; he's so *bad*). The person they root for, they explained, is Sue Ellen, J.R.'s wife.

Fine. I accept that. I love it, in fact. The person being rooted for is a drunk and an adulteress, a woman who gave birth to a child she refused to touch for much of a season—a woman who, not incidentally, treats one of our ostensible rootees, Pamela, miserably. "The audience," apparently, chooses its rooting candidates for itself.

Given the contradictory directives that come from the network, and the disproven yet clung-to pronouncements of its executives, it seems miraculous that anything good ever gets done on series television. At this point, I don't think there *are* any good dramatic series on TV. A few shows are good for what they are—*The Rockford Files* and *Kojak* were pretty good entertainment; *Hart to Hart* and *Dallas* are slick fluff, easy to watch—but "what they are" is not really good drama. I remember TV drama that made me angry, that made me think, that made me change my mind about things. I remember *The Defenders* when E.G. Marshall and Robert Reed defended two survivors of a shipwreck who were guilty of cannibalism; and *Naked City* when Paul Burke had to shoot a homicidal, aging war hero who he felt had been exploited. Those were series that got you

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VCR

Update

Here's a guide to
the latest models
and their special wrinkles

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

Sometime in 1981, the videocassette-recorder population in American homes should pass two million. By the end of the year, VCR owners will have fed their machines 15 million blank tapes, spent at least a quarter of a billion dollars to buy and rent prerecorded cassettes and aimed perhaps half a million video cameras at family and friends.



The VCR has turned out to be an attractive instrument, indeed. Although designed more or less specifically as a "time-shift" device for taping programs off the air (or cable or pay-cable), it has become a triple-threat machine. The battery-operated portable version can be used with a color or black-and-white video camera as a carry-about home-movie system, turning out high-quality, home-brewed programming. And prerecorded tapes of recent movies, offered now by all major film studios, have been surprisingly popular despite their relatively high cost (from about \$40 to \$100), as have cassettes of literally thousands of classic films and television shows.

While there has been an abundance of new-model introductions, this year's VCRs are basically refinements of last year's products. The war over playing time has subsided, and the major new improvements have been in terms of convenience and "special effects." The most significant convenience feature is rapid scan, or visual fast-forward and rewind. This permits you to zip through

a program, usually at a speed of nine to 17 times normal speed, with a recognizable picture on the screen, to locate a desired segment or to skip unwanted sequences, such as commercials.

Another convenience feature is remote control, now including an increasing number of options. Almost all non-portable models, and many portables, have some form of remote control, be it only a hand-held "pause" button to stop the recorder for short intervals. Among the new models, such functions as scan, stop-, slow- and fast-motion and even channel-change can be controlled from the viewing chair. Except for the MCA Mitsubishi model, which has optional wireless remote, all VCR remotes are connected to the recorder by slim cables.

In many cases, the special-effects features—including still-picture, fixed or variable fast-motion, slow-motion and frame-by-frame advance—aren't really satisfactory for prolonged viewing because of the presence of horizontal lines, or "sound bars," in the picture. Some of

the newest machines, however, have special circuits to suppress this distraction and present a sharp, clear picture at any speed. (These special effects, while given much play in the showroom, usually get relatively little use in the home.)

There are three general types of home VCR: the basic machine, the programmable and the portable. While almost all current-model VCRs have built-in digital clocks and timers for recording shows while nobody is at home or everybody's asleep, the standard models are designed only to turn on at a specified time—usually within 24 hours of being set—and record one program, or several consecutive programs, on the same channel.

Programmable recorders can be preset to turn on, record a show, turn off, turn to another channel, record, turn off, and so on, or to record the same time segment every day (so you don't miss your favorite soap while at work). Programming capability varies, but some machines can be instructed to tape up to eight different shows on the same or different channels over a 14-day period—adequate to keep you from missing your favorites during a two-week vacation.

Although any current-model VCR may be used with a camera for making home-movie tapes at home, battery-operated portable VCRs are specifically designed for both in- and out-of-home use. When

*Text continued on page 77.
Chart begins on page 70.*

Comparative Chart of

BRAND	MODEL	MANUFACTURER	FORMATS/SPEEDS	PROGRAM TIMER	SPECIAL EFFECTS	REMOTE CONTROL	OTHER FEATURES	DIMENSIONS (W x H x D—in.)	WEIGHT	WARRANTY (PARTS-LABOR)	SUGGESTED LIST PRICE
AKAI	VPS-7350 Portable	Akai	V1, V3	6 events, 7 days	Variable forward; still to 3X; fixed 2X speed; frame advance	Still/pause; variable forward; 2X speed	2 sound tracks; Dolby sound; program location system; lock	11 x 4 x 2 13 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$1595 (Including tuner/timer)	
GENERAL ELECTRIC	1VCR1006X	Hitachi	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 10 days	10X scan	Pause		17 x 6 x 13 24 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	None	
	1VCR1012W	Hitachi	V1, V2, V3	5 events, 7 days	10X scan; fixed 3X & 1/2X speeds; still; frame advance	All record, playback & special-effects functions	Memory search	17 x 6 x 13 24 lb.		None	
HITACHI	VT-8000A	Hitachi	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan	Pause		17 x 6 x 13 24 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$1195	
	VT-8500A	Hitachi	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan; fixed 3X & 1/2X speeds; still; frame advance	All record, playback, special-effects functions & channel change		17 x 6 x 13 24 lb.		\$1295	
	VT-6500A Portable	Hitachi	V1, V2, V3				INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE AT PRESS TIME				
JVC	HR-6700U	JVC	V1, V3	6 events, 7 days	2X speed; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	Pause and all special effects	Separate heads for each speed	18 x 6 x 14 31 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$1350	
	HR-2200U Portable	JVC	V1	1 event, 7 days	10X scan; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	All record, playback & special-effects functions	4 heads; power-saving standby switch; record lock	11 x 4 x 11 11 lb.		\$1350 (Including tuner/timer)	
MAGNAVOX	8310	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours		Pause		19 x 7 x 15 31 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$795	
	8320	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change		19 x 5 x 14 28 lb.		\$1075	
	8330	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Power-loss protection	19 x 5 x 14 28 lb.		\$1195	
	8340	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan; 2X speed; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	All record, playback, special-effects functions & channel change		19 x 6 x 15 33 lb.		\$1350	
	8370 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	Not included	Still; frame advance	Still/pause; frame advance	Includes power supply/battery charger	12 x 4 x 10 13 lb.		\$1075 (Tuner/ timer extra)	
	8371 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	Same as 8370	Same as 8370	Includes tuner/timer	12 x 4 x 10 13 lb.		\$1195	
	8372 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	Same as 8370	Same as 8370	Includes programmable tuner/ timer	12 x 4 x 10 13 lb.		\$1295	
CURTIS MATHES	F740	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours				19 x 7 x 15 31 lb.	4 years/4 years (subject to transportation charge)	\$800	
	F736	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Auto-rewind	19 x 5 x 14 27 lb.		\$1100	
	F737	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan; 2X speed; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	All record, playback, special-effects functions & channel change		19 x 6 x 15 33 lb.		\$1400	
	F735/F739 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	Still; frame advance	Still/pause; frame advance; channel change	Includes programmable tuner/ timer	12 x 5 x 10 13 lb.		\$1200	
MCA MITSUBISHI	HS-300U	Mitsubishi	V1, V3	6 events, 7 days	15X scan; fixed slow-motion; still; frame advance	Wireless; all record, play, special-effects functions & channel change	5 direct-drive motors; microprocessor-controlled	19 x 6 x 14 33 lb.	1 year (Head: 6 months) 6 months	\$1450	
MONTGOMERY WARD							INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE AT PRESS TIME				

Home Videocassette Recorders

BRAND	MODEL	MANUFACTURER	FORMAT/SPEEDS	PROGRAM TIMER	SPECIAL EFFECTS	REMOTE CONTROL	OTHER FEATURES	DIMENSIONS (W x H x D-in.) WEIGHT	WARRANTY (PARTS, LABOR)	SUGGESTED LIST PRICE
PANASONIC										
	PV-1300	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Auto-stop	19 x 6 x 14 27 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$1095
	PV-1400	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Auto-stop	19 x 6 x 14 27 lb.		\$1295
	PV-1750	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan; 2X speed; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	All record, playback, special-effects functions & channel change	4 heads; auto-stop	19 x 7 x 15 33 lb.		\$1495
	PV-3100 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	Not included	Still; frame advance	Pause	Backspace editing; Includes power supply/battery charger	12 x 5 x 10 13 lb.		\$1150 (Programmable tuner/timer \$350)
	PV-3200 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	Same as PV-3100	Same as PV-3100	Includes tuner/timer	12 x 5 x 10 13 lb.		\$1295
J.C. PENNEY										
	5011	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours				19 x 7 x 15 38 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$699
	5010	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Auto-rewind	19 x 5 x 14 28 lb.		\$995
	5503 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	Still; frame advance	Still/pause; frame advance	Includes tuner/timer	12 x 4 x 10 12 lb.		\$1095
	5504 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	Same as 5503	Same as 5503	Includes programmable tuner/timer	12 x 4 x 10 12 lb.		\$1195
PHILCO										
	V1010	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours				19 x 6 x 15 30 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$749
	V1440	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Synchronous editing	19 x 5 x 14 28 lb.		\$995
	V1550	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Synchronous editing	19 x 5 x 14 29 lb.		\$1150
	V1715 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	Still; frame advance	Pause/still; frame advance	Synchronous editing	12 x 4 x 10 14 lb.		\$1500 (Including tuner/timer)
QUASAR										
	5030	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change		19 x 5 x 14 27 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$1100
	5040	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change		19 x 5 x 14 27 lb.		\$1250
	5160	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan; 2X speed; variable slow motion; still; frame advance	All special-effects functions & channel change		19 x 6 x 15 33 lb.		\$1500
	5300 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	Not included	Slow-motion; still; frame advance	Pause/still; frame advance		11 x 4 x 10 13 lb.		\$1080 (Tuner/timer extra)
RCA										
	VET-250	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event, 24 hours	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change		19 x 5 x 14 27 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$1045
	VET-650	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events, 14 days	9X scan; 2X speed; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	All record, playback, special-effects functions & channel change	Scene-transition stabilizer	19 x 6 x 15 33 lb.		\$1395
	VEP-150 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	5 events, 7 days		Pause	Includes tuner/timer	10 x 5 x 11 15 lb.		\$1149
SANYO										
	VTC-9100A	Sanyo	B2	1 event, 24 hours		Pause	Auto-shutoff	19 x 8 x 15 44 lb.	1 year/ 1 year	\$695
	VCR-5000	Sanyo	B2, B3	1 event, 24 hours	15X scan; still	Pause	Auto-shutoff	18 x 6 x 15 33 lb.		\$895
	VCR-5050	Sanyo	B2, B3	1 event, 24 hours	15X scan; still; frame advance	Stop; pause; rewind; all special effects	Auto-rewind	18 x 6 x 15 33 lb.		\$995
SEARS										
	53055	Sanyo	B2	1 event, 24 hours		Pause	Auto-shutoff	20 x 8 x 16 44 lb.	1 year/ 1 year	\$795
	5306	Sanyo	B2, B3	1 event, 24 hours	15X scan; still	Still/pause	Auto-rewind	18 x 6 x 15 32 lb.		\$895
	5307 Portable	Toshiba	B2, B3	1 event, 24 hours	15X scan; still	Still/pause		13 x 6 x 13 21 lb.		\$1145 (Including tuner/timer)
SHARP										
	VC-7400	Sharp	V1, V3	1 event, 24 hours		Pause	Front-load; tape-remaining indicator	19 x 6 x 15 32 lb.	1 year/ 90 days	\$900

Chart continued on page 77

A Reporter's Post-mortem:

It Was Two Jimmy Carters vs. One Ronald Reagan

By presenting contradictory TV images, the Democratic candidate confused the public and crippled his chances for reelection

By JAMES WOOTEN

Ever since I happened across it the very first time, so many years ago—long before I started reporting on the country's national campaigns—I've always considered Theodore H. White's explanation (in his "The Making of the President: 1960") of why Richard Nixon looked so utterly miserable in his first televised debate with John Kennedy to be one of the most fascinating paragraphs ever written about American politics.

This is what he said:

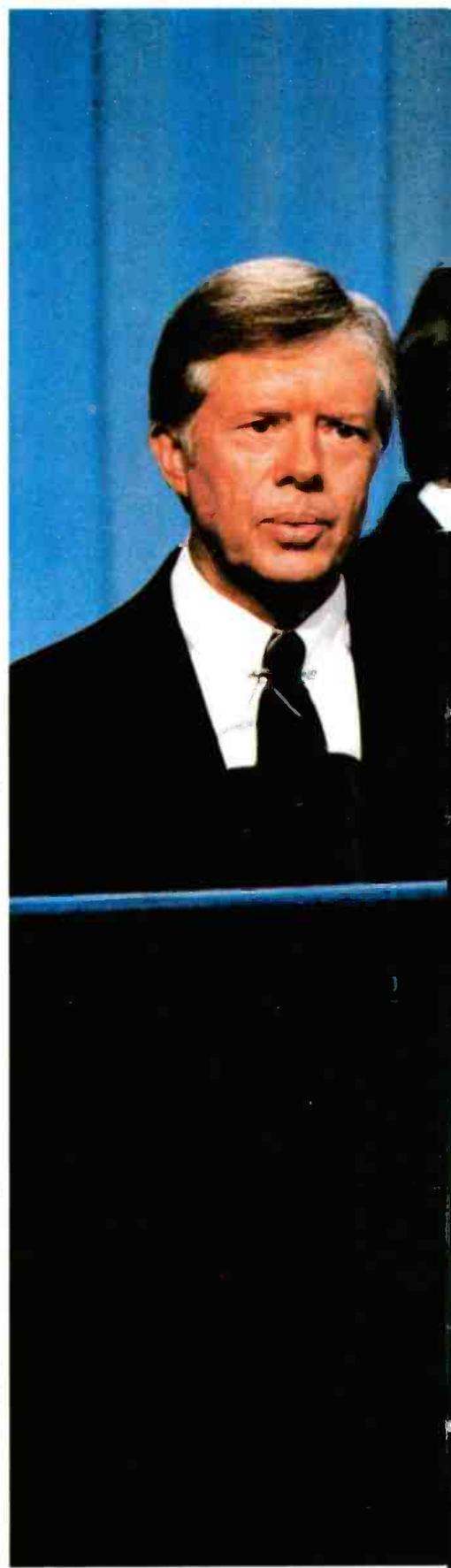
The Vice President . . . suffers from a handicap that is serious only on television: his is a light, naturally transparent skin. On a visual camera that takes pictures by optical projection, this transparent skin photographs cleanly and well; but a television camera projects electronically by an image-orthicon tube, which is a cousin of the x-ray tube. It seems to go beneath the skin. . . . On television, the camera on Nixon is usually held away from him, for in close-up, his transparent skin shows the tiniest hair growing in

the skin follicles beneath the surface, even after he has just shaved; and for the night of the first debate, CBS, understandably zealous, had equipped its cameras with brand-new tubes for the most perfect projection possible—a perfection of projection that could only be harmful to the Vice President.

So, by golly, it was right there in his genes all the time; right there in his naturally transparent skin. What's a wonder to me is that later he failed to include in his list of enemies the name of the fellow who really did him in years before: the guy who invented the dreaded image-orthicon tube.

What Richard Nixon learned from that disastrous experience nearly 21 years ago, most all of us have come to understand since then about television, which is that in any form or function—whether it's pushing cat food or the illustrious career of Rula Lenska or presenting the unctuous epigrams of the Rev. Jerry Falwell or the less-than-reverent bumping and grinding of *Charlie's Angels*—television is a very, very tricky business. And when it's mixed with politics, especially Presidential politics, an even more curious and unpredictable chemistry results.

continued





Carter came across as sour, acerbic, cranky, small and not a little mean

The blend—television and politics—can be volatile but most often is not, and the combination is seldom as explosive as its separate elements might suggest. Nevertheless, a tried and tested formula that has always produced a perfectly acceptable potion under one set of circumstances can bubble and boil itself into pure poison given the slightest alteration in those circumstances. Even the very same politician can seem to be or be perceived to be an entirely different animal when there's an infinitesimal change in the context of his or her appearance.

All of which rather strongly (and logically) suggests that no one, least of all myself, should have been greatly shocked or surprised by the ineffectiveness of Jimmy Carter's television campaign last year. It was, in my view, abjectly awful—from his paid commercials to the staging of his media events for local and network news programs. What's more—and what was most surprising to me, personally—Carter himself seemed absolutely unsuited to television under any circumstances in which he appeared.

This is not to suggest that had he been better he might still be President, but he might not have been beaten so badly by Ronald Reagan had his electronic performances and the production of them been more finely attuned to his political needs and his personal aptitudes. My view is that he was abysmally misused and the medium itself was misused in his behalf.

I was surprised because I had watched him so closely in 1976—watched him film many of the commercials that brought him the attention and finally the affirmative response of millions of voters, and watched him handle himself in the scores of press conferences, speeches, off-the-cuff conversations with reporters and all the other events that become a part of any candidate's unpaid television campaign.

All through that summer and autumn, he was superb. There was the smile, of

course—that carried him a long way in a political setting that cried out for hope and optimism about the country and its directions—but there was also his rather uncanny ability to “break the glass,” as it is sometimes put in television: to shatter that formidable but invisible barrier that exists between a television performer (which, after all, is what a candidate for President now has become) and the audience that exists on the other side of the screen. Carter broke the glass with a greater frequency than anyone in national politics today, and he learned to do it by practice and by dint of his impressive inner disciplines. I came to imagine that there was within his skull a large collection of tapes, each devoted to a specific topic or issue in the campaign and each activated by the mere mention of the topic by the reporters who trailed after him all year. Time after time, the little tidbits of information and opinion came rolling out, in the same form: concise, syntax-perfect, ready-to-use chunks of 10 or 12 seconds, just right for the evening news.

Not that he was flawless, of course. Occasionally, one of the tapes would malfunction—continue rolling after it should have stopped, or kick into gear by mistake when another tape was called for—but throughout the long grind of his 1976 Presidential pursuit, Carter was the perfect television candidate, a man of his time who used the medium artfully and made very few electronic mistakes.

Last year, however, was an entirely different story.

One of the oddities of a Presidential campaign is that it often does not attract to its warriors the advertising consultants who are considered to be the best in the business. That's because the ones who've been around for a while—long enough to establish such reputations—realize that *paid* media in a Presidential campaign is much less important than, say, in a campaign for the U.S. Senate or a governorship. They generally agree that paid advertising's most useful role in a campaign is to dilute whatever

negatives may be produced by *unpaid* media: i.e., the coverage of the campaign as a news event or a series of news events. Since Senate or House campaigns, as a rule, receive less coverage, the candidates find paid media to be much more important. In Presidential campaigns, the coverage is so intense—and so extended—that candidates discover that unpaid media is their principal conduit to the voters. It is, therefore, the aspect of their television campaign that should be exploited rapaciously as a means of offering the audience the major philosophical theses of the campaign and the best side of the candidate's personality.

But the Carter managers—and perhaps Carter himself—seemed to have it reversed in 1980. They used unpaid media—the media events that an incumbent President can stage so grandly whenever he pleases, wherever he chooses to travel, with media attention guaranteed—as the stage for Jimmy Carter on the political offensive. This was particularly true in the general-election battle with Ronald Reagan. Carter, in formal speeches, off-the-cuff remarks to reporters on the other side of airport fences and even in press conferences, came across as sour, acerbic, cranky, small and not a little mean.

Consequently, the one principal advantage he owned—his consistent appraisal by millions of Americans as a really nice guy, a prince of a fellow doing his dead-level best in a difficult job—was squandered away in situations that were not completely within his control. The smile was gone, and in its place was a brittle visage that was alien to the Carter identity in the minds of the public. He seemed a bit strident. He appeared to overreach in his efforts to plant tiny seeds of doubt about Reagan in the voters' collective psyche.

On the other hand, in the Carter campaign's paid media, he was presented as “the President.” “A strong man in a sensitive job” went the tag line for many of his early commercials. A half-hour profile was produced and broadcast just once (on ABC at a cost of \$60,000 in early

Reagan simply wished to be seen as the sort of fellow who could be President

January) opposite *60 Minutes* on CBS and a National Football League play-off game on NBC. The audience was not significant, as one might imagine; but what is more important, in terms of the effectiveness of the Carter campaign on television, is that in that particular profile and in every other piece of paid advertising in his behalf, he was shown doing those things and saying those things and being those things that should have been the focus of his unpaid media campaign.

His paid media, rather than complementing or diluting his unpaid media, simply stood in stark contrast to it. On the one hand he was an irritable little terrier, snapping at any hand that seemed to move against him, yapping his way along the campaign trail; on the other hand, he was the quiet-voiced, steady, deliberate, evenhanded Chief Executive of the country who worked late in the lonely Oval Office, the burdens of the American society and the world weighing heavy on his sloping shoulders. There was a contradiction here that, in my view at least, most Americans had trouble resolving. Which fellow was running for reelection? The President or this irritable little politician?

It occurs to me—and to others who, like me, enjoy that marvelous luxury of hindsight—that Carter would have been better advised and served to have saved the capital of his standing with the public as a nice fellow and spent only the accrued interest from such an asset. He should have been the President in his *unpaid* media—calm, unruffled, deliberative, steady—and used his *paid* media, which he controlled completely both in production and performance, to offer his political critiques of Reagan and the Republicans. Because he reversed that selection, it seems to me that he squandered both phases of his television campaign and only confused his audiences.

Reagan, on the other hand, ran a brilliantly simple television campaign. It was not the work of consultants who regarded their task as complex. We were

treated to an endless narrative of how he won the governorship of California and then ran that state better than anybody has run any state in the entire history of America. There he was, time after time, taking the oath of office in Sacramento and meeting with California legislators and solving every single problem in sight; and to supplement that, we were treated to Ronald-Reagan-in-the-library-for-a-brief-chat-with-the-folks commercials. In these, he was the consummate actor whose chief asset was his instant identification—not only as *the* Ronald Reagan of the *General Electric Theater* and *Death Valley Days*, but as a generic character whose presence on our screens is now and has been for a long time a routine fact of television life. He was of *The Waltons* or *Little House on the Prairie* or, perhaps even more advantageous to his own goals, he was any one and all of those fellows who every day and every night speak mellifluously to us about the virtues of this bathroom tissue or that deodorant or that insurance company or this brand of aspirin.

Most important, though, Reagan never departed from his character or *that* character. Not once. Carter could be seen on TV screens as two people: thoughtful President, snappish politician—but Reagan was always the Gipper: avuncular, hopeful, cut from the same timber as the rest of television's most enduring cast of characters.

Carter's advertising consultants (specifically Gerald Rafshoon, who was with him from the start of his political career) did manage at least a quasi-innovation. From the campaign of Gerald Ford in 1976, they borrowed the technique of the anti-Reagan man-on-the-street interviews, conducted chiefly in California to give them the added credibility of faces that, in speaking ill of the Gipper, should have known whereof they spoke. But even as the anti-Carter commercials of the same ilk and kidney did little to Carter in 1976, these seemed to bruise Reagan only very slightly.

Reagan's advertising, on the other hand, came up with a dandy little rebuke

to Carter for his refusal to participate in the debate in Baltimore with Reagan and John Anderson, the independent candidate. Using an empty lectern, the commercial suggested, in no uncertain terms, that Carter would not be there and had not been there because he was unable to answer the questions that he knew Reagan would be certain to ask. What was most persuasive about this little piece of work was that it issued from the premise that most Americans really did want to know why the President was refusing to take part in a debate, and it provided Reagan's simple, straightforward answer: he won't debate because he's afraid to debate.

Never mind all the arcane politics behind Carter's decision to stay away—the reasoning that he would only hurt himself if he gave the prestige of his appearance to Anderson—because it was simply too complex for the voters to digest. They wanted an answer to the question of his absence. Reagan gave it to them. I thought it was highly effective. So did the Carter people.

As to the eventual debate between Carter and Reagan, it is much too simplistic to state bluntly that either of them actually *won* it or *lost* it. What is much more pertinent to any such encounter is whether either or both of the participants were able to achieve their individual objectives. For Reagan, it was elementary. He simply wished to be seen as the sort of fellow who could be President—the same sort of fellow whose image Carter was projecting in his paid media. I think Reagan succeeded in doing that far beyond his wildest dreams, while Carter, standing a few feet away, was presenting himself yet again as a split personality. I watched the debate in a union hall on the south side of Chicago with several dozen pro-Carter steelworkers, most of whom suggested to me when it was over that their man had bested the Republican.

I could not agree. Neither could I disagree, because it had seemed to me that both men had generally comported

"WHY I ASK PEOPLE TO SUPPORT UNITED WAY... AND HOW"



DIANE HIRES

HOME: Sylvania, Ohio

OCCUPATION: Dental Hygienist

AGE: 33 **Married:** Two daughters

INTERESTS: Jogging, skiing, photography and volunteering for United Way

"Toledo's United Way has over 12,000 volunteers with a relatively small professional staff. And it is because of this voluntary effort that United Way only uses a few cents of every dollar

for campaign and managerial costs.

"I am amazed at how many hours people are willing to devote to United Way. Volunteers on the citizen review panel often spend 15 to 20 hours a month reviewing budgets and deciding where to distribute funds according to each agency's need.

"When I talk to people about United Way I like to ask if they have any questions about the campaign or if they are aware of the new agencies we've added. Most people are interested and surprised at the wide range of services United Way helps fund. And many realize that they know people who are benefiting from these services."



Thanks to you, it works, for all of us. **United Way**

TWO JIMMY CARTERS

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themselves quite well. What struck me about that debate in Cleveland, however, was that Reagan masterfully presented himself as a man that the audience could imagine as the President of the United States. That was all he needed to do—and he did it and he did it well, and that really was the secret of his television all year long. The Gipper took no chances on the tube. He was simply the Gipper.

Carter was electronically all over the lot, and that robbed his television of any chance to persuade.

Still, it probably didn't make any difference, because the difference between the 1976 Jimmy Carter—so deft and positive about his television identity—and the Jimmy Carter we discovered on television last year was precisely the difference that makes television and politics such an unpredictable blend.

The context for Carter had changed. Perhaps it is true, as has often been said, that Carter is only effective as a campaigner when he is cast in the role of a challenger and not a defender. Whether that is the case or not, the backdrop for his television had been altered in the four years since his campaign in 1976.

Perhaps he had run out of ethical proof for his competence, his compassion and all the other virtues that he had quietly but masterfully communicated in 1976; and perhaps he knew that, too, and turned his attention in 1980 to the engineer's favorite topic: the technique. In fact, I've often wondered if that may not have had its genesis as early as his first few months in office, when he asked for national television time to make a speech on energy and then went on-camera in front of a fire, wearing a cardigan sweater.

Who remembers that he said anything of substance? Nearly everyone remembers that he wore the sweater, though.

And who can forget that sometime during that evening, as Jimmy Carter spoke to the American people, the fire went out. It was no big thing, of course, but there it was in the background, cluttering up the context of the President.

When you mix television and politics, it is context that matters. Perhaps, in 1980, Carter's context was that of a loser—and no matter how much he spent on television, it would have done him no good at all. ■

VCR UPDATE CHART *continued from page 71*

BRAND	MODEL	MANUFACTURER	FORMAT/SPEEDS	PROGRAM TIMER	SPECIAL EFFECTS	RE-MOTE CONTROL	OTHER FEATURES	DIMENSIONS (W x H x D—in.)	WEIGHT	WARRANTY (PARTS/LABOR)	SUGGESTED LIST PRICE
SONY											
	SL-5400	Sony	B1 (play). B2, B3	1 event. 3 days	13X scan; 3X speed; still	All special-effects functions	Cassette changer available	20 x 7 x 15	33 lb.	1 year/90 days	\$1250
	SL-5600	Sony	B1 (play). B2, B3	4 events. 14 days	13X scan; 3X speed; still	All special-effects functions	Cassette changer available	20 x 7 x 15	36 lb.		\$1350
	SL-5800	Sony	B1 (play). B2, B3	4 events. 14 days	Variable 5-20X scan; 3X speed; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	All special-effects functions	Clear picture in stop, slow and frame advance	19 x 6 x 15	37 lb.		\$1450
	SL-3000 Portable	Sony	B1 (play). B2	Not included			Includes power supply/battery charger	12 x 5 x 14	20 lb.		\$1300 (Tuner/timer \$500)
SYLVANIA											
	VC2200	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event. 24 hours				19 x 6 x 15	30 lb.	1 year/90 days	\$749
	VC2900	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	1 event. 24 hours	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Synchronous editing	19 x 5 x 14	28 lb.		\$995
	VC3100	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events. 14 days	9X scan	Pause; scan; channel change	Synchronous editing	19 x 5 x 14	29 lb.		\$1150
	VC4515 Portable	Matsushita	V1, V2, V3	8 events. 14 days	Still; frame advance	Pause/still; frame advance	Synchronous editing	12 x 4 x 10	14 lb.		\$1500 (Including tuner/timer)
TECHNICOLOR 212 Portable											
		Funai	CVC (30 min.)	Not included	Variable slow- & fast-motion; still		Includes power supply/battery charger	9 x 3 x 10	7 lb.	1 year/90 days	\$995 (No tuner/timer)
TOSHIBA											
	V-8000	Toshiba	B2, B3	1 event. 7 days	17 & 40X scan; 2X speed	All playback & special-effects functions	Auto-rewind; IC controls	18 x 6 x 15	29 lb.	1 year/90 days	\$1245
	V-8035 Portable	Toshiba	B2, B3	1 event. 24 hours	17X scan	Pause		12 x 5 x 13	20 lb.		\$1425 (Including tuner/timer)
ZENITH											
	VR9000W	Sony	B2, B3	1 event. 3 days	10X scan; still	Pause/still; scan		19 x 6 x 15	33 lb.	1 year/90 days	None
	VR9750	Sony	B2, B3	4 events. 14 days	10X scan; 3X speed; variable slow-motion; still; frame advance	All special-effects functions	Clear picture in slow, still and frame modes	19 x 6 x 15	36 lb.		\$1350

VCR UPDATE

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they're taken outside, all unnecessary parts are left home to keep the weight down. The stay-at-home components are the tuner, timer, AC power supply (which includes a battery charger) and RF converter (which superimposes the taped picture on a TV channel so it can be seen on a TV set). All of these components usually are in a single compact unit called the tuner/timer, into which the portable VCR is easily plugged for tape viewing or off-the-air recording. Some portables are available only with a basic, nonprogrammable tuner-timer. But, increasingly, programmable options are being offered to give the portable all the capabilities of a homebound unit.

The most significant development in portables this year is a gradual reduction in weight and bulk. Standard portables have come down from 20 pounds or more to 12 or 14, including cassette and battery. But carrying one of these babies, along with a 4-to-8-pound camera, still doesn't make the out-on-location user exactly light-footed.

The only radically new VCR this year is the Technicolor, which weighs in at a light seven pounds and is sold specifically (and almost exclusively) for portable use. It's designed around a tiny new "Compact Video Cassette," or CVC, which is only slightly larger than a standard audio cassette and contains tape one-quarter-inch wide, as opposed to the half-inch tape used in standard Beta and VHS recorders. The light weight and convenient shirt-pocket-sized cassette are definite advantages for out-of-home video photography, but, unlike the other portables, the Technicolor is not currently suitable for time-shift use or for playing prerecorded cassettes. The miniature cassette will record for only 30 minutes (although a one-hour version is in the works), and so far no tuner/timer is available for recording off the air.

The little Technicolor machine marks the first departure from so-called standard cassettes since the Beta and VHS formats established themselves in the latter 1970s. Although the Beta format was the first to gain acceptance, it is now heavily outsold by VHS (which stands for Video Home System, if you're interested). The reasons have more to do with

history than with picture quality or convenience, areas in which both are about equal. Until the 1980 models, VHS machines generally had a strong advantage over Betas in recording time per cassette. The first Beta recorders could store one hour of programming on the longest-playing cassette then available; early VHS machines could record for two hours. Successive changes in machines and cassettes—principally the addition of slower recording and playback speeds—increased the recording time per cassette to the point where VHS machines now can record up to six hours on a single tape. The speed advantage from 1976 through 1979 was strongly in favor of VHS, and was largely responsible for that system's huge lead.

For all practical purposes, the recording-time argument is now moot, although VHS still does have a one-hour advantage. Beta machines, thanks to a slower speed and a cassette with slightly more tape than earlier ones contained, now can get five hours on a single tape. Most current VHS and Beta machines have at least two speeds for recording or playback. The faster speed provides less recording time per cassette but slightly

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better picture quality, although sometimes the difference isn't evident.

Except for playing time, Beta and VHS machines perform equally well—in fact, you may find more difference between two machines of the same format than between a Beta and a VHS. Prerecorded material is available in both formats, and neither is a candidate for extinction. Beta's time disadvantage may be offset for some buyers by the fact that these tapes are somewhat more compact and often cost slightly less than VHS cassettes of comparable playing time. So tape format needn't be the primary factor in your choice of a machine unless you plan to swap tapes with someone else; then, of course, you should be sure to buy a machine that accommodates the same format and speed as your swapping partner's.

Home VCRs are now available under 21 different brand names in about 60 current models. However, if you do any extensive shopping, you'll see that some sets with different trademarks bear a strong resemblance to one another. This is because all home VCRs sold in the United States are built by 10 manufacturers in Japan and are imported by domestic TV-set makers (as well as by the subsidiaries of Japanese television and VCR manufacturers). Actually, there are fewer than 30 different basic VCRs now offered here. The remainder are either identical to others except for the brand insignia or have only some minor cosmetic or functional variations.

In the table of available VCRs beginning on page 70, you'll be able to spot which models are similar by noting the actual manufacturer and the features listed. You'll notice a strong similarity among models from Magnavox, Curtis Mathes, Panasonic, J.C. Penney, Philco, Quasar, RCA and Sylvania, for example. However, it's a mistake to jump to the conclusion that machines that appear to be similar are identical. Matsushita Electric, which manufactures the recorders in question, generally tailors them to the desires of the company that will put its brand name on them—so there are some differences in features and design among sets which may otherwise appear identical on the charts.

While the family listings go a long way toward showing you which models are equivalent and giving you some basis for

Guide to VCR Features

To help you compare VCRs in the quick-reference chart, here are some of the recorders' major features, plus a guide to other specifications listed.

Auto-rewind. Rewinds the tape automatically when the end of the reel is reached.

Auto-stop. Automatically stops the tape in playback at the end of the recorded portion.

Dimensions/weight. Rounded to the nearest inch and nearest pound. For portables, dimensions refer only to the recorder *deck* itself and don't include the tuner/timer or power supply/battery charger.

Editing features. Such phrases as "synchronous editing," "backspace editing" and "scene-transition stabilizer" refer to systems designed to minimize picture breakup between the end of one recording and the beginning of another on the same tape.

Fixed fast and slow speeds. The "X" in the table means "times": "3X" indicates three times normal speed; "½X" is slow motion at one-half normal speed.

Frame advance. Permits the user to view the recorded signal as a series of still pictures, advancing the action one frame at a time by means of a push button.

Memory search; program location

system. These are systems designed to find the start of different programs or predetermined locations on the tape.

Portables. Tuner/timers for portables include built-in power supply/battery charger.

Scan. Fast-forward and reverse with a picture on the screen, for quick location of a particular segment of the cassette or for skipping rapidly through unwanted segments. All scan systems operate in both forward and reverse directions. Again, the "X" means "times": "9X scan" indicates the picture moves at nine times normal speed. Scan is sometimes called "cue and review."

Suggested list price. The price as given by the manufacturer. "None" means the manufacturer does not establish suggested list prices. In the case of retail-catalogue chains, price listed is generally the regular catalogue price.

VCR TAPE SPEEDS AND MAXIMUM RECORDING TIMES

Beta	VHS
B1—90 minutes	V1—2 hours
B2—3 hours	V2—4 hours
B3—5 hours (special L-830 tape)	V3—6 hours

CVC (Technicolor) format records 30 minutes on a miniature cassette.

price comparison, they don't necessarily mean you'll get equal satisfaction from two apparently identical machines. The terms of the brands' warranties, for example, may differ. If a dealer who has given you satisfaction in the past carries one of the brands of the machine you're interested in buying, that could be a deciding factor. The reputation of the brand name on the machine and the local availability of authorized service also should be important considerations.

A further note: the prices listed in the table aren't necessarily the final word on the subject; they generally represent the manufacturer's or importer's "suggested

list price" or equivalent. In the case of Sears and J.C. Penney, the prices listed are those in the current catalogues. Discounts are widely available, however, so there's no substitute for doing some legwork.

Speaking of prices, they're generally down from last year. Today's list prices run as low as \$695 for a basic machine, and, even where the price doesn't seem to have changed from 1980, most 1981 machines have been improved and boast new features.

Is now the time to buy a VCR? Consider: in a short five years, the home
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COVERING RACIAL TENSIONS

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Some news executives, however, worry that too much repetition will come across to the audience as "preaching" or "sociology." In Shad Northshield's opinion, "That's a cop out. It's like saying, 'I'm a journalist, not a human being.' Some stories just don't have two points of view. Racism is one of them, and I don't think there is a more significant news story today than the story of race. It's a uniquely American story."

For that reason, Northshield has never been worried about doing stories about black problems over and over, raising the question to his audience, as he puts it, "Are we serious about democracy?" He contends his CBS *Sunday Morning* magazine show tries to do "between 10 to 20 percent" of its stories about blacks. In the past year, *Sunday Morning* did several in-depth reports on black problems, including a Miami follow-up, a story on black teen-age unemployment, a look at how historical preservation in Savannah, Ga., was not disrupting the black community and, just last September, a splendid story on

how local black leaders in Philadelphia averted a near riot last summer and decided to give city officials a chance to carry out their promise to check police brutality.

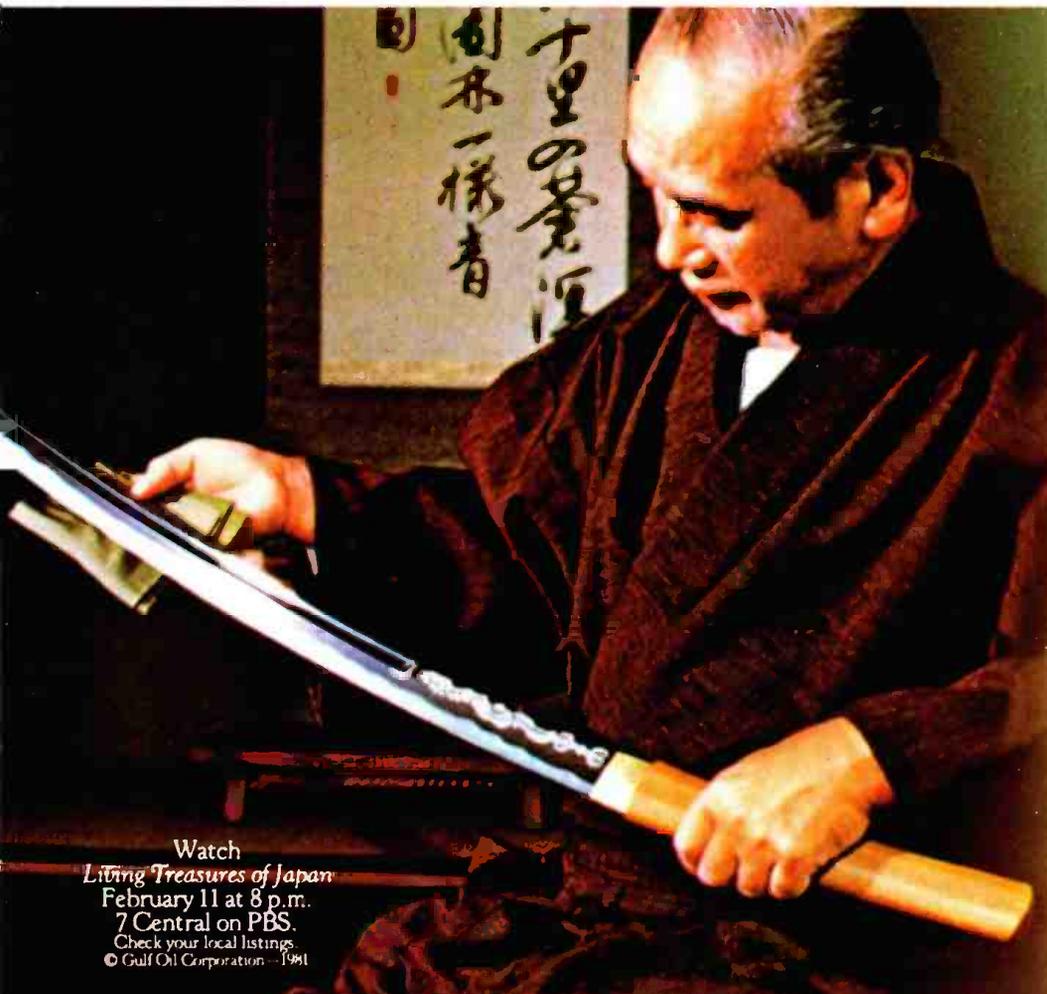
That piece even began with a stab at Northshield's colleagues in the network evening news departments. Opening with a shot of a Jimmy Carter campaign speech last August in a Philadelphia black church, the camera then cut to CBS correspondent Richard Threlkeld standing on a ghetto street in North Philadelphia, saying, "There was another Philadelphia story that didn't make as much news as the Carter speech, and that's why it bears repeating. . . ." Threlkeld then went on to tell the story of how the killing of a black teen-ager by a white cop stirred up three days of demonstrating and rock-throwing in North Philadelphia, which would have turned into another Miami if community leaders had not managed to calm things down.

Last August, more than three months after the Miami riots, CBS returned to that subject with an hour-long documentary about the McDuffie case ("Mi-

ami: The Trial That Sparked the Riots") narrated by Ed Bradley, a top CBS correspondent who is black. Though this report was an unusual look inside the workings of the criminal justice system, it was largely a complex legal story and touched only briefly on the fact that reports of police brutality and a double standard of justice have blacks on the verge of violence all over the country. But more important, this CBS documentary, no matter how admirable, was watched by only about eight million households, compared with the approximately 51 million households that tune in the evening news an average of three times a week. For most of these viewers, if the story doesn't appear on the network news programs, it hasn't happened.

More and more directors of network news coverage are perceiving the black story as a local story. "Our bureau was aware of what was going on in Miami before the riot," says ABC's Opatowsky. "There were economic problems, high unemployment. But we reported the story not in its racial context but as part of

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“Sure the networks ought to be doing more black stories,” concedes an ABC correspondent. “But unless you get a riot, those stories won’t get on the air. . . .”

our general national economic roundup stories. The tension between Miami blacks and Hispanics was a local story; we touch on that when it blows up.”

The argument has some merit. The networks can’t be expected to cover every story in the country that involves blacks; blacks themselves now claim that there is no need for national black leaders because only local leaders really understand the problems of each community. Besides, the network newsmen point out, local news shows have more time to examine these problems with formats that are an hour, even two hours long in some cities.

Trouble is, local stations are not covering the black story any better than the networks. “On a scale of one to 10,” says Pluria Marshall, whose Black Media Coalition and its 65 affiliates nationwide monitor local coverage of black issues, “I’d give them a two. Local news directors still have the attitude that an issue or incident has to be explosive or exciting or scandalous before it’s covered.” Worse, Marshall points out that the four black-owned stations in the country (in Rochester, N.Y.; Detroit; Rhinelander, Wisc.; and Jackson, Miss.) are only doing “just a tad” better covering black issues, mainly because they’re either underfinanced or dependent on the white community for their advertising profits.

There are definitely plenty of stories to go around, but Marshall and others charge that local newsmen tend to be so “insensitive” to an important black story that they miss even the potentially great ones right under their noses.

Consider Boston, “the local media capital of America,” according to a Black

Media Coalition analysis of the top 50 markets, which rated Boston as number one in local-news and public-affairs programming. During the Seventies, Boston stations instituted special shows on black issues—black magazine programs, even a news show called *Black News*. But critics of those shows claim that such “ghetto programming” is viewed only by blacks; whites remain ignorant of what’s happening in the black community.

Meantime, regular news programs were giving the impression that things had calmed down in Boston since the bloody racial clashes following court-ordered desegregation of the city’s school system in the mid-Seventies. Nothing could have been further from the facts. A Justice Department director of community relations believes the Department has received more reports of racial incidents from Boston than from any other city, although no comparative statistics are kept. In fact, Boston may be the only major urban area in the country where blacks fear whites. No black in that city dares to visit South Boston beaches or even the grandstand of Fenway Park, home of the Red Sox—unless he enjoys getting beat up by white thugs. In the first half of 1979, blacks accounted for 71 percent of the victims of racially motivated crimes, though they make up only 20 percent of the city’s population.

That racial tension finally broke in 1979 when a black teen-ager named Darryl Williams was shot in the neck while huddling with his coach on the Charlestown High football field; three white teen-agers were charged with the sniping—and the city blew up with demonstrations, stonings, beatings, the

works.

“The average television viewer was led to believe that Boston was calm, Darryl Williams was shot, and then there was a riot,” recalls Howard Husock, reporter for Boston’s public-television station. Husock put together a four-part series on the black victims of Boston’s racial violence, complete with a shocking interview with three white Boston teenagers nonchalantly discussing how they “rocked houses” owned by blacks and beat up black kids for kicks. Notes Husock, whose report beat out several network contenders for a national award for minority reporting: “Racial incidents had been going on all the time, and nobody was covering them. I just picked up the crumbs that were there for everybody to see.”

Such “crumbs” would have made a terrific special report on one of the network news programs, but there is little pressure on them to look for stories not connected with a major breaking news event—like a riot. “Sure the networks ought to be doing more black stories,” concedes James Walker, an ABC correspondent who covered Miami. “But unless you get a riot, those stories won’t get on the air or won’t get done at all. The competition is fierce inside and outside the networks. It’s wrong, but that’s the way the news business works.”

Not even national black organizations are pressuring the networks for more coverage. Complains Pluria Marshall: “Most black groups—the Urban League, the NAACP, PUSH, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—don’t even have the media on their agen-

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COVERING RACIAL TENSIONS

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da." Similarly, black newsmen, still a token force at the networks, bemoan their own ineffectiveness in getting their bosses to do more black stories. "You meet and talk," says one, "but your impotence is the unspoken constant. You make suggestions, maybe even bang your fists on somebody's desk. The execs say, 'We agree'—then usher you out the door, and that's it."

What will it take to change this attitude of benign neglect toward the plight of black America? "Blacks should use their consumer economic power," suggests Pluria Marshall. "If we could pick up a phone and say to Oldsmobile, 'Look, we're getting ready to put a picket line around your place because we talked to you about sponsoring that racist news and you're still doing it, so we're going to cut off your 25 percent black patronage,' you'd have some changes in the news." Marshall concedes that such action might stir up a wrangle over the First Amendment: he also notes that the black leadership does not seem eager to adopt an economic-boycott strategy. In 1977, when Benjamin Hooks took over as executive director of the NAACP, he criticized television for not reporting "the totality of black life in America" and threatened to picket stations if coverage did not improve. Coverage has not improved, but there have been no pickets.

The shocking fact is, as one network executive quite frankly put it, "few people really care any more" about the problems of blacks. White Americans are caught up in their own problems—inflation, unemployment, energy—and feel that blacks have got plenty of help; it's now time to aid the financially strapped middle class.

That message of white indifference already has reached big-city ghettos across the country, and many black leaders fear that the fury in Miami last May was the first reply from their frustrated and bitter constituents. The message from the ghettos: one proven way to get people to care, to put the problems of blacks back in fashion, is the way it happened in the Sixties—with riots.

Yet there is a more peaceful alternative. By refocusing its cameras again and again on the black community, television can help inform and educate viewers that racism is not yesterday's story but today's story, tomorrow's story, every day's story for as long as "white folks" continue not to care. ■

TONE IT DOWN! SEX IT UP!

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where you hurt *and* where you think; I can't imagine them being produced today.

The reason is that network television has become so competitive. Competition, I remember being taught, is supposed to improve products, but if that is so, the rule is excepted in television. In the old days CBS was so far ahead of the other networks in ratings that it could afford to take chances; it could afford *The Defenders*. And, for that matter, ABC was so distant a third that it could afford to take chances; if *Naked City* averaged only a 25 share, it was doing fine. In today's neck-and-neck ratings race, a show must not only win its time slot to survive, it must win it *fast*. This effectively dictates the kinds of shows that are developed. A successful show must be "promotable"—which is to say melodramatic, sensational, or gimmicky.

The task of developing good dramatic

Today, the cancellation of a hit show could mean the difference between first and second place for CBS or ABC, and neither network can afford to lose a winner . . .

series is further hampered by what I've come to think of as the failure factor. Given the awesome flop rate of new shows, network executives have come to *expect* a show to die. Presented with a bought pilot, the programmers search for flaws, overdiscuss, overanalyze and overtamper. If the show flops, then they can say the flaws proved unsolvable. If the show succeeds, the credit can be shared by those who "fixed" the flaws.

When only one in 10 filmed pilots becomes a series and one in nine or 10 series becomes a hit, it doesn't seem unreasonable for network executives to assume the worst and resist the impulse to enthusiasm. Reasonable or not, however, it is a tough attitude to come up against.

So dramatic series television is not very good because of the networks—right? After listing all my gripes against the network for all to see, I would have to say: Wrong. Dramatic series TV isn't very good because of the creator-producers.

The closely competitive situation that dominates network TV today may restrict the possibility of developing good shows, but it also opens up possibilities for producers of hit shows. When I worked as a story editor for *Family*, these possibilities were exploited regularly. The producer, Nigel McKeand, refused time and again to compromise the integrity of the show. On one occasion, we heard that ABC was going to pull a show about homosexuality if a certain change were not made, a change ordered by Broadcast Standards. The change would have dissipated the impact of the episode, and McKeand refused to make it. If the network pulled the show, he would call a press conference to explain the controversy.

Family at that time was a ratings hit, as widely praised as watched. The change was not made. The show was not pulled.

The days when a network can pull a successful show—as CBS once yanked *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*—are probably gone. CBS was the number-one network then, and by a substantial margin. Today, the cancellation of a hit show could mean the difference between first and second place for CBS or ABC, and neither network can afford to lose a winner; NBC can afford it even less. This gives producers of such shows incredible leverage—but, for the most part, they're not taking advantage of it.

As for my latest entries into prime time, *Secrets of Midland Heights*, like *Dallas*, aspires to be nothing more than terrific entertainment, a great diversion. *Knots Landing*, with its basis rooted more firmly in reality, has the potential to be good, strong drama, but its success so far has been modest; until it attains consistently high ratings over a whole season it will remain cancelable.

I am, then, still a novice. I have not yet been in the position to do the kind of work I want to do, the way I want it done. The prospect is a terrific motivator; it keeps me working, inventing, making the compromises now that will lead to the greater creative freedom later.

Will I flex my integrity muscles and take advantage of that creative freedom, when and if I get it? I plan to. I will disappoint myself if I don't. That's one thing I like about working in television: you do so much work that you *know* could be better, the best is always yet to come. ■

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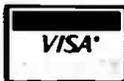
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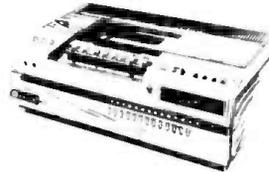
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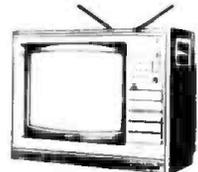
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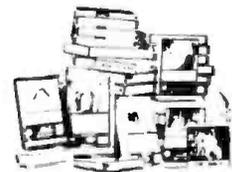
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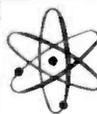
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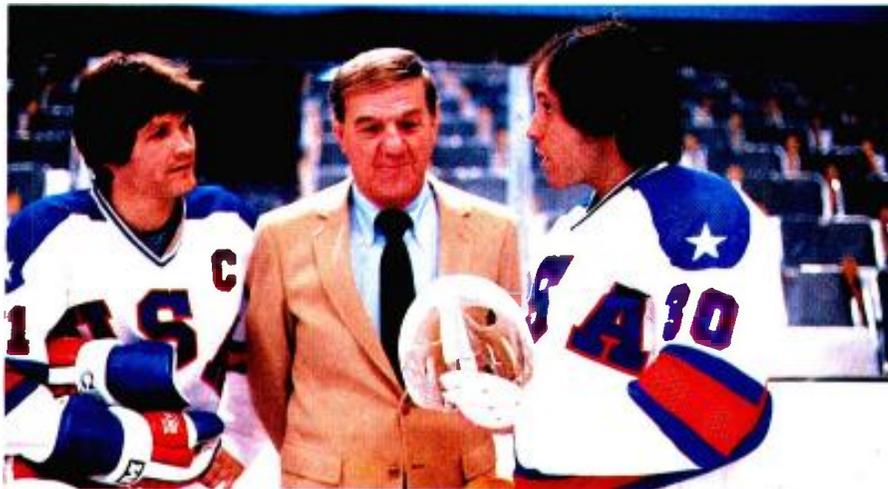
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Olympic heroes (left to right): Andrew Stevens as team captain Mike Eruzione, Karl Malden as coach Herb Brooks, and Steve Guttenberg as goalie Jim Craig in "Miracle on Ice."

be he thought I was a hockey groupie. But he is said to be a spectacular player for the University of Minnesota's Golden Gophers and Brad Buetow, his coach, doesn't think he'll be able to resist the lure of the NHL for long.

Eric Strobel, too, may go back to school sometime this year at Minnesota. Not that he couldn't have played hockey—offers were dangled by the Buffalo Sabres and a team in Europe—but he figured if all he could hope to clear was \$20,000 or so on a farm team, it wasn't worth all the travel.

But what do former hockey players become if they don't go back to school? Businessmen, that's what. Like Bob Suter.

A FREE MEAL HERE AND THERE

In one afternoon in Madison I met not only Bob, but his son and grandparents and his mother, an ebullient woman who, like his wife, is a teacher of the "profoundly and severely handicapped," and who organized a reunion last summer for Olympic players and their parents. Justin Suter, born the week after the Olympics, couldn't quite walk yet, but soon after he does his father Bob will "have him on skates—I guess I'm a hockey parent."

Justin's birth was what made Bob decide to retire from playing hockey; he had been on the road for much of his wife's pregnancy. This is why now, at age 23, the blond defenseman isn't sitting in the penalty box, as he often did last season, but ringing up sales of skates and

fish bait and skunk scent at Bob Suter's Gold Medal sporting goods store in Madison. It isn't a prepossessing store—Bob and his wife live in an apartment behind it—nor is he a flamboyant young man. He's 5 feet 9 and 178 pounds, which is very small for a defenseman and which is what leads some sports experts to think Suter couldn't make it in the NHL; he didn't actually play a whole lot in the Olympics. Suter himself sees his size as his only limitation: "My assets are my skating, my smartness."

Rich Friedman explained the other reason Suter's not playing now. He had contract problems. "He was drafted by the Los Angeles Kings and couldn't work out a deal with them. He wanted his rights to be traded to the Winnipeg Jets. He threw in the towel." And if he wanted to pick it up again? "He'd probably end up in the minors at first. Maybe he'd come up later on."

Suter said that, as a free agent, he'd want to sign—if he signs—with the Rangers or the North Stars. But right now, "I don't mind not playing hockey. I'm good at it, but you gotta travel so much and that—the average NHL player makes around \$80,000 a year; down in the lower leagues it's as low as maybe \$20,000. There are so many things I want to do that I haven't done: coach, hunt, ski. Some of the greatest times I've had are simple stuff—screwing around at the lagoon or wherever, pickup games with guys I've known all my life. That's as much fun to me as the NHL is to some, though sometimes I miss playing in

front of 8000 people—you really do sense the crowd.

"The biggest thrill was probably gettin' the medals." He keeps his gold in a safe now: "I'm going to put it in a display in the store once I have the security worked out."

I think about that for a moment, picturing the medal that was Suter's biggest thrill mounted in a place of prominence in the sports store Suter always wanted to open, "as far back as college." On the surface, at least, it looks as if there is more than one way to keep hockey at the center of one's life, where Suter assured me it will "always" be in his. He still gets treated differently because of what he did as a hockey player, "even though I don't ask for it or care for it. I get a free meal here and there, and I spoke to some hockey groups and at my old high-school's graduation. What would I do if it weren't for hockey?" A pause. "Be a fireman like my brother, maybe. Or a Green Beret."

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

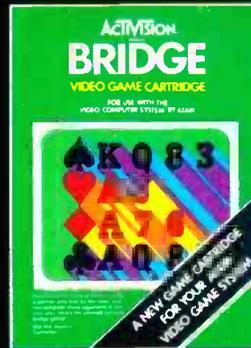
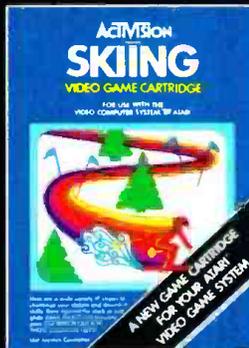
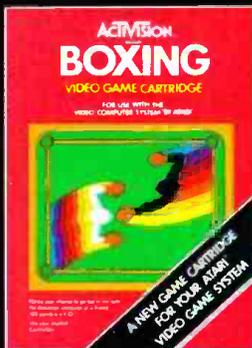
One gets the definite feeling that if former Olympic team captain Mike Eruzione had never heard of hockey, he would still have wound up flying around the country giving motivational talks to industrial and business groups on the power of positive thinking. This is a man who was once quoted as saying, "You have to be willing to work, no matter what you do in life; you have to try your best. A lot of people say they try, but they don't. A lot of people take things for granted; I don't."

It's because of his maturity, his insights, I am told, that Mike Eruzione was hired as a technical adviser on the set of "Miracle on Ice." They may also account for his contract with the USA Network (cable) to cover its Monday-night NHL games as well as the Rangers. Whatever, this is a young man who knows what he's doing—and where he came from.

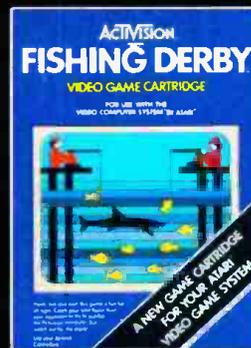
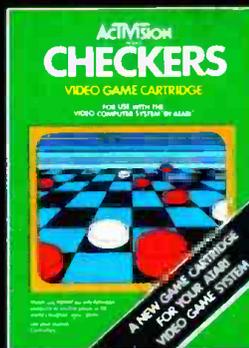
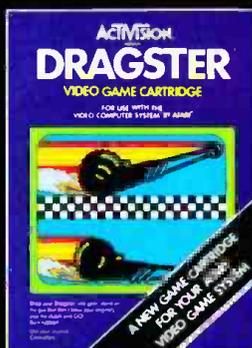
Talk about families; you should see the three-story house where he and something like 30 of his blood relatives all live under one roof, and have for all his 26

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The cast of "Miracle on Ice." Karl Malden (front row, fifth from right, in mufti) stars as coach Herb Brooks.

Elliott, who covers hockey for *Newsday*, agreed that not trying to make it in the pros was the "smartest thing Eruzione could have done."

Whatever is smartest, that's what I'd bet on Eruzione to do every time. Smart, realistic—and as sentimental as the others when it comes to the Olympics. I don't know what else you could call this quote from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: "I wake up every morning with a smile just thinking about that [winning] goal [against the Russians]. I run the tape of that game through my videotape machine 44 times, and 44 times I score the winning goal, and it's a thrill every time I see it."

"I don't know what excitement will ever be comparable," he said thoughtfully, when I brought this up. "Some guys say the first child, but I don't see how even that can compare."

Was the Olympic team a family? "Sure it was," said Mike. "It was a family of 26, including the six guys who got cut just before Lake Placid. You know what the big letdown was? Having to go to the White House Monday morning, right after we won the gold medal Sunday, and then all splitting up to go home. Some guys were crying. It was the wrong setting for us to say goodbye."

THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION

"Tell them, hello for me," said Phil Verchota from Finland, when I called to ask him about playing hockey in Europe and to talk about his old teammates. I talked to Buzz Schneider and John Har-

rington and Mark Pavelich in Switzerland, too.

They all sounded like they were having a good time, a bit lonesome maybe, playing a game that maybe is more relaxed than hockey in the U.S., although "sometimes they expect you to walk on water," according to Buzz Schneider. I mean, Bobby Orr, the best there *is* in hockey, came to town yesterday, and along with his autograph they asked for mine!

I find myself wondering if they will ask for Schneider's autograph here once he comes home. He and Verchota, Harrington and Pavelich were, after all, scouted as heavily as any of the Olympians. "If they were NHL material, they'd be in the NHL," said Rich Friedman with finality.

But if they are lesser players in the eyes of the National Hockey League, they are nonetheless full-fledged members of the Olympic family. I told Verchota I'd pass along his regards.

PAPA BEAR AND SONS

The "father" of this far-flung family I had been tracking down was, of course, the coach. I thought about what I'd been told about Herb Brooks as I placed the call to him at three o'clock one morning. Brooks may or may not become coach for the Rangers this spring, but at the moment he was coaching in Davos, Switzerland.

It was Brooks' job to pick a team of 26 players from 68 Olympic hopefuls, then to pick 20 of them to play in Lake Placid. So as not to play favorites, I was told, he

was mean to everybody. "You're playing worse every day," he once told Christoff, "and today it's like two weeks from tomorrow."

He sounds just about that jolly when we finally connect. His Olympic players, he said, "had a common purpose: they were very receptive to the togetherness concept, even though they were the most visible and diverse team I ever coached. Irregardless of what happened, they adhered to the work ethic and gained the discipline and poise we needed." I remember that even when his team won the gold, even then he barely cracked a smile.

"But," as Donald Craig had said, "a mother bear has to cuff the baby bear to teach it; Brooks was these boys' father, and a father has to love, and love sometimes has to be strict."

It would be nice to report that the strictness of the love Herb Brooks instilled in his team has triumphed over all those forces working to pull them apart: time; distance; other, harder tasks; growing up. Nice, but not quite true. Nor had Eruzione quite got hold of the truth when he said, "All the guys will always be glad to see each other, and, of course, they're flattered to be asked for autographs and that. But to a lot of them the feeling of family has ended."

The feeling has not so much ended as it has become blurred, pushed out of focus by newer allegiances, including what one player called "a whole epidemic of engagements and weddings." Still, when the time comes for that 10-year reunion Bill Baker envisions, the kinship is sure to revive. The 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team will pose for pictures together, introduce their wives and children to one another, and marvel over a feat that time will have made no less remarkable. "Holy buckets," Mike Ramsey may say then, as he has just said to me now, "Holy buckets, we sure played good hockey." ■

10 BEST TV-MOVIES *continued from page 52*

narrative. To ask a question like that, though, you have to be clinging to your naiveté the way an Abscam congressman clutches his lawyer. TV is flooded with B-movies made for television because the all-powerful economy of the industry dictates this as a commercially productive course.

It's not that all TV-movies are bad. In fact, they're bad enough almost as rarely as they're good enough. What TV does is to narrow the spectrum of almost everything it touches, so that in TV-movies you may not get the low lows, but neither do you get the high highs. Generations of TV children have no real idea of what kicky exhilaration a great, even a darn good, movie can be. Their expectations have been lowered by exposure to television as systematically as if by genetic engineering. They can haunt the late shows and get some idea, but even there they're not getting the whole picture.

Ah, well. The fact is, at some point TV-movies can be said to have "come of age," which meant it was too late to do anything about driving them off the face of the earth, so one might as well just judge them according to their own standards. Maybe the turning point came with "Sybil," maybe with *Roots* (not technically a movie, but something produced on film for television), or maybe it came with "The Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders." You never know about these things.

During the 1970s, TV-movies by the dozens were produced, and the most common type showed how generic smallness is to the form: it was the sensitive-issue picture, usually a spiritual uplifter about an individual overcoming a handicap and arriving at a moment of heightened consciousness. Appropriately enough for a "me decade" of self-obsession, the victories in these pictures were usually inner-directed, not anything involving valorous service to one's fellow men.

We saw TV-movies about every conceivable illness, especially the fatal ones, and how people found the courage or wherewithal to face them. The number of cancer cases alone was formidable: films like "Death Be Not Proud," "Sunshine," "Eric," "The Homecoming," "First You Cry," and the warhorse of the genre, "Brian's Song." In many of these, the cancer served merely to precipitate a story, providing a specious excuse for

some strenuous message of the viewing heart.

There've been enough movies about social causes to fill several months of Phil Donahue shows. "And Your Name Is Jonah" was about a deaf child thought to be retarded. "A Case of Rape" broke new ground for TV subject matter. "That Certain Summer" dealt with male homosexuality and fatherhood and "A Question of Love" with a lesbian couple fighting for the custody of children by previous marriages. Truman Capote's "The Glass House," directed by the late Tom Gries, set standards in prison chic still being aped by such recent films as "Scared Straight: Another Story."

"Bloodsport" dealt with violence in football. "The Deadliest Season" with violence in hockey. You can deal with themes of sex and violence in a TV-movie and get away with more sex and violence than if you didn't have the shield of social significance as protection.

None of these films, however well done, could be called artistic milestones.

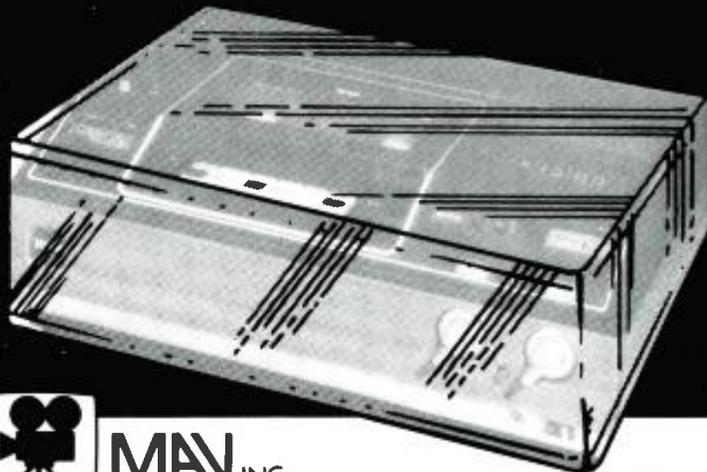
TV-movies are elementarily functional creations; questions of aesthetics are almost irrelevant. For that reason, hardly a half dozen of all the TV-movies ever made could be called unforgettable, and few are worth seeing more than once.

The lowliest types are the most plentiful: cheap quickies. These include dreadful and presumptuous sequels to real movies ("Look What's Happened to Rosemary's Baby," "High Noon Part 2: The Return of Will Kane") and galling, paltry remakes of Hollywood classics ("A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," "The Miracle Worker," "Dark Victory," "Topper," "Captains Courageous"). This sort of thing smacks of sacrilege, as do the exploitative, grave-robbing show-biz biographies such as "Marilyn: The Untold Story," "Elvis!" and "Birth of the Beatles."

But then another problem with TV-movies is that not even the trash is quite trashy enough to be delectable. Hence promisingly titled nifties like "The Jayne Mansfield Story," "Secrets of Three

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10 BEST TV-MOVIES *continued from page 87*

Hungry Wives,” “Diary of a Teen-age Hitchhiker” and “Devil Dog: The Hound of Hell,” prove washouts even at the grubbiest level.

If you were going to try to pick the 10 best TV-movies—say someone twisted your arm, or dangled a wad of money in front of your face—what would you look for? For TV-movies that make obvious the extra time, extra money and extra exertions that are required to come up with something that fulfills the basic utilitarian role and also elevates the movie to a more rarefied plane of at least semi-artful intelligence.

You’d look for films like “Sybil,” distinguished chiefly for its wower performances; or “The Execution of Private Slovik,” notable for its strength of purpose; or “A Death in Canaan,” the TV-movie debut of director Tony Richardson and a model of the docudrama that keeps some sense of humanity about it and doesn’t just turn into an open diary.

And you’d look for films like “Off the Minnesota Strip,” which did a better job of handling a story of teen-age prostitution and its effects on a family than did the similarly themed and much more elaborate theatrical picture “Hard Core,” a pandering hysteric by comparison. TV thrillers like “The Night Stalker,” “Trilogy of Terror” and “Crawlspace” (the best ones tend to be written by Richard Matheson) have proven more resourceful and imaginative about giving out the willies than have dozens of the graphic horror pictures that regularly make date-night audiences shriek in theaters.

Some influential blockbusters would not make the list for all their notoriety. “Born Innocent,” the 1974 NBC potboiler, drew denunciations and a lawsuit (won by NBC) for its prison rape scene, but it wasn’t a very good movie. “Nightmare in Badham County,” a listlessly lurid piece of 1976 junk from ABC, was for some curious reason one of the first U.S. films to be exhibited in China after normalization began. Which proves there may be some abnormalization going on as well. “Brian’s Song” established a formula almost ritually imitated by countless other TV-movies, but it was too treacly and assembly-line to qualify as a “best,” except of its peculiar type.

To make the Ten Best list, a film would have to have some vague mysterious

something-or-other that all these titles have:

1

“Amateur Night at the Dixie Bar and Grill”

(1979), sneaked onto the air by NBC, was Joel Schumacher’s warmhearted, “Nashville”-style country-western comedy-drama about one night in the life of a rinky-tinky honky-tonk and the tribe of regulars and guests who took part in a nearly talentless talent contest there. Schumacher tilted merrily between mawkish melodrama and sly parody and, with a sterling cast, made this picture delightfully tangy and personable.

2

“Too Far to Go”

(1979) successfully transferred the sophisticated marital commentaries of John Updike (chiefly, his “Maples” stories) to television in a bracingly trim, handsome, thoughtful production filled with brilliantly delivered home truths. Michael Moriarty and Blythe Danner were the husband and wife who took turns playing victim and victimizer and who were attentively directed by veteran Fielder Cook. Relatively few viewers watched the film (it was another of NBC’s closely guarded, unadvertised secrets), but those who did saw a movie that crossed a boundary TV-movies usually avoid.

3

“Ishi, the Last of His Tribe”

(1978), based on a classic sociological text about a lone Indian found living in the wild, was started as a film project by Dalton Trumbo and completed, after his death, by his son Christopher for NBC. Robert Ellis Miller, at home on the big screen (“The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter”) as well as the small, made this case history direct and straightforward without letting it become static or chilly. There was no sleeve-tugging or elbow-grabbing, yet “Ishi” was a profoundly emotional piece of work.

4

“The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman”

(1974), on CBS, was a landmark in dramatizing racial issues on television, and a proud moment for its director, John Kory, who also made exceptional TV-movies like “Farewell to Manzanar” (about the internment in prison camps of Japanese-Americans during World War II) and the love story “Forever.” Cicely Tyson, in the title role, scored probably as large-scale a triumph as it is possible to do in a TV-movie; the moment when Jane Pittman, born in slavery, drank from a “Whites Only” water fountain in the South became instantly and indelibly iconographic, the best kind of shared moment TV can provide.

5

“Duel”

(1971) marked a major step in the career of Steven Spielberg, who had already directed TV-series episodes and would later make “Jaws” and “Close Encounters of the Third Kind.” The beauty of “Duel” was that it seemed ideally suited to its form, not crudely adapted or pared down to fit into it. The story could hardly have been simpler: a distraught businessman traveling in a rented car is mercilessly and inexplicably hounded by a huge and malicious 10-ton truck (we never see the driver). Spielberg made the NBC film so that it was dazzling and gripping simply as a chase but also had, unlike most TV-movies, mythic and metaphorical overtones.

6

“Hardhat and Legs”

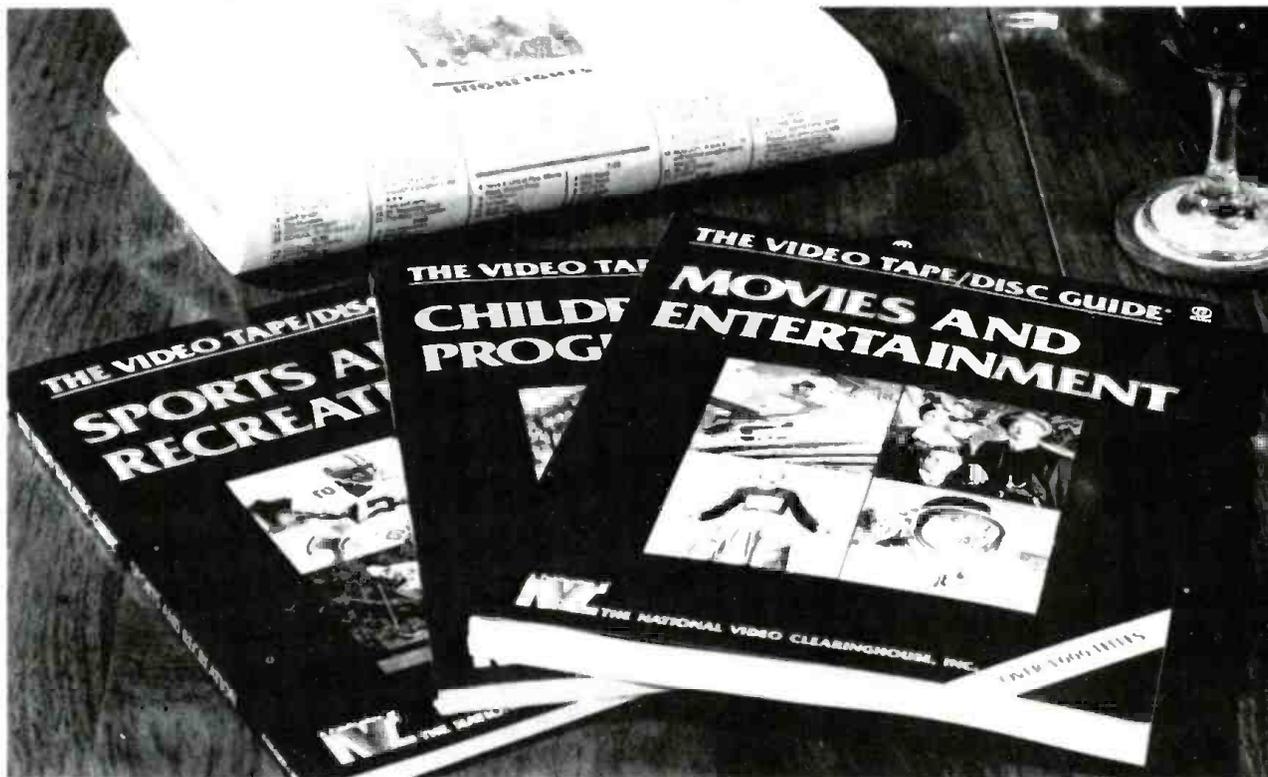
(1979), on CBS, was a bubbly surprise from Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon—a breezily and infectiously updated romantic comedy, which happens to be the very type of entertainment that Hollywood feature-makers have been persistently failing at in recent years. Here almost everything jelled, including the relatively ambitious idea of having a visual leitmotif running through the picture.

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10 BEST TV-MOVIES

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Everywhere the lovers went, a street musician of some kind was sure to follow, with the payoff being a finale that featured grand Bobby Short at a grand piano.

7

“Friendly Fire”

(1979) was not only the moving and agonizing story of the Mullens, a Midwestern family who lost a son in Vietnam; it also served as a national catharsis, a focal point for the release of guilt and sadness over the Vietnam War. Fay Kanin wrote the script and David Greene directed the three-hour ABC film that, perhaps unexpectedly, drew a huge national audience on a Sunday night. Carol Burnett and Ned Beatty as the parents helped make immediate and manageable a crisis that had previously eluded the grasp of television, except in the cut-and-dried nightly network-news reports.

8

“Amber Waves”

(1980) dealt, peripherally, with the Vietnam era as well, but it was more timeless in its story of generational conflict and reorganized value systems. The ubiquitous Dennis Weaver (also the star of “Ishi” and “Duel”) played a rural farmer whose son had fled to Canada to escape the draft. Kurt Russell, as a pampered New York fashion model, was stranded in the area and, with Weaver, underwent a therapeutic form of culture shock when the two were thrown together. The ABC film had its miscalculations, but it introduced ingratiating newcomer Mare Winningham as Weaver’s daughter, and it was one of the few TV-movies to impart a tactile sense of locale and to refrain from treating small-town citizens in TV’s usual condescending or insulting manner.

9

“Love Among the Ruins”

(1975), on ABC, was as sumptuous a piece of hokum as was ever beamed into the national living room, mainly because it provided a forum, and a boxing ring, for Laurence Olivier and Katharine Hepburn to carry on in. James Costigan didn’t have to write much more than a blueprint, and a few stuffed shirts may have found the material too slight for the

acting talents at hand, but if they’d played Shakespeare or Ibsen, who would have been around to watch them? The very accessibility of the material made the heavenly teamwork all the more easily relished. If people thought they were seeing great stuff and were only seeing very very good light comedy, so what? Only television could provide stars like this with just this kind of spotlight in which to shine.

10

“The Winds of Kitty Hawk”

(1978) represents the best work done by a frequent TV-movie director, E.W. Swackhamer (*The Dain Curse*), who may at times find himself with trite subject matter but still manages to give it a distinctive, usually flavorful character. In this NBC biography, the subject matter was soaring, figuratively and literally, and Swackhamer made one of the best movies ever about technological pioneers, somehow both matter-of-fact and glorious without ever getting too dry or too swoony. In an aerial sequence in which the Wright brothers fly their plane around the Statue of Liberty, Swackhamer proved that spectacle can be extremely effective on a small screen.

Will we, in the future, look back longingly at where we were or whom we were with when we saw this or that TV-movie? Will there be TV-movie festivals at distinguished museums or arts centers? Will the TV-movie become the only kind of movie made for mass consumption? These things may happen eventually, but only in the unforeseeable future conjured by pipe-dreamers or, in the last instance, professional pessimists.

TV-movies would seem to be, however, just as here-to-stay as television, and when the people who make them go overboard to put as much heart and wit into them as they can—instead of going the commercially shrewd route of getting by as minimally as possible—somebody ought to stand up and shout bravo. Or, if bravos are things of the past, like masterpieces, at least say, “Thank you.” I feel personally grateful to anybody who does work in television that he honestly feels is the best he can do, and not just something to keep ol’ man repossessor away from the Mercedes.

Occasionally—and maybe miraculously—it happens. ■

SPEAK UP, COLUMBUS

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tional channel (where you can take, for example, a College Boards coaching course for \$1.50 per session), a soft-core porno channel (\$3.50 a shot), and plenty of movies on the other channels. Viewers are billed much as phone users are charged for long-distance calls in addition to their basic monthly fees.

Inaugurating pay-per-view has not been easy. “People didn’t understand it at first,” says former general manager of Qube, Larry Wangberg. Qube billed its subscribers for tuning in as little as two minutes of the show. But some people complained that Qube billed them for films they hadn’t seen at all. One woman in her 70s told a newspaper that she’d been billed for watching “Captain Lust” 10 times in one month. She hadn’t even caught the first fondle.

Eventually, Qube brought the snafus under control. Now it’s the subscribers who have to maintain control. The occasional special events, like the first Duran-Leonard fight (\$10) and the otherwise unavailable Ohio State football games (\$7), are bargains, and can be shared by friends who inevitably drop by during the day of the event. But even moderate movie-watching, at a typical \$2.50 for a flick like “Rocky II” or “The Amityville Horror,” can make the Qube bill a major monthly expense. “I dropped the service after I found my bills averaging \$40 a month,” says an ex-subscriber. For many, though, cost is not a deterrent. Scott Kurnit says that monthly bills of \$150 are not unique.

Most profitable are the adult films. Though Qube doesn’t release viewership data, a recent court case (see PANORAMA, Oct. 1980) revealed the data that 10,500 households had ordered a viewing of “Captain Lust”—about a third of Qube’s subscribership. By running and rerunning a single Beta cassette, Qube had grossed over \$35,000. Qube officials admit that the adult channel is the most profitable of their premium channels.

After Warner had established that people would pay movie-theater prices for films in the home, Qube introduced a monthly movie-package option, The Movie Channel. The happy surprise was that people who bought a \$7.50-per-month package still ordered as many—or more—premium films as they did before. Just why is a mystery, since the “premium” films are generally no different than the ones offered on Home Box Office or The Movie Channel. “You watch

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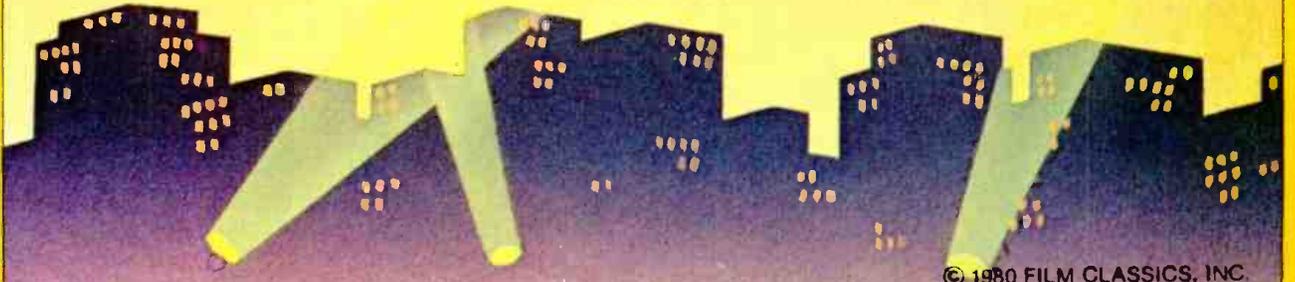
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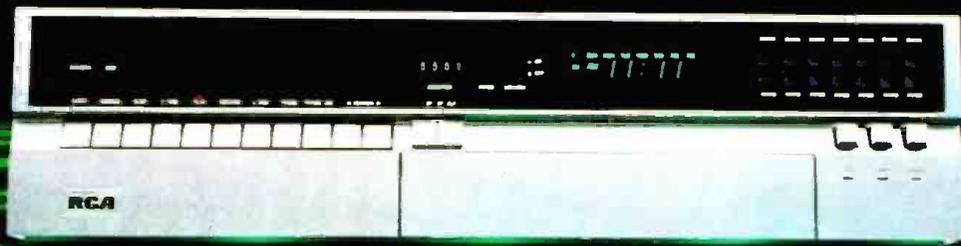
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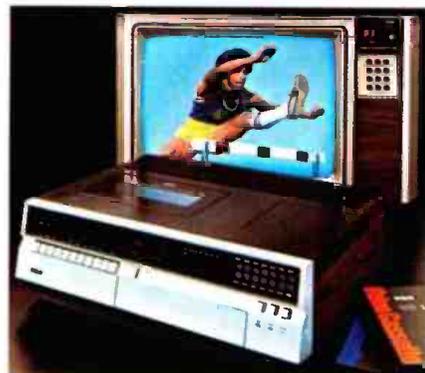
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McDowell, a reporter who covers Capitol Hill for the Richmond Times-Dispatch; and others.

Linda Winslow, WETA news director, is striving for coverage that is more thoughtful and more thorough than that of the networks. "We don't want to be the 25th microphone stuck in somebody's face in a hallway," she says. "We have the luxury of having a little more time. We do things the commercial networks might do if they had more time."

The show occasionally profiles lesser-known Congressional members who—like most of the 435 representatives and some of the 100 senators—never appear on nightly network news shows. Last year the show ran a profile of an obscure conservative Maryland Republican whose knowledge of parliamentary procedure tied up the House repeatedly. It was months later that Rep. Robert Bauman became well-known—when he admitted to being an alcoholic and having homosexual tendencies.

Winslow and producer Gregg Ramshaw say they have come to be fascinated by Congress, with its daily conflict and drama. They try to avoid stereotyping representatives and senators. "We want to leave the impression that these are 535 human beings trying to do a job—not monsters, idiots or superhumans," Winslow says.

TV and the Campaign: When Is Early Too Early?

If you're one of those TV viewers who thinks that election campaigns—especially Presidential campaigns—start too early, peak too soon and tend to linger on like a bad chest cold, then you may be

in for some bad news. Pending a decision by the Supreme Court, the networks may be forced to sell air time to politicians at an even earlier date than they already do.

The case goes back to December 1979 when ABC, NBC and CBS all refused to sell a 30-minute commercial spot to then-President Jimmy Carter. Carter wanted to announce his candidacy for reelection, joining two other Democrats and 10 Republicans who had already declared themselves. The networks replied that it was too early to sell large blocks of time; that the political campaign hadn't really started yet.

Carter appealed to the FCC, which upheld him by a 4-3 vote. The three "no" votes were from Republicans; the four "yes" votes were from Democrats. The networks once more appealed the decision, but the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington unanimously rejected their motion.

While the networks believe that the FCC made a political decision that trampled on their First Amendment rights to exercise impartial judgment, many citizens' groups strongly disagree. As Heidi Sanchez, a lawyer representing the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, puts it: "Members of the public need information to help them vote wisely . . . This is a broad-based concern, not a partisan political dispute."

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case and most observers are hoping for a decision sometime in June.

LONDON
RICHARD GILBERT
REPORTING

Program Blitz from America

During a five-hour break in the U.S. election-results program Nov. 4-5, some British

viewers could hardly believe what they saw on the screen. Granada, the commercial-TV company that broadcasts to the north of England, kept its audiences awake between 2 and 7 A.M. with the "All-American All-Nite Show," a racy compilation of American TV shows never before seen in England. There were excerpts from *Three's a Crowd*, *That's Incredible!*, the *Ugly*



That's Incredible!: British viewers were amazed but unsated.

George show, *The Dating Game*, *Christopher Street After Dark* and *Interludes After Midnight* (naked conversations on a water bed).

Granada boss David Plowright described this £100,000 (\$241,000) package as illustrating "how the hands-off approach of Americans to TV regulation has led to programs which go far beyond accepted levels of tolerance and taste in the U.K." Plowright defended the raunchy programs as "a unique look at the production explosion which is about to reverberate across Britain with the approach of the Fourth Channel breakfast TV show, cablevision, satellites and videocassettes." Viewers accustomed to American TV imports—meaning *Dallas* and *Star Trek*—were amazed at the permissiveness of the cable-TV and network shows that were broadcast. Still, there were no complaints—just requests for more.

Granada plans to repeat the experiment at a more accessible hour. The "All-American All-Nite Show" made the election result itself an anticli-

max in Granadaland, as the north, which receives Granada programs, is known.

Good Morning Britain?

A pioneering breakfast-time TV program that will simultaneously be broadcast on radio is in the works at the BBC. In an ingenious move to preempt commercial TV's intention to launch a breakfast-time TV show in 1982, the BBC has set up a feasibility study to work out how to link one of its four national radio networks with one of its two TV channels in a joint early-morning program. BBC director-general Ian Trethowan said: "Somebody, for example, might listen to the program in the bedroom on radio, watch it on TV over breakfast and then continue by listening on the car radio or while doing housework at home."

The first dummy run at combining TV and radio in this way was tried out in December in Scotland when a radio show called *Good Morning Scotland* was televised every morning for a week. But Trethowan has warned that there are "formidable problems" in turning an experiment into a regular part of the BBC's services: "The addition of the television element must cost some extra money and that has to be found out of our existing resources."

Clementine Churchill a Recession Casualty

The BBC is not alone in worrying about its income. The business recession has led to a sharp decline in advertising revenue for the commercial TV companies as well—and the forecasts for the rest of 1981 are bleak.

continued

What's Happening *continued*

This has led some commercial (ITV) companies to order across-the-board cuts in new programming areas. Thames TV, for example, has killed off its £5 million (\$12 million) series on Lady Churchill, *Clemmie*. This was to be a six-part series based on Mary Soames' biography of her mother. Nigel Ryan, Thames' director of programs, described the project as being "just too expensive." Considering the level of Churchillmania in this country, the ITV money crunch must be serious indeed.

Apart from falling revenue, ITV companies also have to pay out £70 million (\$169 million) to set up the Fourth Channel, opening in late

1982. Meanwhile the BBC has been running a vigorous campaign against "license-dodgers," the estimated one million viewers who have not bought their TV licenses, which are the source of the BBC's money. (A one-year license for color costs £34, or \$82; a black-and-white license costs £12, or \$29.) The BBC would get an extra £25 million (\$60 million) if all the dodgers were caught and paid up.

One proposal that both the BBC and ITV have made to raise money is a special tax on videotapes at the point of purchase. The government is considering the suggestion but is thought unlikely to agree. ■

Home Video; \$72.95) (PG)
Mary Poppins (1964)—Walt Disney's comedy classic about an Edwardian nursemaid who takes her charges and the local chimney sweep on sparkling flights of fantasy. Julie Andrews, Dick Van Dyke. (Walt Disney Home Video; \$74.95) (G)

Prom Night (1980)—A hooded ax-murderer stalks a high-school prom. Leslie Nielsen, Jamie Lee Curtis. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65) (R)
Rough Cut (1980)—A happy kleptomaniac (Lesley-Anne Down) and suave international jewel thief (Burt Reynolds) try to pull off a world-record diamond heist. (Paramount Home Video; \$72.95) (PG)
Smokey and the Bandit II (1980)—Bandit, Frog and Carrie are reunited to transport an elephant from Miami to Dallas with Sheriff Justice again in pursuit. Burt Reynolds, Jackie Gleason, Sally Field, Dom DeLuise. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65) (PG)

Urban Cowboy (1980)—Glossy melodrama about a Texas farmhand turned hard hat in modern-day Houston. John Travolta, Debra Winger. (Paramount Home Video; \$79.95) (PG)



Olivia Newton-John: Muse for good skates.

Xanadu (1980)—Musical fantasy in which a beautiful muse (Olivia Newton-John) inspires an artist (Michael Beck) and a millionaire (Gene Kelly) to

open a roller disco. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65) (PG)

The Video Playhouse—A series of films based on world-famous plays and novels, most of them released theatrically during the 1973-74 season. The following titles are now being offered on cassette by Magnetic Video Corp.:

Butley (1973)—Alan Bates in Simon Gray's bitter comedy about an ambitious school-teacher. With Jessica Tandy, Richard O'Callaghan. (\$100) (R)

A Delicate Balance (1974)—Edward Albee drama in which a wife and mother (Katharine Hepburn) tries to maintain her family's stability. With Paul Scofield, Lee Remick, Joseph Cotten. (\$100) (PG)

Galileo (1974)—Drama from Bertolt Brecht about the 17th-century scientist. Chaim Topol, Edward Fox, John Gielgud. (\$100) (PG)

The Homecoming (1973)—Harold Pinter's play about a young man once again drawn into his family's love-hate structure of combat and dependency. Cyril Cusack, Ian Holm, Vivien Merchant. (\$80) (PG)

The Iceman Cometh (1973)—Eugene O'Neill's epic microcosm of humanity, set in a neighborhood bar. Lee Marvin, Robert Ryan, Fredric March. (\$100) (PG)

In Celebration (1974)—Three brothers return to the drab, British coal-mining village of their youth in this David Storey play. Alan Bates, James Bolam, Brian Cox. (\$100) (PG)

Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris (1974)—From the long-running Off-Broadway musical revue of Brel's bittersweet songs. Elly Stone, Mort Shuman, Joe Masiell, Jacques Brel. (\$80) (PG)

Lost in the Stars (1974)—This Maxwell Anderson-Kurt Weill musical drama has Brock Pe-

Videocassettes

New Releases

MOVIES

Airplane! (1980)—Screwball spoof of airport disaster movies. Robert Hays, Julie Hagerty, Leslie Nielsen. (Paramount Home Video; \$79.95) (PG)

Barefoot in the Park (1967)—Neil Simon farce about young marrieds (Jane Fonda and Robert Redford) living in Greenwich Village. (Paramount Home Video; \$62.95) (PG)

Breaking Glass (1980)—Tale of the rise and fall of a punk-rock superstar. Hazel O'Connor, Phil Daniels. (Paramount Home Video; \$62.95) (PG)

Cheech and Chong's Next Movie (1980)—Comedy team Cheech and Chong smoke their way through a welfare agency, flying-saucer encounter and other adventures.

Richard Marin, Thomas Chong, Evelyn Guerrero. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65) (R)

Coast to Coast (1980)—Romantic comedy with Dyan Cannon fleeing her scheming husband by driving cross-country with trucker Robert Blake. With Quinn Redeker, Michael Lerner. (Paramount Home Video; \$62.95) (PG)

Friday the 13th (1980)—Six summer-camp counselors meet brutal deaths from a shadowy figure seeking revenge. Betsy Palmer, Adrienne King, Harry Lillis Crosby III. (Paramount Home Video; \$79.95) (R)

The Hunter (1980)—Spectacular stunts and chases punctuate this fact-based tale of a modern-day bounty hunter. Steve McQueen, Eli Wallach, Kathryn Harrold. (Paramount

ters as a South African minister whose faith is severely tested. With Melba Moore, Raymond St. Jacques. (\$80) (G)

Luther (1974)—Stacy Keach

stars in John Osborne's play about Martin Luther, the 16th-century founder of the Protestant faith. With Patrick Magee, Hugh Griffith, Alan Badel. (\$80) (G)

The Maids (1974)—Two maids scheme to destroy their mistress in this drama by Jean Genet. Glenda Jackson, Susannah York, Vivien Merchant. (\$80) (PG)

The Man in the Glass Booth (1974)—Maximilian Schell stars in the tale of a wealthy industrialist who is tried for having been a Nazi concentration-camp commandant. With Lois Nettleton, Luther Adler. (\$80) (PG)

Philadelphia, Here I Come! (1972)—Brian Friel's play about a young man in an Irish farm village in conflict with himself on the eve of his departure to America. Donal McCann, Des Cave, Siobhan McKenna. (\$80) (PG)

Rhinoceros (1974)—Eugene Ionesco's landmark absurdist comedy in which a group of citizens gradually become destructive animals. Zero Mostel, Gene Wilder, Karen Black. (\$80) (PG)

Three Sisters (1970)—Laurence Olivier directs and stars in Anton Chekhov's story of three sisters in pre-revolutionary Russia. With Jeanne Watts, Joan Plowright, Louise Purnell. (\$100) (PG)

Best Sellers

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

- * (3) **1. Star Trek—The Motion Picture** (1979)—Starring the original TV-series crew. (Paramount Home Video; \$84.95)
- (5) **2. All That Jazz** (1979)—Bob Fosse's high-energy musical, starring Roy Scheider. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$69.95)
- (-) **3. Close Encounters of the Third Kind—Special Edition** (1980)—Steven Spielberg's expanded UFO spectacular. (Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment; \$69.95)
- (2) **4. Alien** (1979)—Haunted-house drama in outer space. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95)



John Belushi: *The blues are fraternal.*

- (1) **5. The Blues Brothers** (1980)—The satirical singing duo in their first feature film. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$89)
- (17) **6. The Fog** (1980)—Horror

film directed by John Carpenter. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95)

(6) **7. The Black Hole** (1979)—A Disney sci-fi tale of the search for Ultimate Knowledge. (Walt Disney Home Video; \$59.95)

(15) **8. Superman** (1978)—Super-budget film starring the special effects. (WCI Home Video; \$65)

(13) **9. The Muppet Movie** (1979)—Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy sing and dance their way to Hollywood fame. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$59.95)

(20) **10. "10"** (1979)—Featuring the Eighties' first sex symbol, Bo Derek. (WCI Home Video; \$65)

(14) **11. American Gigolo** (1980)—A well-paid sexual companion becomes the target of a murder frame-up. (Paramount Home Video; \$79.95)

(9) **12. The Rose** (1980)—Bette Midler stars as a tragic Joplinesque rock queen. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$79.95)

(-) **13. Cheech and Chong's Next Movie** (1980)—Further adventures of the popular comedy team. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

(10) **14. Up in Smoke** (1978)—Comedy team Cheech and Chong's first film. (Paramount Home Video; \$79.95)

(8) **15. Coal Miner's Daughter** (1980)—Sissy Spacek in the rags-to-riches story of country singer Loretta Lynn. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; \$65)

(12) **16. A Clockwork Orange** (1971)—Stanley Kubrick's vivid drama, starring Malcolm McDowell. (WCI Home Video; \$75)

(-) **17. 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea** (1954)—Elaborate version of Jules Verne's adventure classic. (Walt Disney Home Video; \$59.95)

(-) **18. The Sound of Music** (1965)—True story of the Trapp family, starring Julie Andrews. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$79.95)

(-) **19. Mary Poppins** (1964)—Walt Disney's fantasy tale of a magical nanny and her chimney-sweep friend. (Walt Disney Home Video; \$74.95)

(7) **20. Every Which Way but Loose** (1978)—Clint Eastwood as a barroom-brawling truck driver with an orangutan as a buddy. (WCI Home Video; \$60)

*Position last month

SPECIALS

Nelvanimation—Four cartoons from Nelvana Productions, including "The Devil and Daniel Mouse" and "Romie-O and

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

Readers wishing to obtain more information from the distributors of the above-listed movies and specials may do so at these addresses: Walt Disney Home Video, 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, Cal. 91521; Magnetic Video Corp., 23434 Industrial Park Court, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48024; MCA Videocassette, Inc., 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, Cal. 91608; Paramount Home Video, 5451 Marathon St., Hollywood, Cal. 90038; VidAmerica, 231 E. 55th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022; WCI Home Video, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019.

Sales figures are from the month of November. Retail outlets participating in our survey include: Associated Video, Houston; Audio Center, Honolulu; Audio Video Craft, Inc., Los Angeles; Barney Miller's, Inc., Lexington, Ky.; Beta Home Entertainment Club, Las Vegas; Cinema Concepts, Inc., Wethersfield, Conn.; Communications Maintenance, Inc., Litchfield, Ill.; Concord Video Center, Stamford, Conn.; Cyclops Video, Sherman Oaks, Cal.; Giffen Video, Staten Island, N.Y.; Godwin Radio, Inc./Godwin Video Centers,

Birmingham, Ala.; Jantzen Beach Magnavox Home Entertainment Center, Portland, Ore.; Kaleidoscope Video Shops, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Media Associates, Mountain View, Cal.; Media Concepts, Inc., St. Petersburg, Fla.; Modern Communications, St. Louis; Movies Unlimited, Philadelphia; Newbury TV & Appliances, New Bedford, Mass.; Select Film Library, New York; The Sheik Video Corp., Metairie, La.; Stansbury Stereo, Baltimore; Televideo Systems, Richmond, Va.;

Thomas Film Video, Royal Oak, Mich.; Video 2000, San Diego; Video Audio Electronics, Williamsport, Pa.; Video Cassette, Phoenix, Ariz.; Video Cassettes, Etc., Lubbock, Texas; Video Connection, Boston; Video Corporation of America, Edison, N.J.; Video Dimensions, New York; Videospace, Bellevue, Wash.; Video Library, Torrance, Cal.; Video Specialties, Houston; Video Stop, Beverly Hills; The Video Store, Gretna, La.; Visual Adventures, Cleveland.

Julie-8." (WCI Home Video; \$50)

Eat to the Beat—The video version of Blondie's hit LP. (WCI Home Video; \$40)

The Children's Video Playhouse—A two-cassette collection of eight Emmy Award-winning children's tales, including

"The Boy Who Cried Wolf" and "The Ugly Duckling." (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$80 per cassette)

Caring for Your Newborn with Dr. Benjamin Spock—The well-known pediatrician offers parents a visual primer on bringing up baby. (VidAmerica; \$54.95)

Passages

ENGAGED

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



Angie Dickinson: Breaks up duet and goes solo.

DIVORCING

Actress **Angie Dickinson** (*Police Woman*) and songwriter-composer **Burt Bacharach**.

HONORED

Producer **Lee Rich**, president of Lorimar Productions (*Dallas*, *Knots Landing*, *Secrets of Midland Heights*), as the "Industry Man of the Year" by the Conference of Personal Managers, West.

Lou Grant stars **Ed Asner** and **Robert Walden**, and the show's producer **Seth Freeman**, with Humanitarian Awards from the Humane Society of America, for the episode "Dogs."

Dick Clark (*American Bandstand*, *Where the Action Is*, *Dick Clark's Live Wednesday*), by the New York chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences,

for his 30th year on television.

Veteran actor **George Burns**, as "Advertising Man of the Year," by the Los Angeles Advertising Club.

Muppet creator **Jim Henson** (with the Founders Award), CBS president **Frank Stanton** and British producer **Lord Lew Grade** (with International Directorate Awards), by the International Council of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

CBS correspondent **Ed Bradley**, with the Capital Press Club's National Media Award for outstanding achievement in broadcasting.

Mary Alice Williams, New York bureau chief, Cable News Network, with the 1980 Achievement in Television Award by the National Council of Women of the United States, Inc.

Valerie Harper (*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Rhoda*), for her performance in the ABC movie "Fun and Games"; **Linda Lavin** (*Alice*), for her role in CBS's "The \$5.20 an Hour Dream"; and **Esther Rolle**, star of the CBS series *Good Times*, by the National Commission on Working Women. CBS Sports broadcaster **Jack Whitaker**, with the 20th Annual Bert Bell Memorial Award for distinction in conjunction with professional football, by the Bakers Club of Philadelphia.

APPOINTED

B. Donald Grant, former CBS vice president of programs, as president, CBS Entertainment Division. Grant succeeds **Robert A. Daly**, newly appointed chairman of the board of Warner Bros.



Rocky Bleier: Still in Steel Town but no longer a Steeler.

Pittsburgh Steeler running back **Rocky Bleier**, as sports anchor of WIIC-TV, Pittsburgh.

SIGNED

Basketball star **Rick Barry**, to an exclusive contract with CBS Sports. Barry will serve as commentator for the *NBA on CBS* broadcasts.



Mike Eruzione: Turns in puck for mike.

Olympic hockey star **Mike Eruzione**, as a hockey commentator for the USA Network. **James Brady**, editor of the New York Post's "Page Six," to WABC-TV's (New York) 6 P.M. newscast for twice-a-week features.

As CBS reporters: KCMO-TV (Kansas City) investigative reporter **John Ferrugia** and WXIA-

TV (Atlanta) reporter **Ned Potter**. Ferrugia joins the Washington bureau, Potter the Chicago bureau.

Huell Howser, former host of WCBS-TV's (New York) *To Life*, as reporter for Cable News Network, Los Angeles bureau.

SWITCHED

Hal Walker, from correspondent, CBS News, Bonn, to bureau chief and correspondent, ABC News, Bonn.

Barry Cunningham, from correspondent, Cable News Network, to senior correspondent, Independent Television News Association.

RESIGNED

PBS senior vice president of programming **Chloe Aaron**, to become president of a Washington-based TV production company, Television Corporation of America.

DIED

Victor Sen Yung, 65, the family cook, Hop Sing, on *Bonanza*; he also played Cousin Charlie Fong on *Bachelor Father* during the 1961-62 season.

Nick Dennis, 76, orderly Nick Kanavaras (Nick the Greek) on *Ben Casey*.

Leon Janney, 63, actor on many of the live dramas broadcast on *The U.S. Steel Hour*, *Armstrong Circle Theater* and *Kraft Television Theater*. Janney's other TV credits include *The Edge of Night*, *Another World* and *Stop Me If You've Heard This One*, a 1948-49 quiz show on which Janney was emcee.

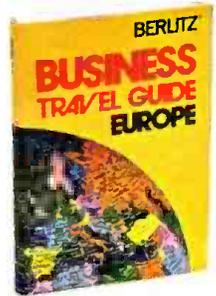
Hod David Schudson, 38, Emmy Award-winning composer, whose credits include *Lou Grant*, the miniseries *Friends* and several of the *ABC After-school Specials*.

Paul Ritts, 60, writer, performer and director for several children's TV shows, including *The Pink Panther Show* and *Exploring*. Ritts and his wife Mary created Magnolia the Ostrich and the other Ritts puppets.

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because it's there when you're in front of the TV," says the ex-subscriber with the \$40 bill.

If the concept of paying for TV programs did not seem strange to Columbus, it is certainly no surprise that the Qube viewers accepted something else with no qualms: commercials. Not just any old commercials, but ads that take full advantage of interaction, sales pitches soliciting not only the viewer's business, but his instant participation. They are called Qubits (those under two minutes) and Infomercials (which can run up to a half hour and are sometimes passed off as entertainment), and they usually culminate in a chance to purchase a product by pushing a button.

Warner Amex chairman Gustave Hauser envisions several channels devoted exclusively to shop-at-home services: advertising as entertainment. Again, it is the subscribers who must adjust to the technology. "We did a weekly show for a local bookstore where authors would discuss their books for eight minutes. Then viewers would press a button to order the book," says Jack Dunahee, Qube's first advertising director. "The store called the people to verify the order and found them having second thoughts. They'd say things like 'My dog's tail hit the button'."

Perhaps Qube viewers don't object to being used as subjects for test-marketing because they're used to it: Columbus has a reputation as a test-market town, with demographics very similar to those of the Nation as a whole. Among clients paying to use Qube's test-marketing capabilities were *Us* magazine (Qube-watchers chose a cover), Doyle Dane Bernbach Advertising (the audience tested potential print ads), and the North American Treaty Organization (button-pushers indicated which segments of a 30-minute documentary made them think nice thoughts about NATO). "Participation is fun," explains Dunahee. "It's exciting to see a magazine cover you helped pick out."

And this is only the beginning of Qube's effort to usher in a profitable future.

"You see that book?" Miklos Korodi asks me, pointing to a huge loose-leaf binder in his office at Qube's Columbus administrative building. "That's the master plan I helped draw for Qube. Even before we went on line, I said that our

development lies in ancillary services." Korodi is now in charge of these services, which are being promoted as enthusiastically as Qube was. Already underway is the first "ancillary service": home security systems. By using the two-way cable, a state-of-the-art fire, burglar and medical alarm system can be maintained at half the cost of traditional systems.

"An individual has only X number of disposable dollars for entertainment; it's not a stable market," says Korodi of traditional cable enterprises. "But home security is perceived as a *need*." To bolster this perception, Warner is running an intensive advertising campaign, with commercials that look like outtakes from the movie "Halloween," complete with a terrified baby sitter fending off unseen attackers. If she only had a cable security system, a touch of a "panic button" would make the home sound like Alcatraz after a breakout.

Warner Amex chairman Hauser envisions several channels devoted exclusively to shop-at- home services

Korodi estimates a black bottom line for the security operation in two years, a profit that will extend to eternity, since the alarm systems are seldom disconnected, but sold to any new owner of a wired home. What he is really hoping for is a "totally wired community," where the local government pays for every home to be connected to the security cable. The fire chief of Grand View, Ohio, whose firehouse is protected free of charge by Warner Amex Security Systems, thinks wired communities are a great idea. "I don't think it's too far away," says the chief. "We give the people police protection, emergency medical, fire companies . . . why not give them cable fire protection?"

Future ancillary services will include cable-monitored home-energy management and a cable-connected computer system. The latter is already instituted in Columbus and provides information retrieval, computer games, and access to just about everything. The computers

are Atari, a division of Warner Communications. Eventually, Qube subscribers will use these services for home banking and credit-card machinations, perhaps in conjunction with products they buy by pushing a button on their Qube terminals. It is no coincidence that, a little over a year ago, Warner Cable took on as partner the Nation's largest credit operation, the American Express company.

On a tour of the nondescript concrete studio building of Qube in Columbus, I saw three modern studios, a control room that looked like a starship, and a room with nothing in it but giant computers. None of it impressed me as much as the enthusiasm of the people who work for Qube. They are all thrilled to be on the ground floor of what promises to be a skyscraper. Talk to them and they tell stories, and most of the stories begin in childhood, when they were awed by some kind of technology—radio, television, electronics, film. I sensed the same kind of childlike wonder directed to the new technology they are helping to create.

It is exciting, and the first shot I had at pressing the buttons on the Qube terminal, I took. It felt like floating bottles out to sea: I wasn't sure where my message was going, but it was a novel form of amusement in which the participation was more important than the result. Sometimes, just to be contrary, I'd pick the most outrageous of the choices available and touch them in, just to screw up the already unscientific sample. Not that it mattered. By the time I left Columbus, I knew that "talking back to the television" was the least of what mattered about Qube. I had figured out that no one on Qube, if he valued his job, was going to be asking the kind of questions that get dangerous answers.

The people of Columbus seem to have sensed this. Interactive television is not a hot discussion topic there. People subscribe to Qube for the same reasons they subscribe to Qube's competitors without cable, only four TV stations are available in the area, and central Ohio seems to lend itself to sitting at home and watching movies. Those who have Qube might touch in, but no one considers it remarkable. Already, in Columbus, the future has been assimilated.

There has been much talk in the national media about the privacy problems

continued on page 100

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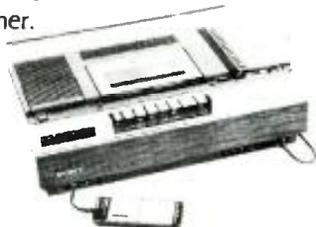
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PR

SPEAK UP, COLUMBUS

continued from page 98

that Qube presents. What if someone got hold of your bill and found you watched "Born Erect"? What if someone peeked into the Qube computer to find out you were among the small percentage who didn't like Phil Donahue? There is a rather toothless provision in the city code requiring cable operations to "observe . . . property rights," but privacy violations don't seem to be an issue with Qube subscribers. When I asked Gustave Hauser about this, he noted that people seemed to take the computerization of their phone bills and bank accounts in stride, and these were also records that might conceivably be compromised. The Qube bill is just one more.

Will the "TV bill" become as much a part of American life as the phone bill? Warner Amex seems confident that the answer is yes. Though Qube's video operation is not yet profitable, though it has yet to prove that consistently good television can be created when the audience keeps interrupting with their damned percentages, the system has indeed proven that two-way cable can deliver the kinds of things that populate the Utopian (and George Orwell's) imagination. It is entirely feasible that one day we will do our banking, shopping, reading, and entertaining by video; that our homes will be wired to monitor the oil heater, check for fires and make sure that the police are only one false move away; that we will register our opinions—and perhaps even our votes—by Qube-like "hot buttons." But no one has suggested how these instant votes, whether they be votes to order a microwave oven or votes on an issue like abortion, will be handled. Once instant polling capacity is in place, it will surely be used—but, as we have seen, Qube's record in this realm is less than reassuring.

The video revolution has only begun. This year it spreads to Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Houston, with improved terminals that perform more functions. It is too soon to tell whether this revolution will be a good thing or not. Columbus has proved that two-way cable is at least as valuable to the cable companies (and their advertisers) as it is to the consumer. But as to what the Qube system, or any system, will look like on the 21st birthday of Sophia Lynn Elizabeth Fiallos, no one can tell you. Certainly no one has asked the subscribers of Qube to touch in on *that* question. ■

100 FEBRUARY 1981

WHERE THE ODD MAN'S IN continued from page 45

I appreciate a well-turned nude body or ca-ca joke as well as the next man, but I don't think that the freedom to pant on television is the sort of freedom I'd fight to defend

ish friends evareewhere across America and in our beloved Yis-ra-ael. . . . " (FLICK) An elderly man stands with a pointer before maps of the city of New York. He is sharing his plan to redesign the entire transit system. "A bridge should have been built connecting Brooklyn . . . over here . . . to New Jersey . . . over here." (FLICK) "Hello, I'm a Pisces and I'd like a general Tarot reading, please." (FLICK) Welcome to *Thinking Times*. Our host is a guy in a ruffled shirt and bow tie named Dr. Mac Truong. His first guest describes himself as the president of the American Movement for World Government. (FLICK) Another evangelist. This one's Hispanic. He's preaching the gospel in Spanish but, somehow, he also sounds like Billy Graham. (FLICK) She's playing out the cards now. "Something brand new affecting the emotions is coming to you." (FLICK) "Now, if we eliminated passenger automobiles from the Cross Bronx Expressway" . . . (FLICK) "The actual lives of your children are threatened unless we immediately adopt a world government for this spaceship Earth. Believe me."

I believe, I believe. I wander into the kitchen for a minute. When I come back, some guy is talking about "pioneers of video transformation." I don't understand anything he's saying. All I can grab onto are phrases—"techniques of non-physical experience" . . . "the second body" . . . "magnetic healing" . . . "passing the fear barrier" . . . "the other body." The name of the show is *Esoteric Sciences and Innerviews*, this week featuring four parapsychologists and our host, Alan Specler. Co-hostess Millie Benoit, who wears thick glasses and

bright-purple lipstick, offers some tips for the coming week. "Be very wary," she advises, "of someone wearing dark colors who comes up to you on your left-hand side in a public place. They could suck out a lot of your energy. Wear white, or light colors, unless you're sure of what's going on."

(FLICK) It's *The Uncle Justin Show*. Uncle Justin is a 13-year-old kid with braces. He sits at a table. "I wanna talk about soap operas," he declares. "Soap operas stink. I've never seen such a silly addiction in my entire life." (FLICK) "Now, if we prohibited all but delivery vehicles and taxis from entering Manhattan below 125th Street, here . . . on the East Side. . . ." (FLICK) "Someone or something," continues Millie Benoit, "entered author Frances Farmer's body when she was 19 and stayed there until her lobectomy. The lobectomy clearly frightened it away." (FLICK) Uncle Justin is reading aloud from a newsletter put out by his orthodontist. (FLICK) Millie has finally shut up. Time for Michael Sullivan to talk about his specialty, psychometry. "I see people's auras," he says. "I want to heal their aura. I heal through speaking. That's why you must be careful of what you say. You can destroy the vibration." Whoops, there goes Millie again. Now she's talking about counterclockwise vibrations. Our host cuts her off. "People don't know what you're talking about," he declares.

"Don't assume that!" she ripostes. They all begin to quarrel. I get it now. Each thinks the other is a nut.

Surreal. It's getting surreal. What's on next . . . footsteps. I hear footsteps in the studio. Voices. Someone's wonder-

ing if there's a picture yet. No picture. There's the picture. It's *Crank Calls*. A guy who identifies himself as John sits at a table with a phone and a big sign with the phone number. "In case you're new to our show," he explains, "the idea is you can call up and say anything you want on television."

The first caller wants to know what John thinks of the Hofstra University Flying Dutchmen basketball team. "Don't know 'em," replies John. "Well, they're a helluva lot better than your wife!" Hah hah hah. A little kid calls and says the same four-letter word over and over again as fast as he can. A guy on 137th Street just wants to say he hates all Puerto Ricans. The same kid calls back and says a different four-letter word over and over again. A Puerto Rican who lives on 138th Street wants to meet the guy from 137th Street on the corner in five minutes. John calls a halt to the festivities and announces some live entertainment—television's first indoor drag race. The camera shifts over to a man and woman who are . . . in drag. The man wears a nightgown. The woman wears a jogging outfit and has a beard penciled on her face. John blows a whistle and they commence to run around and around him while he reads a newspaper.

An hour to go before *Tex Fenster, Superstar* at 12:30. At the rate we're going I can't even fathom what he must do. Time for *Ugly George*. My friend the expert is right. This man is gross. How gross? I watch him conduct a feature he calls "Hit or Miss." Ugly George follows attractive women (or "goyls" as he calls them) through the streets of Manhattan. He makes vulgar comments about them under his breath, then approaches each and asks if she would like to strip nude for his camera and appear on TV. If she says no, he accuses her of having sexual hang-ups and bullies her until she storms off in a huff. That's a miss. If she says yes, he takes her into a convenient hallway where she takes her clothes off for us. Several do. That's a hit. Elliott Gould sniffing his shorts can't approach the repulsion of *Ugly George*.

(FLICK) Time for *Glen O'Brien's TV Party*, apparently a punk-rock talk show. Portraits of Lenin and Stalin hang in the background. "This is a cocktail party which could be a political party," explains our host, who looks like the young William Burroughs. He decides he wants

to sing "Hail to the Chief," but he doesn't remember the melody or the lyrics. Nor does his co-host, an English musician. The host wanders off the set to another side of the studio in search of an answer. He comes back with a half-dozen folks in concentration-camp haircuts, leather vests sans shirts and wraparound sunglasses. All join in singing "Hail to the Chief," each with different lyrics and melody. (FLICK) Meet Daniel J., your host of *Interludes After Midnight*. Daniel J. is smoothly professional, bearded and stark-naked. He sits on a mattress with his first guest. She is naked, too. He calls this "America's first nude talk show." She pours Daniel J. some more champagne and they take their first phone caller. The caller doesn't want to talk. Just want to pant.

Now don't get me wrong—I appreciate a well-turned nude body or ca-ca joke as well as the next man, but I don't think that the freedom to pant on television is the sort of freedom of expression I'd fight to the death to defend. How-

ever, I'm not yet ready to give up on public access. Not while there's still *Tex Fenster*.

He opens his show tonight with Tammy Wynette's "Stand by Your Man." A couple of hand-stenciled signs are held in front of the camera, showing a young man in a beefcake pose and carrying the message "Tex Fenster: Ready for Network TV." The song ends and *Tex* appears. He's a paunchy middle-aged man who wears some sort of scarf or hairnet draped loosely over the top of his head. He puts on another country-western song, holds up another sign and hums along with the record. That's all he does. For 30 minutes. Never says a word. I give up.

I phone my friend and wake him up. "How can you watch this stuff!" I scream.

"Huh? Wha?"

"How can you watch this stuff!"

He yawns. "Maybe you won't understand this," he replies, "but sometimes I'm just not in the mood for *Hart to Hart*." ☐



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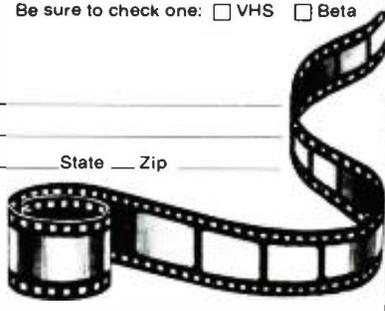
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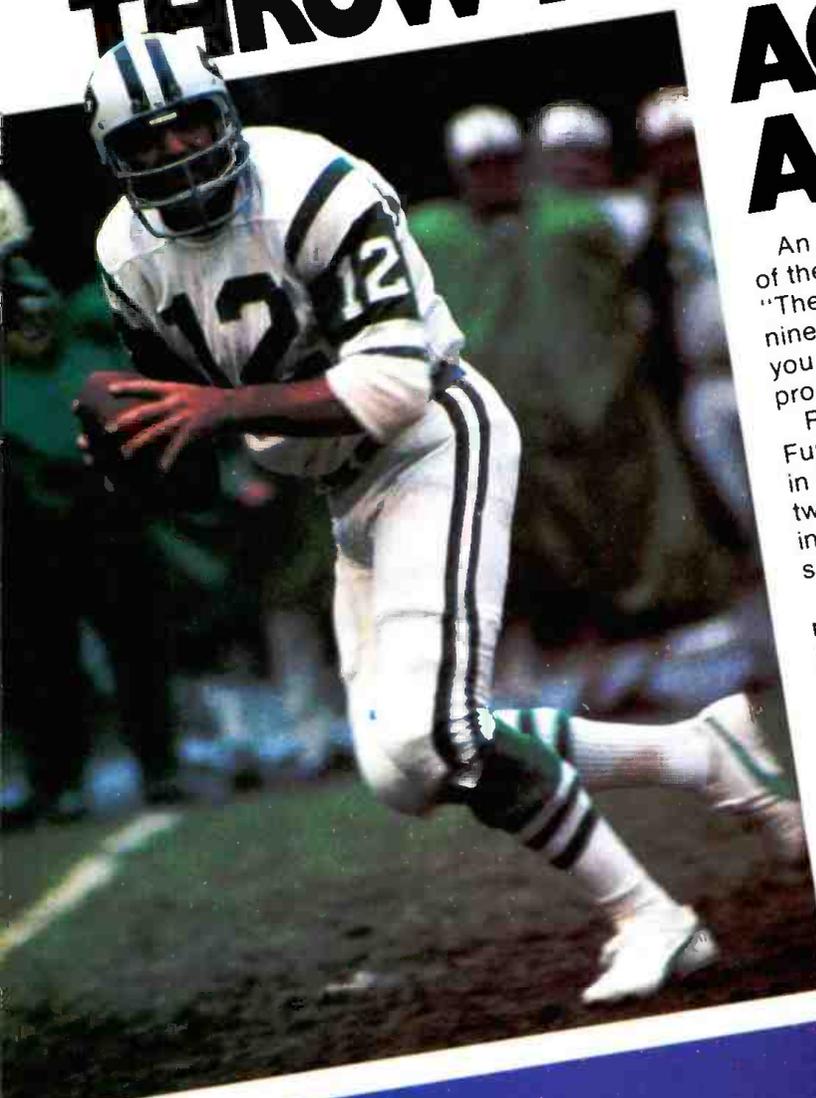
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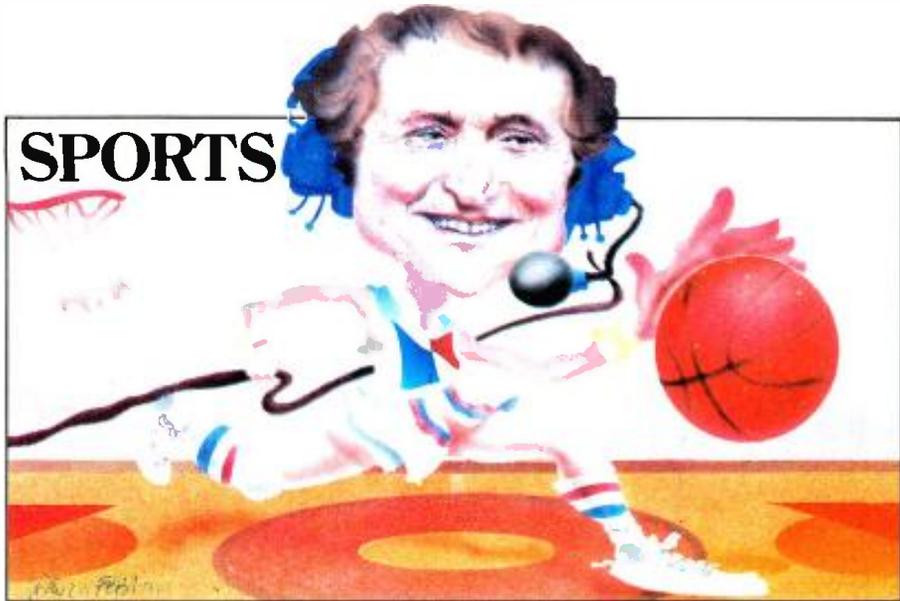
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SPORTS



College Basketball's Joyous Messenger

When Al McGuire puts his wit into play, it's a tossup for who has more fun—the color man or the viewer

By JOHN SCHULIAN

The shot-and-a-beer crowd didn't roll up to McGuire's in limos, and nobody ever walked into the joint carrying a tennis racket for fear of getting hit over the head with it. Those were unwritten house rules, set down by Winifred McGuire, who put her name on the sign out front, her time in behind the bar and her foot down when the noise hurt her ears. She was as tough and funny as they come, and if you need any more proof, just look at that kid of hers who's making it big on television. Even though he has advanced from the Rockaway Beach, N.Y., kind of saloon society to the NBC kind, Al McGuire is still his mother's son.

You could say the same of him when he was a midnight-shift bartender at 20, the best puncher and worst shooter in professional basketball at 25 and the coach of the national college champions at 47. But now, four years after he bailed out of coaching at Marquette University, four years into his new life as NBC's delightfully déclassé

color commentator on their televised college basketball games, McGuire finds more reasons than ever to separate the ridiculous from the sublime.

There are the private jets always at the ready. "The only reason for traveling in one of those things," McGuire says, "is to have your picture taken when you get off."

Likewise, he will never feel comfortable in the hotel suites that always are waiting for him when he arrives at his next destination: "What good is a suite if you're the only one in it?"

Even the sound of NBC executives cooing seductively that his six-figure, 14-weeks-a-year contract should be inflated and extended struck him as wretched excess (although he finally succumbed): "When I heard what they were doing, I said, 'You're taking the numbers uptown? Why?'"

Maybe it was because McGuire has the charm to get away with saying on the air that you can always tell the Catholic schools by the length of the

cheerleaders' skirts. Maybe it was because he has the cheek to claim that his players never bothered him with problems unless the problems were felonies. But don't ask him how he can make such a joy of a college basketball game. He just blurts out the first thing that pops into his head, proving forevermore that not even a haircut and a network blazer can hide the essential McGuire.

"I come on the way I do because I lack vocabulary, not because it's cute," he says. "I'll see something happening in a game and it'll trigger a picture in my mind. Hey, I'm not gonna tell you what the 'shuffle' offense is, because I don't know myself. I stay in the cracked-sidewalk world. I relate to the two-dollar bettor. I relate to Johnny Lunch Pail and Mary the Waitress. I don't want to use any words a shoe-shine kid can't understand."

So it was that when Earvin Johnson was performing magic for Michigan State two years ago, McGuire borrowed snatches of songs from "Saturday Night Fever" to describe the way the show-stopper walked that walk and talked that talk. The choice was a natural: it painted Johnson perfectly and gave McGuire an opening later on to work in some Bette Midler and Kenny Rogers. "What I'm trying to do," he says, "is show the human-ness of the kid." And if music doesn't work, then he will search out an All-America's mother, the way he did with Mark Aguirre of DePaul University. Or he will dig up some nuttily charming minutia—did anyone realize that Sidney Moncrief, the erstwhile Arkansas sharpshooter, didn't have a driver's license until McGuire spilled the beans? All in all, it's a crazy mix, but, considering the source, you shouldn't expect anything else. "I'm so bad I'm good," McGuire says.

The same was said of him when he was running his home for wayward pituitary cases at Marquette. For 13 years, he staged passion plays disguised as basketball games. His players sounded as though they came from central casting: Dean Meminger was "Dean the Dream" and Pat Smith was the "Evil Doctor Blackheart." McGuire, as always, was McGuire. He antagonized crowds, baited officials, screamed at his troops and let them

continued

AL McGUIRE

continued from page 103

scream back at him. It was like nothing anybody had ever seen, and by the end, when he announced his retirement before winning the 1977 National Collegiate Athletic Association championship, it was like nothing *he* ever wanted to see again.

"Everything was getting to be too automatic," he says. "I had a dynasty going and I wasn't getting puffy about it, but there were too many cupcakes on our schedule. I didn't have anything to get up in the morning and run for. There was no excitement, no quivering. The mistress concept was gone."

Everywhere he turned after that, McGuire bumped into fast operators who claimed they could recharge his batteries. He wasn't an easy sell, though. He shot down the idea of coaching pro ball because he wanted one dollar more than his highest-paid player, and he knew that even the most egomaniacal, star-happy team

owner wouldn't meet that demand. He tried life as vice chairman of Milwaukee-based Medalist Industries for a while, but he knew he'd never last when people started saying he shouldn't ride his motorbike to work. Finally, he settled on giving motivational speeches around the country, which was a natural, and doing his schtick on TV, which was a gamble.

"NBC promised I could be the way I am with this flimflam thing," McGuire says, "but I didn't think they'd keep their word." So far, that's the only major mistake he has made in the upside-down world of television. He was perfect for color commentary, and even the thickest network numbskull wouldn't have touched him. McGuire says so himself: "I'm a one-line guy. I'm what they need. To me, any story that lasts longer than 20 seconds is a commercial."

The most frequent target of McGuire's rapid strikes is NBC's other

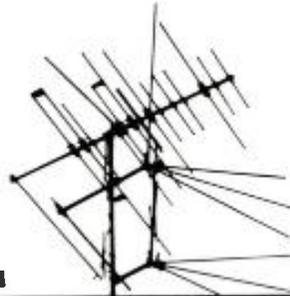
color man, Billy Packer, a Southern-fried former college player and coach to whom each game is a journey to Mecca. The two of them have lived up more than one telecast by going for each other's throats. Whether the balding Packer comes out in favor of needlepoint or Notre Dame, McGuire is sure to tell him, "Get the hair out of your eyes." The result of this sometimes silly, sometimes serious, always spontaneous byplay is that the audience expects a duel at dawn. "I wish people wouldn't think that way," McGuire says. "I love Billy. He's a great guy, terrific company." A laugh interrupts McGuire's train of thought. "But when Billy leaves a room, it really lights up."

Hard as it is to believe, the third member of NBC's college basketball team has done more for McGuire than Packer, the Perfect Foil, Dick Enberg, who describes the game action and throws his partners their straight lines, set a good example from day one by studying. "At first," McGuire says, "I thought he had some babe stashed away in his hotel room." But the pluperfect Enberg was simply doing what McGuire does now—getting down the proper pronunciations, the right home towns, the enlightening anecdotes. The only thing McGuire hasn't mastered is working with earphones. "I'm afraid I'd talk to the guy out in the truck," he says. So Enberg discreetly taps McGuire on the leg when it's his turn, and the color man is off to the races.

"As the game goes on, I start to get soot on my face," he says. "I'm not commentating any more. I'm coaching. I'm saying what I would do. Not what's right, but what I'd do. I'm not giving the people French pastry then. I'm giving them me."

He doesn't stop when the game is over and he is back among the network types, either. There was a night in Pittsburgh, for example, a night when he had finished taping a rare side trip into trash sports and found himself facing the standard buffet, drinks and glitter. In an instant, he was out the door—hopping a trolley and heading for a steelworkers' saloon. That was where the real people were, and, if you really think about it, where Al McGuire belonged. ■

Looking inside the tube.



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TV AND THE VERY RICH *continued from page 37*

2. Shows that offer yoga lessons, calisthenics, or any other kind of physical-fitness instruction. The rich have their own exercise classes and masseurs.

3. Shows that offer cooking lessons or other household tips. The rich have their own cooks, their own maids. (The rich loved *Upstairs, Downstairs* because it was about the servant problem.)

4. Middle-class, domestic situation comedies. The worlds of Rhoda, Laverne, Shirley, Archie Bunker and the Jeffersons are of no interest to the rich.

5. Anything dealing with blacks, poverty, the Holocaust, etc. These are facets of life, and aspects of history, of which the rich don't want to be reminded.

6. Police shows, and anything dealing with crime. The rich spend many of their waking hours worrying about burglaries, embezzlements, kidnaping and pilferage by their employees, endlessly discussing the merits and deficiencies of various home-protection services and devices, memorizing the telephone numbers of police precincts. Why learn more about such matters on television?

7. Anything dealing with politics, Presidential press conferences and the like. The rich, it sometimes seems, have not really listened with much interest to what a United States President had to say since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Even then, the rich tuned in on Roosevelt's Fireside Chats only out of a kind of angry masochism: FDR fascinated the rich because he was, above all else, a Traitor to His Class.

Meanwhile, if there is a single, all-around, hands-down favorite rich person's television program, it is almost definitely *The Lawrence Welk Show*. Lawrence Welk is perfectly tuned to the rich person's tastes, as well as to the rich person's lifestyle. For one thing, in many cities Welk's syndicated show appears on Saturday evenings when, as noted above, the rich are often idle. The time of day is also perfect—well into the cocktail hour,

but before dinner, when the rich tend to be the most woozily contented with their lot. Lawrence Welk deals with no problems, poses no threats. He speaks and sings soothingly of the land of milk and honey. His attractive cast of singers and dancers are all well-scrubbed, healthy, bright-eyed, shiny-haired, squeaky-clean, and of exactly the age most rich people, no matter how old, prefer still to think of themselves as being. The girls are debutante-pretty, and the boys are prep-school handsome. They look like rich kids.

Lawrence Welk's music, furthermore, is exactly the kind of music the rich like to hear—sweet, sentimental, unchallenging, old-fashioned; the kind of music the rich learned to dance to when, long ago, in white gloves and patent-leather pumps, they attended such exclusive private dancing classes as Willie De Rham's on Park Avenue, where two generations of Astors, Whitneys, Hearsts, Chryslers and Fords learned to waltz and fox-trot and to perform cotillion figures. It is the music from long-ago coming-out parties in huge pink tents overlooking Long Island Sound, where champagne flowed until dawn. It is music in the familiar—to the rich, at least—tradition of Meyer Davis, Lester Lanin and, more recently, Peter Duchin. After all, many of the very, very rich are no longer technically young. It takes a while, and people have to die, before the trust funds become tangible assets and the full weight of the great fortunes descends upon the heirs. It is no surprise, therefore, to discover that at least one wealthy widow in her 70s turns on *The Lawrence Welk Show* religiously every Saturday night and dances around her drawing room—all by herself, with an imaginary partner—cocktail glass in hand.

Advertisers may not yet have fully grasped this fact. But *The Lawrence Welk Show* would be the perfect vehicle for horse-food commercials. ■

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VCR UPDATE

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video recorder has grown from virtually nothing into a major industry. In another year or two, home VCRs and their subsidiary products could displace the entire audio field—as the second biggest electronic home-entertainment category, exceeded in dollar volume only by television itself. Like automobiles and most other consumer products, VCRs keep getting better, and next year's models undoubtedly will show new improvements, more features and possibly some lower prices. But today's VCRs have been well proven around the world. There are enough now in use to assure a continuing supply of cassettes—both blank and prerecorded—for the life of the machines of today and tomorrow and a long time to come, even if all VCR standards were to change this afternoon.

There almost certainly *will* be new cassette formats introduced. Just one year ago, in PANORAMA, I forecast the appearance of "tiny nonstandard cassettes within the next 12 months"—and the Technicolor CVC is only the first of these. Other companies are experimenting with minicassettes and combination camera/VCRs for lightweight portability. In Europe, Philips has introduced a new format, Video 2000, with a VHS-sized (but incompatible) flip-over cassette that can record for up to eight hours; the company hopes to introduce this format in the United States next year.

Then, too, the videodisc player is coming on the market in full force this year, with RCA adding the persuasion of a record-breaking advertising campaign for its SelectaVision machine to the existing marketing efforts of Magnavox and Pioneer. The videodisc eventually may become the preferred medium for viewing purchased or rented programs—but that's only *one* of the uses of a VCR, and the only area in which the disc players can compete; they cannot *make* recordings. (Interestingly, a survey by Pioneer shows that the majority of videodisc-player buyers also own VCRs. This may not prove anything except that video enthusiasts want to have all the latest gadgets.)

It all really boils down to the question of what you want and when you want it. If you want to tape off the air or cable or from a camera, as well as view prerecorded programs, and you want to do it now, you can buy with the assurance that you're getting a perfected product that will serve you for many years. ■

YESTERDAYS

“Captain Kangaroo” has its debut . . . Lisa makes a big decision on “Green Acres” . . . Dorothy Hamill wins Olympic gold



Bob Keeshan

25 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 1956

The Los Angeles Police Department is campaigning against the use of the word “cop”; if the LAPD gets its way, *Dragnet’s* famous opening line will be changed to, “My name is Friday—I’m a police officer.” . . . *Meet Millie* and *Ethel and Albert* are the only surviving live sitcoms; all others are on film.

. . . Economy note: the secret-word payoff on *You Bet Your Life* has been cut from \$101 to \$99 . . . Richard Simmons and a trained dog, Yukon King, are starring in a new adventure series, *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*.

. . . Bob Keeshan is the star of a new morning kids’ show, *Captain Kangaroo*; regulars on the show include Bunny Rabbit, Mr. Green Jeans and Grandfather Clock. . . . The same promotion firm that built a piano player, Liberace, into a national craze is now

gearing its machinery for an accordion-playing band leader named Lawrence Welk.

15 YEARS AGO: 1966

After five successful years, *Ben Casey* is suffering from bad ratings. . . . NBC’s *Profile on the Arts* features the films of an NYU film student, Martin Scorsese. . . . Gene Kelly hosts a musical salute to New York City, with guests Woody Allen and Gower Champion. . . . On *Candid Camera*, a little girl tries to teach her boyfriend to dance “The Jerk.” . . . A PBS documentary entitled “Two Roads to the Center” examines the paths to democracy being followed by Argentina and Chile. . . . Lee Majors, who plays Heath Barkley on *The Big Valley*, is hailed as “the new James Dean.” . . . On *Green Acres*, Lisa (Eva Gabor)

must decide whether to stay on the farm with Oliver (Eddie Albert) or go back to New York City. . . . On *World Town Meeting*, four major cities are linked via Early Bird satellite to discuss how to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. Eric Sevareid is the moderator and participants include Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and Britain’s Lord Chalfont.

5 YEARS AGO: 1976

Sara, a weekly series starring Brenda Vaccaro as an Eastern schoolmarm adjusting to life in a Colorado pioneer town, makes its debut on CBS. . . . Soccer player Kyle Rote Jr. takes the crown and \$122,000 in the fourth annual men’s *Superstars* final; the winner of the women’s competition is Olympic speed skater Anne Henning. . . . ABC’s coverage of the XII Winter Olympic Games from Innsbruck, Austria, brings fame to U.S. figure-skating gold-medalist Dorothy Hamill. . . . On *The Six Million Dollar Man*, Steve Austin (Lee Majors) is aided by an old girlfriend, played by actress (and Majors’ real-life wife) Farrah Fawcett-Majors. . . . The Bellamys’ marriage is on the rocks on *Upstairs, Downstairs*. . . . WJM-TV producer Mary Richards threatens to quit when her boss, Lou Grant, insists on doing a news story that could hurt her political idol. . . . Yasir Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, is interviewed in Beirut for NBC’s *Meet the Press*.—Alison Nelson

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Barbra Streisand's first one-hour television special; a spectacular evening of entertainment with over a dozen songs, all sung in the distinctive style that is Barbra Streisand. 57 minutes.
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638 LOST IN SPACE (1965)

The first episode of one of the best science fiction series in television history, featuring the Robinson family whose space voyage to another galaxy is sabotaged by foreign powers, causing them to be hopelessly lost in space! Wonderful family entertainment! 45 minutes.
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590 SHERLOCK HOLMES (1954)

With Ronald Howard and H. Marion Crawford. Two complete programs: THE CASE OF THE IMPROMPTU PERFORMANCE and THE CASE OF THE EXHUMED CLIENT. 54 minutes.
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Live Burns and Allen in their prime! This is a Christmas show complete with George's monologue and Gracie's perpetual confusion! 30 minutes.
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Frank Sinatra and Ethel Merman sing & swing their way through this delightful adaptation of Cole Porter's hit musical! There's gangsters, G-men, mistaken identities and stowaways; romance, comedy and confusion—but mostly there's brilliant singing by Sinatra and Merman! 53 minutes.
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687 ELVIS IN CONCERT IN HAWAII (1973) COLOR*

Elvis electrifies his audience with BURNIN' LOVE, LOVE ME, HOUND DOG, IT'S OVER, MY MAY and many more in this dazzling souvenir of the greatest showman of them all! 59 minutes.
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591 THE BING CROSBY SHOW (1963)

With Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Edie Adams, Gary Crosby, The Smothers Brothers, Ken Carpenter, Pete Fountain Quintet, and David Rose and his Orchestra. 57 minutes.
BETA 2: \$39.95 - VHS: \$42.95

636 THE HOLLYWOOD PALACE (1970)

Last show of the series. With Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Jimmy Durante, Ethel Merman, Sammy Davis Jr., Nat King Cole, Perry Como, Gene Kelly, Dean Martin, Judy Garland, Jack Benny, Buster Keaton, Tiny Tim, Groucho Marx, Milton Berle, George Burns, Bette Davis and many more! 52 minutes.
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415 THE BIG TIME (1959)

MERCURY STAR TIME. Super all-star cast: Eddie Cantor, George Burns, Bobby Darin, Kingston Trio, George Jessel, Jack Benny! 51 minutes.
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655 THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (c. 1966) COLOR

Two complete shows: THE EQUESTRIAN and THE BABY SITTER. Includes original commercials by Cue toothpaste, Metrical, Arrid, Rise shaving cream and Sucrets! Very funny! 57 minutes.
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Old Blue Eyes knock's 'em dead in Tokyo singing COME FLY WITH ME, I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU, I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING, GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN, and lots more! 52 minutes.
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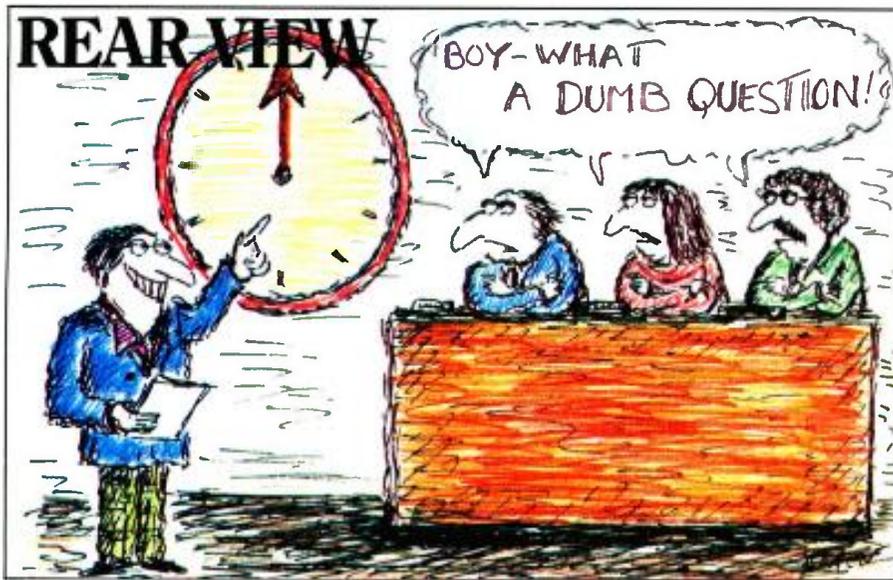
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“What’s the Price of the Peanut Butter?”

Once, quiz shows were challenging. Now the questions are more stupid than the answers

By ED ZUCKERMAN

College Board scores are down again for the 18th straight year—and educators are speculating, according to *The New York Times*, that one of the causes of this decline in academic ability lurks in “changes in the family structure.”

Well, Mommy may have had her consciousness raised and run off with a punk-rocker 13 years her junior, but there’s more to the story than that. If the speculating educators would only take a break from watching PBS documentaries on gene-splicing and switch to *Family Feud*, they would see the answer.

Once this was a country where it was not considered inconceivable that a salesclerk could name the capital of Peru. And such a person was encouraged to do so—and generously rewarded—on a slew of big-money TV quiz shows.

Ed Zuckerman is a free-lance writer who has written for The New York Times and Harper’s magazine.

Knowledge (or at least memory) was honored on the tube. In 1955, a 12-year-old from Baltimore won \$16,000 for spelling “The belligerent, astigmatic anthropologist annihilated innumerable chrysanthemums” on *The \$64,000 Question*. Today, 12-year-olds go on *Family Feud* with their relatives to guess what 100 people surveyed said when asked to name a green vegetable. Now all contestants have to know is how to jump up and down and hyper-ventilate.

Of course, several of the quiz shows of the 1950s turned out to be rigged. In 1956, Charles Van Doren was carefully coached before his first appearance on *Twenty-One* on the subjects he would be asked about, which included the name of the Inca leader encountered by Pizarro. (The answer is “Atahualpa.”) But imagine what it would be like to rig a quiz show today. What’s a crooked producer going to whisper to a contestant? “Bachelor Number Three”?

Picture the scene at the executive offices of a typical contemporary game show—call it *Win That Junk!*—as a prospective contestant is briefed.

PRODUCER: Harry, my boy, we like to keep the show interesting, so I hope you’ll have no moral objections if we build you into a big winner.

HARRY: What’s in it for me?

PRODUCER: An electric popcorn popper, two trash compactors, a trip to Baja California and a lifetime supply of that dish-washing liquid that lets you see your face in the plates.

HARRY: Hokay! What do I do?

PRODUCER: Show up dressed as a carrot. When the host calls you up on-stage, jump up and down on the red spot on the floor. That’ll trigger a mechanism to stop the wheel of fortune on the joker. Remember that Dwight Eisenhower is dead and that the retail price of the peanut butter is 79 cents. Got it?

HARRY: I think so. Who’s Dwight Eisenhower?

As a former quiz-show contestant, I have found the wholesale replacement of quiz shows by game shows especially painful. (In 1966, I and three others represented Samuel C. Mumford High School on Detroit’s famous *Quiz ‘Em on the Air*. Unfortunately, we Mumfordites were creamed by the Yeshivah Beth Yehudah girls.) And so I spent an entire day watching every game show I could tune in, on a quest for some remnant of a quiz. I saw a contestant on *The Price Is Right* fail to guess how many packaged macaroni-and-cheese dinners she could buy for \$5. I saw a contestant on *Card Sharks* asked to estimate how many people of 100 surveyed said they’d want to watch a film of their own birth.

Finally, numb, I came upon a veteran show called *Tic Tac Dough*. My ears perked up when the emcee asked, “On what continent is the dingo found?” And my spirits soared when I heard the amplified “tic-toc-tic-toc . . .” of a timing clock. At last, an old-fashioned quiz!

An Air Force pilot and a civil servant were volleying back and forth: Name the residence of Andrew Jackson! Who wrote “Finnegan’s Wake”? Then, at the game’s climactic moment, my jubilation collapsed. The civil servant was asked to identify . . . the star of *CHiPs*. He left the show in disgrace, his dream of dune buggies turned to dust. He could not name Erik Estrada. ■

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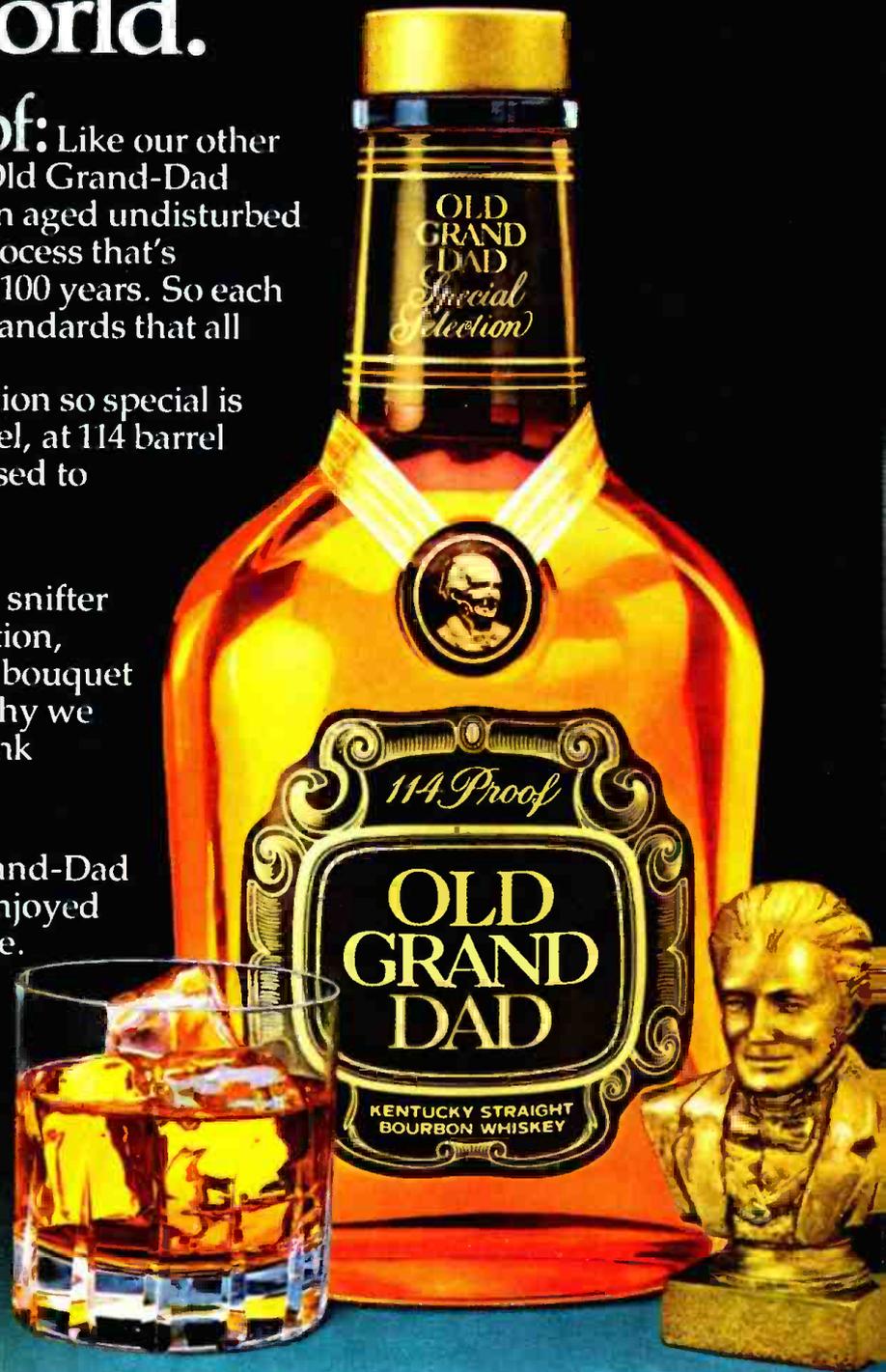
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