

Wednesday, December 17, 1958

VARIETY

RADIO-TELEVISION

23

YEAR END: 'WHO'S ON SECOND'?

Nielsen's Top 10—8 Are Westerns (Second November Report)

With the exception of Danny Thomas and "Shirley Temple Storybook," eight of the Top 10 Nielsen shows are westerns. Of perhaps major significance, however, is the fact that ABC-TV dominates the Top 10 with four entries, NBC and CBS having three apiece. Of the Top 15 shows, CBS has seven, ABC five and NBC three.

The Top 10 lineup:

Gunsmoke	CBS	41.4
Have Gun, Will Travel	CBS	35.5
Wagon Train	NBC	34.3
Danny Thomas	CBS	31.8
Shirley Temple	NBC	30.8
Rifleman	ABC	30.7
The Real McCoys	ABC	30.6
Wells Fargo	ABC	30.2
Maverick	ABC	29.8
Wyatt Earp	ABC	29.5

ABC-TV'S RISE TO NEW STATUS

By GEORGE ROSEN

The new Nielsen, just out, are almost shattering in their implications. ABC-TV dominates the Top 10 listings (first time in history), capturing four places, with CBS and NBC dividing up the remainder three apiece. On four nights of the week ABC-TV boasts the top-rated show ("Maverick" on Sunday; "Rifleman" on Tuesday; "Real McCoys" on Thursday; "Walt Disney Show" Friday). In short, Leonard Goldenson has got himself a network.

Further "new Nielsen" intelligence as researched by ABC: Of the 30 half-hours prime time in which all three networks are competing with commercial programming, ABC and CBS each lead in 11 instances with NBC leading in eight places. (A rundown of the complete 42 half-hours seven nights a week 7:30 to 10:30 shows CBS leading with 17 places, NBC second with 13, ABC third with 12).

The onward-&-upward ascent of ABC in the three-network tv competition must inevitably add up to one of the more interesting and exciting chapters when the debit and credit sheets of '58 are tallied. What makes it all the more remarkable is that only a year ago ABC, by its own admission running a poor third in the inter-network rivalry, was still being talked about as the "potentially promising network." Its "arrival" into the bigtime is borne out by the following statistics:

For the same November Nielsen period a year ago ABC had an average nighttime rating of 18.5 (in the 7:30 to 10:30 periods). CBS had a 25.3 and NBC a 23.6. This year the score reads: ABC, 20.1; CBS, 23.9; NBC, 21.7—a major stride toward closing the gap.

While in the daytime area there's still an iffy status to the network's new bid for afternoon audiences, with some \$15,000,000 in sponsorship coin riding on the outcome, the nighttime story is something

Maverick Sat. Entry Gives ABC-TV A 7-Nights-a-Week S.O. at 10:30

Index Top 10 (Week Dec. 15)

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Locks like ABC-TV will be headed for seven-nights-a-week sell-out 10:30 to 11 p.m. starting in March, when Schlitz is scheduled to move to the Saturday late night period (now station time, with a new series. If even that goes as anticipated, it will be the first time since 1952 that the network has boasted that kind of a fringe time "S.O."

Schlitz, as placed the order and it's now up to the stations. Since that's the time period following "Gunsmoke," the certainty of an audience pickup practically clinches the station's acceptance. Beer company is checking out of its current "Schlitz Playhouse" series entry, which it shares with Lux, and the latter will take over the whole half-hour.

The new "Gunsmoke" series—a spin-off from the Revue Productions "Suspicion" series of last year, as a pilot for a new private eye series of the Revue shelf.

That 10:30 to 11 p.m. S.O. on ABC will go like this: Sunday, "What's My Line"; "Dead a Playhouse"; Tuesday, Garry Moore show; Wednesday, "U.S. Steel" and "Theatre"; Thursday, "Playhouse 93"; Friday, "Person to Person" and Saturday, "Millions."

And the network's profits are up. That the intense ABC rivalry is creating some uneasiness within the NBC precincts can only be surmised. Even now the latter network's program chieftains, both in Florida (away from the phones) to map strategy and future programming in a major bid to recapture lost ground. Similarly at CBS the "airer" has gone out, with an off-the-record communique to program execs posting notice that "we must, redirect our program defenses against ABC's position as the new second network."

It is argued in some circles—chiefly by the competition—that the ABC advances, with the major reliance on westerns and action shows, were accomplished at the expense of balanced programming, whereas the other networks made the sacrificial gestures in order to embrace a wider scope of programming. ABC concedes the point, contending that it has had no alternative but to move in the direction where the mass audience lies since, as the longtime runnerup network, it had to "make it or else." "The rest can come later, when we're firmly established," says ABC.

Thanks to ABC—Error in Station's Report of Ratings Buttons

ABC agency on the "77 Sunset Strip" and whose report also has a \$100,000 stake in such entries as "Gunsmoke" and "The Real McCoys" is doing a burn over ABC's decision to shift the "77 Sunset Strip" to 10:30 to 11 p.m. period on Jan. 13.

That's the same time and the same night when one of the major "burns" was "Who's My Line?" will be presented on ABC. In view of the second recorded presentation, it is a bit of a coincidence that the "77 Sunset Strip" is being moved to the same time slot as "Who's My Line?"

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BOY, DO THEY LOVE US IN NORTH TEXAS!*



NIELSEN, DALLAS - FT. WORTH AREA

#1	"Rifleman"	(ABC)	253,800 HOMES
#2	"Wyatt Earp"	(ABC)	251,400 HOMES
#3	"Gunsmoke"	(CBS)	235,800 HOMES
#4	"Maverick"	(ABC)	233,700 HOMES
#5	"Lawman"	(ABC)	216,200 HOMES
#6	"Real McCoys"	(ABC)	215,500 HOMES
#7	"Sugarfoot"	(ABC)	207,700 HOMES
#8	"The Texan"	(CBS)	202,400 HOMES
#9	"I've Got a Secret"	(CBS)	201,200 HOMES
#10	"Danny Thomas"	(CBS)	199,200 HOMES

*Six out of 10 on WFAA-TV

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