PANORAMA

THE TELEVISION MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1981

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By Theodore H. White

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PANORAMA

THE TELEVISION MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1981 **VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1**

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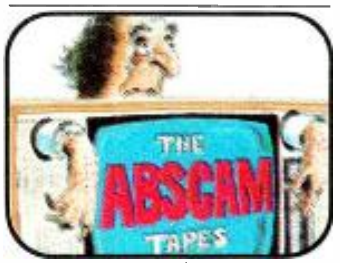

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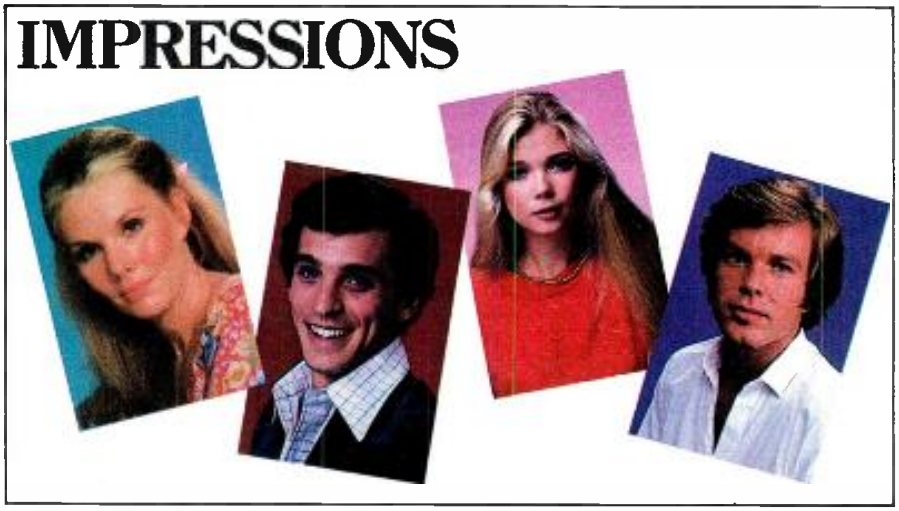

***Masters of "the thousand-mile stare": (from left) Jacqueline Courtney, who plays Pat Ashley on* One Life to Live*; Mark Lamura (Mark Dalton), Taylor Miller (Nina Cortlandt Warner) and Peter Bergman (Cliff Warner) from* All My Children.**

Those All-Purpose Blondes and Rich Romantic Lovers save the day

Soaps as Therapy

By CYRA McFADDEN

Don't lose sleep over that surplus of doctors predicted for the next decade. They can all find steady work on daytime soap operas.

A rough count of doctors on "daytime dramas" recently turned up 24—all square-jawed, cleareyed and masters of what a friend calls "the thousand-mile stare": that profound yet vacant gaze into the distance that means trouble ahead, and without which no soap-opera actor could function. The same count turned up nine nurses, eight lawyers, nine rich businessmen and businesswomen, four politicians and four prostitutes.

In other words, what might be called the "professions" are amply represented. So are onerous life problems: terminal cancer, paralysis, mental illness and diabetes (you can see why the soaps need all those doctors), wife-beating, adultery, paternity suits, pornography, euthanasia, interracial marriage and alcoholism. This, I suppose, is reality "heightened" to the cruising altitude of the Concorde.

Where, though, are the real problems of embattled, day-to-day living, such as cars that won't start and cats that miss the cat box? "The crises are so enormous that by comparison the viewers' problems pale into insignificance," one soap-opera star (Gail Rae Carlson, Susan on *General Hospital*) told a San Francisco newspaper recently. "It's cheap therapy."

But what about the other end of the shtick? Consider the following love scene (typical, typical) from NBC's stunningly original *Texas*. Reunited after a long separation, the All-Purpose Blonde who frequents all soapers and her counterpart, the Rich Romantic Lover, have the following exchange:

RRL: "Darling, it's so wonderful to have you in my arms again."

APB: "Sweetheart, it's so good to be surrounded by your love. . . . Remember the little *pension*? The balcony? The Mediterranean glistening below?"

RRL: "Remember that po-uhm I read to you? 'Had we but world enough and time . . .'." (Soap-opera writers are often ex-English majors.)

APB: "Let's make this night like our last night in Saint-Tropez, but this night our happiness will never end."

Following this conversation, which took place on the RRL's yacht, the couple wafted toward a bed. The scene that followed was shot through so many filters that they could have been having sex, playing "Simon Says" or brushing flies off each other. Nonetheless, it's true that my life "pales by comparison." Where do all those RRLs come from anyway?

One might ask the same question of another daytime drama stalwart: the sexy, sensitive young man who prefers mature older women, like Mark and Sean on *All My Children* and (marginally—he's sexy but not sensitive) Michael on *Ryan's Hope*. Just how many attractive 25-year-old men are there in real life who prefer maturity to muscle tone?

Nor have I encountered all those people who talk to themselves, usually while employing the thousand-mile stare:

- "You're right, Maggie. I don't want to be dependent on anyone or anything—and when I come to your house for dinner, I *certainly* don't want to be dependent on your husband." (*Days of Our Lives*)
- "Oh, Julie—when are you and I going to get a chance to achieve the best we can get from *our* love?" (ibid.)
- "Billy Joe wouldn't hurt Dawn, he just wouldn't. Billy Joe just couldn't, he just *couldn't*. As soon as Billy Joe gets home from work, I'm gonna ask him. I gotta know, I just *gotta*." (*Texas*)

I just don't believe in this soul-searching out loud, I just *don't*. Nor do I accept countless other soap-opera conventions, such as friends dropping in on each other three times a day instead of leading electronic lives like the rest of us, speaking into telephone-answering machines. Even tougher to credit is the degree to which characters meddle in other characters' lives. Says my friend Mary, expert on the genre, "Four words could wipe out all the soaps: Mind Your Own Business."

Given their enduring popularity, however, it is obvious soap operas offer people something more important than credibility—as do the Harlequin paperback romances they closely resemble. For starters, there's fantasy. A small *pension* with a view of the Mediterranean beats an incontinent cat any day.

The soaps serve up the romance missing in our more humdrum lives. It's sticky, and the dialogue is ludicrous, but nobody's perfect.

And they offer that ubiquitous but oddly chaste soap-opera sex. In daytime dramas, three characters in any room form a love triangle. Yet full frontal nudity consists of bare shoulders and a collarbone.

Then there are those comfortably familiar characters: the all-purpose blondes, the sexy, romantic men, and the black-hearted schemers not even their social workers could love. These inspire some of my favorite soap-opera utterances, such as the classic "Will you never stop your evil machinations?"

No wonder that the form is indestructible and that it's sudsing over into prime-time programming, where we may shortly expect series called *Fort Worth*, *Tyler* and *Galveston*. These are tough times. Who can resist encouragement like Trish's recent pronouncement on *Days of Our Lives*, "No matter what crazy things happen to us, we can always make our dreams come true"?

My soap-opera-watching friend says that's all fine and well, but what works for daytime drama characters will never work for the rest of us because "we don't have the right background music." She adds wistfully, "Do you suppose if we ever mastered the thousand-mile stare, we could get our lives to cut to commercials at the worst moments?" ■

LETTERS

Dem Brooklynese Blues

I would like to thank you and David Frost for the nice interview in your October issue ("I Wish Everyone Would Stop Putting TV Down So Much," Q&A). However, in the article it stated that I said, "I don't know if Raquel Welch understands English." On the contrary, Miss Welch is a lovely, bright woman who understands many languages. What I don't know is if she understands *my* English. You see, I have this Brooklyn accent and I tend to draw it out, emphasizing every third word or so, pausing every now and then. . . .

Garry Marshall
Hollywood

Pay's the Thing

Regarding Ron Powers' "Is Pay-Cable More Exciting than Network TV?" (October): Perhaps Mr. Powers should pay more attention to a subject he is supposedly studying. The only advantage he gives pay-TV over network TV is the lack of commercials. He implies that pay-TV chooses movies starring television stars deliberately to appeal to TV watchers. He also talks about offerings on cable from the "great, safe, repetitive middle of television's pantheon." It is true that all this may be found on pay-TV. But Powers stops there and does not venture farther.

To begin with, not only is pay-TV free of commercials (though it does carry self-promotional material), its offerings are uninterrupted and uncut. Further, an examination of the October Showtime schedule reveals the following: Of their 28 scheduled motion pictures, only six (21 percent) star television stars. Of the 11 special features, only one could safely be called "typical" of network TV. The rest are unedited (or uncensored) concerts, live plays, the Ralph Nader special, a gossip show, and the program the networks stole for their own *Real People* and *That's Incredible!* All these programs are more sophisticated than what one finds on the networks, and would hardly be considered "safe" by a network executive.

This is a fairly typical pay-TV schedule. The point is that none of this is "something eerily the same" as network TV. If Mr. Powers wants to call a schedule that runs daily from 3:30 P.M. to 2 A.M. (on the average) and on weekends from 1:30 P.M. to 3 A.M. clustered "in and around prime time," that's his own business, but Mr. Powers should acknowledge he's being very misleading. Or perhaps he made up his mind before he did his "research." Readers of PANORAMA deserve something better.

Daniel W. Hays
Eugene, Ore.

Ron Powers replies: *Daniel Hays is mighty quick with a calculator (that 21 percent was almost faster than the eye could follow), but he needs work on his aim: he failed to shoot any holes in my argument that pay-cable, so far, is profoundly derivative of the entertainment conventions and forms of big-network television.*

Granted, Showtime offers a fair amount of mass-audience movies that don't *feature established TV stars. So do the three networks. (Yes, pay-TV's offerings are uninterrupted. I think I mentioned that.) Hays is firing even more from the hip with his claim that "only one" of Showtime's 11 special features for October could safely be called "typical" of network television. Are we reading from the same program guide? A Jerry Lewis special? A Charlie Daniels special? David Sheehan's Hollywood gossip, a Vincent Price magic show, a story about Christian the Lion. . . . Hey, if these are what Hays considers "sophisticated" and "unsafe," I will tiptoe carefully away and leave him to the pleasures of his taste.*

Oh, and one other thing—I do *want to call that schedule "in and around prime time."*

Witnessing for Grimsby

The tone of your article "Coming to You Live . . . From Potholes and Trash Baskets" (October), was certainly no less acerbic than Roger Grimsby's wit. I think you unfairly impugned *Eyewitness News* and its principals. The cursory viewing of merely one newscast is hardly to be considered a valid content analysis. In fact, this particular evening did not even feature Doug Johnson, a three-time Emmy-winner and an especially fine newsman. Nor does your article give mention to the well-established credentials of Grimsby and Beutel as journalists.

If one were to observe fairly, one would draw the rather obvious conclusion that the *Eyewitness* imitators are far more prone to "happy-idiot news talk" than the original. Roger and Bill rarely address each other personally and do refrain from small talk about trivialities.

In addition, I'd like to say that Roger Grimsby isn't quite the mortician he is described as in this article. He was recently reputed to be among New York's sexiest anchors, according to the Sunday Daily News. And Bill Beutel is a charming gentleman, as well as being a journalist of the highest caliber.

Lindsay Fox
New York City

Equal Time

Ever since the publication of my husband's article on our courtship ("The Lady or the Pirates?" October) my PANORAMA-reading law-school classmates and my mother have been asking in horror, "Is it true?" Sad to say, the answer is yes.

But people do change. This past October, *both* of us were glued to the tube as we watched our Phillies battle their way to the top. One of us, however, sat in front of the set drinking beer, wearing a baseball cap, and screaming, swearing and cheering. That person was me.

Meryl Rosen Friedman
Frazer, Pa.

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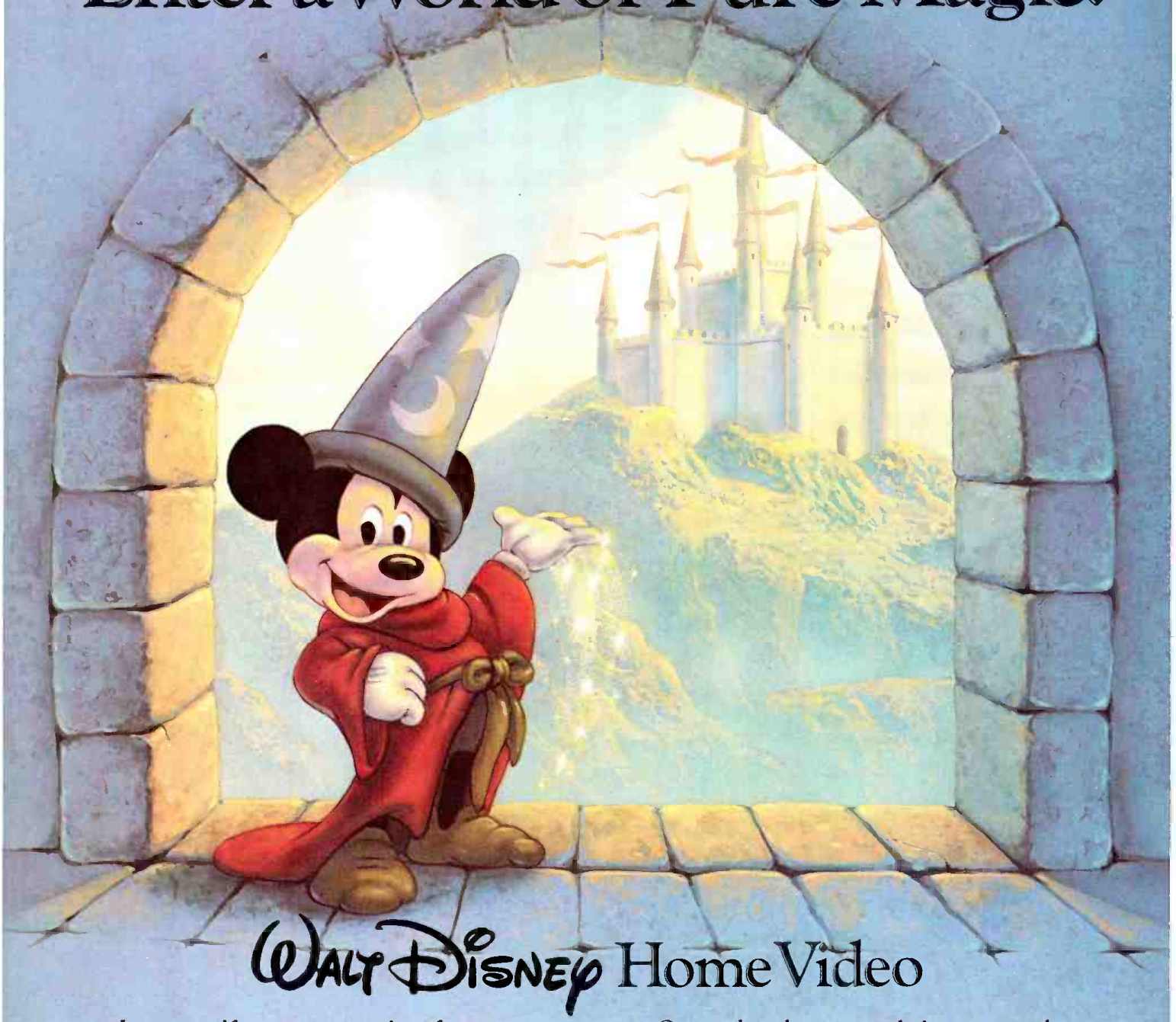

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PERSPECTIVE

Abscam's Ominous Legacy

Videotapes can convict as surely as a jury

BY RICHARD REEVES

Security World is not a place. It is a magazine. More precisely, it is "The magazine of professional security administration and practice"—and it has almost 42,000 subscribers.

Looking through recent issues, a scary exercise, you find articles with titles like: "Three Missions for Closed-Circuit Television in Physical Security, Detection, Surveillance, Access Control." The subtitle is: "Human factors important consideration in tactical deployment."

Tactical deployment of what? Television cameras, of course. Little eyes are everywhere. One of the biggest advertisers is Panasonic, which pays for a two-page color spread that begins: "Nobody lets you keep an eye on people, places and things more ways than Panasonic."

Little Brother is watching. Television cameras—like Panasonic's Newvicon—are hidden in corners, behind walls, behind pictures. Sometimes they're out in the open if the person paying for the electricity believes that their very visibility is a deterrent to what he wants to deter—outsiders, thievery, free speech. The company, and many others, will also provide "dummy" cameras complete with little red lights to make you believe that you're being observed even when there's nothing behind the little eye but styrofoam.

We now know, of course, that the Government, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is a major customer of the advertisers in Security World. Equipment like this was what the FBI used to trap congressmen talking about bribes with agents posing as Arabs—Abscam. The places where the meetings were held were "eyed"—or whatever the equivalent visual term is for bugging. Big Brother is watching, too.

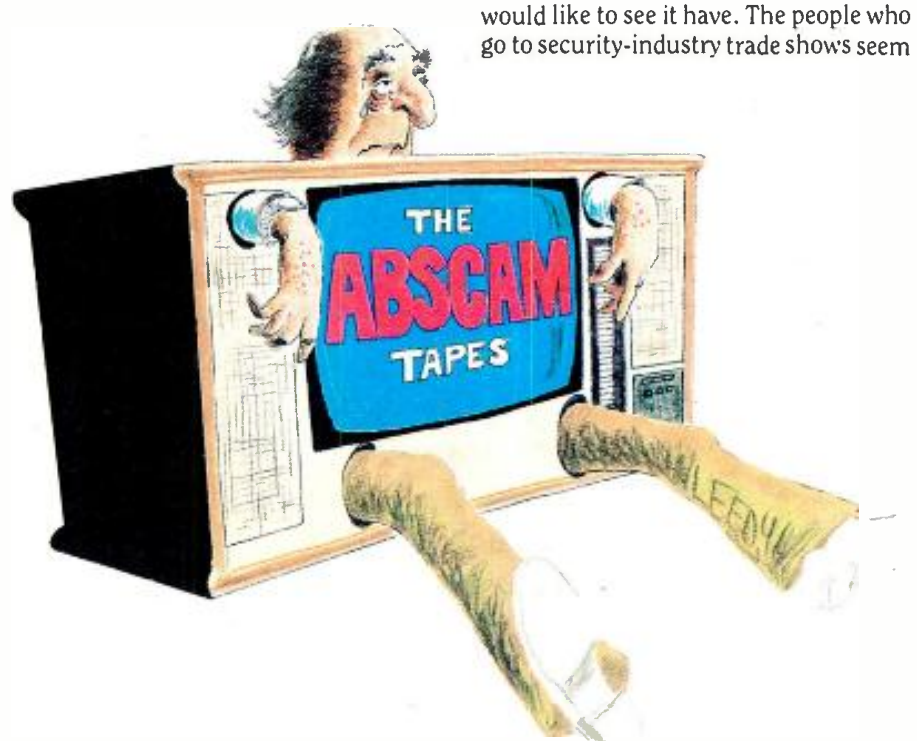
In fact, on Tuesday, Oct. 14, 1980—a date I think will prove historic—almost all of us were watching. On that day, the United States Supreme Court ruled, in effect, that video surveillance (videotapes) introduced in evidence during trials was public information. The tapes could be released to network television. That night, the network news broadcasts did show the Abscam tapes from the case of Pennsylvania representative Michael Myers – first editing them, of course, to highlight the most dramatic moment, the congressman taking the envelope with the cash inside.

American justice was set back, by my disgusted reckoning, about 300 years. Showing the tapes to the Nation, with narration by Walter Cronkite and friends, was the modern equivalent of pillory. Myers was put in the stocks in the town square so people could come by and spit on him.

But whatever justice suffered, television made another leap forward. The networks got what they wanted—three minutes of very good film. The industry got further proof of the value of its product and technology—and a license to sell more little "eyes" for discreetly applied surveillance.

So, television technology is now available for detection and apprehension (cameras), trial and conviction (the first run of the tapes in court) and massive public humiliation (nationwide distribution of the tapes).

The Supreme Court's effective backing, perhaps unintentional, gives the security business, both governmental and private, more respectability than I would like to see it have. The people who go to security-industry trade shows seem



different from me and you. When I went to a show at the Los Angeles Convention Center, I asked the demonstrator of a $1995 voice stress analyzer—a "lie detector" for your telephone—whether the gadget was illegal. "Sure," he said. "In California it's against the law to tape another person without his permission. But, hey, everybody's doing it, and no one is ever going to be convicted. The police could break in while you're taping and they couldn't do anything. A tape is inadmissible as evidence if you don't identify yourself at the beginning—and you're not going to do that, right?"

But "evidence" does not have to be used in court to be effective. Showing it on television could be enough. Now that the networks have seen how popular Abscam-like tapes can be, they might start commissioning them for themselves. Why wait for the next big trial that involves videotapes? Hell, why not plant cameras and microphones anyplace they can't be found? Why not use tapes done by outsiders with an ax to grind, maybe a clerk somewhere who thinks his boss is on the take? Why not set up your own Abscam operations? Why not hire a couple of actors and ruin the reputation of someone you don't like? A third party mentioned in a tape has no defense, no recourse.

The legal answer to those questions would be that tapes like those fantasized would not be admissible in court. Big deal! If I were Ozzie Myers, I would rather be convicted in court than on network television.

That's the point. Television has great power both as prosecutor—Mike Wallace for the people—and as the society's communicator of shared information. Gossip and unproved allegation can convict as surely as a jury, and videotapes shared by a hundred million people are a little more effective than gossip.

The danger—and I think it is very great—is that the technology of television can provide a crude alternative to the procedures of justice established over hundreds of years. If we work at it and if the courts don't think about the implications of what they're doing, we could institutionalize 1940s' movie blackmail with its bedroom and motel photographs. You follow me around with your Sony and I'll be after you with my Panasonic. We'll see who gets enough to go to court . . . or to a network. ■

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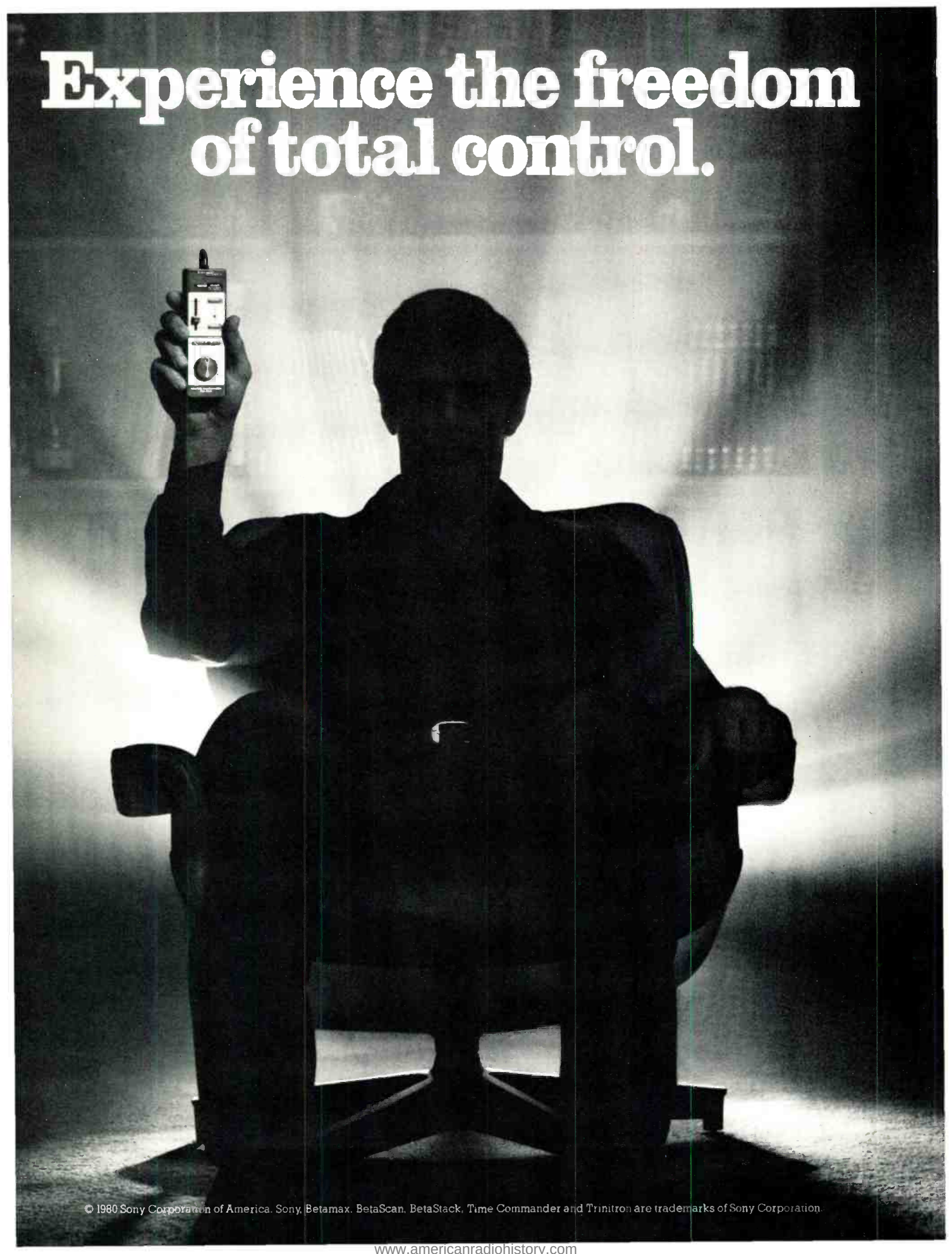

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JAN. 1981

Kent State Flares Anew . . . PBS in M*A*S*H *Rehash . . . The Mobil Ad Controversy . . . Archie Bunker's English Cousin Returns*

What's Happening

HOLLYWOOD
DON SHIRLEY REPORTING

How to Juggle George Wallace and Kent State

Politically speaking, there are times when a television producer has to be able to work both sides of the street. As a case in point you can take Max Keller, who at the moment finds himself hand in hand with George Wallace . . . *and* the old antiwar movement.

Keller is the producer of "Kent State," NBC's upcoming movie on the Kent State tragedy. This four-hour production was considered so potentially damaging to National Guard recruiting efforts that the Guard simply refused to cooperate with Keller. In fact, one Guardsman was temporarily threatened with a disciplinary discharge when he signed up as an extra on the film. Keller's historical consultant, Dr. Gregory J. Payne, a professor at Occidental College in California, says Keller felt—and resisted—pressure to "balance" the film more toward a pro-authorities position; Payne says such balancing would have been "tainting the truth." (Keller's service as a draft counselor at the time of the Kent State incident did not reassure those who were fearful of his motives.)

George Wallace: *Thinks it's right to put his life in left hands.*

As the film was being shot in Alabama, however, Keller also was busy courting George Wallace in order to get TV rights to his life story. Wallace—who is not known for sympathy toward war resisters—had asked California's right-wing Lt. Gov. Mike Curb for advice on producers, and Curb suggested his friend Max Keller. Wallace was not given script approval over what is planned as a four-hour film, but his press secretary Elvin Stanton says, "We are pretty sure it will be what the governor intends."

Keller sees no incongruity in working on two such disparate projects. The Kent State film is not the antiwar tract it might have been. It was partially financed by the Osmond Communications company—hardly a hotbed of radicalism—and at one point some of the actors playing students threatened to stop work because they felt the students were being unfairly fingered for the burning of the Kent State ROTC building. Meanwhile, mending the left side of his fence, Keller says he will hire "the staunchest anti-Wallace writer in the country" for the Wallace script—a development that could produce some fascinating story conferences down in Montgomery.

Money and Blood

Lately, network executives have been sounding the alarm about rising production costs. And nowhere is their trumpeting louder, more frenzied, than in the area of miniseries. NBC's 12-hour *Shōgun* and ABC's eight-hour *Masada* both topped $20 million. ABC's *The Winds of War* is expected to cost as much as $35 million for its 16 hours.

CBS, however, is more frugal with its miniseries budgets. For example, no CBS movie will exceed four hours in length this season, although longer films are being planned for the future. As factors in this decision, CBS executives cite the generally poor rerun ratings of miniseries as well as the dearth of material that can be sustained over many nights of programming.

CBS dollar-pinching was said to be responsible for the demise of what might have been the network's strongest miniseries yet: *Blood and Money*, based on Tommy Thompson's book about a Texas murder case. Producer David Merrick insisted on a budget rumored to be as high as $18 million for the 10-hour production; according to Thompson, CBS was unwilling to foot such a high bill and the miniseries has been shelved for the time being. The delay allowed NBC to rush its own four-hour version of the same story into production. Called "Murder in Texas" and starring Farrah Fawcett, NBC's movie is being made by Dick Clark's company at an estimated cost of less than $5 million. "It's a rip-off," says Thompson, who has gone to court along with Merrick to try to stop "Murder in Texas." But Thompson is equally annoyed at Merrick for demanding so much money for *Blood and Money*: "It shows the perverted side of a producer's power." *continued*

What's Happening *continued*

NEW YORK
DOUG HILL REPORTING

The *Real* Meaning of Corporal Klinger

Two of commercial television's most acclaimed series—*M*A*S*H* and *The Paper Chase*—are scheduled to cross over to public TV this month, but not without the requisite dose of seriousness befitting PTV's studious image.

Jamie Farr: Becomes a Public spectacle.

"Making *M*A*S*H*" is a 90-minute documentary that, according to PBS, will examine how the antics of Hawkeye, B.J. and the rest of the gang "reflect the decade of the Seventies in America," thereby acting as "a social and political mirror" of our times. All the principal cast members, past and present, are interviewed for their opinions on these matters, and one would hope for an especially enlightening exposition from the reformed drag queen, Klinger. *The Paper Chase* is to return in reruns, with John Houseman—Professor Kingsfield himself—introducing and summing up each of 13 episodes with comments on, yes, "the issues" raised therein.

Both shows are being presented by Chicago's public station, WTTW, which also has ambitions of resuming production of *The Paper Chase* with new episodes if it can find the money to do so. At press time plans were unconfirmed, but Houseman has made a firm commitment to reprise his role, a station spokesperson says, and most of the other lead characters have expressed interest in returning as well.

One more thing about all those "issues" we'll be hearing about. Both series justify such consideration, no doubt, but, to be honest, there's another reason PTV must be attracted to them: they're bound to draw larger audiences than, say, a documentary about termites in Tibet.

No Ford in PTV's Future

The end of a television era arrived Dec. 31, 1980. On that day, the Ford Foundation officially closed its Communications office as Fred Friendly, its director since 1966, retired. Ford grants more or less launched public television in the United States in the 1950s, and the Foundation has given more than $200 million to PTV since then. Five years ago it made its final PTV grant—of $45 million, helping to start *The MacNeil/Lehrer Report* and *Bill Moyers' Journal*, among other programs—before withdrawing on the theory that public television supported entirely by the Ford Foundation was not "public" television.

Friendly, a former president of CBS News, says the Foundation may continue to award occasional grants in the communications field but probably will not do so on a major scale. He agrees with most people that public TV is facing "terrible times" at the moment, "and I feel lousy about that." But as cable and the other new technologies take shape, he's more optimistic about TV's future as a whole than he has been in the past. "I certainly have been discouraged and still am discouraged by the product [on commercial TV]," he says. "It's become a billion-dollar penny arcade. . . . But the day of over-the-air broadcasting is in its twilight."

WASHINGTON
STEVE WEINBERG REPORTING

Balance of Programming

Conventional wisdom holds that America's public-television stations import far more programming than they export. Well, suffice it to say that—once again—conventional wisdom comes up short. Quite the reverse is true. In the last fiscal year, America's PTV stations sold 954 hours of programming overseas. That's compared with 223 hours that were purchased from foreign sources for use over here.

Sesame Street, as might be expected, was the most popular American show among foreign customers. Running a close second was *Nova*. In addition to the children's show and the science series, foreign broadcasters purchased a wide range of cultural programs, including serious dance, drama and classical-music shows. For example, viewers in Japan, Switzerland, Brazil, Canada, Ireland and England were given access to "The National Symphony with Leonard Bernstein."

When it comes to money, however, there definitely is a U.S. deficit in the balance of trade. For the 954 hours of programming sold, American producers received $2.5 million; in contrast, public-TV stations spent $9.2 million for the 223 hours of programming from overseas. (This discrepancy is at least partially due to the fact that U.S. audiences tend to be larger; thus, the programs command higher sales prices here.)

And speaking of exports, imports and the balance of trade: only one foreign country is reported to have bought the rights to *Wall Street Week*. You guessed it—Saudi Arabia.

Oil and Aesop Don't Mix

A couple of Washington, D.C., public-interest groups have taken a big oil company to task over its TV commercials. And they've won a moral victory . . . sort of.

Last year, Mobil Oil sponsored the six-part *Edward and Mrs. Simpson* and the seven-part *Summershow*. Both series carried commercials in the form of "fables," which illustrated the need for oil company profitability, less Government regulation and a better balance between energy and environmental concerns.

While more than 50 stations accepted the *Edward* series for broadcast, several refused to run it because of the aforementioned fables. Their objection was based on the fact that the commercials told just one side of the energy story. Of course, what really had them worried was the Fairness Doctrine—a Federal Communications Commission policy requiring broadcasters to provide reasonable opportunities for presentation of contrasting viewpoints if a station gives only one side of an important, controversial issue.

Energy Action and the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition—acting on the Fairness Doctrine—thought the Mobil fables required stations to provide free response time. At first they asked broadcasters to allow Coalition repre-

continued on page 16

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

Richard Dreyfuss: Gets spacey when tourists come to town.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind—The Special Edition. 1980's reedited version of the 1977 science-fiction box-office smash starring Richard Dreyfuss and directed by Steven Spielberg. Home Box Office, Showtime, The Movie Channel, Home Theater Network (cable).

A Whale for the Killing. Peter Strauss and Richard Widmark star in this TV-movie drama about a man obsessed with saving a whale. ABC.

Danger UXB. A 13-part *Masterpiece Theatre*, about the lives of a London bomb-demolition squad during World War II, begins this month. PBS.

The Gangster Chronicles. A new series, beginning with a special two-hour TV-movie, loosely based on the careers of notorious mobsters like Lucky Luciano and Bugsy Siegel. NBC.

The Paper Chase. The critically acclaimed (but ratings-poor) 1978-79 CBS series returns in reruns, this time on PBS, with John Houseman as Olympian law professor Charles Kingsfield and James Stephens as his crack student. PBS.

Just Tell Me What You Want. Alan King and Ali MacGraw are the knock-down, drag-out lovers in this 1980 film comedy. Showtime (cable).

The Rose. Bette Midler won an Oscar nomination as a Joplin-esque rock queen in this 1979 theatrical release. The Movie Channel (cable).

Cousin, Cousine. A 1976 French film comedy about love with the proper relative. Showtime (cable).

How to Beat the High Cost of Living. Susan Saint James, Jane Curtin and Jessica Lange are housewives who try robbery in this 1980 film comedy. The Movie Channel (cable).

Interiors. Woody Allen's 1978 look at a most unhappy family. Showtime (cable).

Jill Clayburgh: Teeters before taking a plunge.

Starting Over. A newly divorced man (Burt Reynolds) tries to reorganize his love life in this 1979 film, also starring Candice Bergen and Jill Clayburgh. The Movie Channel (cable).

Dynasty. John Forsythe and Linda Evans star in a new series about (sounds familiar?) oil-rich families. ABC.

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

The New Voice. A new series, with a multi-ethnic cast, about students working on their school newspaper and the problems they encounter in everyday life. PBS.

ABC Weekend Specials. Three are scheduled this month. The first, "Arthur the Kid," has a 10-year-old boy leading a Western outlaw gang; the second, a two-parter, stars Jane (Josephine the Plumber) Withers as the operator of a magic factory; and the third, another two-parter, is a drama about a family whose plane has crashed. ABC.

New Year's Speak Out Special. Youngsters give their resolutions. Nickelodeon (cable).

NEWS AND DOCUMENTARIES

Making M*A*S*H. An in-depth look at the creation of the CBS hit sitcom. PBS.

ABC News Closeup. An examination of the life of a big-city police officer (postponed from last month). ABC.

Shock of the New. Time magazine's art critic Robert Hughes is the host of this eight-episode tour of 20th-century art and its interrelation with society's upheavals. PBS.

Hard Choices. A six-part series on the moral dilemmas wrought by scientific advances. Topics covered include death and dying, and genetic screening. PBS.

COMEDY

Fitz and Bones. The Smothers Brothers return in a new series about an electronic news-gathering team. NBC.

Gabe Kaplan: Just for Laughs. The erstwhile Mr. Kotter taped in performance in Encino, Cal. Showtime (cable).

Mark Russell Comedy Special. The Washington wag in his first special of the new year. PBS.

MUSIC

Standing Room Only. Two are scheduled this month: Kris Kristofferson (with guest Anne Murray) recorded in concert in Monte Carlo; and Melissa Manchester caught in her act in Philadelphia. Home Box Office (cable).

Eubie! The Broadway musical tribute to nonagenarian composer Eubie Blake, taped in New York City last Nov. 1-2. Showtime (cable).

Eddie Money's Rock Concert. The rock star in concert in Cleveland. Nickelodeon (cable).

SPORTS

Pro Football Championships and Super Bowl XV. The semifinal round of the AFC and NFC play-offs takes place the weekend of Jan. 3-4; the conference-title games will be played on Sunday, Jan. 11. The AFC is on NBC, the NFC on CBS. The Super Bowl is on Jan. 25 from New Orleans, on NBC. (To see how the game's director puts together a telecast, turn to page 40.)

College Bowl Games. The annual barrage climaxes New Year's Day, with the Sugar Bowl from New Orleans on ABC, the Cotton Bowl from Dallas on CBS, and the Rose and Orange Bowls from Pasadena and Miami on NBC.

The Superstars. The ninth year of the competition pitting men and women from all sports in events to see who is the greatest athlete of them all. ABC.

Golf. The season tees off with the annual Bob Hope Desert Classic from Palm Springs on Jan. 17-18. NBC.

SPECIALS

The Presidential Inauguration. With appropriate media fanfare, Ronald Reagan takes the oath of office on Jan. 20.

What's Happening
continued from page 14
sentatives such time; three stations consented. Then the Coalition went a little further: with a budget well below $1000 it produced a 30-second and a one-minute rebuttal calling the Mobil spots "clever fiction" and noting that "big oil companies don't like Government regulation. They keep getting caught cheating the American public. The Department of Energy has charged 15 major oil companies with over $10 billion of price gouging. . . ." The spots were ready by the time *Summershow* began its run in July, and 10 stations agreed to show them.

The Energy Coalition considers its success rate—about 25 percent for the two approaches combined—a moral victory for its side. Even the stations that declined, a Coalition spokesperson notes, usually took the trouble to cite programming they'd shown that "balanced" the Mobil messages.

When the FCC Talks . . .

Recently the Federal Communications Commission issued the long-awaited report of its Network Inquiry Staff. ABC, NBC and CBS had expressed reservations about the three-year, million-dollar project, since its stated goal was to examine "whether the major commercial television networks have engaged in practices that are anticompetitive, hamper the judgment of affiliated stations or otherwise frustrate the purposes of the 1934 Communications Act."

Given this mandate, it is not surprising that NBC, CBS and ABC were worried about the report. What is fairly surprising is the verdict of the 600-page opus. To wit: not only have the Big Three *not* acted improperly, it's chiefly the FCC's fault if TV viewers have a limited choice of programming. To quote from the report itself: "The Commission often has acted, perhaps inadvertently, to prevent additional networks from serving American viewers. Whatever economic power ABC, CBS and NBC possess is in large measure a result of Commission policies that protected them from potential competitors."

In essence, the Network Inquiry has been interpreted not as a call to break up the Big Three, but as a shove in the direction of new networks using new technologies. That would include cable TV, subscription TV, satellite networks beaming programming directly to home antennas, and more. Though over-the-air broadcasters have opposed some of the FCC's proposals to foster more competition, the Network Inquiry says that the prospects for alternative networks appear bright, "especially for those relying on direct viewer support and using nonbroadcast technologies. . . . A large number of these have recently come into existence, in large measure because of a relaxation of Commission rules."

LONDON
RICHARD GILBERT
REPORTING

New Channel's New Boss

The most significant development in British television in 20 years will happen in the fall of 1982—the opening of a fourth channel. Although financed by ads and already known as ITV 2, it will have a legal obligation to "encourage innovation and experiment in the content of programmes." The words of the Broadcasting Bill, which has just gone through Parliament, will be taken seriously because the chief executive of the new channel is 48-year-old Jeremy Isaacs, the most imaginative and talented radical in British TV.

Isaacs was formerly director of programs at Thames Television, where he made the successful series on World War II, *The World at War*, and midwifed the popular *Hollywood* and *Rock Follies*. As an independent producer, he has been making a 13-part series on the history of Ireland for the BBC.

He will have a budget of £70 million (provided by the commercial TV companies) to get the fourth channel on the air in 18 months. His views on the medium are, if anything, forthright: "I am in favor of backing people who make good, interesting, watchable, entertaining, shocking, offensive-to-some TV programs, rather than playing safe. If television isn't prepared to say to people that the world is a bit different from what you thought, the world is a bit harsher than you were prepared to accept, then television isn't alive and isn't worth working in."

The test for Channel Four will be how Isaacs and the independent producers, who will make most of the programs, match those fighting words with what is seen on the screen in 1982. Isaacs is already looking eagerly for material to fill 35 hours a week for a target audience of 10 percent of British TV viewers.

Welcome Back, Alfie

The inspiration for Archie Bunker—that loudmouthed bigot from Queens—was none other than a loudmouthed Cockney bigot by the name of Alf Garnett. Alf, of course, was the central character in the BBC's *Till Death Do Us Part*, Britain's most popular TV comedy, which itself was the model for *All in the Family*.

Now, after nearly a decade's absence, *Till Death Do Us Part* is set to reappear on British home screens. The new series will not be made by the BBC but by Associated Television, the commercial TV company that makes *The Muppet Show*. Author Johnny Speight, who created the Garnett family, is to write a series of six shows for ATV, with the same cast that made millions laugh from 1965 to 1972. Warren Mitchell will again play the Cockney ignoramus who likes to call his wife "a silly old moo," his son-in-law "Shirley Temple" because of his hair and foreigners "wogs."

Carroll O'Connor: Return of his paterfamilias.

As with *All in the Family*, the storyline of *Till Death Do Us Part* will be updated: Alf is now retired, living in a cottage on the south coast of England and complaining about the lack of pubs. Predictably, he approves the Conservative government but he wishes Margaret Thatcher were a man. A newcomer to the Garnett family will be a punk-rocker grandson who enrages Alf by dying his hair red, white and blue.

Johnny Speight says of Alf Garnett, as others might say of Archie Bunker: "Some people say Alf is like their brother. Some say he's like their uncle. The truthful bloke says, 'Alf is me. Not all of me, but some of me'."

continued on page 89

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CASSETTES IN REVIEW

Two collections of clips from filmdom's early years prove that silence was golden—and hilarious

Play These for Laughs

By GENE SHALIT

The Golden Age of Comedy *(78 minutes) and* **When Comedy Was King** *(84 minutes); B&W; $9.95 (rental only) each; from VidAmerica, 235 E. 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.*

The decade ahead will be no laughing matter, so relax with comedy and turn back time to when movies *were* movies—when pictures *moved*, which is how movies got their name in the first place. Return to the rickety, rackety, rollicky nights of sight gags that had folks punching the arms of their friends as they screamed through their laughter, "Did you see *that*?"

You can recapture the wonderful shared experience of laughing together with these two dandy collections of excerpts from 1914-to-1929 comedies. ("The Golden Age of Comedy" was originally released to theaters in 1958, its sequel in 1960.) "The Golden Age of Comedy" begins with Mack Sennett, whose Keystone Studio startled the world with uproarious visual comedies that were slingshots to fame for Charlie Chaplin, Fatty Arbuckle, Mabel Normand and that wildly ineffective constabulary, the Keystone Kops. Their headlong antics made the world laugh: a pie in the face was as funny in Latvia as in Louisville, and a pompous matron slipping on a peel had 'em rolling from Paris to Peoria.

The word "genius" is now used loosely, but I use it tightly: Chaplin was a genius, and some of the rest came mighty close. Many invented their own humor. Chaplin often made his up as he went along, improvising what have become classics. Who had time to plan? In 1914, his first full year in films, the young Chaplin made 35 pictures!

"The Golden Age of Comedy" and "When Comedy Was King" reverberate with visual echoes from an era of physical humor—pies flying, men and women leaping, chasing, driving, plunging through a kind of madcap merriment. Yet even when the humor was wildly physical, it had a benevolence missing from today's humor of insult and hurt. "Slapstick" is a word now in disfavor. Instead of slapstick, we have "sophistication"; instead of inspired silliness, we have insipid sex. We have lost our innocence in the bargain.

"Innocence" doesn't mean being simple-minded. Innocence means that we have purity of heart, an understanding for the next person, that we are not cynical or contemptuous, that we are ready to *believe*. The silent screen celebrated innocence in a glory of slapstick, to wit:

Sight gag. Man in a restaurant. He is served a bowl of oyster stew. Drops one little round cracker into stew. Live oyster pops up, grabs cracker, ducks down into stew. Man stares. Drops in another cracker. Oyster beats him to it. Man rubs eyes. This goes on until you're rubbing *your* eyes . . . to wipe away laughter's tears ("When Comedy Was King").

Pie-Throwing. A pie in the pan had been invented for Sennett's comedies, and had become a comedy cliché. Then came Laurel and Hardy who elevated it to a crescendo of tumultuous insanity: "The Golden Age of Comedy" contains the most hysterical pie-throwing sequence ever filmed.

So if you want to laugh at a side-shaking smorgasbord of comedies in their original and altogether wonderful state, see these cassettes. Watch them first with the music, sound effects and commentary that have been added. Then, watch them *silent*, as they were made to be seen. You'll experience a very special reminder of what once was but, because the world has slid so awfully, cannot be again. ▣

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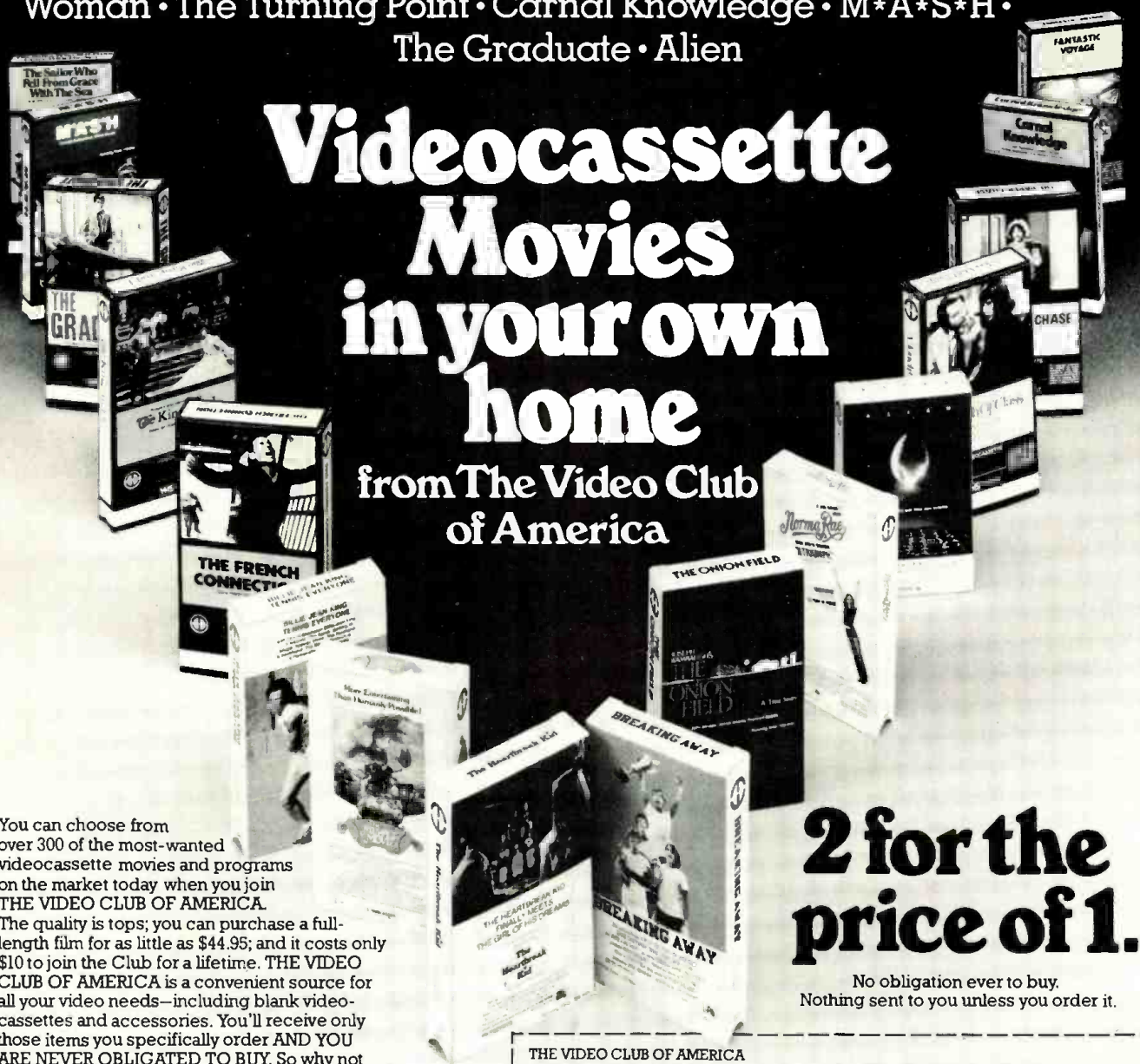

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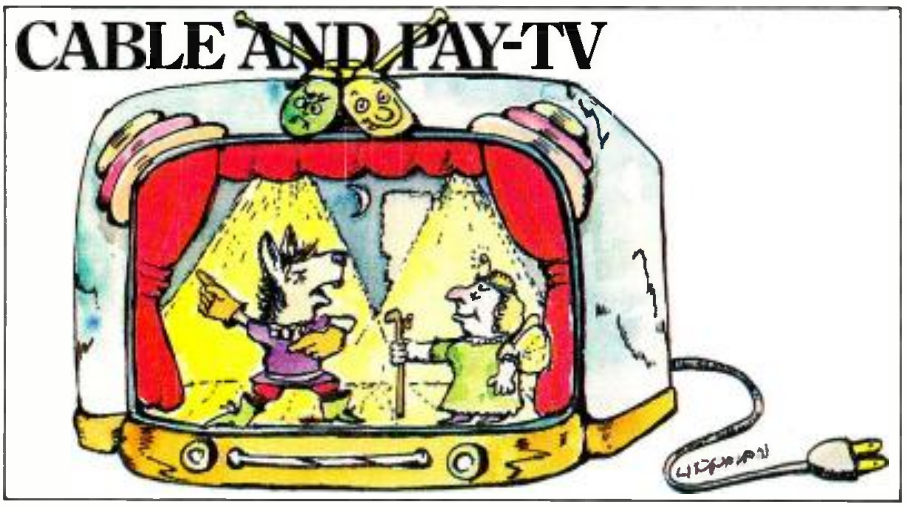

Will audiences find "Vanities" appealing?

HBO Gets Stage-struck

By STANLEY MARCUS

Home Box Office, ever mindful of the fact that man liveth not by movies alone, continues its search for Something Different to offer its 5 million pay-TV subscribers. HBO's latest idea is to take its cameras directly into live theater to tape dramatic productions just as they appear on the stage.

For its first foray into legitimate theater, HBO has chosen "Vanities," a comedy by Jack Heifner that broke all off-Broadway records for nonmusical shows when it played in New York from March 1976 to August 1980. The story deals with the maturation of three young women who are cheerleaders together in high school and who move into varied destinies as sophisticated and/or bored adults.

Last November HBO mounted a revival of "Vanities" at the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles. A number of the later performances were taped and an amalgam of the best ones will be transmitted on HBO's satellite network sometime during the next three months. Meredith Baxter Birney, Annette O'Toole and Shelley Hack take the three roles.

But "Vanities" will not necessarily be typical of HBO's theatrical offerings. Senior vice president for programming Michael Fuchs says he's interested in musicals as well as straight drama, and negotiations are currently under way for two large-scale "Broadway-type" productions. In some cases HBO will go out and tape an existing show; in others, it will take the initiative in reviving one.

Over the entire scheme, however, there hangs a question mark: do TV viewers really *want* to be taken to the theater? According to an HBO survey conducted last fall, large numbers of people regard televised stage plays with passionate indifference.

Fuchs attributes this attitude to past network failures in bringing live drama to TV. Will HBO do any better? Yes, says Fuchs, because great care is going into the selection of properties that do "translate" from one medium to the other. Furthermore, HBO has recruited a man with experience in both TV and theater to oversee the selection process: producer Arthur Whitelaw ("Butterflies Are Free," "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown").

As director of theater development, Whitelaw will be doing his darnedest to give HBO's regards to Broadway.

Promises, promises. What does it take to wrest a lucrative cable franchise from a city council? With scores of franchises currently up for grabs, the question is far from academic. And the answer takes us into a curious twilight zone where state-of-the-art technology is found cavorting with Madame Chutzpah.

To put the matter in a nutshell, many of the companies now competing for the rights to 15-year local cable monopolies are throwing modesty to the winds in the promises they are making to city fathers. This is particularly true in relation to the number of channels they say they will provide.

Martin Malarkey, whose Washington, D.C., consulting firm, Malarkey, Taylor & Associates, advises both city authorities and cable companies on franchising matters, says: "There's so much money at stake that, human nature being what it is, companies are inclined to promise things they can't deliver. For example, in the past nine months, a number of applicants have said they would install the new 400 MHz system that would provide up to 58 channels on a single cable. [The 300 MHz system that's now used by most operators has a capacity of around 40 channels.] But this new equipment was unveiled only last May, and there has been little, if any, field testing of it."

A senior industry official, confronted with Malarkey's accusations, admitted that "sometimes the operators are carried to excess, because they *want* the franchise." But in part, he said, they were responding to pressures from the cities themselves to go beyond present technology. "The cities, knowing that a franchise is granted for 15 years, want state-of-the-art not 1981, but 1996. They want to make sure that the number of channels is going to meet their needs through the end of the 20th century. That's why city councils are granting franchises to companies that are promising 150 channels."

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Q&A

"The Cast Suffered by Becoming Celebrities"

The moving spirit of the original "Saturday Night Live" remembers its glory days—and its troubles

Lorne Michaels Interviewed by David Frost

David Frost *Lorne Michaels*

"The hardest thing to learn in comedy is when to get off the stage. Thank you and good night."

With those words, Lorne Michaels has exited the phenomenon known as *Saturday Night Live*. It was Michaels, at the tender age of 29, who created the show and assembled the writers and actors who would go on to win six Emmys in five seasons. Though some may argue the artistic merit of *Saturday Night Live*, few if any will deny that it altered—for all time—the definition of what is and what is not television comedy. In terms of words never before uttered and targets never before attacked, *Saturday Night Live* scored breakthrough after breakthrough.

Of course, it wasn't easy. In fact it was kind of tumultuous. First there was the well-publicized defection of Chevy Chase in 1976. This, in turn, was followed by the departures of audience-grabbers like John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd. Along the way there were personal jealousies, ego clashes and generally enough *Sturm und Drang* for Michaels to comment cheerily, "I'm grateful for this opportunity to waste several years of my life and grow old before my time." As early as April of '78, and in a more somber mood, he put it this way: "I really believe I'm exhausted and burned out in many ways."

Many critics agreed. The cognoscenti insist that, following the departure of Chevy Chase, the show went into a tailspin from which it never recovered. But, as often happens, the American viewing public didn't agree with the arbiters of TV taste. In 1975 (its first season), *Saturday Night Live* garnered the following numbers: a 6.6 national Nielsen rating with a 23 share. Last season, the ledger read: a 13.5 rating with a 38 share. These are all-time highs for the show.

You needn't worry about Lorne Michaels' future. He can, as they say, write his own ticket. Indeed, he has. In June of last year he signed a contract with NBC to develop and package a variety of projects.

Michaels' career began in his native Toronto as a writer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Something of a phenom, by age 23 he was writing for *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*. He then wrote and co-produced four Lily Tomlin specials—at which point he decided to return to Canada to write, produce and star in *The Hart and Lorne Terrific Hour*, one of the CBC's biggest comedy hits. It was during this period, incidentally, that Michaels discovered the talents of both Gilda Radner and Dan Aykroyd.

The following interview took place last fall in David Frost's New York office. Frost himself first came to the notice of American audiences in 1964 as a cast member of an irreverent and topical show, *That Was the Week That Was*.

DAVID FROST: *What were the crucial steps in terms of getting* Saturday Night Live *on the air?*

LORNE MICHAELS: I think originally in that time period the plan was to do 40 pilots, all of which were to be different. I was to do one of them.

FROST: *Did NBC at the time realize what they were getting?*

MICHAELS: To a certain extent, yes. I think that because the show was being done live—there didn't seem to be a lot of argument about that—and because it was being done in New York, in effect

that made it an outlaw show. Although the network head office is in New York, it really is right out of Los Angeles. So there was no one around. We were in kind of the bowels of the RCA Building and working there, but we were the only entertainment show there. Television had pretty much left New York a decade earlier, and so we were pretty much left to our own devices. Whereas L.A. is a company town, so you meet other people who are working on other shows, and you discuss what they're doing and they discuss what you're doing, and eventually all styles blend.

So what happened was, I think, we just wandered off. We had three months before we went on the air, and I think towards the end of that three-month period a style began to evolve which could be defined now as *Saturday Night Live*. But at the time we just did a show that would please ourselves, and it turned out that there were a lot of other people out there who were like us. So all we did was bring sort of a 1970s consciousness onto the air in 1975.

I think everybody sort of knew that whoever did that kind of show first would have a success. I don't mean that there hadn't been other things tried, but it was in the right time period—at 11:30 on Saturday night, there was less pressure. The only direction I got was that the network wanted a show for young urban adults. If it had been in prime time, I think it would have been meddled with more.

In the first year, we had a cast of players and we had two musical guests; we had a host; we had films being made by Albert Brooks, by Gary Weiss; we had the Muppets for a regular feature; and "Weekend Update." There were so many things that interested me—most were comedy and politics and music and film, and so it was a question of throwing them all in.

What I'd promised [then NBC president] Herb Schlosser—when he asked, "When will the show be ready?" I had said, "By show 10." And instead of reacting the way I thought he might, he said, "Well, then, I'll come to show 10." Which he did. And it was Richard Pryor's show. At the time there was some fear whether or not Richard could be trusted with a live show. But he was great.

FROST: *I'm sure that if the show had been just one pilot, as originally planned, it could have been committee-judged to distraction.*

MICHAELS: Absolutely. Even the first weekend when it went on, there wasn't that great panic. Then on Monday the ratings came in. The ratings were fine and Western civilization as we know it did not come to an end. Because Schlosser liked *Saturday Night Live*, network people were more open to the possibility that it could be good, or it could be a hit.

Through the five years of the show, there were standard arguments every week. We'd fight or argue, but my goal was never to put an obscenity on the air. That wasn't what I wanted. We were trying to do something intelligent. And the things that were intelligent never ever got bad reaction in terms of the audience or mail because the very groups that might complain about the subject matter, when it was done intelligently, didn't seem to notice it. And once you'd argue for something and get it on, and if there was no complaint—you know, the roof didn't cave in—then that would be the new standard.

"We'd fight or argue, but my goal was never to put an obscenity on the air. . . . We were trying to do something intelligent."

FROST: *Wasn't the audience's relaxed attitude a surprise sometimes?*

MICHAELS: Absolutely. I had mouthed off a lot at college about not believing in censorship and, unfortunately, too many people had heard me by the time I got to the show, so I was no longer in a position to say with credibility [to the cast and writers], "You can't do that, because I say you can't do that." Because, quite often, if a piece was written well and if it had some intent to it, and even though it might be something I disagreed with, I would defer to NBC Standards and Practices. If they said it was all right, then I would. The only reason that I would cut it would be, "It's not working; it's not good enough; it's not interesting enough."

There was never any problem with sexual matters. I don't know why, but I think that perhaps Johnny Carson had cleared the way in that area. But when we went to prime time, all of that was removed. They wouldn't allow that in prime time. The difference between 11:30 and 10 is still very substantial in terms of subject matter.

Politics—never a problem. That was the big surprise to me, coming from Canada. The CBC there had much more political censorship because it was government broadcasting, although they would be scrupulous in terms of bending over to prove that they weren't. Whereas sitting in the RCA Building, in the middle of this kind of multinational corporation, you could say pretty much anything about anything politically.

FROST: *So the subjects that you might have anticipated outrage on—being tough on politicians, being frank about sex—these all proved, to your ecstasy and amazement, to have less of an outrage factor.*

MICHAELS: Yes. The biggest single problem area was religion. Yet when Don Novello began doing Father Guido Sarducci, there was never any problem because it seemed to be somebody of a group kidding the group. There's an odd kind of censorship here in which a Jew can make fun of Jews but no one else can. A Catholic can make fun of a Catholic. Don's stuff was always intelligent and perceptive and also very funny. I think if it's funny, there's never a problem; at least that's been my experience. A couple of days later the audience may get mad, but while they're laughing an audience always accepts it.

There were many religious things that got on. For example, we did a piece on the Sodom Chamber of Commerce, which was when they were doing the "I

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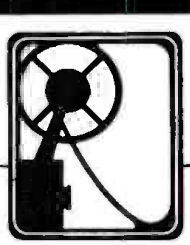

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Q&A

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Love New York" campaign. And so we had Sodom saying, "Why aren't tourists coming to Sodom? Why are they all going to Gomorrah?" And because it was set in the past—no problem. If you do the same thing with today, it becomes more difficult.

FROST: *Over the five years, you must have seen the taste changing on the show as the public's taste changed, partly because of what you'd done.*

MICHAELS: Well, yes and no. What happened is that originally we *were* the audience—in the sense that most of our people had never worked in television and what we were doing was reflecting values and tastes and curiosity that was the audience. After about three years of being on the air, the cast suffered by becoming celebrities, by becoming more isolated and by their lives changing so radically. And the writers to some extent, too—pretty much everyone.

A writer or a creative person tends to feed off life. And when the life you're feeding off is better fed and better clothed and more selective, then you're no longer feeding the audience back their lives. Not only that, but the more you do it, the more sophisticated you become about it, the more tastes become more specific and less general.

The things that were always the most popular on the show were the broadest things, the things that you knew there would be a broad consensus for. Because the Bees or the Czech Brothers or the Samurai—things that were not in any way controversial, but were just funny and were quite joyous—were the things that were most popular.

The role model was Shakespeare, in the sense that when I was 14 and saw "Henry IV, Part I" for the first time, it was just sword-fighting to me. I loved the sword-fighting and I was thrilled by it. Later, somebody pointed out that it was also poetry. Then in college I understood it and saw it again, and it was poetry. So I always hoped *Saturday Night* would work on a number of levels, and I tried to curb, as an editor, people who were showing off. It always distresses me when people try and show how many books they've read, particularly in a sketch, and use references which they know will be intimidating to an audience. I like American popular art. I'm a big fan of it.

FROST: *In terms of the writing team and the performing team you assembled, to which would you attribute the most credit for the success of the show? Obviously, it couldn't have been done without either.*

MICHAELS: There was an enormous overlap—particularly in the first three years—in the sense that everybody pretty much lived there on the 17th floor. So if Danny [Aykroyd] had an idea and wasn't writing it himself, he would sit with the other writers. Danny would write the Coneheads with Tom Davis. Tom Davis might also work on another piece with Al Franken or with Jim Downey or with someone else. Gilda [Radner] and Alan Zweibel would do the RoseAnn Roseannadanna pieces. Gilda had her character and they could sit over dinner and work out the piece. So collaboration was the key to it.

What I found toward the end of the show's run—and I think that it's a natural kind of problem—is that people don't like to collaborate past the point of fame. I found when I was writing with a partner that it's real uncomfortable after a while to say "we" all the time. You kind of want to say, "I did that." And the need for that seems to ultimately prevail. And so you get people calling things "my piece," as opposed to the "us" or the "we."

FROST: *What factor was most responsible for the sustained quality of the show?*

"I found toward the end of the show's run that people don't like to collaborate past the point of fame."

MICHAELS: The thing that was responsible for the show's keeping its quality as long as it did was dress rehearsal. Every Saturday there was a dress rehearsal, and 349 civilians would arrive—strangers—people who didn't know us. And would tell us it wasn't funny. The piece that on Monday everyone thought was the most brilliant by Saturday somehow had paled. The writer is much more receptive at that point to making the cuts than they would be in the kind of theoretical thing, where they can argue effectively that something is funny before the audience gets there.

There's a distinction that I should make: certain performers know they can go out and make something work. John Belushi was particularly adept at that, as was Billy [Murray]. Well, every one was, now that I think about it. They could go out with something that now is deemed a classic but at the time was

Q&A

continued

considered very weak material, and make it work on sheer force of personality and talent. When a cast member takes it off the paper, and makes the writer look great, then everyone's happy. Everybody needed everyone else. When *Saturday Night* was at its best, there was a kind of tribal sense that no one was more important than anyone else.

FROST: *Was there a cast member who could invariably reduce you to paroxysms in an ad-lib situation?*

MICHAELS: Yes. Chevy [Chase], when we were first starting on the show, would be funny just to be funny. We'd be coming out of an Italian restaurant in Little Italy, and he'd fall through garbage cans to the point of seriously injuring himself. But he would do it simply for the pleasure of making you laugh. When he became famous and would do the same things, people would say, "Well, look at what he has to do just to get attention." Whereas, in fact, that's what he'd always done.

FROST: *How long did you have between the dress rehearsal and the show?*

MICHAELS: About an hour, an hour and a half. The biggest problem I had was that certain cast members would peak at dress, would just be brilliant, and then you knew in almost a religious or superstitious sense that it wasn't going to work on air. The piece that everybody had been knocked over or blown away by at dress you knew stood the least chance of succeeding on air. As the cast got better, they would then save it, so they would give it just enough at dress to get it into the show because they wouldn't want to betray the writer or themselves. Everybody was competing for the maximum amount of air time and fighting for the piece they were in by not giving you what would be getting on air, which would be more brilliant.

All of the cast had had improvisational training—they were all matadors in that sense—they were going out there. And I think that quite often people didn't know what they were doing on air because there was so much chaos and so much confusion. There wasn't the time for people to say, "Is this a good career move for me to be doing that kind of piece?"

FROST: *There wasn't time for them to consult with agents and managers.*

MICHAELS: Absolutely. The show was the most important thing. And there was a host each week who invariably wanted out after dress rehearsal. So there was that feeling of: you have to do it to get that person through. At the beginning, when the host was more famous than anybody in the cast, it was easy to do that. Towards the end, the cast was more famous than the host, and it became more difficult, because why was the host getting *that* part, which this cast member could do much better than the host? As the cast became stars, the power balance shifted and it became more awkward.

FROST: *Why did you design a show with a different host each week?*

MICHAELS: The reasoning for the host in the first place was it would be the writers' salvation. Writing for the same people every week leads to "What will Sonny say to Cher when they come out at the opening?" And after you've solved that problem a hundred times, there's no freshness.

FROST: *How would you describe the special talents of your cast?*

MICHAELS: Well, I think Jane [Curtin] is a brilliant actress and great at comedy, and the most disciplined of the cast. I think Gilda gives you more of Gilda than perhaps anyone else. Gilda

"Everybody was competing for the maximum amount of air time and fighting for the piece they were in."

and John have that in common, that, aside from enormous talent, you always could see the person there. I tend to think that's what makes a star, because technique is of no interest to the public. Danny, for example, always had the Robert Duvall problem: he would be consistently brilliant in everything he did but might not be noticed. John was always noticed, even though he was different in every part. What you loved was the quality of John-ness that would come through. Chevy I think of in the same way. When I first saw Garrett [Morris] in "Cooley High," he had what he still has: a certain kind of credibility in terms of acting. He has an enormous range and can play all sorts of things. The more he started doing comedy exclusively, the funnier he got. Where he'll go now I don't know. Laraine [Newman], the same thing. Laraine has a certain kind of way of perceiving things, which, when it has the quality

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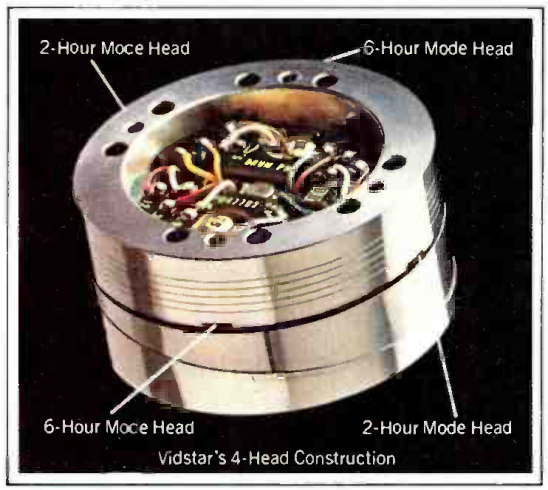

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Q&A continued

of Laraine-ness, is fascinating to me, and completely unique. Billy can hit both ways—in a dramatic role or in a comedy. He has enormous power as well as a very nice light touch.

When you spend five years day and night with a group of people, it goes beyond the fact that you care for them and that you're moved by them. For example, Gilda and I would talk all the time; we're very close friends, as I am with Laraine. Jane and I were never particularly close friends, but I would watch Jane on the monitor and just be continually amazed that she could do what she could do. She was consistent and would give you what you were going to get right from the beginning. Which is not to say that she wouldn't grow; she would continue to grow. But we didn't go out and have coffee afterwards. Jane was Jane—very happily married. There were other people who lived the life of the show and who were there 24 hours. I was one of those people; certainly Gilda was, Chevy was, John and Danny and Billy were.

FROST: *What will Lorne be doing next?*

MICHAELS: Well, I think Lorne will watch television again, and movies, and then hopefully have another idea. I pray that I will have an idea, because I would be very unhappy if it turned out that I had only one idea. Originally I think what led me to *Saturday Night* was watching television and getting angry, and I think that I'll probably just resort to that again. I'd like to do some movies and probably will, except I'm not wild about the hours involved in making movies. I love television and I love what it's about; and I think that as cable begins to proliferate and there become lots of alternatives, or "narrowcasting," as they call it now, that shows that are pure and get to the audience will begin to happen more and more.

FROST: *We're talking now in October, before a new season of* Saturday Night Live *begins in November. When it starts again, will you suffer withdrawal symptoms?*

MICHAELS: It will be very painful, yes. But I really feel that I did everything I wanted to do with it. The show will still be popular, and I wish all of the luck to the people who are doing it. There's always that ego problem of "I wish you all the best, but if it could be just a little less successful than when I was doing it, it would be nice."

To a certain extent the *Saturday Night* that I was involved in was much a product of the times. There's a time for certain kinds of attitudes. Now it will have to be a different show. And it will be a different show because it's a new group of people doing it. And hopefully they'll respond to what 1980 is as we responded to what 1975 was. ■

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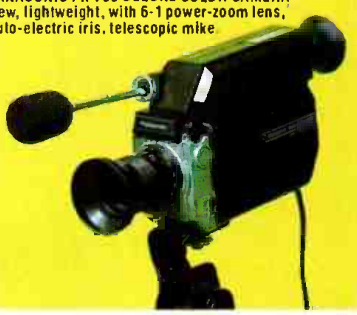

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PANORAMIC VIEW

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The Orchestra's first concert this year, however, was devoted to familiar old theme music: guest-maestro John Williams conducted his suite from "The Empire Strikes Back," and The Orchestra played music from *Dallas*, *How the West Was Won* and *The Men from Shiloh*.

Public reaction to the two-year-old orchestra exceeded expectations—so much so that NBC has decided to spotlight the musicians' work in March with their own prime-time concert, a two-hour special titled *"Live from Studio 8H:* The Orchestra."

Roll over, Beethoven.

—Karen Grigsby

Auction Action

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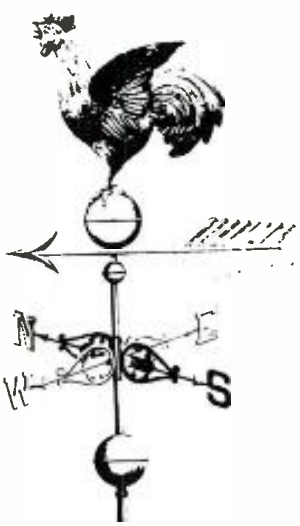
Redecorating? KQED in San Francisco recently supplied ambitious home-improvers with eight two-ton balustrades from the city's opera house, delivered by truck to buyers' homes for about $800 apiece. (Lifting the railings off the truck and onto front porches, however, was not KQED's problem.) Minneapolis-St. Paul's KTCA-TV took bids on a 15-foot-high rooster weathervane covered in 24-karat gold leaf; it now sits atop a chicken-processing plant. Nine stations have auctioned whole houses, with average values in the $75,000 range. According to WHRO-TV in Norfolk, Va., bidders on these are usually directed to call a realtor rather than the station.



Pets? A faithful donor in Jacksonville, Fla., gives WJCT a dairy calf for auction every year. Boise, Idaho's KAID had a dozen homing pigeons eagerly bid on by children—but their parents weren't quite so ready to confirm the bids. KAKM in Anchorage, Alaska, appropriately, has offered a puppy of a championship sled team's lead dog (more than $400 bid), as well as the loan of llamas (which belong to the auction chairperson) for a backpacking trip.

Speaking of trips, these can range from KWSU-TV's (Pullman, Wash.) expense-paid weekends for two in Seattle, through WCBB's (Portland, Maine) day on location with Robert Redford *somewhere* in the U.S., to KQED's "get-yourself-there" tour of Tibet—you find your own way to the Himalayas and they'll take you from there. And for the homebody (with $6000), KERA-TV in Dallas has been known to provide a different Cadillac every month for 13 months.

Still too mundane? Then how about WJCT's heavy-breathing phone call from The Greaseman, an award-winning disc jockey whose name says it all. You might prefer WCBB's after-dark picnic for 12 on a lonely lake in Maine—with "The Shining" author Stephen King to make it 13 at dinner. On a still higher plane, consider the possibilities in the Giumarra Vineyard's donation (valued at $5000) to KCET in Los Angeles: the equivalent of one ton of premium Cabernet grapes—crushed, stored, aged and bottled expressly for the winning bidder. And WHYY-TV in Wilmington, Del., rewarded buyers of items going for more than $100 with an all-night Roman feast: wine, togas, rare delicacies—and a complete screening of *I, Claudius*.

Now, for those muttering, "Why didn't I know about all this in time?"—take heart. Auction season is coming again, with still more choice items.

A sneak preview? Well, KTCA has two antique cabooses, one built in 1886 for the Soo Line and the other from the Burlington Northern, being restored in *The Wild Wild West* style. If you prefer cruise travel, try WYES-TV's (New Orleans) guaranteed-seaworthy houseboat: its first owners built it in Pittsburgh, floated it all the way down to the Gulf, and then donated it to the station. And do you remember "The Thinker," below whose furrowed brow Dobie Gillis and Maynard G. Krebs pondered the mysteries of life and Thalia Menninger? Yep, it could be yours for the bidding if you tune in this spring to KCET. *—Deborah Lyons*

"ABC, CBS and NBC will be the Life, Look and Saturday Evening Post of the future. By the end of the Eighties, ABC, CBS and NBC will have fewer than half the viewers they have today."
—Mike Weinblatt, president of Showtime Entertainment, at a meeting of the Cincinnati Ad Club

Samurai Mobilization

With the overwhelming success of *Shōgun*, distributors to the cable and pay-TV networks have had a yen to snap up any Japanese sword-slinging show they can get their hands on. After dubbing the dialogue into English with an

Oriental accent, many distributors expect the combination of fast action and multiple evisceration to be a big hit on the Southern circuit—"Walking Tall"s featuring Buford Pussers with epicanthic folds and swords instead of baseball bats.

David Champtaloup, director of marketing for Fremantle International, Inc., in New York, is one distributor who feels optimistic, at least about *his Shōgun* variation on a theme: "Although we haven't decided what to call the show in English, the literal translation of the Japanese title is *Son and Swordsmanship for Hire*. The hero is an outcast samurai, sort of a cross between *The Fugitive* and Robin Hood." The bad guys have killed his wife and put a price on his head. He roves the countryside pushing his 4-year-old son ahead of him in a bamboo baby carriage. Every five minutes, he does a Cuisinart on an evil band of martial artists.

"The program was a big prime-time hit in Japan," claims Champtaloup, "and we thought it must be based on ancient folklore. Then we brought in translators and were told it was adapted from a popular Japanese comic strip."

There are some problems with the plot. In one episode, a former lover of the samurai works herself into a cultural corner. She explains to the Kabuki cowboy that he must kill her. Her honor has been besmirched. Without blinking an eye, the warrior solves all her problems with his trusty side arm. Says Champtaloup, "On American television, they would have found some way to work things out."

—Mark Baker

It's Tough to Wed and Bed when You're Dead

BBC Enterprises, the selling arm of Britain's BBC, is always getting strange requests.

Like that of the Japanese programmer who recently approached the company about purchasing the rights to the BBC series *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*. Only one snag, said the Japanese programmer politely: "Since Japanese television works in packages of 13, 26 and 39 episodes, would it be possible for the BBC to provide seven more episodes and seven more wives?"

Although Henry is considered a Renaissance man, this would have taken quite a rebirth indeed.

—Richard Gilbert

PANORAMIC VIEW

The Only Thing Missing Was Jerry Lewis

British television may never be the same. At 7 P.M. on Oct. 2. 1980, Britain's first telethon went on the air over Thames Television. The beneficiaries were children's charities, and when the dust finally settled after 13 hours of entertainment, viewers had pledged a whopping $3 million. What's more, the Thames telethon even made the top 10 ratings in the London area.

The format—so familiar in the U.S.—was an eye-opener for British viewers. While most of the entertainment was typical telethon fare (singers, dancers and comedians), there was an occasional uniquely British touch: John Gielgud reading William Blake, for one; for another, top London theater and TV critics performing monologues in front of stars they had roasted in their columns.

While those critics gave generously of their time for such a worthy cause, they also did not spare their acerbic pens. Said one, "It [the telethon] is a sample of what the Americanization of TV will do to our collective consciousness if we let it happen. There are less painful ways of committing national suicide."

But the last word came from telethon guest and female impersonator, Australian Barry Humphries, a k a Dame Edna Everage: "I always thought the British had short arms and long pockets. Now I know I was wrong."

—Richard Gilbert

"Blaming television for the state of American culture is like blaming the temperature on the thermometer."
—Shirley M. Hufstedler, Secretary of Education, at a joint meeting of the Magazine Publishers Association and the American Society of Magazine Editors, Palm Springs, Cal.

Made-for-TV Mutations

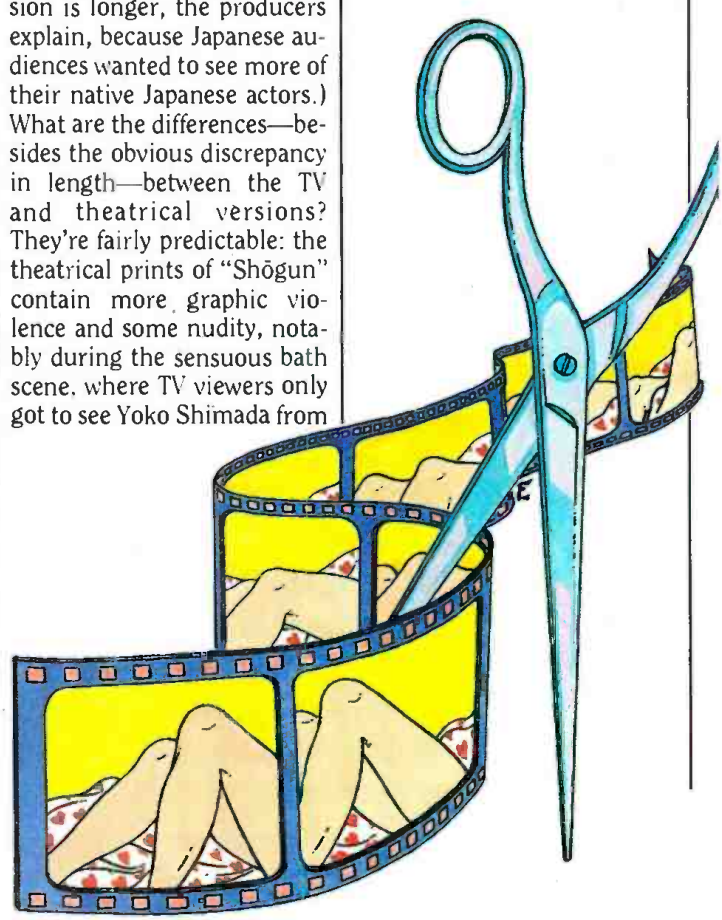
Although TV audiences are used to seeing edited versions of theatrical movies on television, lately the reverse has been happening: TV-movies or miniseries that have had their world premieres on American network TV are being released theatrically in Europe, Japan and the rest of the movie-going world. Many production companies are "double-shooting" their films, with one version earmarked for American TV, the other (usually shorter but racier) for theatrical release around the globe.

For example: a large-screen, two-hour-and-47-minute version of NBC's blockbuster *Shōgun* was released in Japan last October, where, for obvious reasons, it is expected to do quite well. A shorter (two-hour) screen version of this historical samurai epic was released in Europe. (The Japanese version is longer, the producers explain, because Japanese audiences wanted to see more of their native Japanese actors.) What are the differences—besides the obvious discrepancy in length—between the TV and theatrical versions? They're fairly predictable: the theatrical prints of "Shōgun" contain more graphic violence and some nudity, notably during the sensuous bath scene, where TV viewers only got to see Yoko Shimada from the shoulders up.

Nudity is also the primary difference between the TV and theatrical versions of "Marilyn," which ABC ran last September, and which will be theatrically released worldwide (except for the U.S.) this year. Though 25 minutes have been pared away, foreign moviegoers will be rewarded by glimpses of "Marilyn" star Catherine Hicks in the buff.

Another NBC project, "Evita—First Lady" will be theatrically released overseas after its premiere on U.S. TV screens this spring. This film biography of Argentina's infamous Eva Peron stars Faye Dunaway and will be a four-hour TV-movie (broadcast over two nights) and a two-hour theatrical film. Executive producer David Ames says the theatrical print of "Evita" will undoubtedly be a "stronger picture" and will include the kind of violent and "suggestive" scenes that the NBC censors almost surely will nix for the small screen.

—Alison Nelson



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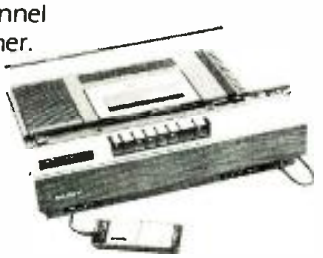

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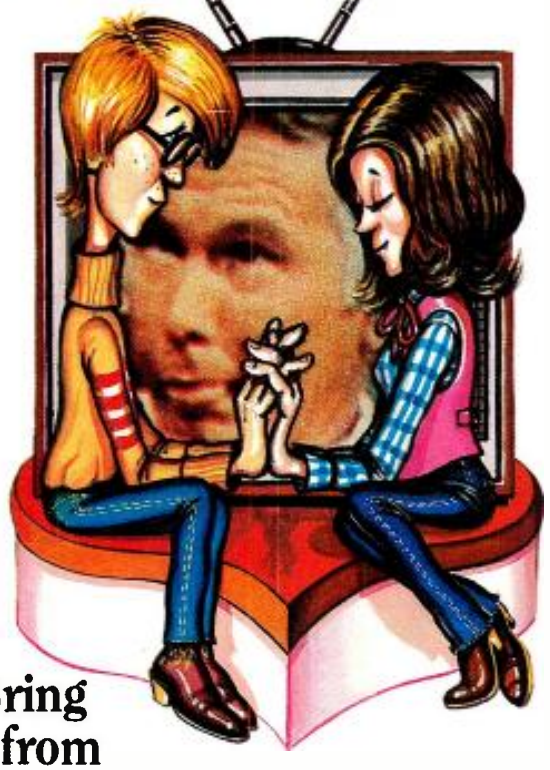

And Bring a Clip from Your Latest Movie

Having trouble getting dates? Meeting lots of people but striking out in every direction? Maybe you should start watching *The Tonight Show* regularly. Sound crazy? Perhaps, but that's the advice you'd get from Dr. Jeffrey Young of Philadelphia. Young is a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania who specializes in helping lonely singles who, for one reason or another, can't seem to make a good impression on members of the opposite sex.

"The patients I see generally fall into two categories," explains Young. "Those in the first group become extremely anxious when they meet someone new, and they literally don't know what to say or how to act. Those in the second group don't get as nervous, but they turn people off by being too talkative, too intense, or too argumentative. They also tend to talk too much about themselves." For both groups, Young's goal is simple: to teach them the fine art of social conversation.

How does he do it? By asking his clients to watch Johnny Carson interview guests on *The Tonight Show*. Says Young, "I encourage them to view Johnny as a role model, because he's extremely skilled at making conversation with people he's just met. He's a good listener, and yet he doesn't interrogate his guests. When he does talk, he confirms—through a joke or a self-disclosure—what the other person is saying. In this way he makes his guests comfortable in what otherwise might be a tense situation."

Young instructs his patients not to copy Johnny, but merely to analyze his techniques and try to adapt them for their own purposes. There's only one problem: once Young's patients do start getting dates, they may refuse to go out for more than an hour, and half the time they might send Richard Dawson or Joan Rivers in their place.—*Alison Nelson*

It's the Not Ready for the Not Ready for Prime Time Players

So maybe *Saturday Night Live* does have a new cast. So maybe Bill Moseley wasn't one of the six cast members chosen from hundreds of videotaped auditions submitted to the program. And so maybe he *was* a little hurt when he received the standard rejection letter with his name hurriedly scribbled across the top after he had just spent $500 out of his own pocket to produce his own audition tape.

Do you think a little turndown would stop a funny guy like Bill Moseley?

Funny you should ask.

Moseley and co-producer Jerome Hamlin decided to form a comedy group called The Not Ready for *Saturday Night Live* Players. They placed a small ad in Back Stage asking other rejects to contribute their audition tapes to be included in what they dubbed *Video Snacks*. The sour grapes were overwhelming and made for a very funny series on public-access TV in New York. There, audiences saw an administrator of the Brooklyn Law School sing "Getting to Know You" to a corpse; Ms. Drumstick—a fryer fresh from the supermarket—dance and lip-sync Jimi Hendrix's "Fire"; not to mention a K-Tel-style ad for celebrity voodoo dolls.

"It gives some talented people a chance to see their hard work pay off. They get to see themselves on TV. as well as having a chance to be seen," says Moseley.

If you're a *Saturday Night Live* loser or if you just have an insane idea to contribute, you can contact *Video Snacks* by writing Hamlin at 229 East 52nd Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10022. But if you can't take getting burned twice, beware. "We got a lot of junk we couldn't use," says Hamlin. "I talk to the people on the phone and try to let them down easy."

—*Mark Baker*

"Today telecommunications and the information industries are poised to play the same leading roles in our economy that the steel and automobile industries played 10 years ago."
—Charles D. Ferris, chairman of the FCC, in a speech to the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

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Beware of TV's Scoops

Here's the inside story of how reporters come up with their news breaks and why the "revelations" are sometimes not as revealing as touted

By STEPHEN BANKER

The television reporter who relies on exclusives to get on the air must lunch well. That means both good food and carefully selected companions. On Nov. 25, 1979, ABC senior diplomatic correspondent John Scali telephoned Thomas B. Ross, an Assistant Secretary of Defense and a former reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times. Scali wanted to check on a tip regarding U.S. monitoring of a high-level explosion off the southern coast of Africa. While they were on the phone, Scali invited Ross to lunch. They met that noon at Duke Zeibert's restaurant. "John," said Ross, "you don't have it quite right. You ought to come over and get it from the horse's mouth."

That afternoon, Scali appeared at the Pentagon and Ross escorted him into the spacious office of Secretary of Defense Harold Brown. That evening, ABC's *World News Tonight* led with Scali's report: "United States intelligence has gathered evidence that the South African government has exploded a nuclear bomb within the past month. ABC News has learned that the Carter Administration has secretly alerted key allies and congressmen."

The story was picked up by the major newspapers, which made ABC happy. But it did not stampede the South African government into a confirmation, and in fact there are still American scientists—including a White House staffer—who believe the report was erroneous. The incident is reminiscent of a 1969 NBC scoop that Israel had tested an atomic bomb. NBC used the item three nights in a row. But that story also never has been validated, and if it was untrue, the correction will have to catch up to a signal that has already traveled 16 trillion miles and is now at the midway point on its journey to the star Sirius.

Television news is *evanescent*—now you see it, now it's gone.

Rudy Maxa is a columnist for The Washington Post Sunday Magazine and a commentator for the Cable News Network. "If you have an exclusive story," he says, "and it's on the front page of The Washington Post, everybody can see it. It can be passed around. Somebody can say, 'Did you see that thing?' and the answer is, 'No, let me get it.' It's there. It has a life that can be perpetuated.

"On the other hand, you go on television and if nobody sees the tree fall, it didn't fall. Suppose you have a wrinkle that nobody else has—it can't be run back, it can't be looked at again. It's out in the air. You're onto another story. It's gone."

All this makes life difficult for broad-

casting's investigative reporters. Yet in the hyped-up superstakes competition of network television news today—when one rating point can mean a million dollars—there is a greater premium on scoops than ever before. "I want to beat the other guys every day and every way," says Sanford Socolow, executive producer of the *CBS Evening News*.

For all three networks, this competitiveness has created a dangerous willingness to go out on a limb. Yet the evanescence works to the advantage of the networks when the limb breaks and a disaster occurs. Reporters and producers who have pulled boners can expect that hardly anyone will remember.

What happened to John Scali happens all too regularly with network news—and the practice is hardly ever scrutinized by newspapers or the public. The true, the untrue, the partly true and the unconfirmable get all mixed up with stentorian voices and blazing graphics, only to be blown into the night air and to vanish like smoke.

Let's take a close look at three examples of "scoop" reporting—one by each network—each of which demonstrates a problem with the system.

THE OVERREACH SCOOP/NBC

On Aug. 4, 1980, *NBC Nightly News* broadcast a three-minute item on the search for the assailant of Urban League executive director Vernon Jordan, shot in Fort Wayne, Ind., on May 29. The reporter was Brian Ross, the hero of NBC's Abscam coup.

John Chancellor introduced Ross, carefully noting that "nothing seems to be leading to the wanted party." But he added, "There's another course in the investigation, as described by Brian Ross." ("Described" is surely the right word, although the official NBC transcript errs all too revealingly with "designed.")

Ross appeared on a dirt road in southwest Missouri, near the headquarters of what he called "a right-wing, white, extremist religious sect." He said that "NBC News has learned" there were reports months ago that some members of this sect were cooking up assassination plans for unspecified black leaders. He continued, "One member of this group is now a suspect in the shooting of Vernon Jordan." Then, 51-year-old Duane Middleton, unemployed, appeared on-camera, explaining that he was not surprised to be a suspect because "I have racist beliefs."

ROSS: Did you shoot Vernon Jordan?
MIDDLETON: No, no, I didn't shoot Jordan.
ROSS: Were you near the scene?
MIDDLETON: No.
ROSS: Did you watch him at all that evening?
MIDDLETON: No, no, I was home all evening.

That was the entire interview. Then Ross was alone again, saying, "No charges have been brought against Middleton, and the FBI has no evidence putting Middleton at the scene of the shooting."

So what we had was three minutes of network time devoted to a denial from a man against whom there was no evidence. Or if there was evidence, Ross failed to mention it.

Surely the general public may have been misled if such a sophisticated viewer as Sanford Socolow could say, "I thought it was a true scoop. You've got one of your ace reporters saying this is *the prime suspect*." But Ross did not say that. Did he imply it?

And remember that Chancellor stated, "Nothing seems to be leading to the wanted party."

Having succumbed to overreach on the Vernon Jordan story when there was nothing to report, NBC then proceeded to shy away from it when it

Scoops: From the Reporter's Point of View

To a correspondent, a scoop can mean a boost to his career and to his network's ratings and morale; it can also mean cutthroat (or cheek-to-cheek) competition and bureaucratic hassles. Here, a few revealing incidents:

On Oct. 29, 1979, CBS White House correspondent Lesley Stahl had a hunch that her NBC competitor, Judy Woodruff, had something special. Finishing the taping of her own "stand-upper" on the White House lawn (a piece that was never used), Stahl stalled. In fact, Woodruff had a scoop on the appointment of Judge Shirley Hufstedler as the first Secretary of the new Department of Education. Finally, NBC could wait no longer and Woodruff recorded her spot as Stahl adamantly remained within earshot. Then she broke for the telephone, and—would you believe it?—CBS scooped NBC's Woodruff by two minutes on her Hufstedler story that night.

Three years ago, before the fall of the Shah, Barbara Walters was in Iran covering President Carter's visit when she and other reporters were invited to a New Year's Eve party. Presciently, she had packed a formal gown. She remembers: "Bob Schieffer [of CBS] asked me to dance. We danced over to Carter and asked him what his next trip was. He told us he was going to Egypt. Bob and I looked at each other. We didn't dance one more step. Our eyes locked for a second and then we both ran like hell. I missed the rest of that evening—but who cares? There was a party and Carter had just asked me to dance, but we ran out and filed a story. I don't think anybody watched it—it was New Year's Eve. But, by God, we did it!"

Another Walters report had more impact. In 1977, she remembers, "When [Egyptian President Anwar] Sadat went to Israel, ABC got the first interview that Sadat and [Israeli Prime Minister Menachem] Begin had ever done [together]. We had been in such doldrums then; it was a black period. Roone [Arledge] was just beginning [as president of ABC News] and it was after all that [feuding] stuff with Harry [Reasoner] and me. I can't tell you the pride we felt. We came home feeling: hey, don't push us around; look what we did."

Very well—but what in fact did ABC accomplish? *What was the scoop?* Walters plays it back: "There was all that business about whether Begin was going to be invited to Egypt. Sadat *squirmed* and then finally said,

'I invite you to the Sinai.' There was a *pause* and then Begin said, 'No, I invite *you* to the Sinai'."

So the scoop was not what happened or what was said—it was the moment itself, the atmosphere, the context.

Many reporters believe that some of their best stories have been blocked by producers who don't have the sense or the training to know what they are dealing with.

"I was in New York last July when a source at Justice tracked me down," says Carl Stern, NBC's legal correspondent based in Washington. "It was the middle of the afternoon, and I ended up running—I don't mean walking fast—to our office at Rockefeller Center to pound on desks. But I couldn't get anybody to understand the implications of the story."

What was it?

"The President's brother had admitted that he got $220,000 from this terrorist government. I had it at three o'clock, two hours before it broke on the wires. At the time, all eyes were on the Republican Convention. There just wasn't the excitement that that story should have generated. We ended up playing it in second place after the commercial. In my judgment, it deserved to be the lead, rather than merited coverage. Two months later, on Oct. 3, there was word from the FBI that a suspect was being sought—Joseph Franklin, a man who was believed to have sold the gun used in the attempted assassination a week after the assault.

Was it newsworthy? CBS and ABC thought so, the latter using the story in second position, right before the first commercial. But NBC ignored the development, though there *was* time on the *Nightly News* for a two-minute report on a gimmicky mortgage rate offered by a Sarasota, Fla., Savings-and-Loan. Perhaps NBC was saying, "We already have our suspect and he is Duane Middleton, not Joseph Franklin."

"You know he did it," says an industry cynic, "because his name is Duane."

another tired 'Ronald Reagan arrived in Detroit' story."

The network correspondent bounded into the street and hailed a taxi. He had a scoop and he knew it. As he headed toward his office, he composed his story. It began, ". . . News has learned. . . ." At the bureau, he gave the evening show's producer the bones of what he had discovered. "Fine," said the producer, "put it on tape." The reporter talked the piece into the camera and went home with a satisfied feeling.

As he turned on the TV that night, he wondered if his story would lead the show. But it wasn't the lead, and it didn't come on after the first commercial, and it didn't come on at all.

The next day he approached the producer. "What happened to my story?" he asked. "Oh," said the producer, "I couldn't find it on the wire services, so I didn't know if it was true or not."

"But that was a scoop," said the reporter.

"Calm down," said the producer. "AP just moved it. I logged it in for tonight."

During the research for this article, that story was told with only slight variations by three different reporters, one from each network.—*S.E.B.*

THE STAR SCOOP/CBS

What would happen if two such megastars as Walter Cronkite and Mike Wallace were to join forces? The skies would surely tremble, as they did on the evening of Sept. 20, 1979.

The *CBS Evening News* led that night with a Mike Wallace report—a rare appearance for him on that broadcast—in which Cronkite had apparently taken an interest. The welcome mat was out. The piece ran on for six minutes and five seconds (eight-and-a-half minutes, counting commercials).

This was after charges had surfaced concerning alleged use of cocaine by President Carter's chief of staff, Hamilton Jordan, a man whom Cronkite called "perhaps the Nation's second most powerful figure." Wallace, Cronkite told us, had reached the host of a party that took place two years earlier; the host had suspicions that cocaine *might* have been used.

Cronkite identified the host as Leopold Wyler, a California industrialist who had been an important Carter fund-raiser, but who now was trying to dump the President in favor of Sen. Edward Kennedy. After the commercial, Cronkite promised us, we would see Wyler giving his account of the story "for the first time before the cameras."

When the show returned, Cronkite said, "Mike Wallace, on assignment for the broadcast *60 Minutes*, talked with Wyler." Curiously, the CBS Public Relations department now says the piece was never intended for *60 Minutes*, that what Cronkite said was "misleading." But producer Socolow says, "*60 Minutes* couldn't get their act together. They were in the middle of reruns. He [Wallace] had done the interview the day before we broadcast it and there was a very short lead time. They felt it wouldn't hold."

But another CBS hand says: "Bull_____. [*60 Minutes* producer Don] Hewitt wouldn't touch it."

Wallace opened the interview by asking Wyler about the White House people at the party.

WYLER: The White House group had come in in a boisterous way, followed with a—a lot of young girls . . . .

WALLACE: I think that you have previously used the word "floozies."

WYLER: I may well have. [Dr. Peter] Bourne of the White House staff approached me and said, "You can have any one of these girls except . . ."—singling out one—"because Ham Jordan has a yen for her."

WALLACE: What was your reaction?

WYLER: One of shock.

Wyler characterized the mood as "licentious." And then he said, "There was talk of hits."

WALLACE: Cocaine hits?

WYLER: I don't—I don't recall.

Wyler said his "feeling" was that the approach of the White House people to relaxation "was one of drugs and girls."

WALLACE: You didn't see any drugs being taken?

WYLER: I don't recall.

WALLACE: You don't recall?

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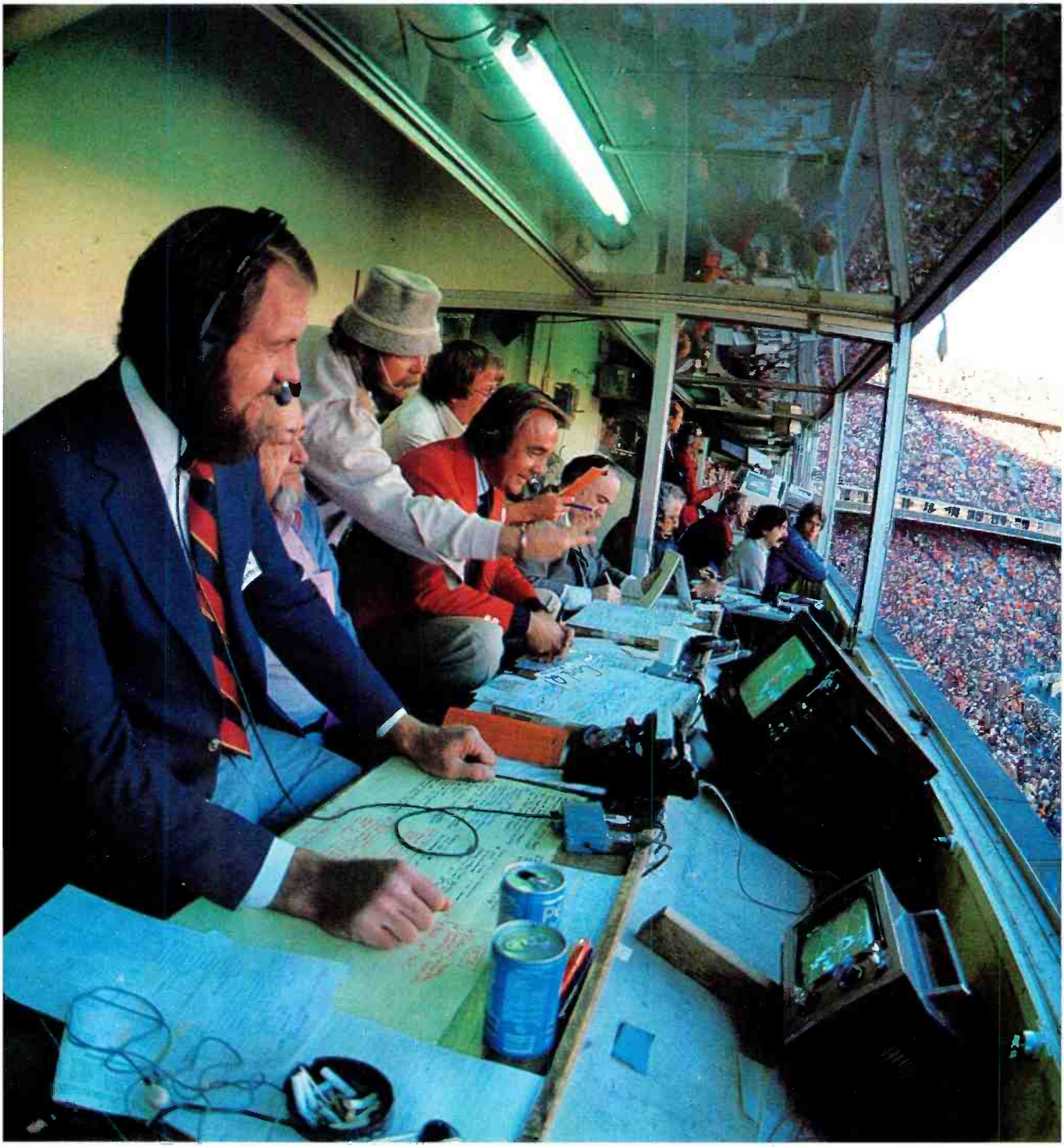

Merlin Olsen (left) did the color and Dick Enberg (center, in red jacket) the play-by-play for the Minnesota-Pittsburgh game (far right). This same broadcast team was picked to do this season's Super Bowl XV.

SURE, THE GAME WAS FUN—BUT IT WAS ONLY HALF THE SHOW

For action, drama and team play, there's nothing like watching a network crew cover all angles of an NFL ball game

By PETER GENT

It's a cold October Sunday in Bloomington, Minn., and the sight of the hulking Metropolitan Stadium does not call forth pleasant memories for me. The last time I played pro football was as a New York Giant on an August night on this field during an exhibition game in 1969. After five years as a receiver for the Dallas Cowboys, it had been my lot to be traded to the inept, ragtag Giants.

As I walk toward the stadium to meet the director of today's televised game between the Minnesota Vikings and Pittsburgh Steelers, I remember the drubbing the Giants took from the Vikings. Then Minnesota's defense was known as the Purple People-Eaters, and they sure ate me up—and the rest of the Giants, by a score that I refuse to recall. I was cut from the team after that game, but that was OK. It was time. I was a step too slow, my reactions a split second off.

What wasn't OK was the way coach Allie Sherman had prepared the Giants for the Vikings. There wasn't any preparation. We were licked before we put on our helmets. We knew it was going to be a bad game.

Today's game doesn't figure to be a good one, either. The Steelers are the Super Bowl champs, and the Purple People-Eaters have been toothless for a bunch of seasons. Still, it should be interesting to see how the NBC broadcast team behaves under the grinding pressure of telecasting a bad game. They have granted me access to their operation far in excess of that given the usual sports reporter. I could witness their production meeting, the camera-talk meeting, and I could wander into the master control unit and announcers' booth during the game. The thought of this almost—but not quite—takes away the pain of seeing Metropolitan Stadium again.

THE DIRECTOR

"It's the bad games we prepare for," says Ted Nathanson, the NBC director for the Minnesota-Pittsburgh game. It is 8:45 A.M. on the morning of the noon game and Nathanson is on his way to the

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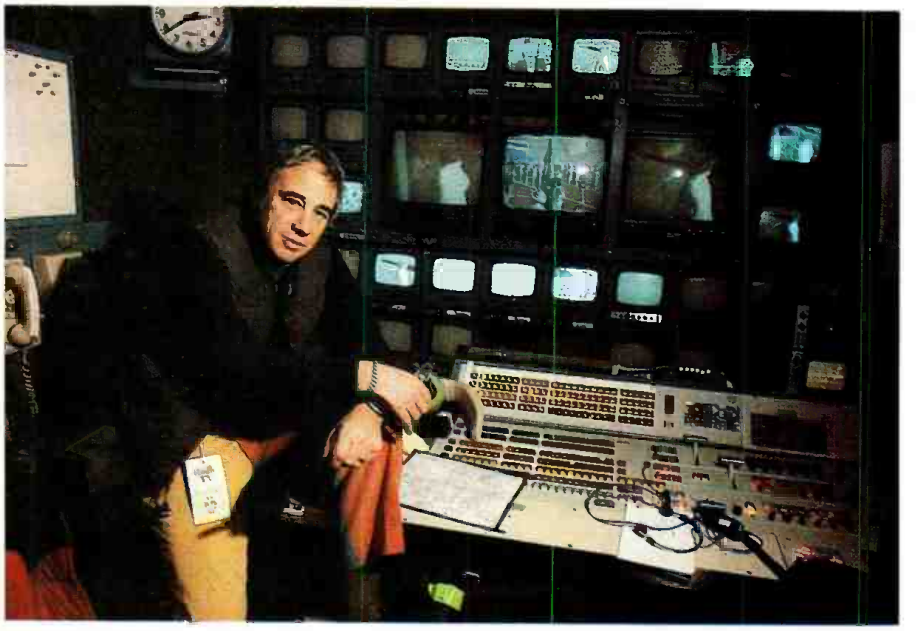
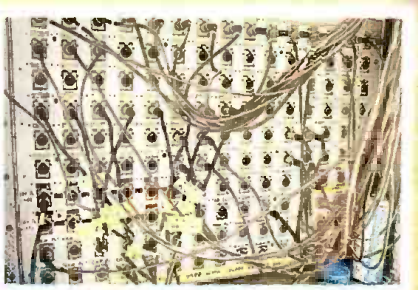
Peter Gent is the author of the novels "North Dallas Forty" and "Texas Celebrity Turkey Trot."





Director Ted Nathanson in his command post, the mobile control van, where he calls the camera shots.* Insets *: inside the backup-equipment truck and a close-up of the central hookup panel that acts as a master-switching junction for the control van.

camera-talk meeting in which he'll state his battle plan, giving the six cameramen and two videotape-playback recorder (VPR) men their assignments and going over what elements of the action he wants stressed during the telecast. Much of what he tells them will be based on the information and hunches put forth by today's announcers, Dick Enberg and Merlin Olsen, during yesterday's production meeting.

"The good game will carry itself," says Nathanson. "It'll lead into things. It's the bad game, the 36-to-nothing game, that you're constantly fighting. That's why you see us preparing all this extra stuff. We have to prepare for the bad game. Even for the Super Bowl." Nathanson will also direct this year's Super Bowl game. He is a graying man with a thin, straight nose upon which he periodically rests his black-framed reading glasses.

We pause outside the stadium in front of the three NBC mobile units. The first unit on the left contains the audio and video mobile-control unit from which Nathanson will command the broadcast; the second holds the two Ampex VPR units and the replay crew; and the third truck is for the engineering trouble-shooting crew and equipment that go into action in case of technical breakdowns.

"We have four- and six-camera games," Nathanson says. "This is a six-camera game. As director, what I try to do is watch a lot of other things besides the ball and what is going on out on the field. I watch the sidelines and benches. If the quarterback comes out of the game—if he's had a bad series or been intercepted—I watch him. If a quarterback throws an interception, I want to see him on and off the field. And I want to see the guy that made the interception. I may take three or four reaction shots back and forth. Stay with the guy.

"You get a lot of reaction shots from kickers—a guy who shanks the ball or kicks it good. You may not get his reaction till he goes off the field. You'll take the shot maybe five times, and the sixth time you'll get a really great shot."

Then Nathanson pauses, stares at the stadium and points toward its upper reaches. "I use a spotter high up in the stadium with binoculars and a monitor and a headset. He has to keep me informed about sideline activity—where the coaches are, where an injury is sitting, where the field-goal kicker is—information I pass on to the cameramen. Sometimes I'll miss what the announcer is saying and the spotter will tell me." Nathanson smiles slightly. "I wear two headsets. With everybody yelling in the control truck and the monitor turned up, it gets kind of hard to hear in there.

"When I get a crew that knows what I am looking for, I can concentrate on the game a hell of a lot more. If I get a cameraman without experience, it takes me out of the game. If I'm having to talk to a cameraman all the time, I'm not able to listen to the announcers, pay attention to the situations, get more involved with the isolated replays. When I get with the right crew, I get the shots without even asking for them." Nathanson suddenly chuckles. "The best example of that is a game I did where a dog ran on the field. The announcer said, 'Dog on field.' Immediately there were five cameras on the dog and I couldn't cut away. Every camera I cut to was on the dog, and the dog took a crap. That's a classic example of every single cameraman listening to the announcer. It was a very good crew."

THE ANNOUNCERS

Among football aficionados, including myself, Dick Enberg and Merlin Olsen are considered NBC's blue-chip announcers. They stay on top of the action, and the information and anecdotes they pass on to the viewer usually give insights that pertain to the game at hand. This team, with Enberg doing the play-by-play and Olsen the color, already has been picked by the network to do the 1981 Super Bowl.

It is noon, Saturday, the day before the game, and I have an appointment with them to get filled in on how they prepare for a game. Enberg opens the door to his and Olsen's hotel suite. They have just returned from a Viking practice session and are sandwiching in this interview before going to the Steeler practice. Well-tanned and casually dressed—red jogging suit and blue Nike shoes—Enberg leads me into the room where the full-bearded Olsen is waiting. As Olsen and I walk over to a couch, we begin reminiscing about our last meeting: one of the first *Tomorrow* shows, in October 1973. Since that time he has lost some of the playing weight he carried during the 15 years he was an exceptional defensive lineman for the Los Angeles Rams, and gained a beard for his continuing role as Jonathan Garvey on *Little House on the Prairie*.

Their tight schedule this morning leaves little time for chitchat, so I get down to business. "What's your routine like during game week?" I ask.

"Pick-and-shovel work," Olsen says as he holds up a large cardboard card that has been resting next to him on the couch. "This is one of what we call our 'three-deep boards.' Today I have been carrying this one around with me and constantly reviewing it." The card shows the Steeler and Viking starting offenses and defenses and how they match up on the playing field. The Steelers are written in black felt pen, Minnesota in purple. There are also small notations by certain players' numerals—anecdotes, a personal note or two. "This is just the starters, but normally I do the three-deep cards that list every player and position.

"It compares to the kind of work I did early in the week when I played defense. You know, learning to read certain offensive looks. When you're broadcasting a game, there's no time to think. The information just has to be there. Not up here, in the thinking part"—he taps his forehead—"but back here"—he touches the back of his head—"where you don't even have to worry about it. I have to know every player by name, number, position so that when that number pops up, I don't have to go looking through my notes. Time is a squeezer in the booth, and if I don't know that player immediately, the moment is gone. It's not a thinking response. It is a preconditioned response. You have to prepare."

"That's right," says Enberg, who was once the radio announcer for the Rams. "When I was doing radio, I had to be as quick as Merlin. One of the breaks a play-by-play man has in television is that you really don't have to be right on it. The camera carries the action. But if Merlin has to look to his notes before he comments on a replay, the play is over. Merlin has to supply the technological and strategic background and give the viewer a deeper insight into the game. In radio I used to paint the whole picture. Now that's Merlin's job." Enberg flashes a mischievous grin. "That is why the color man must be the star."

"We argue about this," Olsen says.

They both laugh loudly, but Olsen's is a booming guffaw, somewhat like a jet breaking the sound barrier.

Enberg stops laughing first and says with some seriousness, "You prepare for the bad games. If it's 35 to nothing and there are two quarters left, we have to do what we can as broadcasters to keep you interested in the game. It's my job to personalize the players. I like to think of my mother sitting out there and saying, 'Well, I didn't know that about that boy. I'm going to watch him a little closer next time'."

"During a bad game," Olsen says as he scratches his reddish beard, "the individual plays become less important and the people more important. For some broadcasters that is panic time, because they really haven't prepared for the bad game. That's where we really earn our money. It's a treat to do an overtime game. We walk out of games like that having used maybe 10 or 15 percent of the material we had prepared.

"As a broadcasting team, we start out with the philosophy that we are not the event. The game is the event."

"ABC feels that the booth is the event, or at least that's how it seems," I say. "They often sound like they're blaming the players for a bad game instead of working themselves to keep the viewers interested."

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After surveying experts all over the country, our writer offers their consensus of . . .

THE TOP LOCAL CABLE

By HOWARD POLSKIN

Which are the best cable-TV systems in America?

Tough question. And we got some tough answers when we asked representatives of television trade associations, special interest groups that monitor TV, and cable-TV suppliers. Mostly, we got a lot of people saying, "Forget it." There are more than 4200 systems across the country, serving roughly 18 million subscribers. Almost to a man (and woman) our experts said it was virtually impossible to single out "the best"; the few who *could* do so, wouldn't, for fear that they would offend the 4190 or so systems not named (including some our experts have business dealings with).

What people *were* willing to talk about, however, turned out to be even more interesting: noteworthy cable systems that produce their own locally originated programming. Most of the programming we heard about fell into five categories: sports, public affairs/news, entertainment, educational/instructional, and minority-oriented. In short, the very stuff of which so many cable promises have been made. The more people we talked to, in fact, and the more of their "noteworthy" selections we compiled, the more it became clear that what was emerging was, after all, a list of what could very well be the country's best cable-TV systems.

In each category, we've listed four or five outstanding cable systems whose names cropped up repeatedly in our sample, and described their achievements in producing original programming or catering to specific needs in the community. All of the services men-

SYSTEMS IN AMERICA

tioned are part of a basic-cable package, for which subscribers pay one monthly fee—there is no additional charge for any of the programming. (The only exception is Qube, which costs subscribers more.)

Readers whose own communities have yet to award a cable franchise would do well to study competing companies' bids in light of what these 20 systems have to offer. If not "the best" in America, they certainly stand out as prime examples of what the cable industry can do best.

SPORTS PROGRAMMING

Suburban Cablevision, East Orange, N.J.; 87,000 subscribers. This suburban New York system has won wide acclaim for its major-league-quality coverage of high-school sports, including football, soccer and girls' field hockey. The station has three remote trucks to cover events and employs a staff of 16, including a full-time sports director and two assistant sports directors. Following a Saturday afternoon of football in the suburbs, there's a 7 P.M. high-school sports update, which then leads into tape-delay replays of the games. Thursday nights feature a live call-in sports show with local coaches and occasional sports celebs, such as Phil Rizzuto and Rick Cerone. None of the games are advertiser-supported, because many of the schools in the 32 municipalities served by Suburban Cablevision are concerned about the system making money from the games.

Gill Cable, San Jose, Cal.; 80,000 subscribers. Allen Gilliland, president of Gill Cable, used to own a broadcast TV station

and claims to have "put some of our broadcast knowledge into the cable biz." So it would seem. His system has developed a 24-hour local sports channel that carries such events as San Jose State University football games, local rodeos, college track meets, the Santa Clara swim club and pro tennis. The channel is advertiser-supported and is microwave-connected with approximately 20 other California cable systems, which means that the sports programming is available to more than 500,000 subscribers in all. Many of the events covered by Gill Cable's sports channel are subsequently sold to ESPN, the national cable-TV sports network.

Potomac Valley Television, Cumberland, Md.; 23,000 subscribers. Two hundred local sporting events a year are covered by Potomac Valley Television, a 30-year-old cable franchise tucked away in the northwest corner of the state. Although most of the events are shot with only one camera, the system televises an eclectic assortment, including Frostburg State College football and basketball, Little League baseball, local high-school sports, the Frostburg soapbox derby and 19 weeks of bowling from a local alley, all advertiser-supported.

Mission Cable, San Diego, Cal.; 200,000 subscribers. The country's largest cable-TV system has its own sports channel called KCOX-TV, which program director Bill Gruber proudly compares to an independent TV channel. About half of the programming is devoted to major-league sports like baseball, basketball and hockey, most of which are tape-delayed (unless it's a West Coast game). Because of the large number of subscribers to the system and the type of sports it features (no high-school events), major national companies like Datsun, Coca-Cola and Schlitz have begun advertising on Mission Cable. Within the next two years, Gruber hopes to launch a local sports *pay*-TV channel offering subscribers games from such local pro teams as the San Diego Clippers and Padres.

ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMING

Warner Amex Cable (Qube), Columbus, Ohio; 26,000 subscribers. One of the most popular programs on the Nation's most publicized cable-TV service was "Screen Test," a movie/TV trivia game show wherein viewers could compete for prizes via the two-way communications system. Grand prize was a bit part in a Warner Bros. movie or TV program (Warner Communications owns Qube). The system also has programmed several football quiz shows because of the enormous popularity of Ohio State University football in Columbus, as well as local rock concerts by stars such as Todd Rundgren and Rick Derringer.

Sunflower Cablevision, Lawrence, Kan.; 11,000 subscribers. "I have always thought that there's a lot of good musical talent passing through here," reflects Sunflower Cablevision programming director Randy Mason. "That's why I decided to produce *Bringing It All Back Home*." Since March 1979, this weekly musical program has been presenting a variety of national and local musical groups, including such performers as Patti Smith, John Mayall, and the Boomtown Rats. Most of the concert footage is taped at the 800-seat Lawrence Opera House and original interviews are sometimes edited in. Mason calls his blues-oriented show a cross between *Austin City Limits* and *60 Minutes*. Instead of paying groups for the rights to tape and televise their acts, says Mason, "I just give [them] a copy of the tape." Despite advertiser support of the local cable channel, the program itself is a money-loser—but also, Mason thinks, a vital entertainment service to the community.

Viacom Cablevision, San Rafael, Cal.; 45,000 subscribers. Local comedy and musical acts from the San Francisco area are featured on *Showcase 11*, a popular weekly entertainment series. The show is shot with an audience of 50 ("It's intimate but it works," says Peter Rafalow, director of community programming) and shown on three other Viacom systems around the country, in Long Island, N.Y.; Seattle; and San Francisco. This year Rafalow plans to have the program simulcast in stereo on a local radio station. Another locally produced entertainment series, *Every Wednesday*, is a magazine-format show about Marin County, with on-location stories about interesting county residents, businesses and places of interest. There are no commercials except for a smattering of public-service announcements for local nonprofit groups, which are produced by student interns who work at the station.

Gill Cable, San Jose, Cal.; 80,000 subscribers. For the past year, Gill Cable has been providing subscribers with a 24-hour classic movie channel as part of its basic-cable package. The channel carries advertising. Just in case viewers want additional movies, Gill also offers three pay-TV networks—HBO, Showtime and The Movie Channel—for additional fees.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/NEWS PROGRAMMING

Berks TV Cable, Reading, Pa.; 44,000 subscribers. Berks TV Cable uses two-way capability to promote a rare dialogue between local government agencies and citizens of the area. For at least 14 hours a week, the system cablecasts meetings or hearings that affect various segments of the community; whenever such a meeting is televised, at least two well-advertised locations in the community are equipped with television cameras so that viewers can talk to (and see) people at the meeting. As soon as a viewer asks a question, the TV screen is split down the middle and both parties can see each other. (People watching at home can see both parties at once.) Actually, there are 70 locations—senior-citizens centers, schools, hospitals, libraries—where citizens can respond to meeting participants, but only a few are used per meeting, due to lack of sufficient cameras. "It's definitely not the Johnny Carson show," remarks Gerald Richter, executive director of Berks Community TV, the nonprofit company that is responsible for most interactive programming on the system. But Richter estimates that 51 percent of his subscribers watch at least one of his shows a month.

Palmer Cablevision, Naples, Fla.; 28,256 subscribers. One of the longest-running cable-TV series is *The Naples Report*, a 10-year-old, half-hour, daily news broadcast geared to the residents of balmy Naples, which is virtually overlooked by the three local commercial TV stations that serve the five surrounding Florida counties. Station manager Bill Ryan says his two anchormen double as newsmen on a pair of local radio stations that he also manages. Ryan's biggest problem with *The Naples Report*? "We keep losing our on-air talent to commercial TV," he moans.

Viacom Cablevision, Lynnwood, Wash.; 46,000 subscribers. If you lived in Snohomish County, you'd probably be interested in the county election results

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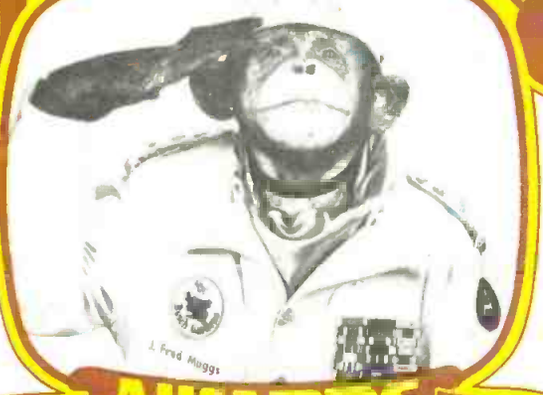
Looking back at TV in 1980, we cite those who excelled at making monkeys of themselves

PANORAMA'S FIRST ANNUAL J. FRED MUGGS AWARDS



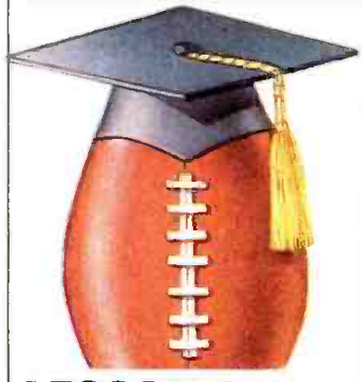
There are television awards aplenty. There are awards for local news shows and awards for television commercials, humanitarian awards and awards for civic contributions. There are cable awards and public-television awards and, of course, the Emmy Awards. (And how long can it be, we wonder, before there's an awards show for the awards shows?)

Little wonder, then, that we find ourselves unable to resist jumping onto the awards bandwagon. The big difference, however, is that instead of back-patting the best of the 1980 performances (both on and off the small screen), we've decided—with tongue planted firmly in cheek—to celebrate the gaffes, overstatements, contradictions and other monkey business in the industry. In that spirit, we've decided to name our awards in honor of J. Fred Muggs (Dave Garroway's simian co-host on the old *Today* show and current star of *The Wonderful World of Animals*). For Muggs, of course, acting like a monkey comes naturally. Our award-winners actually had to work at it.

Here's to the year that was!

NOW, THAT'S INCREDIBLE

After just six episodes of *That's Incredible!*, ABC broadcast a special entitled "The Best of *That's Incredible!*"



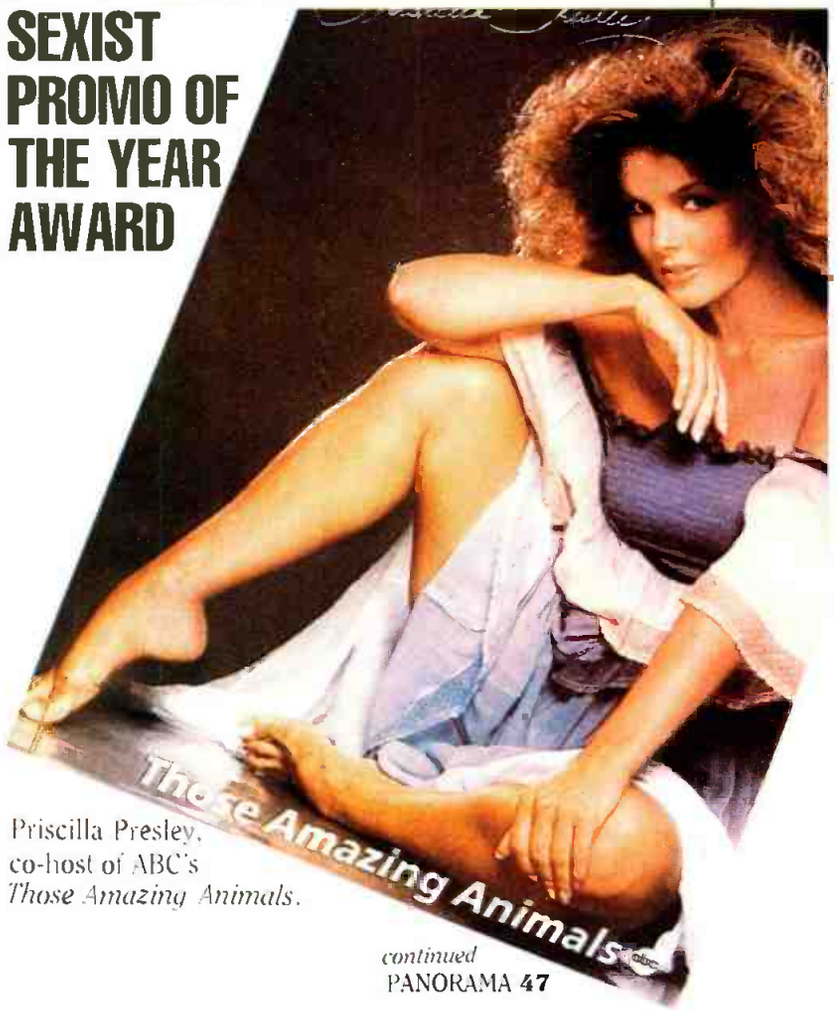
LESSON 1: TURN OFF THE SOUND

Miami-Dade Community College in Florida offered a new course this past fall: "Understanding *Monday Night Football*."

MERCY KILLING ENDORSED BY YOUNG WHIPPER-SNAPPER EXEC

"From last year to this year we improved in ratings," announced Brandon Tartikoff, the then 31-year-old president of NBC Entertainment, last May. "and we also changed our demographics from a network that was very old to a network that is very young and alive. In the process, we flushed out some of the older viewers . . . ."

SEXIST PROMO OF THE YEAR AWARD

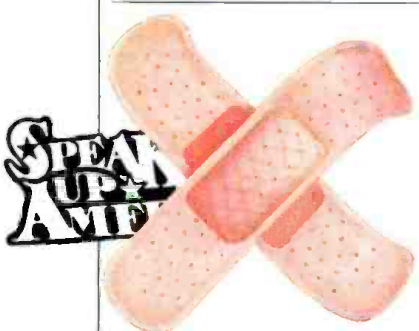


Priscilla Presley, co-host of ABC's *Those Amazing Animals*.

continued

NO WONDER SUPERMAN APPEARED FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET

Video Corporation of America says "hundreds of thousands" of cassettes distributed in 1980 employed "time compression," a little-known technique that speeds up the action without raising the pitch of the film's sound track. So that video companies could save tape, many movies that actually run several minutes over two hours were compressed into a two-hour cassette.



AMERICA SPEAKS UP

Speak Up America was canceled after 11 episodes.

MONDAY-MORNING QUARTER-BACKS SACKED!

Monday-morning quarterbacks had their chance last July in Columbus, Ohio, when 5000 cable viewers who were electronically linked to Warner Amex Cable's Qube central computer got the opportunity to call the plays for the Columbus Metros football team.

The result: a 10-7 defeat at the hands of the Racine Gladiators.

HACK-NEYED QUOTES OF THE YEAR

Shelley Hack, the day she was hired as the newest Charlie's Angel: "Of course it's fluff, but high-grade fluff."

Shelley Hack, the day she was fired from *Charlie's Angels*: "I had seen *Charlie's Angels* before I signed on, and what can you say—it wasn't Shakespeare."

JOHN TRAVOLTA KEEPS ON TRUCKIN'

Purchasers of MCA DiscoVision videodiscs found life full of little surprises. One movie fan bought an album of "Jaws 2" and didn't realize until after the first hour that he was watching a mere reprise of the original "Jaws."

But pity the poor purchaser of "Saturday Night Fever" who found that the final side of his three-disc album showed how to service a GM truck.

ME TARZAN, YOU OUT

After 25 years, Bert Parks, 65, was replaced as the host of the Miss America Pageant by former TV Tarzan Ron Ely. The reason: "a new image" was needed.

HOW ABOUT FLIPPING A COIN?

Powers Boothe, who threw caution to the winds by showing up to accept an Emmy despite the boycott by his fellow actors, made the following declaration: "It may be the most courageous moment of my career—or the stupidest."

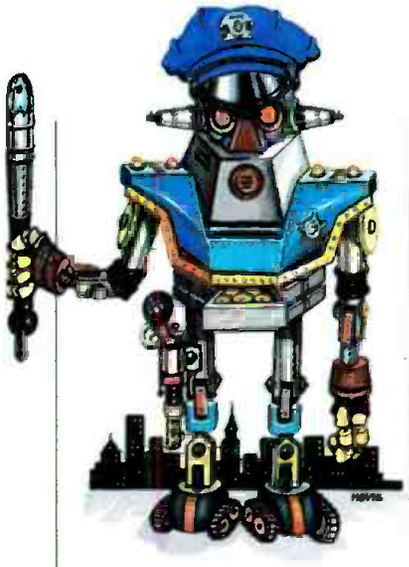
STOP THE PRESSES

And Ed Asner, leader of the hard-liners in the very same actors' strike, told a strike-benefit audience: "I'm filling in for Powers Boothe tonight. Courage and stupidity do have their limits."

KNOCK OFF THE INTELLIGENT CHITCHAT, LADY. THIS IS TV

Following the early-1980 sacking of NBC chairman Jane Cahill Pfeiffer, an unidentified NBC source put the dismissal into perspective for The Wall Street Journal.

"She [Pfeiffer] was on too high a level. I've been in meetings where she walked in and the conversation took an awkward, elevated level when much of what needs talking about is grubbing it out for the big bucks."



STOP THIEF . . . THIEF . . . THIEF

Last May, ABC and two co-defendants were forced to pay writers Harlan Ellison and Ben Bova $337,000 for plagiarism of a story about a robot police officer.

JUST DRESS LIKE GERALDO RIVERA AND CALL YOURSELF A NEW JOURNALIST

Boston anchorman Jack Hynes was outraged by an IRS ruling that stated that TV anchormen can't get deductions for clothes worn on the air because they can also be used for general wear.

Said Hynes: "Soon I might not have any money to buy clothes. Maybe I'll start a new style and wear T-shirts and bib overalls when I do the news. And I won't shave or get a haircut either."

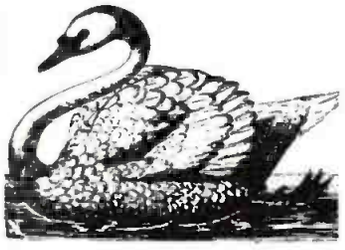
AND TAKE THEM TO LIBYA INSTEAD, OK, FELLAS?

While in Alabama to coordinate his brother's reelection campaign, Billy Carter called for the American television networks to "pull the damn cameras out" from in front of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

LIKE, MAYBE, REGIS PHILBIN?

Joey Bishop, irked by Mike Douglas's suggestion to columnist Earl Wilson that the only reason Bishop had blasted him was to cash in on some much-needed publicity, told Wilson: "If I want to get publicity, I'll attack a big name."

PICKY, PICKY, PICKY



It was reported that several of the Japanese actors on the set of *Shōgun* protested the presence of swans in several of the scenes on the grounds that swans did not appear in Japan until 40 years after the events in *Shōgun*.

Despite these protests, *Shōgun* producer Eric Bercovici ruled that the swans could stay. "What's 40 years?" he told an interviewer. "Call me *pisher*."

HOW ABOUT CLEVELAND?

Said Larry Hagman in defense of the material on *Dallas*: "If we did the *real* Dallas, they wouldn't let it on the air."

DOG OF THE YEAR

"Action never stops in the ABC television network's action/adventure series *B.A.D. CATS*," according to an ABC press release issued last January.

The final "action" episode was shown less than a month later.

OPEC'S FAVORITE SERIES

"The two young cops," continued the same press release, "while admittedly inexperienced in accepted police procedures, call on their high-speed driving ability and common sense to deal with police cases of all descriptions."

BUT HE'LL STILL HAVE TO PAY TAXES

Fitness buff Jack LaLanne found himself curiously tongue-tied when questioned by an interviewer about his mortality.

"I can't die," LaLanne responded. "It would wreck my image."

continued

AND ALL THE TIME WE THOUGHT WE WERE WATCHING TONI TENNILLE

Said John Davidson upon the announcement of his new talk show: "I'm really happy about the new day-time talk show because it's giving me the chance to show the *real* John Davidson."

AND IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, HE'S GOT A GREAT PIECE OF LAND NEXT TO MOUNT ST. HELENS

In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Alan Landsburg (chairman of Alan Landsburg Productions and producer of the TV-movie "The Mysterious Island of Beautiful Women") told a reporter: "We want our television movies to be as close to the truth as possible."

WELL, HARDLY EVER

Red-faced and waxing shy, Suzanne Somers admitted in a TV interview that she had "tried out" to be a Playboy Playmate, but had never posed nude.

Weeks later, Playboy hit the streets with a vintage photo spread of TV's very own Suzy-Q in the buff.

EXCEPT WHEN WE TANGO

When asked by Barbara Walters whether the age difference (45 years) between himself and his new fiancée, Robyn Smith, was ever a consideration, Fred Astaire, 80, responded: "I don't even think about it."

OR SNOOZING, AS THE CASE MAY BE

Said John Travolta after rejecting interview requests from Barbara Walters and Rona Barrett: "I'm just not comfortable on TV. With a newspaper person, I can squirm and make a face and it's OK, but if I do it on the air millions of people are watching."

AND FURTHERMORE, I'LL TAKE THE JOB!

When Dan Rather phoned CBS News President William Leonard to announce his decision to accept the anchor position after Walter Cronkite's departure, he is said to have intoned: "I have decided to make a new covenant of excellence at CBS."

AND SHE'S TOILET-TRAINED TO BOOT!

An ABC press release described the character of Sara in the TV series *Too Close for Comfort*: "Sara is 18, available, and a freshman at San Francisco State College. She is smarter than is outwardly portrayed, and is a free spirit of the new generation. Her physical attributes attract the opposite sex, and her purring-kitten manner might cause her to be accused of entrapment."

FRANKLY, MY DEAR, I DON'T GIVE A DAMN

Said David Gerber, executive producer of *Beulah Land*, about his miniseries: "The plantation depicted may not be representative. But this is an entertainment show, about a certain white family that happened to have household slaves."

THE NOT SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING SCHOOL OF EDITING

NBC commissioned 13 weeks of a Barbara Eden series based on her feature film "Harper Valley P.T.A." because the movie scored well in the ratings.

Six months later, without having yet seen a thread of footage, NBC fired the producers and cut the length of the episodes from an hour to a half hour.

"We just couldn't lick it in the hour form," said a network executive.

NOT TO MENTION NATIONWIDE BRAIN DAMAGE

In separate stunts for *That's Incredible!*, three contestants were badly injured: one while running through a flaming tunnel, another while attempting to leap over two speeding cars, and a third while cycling over the fountains at Caesars Palace.

AND YOU CAN CALL ME RAY

An *Evening Magazine* report on correspondent Ray Murray's audience with Pope John Paul II last November was considered quite a coup for Group W.

According to Murray, his meeting with the Pontiff lasted only 30 seconds, but, "Our camera crew was allowed to walk beside the Pope closer than perhaps any other television crew had done before or during a papal audience."

Murray was so "childishly excited," he confesses, that he ended with "Thanks, Pope."

OH, SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, GEORGE

Said producer George Schlatter upon the debut of *Real People*: "The show speaks to and about the common man. It is a look at ourselves."

WHO'S GOING TO REMEMBER PETTY DETAILS?

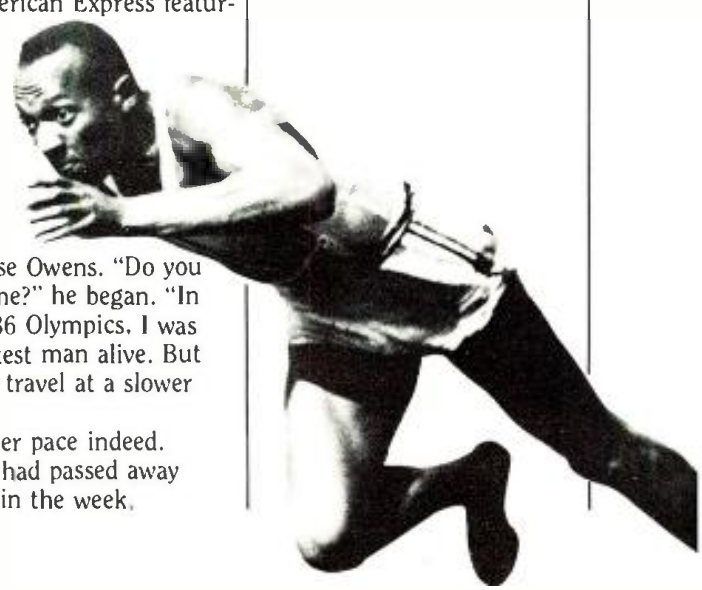
Last spring's CBS movie "Guyana Tragedy: The Story of Jim Jones" gave viewers the impression that nine people were killed at the Jonestown airstrip. Actually, only five were killed.

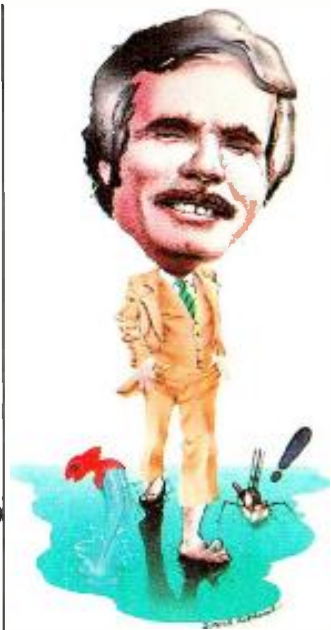
Explained executive producer Frank Konigsberg: "We made up a lot of extra characters and had more to get rid of."

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Last April, New York's WABC-TV followed a nightly newscast with a commercial for American Express featuring Jesse Owens. "Do you know me?" he began. "In the 1936 Olympics, I was the fastest man alive. But today I travel at a slower pace."

Slower pace indeed. Owens had passed away earlier in the week.





AND ON A GOOD DAY, I CAN WALK ON WATER

In an interview with Newsweek, Cable News Network founder Ted Turner declared: "I can do more today in communications than any conqueror could have ever done."

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Is Walter Cronkite as Good as His Ratings?

With the legendary anchorman preparing to leave his post, a respected journalist judges the man and his achievements

By THEODORE H. WHITE

We were all young reporters then in a war that girdled the globe.

But unless we bivouacked together at the same headquarters, we knew each other only by reputation. We relied on gossip to sort out the correspondents we would be working with in the next arena of assignment—the name stars (who did not like to dirty their uniforms) from the men who moved up with the troops. We relied on such information because it was important to combat correspondents to know who was safe as a companion, who was a nut, who was a phony. So, even in the Pacific, we heard that United Press's combat correspondent in Europe, Walter Cronkite, was one of the good guys. He'd flown over the landings on D-day, on a low-level B-17 mission; had hit the beach himself on D-plus-5; had crash-landed when he glided into Eindhoven on the foredoomed Market-Garden Operation. We got the UP copy in China and read Cronkite's deceptively simple stories—understated, clean, crisp. As far away as the press hostel in Chungking, the word ran, "If you get to Europe, look up Cronkite, a good guy to be with."

I met this Cronkite for the first time many years later—when I came home in the early Fifties after 15 years abroad. But he was now someone famous, *the* Walter Cronkite. When I, entirely unfamiliar with television, asked what he did now, I was told he was an "anchorman." The word had been coined by a CBS producer, Paul Levitan, trying to describe what Cronkite's role would be at the conventions of 1952. Levitan spun off the term "anchorman": a person who held things in place. The term caught. Pursuing my question, I learned that Cronkite had succeeded in binding the heavings, conspiracies and carnivalia of an American political convention into one coherent whole.

Don Hewitt, that pioneer of television news production whose career has paralleled and crossed Cronkite's ever since D-day, had produced the conventions of 1952 for CBS. "We thought," said Hewitt, "that what we were doing was interesting only to political buffs. We were learning how to serve it up, how to make it more dramatic, more exciting. We were dealing with something called the attention span; my job was to capture and hold the attention of the American public by putting on the best show, like putting a frame around a picture. Only it wasn't a picture of the convention, it was a picture of Cronkite."

Nineteen fifty-two is now long ago and far away. Had Cronkite stopped there, it would have sufficed to mark his name in television history as the prototype of the noun "anchorman."

But modern television history begins on Sept. 2, 1963, the night the first half-hour *Evening News* took to the air. And Cronkite was the master there, too.

The reasoning behind the expansion of the *CBS Evening News* was as coarsely commercial as the reasoning behind any of the television networks' furious toy wars. NBC, with its Huntley-Brinkley team, had outstripped CBS in the news ratings. CBS decided, therefore, to leapfrog Huntley-Brinkley's 15-minute news show with a full half-hour of Walter Cronkite every single weekday night!

Over the opposition of CBS's affiliates, the show took to the air. Within 10 days NBC had countered with its own half-hour *Nightly News*. And, with the introduction of the half-hour news, all American politics were to change. Presidential campaigns would be shaped to catch the precious minutes on these evening shows; local programs would be scheduled to precede or follow the national news shows; in years to come, some *50 million people every evening* would watch the evening news shows of the three networks, the greatest unifying source of information in the country.

One should linger on the significance of the evening news shows, not because it was here that Cronkite made his most enduring mark in the history of politics-and-media, but because Cronkite was pioneering his way into the bewilderments of modern times. The world has always been coming apart only to be

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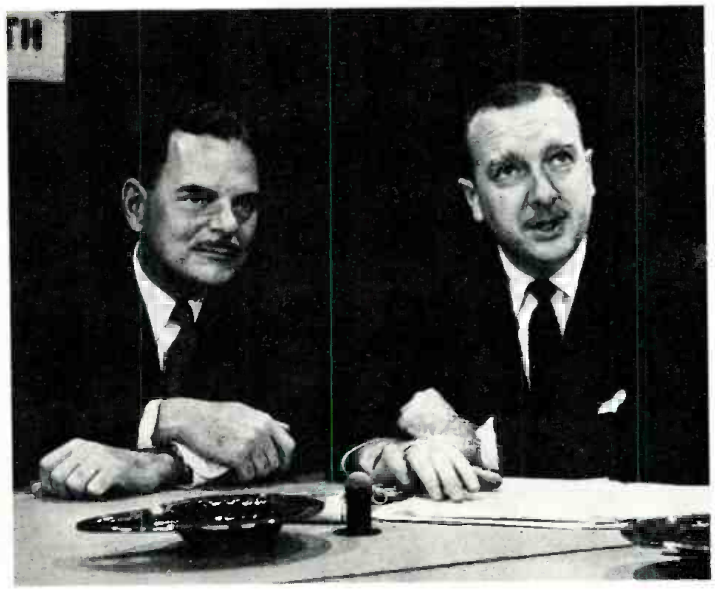
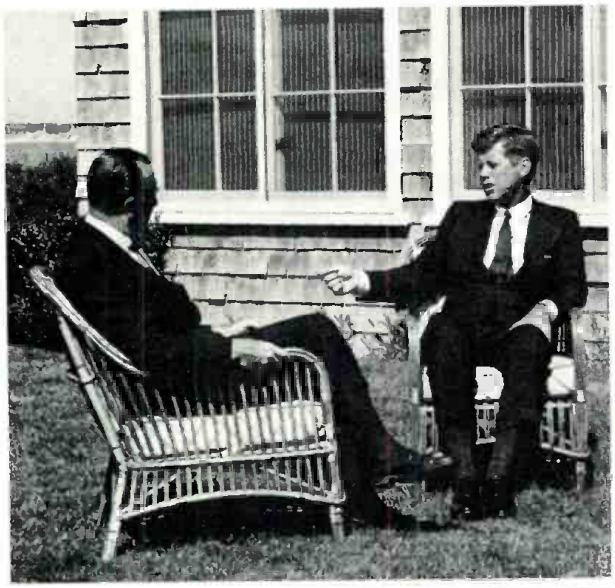
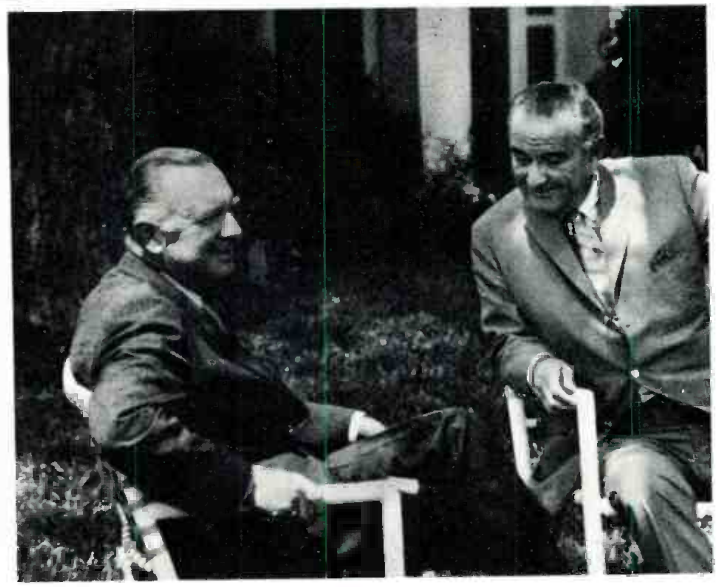
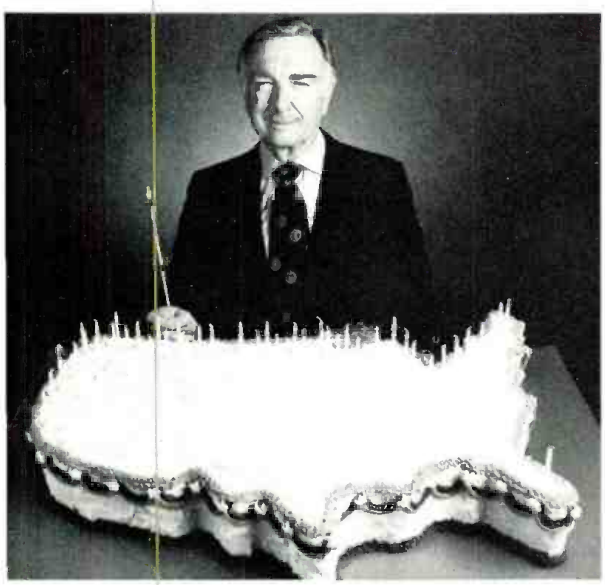
Theodore H. White is the author of the series of books "The Making of the President 1960," "... 1964," "... 1968," "... 1972." His "The Making of the President 1980" is expected out early this year.









From left to right, top row: In 1943, Cronkite is one of the first correspondents to accompany B-17s on their raids into Germany; Gov. Thomas E. Dewey (Republican Presidential candidate, 1948) and Cronkite discuss the upcoming '52 election; covering the '52 Republican convention. Middle row: With J.F.K. at Hyannis Port, Mass.; with Dwight D. Eisenhower in "Eisenhower Revisits Normandy," 1964; Vietnam, 1968, Cronkite is on the road to Hue with the U.S. Marines. Bottom row: Interview with 1968 Presidential candidate Richard M. Nixon at candidate's apartment; with Lyndon Baines Johnson at L.B.J.'s ranch in Texas, 1969; Cronkite in a promotion photo for CBS News' all-day, all-night coverage of America's Bicentennial.

pasted together again—ever since Adam and Eve were driven from Eden. But now, in our time, one could actually *see* it coming apart: blacks marching in America's South; rockets hurtling to the moon; revolutions; killings; drought and famine; villages burning; prime ministers, presidents and princes gathering. Television made it possible to see all this, to see it while it was happening. But someone had to impose an intelligence on it, give a coherence to the random events, seek a selectivity to pattern a narrative of change out of the colors of chaos. So it was that Cronkite, given the role of "star" of his show, also insisted he be its "managing editor." It was to be *his* view of the world that CBS viewers would get. It would be he who would try to fit the fragments into place.

I know this account makes Cronkite seem forbidding—which he isn't. He can, of course, be hard, brusque, insistent, demanding of his staff. But nothing quenches that zest for life, that grief at tragedy which rises in our memories of all his large moments: Cronkite pounding his table at the space shots, his voice quivering, occasionally yelling for our side as each of the silver tubes lifted off from Cape Canaveral; or Cronkite anchoring the ceremonies that attended the passing of John F. Kennedy, choking down his sobs, struggling to keep his voice clean of emotion so that his reporting, too, would be clean. This is the Walter Cronkite who gives that human lubrication of heart, warmth, fear, sadness to the intricate task of fitting the world together all over again each night.

There are, of course, all the other Cronkites who have softened my respect for him to affection. There is Walter who still flirts in public with his wife Betsy, one-time Agriculture Queen at the University of Missouri. There is Walter waltzing with his mother at his 63rd birthday party last year. There is Walter the father, who, like all of us fathers, cares deeply for his children. There is Walter who can gossip about or hilariously mimic the CBS executives who, from time to time in the past, have tried to take him down a notch. And then there is the Walter Cronkite of today, who is handing on the crown of anchorman to whoever can wear it.

I was lunching with Walter recently. We were talking about television and its

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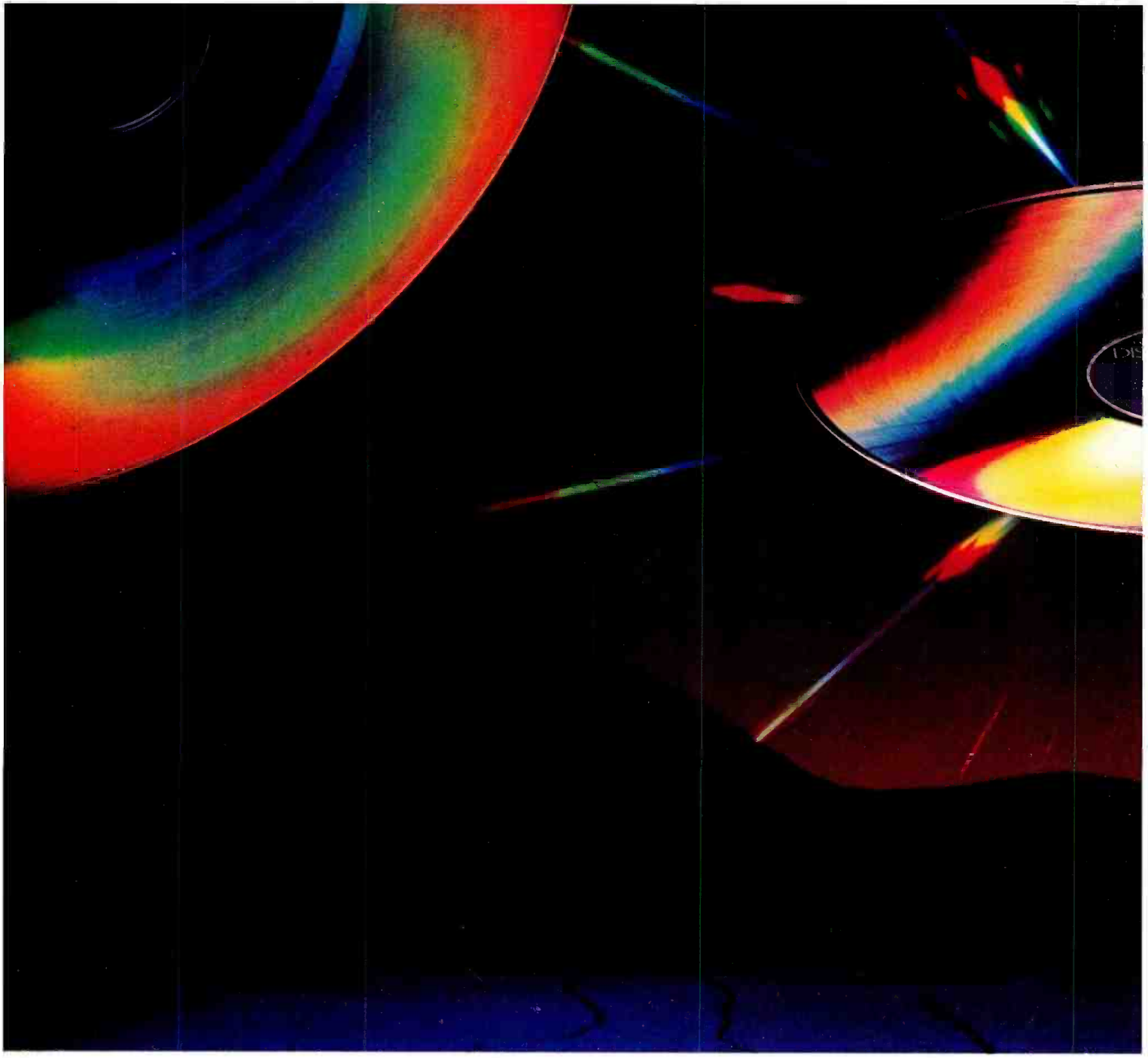


Billion-Dollar Gamble

Videodiscs Go For a Triple Play

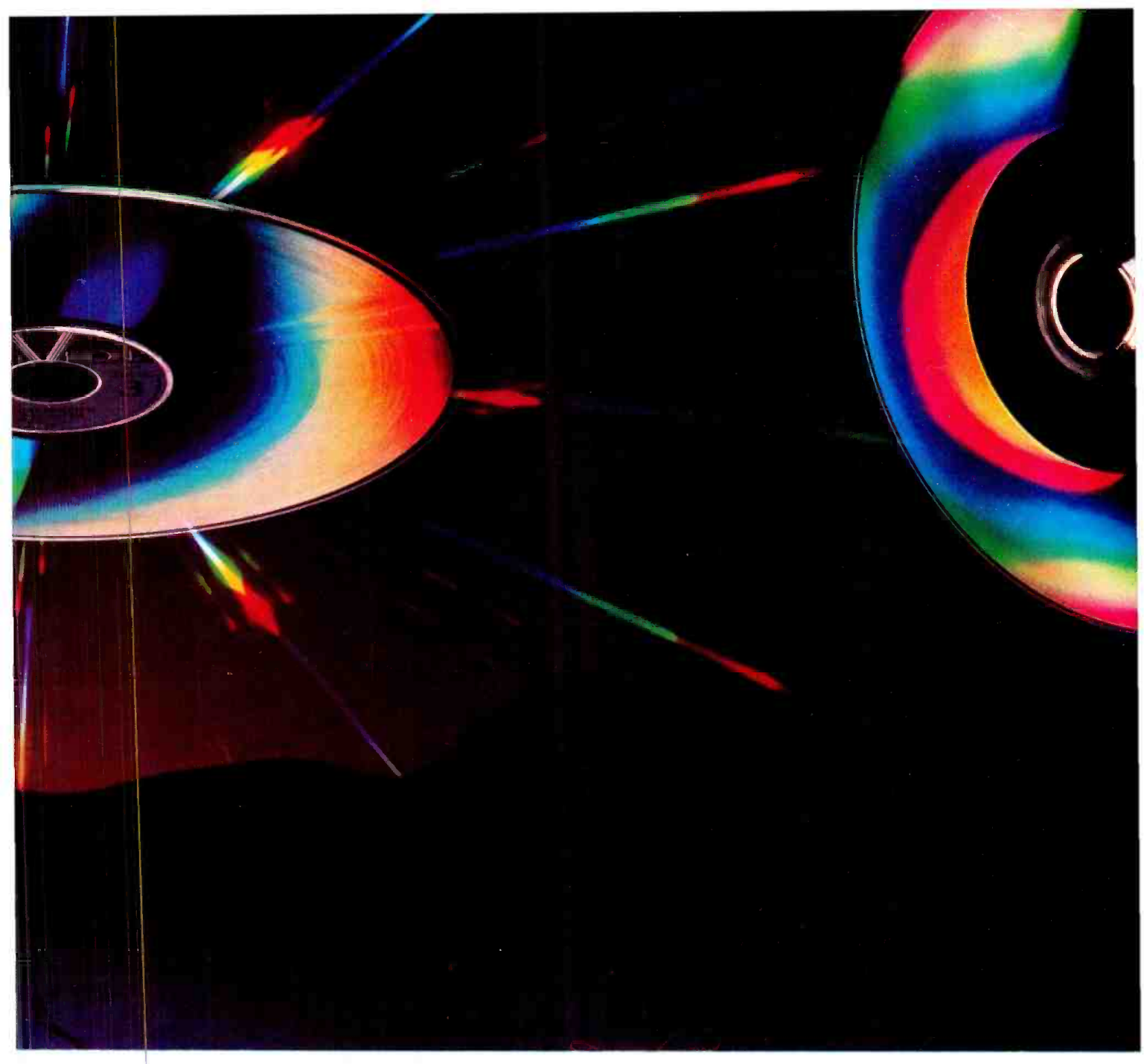
Three incompatible systems are now vying for the market; here is a guide to the players and programming available

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

The curtain is about to go up on the newest of the video media after an out-of-town tryout that drew mixed reviews. The videodisc aims to take its place among the alternatives to broadcast television; joining pay-TV, cable and the videocassette recorder as a competitor for access to the box in the living room.

If it succeeds, it could be the biggest new entertainment medium ever introduced—bigger than television itself, according to RCA. If it flops, heads could roll at some of America's largest corporations and consumers could be stuck with computerized electronic marvels in their living rooms that have no useful purpose. And it *could* flop—because a videodisc player can't record. Like television, it's only as good as its programming.

Happily, there promises to be plenty of top-quality programming. Initially, at least, the disc's big attraction is feature movies: every major movie studio has signed up to transfer its major recent re-



leases and golden oldies to see-and-hear records, and the minors are standing in line right behind them. Television itself promises to supply a rich lode of disc material: all four networks have plans to press documentaries, specials, series, even soap-opera retrospectives; reruns of programs from television's fabled "golden age" of the 1950s may finally be seen again by the magic of videodisc. Highlights of memorable sports championships, do-it-yourself projects, concerts and Broadway plays also are prominent on disc program schedules.

Although disc programming at first will rely overwhelmingly on transfer of existing material from other media, proponents are looking forward confidently to the time when there are enough players in use to subsidize development of programming exclusively for videodiscs. To attract this kind of programming—indeed, to succeed at all, given the tremendous costs of disc pressing—player sales must be measured in the millions of units per year, and the discs themselves in the tens or hundreds of millions.

As with any mass-market business proposition, this one cried out for a single system, so that any record could be played on any turntable. The problem is, the cries were heard simultaneously by many different people, who all started working on the idea from different approaches—making what should be a simple situation about as complicated as it possibly could be.

Although you might hardly have noted the occasion, the videodisc celebrated its second birthday on the American market last month. Among the five or six different approaches to video records, one is already available in some areas, and two more are definitely on the way. Here's the home videodisc and player lineup now and for the near future:

The Optical System: Players and discs were first placed on sale by Magnavox in December 1978 in Atlanta,

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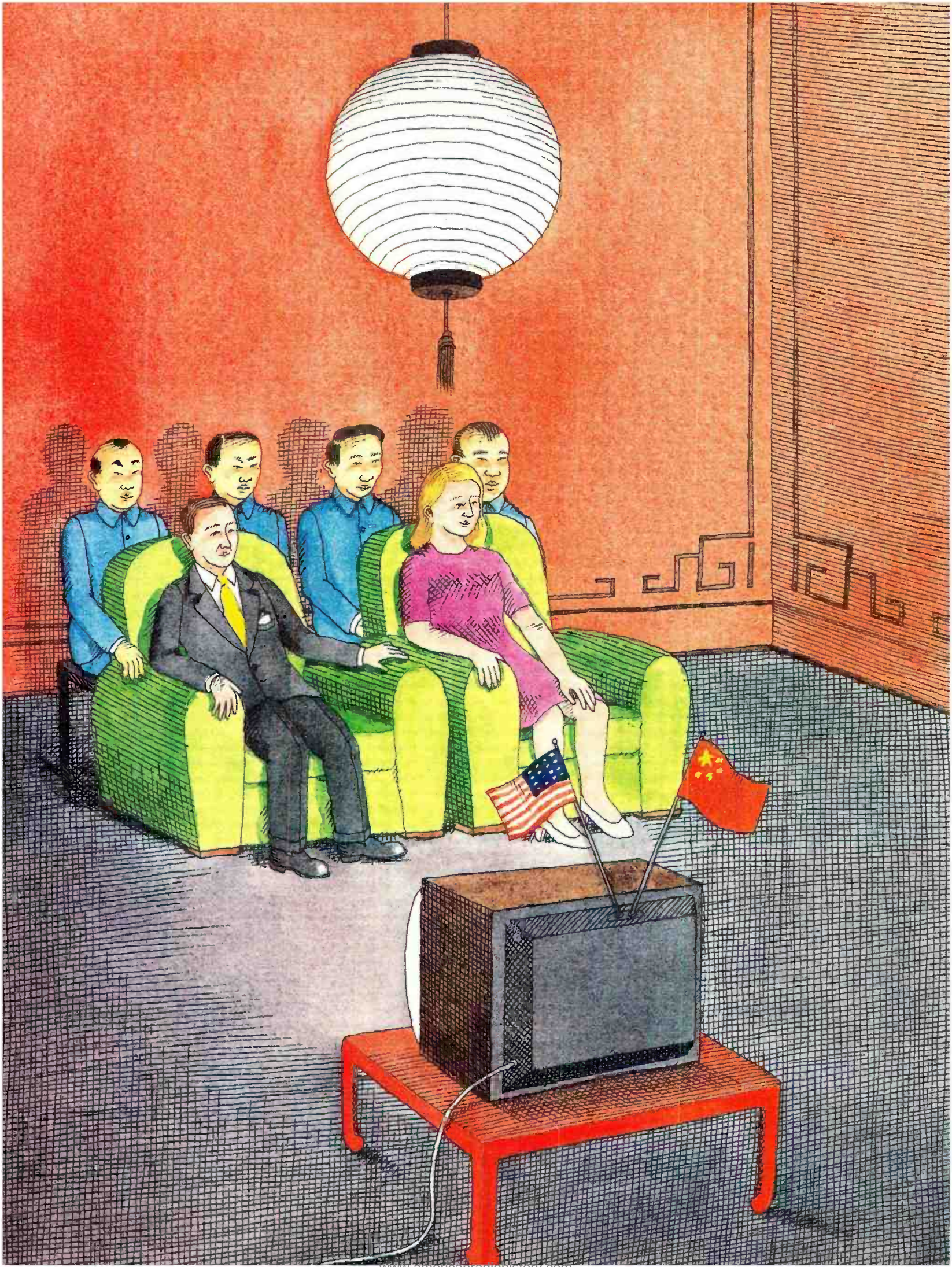

In a rare interview in Peking, an American writer and a Chinese TV official struggle to grasp each other's television values

Hot Tea, Cold Facts and the Clash of Cultures

By CAROLYN SEE

For weeks, I have been in correspondence with television authorities in Peking. I am to be, as far as I know, the first American journalist since the end of the Cultural Revolution to be granted an extensive interview on the workings of Chinese TV. I'm not sure what to expect; I suppose . . . "different."

But when I get to Peking it becomes evident that, although the people in Chinese television have thus far eschewed the dubious delights of sex, violence and commercials, they have by no means divorced themselves from that most intoxicating pleasure: being important and hard-to-get. It takes my national guide, Mrs. Chang Hui, not one, not two, not 11, but *22* phone calls to get through to Mr. Han Quingyu, deputy chief of the International Liaison Department of the Central Broadcasting Administration (the national network) in Peking. That means Mr. Han is seven phone calls harder to get than Aaron Spelling—a distinction understood very well on both sides of the world.

Finally, after two days, Mrs. Chang, exhausted, says yes, OK, Mr. Han will see us—but only for *five minutes*! Again, somehow, this sounds familiar.

We take a cab down the main street of Peking. I am with Mrs. Chang and Prof. John Espey of UCLA, who, in addition to being a China specialist, was born in China and spent his first 17 years there. Somewhat nervously, we drive to the offices of the Central Broadcasting Administration.

To enter the CBA building is to enter an austere cathedral. A long hall—painted in complementary tones of beige, like our public high schools of old—begins in a large anteroom and sprouts out into a series of plain alcoves. This hall succeeds to another, and another, and down at the far, far end of the halls, a ghostly, enormous statue of Chairman Mao.

There is no artificial light here, or air-conditioning. It is very, very hot. Our two interpreters seat us in the anteroom's cozy gloom, bring us tea and orange drinks. Mr. Han comes out and greets us civilly, cautiously. He is dressed in the customary loose-fitting starched white shirt and dark trousers. He has my letters in his hand and keeps glancing from me to them, with a slight air of disbelief.

The interview begins. He speaks in set "briefing" sentences, purposely short for the network interpreter, Mrs. Chou Chen. He is gracious, but formal. He can spare, he reminds us, only five minutes.

Up until 1958, Mr. Han tells us, all Chinese television was in black and white. There now are two color channels—one national, one local—for each region. There is no regular "daytime" television. The three to four hours of program time each night on each channel are divided up into three main sections. One, described by Mr. Han as "Documentary," includes the world news, political speeches and "documentaries."

The conversation now stops. The interpreters consult; we consult: when we say "documentary," are we talking about the same thing? When we Americans say it, we mean the travelogue on Ottawa we saw last night, or the hour-long program on Toyota factories we saw the night before that. The Chinese tentatively suggest that they mean short subjects on their own farming and industry.

A second section of Chinese TV is "Educational Material," which might include scientific information, sports, children's programs and introductions to well-known artists and writers.

A third section—although not so labeled by Mr. Han—would seem to be "Entertainment." (Again the concept is foggy.) While American television en-

tertains in order to sell, Chinese television entertains—as an extension of the government—in order to "educate." In both countries, perhaps, "entertainment" is a misnomer. Be that as it may . . . some of the Chinese programs in this section consist of travel shows: sightseeing and foreign industrial methods. Others include more scientific information, folk and classical operas and dramas, either on videotape or (some hand-waving here) live performances. Some of their operas are deliberately performed for television rebroadcast.

I tell Mr. Han that the period when *we* still had many live performances on TV is called the Golden Age of Television. The interpreter translates; they look at each other politely. *So what?* seems to be their unasked question.

We are still sitting in the anteroom of the first entry hall, sweating, smiling, using fans, drinking tea. "You must understand," Mr. Han says rather suddenly, "that during the time of the Gang of Four, such programs could not be shown."

It's our turn to look blank. It's one thing to know that from 1966 to 1976, during the Cultural Revolution, all secondary schools and universities were closed, all students and faculty sent down to the countryside to be "re-educated" by workers, soldiers and peasants, and quite another thing to see how this might apply to television.

"People like to see films on their TV sets," Mr. Han explains patiently. "Sometimes it is convenient to see some *new films*."

The five of us look at each other. Mr. Han tries again.

"During the Cultural Revolution, for 10 years, there were only three films on Chinese television."

Only three films?

Mr. Han and the two interpreters begin to nod and smile yes. Three films and six Peking operas. That was *it*, for 10 years.

What were the names of the three films?

Our two interpreters, incredibly charming ladies in spite of their deliberate austerity of dress and demeanor, begin to sigh and groan, falling back in their chairs and uttering the Chinese equivalent of "Will I ever *forget*? Gimme a *break*!"

" 'The War of the Underground Tunnel'!"

" 'The'—uh—'The' . . . 'The Bomb War'!"

" 'The Liberation War'!"

Amid nostalgic giggles and sighs, Mr. Han says only that these films were either "anti-Japanese or anti-Nationalist."

"The Chinese people, at that time," he says, "did not like to see always the three films. What you see on our screens now, we have done since 1977. We are still not yet satisfied with the qualities of the programming we produce. We are training ourselves how to use television. For instance, we still have not sent news correspondents to other nations. . . ."

Something about this exchange, the laughter, has lightened everybody up. Our five minutes have already stretched into close to an hour. Mr. Han stands. We feel the interview is ending on a convivial note. But no, we're mistaken; it has just begun. Expansively, he shows us down a side hall to an inner room, furnished comfortably with leather easy chairs, decorative scrolls, and a wall cabinet full of art objects. We sit down with new tea, more cheer, on a much more friendly basis.

Prime

The Local Channel
(Times Approximate)

Monday
6:00-6:30: Short subjects on shoes: their manufacture, their variety, their availability in stores.
6:30-7:00: A scientist tells a Young Pioneer about methods of cultivating the sunflower and how it can be turned into oil.
7:00-10:00: A workers' opera; can't figure out the plot.

Tuesday
6:00-6:30: Short subjects on calligraphy, children's activity centers, barbering.
6:30-7:00: The news? Sluice gates open. The silk-reeling factory continues production.
7:00-8:00: Japanese documentary on a Toyota factory. Robots looking vaguely like humans do much of the work.
8:00-10:00: Workers' opera. A set of peasants squabble, in song, about a piece of crockery. Does it belong to this daughter-in-law? Or this one? The plot is thickened by a nosy neighbor who offers, at length, her own voluble opinions. An hour later, they're still arguing about that lousy cup! The issue is solved by a strong-minded, right-thinking woman who—you guessed it—breaks the cup! Because how silly it is to argue about individual material gain when there are things like the Four Modernizations to put your mind to.

Wednesday
6:00-6:30: Short subjects on chicken-raising and wheat-farming.
6:30-7:00: Well, it starts off like the news, has "news" music, but its focus is on workers in different factories; tonight, we see car and truck plants.
7:00-9:00: A basketball game, played in an almost empty stadium. The players are very good. During the half-hour half time, there's half of a Canadian travelogue on Ottawa, with Chinese voice-over.

Thursday
6:00-6:30: Chinese scientists in a modern laboratory.
6:30-7:00: The news. (There never is any *bad* news; perhaps that's why it's hard to think of it as news.) Some delegations shake hands with one another. The factories work full tilt.

Time in Peking

7:00-10:30: A black-and-white spy/smuggling movie, very slow, sophisticated, beautiful; set in the Thirties. (Was it *made* in the Thirties? Hard to say. It doesn't—by the action—seem to have a political moral.)

Friday
6:00-6:30: Life in a people's commune. Everything is saved; nothing is wasted. It's important for children to work hard and also to study.
6:30-7:00: The news. Putting up a building. Also, on this night, two women squabble in a Chinese street.
7:00-11:00: A European movie, in technicolor, about World War II. With the Chinese voice-over it's hard to tell where this movie is from—Yugoslavia? The costumes are stylish, the hero debonair; whenever he manages to insult the Nazis, a group of young Chinese who are watching this same show next door cheer softly.

The National Channel
(Times Approximate)

Saturday
6:00-6:30: The same 10-minute short subjects. More on silk: silk-weaving in huge factories, silk-printing, silk-painting.
6:30-7:00: The news. Some local coverage. A young girl getting an award. Work on the Grand Canal (or another waterway). International news from ABC: weather in the U.S.; a dead Central American; President Carter addresses a flag-waving demonstration. Nothing about Russia.
7:00-9:00: A police or detective story, in color. They are after some thugs who seem to have smuggled something. The chase scenes—on foot—are very slow and quite beautiful. At the climax one thug careens, in slow motion, through a picture-window in a kaleidoscopic shower of glass. (He is caught.)

Sunday
6:00-6:30: The tomato. It is a very important food, and while it can be grown on huge farms, it can also be grown in individual gardens, even in cities.
6:30-7:00: News, from here in Peking, and from ABC. In a week, I have seen no national Chinese leaders. But here is Carter giving a speech. And Prime Minister Thatcher. In South Carolina they're having a heat wave, and the planes have trouble taking off. Nothing about Russia.
7:00-10:00: Drama. A doctor, surrounded by a plethora of scientific appurtenances, breaks the bad news to a young couple. The wife weeps; her husband holds back the tears. Now the doctor speaks to an older couple. There's no doubt about it: somebody's going to die. The wife can hardly bear it, but her husband, a writer, scarcely allows himself to be distracted from his important work. It turns out that he is the one who is incurably ill. He keeps on writing, against time, but the pain is getting to him. Finally, things get worse. The writer is dying. His wife tries to get him to eat some rice porridge. It's too late. They embrace; their spectacles touch—will they kiss? No; the camera focuses in on his published volumes lying with him on the bed, then cuts, with an inspiring voice-over, to a huge pan of a modern Chinese waterfront. —*C.S.*

But in another sense, the distance between us widens.

"We've heard that you plan to run 15 minutes of commercials a day," I say. "When will they start?"

"Oh . . . not yet," the interpreter explains. "There will be 15 daily minutes of commercial time . . . it will be sold to mostly different countries . . . commercials are to make it convenient to buy certain things, never anything like wine or cigarettes. . . ."

"What things?"

Ms. Chou lowers her eyes. "An electric watch, perhaps, well-known in Japan."

"Have the Chinese, in the past four years, produced, or thought about producing, a series?"

Mr. Han, Ms. Chou and Mrs. Chang gaze at us politely. What's a *series*? After five or 10 minutes, which seem like as many hours, I'm still not sure I've adequately described one. But their position is clear. Whatever a series is, they don't have one.

"Do you have . . . *situation comedies* on Chinese television?" And although we have just this week seen a feature film, "Vexations in the Life of a Worker," which illuminates in what can best be described as Lucille Ball fashion some of the things that can go wrong around a house when everyone doesn't pitch in to do the work, still, it's hard, very hard (and perhaps it is impossible) to get across the idea of a *situation comedy*.

Is it my imagination, or are the Chinese in the room beginning to look pityingly at us Americans, stuck as we are with such junk in our "Entertainment" category?

Mr. Han, a nice man and a good conversationalist, maneuvers us back to what the Chinese are doing.

"Many of our programs are educational," he says. "That is to say, they are part of a national television university. Some-

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The troubled and the poor get messages from what they see on TV—messages about others *and* themselves

"You See that There's More than You in the World"

By ROBERT COLES

For the past quarter-century, Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles has traveled America studying the Nation's troubled, its poor, its children and its minorities. From his interviews has come a stream of remarkable books, including the five-volume "Children of Crisis," two volumes of which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1973; "Still Hungry in America"; "Farewell to the South"; and "The Old Ones of New Mexico," to name just a few.

Among the topics Coles has explored with his subjects is television. In fact, he recalls, "Sometimes I have sat for days in people's living rooms watching television until they would begin to talk candidly with me." PANORAMA asked Coles to discuss just how television affects such people in crisis—how they use TV to help them better understand and cope with their circumstances. Here, he tells of disparate families, each undergoing turmoil of a different type, and the impact the medium has had on them.

In a photograph taken by Bruce Davidson and used in a CBS film called "Living off the Land," the TV set looms large in the home of this New Jersey family.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s I found myself going into the homes of families deeply involved as protagonists in this country's changing social history. They were whites and blacks, and they suddenly had become pioneers in school desegregation and the sit-in movement, or, on the other side, citizens who joined mobs to resist court-ordered changes in Southern education or in that region's political and economic and cultural life. They were also men, women and children who had a relatively unusual experience: the sight of themselves on television. At times I wondered which had a greater effect on those individuals—what they did, or what they saw themselves doing on television.

Here are words spoken by the mother of one of the children who initiated the integration of the New Orleans schools in 1960—in the face of daily mobs and worldwide newspaper and television coverage: "We go past the mobs, and they tell us we're the worst people in the world, and the Devil owns us, and

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Presenting the

With his new blockbuster, "Real People," producer George Schlatter is now scoring hits off America's eccentrics—and, as ever, challenging those who question his taste

By DON SHIRLEY

"The easiest way to get a reputation is to go outside the fold, shout around for a few years as an . . . atheist or a . . . radical. and then crawl back to the shelter." A few decades after F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote those words, 19-year-old George Schlatter dropped out of college and went to work in the mail room of the MCA talent agency in Hollywood—a conservative firm that catered to performers of the highest caliber. Young Schlatter quickly parlayed his menial job into one of booking talent and almost as quickly set the firm on its ear when he widened his client list to include strippers as well as pianists.

Today, at 50, Schlatter is one of television's maverick producers: the man who brought you *Laugh-In* is the executive producer. the head honcho, behind the current NBC trend-setter *Real People* and the recently fallen *Speak Up America*. Schlatter is controversial—something of a programming atheist or radical, you might say—and, true to Fitzgerald, he's got a whale of a reputation: egotistical, irreverent, trendy and exploitative are among the most mentioned adjectives used to describe him by the denizens of Hollywood's watering holes. And they've come up with a recent addition—patriotic.

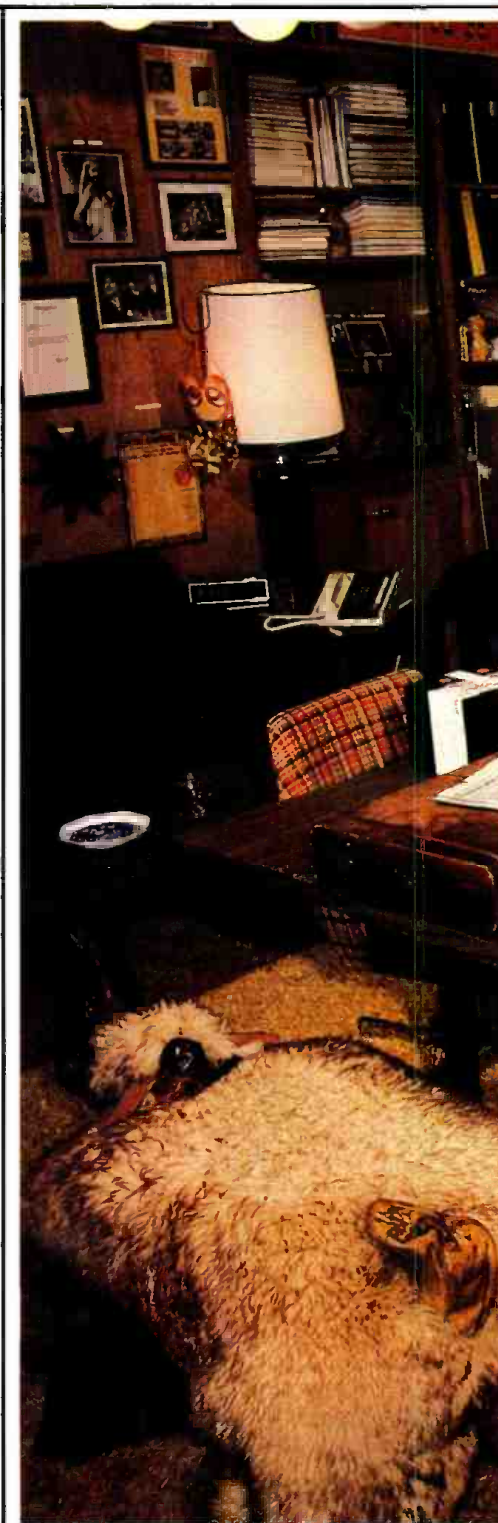
His West Hollywood office is at the heart of 11 or so cluttered rooms that house George Schlatter Productions. Schlatter hasn't arrived yet, but his empty office looks somewhat like a zoo just before feeding time. A large plastic udder dangles from the ceiling; a life-size "sheep" made out of driftwood and wool—a souvenir from one of his *Real People* subjects—stands by the desk; across the room a brown gorilla hand protrudes out of a chair.

Suddenly, up the stairs comes the sound of big bass chortles. With a little imagination you can see the telephone on Schlatter's desk bracing itself for a long workout. The master is about to arrive.

He strides into the room, looking a lot like Luciano Pavarotti dressed for a picnic—but without quite as much beard or paunch. The arias begin: long recitations on how much Schlatter loves television and his work, and how he wants to give you and me a chance to be heard.

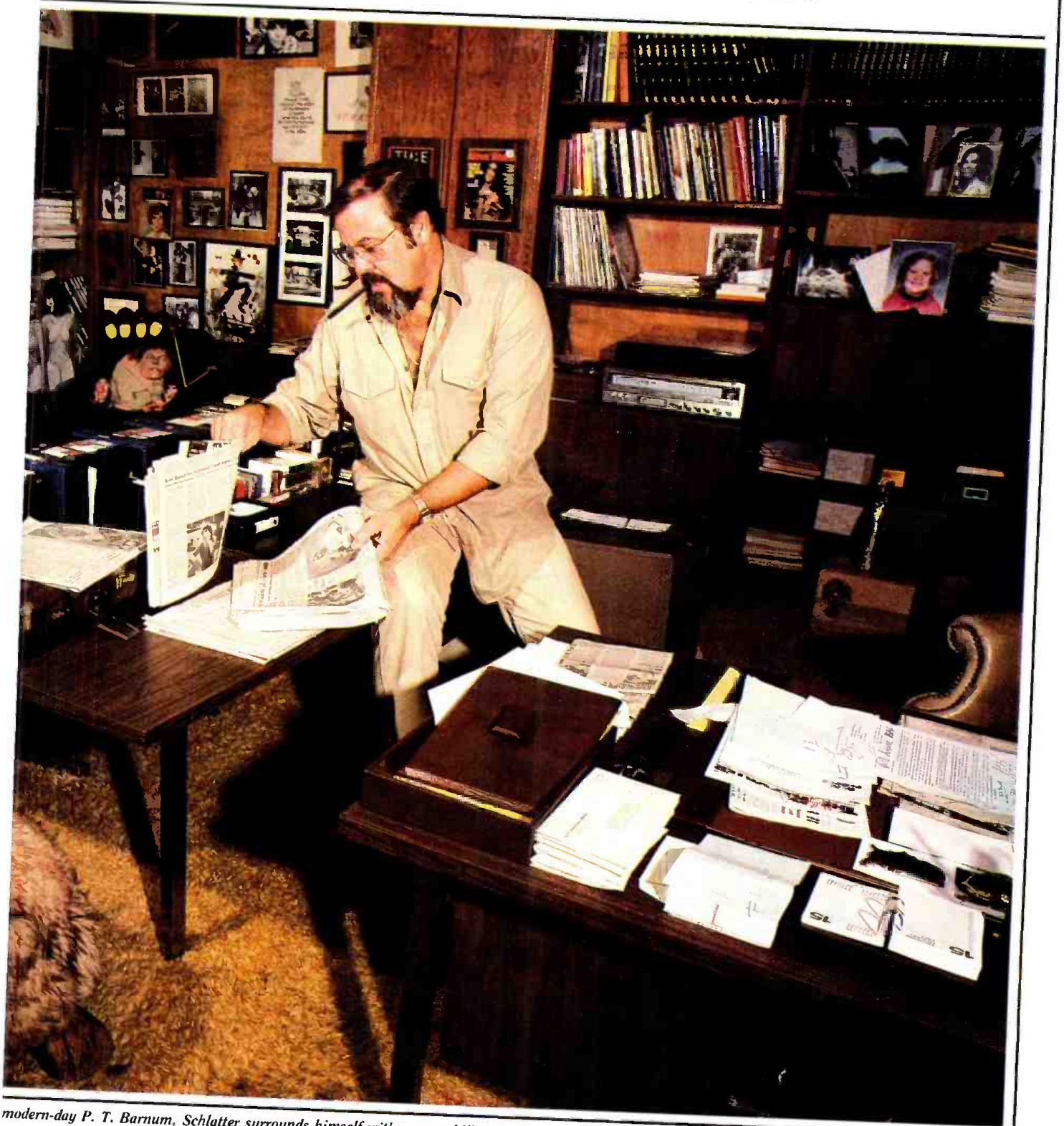
Through it all, that big pink udder looks down on everyone, and finally one is compelled to ask about it. Television's judge of who is "real" glances up at it and professes not to know why it is there. Then, as if worried that he might seem a little odd, he adds, "I could sound like a total eccentric, couldn't I? I'm really not. I live in the same house I've lived in for 14 years [never mind that it has nine TV sets, including three in one bathroom]. I'm a very ordinary, stable kind of individual."

But no denials are necessary—after all, thanks to George Schlatter, the American eccentric is now in his glory days. In fact. as Schlatter sits there rattling off some of his former publicity stunts, like the time he sent Lucille Ball waddling down Shubert Alley on top of a five-ton elephant, he starts to sound more and more like the kind of guy who could wind up in a George Schlatter production. Along with the fellow who taught his bellybutton to "whistle" and the man who kept 10,000 flies in his kitchen, Schlatter could land himself a spot on network television, spouting his off-beat philosophy into the living rooms of homes all across the country. *continued*



Hailed—and damned—a

Wizard of Odd



modern-day P. T. Barnum, Schlatter surrounds himself with memorabilia of 20 years in, and out of, television's center ring.

"What do I think of 'That's Incredible!'? I don't mind being ripped off. I just wish they did it better."

THE GEORGE SCHLATTER STORY
Treatment for a *Real People* segment

Begin with shots of Schlatter in action. We're at the *Speak Up America* studio on a taping night. Schlatter's command post is a platform in the wings, where he hovers over a podium that faces the stage.

Schlatter keeps bouncing off the platform—giving orders, making jokes, cheerleading. Acting as a human applause sign, he'll start clapping and the audience will join in. When host Marjoe Gortner exhorts the crowd or when field reporter Rhonda Bates asks the audience "if you want to hear something nasty," Schlatter is the first to respond with shouts of "Say yea!" His laughter punctuates our sound track.

Cut to Schlatter's office. Pan over the udder and other doodads, then to Schlatter seated at his desk. He's on the phone, talking about his wife: "She said, 'These 24 years have been four of the happiest years of my life. It wasn't consecutive—a day here, a lunch there'." He laughs. "I have made that woman very happy."

Next Schlatter sounds off to our reporter in a series of sharply edited bits:

- "Fourteen years ago we taped the first *Laugh-In*. People said it was dangerous, fast and frenetic, future shock, McLuhan. Well, now with *Real People* they're saying, 'What? No guest stars? No newscasters who are cranked out of college like out of a cookie cutter?' No, we just use ordinary people like you and me."
- "How does the audience know where that line is between news and entertainment? The line is not just thin but wavy. Barbara Walters wears more Spray Net than Dolly Parton."
- "What do I think of *That's Incredible!*? ABC has exchanged its typewriters for Xerox machines. I don't mind being ripped off. I just wish they did it better."

Cut to shots of the *Real People* "reunion" last season. We see Schlatter mingling with the Real Ones who have been on his show—very upbeat images. We hear the voice of *Real People* host Sarah Purcell: "George had never met these people. So when they arrived and there was the lizard man, the hollerers hollering, and all the rest, George was in heaven." Freeze on Schlatter's face caught in a big guffaw.

Cut to the studio audience applauding, then to the stage. Sarah Purcell tells the other hosts: "I asked George if there were any lovable eccentrics in his own family like the ones on the show."

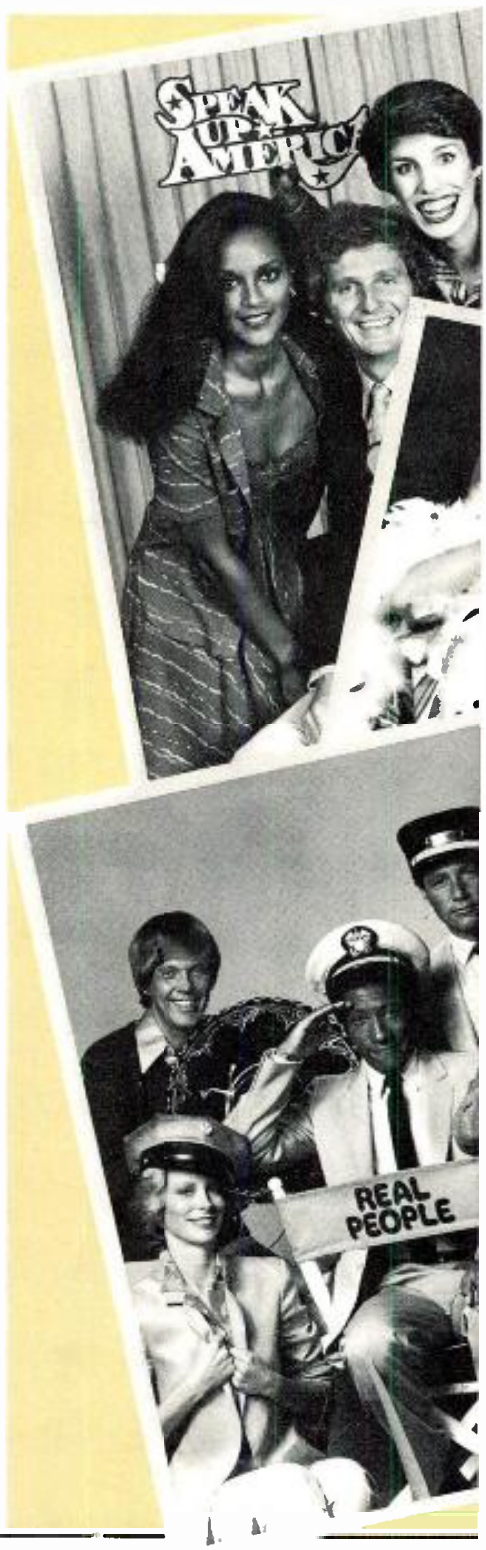
"Yeah, and what did he say?"

"He said there were *only* lovable eccentrics in his family." Laughter. Cut to commercial.

Schlatter has said that his aim with *Real People* is to raise the American eccentric to his proper place in the public esteem, but critics denounce the show as an odious display of exploitation and "casual cruelty." Such attacks send Schlatter bouncing off the ceiling with rage. He once snapped to an interviewer, "*Real People* is a freak show? Hell no. We're not sadists; we don't exploit people's weirdness or make fun of them." He repeats that sentiment now as he contrasts his show with *That's Incredible!*: "By design, they put on one thing every week that makes you cringe. It's kind of a *Gong Show* presentation. We are kind," he insists. "We love the people who are on our show."

The origins of *Real People* go back to the fall of 1978. To programming executives looking for the country's next television love affair, that fall appeared ripe for a nonfiction entertainment program: *P. M. Magazine* was building steam in syndication; Showtime introduced *What's Up America!*, a magazine show concentrating on off-center individuals and events; and the commercial networks scheduled two "reality" shows in prime time, *Lifeline* and *People*, both of which fizzled in the ratings.

But NBC president Fred Silverman thought he smelled success. He called Schlatter and suggested the producer develop a show with "real people." The



"If I were doing 'Speak Up America' again, I would make it tougher. People don't care about Bo Derek's hairdo. They do care about cancer."

Top: Speak Up America *co-hosts Jayne Kennedy (left) and Marjoe Gortner, with field reporter Rhonda Bates. Middle:* Laugh-In's *Alan Sues (left) and Dick Martin. Bottom:* Real People *regulars Byron Allen (center) and (clockwise from lower left) Sarah Purcell, Skip Stephenson, Bill Rafferty and John Barbour.*

show made its debut on April 18, 1979, and gradually grew into one of the network's biggest moneymakers.

When *Real People* host and co-producer John Barbour, who gushes praise for Schlatter, was asked to identify specific features of the show that were Schlatter's ideas, Barbour at first could come up with nothing beyond "his general touch." A few minutes later he called back to give Schlatter credit for "the way the show is mounted so theatrically, the set design, the march music."

Now Barbour is walking into Schlatter's office. He has some good news. While covering a "garbologist" who was examining the trash outside Richard Nixon's home, Barbour and his cameras encountered the Secret Service. Schlatter laughs, wide-eyed, and tells Barbour, "There isn't enough money in the world we could have paid the Secret Service to do that, and there isn't enough money in the world to make me not run this story." Schlatter shakes his head and remarks, "There's no way the news would cover this. Maybe we are more real, closer to reality, than the news."

While blurring the line between news and entertainment has served Schlatter well with *Real People*, it proved his nemesis with his controversial spin-off *Speak Up America*, which NBC dropped after 11 shows. An attempt to find out what average Americans have on their minds, the show proved conclusively that they didn't have *Speak Up America* on their minds or their TV sets. The show drew heavy fire from news executives such as NBC News producer Reuven Frank, who said, "When they showed oil-company executives being interviewed while members of a studio audience could boo and hiss, I thought, 'This hasn't happened since they threw people to the lions'."

Reflecting on the show's failure, Schlatter says, philosophically, "Nobody hits a home run every time." He attributes the poor ratings to its time slot opposite the CBS hit *The Dukes of Hazzard* on Friday nights. "when people aren't into issues," and to "tremendous pressure" from NBC News. The News division's objections, he claims, arose not because of the content of his show but because it was seen as an intrusion into NBC News turf: "They're not talking about responsibility. They're talking about kingdoms."

More objective observers say Schlatter is overlooking the most important source of *Speak Up*'s rating woes: his selection of hosts. "I can sum up the problem in two words," says television analyst Herb Jacobs, "Marjoe Gortner." The only host who was on every episode of *Speak Up*, Gortner "is preachy and talks down to people," says Jacobs. "Besides," he adds, "who the hell cares about on-camera public opinion?"

"If I were doing it again," Schlatter says, "I would make it tougher rather than more frivolous. People don't really care about Bo Derek's hairdo. They do care about cancer." But he maintains that he was under pressure to steer the show farther in the Derek direction than he did: "I refused to make it 'Let's speak up about cotton candy, teddy bears and penguins.'"

"I'm sure *Speak Up* will have a great impact, not just in entertainment but in news," Schlatter says. "Since *Speak Up*, every one of the news divisions has been out on the street more. They may have been critical of us, but they are breaking their asses to do the same thing."

NBC Nightly News executive producer Paul Greenberg responds with a profanity to Schlatter's boast that he has influenced news coverage. "We've always reported reactions," Greenberg says. "But it's very misleading to take the first five people you meet and turn them into a microcosm of America."

Speak Up America was not Schlatter's first fiasco. His most notorious would-be series was a *Laugh-In*-inspired disaster called *Turn-On*. A madcap assortment of quick, racy gags with modern video technology, *Turn-On* starred a

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Eh, What's *Down*, Doc?

It's the level of fun on Saturday-morning cartoons—and the author finds them poor matches for the zany escapades of Bugs Bunny and his contemporaries

By DAVID HANDLER

"We want you to watch some Saturday-morning kid-vid," barks the editor on the telephone. "You know—a former kid goes back. Make it light. Pretend you're a kid."

"Who has to pretend?" I respond.

He sighs impatiently, hangs up. He's very busy. Grown-ups are always busy.

I set my alarm Friday night and it awakens me at 7:45 Saturday morning. I pour some Grape-Nuts and wheat germ into one of my chic stoneware bowls, flick on the TV set and climb back into the hay. It's tough, dirty work but someone has to do it. Sure, my parents wanted me to go to law school. I told them I had to write, write important stuff. Maybe now they'll understand.

I don't live with them any more. I can make the sound as loud as I want to and I won't wake them up. Better yet—no sister to fight with over what to watch. But none of that matters like it used to. Too early for loud noises of any kind, and I don't know one show from another. I just leave on what comes on—something called *Superfriends*.

A Chinese professor invents a machine that can miniaturize anything. His dyspeptic assistant turns the device on its creator; snarls, "You underestimate me, Professor Wong"; and zaps him. Then he dumps him on the edge of a pond. The episode is called "Tiny World of Terror." A variety of superheroes with square jaws and festive capes go miniature and save

the prof just before he is eaten by a frog.

I gulp and pull up the covers.

A half-dozen preteens in Sergio Valente designer jeans strut about, stick their little tushes in front of the camera and declare, "We love you, Sergio." There are some exciting new additions to the "Star Wars" collection. Bad news, parents—the Empire has struck back. Barbie has taken a place in Malibu because she loves the sun so much and—face it—she can afford it now, so why not? The Malibu Barbie Doll burns if she overdoes it. Dunno if she peels.

Because of my diligent viewing, I can now report that Plastic Man can turn himself into a ladder. Anything plastic. He has a cowardly sidekick named Hula Hula, who looks and talks like Lou Costello and is very humorous. I know this because there is a laugh track. Plastic Man takes on the diabolical Superstein, but almost blows it because he is unable to recognize Superstein in sunglasses—even though the fellow is 8 feet tall and has bolts sticking out of his neck. I think this is funny. The laugh track doesn't.

Plastic Man turns himself into a talking shopping cart and pushes himself down the aisle of a supermarket, offering tips on smart shopping. I ignore his advice. If he had any smarts he would turn himself into a credit card.

Mighty Man, an ordinary guy who can change himself into a pint-size crime fighter, has a sidekick named Yukk. Yukk is a big dog who is so ugly he must wear a doghouse over his head. Mighty Man and Yukk get locked in a vault. Yukk takes the doghouse off his head and the door to the vault crumbles. Then he puts the house back on his head and they rush out to make the world safe from Coach Crime. All the hoods in town play on the Coach's team.

Ronald McDonald tries on some clever hats. A giant pitcher of Kool-Aid with moving mouth, legs and hands breaks through the wall of a bumper-car arena and quenches some kids' thirsts. The Crest Superheroes subdue the Cavity Creep Monsters.

On *Scooby and Scrappy Doo*, a bunch of teen-agers and their dog Scooby make the world safe from the Snake Demon. For only $9.98 I can get disco versions of all of my Disney favorites, including "Disco Mickey Mouse" and "Macho Duck." Popeye chokes down some spinach and it turns him into a caped superhero who has a large P on his chest and is strong enough to toss a whole city about. The Harlem Globetrotters, who are globe-trotting superheroes off the court, pursue a demon who wants to steal all of the world's monuments. He locks our superheroes in a cave. "Ain't this the pits?" fumes one. "That's cool with me," replies another, "as long as there ain't no pendulum." I am told to buy Count Chocula, Cookie-Crisp chocolate chip cookie cereal, Cocoa Pebbles and Cocoa Krispies, which actually make your milk turn brown. The Shmoo, a cute white blob who hangs around with a bunch of teen-agers and is capable of turning himself into any object, is on a plane that crashes in the Bermuda Triangle. A UFO sits underwater waiting to attack. Turns out to be a smuggling ring dressed up like Venusians. I follow the bouncing Shmoo and sing "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain When She Comes." Disco version, of course.

I am fidgeting, bored. These cartoons are no fun at all. All the heroes look like Lee Majors, chase global stinkers and blink at the same time. These aren't even cartoons—they're low-budget replicas of prime time, the Six Million Dollar Man in tights. Instead of hiring a stiff to play the lead, they draw one. A producer's dream—no contract disputes. So what if it's cheap and crummy and dull?

But wait. Am I kidding myself? I mean, my happiest childhood moments took place two feet away from a Packard Bell. I gobbled up the old cartoon characters—Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Mighty Mouse, Sylvester and Tweety Pie, Popeye, Felix the Cat, Yogi Bear. Were those cartoons just as lousy as these new ones are? Have I let myself in for yet another "growing-up" experience? Will this be like when I found out that the Babe didn't miss part of the 1925 season because he got sick from eating too many frankfurters?

I hunt through the listings. Aha! A lot of my old favorites are still on the air. The next Saturday I don't need the alarm—my past is on the line now. For fortification I pour some Cookie-Crisp chocolate chip cookie cereal into one of my chic stoneware bowls. Doesn't taste bad, but something is wrong about it. I don't know what. I flick on the set and fluff up the pillows. Back to the salt mines.

I catch a Bugs Bunny Hollywood memoir. Bugs is a big star, getting his paws manicured at pool-side, reminiscing about his vaudeville days—whistle-stopping, palling around with Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Bing Crosby (with Mel Blanc doing all the voices, of course). After a couple of minutes I forget Bugs is a rabbit, that his expressions and asides are manufactured. None of that matters. Bugs is a star.

And like all the big stars, he has his big rival on the studio lot—Daffy. Daffy has been outfitted for a Foreign Legion picture, and is riding a camel in the desert when suddenly the artist switches backgrounds on him—splash, into the ocean he goes. Daffy surfaces, sputters, inflates himself a raft and—ka-pow—he's caught in the cross fire between two destroyers and sinks. He demands to see the head of the studio. He yells that he'll get the animator fired. Pull back . . . Bugs has been drawing the cartoon.

Sylvester is haunted by his own conscience—skulking in flophouses, running from sirens—because he's mistakenly convinced himself he ate Tweety.

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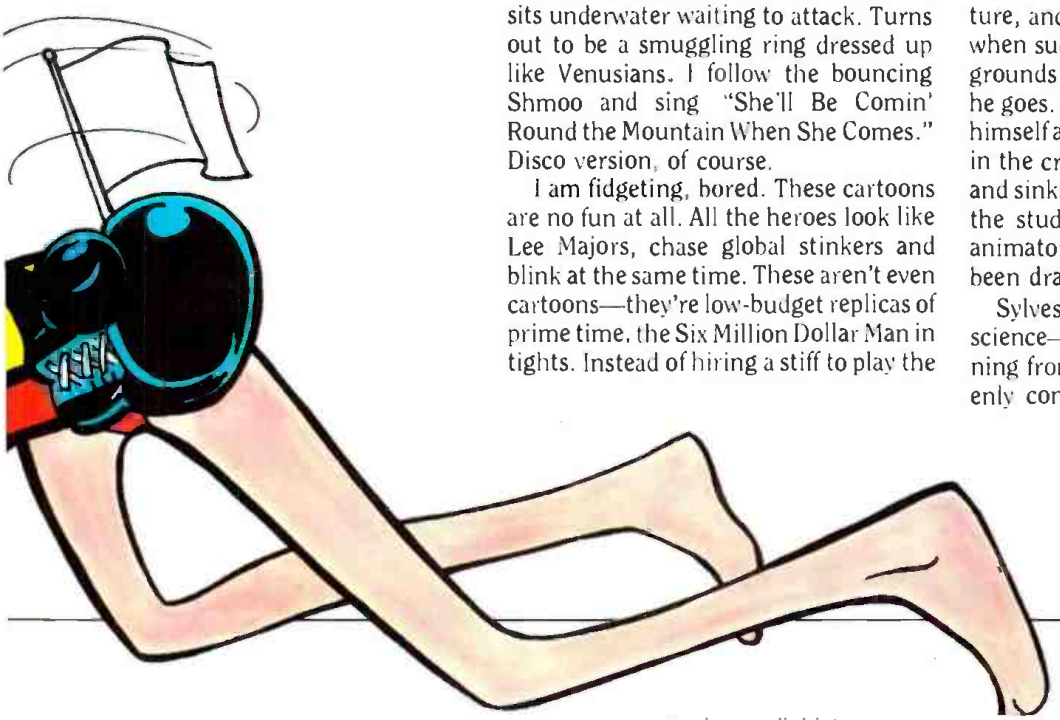
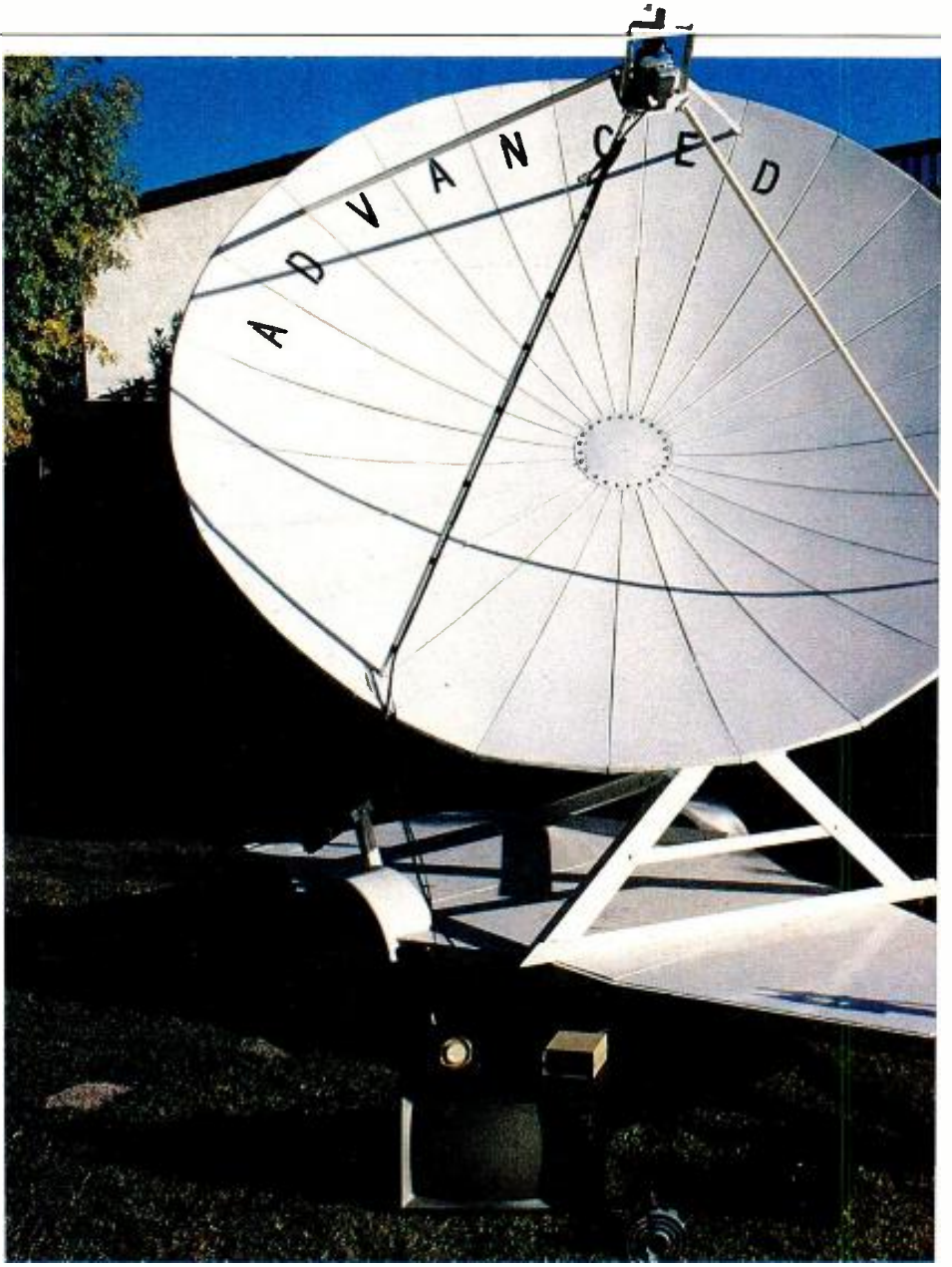




The cost and technology are no longer forbidding and the extra programming you'll get is a great incentive

You Can Build Your Own Satellite Station

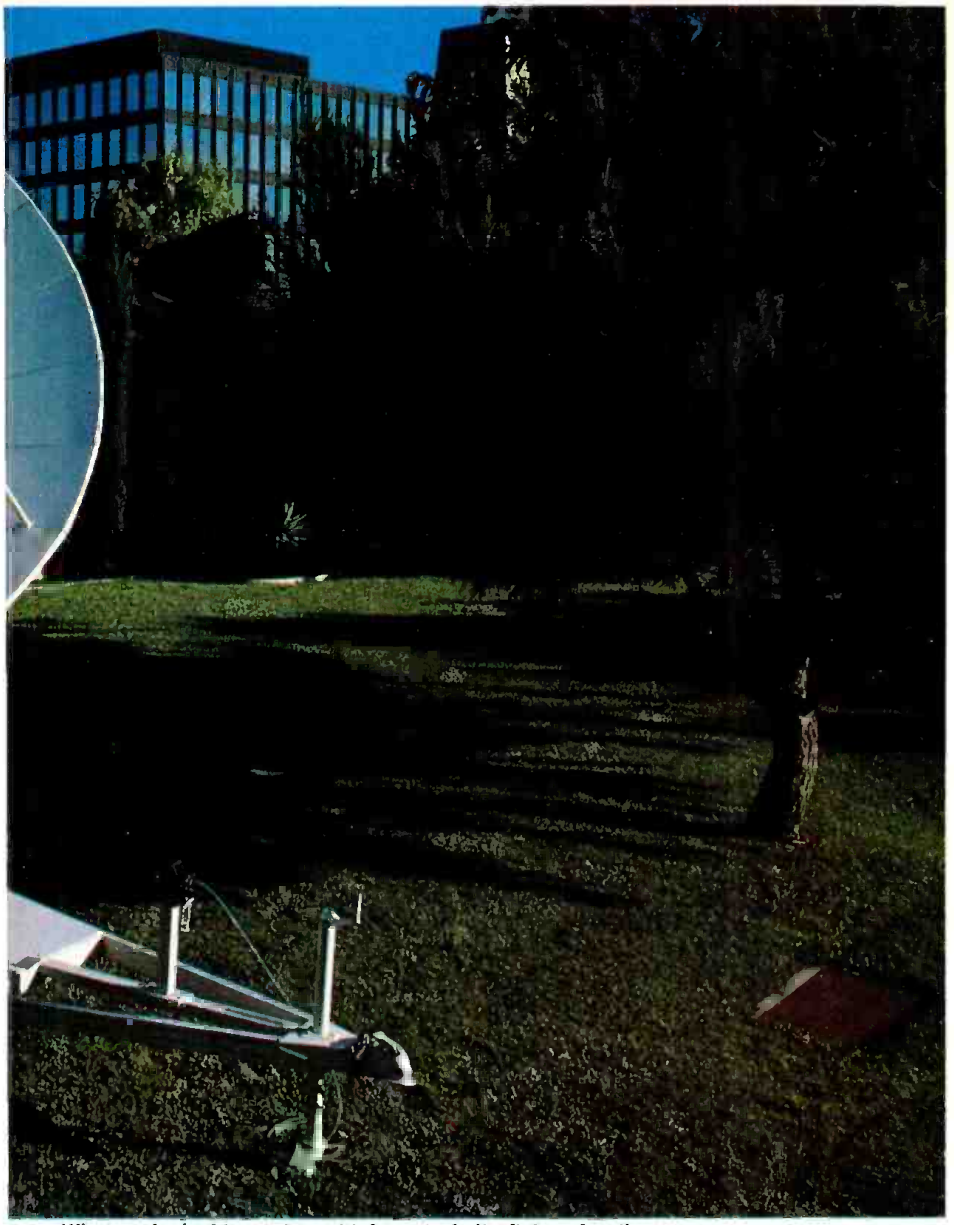
By BOB COOPER

I watch television, but it's not the same kind of television you watch. From my living room in rural Oklahoma, I often watch the Siberian version of *Good Morning America*; it comes on at 4 P.M. Also on Russian TV, this past summer, I watched the Moscow Olympics. I like watching bullfights from Mexico City and unedited versions of *The Tonight Show*. Soccer from Brazil is another favorite. I watch a good deal of television that is hardly standard fare, and what's more, I keep discovering new options every time I turn on the set. And that's *before* I switch satellites.

Bob Cooper is the president of Satellite Television Technology in Arcadia, Okla. When he's not busy watching international television, Cooper produces videotapes and stages seminars about home satellite television.

You did say, "Switch satellites"?

It's all part of the New Technology, folks, and if you haven't been affected by its seemingly endless possibilities yet, you will be. And soon. I know; I've been there and back, and I never had to leave Oklahoma to find it. I saw future shock firsthand back in 1977 when my family



What you're looking at is an 11-foot parabolic dish and trailer. Spread out in front of the trailer are the integral parts: a TV receiver, an LNA and a dual conversion receiver. If you intend to construct your own earth station, you'll also need know-how, patience and an insatiable appetite for television.

became the very first in the country to have private, in-home satellite television. Since that time, we've helped thousands of people build, install and even buy their own back-yard private satellite television stations. And what we've learned from this space-age television fantasy is that you can have it, too.

When we first installed our terminal (we recently added a second and are planning a third) the required hardware for high-quality reception from the five broadcasting satellite TV channels totaled some $20,000. Our most recent terminal cost about $2500, and our third will cost less than $1000. If nothing else has changed since 1977, the cost of participating in home satellite television certainly has.

We added our second terminal this past May because we wanted to watch the Moscow Olympics. NBC couldn't cover the games because of the U.S. boycott, so the only way we could watch was through a Russian satellite. And since we weren't willing to give up the simultaneous reception from our 60 to 70 U.S., Canadian and Mexican channels while the Olympics were on (we would have had to engage in a major repositioning of our satellite antenna), a second terminal seemed only logical.

The use of satellites to transmit television programming began on a regular basis in this country on Sept. 30, 1975, when HBO began sending movies, sporting events and specials to a handful of homes in Mississippi and Florida via satellite. In those days, it cost upwards of $115,000 to install a television satellite terminal. Today, the same terminal costs substantially less, and an entire new industry that a year or two ago didn't know how to spell satellite is revolutionizing what was previously thought to be a high-priced technology.

The low-priced satellite terminal revolution began when a Stanford University professor named Taylor Howard built the primary electronic ingredients for under $1000 and then for another $500 added a war-surplus "parabolic antenna" he had located in a junkyard. Bingo! International television! Today a couple of dozen firms are up to their widgets in orders for special satellite home receivers, antennas and low-noise amplifiers.

When 1000 participants in this just-hatched industry gathered for a three-day seminar in San Jose, Cal. recently, they shared their ideas while devouring more than 25 lecture sessions and sorting through more than 30 commercial equipment booths loaded down with the "new hardware." People attending this event quickly learned that even if they had difficulty assembling a child's swing set, they could nonetheless acquire a factory-built antenna system, a commercial receiver and a low-noise amplifier, plus all the cables and minor parts, for under $3500. The retail value of these materials varies from $6000 to $10,000 for a back-yard *installed* rig, thus giving rise to hundreds of new businesses.

Wonderful. But how does it all work?

With a few minor blemishes, very well, thank you. A government agency (or a private corporation) with a spare $25 million acquires a satellite from a supplier. The satellite is then launched for another $30 million or so into something called a geostationary orbit, where its forward speed matches the rotational speed of the earth on its axis. Actually, your receiving antenna and the satellite stay locked together, though the satellite only gives the *illusion* of standing still in space.

Once the satellite is in orbit, ground

transmitting stations, called "uplinks," transmit messages to the satellite to prepare it for use. After a month or so, the satellite is ready to act as a relay station, receiving television or radio communication signals from "uplinks" scattered over perhaps 40 percent of the earth's surface. Received by the satellite, these signals are processed and transferred to a new "downlink" frequency band, amplified, and then transmitted back to earth. Totally dependent upon solar energy for power, these satellite broadcasting stations are not very powerful, but more powerful "birds" are coming soon. In the meantime, because the signals arrive back on earth quite weak, it takes a fairly substantial dish antenna propped up on the ground in your yard to collect enough satellite signals to produce high-quality, good-looking pictures on your TV set.

Satellites can transmit to areas encompassing as much as 40 percent of the surface of the earth, meaning that a home in Clam Gulch, Alaska, can receive the same satellite signals as can a home in San Juan, Puerto Rico. There are presently 12 U.S. and Canadian television-relaying satellites in operation, and among them they have the potential to offer upwards of 60 channels of television. (Not all of these, however, offer entertainment; many are reserved for data channels, wire-service printouts and the like.) In addition, there is an entirely separate family of "international satellites" operating in the sky, offering many other services—including live, direct television from Brazil, Europe, Africa, the USSR and even Japan. To receive from the international satellites, though, you'll need a much larger antenna, because their signals have only one tenth the strength of those of the domestic satellites.

I understand, I understand! But how much will it cost?

Less than a fully equipped hot tub, in some cases. But how much it costs will depend largely upon your own skills. A very talented person with an extensive electronics background, for example, can build a system for under $1000 total cost and around 200 hours of labor. A less talented person with modest electronics experience (but the capacity to assemble a Heathkit) can duplicate the same results for around $2500 and 75 hours of labor. If your total skills end with signing a check, you can have the same service installed for you for as low as $4500.

OK. So maybe if I scrimp I can afford it. But in my back yard?

The 12 U.S. and Canadian satellites all operate from "transmitting sites" located directly above the earth's equator to the south of you. If a satellite were due south of your home (on the same line of longitude), your satellite television antenna (a parabolic-shaped dish) simply would be directed south at the satellite, and up. Most satellites, in fact, are southwest of us.

First, then, it's necessary to determine whether or not a dish antenna resting on the ground in your yard can "see" the satellite. Satellite transmission is "line-of-sight"; that is, if you're going to receive signals from it, the satellite has to be able to "see" you (and "be seen" by you) from its 22,300-mile elevation. Of course, at that distance, you can't *really* see a 2000-pound box that's barely eight feet across, but you *can* see its electronic signals with your dish antenna.

A person with modest electronics experience can build a system for around $2500 and 75 hours of labor

Generally speaking, if you can stand in your yard and see up into the sky to the south and southwest without buildings, trees or mountains blocking your view, you're in good shape. Most people (except possibly those in New England) have at least one clear-look angle, and moving the antenna to a different spot in the yard will often solve your problem.

So maybe I can replace the swimming pool with this dish. Go on, tell me about the other parts.

Having determined that you can in fact see—*and be seen*—by the satellites, the next step is to understand the elements of the receiving system. There are three: the antenna, the low-noise amplifier and the receiver.

1. *The antenna.* Satellites transmit in a microwave frequency. The power they transmit with is very low (typically five watts, the same as a stock CB set). Not only must the signals travel a great distance, but they must also spread out to cover a very large chunk of the earth. Thus you need a fairly large antenna in your yard. The antenna design that works best is called a parabolic dish. It is typically constructed out of metal or fiberglass "petals" that go together in sections.

There are numerous antenna styles that work. If you live east of the Rockies and west of the Appalachian Mountains, north of Texas and south of the Canadian border, an antenna 10 feet in diameter will be adequate. Along both coasts, the Gulf of Mexico, and in Canada, a 12-to-13-foot antenna is generally advised since the satellite signals are slightly weaker in these areas. Offshore, say in the Bahamas or Bermuda, an even larger 16-to-20-foot antenna is required.

You can build your antenna from scratch for between $300 and $500, and perhaps 25 hours of labor; you can also buy one in semi-finished kit form that requires only 10-to-12 hours of work for between $525 and $650. Or you can buy one ready to install for between $1000 and $2500.

The finished units have intriguing options; with one, from your television viewing chair, you can hold a small remote-control box that will move your antenna's motorized drive system to pick up different satellites. Without the attachment, it is possible to physically move the antenna by hand, but this can be a difficult, day-long project. One of the satellites (RCA Satcom I) has some 20 different TV program services on it, so you may never have to change satellites at all.

2. *The Low-Noise Amplifier (LNA).* Because the satellite signals are very weak when they are intercepted by your antenna, they must be boosted when they reach it. If you have ever lived in an area where regular "terrestrial" television reception is poor, you may be familiar with the TV booster device that dealers install on regular antennas. The LNA is based on the same premise, though the cost is considerably higher. A few *very* talented electronics wizards have built their own LNAs, but probably you'll need to purchase yours. The lowest price available is around $800, but they can

run as high as $1200.

The LNA is a gadget in a state of transition. Just one year ago they sold for as much as $2000, and one can reasonably expect the price to drop to perhaps $500 in another six months to a year.

3. *The Satellite TV Receiver.* Unlike your present TV receiver, a satellite receiver has neither a picture tube nor a speaker. In a sense, it is more like a very fancy "converter" than a pure receiver. It receives, from the antenna and the LNA, the satellite TV "spectrum" of signals. It then translates or converts these signals from the frequency band (3700 to 4200 megahertz) to something called "baseband"; then it changes the satellite's FM (frequency modulated) signals into an AM (amplitude modulated) format that you dial up on your standard TV set.

Typically, you set your TV on either Channel 3 or 4 (whichever is not in your area for regular TV) and then plug your satellite TV receiver into your TV set. Since a satellite may have as many as 20 television programs on it, you tune a dial on the satellite receiver to "change satellite channels," while your TV receiver stays on the same (VHF) channel. In a sense, microwave satellite TV signals go *into* the receiver and standard VHF TV *comes out.*

If you have some electronics experience, you can build your own receiver from scratch. The parts cost around $400. If you are unsure of your total electronics abilities, but feel you could handle a kit that provides all the parts and instructions, you can do it for around $700. Or you can buy a satellite receiver already assembled and ready to plug in and operate as it comes out of the box. Now things get interesting. The basic ready-to-install receiver is priced at between $1000 and $3000. More expensive ones do some intriguing stuff, including offering remote control with which you can change satellite channels and even satellites; several allow you to run a small cable to the homes of one or more neighbors.

As soon as I hear these numbers I get cold feet. I've got kids to put through college!

OK, let's add up some numbers. We know that someone with electronic talents can assemble an antenna, an LNA and a receiver for around $1500; or that you can instead opt to buy an antenna kit and a receiver kit, plus an LNA, for around $2000; or that you can purchase a ready-to-install antenna, a commercial LNA and a commercial receiver for around $3000. To any of these numbers, you should add at least $200 for concrete (to hold the antenna on the ground), and cabling and connectors (to interconnect the antenna/LNA outside to the satellite receiver inside). And you can spend much more for super-deluxe models. Prices for these hover around $10,000 to $12,000 nationally. But we don't want to forget about Harold's education.

One alternative is to "share" reception with neighbors, thereby splitting the costs. This is perfectly legal as long as no party attempts to profit by selling the reception to others. "Shared reception" is the basis for CATV or cable systems. If you have one or more neighbors, say within 1000 feet of your home, you can figure on spending another $150 to $200 per home to string some low-cost coaxial cable from *your* receiver to *their* TV sets. You could also install such a system in a trailer park, a motel, or even an apartment building. However, you should be aware that *your* home, where the satellite TV receiver sits, controls which of the satellite channels everyone else will watch.

Satellite television is the future, the *near* future. On U.S. satellites alone, an additional dozen channels of television service are beginning operation in the months ahead

You're a good salesman. I'm still listening. But what will the neighbors think with this Twilight Zone *gadget sitting in the back yard? Will the FCC or police make me take it down?*

As far as the FCC is concerned, on Oct. 18, 1979, that Government agency ruled that private satellite receiving stations were no longer required to have a Federal license or permit. However, most of the programming services available via satellite *do* expect to be paid if you watch their programs; generally, only the religious programming services, such as the Christian Broadcasting Network, invite you to watch free of charge.

Whether or not you may install your own earth station—and where—will depend on the local zoning ordinances in your area. Some new subdivisions prohibit any outside antennas, while others limit the height of such structures. Since your satellite TV antenna will probably sit on the ground, it will most likely be at least 10 to 11 feet high.

You can install this antenna on your roof, but its solid metal or fiberglass surfaces can be substantial wind collectors. There is no electronic problem with doing it this way, just the obvious mechanical problems of getting it up onto the roof and then keeping it there. Some flat roofs (the kind found atop motels) work nicely, but only when installation includes a steel reinforcing plate to ensure that the antenna does not tear away a section of your roof in a strong wind.

As for the actual construction of these elements from kits, if you are at all into electronics, anticipate the same degree of difficulty you'd encounter in assembling one of the larger and more complicated Heathkits. If you decide to tackle assembly of a receiver kit *and* an antenna kit, you'll need a soldering iron and the usual hand tools for electronic circuit work. Antenna assembly, or installation of your own antenna using a commercial LNA and receiver, requires wrenches, screwdrivers, a leveling device known as an inclinometer (to determine the angle of your antenna) and whatever else you need to dig holes.

Let me think it over. It's tempting, but I want to wait and see if the neighbors go for it. Thanks for the pitch, though.

Rest assured, the neighbors will go for it, and a lot sooner than you think. Satellite television is the future, the *near* future. On U.S. satellites alone, an additional dozen channels of television service are beginning operation in the months ahead. And while quantity has never been a substitute for quality, even the most selective viewers will find a great deal of interest in the variety available through satellite television.

Still, make no mistake about it: this is an industry that's learning to crawl before it can walk. If you want in early, you're going to have to go out and get it. But the results are worth it. After all, how many people do you know who can quote the Siberian version of *Good Morning America* at Saturday night's cocktail party? ■

TV'S MESSAGE

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we're going to die and go to Hell, and then we come home, and there we are, and the same thing is going on again. I can't believe it's me, and I can't believe it's me looking at me on TV. My husband said to me the other day that the strangest part of all of this we're going through—it's turning on the set and seeing him and me and our child and our house and the school. You look at television, and you're supposed to forget about yourself, your life; it's never supposed to be *you* on television, unless you're an actor or an actress.

"I know, we're 'news.' But when I see the newspaper stories, they seem to be about other people; when I see myself on the television set, though—that's a different story. I go through the whole business again! It all comes back! And the next day, I'll be walking past the mob, and I can't believe what I'm thinking to myself: will they show this, too, on the set, and do I look all right? One day I had my head lowered too much, and my aunt saw me on TV and she said I looked bad, real bad. But she had been with me, and she didn't say a word *then*! It was only when she saw me on TV that she got to noticing and worrying.

"I can't ignore the television cameras the way I can ignore the people screaming at us, and the way I can ignore newspaper reporters, or the police, or the Federal marshals, or the school officials, or even our own people trying to give us a hand. With television it's never over! Like the minister says, the Lord watches us all the time! Well, with a television camera around, it's the same thing! They had me picking my nose the other night on the six o'clock news!"

The thrust of this woman's personal experience with television was not only racial or even regional; a person was talking about the assumptions many of us have about a particular 20th-century phenomenon. Nor is seeing a home movie the same thing, as the woman's minister took pains to tell us: "I've looked at the movies my wife has taken, but when I saw myself on television, it was as if I'd lost myself, and I was someone else, appearing before myself! If I watch old movies, that's me, being me. There's a big difference!"

Maybe he was exaggerating. But he was struggling with the same psychological issue his rather poorer and more

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FOOTBALL TELECAST

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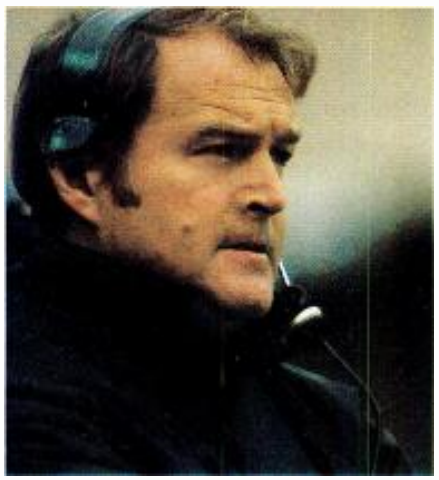

When Steeler coach Chuck Noll gets angry, the director gets a great reaction shot.

"Well," Olsen says, nodding, "we don't feel that way about our broadcasts. I really mean it when I say the game is the event with us. I've seen poor Dick walk in with really fantastic notes and stories that I know won't be told unless the action and the game dictate it. Some announcers are going to tell a story no matter where they have to jam it.

"One of the things we will periodically try to show," Olsen goes on, "is the action away from the ball—line play, defensive stunts." (When Olsen says "defensive stunts," he means the special defensive plays designed against a specific player or a particular team weakness.) "Like for this game, [offensive tackle] Ron Yary for Minnesota has a broken ankle and I know the Steelers are going to try and stunt him, and we are going to try and show that and explain what Pittsburgh is doing to him. It's part of the shopping list of things I'd like to show during the game that I'll take to the production meeting later this afternoon.

"You'll see in the production meeting how we'll talk with Ted [Nathanson] and [producer] Larry Cirillo about the different storylines we want to develop," Olsen says while thumbing through a clipboard of notes. "That is what all this stuff is about—notes from a week of preparing. Things we will want to play back and forth if the game requires it."

"Merlin prepares as well as anyone I've ever seen," Enberg says. "I pride myself on preparation, but he *really* comes prepared." Enberg pauses for a moment and looks down at the coffee table. "I suppose I could say the hell with it and not prepare so elaborately, but it's a trap. You can't depend on every game to be 17 to 16." He looks up. "Eventually you're going to get caught."

"What we are looking for is quality end product," Olsen adds. "The most important thing is what goes out over those airwaves. It carries with it all the work we've done this week, all the work of the producer and director, the expertise of the cameramen and technicians, our reaction to what goes on visually, and the ability of our producer and director to listen to what we are saying so they can enhance that with graphics and camera work and replays. It will reflect our preparation, because if we haven't done a good job of setting up what people should look for, then we haven't done our job. Preparation is our edge."

Enberg points to his watch. "We got to get to the Steelers' practice."

THE PRODUCTION MEETING

It's 4:30 P.M., the Saturday before the game. The production meeting to map out tomorrow's battle plan is about to begin. We are seated in a loose circle in producer Larry Cirillo's hotel suite. He is sitting next to Nathanson and talking across the coffee table to Olsen and Enberg. Meanwhile Glenn Adamo, the production associate (P.A.), is organizing his charts for the Chyron IV, a character generator that is essentially a computer videodisc, which is used to create the statistical graphics that appear on the screen during a game.

"You ought to see the truck we've got to work out of tomorrow," says Cirillo. "Rick Berman, the audio man, is in the driver's seat; the associate director, Howard Bayha, is in the auxiliary driver's seat; and poor Glenn here is between them and us. Teddy and I and the technical director [T.D.], Horace Ruiz, are squeezed so close to the monitors I don't know what we'll do."

"I want to show third-down conversions," Olsen says to Adamo. They begin discussing the graphics to be preprogrammed into the Chyron IV. It will be programmed with Viking and Steeler statistics and then constantly updated during the game. They call these stats "Heroes Information." Calling up the graphics is the P.A.'s job during the game. When he has the right graphic for a shot, he will yell to Nathanson, "Font's right! Font's right!" That means that the graphic (down, yardage, number of pass completions, etc.) is correct and ready. It is Nathanson's decision whether to put it

on the screen. The T.D. works the video board, inserting the graphics and putting up the camera shots Nathanson calls for.

"OK, I'll just run down the schedule," producer Cirillo says. "You all know we are an hour early tomorrow, kickoff at 12 o'clock. We have a camera talk at nine o'clock in the morning and we have a rehearsal scheduled for approximately 9:45 to 10:45. Disc-recording and engineering time will be 10:45 to 11:30 A.M. From 11:30 to 11:53 we stand by for *NFL '80*. And we would like to run the interview of [Pittsburgh backup quarterback] Cliff Stoudt, which we will prerecord as soon as the P.R. guy from Pittsburgh gets here and we find out what time Mr. Stoudt can make it out for the taping."

"How much time will we have?" Olsen asks.

"Approximately a minute to a minute 15."

Olsen is visibly disturbed when he hears the time allotted for the Stoudt interview. "What do they want us to do in that minute 15?"

"I say let's make it a minute and a half," Cirillo says.

"The only problem with that," Nathanson looks up over his glasses, "is then we screw ourselves up at the other end."

"OK," Olsen says. "We do what we have to do, but that's not good planning."

"Obviously," says Cirillo, "the story we've got with Stoudt is a guy who's been in the league four years and becomes eligible for his pension without ever playing a down. Then when he finally gets in a game, he throws a touchdown."

"It's a nice story," Olsen says. "I'll do five minutes and you guys cut it."

"OK," says Cirillo, "now let's talk about what I brought from New York, and you guys take it from there. We do have a list of the players who are still left from Pittsburgh's first Super Bowl, IX, in 1975 against Minnesota, and that's already programmed on the Chyron. Then from 1975 we have a minute and a half of plays."

"I think we just need the flavor of that," Olsen says as he fishes into a bag of Doritos. "Just one play."

"Maybe with a graphic that says Super Bowl IX, 1975," Enberg suggests. "That's the way I'd like to come on voice-over, saying 'Super Bowl IX, 1975, Minnesota Vikings-Pittsburgh Steelers blah blah blah blah . . . and today, six years later . . . blah blah. . .'."

"Today Pittsburgh is *still* winning," Olsen adds, "and Minnesota is a team in *transition*." He gives a Dorito an emphatic crunch.

"Pittsburgh still does a lot of looping on defense, don't they, Merlin?" Nathanson asks.

Olsen nods. "Yeah, and that's something I'd like to see 'cause Yary is hurt and they're going to work on him. They're going to stunt him." Then he says, "Let's look at the Viking offense first. Their big-play people are all aerial people: Ahmad Rashad, Sammy White, Bob Tucker. But [quarterback] Tommy Kramer is the story because if they shake him up early, it's all over. He was intercepted five times last week."

When Olsen says this, I give an internal nod of agreement. A team that is behind has to throw the ball—and the defense knows that. They can increase their pressure against the pass without fear of the run. Unless the Vikings take an early lead, the skittish Kramer will have to pass.

"OK," Olsen continues, "let's look at the Steeler defense. We already said we were gonna watch them work on Yary because of that ankle, so we'll be looking at [Steeler lineman] L.C. Greenwood 'cause that is the match-up. And I think we have to look at their linebackers, especially Jack Lambert because he drops so deep on the pass. If the Vikings try to throw into the middle, Lambert will really mess things up for them."

Loud voices in the hallway announce the arrival of the Viking P.R. man, Merrill Swanson, for his report to the broadcast crew. He tells them little that they don't already know. At the end of his briefing at least three of the crew, almost in unison, ask him, "Who is your headhunter?" (A headhunter is that man on the kick-coverage team who recklessly charges down the field, hoping to tear the ball-carrier's head off.)

"Keith Nord, if he is healthy—he's got a sprained ankle. He's unique in the headhunter category because he was a college quarterback who made up his mind that if he was going to make this team, it would have to be on special teams."

Joe Gordon, the Steeler P.R. man, comes through the door and the Viking P.R. man leaves. Gordon takes a seat on the couch and goes through the Pittsburgh injury list, ticking off those players who are doubtful for today's game, probable, or definite—in or out.

"When can we get Stoudt?" Cirillo asks.

"Twelve o'clock game? I'd say about 10:30."

"OK, we'll be ready for him."

"Who are your headhunters?" is the last question.

THE CAMERA-TALK MEETING

Ted Nathanson is climbing the ramps of the Metropolitan Stadium on his way to the scheduled 9 A.M. camera-talk meeting. It is Sunday, three hours and 15 minutes until kickoff.

At the third ramp, Nathanson walks into the stadium. The field is covered with a wet tarp. The seats are all empty. He looks around for a moment, then continues on to the broadcast booth.

Nathanson passes out the three-deep boards to the assembled cameramen and says softly, "Study these before game time. All right? The Viking headhunters are numbers 49 and 24, and numbers 56 and 44 for Pittsburgh.

"OK, if Pittsburgh is on defense our first isolate is on number 68, Yary. Yary's hurt and Merlin wants to watch him. They are going to stunt him. Minnesota throws a lot. Their big-play men are White, Rashad and Tucker. Kramer threw five interceptions last week. Merlin says he will today if he gets rattled or pressured. We'll isolate a lot on Lambert at middle linebacker for Pittsburgh. His deep drop may cause an interception."

Nathanson turns to one of the cameramen. "You've never worked a football game with me, have you?"

The cameraman shakes his head.

"Don't be afraid to talk to me. I may not seem like I hear you, but I'll hear you, so don't be afraid to talk to me. We've got a good phone-line system here, so I won't yell very loud." Several people laugh at Nathanson's insistence that he won't yell. It is apparently a promise he has broken before. "Unless I get excited," he adds as a qualifier.

The meeting breaks up.

COUNTDOWN TO GAME TIME

It is a little over two hours before air time.

The inside of the control unit is small and cramped. The 25-foot motor home is bisected by a bank of TV monitors. Horace Ruiz, the T.D., sits on the far right at

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Much of the TV direction is based on Enberg's and Olsen's educated hunches on what will occur during the game.

the video control panel, Nathanson is next to him and Cirillo is jammed in on Nathanson's left. Behind them in a small jump seat is Glenn Adamo, the P.A., who is in constant contact with the Chyron IV operators. Behind Adamo in the auxiliary driver's seat, Howard Bayha, the associate director (A.D.), is trying to establish contact with Chicago and New York and go over any last-minute changes in the commercial scheduling. In the driver's seat, Rick, the audio man, sits at his board and says over and over again into his headset, "I don't hear you, New York. . . . I don't hear you. . . . This is Bloomington. . . . I can't hear you. . . . Can you hear me?"

A cervical collar lies on a counter in front of the monitors. Nathanson will put it on once the game begins in order to ward off the chronic stiffness caused by a pinched nerve. His elbows used to swell from spending so much time leaning on them while watching the monitors. Nathanson needed surgery, because the nerves had been pushed way out of place.

The back half of the control unit contains the video crew and another dozen monitors. The engineers in the back ride the levels on all the cameras, making sure that the colors are right and the contrast is correct.

Out on the field, Olsen has just finished his interview with Stoudt. The piece is ready for the *NFL '80* pre-game show.

Cirillo taps Nathanson on the shoulder and shouts, "Teddy, I just talked to New York and they aren't going to run the Stoudt interview. They want to save it for next week. I told them that Merlin wouldn't be doing Pittsburgh next week."

Nathanson smirks. "You tell Merlin."

THE FIRST HALF

It is only a few minutes to air time, and Nathanson has walked outside the control unit. He stands watching the crowd pour into the stadium. After a few minutes, he steps back into the control unit and assumes command of the telecast.

The preparation pays off almost immediately. The first isolated shot on Yary shows him being stunted and beaten by the Pittsburgh defense, and Olsen points this out during the replay.

In the control unit Nathanson is watching his monitors and listening to his announcers. Wearing two headsets, he also listens to his spotter and engineers, and talks to his cameramen and VPR operators. He also shouts to Ruiz what shots to take and what graphics to insert.

Ruiz plays the video control panel like a piano, responding to Nathanson's calls instantly: dropping in graphics and smoothly sliding in and out of replay and live action, cutting from camera to camera on command.

It's third down and long. Passing situation.

"Font's right on Kramer!" Adamo yells. "Font's right!"

In spite of the confusion and noise coming in over two headsets and the announcers' loud voices on the monitor, Nathanson hears Adamo.

"Insert," the director says, and the T.D. hits a button that flashes quarterback Tommy Kramer's passing statistics up on the screen. Nathanson continues resetting cameras. "Take 2 . . . and drop insert. . . ."

Ruiz's fingers glide across the board and the Number 2 camera's wide 50-yard line shot of the field pops onto the line monitor as Kramer's statistics disappear from the screen.

The Vikings fail to get a first down and Nathanson resets his cameras for the Minnesota punt. Adamo is yelling, "Font's right! Down and yardage." Nathanson says, "Insert," and Ruiz drops the graphic into the picture.

After the punt, Pittsburgh scores a quick touchdown but misses the extra point.

On the kickoff, they isolate on the headhunters.

The game is controlled throughout the first half by Pittsburgh, although they are only ahead 13 to 3. Minnesota blocks a field goal but, with 49 seconds to go, turns the ball back over to the Steelers.

"Stay on Bradshaw," Nathanson orders a cameraman.

Pittsburgh has no timeouts left but has moved into Minnesota territory.

"Isolate Swann," Cirillo says.

Steeler quarterback Terry Bradshaw responds by throwing a quick screen to wide receiver Lynn Swann, who moves the ball to the 20 but can't get out of bounds to stop the clock. Pittsburgh lines up quickly and Bradshaw throws an incomplete pass, killing the clock with one second left in the half. The Pittsburgh field-goal team again comes onto the field.

"The kick is up," yells Enberg, "and it is good!"

"Take 3 . . . stay with the man who kicked it, please, 1 . . . take 2 . . . go 5 . . . 4 . . . 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . freeze."

Pittsburgh 16, Minnesota 3.

Cut to commercial and to the halftime show in New York.

THE SECOND HALF

The atmosphere is organized chaos in the control unit as the second half is about to begin. Nathanson is at the monitors with his cervical collar wrapped around his neck. "Minnesota is kicking left to right," he says. The cervical collar gives a strangely disconnected look to Nathanson's head.

"Meanwhile," Enberg is speaking, "the Vikings have their—"

"Font's right on Viking stats!" Adamo yells. "Font's right!"

"Insert," Nathanson tells the T.D., and the Viking stats are on the screen.

Olsen is speaking over the crowd noise: "If you'll look at those stats, the Vikings got most of those 85 yards rushing early in the half, and through most of the half the Viking line just hasn't given Kramer the time he needs to pass."

"OK," Nathanson says, "there's Swann."

"Font's right on Swann!" Adamo yells. "Font's right!"

"Insert."

Swann's "Hero Information" comes up on the screen.

"There are the stats on Lynn Swann," Enberg says. "Five catches for 95 yards."

The Vikings kick off to the Steelers to begin the second half.

". . . and he elects not to run it out, so Pittsburgh will get the ball at the 20."

"Teddy, should we come out of the huddle on Bradshaw?"

". . . 4, you take Bradshaw out of the huddle."

"Font's right on Bradshaw! Font's right!"

"Insert."

The Steelers continue to drive up the field on their first possession and score.

Pittsburgh 23, Minnesota 3.

It looks as if all this week's preparation will not go in vain. The crowd is already beginning to drift out of the stadium during the third quarter. Right now it's a runaway, and Olsen and Enberg will get to use their anecdotes as each individual play becomes less important.

But in the fourth quarter Tommy Kramer and the Vikings stage a comeback, taking advantage of Pittsburgh turnovers. Suddenly it ceases to be a bad game. By the time the hand-held camera behind the end line gets an excellent isolate on Swann taking a terrible blow to the ribs from Keith Nord, the Vikings' "unique headhunter," the score is Pittsburgh 23, Minnesota 17.

The screen is filled with the angry face of Steeler coach Chuck Noll, his jaw jutting way out.

Go for the reaction shots and eventually you get them.

Two plays after Kramer is also roughed up, he throws an interception to Lambert. Both events were predicted in the production meeting by Olsen: Kramer makes mistakes under pressure, and Lambert drops so deep from the middle-linebacker position that he raises hell with passes over the middle. Olsen makes those comments again over the replay.

Although the Vikings get possession of the ball again, the Steelers hold on to win the game, 23 to 17, because Kramer throws another interception.

If a viewer stuck around for the fourth quarter, he saw a good game evolve out of a bad one. Olsen, Enberg, Nathanson and the rest of the broadcast team had worked very hard to keep their audience interested. They did it with preparation: in-depth research on the teams, well-placed replays and a lot of technical skill. To the viewer, it probably looked easy.

As I left the game, I couldn't help feeling that this time I was leaving Metropolitan Stadium as part of a winning team. It felt good. ■

TV SCOOPS *continued from page 39*

WYLER: I don't recall any.

But Wyler did add that "I understand" (present tense—two years later) the talk of "hits" to mean the use of cocaine.

Wallace then turned his attention to Harold Willens, California businessman and Democratic Party fund-raiser, who spoke shortly after this incident to a White House official on Wyler's behalf. Wallace suggested that the official was Bourne, who, according to Wallace, "is *alleged* to have said that the use of drugs among the White House staff was well-known and understood."

Then, in the version of the program seen in most of the country, reporter Robert Pierpoint did a White House "reactioner"—more than two minutes of almost pure denials. Pierpoint said Bourne did meet with Willens, who repeated Wyler's concern about "licentious behavior," but Bourne recalled no mention of drugs. "I have no evidence at all that anybody at the party was using drugs," said an aide to one of Carter's Democratic rivals, California governor Jerry Brown. And three other witnesses not connected with the White House denied charges of "licentiousness." But Pierpoint ended with a reference to White House press secretary Jody Powell, who was described as being "clearly troubled."

With this as a sample, it is easy to see why the case against Hamilton Jordan was finally thrown out for lack of evidence. Here was an anti-Carter politico claiming that two years earlier he had heard some raffish talk, possibly about sex and drugs, but seen nothing. Who knows what this middle-aged industrialist considers licentious? As for "hits"—maybe those guys were talking about Steve Garvey of the Dodgers.

In the end, Jordan's name was not connected with drugs at any point in the interview. Even the word "hits" was not attributed to him. The cautious insinuation that Jordan *may have* taken drugs at this party was not addressed, except in a hand-me-down, gossipy, speculative way.

In the meantime, this nonstory had occupied the entire *CBS Evening News* through the second commercial break. It wasn't until eight-and-a-half minutes into the show that CBS viewers that night got a whisper of any other national or international developments.

In contrast, by the time the second commercial came up on ABC's *World News Tonight*, those who were watching that network had already seen these items:

- Ted Kennedy under Secret Service protection.
- Mrs. Carter reveals date for official announcement of President's re-election campaign.
- Senator Kennedy endorsed by 30 Michigan politicians.
- Vice President Mondale stumps for Carter in California.
- A write-in campaign starts for Jerry Ford.
- New findings on DC-9 safety by the Federal Aviation Administration.
- New pressure to end the Rock Island Railroad strike.
- Corn harvest endangered by strike.
- House refuses to raise national debt ceiling.
- Democratic leadership pushes bill for House members' pay raise.
- California brush fires under control.
- Heavy flooding in Houston.

A CBS News reporter who covers Capitol Hill says, "I was ashamed to go to work the next day."

THE SOURCE SCOOP/ABC

In 1979, ABC was in the process of building a reputation as a major news force, and moving from third place in the ratings—behind CBS and NBC—to second. Incoming president Roone Arledge had changed the name and look of the evening news, conceived a multianchor format and laughed at satellite bills. "We're going to be number one," said one correspondent, "if Roone has to buy CBS." Arledge also began talking about what he called "the cutting edge of news. That's where we want to be," he told associates.

But the new look did not appeal to everyone. Says NBC's Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent James Polk, "ABC is more hyped than anyone else. They overstate the importance of stories. Those people have to understand that sometimes something may be news, but there ain't a hell of a lot to it."

On Sunday, Aug. 26, 1979, Dan Brewster, 24-year-old son and namesake of the former Maryland senator, was at a social gathering at the home of a State Department official. There, Brewster, recently hired as a writer by ABC News, heard talk that led him to believe that Washington had received advance word

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of United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young's plans to meet surreptitiously with the Palestine Liberation Organization, a meeting that had taken place the month before. People at the party were talking about "intelligence reports."

Could such reports have come from the U.S. Government, as in the days of Watergate? Brewster bustled into work the next day itching to pursue the story. ABC's then-Washington bureau chief, George Watson, told him that on something of this magnitude he would need multiple sources. He ran the story past one of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's close aides, who gave him some elaborate bureaucratise that added up to nothing. It wasn't a denial, Brewster noted.

By Wednesday, the 29th, Brewster felt confident enough of his scoop to call Watson, who was in New York for the day. Watson conferred with ABC News vice president Richard Wald. Then he called Brewster back and told him to go directly to the office of Washington anchorman Frank Reynolds, who grilled him at length. At last, Reynolds appeared satisfied with the story. The decision was made to assign it for broadcast to Tim O'Brien, the network's legal correspondent, whose beat included the Justice Department.

O'Brien, like Carl Stern of NBC and Fred Graham of CBS, the other networks' Justice Department reporters, is a lawyer. But unlike them, he frequently has been criticized for his reportorial methods. When he had broadcast advance word on Supreme Court decisions the previous April and May, his colleagues were shaken.

Despite the criticism, O'Brien had received a congratulatory phone call and telegram from Roone Arledge. The tall, flaxen-haired O'Brien also received a new contract that ended his reliance on air fees—payments newspeople receive above their salaries when they appear on the air.

When O'Brien was assigned the Young story, he at first knew nothing of it. He was in the office of the special assistant to the Attorney General, Terrence Adamson, working, as chance would have it, on the Hamilton Jordan story.

And he was tired. He had been up all night writing an article for the Saturday Review—and he thought he was coming down with a cold. As he pulled into the office at about five o'clock, he felt "thoroughly wrecked."

When he was handed the story, he realized he had one hour before the first feed of the evening news. "I didn't have time to confirm the information," he recalls, "so I called people in the Justice Department that I knew to be reliable."

In fact, he called Terry Adamson—the man he had been interviewing on another subject just minutes earlier. What he may not have known was that Dan Brewster had already run this story past the same man, asking, "Now, Terry, is there anything inaccurate in this?"

Brewster will never forget Adamson's reply: "Nothing leaps out at me."

This, thought the young reporter, was a confirmation, especially considering the fact that Adamson had recently steered him off something else.

When O'Brien called and asked about the Young story, Adamson said, "No comment." O'Brien told a colleague, "I know this man well enough so that if it were wrong, he'd lead me away from it."

"This is incredible, Tim. It's wrong," Adamson told O'Brien. "You don't even have the right Attorney General!"

But Adamson puts a different spin on the conversation. "I didn't want to get into a discussion with Tim about it until I had talked with the Bureau [the FBI] and could give him something formal and official."

Why didn't he say that instead of "No comment"? "Timmy was excited," he replies, "and he had his radio-announcer voice on. And I simply made a quick judgment that I would get back to him rather than deal with him when he was in that state."

But it wasn't Adamson who called back; it was Homer Boynton, associate director of the FBI. It was 5:35 P.M., and by that time O'Brien had written the piece, put it on videotape and was on his way to Adamson's office to show him the script.

Since O'Brien wasn't there, Brewster took the call. "Had he gotten hold of me," O'Brien says now, "it would have made all the difference in the world." Boynton read a statement: "Any implication that United States Ambassador Andrew Young was the subject of FBI surveillance or investigation is untrue."

According to Brewster, he took that information directly to Frank Reynolds. Reynolds does not believe that is right—or at least he does not remember it. In any case, it was too late to alter the story for the first feed, O'Brien having taped his piece and left.

At the Justice Department, Adamson read the story with horror. He said, "This is incredible, Tim. It's wrong. You don't even have the right Attorney General!" In his haste, O'Brien had forgotten that Benjamin Civiletti had replaced Griffin Bell *after* the Andy Young incident had taken place.

At that moment, Civiletti walked into Adamson's office. In no uncertain terms, he put the kibosh on the story. O'Brien high-tailed it back to his office to get a redo ready for the 6:30 feed.

This is how it went on the air: "ABC News has learned that U.S. intelligence has bugged the Waldorf Towers residence of UN Ambassador Andrew Young, that the U.S. knew well in advance that Young was planning that most controversial meeting with a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization."

Tim O'Brien corrected the Civiletti-Bell mix-up, and he added: "High Justice Department officials, including the highest, the Attorney General himself, deny any knowledge of the bugging."

But by this time, all hell was breaking loose around Washington. The other networks were trying to get their hooks into the story before they went off the air. After a series of rapid-fire phone calls, both NBC and CBS concluded that there was nothing there and that ABC was welcome to its exclusive.

Adamson believes that ABC should have dropped the story when the FBI denied it—since only the FBI, with the Attorney General's approval, could have carried out the bugging legally. "Even if ABC still thought they had a story," he says, "when they got the 5:30 denial, they could have put it off for 24 hours."

But the story went out. President Carter quickly ordered Civiletti to find out if there had been any bugging, legal or

otherwise. Civiletti queried the other agency heads and reported back that there had been none. On the road the next morning, the President turned to the ABC camera and said that the report "is absolutely false, and ABC was informed that it was false before they published it."

Before lunch, Frank Reynolds, along with reporter Dan Brewster and bureau chief George Watson, went to see Terry Adamson. They reconstructed the exchange when Brewster had asked Adamson for inaccuracies and Adamson said, "Nothing leaps out at me."

Reynolds was angry. He leaned forward. "After all my years in the news business," he said in sepulchral, anchorman tones, "I certainly would have taken that as a confirmation."

Meantime, O'Brien still hadn't caught up on lost sleep. Finishing his redo the night before, he was immediately off to Atlanta to find Ambassador Young. He had to do an early piece for *Good Morning America* at 7 A.M. Then, with various mop-up chores, checking out of his hotel, getting to the airport and a long takeoff delay, it was five o'clock before he arrived back in Washington.

At the bureau, Watson told him he would be doing another piece that night that would essentially be a "rollback"—denials from everybody. O'Brien refused to do it, claiming that he should have been consulted during the day—and besides, he was feeling sick. The piece was handed to correspondent Ann Compton. Then O'Brien changed his mind, but Watson, using some profanity, said it was too late.

Compton's piece led the show, with Reynolds restating the elements of the previous night's report. He mentioned denials from the Justice Department, the State Department and the President. Then came videotape with President Carter, State Department spokesman Hodding Carter, former Attorney General Griffin Bell and Ambassador Young, who said, "Maybe something like that is possible, but I doubt it, and I doubt it very seriously."

Then Reynolds added: "The ABC News report is based on information from separate sources in the Federal government. Late yesterday afternoon before we broadcast it, a final check was made. The story was confirmed to the complete satisfaction of two reporters, independently, by a high-ranking Government spokesman to whom we read our information. The first denials came after our report was broadcast. Our investigation is continuing."

When Reynolds says, "The story was confirmed . . ." he is referring to the lack of official responsiveness, rather than any validation received by O'Brien or Brewster, and he is counting "no comment" as one of the confirmations. Reynolds is just plain wrong when he says there were no denials before ABC went on the air with the story. On the question of the continuing investigation, ABC has been silent for a year and a half.

Adamson says, "I personally hold Frank Reynolds largely responsible. He's supposed to be an experienced journalist. He should have had some red flags come up in his head when he got the hard denial from the FBI."

"You just can't use what you can't verify," says Carl Stern. "Period. *Period. Period. Period.*"

But Reynolds claims that he did not receive that information before six o'clock, despite the fact that Homer Boynton entered the call on his FBI telephone log and Dan Brewster remembers taking down the statement and telling Reynolds about it. Reynolds says, "I certainly didn't go on the air and say that the first denial came after we reported it, and tell a lie. I based it on the fact that I'd had no information that anybody had called."

As for the continuing investigation, Reynolds says, "I have never been persuaded that the report we gave was in error, and therefore there is no need to correct the record."

But an executive who was involved with the story admits, "There is now a consensus at ABC that the story was inaccurate, but that has never been reported."

The rollback was not the end of Brewster's ordeal on this story. He was accosted the next day at the ABC bureau by none other than John Scali, who shouted at him in the newsroom. "Scali chewed me out in the most vicious way," Brewster remembers. "He called me a rookie and shook his finger in my face."

Brewster waited Scali out. What he wanted to retort, though he held his tongue, was "Is Franco dead yet?" That would have been a mocking reference to Scali's on-air bulletins on Oct. 14 and 21, 1975, that the Spanish dictator had died. The generalissimo held on until a month after Scali's second obituary.

Perhaps Scali would have bawled out Tim O'Brien, too, if he had seen him in the next few days. But O'Brien was home in bed with pneumonia.

Not all scoops are like the ones we have been discussing. In 20 years in the business, Carl Stern has never had to eat a story—and he has broken some big ones, including the FBI program to harass the New Left in the early 1970s, "Cointelpro." Says Stern: "You just can't use what you can't verify. Period. *Period. Period. Period.*"

A CBS producer, disagreeing some with his boss Sanford Socolow, says, "Beating people is not really what we do here. It's nice if you know something the others don't, but that's not the main thrust. It's kind of a minor thing. We don't judge our people on whether they beat other people."

Are things going to change when Dan Rather takes over the anchor position? A CBS correspondent says, "I can't think of any scoop that Dan ever had."

The correspondent is wrong. Rather was the first with the news on Nov. 22, 1963, that President John F. Kennedy was dead.

In the turmoil that gripped the CBS newsroom after the shots rang out in Dallas, one executive was assigned the task of monitoring the other networks. He turned on ABC Radio and heard that President Kennedy was believed hit. He turned on NBC and heard that President Kennedy had been wounded, perhaps seriously. He turned on his own network and heard that CBS News correspondent Dan Rather had learned that President Kennedy was dead.

"Jesus Christ," said the executive. "I hope he's right." ■

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role in current history. I am disturbed by its role in international politics, where state challenges state and public postures may make clash inescapable. So we came to the Middle East. It was Cronkite who had set matters in motion there when, on a hunch, he had telephoned Anwar Sadat in the fall of 1977 to ask what Sadat's terms were for a meeting with the Israelis. Cronkite had expected a flat rebuff. But Sadat replied: he would meet Israel's Menachem Begin to talk peace without any conditions whatsoever. Within minutes Cronkite's network team had caught Begin leaving a meeting in Jerusalem. In minutes more, Begin had invited Sadat to Jerusalem—on Cronkite's program. All this on the public screen of American television—thus on the screen of the world.

So a new chapter had begun in the meaning of television, and Cronkite, who had opened television's role at American political conventions and widened that role as the first signature on television's evening news, had transformed television into the actual stage of international politics.

I do not like this transformation; nor, actually, does Cronkite seem to like it either. We were talking while the war between Iran and Iraq was at its height. "Suppose," said Walter, "you could get Hussein and Bani-Sadr on the same show. Would that put an end to the war? In that case, what's our duty? Should we do it? Should we deal with a foreign power? Is it within the law?"

Cronkite is about to give up the role of national anchorman who holds things together to go back to the role of Cronkite, the reporter, as I first heard of him, who wants to explore what is still unknown. His new long-term contract with CBS commissions him to do his own documentaries and feature stories—and lets him insert himself into the great news-breaking events whenever he chooses.

It will be a more relaxed life than that of an anchorman watching the big red second hand sweep around the clock night after night. He'll be less controlled by clock and calendar than before, which is what he wants, but no less committed to the action.

Cronkite is the man whose instincts told him how to make a convention comprehensible, whose ear told him to render simplicity out of complexity, whose mind taught him to sort out the chaff of the day from the kernels of significance or the candies of entertainment.

His hair is whiter now and he is more than an ounce or two heavier than when I first met him 25 years ago. But he still smiles, loves to gossip, chuckles at the inside story that neither of us cares to publish.

Yet I leave out the essential thing, and for that I call as witness John Chancellor, a younger friend whom I hold as close in affection as I do Cronkite. Chancellor of NBC and Cronkite of CBS are pitted as rivals by the dynamics of television commerce. News is big business; Cronkite and Chancellor are its instruments.

Said Chancellor one day: "If it hadn't been for Walter, none of us would be around. Walter believes in the 'news' more than he believes in the 'show.' Walter is one of the good guys, not a hot dog. [In Chancellor's lingo a "hot dog" is

Cronkite in Perspective

What are Walter Cronkite's strengths, his weaknesses? How has he contributed to the development of TV news? PANORAMA put these questions to a variety of notables, both in and out of the media.

Alistair Cooke, author and critic:

Walter Cronkite has been the model television-news reporter—with the stress on the word *reporter*—stating the facts in all their splendor or dullness or horror and leaving it to the viewer to be exhilarated, bored or appalled.

David Halberstam, author of "The Best and the Brightest" and "The Powers That Be":

I admire Cronkite's belief that the story is more important than the person covering it. . . . On the minus side—and this shows up during the conventions—is Walter's tendency to take things at face value. This lack of skepticism is a reflection of mainstream American journalism's tendency to accept the American governmental norm as the objective norm.

Frank Reynolds, ABC News:

I've often wondered what TV news would be like if Walter were not the person he is. He could have done great damage to the industry and to the country if he had not been the principled person that he is and I know him to be. . . . For this we owe him a great deal of thanks. He has served his country and profession in a great way.

Averell Harriman, former U.S. Ambassador:

He has won the confidence of people over the years because of his accuracy. He sticks to the facts rather than sensationalism and rumor. He will be missed, and no one can take his place. Others, of course, will fill the void as a result of their own personality and methods.

John Simon, critic and author of "Paradigms Lost":

That he possesses this credibility shows the power of television and perhaps the shrewdness of Mr. Cronkite, but I do not think that it shows greatness. The picture of Cronkite as some sort of tremendous Great White Father strikes me as just slightly, slightly ludicrous; of course I'd rather that people regard *him* in this way than Mick Jagger.

A. Bartlett Giamatti, president of Yale University:

Walter Cronkite is a mirror in which America looks every night and sees reflected its best hopes.

Art Buchwald, columnist:

It's going to be hard for the country to do without Walter Cronkite because he was the one who got us out of all our troubles. I remember once, when the astronauts were in trouble and I was worried, my wife said, "Don't worry. Walter will solve the problem." Twenty minutes later, Walter came back on the air and said he'd found the problem and fixed it. Dan Rather will never be able to do anything like that.

Reed Irvine, president of Accuracy in Media:

The durability of Walter Cronkite as a TV personality owes much to the impression that he conveys of wisdom and solidity. There is a gap between the impression conveyed and the reality revealed by his record. . . .

That was demonstrated as recently as 1979 when, in a televised interview

with Eric Sevareid, Cronkite questioned what he considered to be our excessive military spending. Not long after, in an interview with a Soviet journalist, Cronkite agreed that the "Soviet threat" was probably a "myth." "I do not believe in the 'Soviet threat' in the sense that is meant," he was quoted as saying. After the invasion of Afghanistan, Cronkite, obviously embarrassed, claimed that he was thinking of the "Soviet threat" as "an unprovoked nuclear attack on the United States."

People laughed at Jimmy Carter when he publicly admitted that the invasion of Afghanistan had forced him to reassess his views of Soviet intentions. Walter Cronkite was no wiser, but he was less candid.

[A spokesperson for Cronkite claims that Reed Irvine's quote "seriously misrepresents what Walter Cronkite said and what he believes"—Ed.]

George Reedy, press secretary to President Lyndon Johnson:

He has given [TV news] a degree of respectability and believability that it desperately needed. Before Walter, people tended to look on newscasters as entertainers. He has given the news an aura of solidity.

Alice Cooper, rock star:

I would trust Walter Cronkite coming toward me at 90 miles per hour on roller skates with a vial of nitroglycerin. There will be no news without Walter Cronkite. There will be a new thing called 'snoig,' because the news will die when he goes off the air.

Charles Collingwood, CBS News:

Perhaps more important than anything else, he is on the air what he is off the air. He is not a role-player. Role-players do not last long in television. The public finds them out through mysterious, subliminal clues that the fakers give off. There is no fake in Walter Cronkite.

As to his weaknesses, I will suggest only one: because he is so important to CBS News, he sometimes allows himself to be spread thin, to do too many things, which means that some of what he does is not always up to his very best.

I have a thousand memories of Walter Cronkite. None of them is more poignant to me than the day of John F. Kennedy's assassination. He had been in our studios covering the story from the first bulletin. I was at lunch when my office called me and told me, "Get to the studio at once." When I arrived, Walter, who had borne the first brunt of the shock, was shaken and, indeed, close to tears. I was asked to sit in for him, and as the story unfolded, I got pretty close to tears myself. And I shall never forget how this well-seasoned, usually composed journalist was so moved by that bizarre and macabre assassination. It revealed, as if I hadn't known it long before, the strong vein of humanity and caring that lies beneath all his reporting. This is in no small measure a basic ingredient of the extraordinary credibility he has created with his vast audience.

What will his absence from the TV screen mean? . . . I doubt very much that he will be absent from the TV screen. TV reporting is so much in his blood and he has so much to contribute that I would be very surprised if we do not continue seeing Walter Cronkite on TV for a long time to come, working in-depth and perhaps more effectively than ever in areas of great importance.

a phony—a TV personality masquerading as a newscaster.] It's only because Walter was a good guy that it was possible for the rest of us to compete as good guys, too." At the heart of Chancellor's sadness was the fact that Walter was pulling out—and that he would not be able to compete next year against "good guy" Cronkite.

Which is not an irrelevant farewell. The power of television over our minds and imaginations is nearly total, but it is nowhere more dangerous than in the area of news and public affairs. Until now, that area of television has been the realm of the "good guys"—of Murrow, Smith, Huntley, Brinkley, Collingwood and others. But of none more than Walter Cronkite. Good Guy.

Which is where I came in so many years ago, when I was told to look up Cronkite: a good guy, a savvy war correspondent, wrote well, did some thinking, and said it simply. ■

VIDEODISCS

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gradually fanning out to more and more areas, until today the optical system is available virtually throughout the U.S., although still in relatively few stores. This system was developed independently and simultaneously by two companies: Philips of the Netherlands (which calls it VLP, for Visual Long Play), and the U.S.'s MCA Inc. (which uses the name DiscoVision).

The two companies ultimately joined forces to establish a single "standard" optical system. Philips and its American affiliate Magnavox were first to manufacture players, under the Magnavision brand, while MCA went ahead with a plant to make discs and set up a joint venture with Pioneer Electronics of Japan to manufacture *both* players and discs. Last year, IBM bought 50 percent of the DiscoVision operation from MCA, and the two companies are now partners in DiscoVision Associates, or DVA, which makes the optical discs and owns half of the Japanese operation, Universal Pioneer.

Thus two different brands of optical player are now on the American market—the Magnavision player by Magnavox and the LaserDisc player, imported from Japan and sold here by U.S. Pioneer Electronics. Although they are quite different, both units can play the same discs, currently being produced in quantity only by DVA.

The optical videodisc system is a fascinating example of the art of the possible in sophisticated electronic technology: the first consumer product to employ a laser. There are no grooves on the smooth, mirrorlike silvery disc; the light from the low-powered (and absolutely safe) laser is used both as a guide to proper tracking and as a pickup, in place of a stylus. The standard two-sided optical disc provides up to 30 minutes of video picture per side.

Each of the 54,000 microscopic tracks takes one thirtieth of a second for the laser to scan and contains a single "frame," or still television picture. This single-frame-per-revolution feature, along with the laser, gives the optical technique a versatility that has created extraordinary excitement in the educational and industrial fields. Any one of the 54,000 frames can be located within a fraction of a second and held rock-steady on the screen for as long as desired. In effect, this gives you a sort of super slide projector, capable of storing 108,000 still

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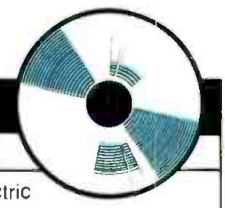

CONSUMER VIDEODISC SYSTEMS

SYSTEM	CED	OPTICAL		VHD
Brands	RCA, Zenith, J.C. Penney, Radio Shack, Sanyo, Toshiba, Sears	Magnavox, Pioneer		General Electric, JVC, Panasonic, Quasar
Type	Grooved Capacitance	Grooveless Optical		Grooveless Capacitance
Disc Diameter	12 in. *(plus plastic sleeve)*	12 in.		10.2 in. *(plus plastic sleeve)*
Play Time Per Side	1 hour	**Standard** 30 minutes	**CLV** 1 hour	1 hour
Disc Speed	450 rpm	1800 rpm	600 to 1800 rpm	900 rpm
Visual Search	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stop-Motion	No	Yes	No	No
Indexing	By Time	By Frame	By Time	By Frame
Slow-Motion	No	Variable	No	Variable
Fast-Motion	Nine-Times Only	Variable	No	Variable
Sound	Monophonic	Stereo	Stereo	Stereo
Player List Price	Under $500	$749 to $799		$500 to $600
Disc Manufacturers	CBS, RCA	DiscoVision Assoc. (U.S.), Philips (U.K.), Pioneer (Japan), Sony (Japan), 3M (U.S.)		EMI-GE-JVC-Matsushita (U.S.), JVC (Japan)
Marketing Date	March 1981	Now		Late 1981
Disc Price (Feature Film)	$20 to $25	$15.95 to $24.95		$15 to $20

Note: All information in this table refers to initial models: later models may have different features. Except for the optical format, all data is tentative, based on company announcements and best supplementary information available.

scenes on two sides of a disc—enough to hold virtually all of the art masterpieces in the Nation's leading museums.

But that's not all. The optical player can provide clear playback in forward or reverse slow- or fast-motion at virtually any speed, or the picture can be advanced frame by frame. At the push of a button, every frame from one to 54,000 is identified by its own on-screen number, and, with the addition of a low-cost microprocessor circuit, any one of those frames can be "called up" by dialing that number. The system has an "automatic indexing" feature that makes it possible to "program" a disc to repeat certain segments; hold a picture for a given interval, then advance again; go to slow- or fast-motion for a specified number of frames; or even skip around and play different parts of the disc in any specified order.

The disc itself is capable of carrying two sound tracks that can be used simultaneously or individually; if recorded in stereo, the sound can be channeled to a standard home stereo system.

In addition to the standard 30-minute-per-side disc, the optical player can accommodate a special one-hour-per-side type, known as a CLV (Constant Linear Velocity) disc. The extended playing time is designed specifically for feature movies and comes at the sacrifice of such features as stop-motion, multiple speeds and precise indexing (although any part of the disc may be located by means of elapsed-time numerals on the screen).

Magnavox's Magnavision player offers many of the capabilities of the optical system and at press time carried a suggested list price of $775, although discounts have been available in some markets. The Pioneer LaserDisc player, introduced last summer, is list-priced at $749; for an additional $50, a wireless remote-control unit is included.

Disc albums by DVA retail at $24.95 for recent motion pictures, $15.95 for movie classics, scaling down to as low as $5.95 for half-hour documentaries and how-tos.

The CED System: In developing its Capacitance Electronic Disc system, RCA strove for a simple, low-cost, consumer-oriented product that could be sold in vast numbers. It has little of the sophistication of the optical system and, except for its replaceable stylus assembly, is claimed to be almost as simple to manufacture as an audio record player. Its two-sided discs have microscopic grooves to guide a diamond-tipped stylus, which relays changes in electrical signal characteristics in the disc to a detection circuit, which then converts them to video signals. Each 12-inch disc is enclosed in a protective plastic sleeve, or "caddy," that unlocks only after being inserted in the player. Unlike the optical discs, CED records are not impervious to wear and environmental hazards.

A CED disc is played by slipping it into a slot in the player, pulling out the caddy and pushing a "play" lever. Numerals on the front of the player indicate which side of the disc is being played and show elapsed time in calibrated minutes. For

exact location of a segment, forward and reverse "visual search" buttons move pictures on the screen at approximately nine times normal speed. RCA's first CED players won't be capable of producing stereophonic sound; however, the company says some discs will be recorded in stereo and future deluxe players *will* provide stereophonic sound.

The initial RCA SelectaVision videodisc player is scheduled to go on sale nationwide about March 1 at just under $500. Other companies planning to introduce compatible CED players include Zenith, Sears, J.C. Penney, Toshiba and Sanyo. Discs will be pressed by both RCA and CBS; the former estimates feature films will cost $20 to $25, shorter programs less.

The VHD System: A late entry in the race is the Video High Density system, incompatible with the other two. Developed by Victor Company of Japan and embraced by its parent company, Matsushita Electric Corporation, it is technically a "grooveless capacitance" system, which is said to combine the CED system's economy with the optical system's versatility. Its 10.2-inch discs play for an hour per side and are enclosed in plastic sleeves similar to those used by CED. It has variable slow- and fast-motion and dual sound track, or stereo sound. A special accessory may provide indexing features and stop-motion. VHD players are supposed to be on sale here toward the end of 1981, under the brand names of General Electric, JVC, Panasonic and Quasar, the last three companies being Matsushita offspring.

Players and discs will eventually be made in the United States by two newly formed joint-venture companies. Players are expected to be priced between $500 and $600, movie discs between $15 and $20.

All three disc systems are capable of providing better pictures than off-the-air reception or a VCR can give you, and the sound from all of them is certifiably high fidelity.

The first two years of the videodisc in America have been described variously as "successful," "experiencing growing pains" and "unmitigated disaster." Attracted by local advertising, people flocked to see this new wonder in the stores, but relatively few bought. Although neither Magnavox nor Pioneer is giving out numbers, it's estimated that perhaps 20,000 to 30,000 players have been purchased by the public. Those who did buy the first players experienced a wide variety of problems.

The biggest problem of all was slow delivery of discs: there's evidence that not more than 80 to 90 titles in MCA's slick 202-title catalogue were available during the first year. There were other problems with the discs that *were* deliv-

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WHAT YOU'LL SEE ON VIDEODISCS

(A listing of some of the titles currently available in the DiscoVision optical format and selections expected to be included in the initial CED catalogue, which will be supplemented by regular monthly increases.)

OPTICAL	CED
MOVIES	
Close Encounters of the Third Kind	Grease
The China Syndrome	The Godfather
Chapter Two	Heaven Can Wait
Midnight Express	Foul Play
The Blues Brothers	Rocky
Coal Miner's Daughter	The Boys from Brazil
Cheech and Chong's Next Movie	Play It Again, Sam
The Electric Horseman	The Bad News Bears
Smokey and the Bandit II	Starting Over
American Graffiti	Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid
The Birds	M*A*S*H
The Choirboys	Patton
Jaws	Planet of the Apes
Jaws 2	Tora, Tora, Tora!
The Jerk	Hello, Dolly
Love Story	Love Story
Saturday Night Fever	Saturday Night Fever
Same Time, Next Year	The Graduate
The Sting	Fiddler on the Roof
Animal Crackers	A Night at the Opera
Dracula [original]	King Kong [original]
Going My Way	Citizen Kane
Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein	North by Northwest
Frankenstein	The Hunchback of Notre Dame
The Lost Weekend	Singin' in the Rain
MUSIC	
Elton John at Edinburgh	To Russia with Elton
Loretta [Lynn]	The Grateful Dead in Concert
Olivia [Newton-John]	Blondie—Eat to the Beat
Abba	Gimme Shelter
TELEVISION	
The Bionic Woman	Victory at Sea
Cyborg: The Six Million Dollar Man	Star Trek [Two discs]
The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau [Four discs]	The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau [Four discs]
	Our Town
SPORTS	
The Big Fights: Ali vs. Foley	The Big Fights: Muhammad Ali's Greatest Fights
NFL Films [Four discs]	Super Bowl XIV
Better Tennis in 30 Minutes	Tennis with Arthur Ashe
HOW-TO	
Julia Child: The French Chef	Julia Child: The French Chef
Total Fitness in 30 Minutes a Week	Dr. Spock—Caring for Your Newborn
THE ARTS	
The Bolero	Hamlet [Olivier]
The Art Conservator	The Royal Ballet
Art Awareness Collection from the National Gallery	Giselle
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS	
At Home with Donald Duck	Charlie Brown Festival
On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends	Disney Cartoon Parade
	The Muppet Movie
The Adventures of Chip 'n' Dale	

ered: some "skipped" and jumped from one track to another; others tended to repeat the same track. In some cases, the wrong discs were packed in the album, or an album contained some sides from one movie, some from another. The CLV process for turning out one-hour-per-side discs had problems of its own, and very few of the extended-play selections were released: some that were issued were recalled.

All parties involved say the initial problems have been corrected. The revised DiscoVision catalogue contains 150 titles and all are available, says MCA, with four to five new ones being added monthly. DVA has been telling player manufacturers that it has licked the problems of the hour-per-side record and a steady flow should start before the year is over.

Now new optical videodisc labels are starting to appear: Columbia Pictures is releasing its movies under its own name, and Pioneer Artists plans to start issuing picture-and-music concert discs in stereo sound. MCA promises to release its new movies on disc as soon as possible after their theater premiere, and started to make good with the issuance of "Cheech and Chong's Next Movie," "The Blues Brothers," "1941" and "The Jerk."

RCA, meanwhile, hopes to benefit from what it considers the mistakes of the optical group. Herbert Schlosser, the RCA executive vice president (and former president of NBC) who heads up RCA's videodisc programming operation, has been signing up titles for well over a year and promises an initial catalogue of 150 selections, with 150 more to be added during 1981. CBS, when its disc plant starts operating in the second half of this year, will issue an entirely different catalogue, including a large group of MGM movies.

The introduction of RCA's SelectaVision players and discs will be accompanied by the biggest advertising campaign ever undertaken by that company. In 1981, RCA hopes to sell at least 200,000 players and millions of discs under its own name. It will also supply players initially to Zenith, Sears and J.C. Penney; Zenith will manufacture its own as soon as it can get a plant going. RCA is already in production of both discs and players to build up its supply, and says it will be producing players at an annual rate of 500,000 by the end of 1981. The company firmly predicts that 30 to 50

continued on page 102

It's a parody of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. Popeye confiscates his nephews' musical instruments because it's late and he wants to get some sleep. Doesn't stop them—they uncover an orchestra out of everyday objects like the radiator and bedsprings and erupt in song. Mighty Mouse ("Here I come to save the day!") stars in an animated operetta in which Venice is a city of muscular mice with mustaches who wake up every morning singing.

Today's kids don't have anything FUN to watch, and they don't have Soupy Sales to steer them right

One after another the cartoons explode with energy and creativity. The art is rich and detailed, the animation and sound effects skillfully orchestrated. I feel like I'm watching the old silent film comedies. A universal language of slapstick and of suspended physical law is at work. Call it cartoon reality. If a dog chases its tail around and around fast enough, it will take off and fly away. Gravity is suspended as long as a character doesn't realize he has dashed off the edge of a cliff and is now running in midair. Literal phrases spring to life. When Olive Oyl says, "Oh, Popeye, you're givin' me goose bumps," little geese start running up and down her arms. I know exactly what's going to happen and I enjoy every minute of it.

The cartoons aren't quite the same without a host. There don't seem to be hosts any more. Back when I was growing up fast and hard in the mean streets of West Los Angeles, we had Engineer Bill, who wore a big, puffy trainman's hat and had the best set of trains in the whole world. He used to show . . . let's see, was it *Felix* and some *Three Stooges* shorts? I can't remember. Tom Hatten showed Popeye. He had a treasure chest and you could win prizes and junk like that, and he had this giant sketch pad on an easel. Kids would draw a squiggle on it and he would turn it into a picture. Sheriff John would sing to all the boys and girls who had birthdays that day: "Put another candle on your birthday cake. You're another year old today." You could write to him and he would send you a Sheriff John badge. He had huge hands, and the spoon and glass almost disappeared in them when he showed you how easy it was to make Bosco yourself. There was a big house on a hill near my house. We all believed Sheriff John lived there. When I grew up and went back to my old neighborhood, I found out it was actually a veterans' hospital.

Every town had its own Engineer Bills, Tom Hattens and Sheriff Johns. All kids shared the *Mickey Mouse Club*, with the Mouseketeers and the Hardy Boys and Spin and Marty. Then there was my personal god—Soupy Sales. I can still do the Soupy Shuffle on command.

Most of the hosts were on after school. I dashed home for them. It was a hard habit to break. Years later I knew a couple of guys who went to Berkeley who still hadn't. They used to rush home from classes to watch Rocky and Bullwinkle and scarf Sugar Pops. Of course, they would get stoned, too.

Today, it's mostly syndicated reruns of *The Munsters*, *F Troop* and *Gilligan's Island* holding down the after-school slot. No hosts. Not even many kiddy ads. It did make me feel good when I noticed that *The Three Stooges* is still on in syndication. Today's kids, I've discovered, don't have anything FUN to watch, and they don't have Soupy to steer them right. Knowing they can still watch Larry, Moe and Curly twisting one another's nose off gives this creaking video child some hope for the young.

I pat the box of Cookie-Crisp cereal fondly and place it in a distant cupboard. Suddenly, I realize what was wrong with the taste—the bowl. I can't eat cereal in anything but my plastic Yogi Bear bowl. I call my mom and say, "I want my bowl."

"You gave it away, sweetheart," she replies, with remarkable calm.

"Who has it?"

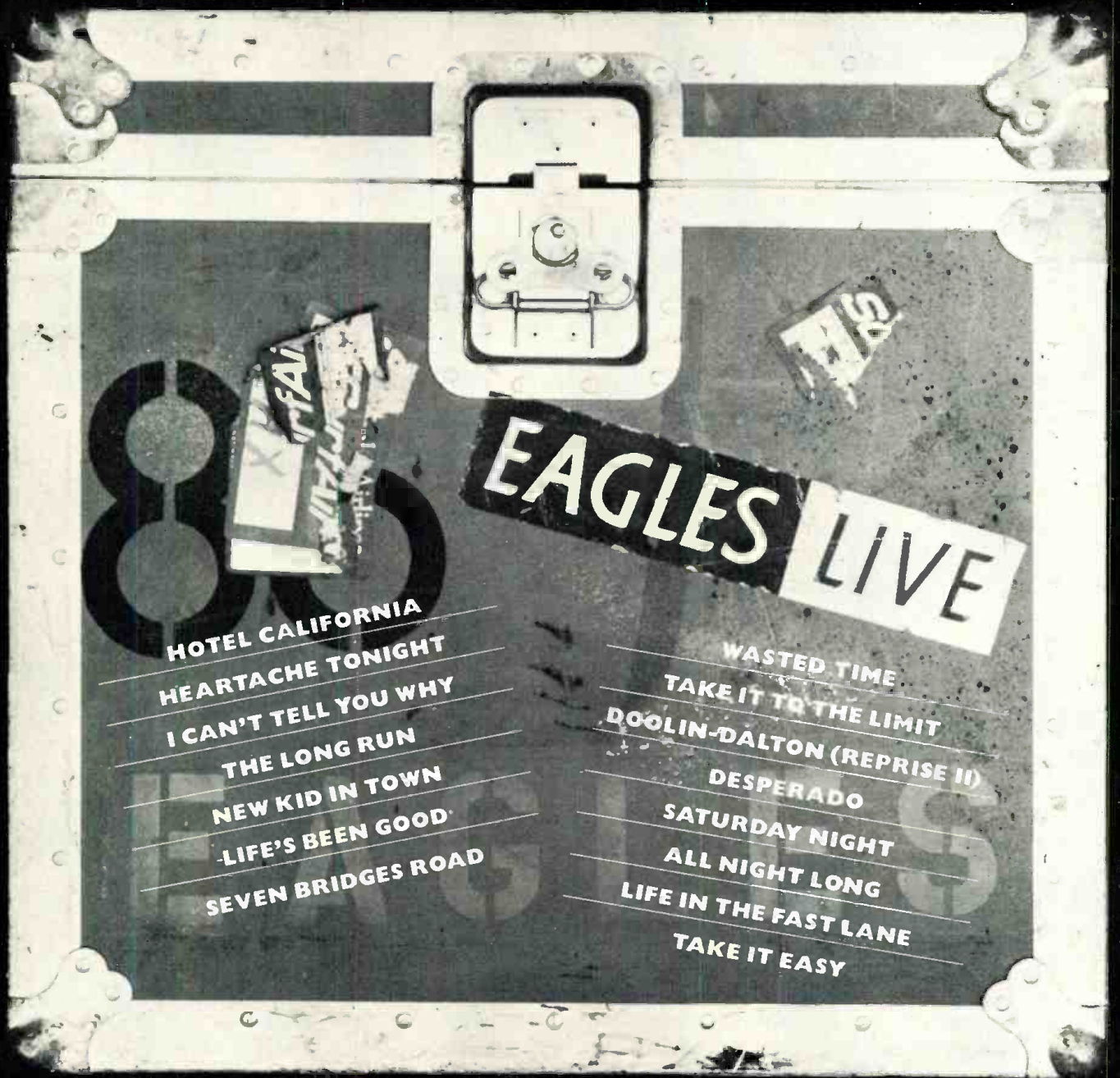
"Your cousin Tom. You gave it to him with your Hardy Boys books."

"I gave away my Hardy Boys books?"

"Is everything OK?"

I tell her I'm fine—busy as hell—and hang up and call Aunt Stella. Does she have the bowl? Yes, it's on the windowsill in the kitchen. Chives are growing in it. The Hardy Boys books are packed in a box in the cellar. Cousin Tom is fine. He's in his junior year at Yale University. Do I want some of the chives? ■

A LIVE TWO RECORD SET



Produced by BILL SZYMCZYK

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asylum

What's Happening
continued from page 16

Python in Ad Squeeze

The Monty Python gang, who developed their enormously successful TV shows into equally successful films and records, are in trouble once again. This time the tiff is over their latest album, "Monty Python's Contractual Obligation Album." Seems that the ads for it, which were supposed to appear on commercial TV (ITV), have all been banned. Needless to say, this has only generated millions of pounds worth of free publicity.

Terry Jones: A Python makes disgusting sounds.

According to the board that examines all ads for ITV, the album itself is "crude in the extreme" and "filth." Among the tracks that most upset ITV was "Farewell, John Denver," in which the country songster starts to sing "Annie's Song" and is then strangled. The head of Charisma Records, which released the album, said, "We won't be asking Monty Python to make any changes. What's wrong with strangling John Denver anyway?" (He later backed off and did omit the Denver farewell. In its place went something tasteful about a massage parlor.)

Perhaps more intriguing—and certainly more philosophical—was the reaction of Python member Terry Jones: "A lot of the record is disgusting. If only I hadn't already become so depraved by it, I'd have asked for it to be banned." ■

Videocassettes New Releases

MOVIES

Black and White in Color (1976)—Academy Award-winning war satire about a handful of Frenchmen in colonial West Africa who attack the local German garrison. Jacques Spiesser, Jean Carmet, Dora Doll. (Time Life Video Club; $44.95) (PG)

Brubaker (1980)—Robert Redford as a prison warden whose attempts at reform are resisted by corrupt authorities. With Yaphet Kotto, Jane Alexander. (Magnetic Video Corp.; *) (R)

Burlesque on Carmen (1915)—Early Charlie Chaplin spoof of the perennial bullfighter-and-his-lady romance. With Edna Purviance, Ben Turpin. (Time Life Video Club; $39.95)

Cheering Section (1977)—Racy tale of rival high-school football teams and cheerleaders. Rhonda Foxx, Tom Leindecker. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

Creature: Was doing swimmingly until the girl showed up.

The Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954)—The discovery of a half-human in the Amazon backwaters sparks this horror yarn and one of the great lines in B-movie history: "David, you still don't look like an ichthyologist!" Richard Carlson, Julie Adams. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; 3-D movie with glasses; $65)

The Godsend (1978)—Tale of horror centering on a diabolically possessed child left on a family's doorstep. Cyd Hayman, Malcolm Stoddard, Angela Pleasence. (Time Life Video Club; $34.95) (R)

Hester Street (1975)—Director Joan Micklin Silver's study of a Jewish immigrant couple adjusting to life on New York's Lower East Side in 1896. Steven Keats, Carol Kane. Time Life Video Club; $44.95) (PG)

It Came from Outer Space (1953)—Ray Bradbury story about a monster who creates havoc in an Arizona town. Action is seen through the eyes of the monster. Richard Carlson, Barbara Rush. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; 3-D movie with glasses; $65)

Malibu Beach (1978)—Randy youth at leisure in Southern California. Kim Lankford, James Daughton, Susan Player Jarreau. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

Malibu High (1979)—Steamy tale about a nubile student (Jill Lansing) who becomes the target of lecherous eyes. With Stuart Taylor, Katie Johnson. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

Naked Paradise (1978)—Problems arise when the daughter from a previous marriage moves in with her mother and stepsister. Laura Gemser, Annie Belle. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

The Pom Pom Girls (1977)—The escapades of two graduating high-school couples preoccupied with sex, cars and food. Robert Carradine, Jennifer Ashley, Lisa Reeves. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

Raise the Titanic (1980)—Suspense and intrigue as world powers vie for a rare mineral thought to be aboard the sunken luxury liner. Jason Robards, Richard Jordan, Alec Guinness. (Magnetic Video Corp.; *) (PG)

Swap Meet (1979)—Humorous look at middle-class teens gaining experience in skateboarding, car chases and youthful sexcapades. Ruth Cox, Debi Richter. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe (1973)—Farce about a bumbling musician who becomes a patsy for spies. Pierre Richard, Jean Rochefort. (Time Life Video Club; $39.95)

The Van (1977)—A summer in the life of California youth preoccupied with sex. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

Van Nuys Blvd. (1979)—Youth-oriented story of California teens obsessed with cars and one another. Bill Adler, Cynthia Wood. (Video Communications, Inc.; $54.95) (R)

SPECIALS

Adventures of Pinocchio—Cartoon about the wooden puppet whose nose grows with every lie he tells. (Time Life Video Club; $34.95)

Ali: Skill, Brains and Guts—Ninety-minute documentary covering Ali's boxing career

continued

continued

through his first fight with Joe Frazier. (VidAmerica; $54.95 purchase, $10.95 rental)

Jim Fixx on Running—The best-selling author offers more advice on the art, science and joy of running. (Time Life Video Club; $34.95)

The Greatest Comeback Ever—Phil Rizzuto and Bucky Dent are hosts of this baseball documentary about the Yankees' 1978 season. (VidAmerica; $44.95 purchase, $12.95 rental)

The Lenny Bruce Performance Film—The next-to-last night-club performance of the comedian and satirist. With animated short "Thank You Masked Man," featuring voice-over by Lenny Bruce. (Time Life Video Club; $39.95)

Let's Dance—Two hours of cha-cha, waltz, rumba and disco lessons. With Arthur Murray. (Time Life Video Club; $39.95)

The Road to Happiness—A biography of Henry Ford, originally produced for PBS's *Nova*. (Time Life Video Club; $29.95)

***Price to be announced**

Best Sellers

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

***(–) 1. The Blues Brothers** (1980)—The satirical singing duo in their first feature film. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; $89)

(1) **2. Alien** (1979)—Haunted-house drama in outer space. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(–) 3. Star Trek—The Motion Picture (1979)—Starring the original TV-series crew. (Paramount Home Video; $84.95)

(–) 4. Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)—Steven Spielberg's UFO spectacular. (Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment; $69.95)

Roy Scheider: Takes "All That Jazz" to heart.

(–) 5. All That Jazz (1979)—Bob Fosse's high-energy musical, starring Roy Scheider. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $69.95)

(–) 6. The Black Hole (1979)—A Disney sci-fi tale of the search for Ultimate Knowledge. (Walt Disney Home Video; $59.95)

(13) **7. Every Which Way but Loose** (1978)—Clint Eastwood as a barroom-brawling truck driver with an orangutan as a buddy. (WCI Home Video; $60)

(2) **8. Coal Miner's Daughter** (1980)—Sissy Spacek in the rags-to-riches story of country singer Loretta Lynn. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; $65)

(3) **9. The Rose** (1980)—Bette Midler stars as a tragic Joplinesque rock queen. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $79.95)

(–) 10. Up in Smoke (1978)—Starring comedy team Cheech and Chong. (Paramount Home Video; $79.95)

(20) **11. Saturn 3** (1980)—Farrah Fawcett and Kirk Douglas as research scientists at a space station near Saturn. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(8) **12. A Clockwork Orange** (1971)—Stanley Kubrick's vivid drama, starring Malcolm McDowell. (WCI Home Video; $75)

(4) **13. The Muppet Movie** (1979)—Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy sing and dance their way to Hollywood fame. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(–) 14. American Gigolo (1980)—A well-paid sexual companion becomes the target of a murder frame-up. (Paramount Home Video; $79.95)

(5) **15. Superman** (1978)—Super-budget film starring the special effects. (WCI Home Video; $65)

(19) **16. Phantasm** (1977)—Two brothers in a tale of murder and mystery. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(–) 17. The Fog (1980)—Horror film directed by John Carpenter. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(10) **18. The Godfather** (1972)—Francis Ford Coppola's Oscar-winning crime drama. (Paramount Home Video; $84.95)

(–) 19. Halloween (1978)—Violent thriller about a knife-wielding killer. (Media Home Entertainment; $54.95)

(6) **20. "10"** (1979)—Featuring the Eighties' first sex symbol, Bo Derek. (WCI Home Video; $65)

*** Position last month**

Sales figures are from the month of October. 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.; 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.; Nichols Electronics, Wichita, Kan.; Precision TV and Video, Bellwood, Ill.; Select Film Library, New York; The Sheik Video Corp., Metairie, La.; Stansbury Stereo, Baltimore; Televideo Systems, Richmond, Va.; Thomas Film Video, Royal Oak, Mich.; Valas TV, Denver; Video 2000, San Diego; Video Cassette, Phoenix, Ariz.; Video Cassettes, Etc., Lubbock, Texas; Video Connection, Toledo, Ohio; Video Corporation of America, Edison, N.J.; Video Dimensions, New York; Video Library, Torrance, Cal.; The Video Library Company, Narberth, Pa.; Video Services, Towson, Md.; Videospace, Bellevue, Wash.; Video Specialties, Houston; The Video Store, Gretna, La.; Visual Adventures, Cleveland.

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: Time Life Video Club, Harrisburg, Pa. 17105; Magnetic Video Corp., 23434 Industrial Park Court, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48024; MCA Videocassette, Inc., 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, Cal. 91608; VidAmerica, 231 E. 55th Street, New York, N.Y., 10022; Video Communications, Inc., 6555 E. Skelly Drive, Tulsa, Okla. 74145.

Books

A listing of some of the recently published books dealing with television

How to Get Your Child into Commercials and Modeling, by Jane Gassner Patrick. (Doubleday; $11.95)—A practical handbook for parents whose children are serious about pursuing a career in modeling and commercials. *continued*

continued

Teaching Television: How to Use TV to Your Child's Advantage, by Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D., Jerome L. Singer, Ph.D. and Diana M. Zukerman, Ph.D. (The Dial Press; $10.95)—Advice from Yale University child education specialists to parents on how to help their children understand TV, use it as a learning tool and differentiate between TV's stereotypes and reality. (Dorothy Singer has been a contributor to PANORAMA.)

NEW IN PAPERBACK

Lilias, Yoga & Your Life, by Lilias M. Folan. (Macmillan; $8.95)—The star of the syndicated TV show about yoga gears this latest book to specific groups: athletes, performers, pregnant women, preschoolers, the elderly and people with back problems.

Passages

WED

Actor **David Soul** (*Here Come the Brides, Starsky & Hutch*) and Patricia Sherman.

Novelist and screenwriter **Gerald Green** (*Holocaust*) and interior designer Marlene Eagle.

Actress **Lani O'Grady**, Mary Bradford on *Eight Is Enough*, and James Gibson Smith III.

BORN

To actress **Cheryl Miller**, Paula Tracy on *Daktari*, and businessman Robert Seidenglanz, a boy, Erik Christopher.

HONORED

Walter Cronkite, with the National Association of Catholic Broadcasters and Allied Communicators' Gabriel Personal Achievement Award, for exceptional leadership and service to his country and his profession.

Pat Boone, by Morality in Media, for his positive contributions to the enrichment and uplifting of media through the performing arts.

CBS sportscaster **Bill Russell**, as the "greatest player in the history of the NBA," by the members of the Professional Basketball Writers Association of America.

CBS News correspondent **Dan Rather**, as a "creative innovator in the realm of news" by the Explorers Club, an international multidisciplinary association of explorers and scientists.

George Burns: Oh, God, another birthday.

George Burns, for his 85th birthday, by Israel's Ben-Gurion University.

WNBC-TV veteran newsman **Gabe Pressman**, with the American Jewish Congress National Women's Division's Communications Award for "25 years of outstanding achievements as New York City's foremost investigative reporter."

California talk-show host **Johnny Grant** (*Gallery*), as the honorary mayor of Hollywood. Grant replaces former honorary mayor **Monty Hall**.

SIGNED

Gilbert Gottfried, Charles Rocket, Joe Piscopo, Denny Dillon, Ann Risley and **Gail Matthius** as the cast of NBC's *Saturday Night Live*. Fifteen writers have also been hired, one of whom, **Mitchell Kriegman**, will perform occasionally.

Producer **Herbert B. Leonard** (*Naked City, Route 66*) to an exclusive contract with Playboy Productions to create, develop and produce TV and theatrical projects.

Michael Zinberg, former NBC vice president, comedy programs, to a long-term production agreement to develop pilots and world-premiere movies for NBC.

James Garner: Back in the saddle again.

James Garner, to re-create his role of Bret Maverick in an NBC revival of ABC's Emmy-winning Western *Maverick*.

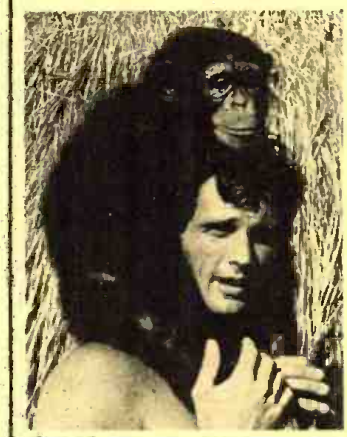
Olympic speed-skater **Eric Heiden**, to an exclusive four-year contract as commentator for ABC Sports.

Meteorologist **Gordon Barnes**, to report the weather on CBS's *Morning* show.

As CBS reporters: **David Andelman**, from The New York Times; **John Blackstone**, from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; **Charles Krause**, from The Washington Post; and **Pam Olson** from KWTV in Oklahoma City. Andelman and Blackstone join the foreign staff; Krause the Latin American bureau in Miami; and Olson the Atlanta bureau.

RE-SIGNED

Ron Ely (*Tarzan, The Aquanauts, Face the Music*), as master of ceremonies for the 1981 Miss America Pageant.



Ron Ely: Wins another trip to the Boardwalk.

APPOINTED

Saul Ilson, former NBC vice president, variety programs and talent, to the position of vice president, comedy and variety.

SWITCHED

Andrew Porte, from assistant assignment manager, ABC News, to ABC Chicago bureau chief.

Bryce Zabel, from weekend anchor and general assignment reporter, KVOA-TV, Tucson, to reporter/anchor, Cable News Network, Los Angeles bureau.

Marc Kusnetz, from news writer, NBC's *Today* show, to special-projects producer for the show. Kusnetz replaces **Marty Ryan**, who moves to producer.

Cynthia K. Samuels, from assistant New York bureau chief, CBS News, to writer and field producer, NBC's *Today* show.

DIED

Steve McQueen, 50, star of more than two-dozen films during a 22-year movie career. In the late Fifties, McQueen played bounty hunter Josh Randall on *Wanted—Dead or Alive*, the television Western that helped launch his career.

Billy Thomas, 49, Buckwheat on *The Little Rascals*.

YESTERDAYS

Sgt. Joe Friday finds a girlfriend . . . "Bewitched" gets a baby . . . Lear launches "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman"

Jack Webb

25 Years Ago: January 1956

Hopalong Cassidy and Roy Rogers join hostess Jeanette MacDonald for the televising of the 67th Tournament of Roses Parade from Pasadena, Cal. In the Nation's oldest bowl game, the Michigan State Spartans defeat the UCLA Bruins, 17 to 14. . . . On *The Jack Benny Show*, Benny presents for the first time on television his annual New Year's radio drama, in which Benny takes the part of the Old Year. . . . The season's top-rated show, *The $64,000 Question*, has several gimmicks in mind to sustain its popularity; one is to award winners the $64,000 *plus* enough money to pay taxes on it. . . . Sgt. Joe Friday gets an earlier time slot and a steady girlfriend to sustain *Dragnet*'s ratings. . . . Television continues to head west; observers note that NBC has increased its Hollywood payroll by 450 employees in the past year alone. . . . *Wanted*, the weekly documentary (drawn from active FBI files) in which policemen, informers, witnesses and victims are interviewed—and criminals-at-large asked to turn themselves in—is no longer wanted. CBS telecasts the program's last segment. . . . Almost two dozen dramatic series are appearing weekly: *The Alcoa Hour* presents Melvyn Douglas, Keenan Wynn and Tony Randall in "Man on a Tiger"; Noel Coward and Lauren Bacall perform Coward's "Blithe Spirit" for the *Ford Star Jubilee*; and *General Electric Theater* host Ronald Reagan introduces Joan Fontaine in her television debut, "Summer Promise."

15 Years Ago: January 1966

Walt Disney hosts the Tournament of Roses Parade, whose theme is "It's a Small World." Once again, the Bowl is a battle between the Michigan State Spartans and the UCLA Bruins—but this time the Bruins prevail, 14 to 12. . . . In the largest sports contract to date, CBS lays out $37.6 million for rights to the NFL games for the next two years. . . . President Lyndon Johnson delivers his State of the Union address, telecast for the first time in color. . . . Recently announced gubernatorial candidate Ronald Reagan appears on *Meet the Press* and disappears from *Death Valley Days* in his home state of California; because of the equal-time rule, the show's sponsor must use other hosts on all episodes shown in California until after the election. . . . Tabitha is born to Samantha and Darrin Stephens on *Bewitched*. . . . The Beatles sing "We Can Work It Out" and "Day Tripper" on *Hullabaloo*. . . . ABC, "the third network," introduces a new show that immediately garners impressive ratings: *Batman* becomes one of the network's top moneymakers. . . . *Daktari*, the adventure series starring Marshall Thompson and Cheryl Miller as an American doctor and his daughter living in Africa, makes its debut on CBS. . . . On test forms distributed in TV Guide, viewers at home pencil in either "True" or "False" in response to questions on "The National Health Test," the third in a series of "viewer-participation quizzes" produced by CBS News. On the 60-minute special, hosts Harry Reasoner and Mike Wallace query viewers on their knowledge of everything from pediatrics and nutrition to venereal disease and sex education. . . . ABC decides to devote more of prime time to commercials and increases the number of 60-second spots during *Batman* from three to four. . . . The U.S. brings television to Vietnam: two VHF channels are beamed from a Navy satellite, one to be operated by the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network and the other by the South Vietnamese government. . . . And television brings Vietnam to the U.S.: CBS's *Twentieth Century* examines North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh in its "Man of the Month" report; former Vice President Richard Nixon discusses the war on *Issues and Answers*; and Raymond Burr narrates a study of U.S. involvement on *The Big Picture*, the syndicated weekly documentary produced by the U.S. Army.

5 Years Ago: January 1976

In Super Bowl X, the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Dallas Cowboys, 21 to 17, to win the NFL title. . . . In the Rose Bowl, the UCLA Bruins sack the Ohio State Buckeyes, 23 to 10. Kate Smith is the grand marshal for the Tournament of Roses Parade, which includes a Bicentennial wagon train that will travel east to Valley Forge. . . . Bicentennial specials include NBC's "200 Years of American Humor" with Jonathan Winters. . . . Billed as "a series that's bound to be controversial," Norman Lear's *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* makes its debut in syndication. . . . NBC introduces a new symbol: an abstract "N." . . . In a special celebrating the 25th anniversary of "Peanuts," creator Charles Schulz talks about his comic strip and shows excerpts from past specials. . . . *Welcome Back, Kotter* is welcomed back to Boston after being banned by the ABC affiliate there during a period of racial tension over court-ordered busing. . . . NBC devotes three consecutive hours of prime time to a news special, "New World—Hard Choices: American Foreign Policy 1976." Anchored by John Chancellor, the program features interviews with President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

—Karen Grigsby

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each year. For the past seven years, the local cable system has provided live election coverage with a special emphasis on races that the Seattle TV stations don't cover. As a civic-minded franchise, Viacom Cablevision also televises a weekly news program, *Community Bulletin Board*; typical shows have talked about fire safety at Halloween and have included interviews with leaders of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters. There are other programs, not under any series umbrella, that focus on the political system in the county. And, for the past three years, Rick Portin, station production manager, has headed Snohomish County Access TV, headquartered at the station, which teaches libraries, schools and civic groups the nuts and bolts of access television.

Warner Amex Cable (Qube), Columbus, Ohio; 26,000 subscribers. Four nights a week, Qube produces *Columbus Alive*, a one-hour talk show that programming director Scott Kurnit compares to *Good Morning America*. There are four to eight segments per program and, at the end of each one, the host asks viewers if they want to extend the portion. If they say yes (by pressing a button on their home terminals), Qube will duly extend it—sometimes to the regret of Kurnit. "I have to pay my staff overtime in those situations," he confesses. Qube also presents *Columbus Amen!*, a weekly half-hour ecumenical religious program. Prior to elections, Qube tries to get candidates to appear on a local show and then immediately polls viewers to see how they would vote.

EDUCATIONAL/INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

Continental Cablevision, Concord, N.H.; 8857 subscribers. When the residents of Concord asked Continental Cablevision programming director Greg Uhrin what cable TV could do for the community, he went to work on his acclaimed *I Like Kids Creating*. "This is the shining star of our system," he says. "And we haven't modeled it after a broadcast TV show." Now in its fourth year, the program is produced by fifth- and sixth-grade students at the Millville School. Eight to 10 programs are televised a year and, as might be expected, subjects often deal with events in the Concord school system. However, the kiddy crew followed Presidential candidates stumping through Concord last year, and this year they will interview New Hampshire governor Hugh Gallen.

K & K Cable TV, Devils Lake, N.D.; 2200 subscribers. In the winter, temperatures sometimes plunge to −30° F in this tiny hamlet 90 miles south of Canada. It's no wonder that the station once produced a program on cabin fever. It's also given town residents free lessons on how to use TV equipment to produce their own shows. The result so far: locally produced programs on sign language, preventive medicine and the availability of meal delivery for senior citizens.

Norman Cable TV, Norman, Okla.; 4750 subscribers. "We're a very education-oriented community," notes Suzanne Harrell, manager of Norman Cable TV. For several years, the local school system has developed and televised its own programming over one of the local channels. Some of the more popular educational shows have been "Nutritional Needs for the Athlete" and "How to Use the Library." The school system is not charged for the use of the channel.

Viacom Cablevision of San Francisco; 55,200 subscribers. One of the best instructional programs ever produced by a local cable system was *Gardening in the City*, produced by Viacom Cablevision in conjunction with the city department of recreation and the Community Garden Project. The 13-part series instructed San Franciscans on how to grow crops in the city. First televised more than two years ago, the programs have been repeated for the past two summers by popular demand.

Warner Amex Cable Communications of Reston, Reston, Va.; 6500 subscribers. After Tom Bartelt returned in the late 1960s from Vietnam, where he had served as motion-picture adviser to the South Vietnamese psychological warfare department, he volunteered to do local productions at the Reston cable-TV station. By 1971 he was appointed head of programming and since then his station has televised thousands of hours of locally produced shows for residents of this planned community. *You Gotta Have Art*, now in its fourth year, teaches preschool children about art and also instructs older kids on the ins and outs of painting, pottery, ceramics and puppetmaking. Another children's show, *It's a Small World*, is hosted by six preteenagers and explores current events from their viewpoint. For adults, a popular program has been *The Reston Garden Club Presents*, which teaches subscribers about gardening and floral arrangements.

MINORITY PROGRAMMING

Cablevision, Baton Rouge, La.; 44,000 subscribers. In 1975, a camera crew from Cablevision televised the wake of a prominent black Baton Rouge resident. The coverage was so well received that the station decided to videotape weekly church services at local houses of worship. That was the beginning of Cablevision's programming to the needs of the community; since then, it has been televising an average of 20 hours a week of black-oriented shows. Area churches are almost begging Cablevision to televise their services and there's now a year-long waiting list. Additionally, the system televises the football and basketball games of Southern University, a local black school. All advertising income derived from cablecasting SU events is donated back to the university. Cablevision also works closely with black councilmen to televise events in their districts, such as building commemorations or political debates.

Fresno Cable TV, Fresno, Cal.; 17,170 subscribers. In the flat desert country of central California lies the prosperous agricultural belt of the state. A large Chicano population has flocked to this region to work in the vineyards, and Fresno Cable TV has been catering to this substantial segment of the region's population. Among the shows, produced in Spanish, that are aimed at local Chicanos: *Hora en Madera*, which focuses on the social-service agencies in nearby Madera; and *Iglesia de Dios*, a half-hour weekly bible-study program. Each month the system also produces about four special documentaries in Spanish.

Cablevision of Shreveport, Shreveport, La.; 36,000 subscribers. Friday nights, this cable system devotes all of its local-origination channel to black programming. Starting at 5:30 P.M., it televises *The Sickle Cell Anemia Show*, followed by a talk show and three locally produced religious programs. At 8, *Main*

Circuit changes the pace; it's a disco show taped live in the station's studios. Two more black-oriented talk shows wrap up the evening's locally produced programming. At 10, Black Entertainment Television, the national black TV network, is fed into the system, featuring either black sports or movies.

KBLE, Columbus, Ohio; 12,000 subscribers. Columbus is home for the Nation's only operating black-owned cable system, KBLE. The system serves the north side of the city, which is 75 percent black. KBLE, currently gearing up for more local productions, now produces two shows: *Probe*, a public-affairs program, and *The First Church Hour*.

Teleprompter of Oakland, Oakland, Cal.; 23,166 subscribers. Minorities make up more than half of Oakland's population. This cable franchise produces about 50 hours a week of programming geared to the local community, including shows on legal issues, police community relations and other matters important to its subscribers. Board of Education meetings and City Council meetings are televised on a regular basis. Teleprompter also produces *Law and the People*, a weekly show that looks at the possible effect of current legislation on women and minorities.

A word to the wise: a number of people have complained that cable systems promising just these kinds of services have sometimes failed to deliver after winning a franchise. One mark of a good system is its willingness to consult in a consistent and honest way with residents on what *they* want—rather than just serving up programming based on what *it* thinks should be shown. What the systems we have described have in common is a demonstrated and ongoing willingness to provide their subscribers with programs that meet a genuine need or wish within the community—as expressed by the residents of that community themselves. ■

vulnerable parishioners were trying to contend with—the function of television in all of our lives. Books contain mere words; photographic albums, mere pictures; the newspapers, both; home movies, mere private memories; but television offers to just about every household in the country what might be called "life," maybe more of it than we acknowledge.

What, precisely, we do with that "life" depends upon who we are. There is the crisis of racial conflict, but there is also the crisis of poverty, of social marginality. Among the migrant farm workers I have worked with, among the hardy but often quite threatened poor of Appalachia, among tenant farmers I've interviewed in the South and the Southwest, the television screen offers a "life" distant, improbable, unlike any that is known and familiar—and so, the result is a trip of sorts: "We put on our set," a migrant farmhand told me, "and we go into another world, and we're mighty glad to take a look at it, I'll tell you!" He

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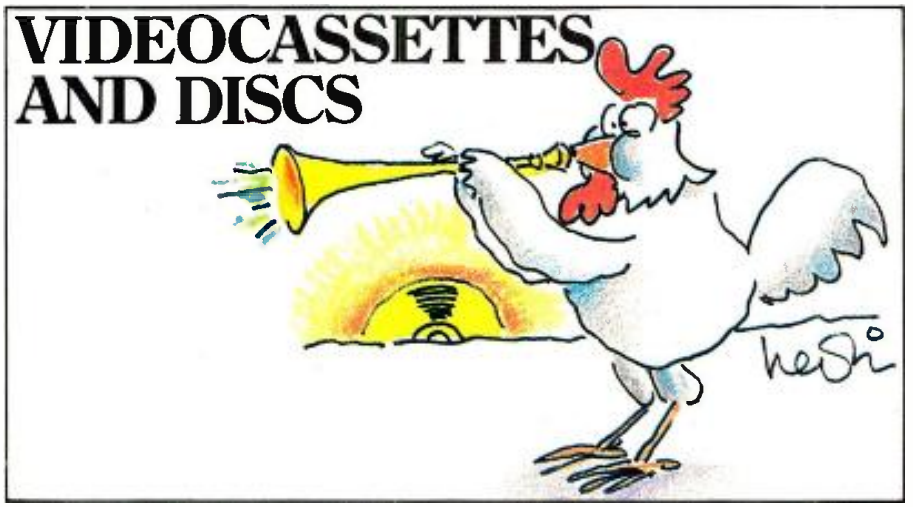

Here's what's on the horizon in technology and terminology

O Brave New Video World!

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

Today, students, we shall examine four apparently unrelated phenomena, all with a single underlying motif: the vast changes on the horizon as we enter the world of home video.

The Video Merger. So high are the stakes in the public's choice among video systems that video dough may be at the root of many corporate sales and mergers in the future. In 1974, when the American affiliate of the Netherlands' giant N.V. Philips purchased Magnavox, the major reason obviously was to provide a launching pad in the New World for Philips' VLP optical videodisc system. Having introduced the system, Magnavox now finds itself outflanked by SelectaVision, developed by RCA and endorsed by Zenith, which together hopelessly eclipse Magnavox in number of dealers and marketing clout.

So now Philips is going back to the well and purchasing two more American brand names—Sylvania and Philco—to give its disc system greater access to the market. Sylvania and Philco also will come in handy when and if Philips invades the U.S. market with its Video 2000 videocassette system, which is incompatible with both the Beta and the VHS systems. Interestingly, before the purchase deal was set, the Sylvania-Philco organization was itself in the throes of picking a videodisc player format. Of the three proposed systems, only one had been definitely ruled out—the Philips-developed optical system.

The New Photography. The super-home-movie business is about to die, a victim of electronics. Last July Sony demonstrated its prototype "Video Movie" system—a hand-held combination camera and minicassette video recorder, which the company said was scheduled for production in 1984 or 1985. (See this column, October 1980 issue.)

Now Sony has flushed out its first competitor. Hitachi has demonstrated its own approach to the home-video movie business: a one-piece camera/recorder that uses a cassette slightly larger than an audio cassette for recording up to two hours of color pictures and sound. And Hitachi's marketing target isn't 1984 or 1985—it's 1982.

(There's a catch that may delay things: like Sony, Hitachi wants its format adopted as the standard before it commits itself completely.)

MDP. As television was establishing itself in the Nation's households, someone discovered LCD—and network executives began programming for the Lowest Common Denominator. Now video is bringing us MDP.

MDP stands for Most Dispensable Program. It works like this: We no longer feel obliged to view programs when they're broadcast, because we can always tape them for showing later. This is so convenient that we soon form the habit of letting our faithful VCR do almost all of our viewing.

Inevitably, we discover all of our cassettes are full of programs we haven't watched yet—at a time when a program is coming up that we don't want our VCR to miss. This is where MDP comes in. The tape with the most dispensable program is erased and rerecorded without ever having been viewed. In most cases, one hopes, the MDP was one of those shows aimed at the LCD.

Son of 3-D. If you're over 30, you probably remember 3-D movies—the ones with all those messy creatures from prehistoric times and outer space jumping out of the movie screen at you. The phenomenon was supposed to save the film industry from television. It didn't. In-depth movies, in short, were a bomb. Well, put $65 on the line and you now can have those very same creatures jumping out of your TV screen into your very own living room—courtesy of MCA Videocassette, Inc.

To test the market for stereoscopic TV, MCA is offering "Creature from the Black Lagoon" and "It Came from Outer Space" on videocassette. (The tapes can be seen only on color sets.) The two deepie chillers, which originally required polarized glasses for viewing in theaters, have been reprocessed for the small screen, since the polarized technique won't work on TV. Instead, you use glasses with one red lens and one blue lens; each cassette comes with four pairs.

The question is: will the 3-D technique, first designed to lure people away from their TV sets, now keep them home—or will it accomplish its original purpose and send them flocking back to the film palaces for relief? ■

loved to look at situation comedies, at shows "with lots of music." On rainy days, he loved to watch the soaps: "I don't keep track of them, the way my wife does, but I get the drift."

What, in fact, does he "get"—what message, what thematic continuity? "After a few programs," he once explained, "I can say to myself that it's tough all over, though I'd sure rather be in their shoes than mine." There are very few shoes in America worn by people poorer than he is. Still, as he looks at well-to-do, well-spoken men and women telling one another of their love and hate, their resentments and envies and rivalries and dissatisfactions and aspirations and frustrations, something happens to his frontal lobes. Pictures in a machine become pictures caught by the optic nerve, and then a person speaks of another "picture"—the state of human affairs, which he has been prompted to examine. To draw upon this uneducated, hard-working and honorable man once more: "You get a chance to see that there's more than you in the world. It's a big place, and if it wasn't that there's television, we'd not know much but our own little acre of it!"

Of course, there are crises and crises. While some people struggle to obtain the vote, or a halfway decent job, others feel personally at loose ends, or aimless, adrift on a sea of luxury. And so, among the exceedingly comfortable, if not wealthy, but sometimes troubled families I've also come to know in the course of my American field studies, one hears responses to television not unlike those noted above.

"A good television program makes you stop and ask yourself about what you believe in and why we're here."

The program may be on public television and seen in the evening, rather than an afternoon soap, and the response may be stated more felicitously or at greater length, or maybe put in an intellectual vein, but the presentation is—well, that of a human being: "I'm a lawyer, and I come home, and I'm with my family, and on weekdays we all go to bed early. On weekends, we have more time. I like the news programs on Sunday: *Meet the Press* or *Face the Nation* or *Issues and Answers*, depending on who is being interviewed. I like a good documentary. I like a good game—baseball or football. I like an old movie, or a new one. I like some of the programs on public television. Remember *The Forsyte Saga*? I'll never forget that one! I watched it straight through, and then a second time. I watched *Roots*, even if it was shown in the middle of the week.

"A good television program, like *The Forsyte Saga* or *Roots*—you stop and ask yourself about what you believe in and why we're here, and what you want out of life. *Roots*, to me, wasn't only about the blacks; it was about history, and how it works, and affects all of us. *The Forsyte Saga* wasn't only about the

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Victorians; it was about families, and how we all live in them; and it was about how you live your life—with whom, and for what reason. You get thinking—it's all so *live*, and you can't just forget it, like you do a magazine article! The medium insinuates itself into your consciousness."

Maybe, in other generations, or for some in this age as well, particular social occasions have served a similar purpose—public rituals, ceremonies, parades, church services with their dramatic and exhortative moments. I think many critiques of television, emphasizing as they do the pieties and clichés one sees, and emphasizing the "waste land" offered on the "tube," its culturally enervating or destructive side, fail to take note of the use, nevertheless, made of all those "soaps" and "sitcoms," those quiz shows, movies and specials, those talk shows and documentaries and news programs. They are the means by which we of this generation not only are cheated or undercut mentally but, upon occasion, are brought a little closer to our nature—the function of art, be it great or mediocre.

I have watched, for example, ordinary working people view a quiz show I may happen to find boring, stupid, frivolous. And what have I heard afterward? Maybe not my kind of portentous, self-assured, all-too-knowing criticism, but this: "I wished she'd have won that thousand dollars. She looked sad to me. She was just getting over a sickness, she said. She probably has plenty of doctor's bills! You watch those people, and you know the odds are against them, like they are against you. You hope for them. I never get my own hopes up. But when I watch television, I sit back and say a prayer for the other guy—or the gal. I daydream about what I'd do if I won some money. You sort out your 'priorities'—isn't that the word?"

That is the word—one that bespeaks concerns we all have, and concerns we try to sort out and arrange in some order. To do so, we use what is available—including, these days, those programs that come to our eyes and our ears in our homes, programs that draw upon, it seems, the whole world: the images and sounds of television—a way for a mind's imagination to do its work, send us messages about ourselves in response to the messages we have received about others. ■

mock computer. The program has the distinction of being turned off by ABC after only one broadcast—on Feb. 5, 1969.

Schlatter's former partner, Ed Friendly, says Schlatter "insisted on doing the things that got *Turn-On* canceled"—including a sequence of several minutes in which the word "sex" flashed across the screen in various permutations. "There was always George's way and the wrong way," Friendly says. "He was always positive, but he was not always right."

The reason George Schlatter could choose to send the word "sex" flashing across the Nation's TV screens in 1969 was the phenomenal success a year earlier of *Laugh-In*. Every Monday night at 8 P.M. close to half the viewing audience sat down to watch newcomers such as Lily Tomlin and Goldie Hawn say such instantly popularized phrases as "You bet your bippy" and "Look that up in your Funk & Wagnalls." The show ran for six seasons, from 1968 to 1973; won 25 Emmys; and catapulted its producer, George Schlatter, to the top of his profession.

Hoping that lightning would strike twice, Schlatter put together a second version of *Laugh-In* in 1977. (He tried unsuccessfully to get former President Nixon, who had said "Sock it to me" on the show in 1968, to come back for a second appearance. This time Nixon would say, "It's OK if you stop now.") The show lasted six episodes—just long enough for Schlatter to get sued by former hosts and co-producers Dan Rowan and Dick Martin, who charged that Schlatter had ignored their approval rights over the second version of the show. There has long been bad blood between Schlatter and Rowan and Martin, who contend that *Laugh-In* was their idea, not Schlatter's. Asked to discuss Schlatter, Martin replies, "I have no interest in him."

That wasn't the only fracas Schlatter got into as a result of his *Laugh-In* revival. The American Arbitration Association called a session in 1978 to determine if Robin Williams, an unknown comedy actor who was signed as a regular for the second show, should be held to the contract he had signed with Schlatter. Williams said he had assumed he was free to go elsewhere after reading an article in Daily Variety in which Schlatter said he wouldn't be producing any more *Laugh-In*s.

Schlatter testified that he had lied to the reporter, hoping other buyers would become interested in the show. "It was a lie then, and it's a lie now," he said. "It was a negotiating ploy, pure and simple . . . As a matter of fact, we subsequently met with ABC within a few weeks of this story. . . . It was not only a lie, it was a very effective lie." The arbitrator, unimpressed, freed Williams to leave Schlatter and become Mork.

In an interview shortly before her death last September, Schlatter's mother, Miriam "Bobby" Schlatter, beaming about her son's accomplishments, nevertheless recalled, "George was never too particular about the stories he told."

In the mid-Fifties, after his tumultuous stint at MCA, Schlatter began booking talent for nightclubs along the Sunset Strip and in Las Vegas. One of the starlets he dated during that time was Jolene Brand, a dancer and model on *Queen for a Day*. The romance became serious, and "she said she'd marry me if I got out of saloons," says Schlatter, "so I went into TV."

His teacher in the TV trade was Ernie Kovacs, who used Jolene Brand as the "bathtub girl" on his show. "He was probably the biggest influence on my work," says Schlatter. "He had more to do with *Laugh-In* than anyone else."

Beginning in 1958, Schlatter became a booker, then a producer, on Dinah Shore's NBC show. The network kept firing him, he says, but Shore kept hiring him back. He supervised the change in sponsors for the Shore show, from Chevrolet ("See the U.S.A. in your . . .") to the American Dairy Association. To mark the occasion, he put Shore on a cow, turned her to the camera and had her say, "There's more than one way to see the U.S.A." His reward? "The Dairy Association told me I used the wrong cow, Chevy accused me of making fun of them, Dinah said I wrecked her dress, and NBC said the cow did permanent damage to the tile."

"George has always had a feel on how to adapt himself to what's happening," says Lily Tomlin. "He's like a kid. He doesn't censor or squelch himself." She hasn't worked with him on her own specials, she says, because "he doesn't have the most all-embracing sensibility. His sensibility is very pop." She considers Schlatter "very

sharp as to what's trendy."

His friends and family say they see a surprising trend in his recent work, a new twist in the evolution of George Schlatter. In its intent, *Speak Up America* was antithetical to the almost totally depersonalized *Turn-On*, just as the corny comedy of *Real People* seems light-years away from the iconoclastic barbs of *Laugh-In*.

"His shows have become more conservative lately," says a former *Laugh-In* writer. "When I worked for him, one of his greatest joys was upsetting the apple cart. *Speak Up America* was a very mainstream show."

Bob Wynn, the co-executive producer of *Speak Up*, concurs: "In the Sixties, George was very anti-establishment, and he put together a whole new form of comedy. He's still plowing new fields on TV, but this time it's very pro-American, pro-people. It's a sign of the times."

Even Bobby Schlatter sounded the theme: "I have never been more surprised than when George brought out *Speak Up America*. It just didn't seem like one of his shows. He has never been what I would call patriotic," and *Speak Up* struck her as quite patriotic. "He has changed a great deal, mellowed a lot. Maybe common sense has come to the rescue." Politically, she identified herself as "violently to the right" of her son.

Schlatter doesn't deny that he's different now. "I don't know why I've changed," he says. "*Laugh-In* was brittle. What I do now has more warmth, more humanity. Perhaps so do I. I'm constantly looking for new forms. Maybe it's my minimal attention span. I was looking at a PBS film on Picasso the other night. Every woman he met changed his art. Well, I'm always looking for something new to do on my canvas."

Those who consider Schlatter an inventor, a trend-setter, see his flip-flops as a necessary evil for a man who has his finger on the Nation's pulse; his critics see them as proof of his insincerity and skill for taking other people's ideas and riding them to success. But however he's done it, Schlatter has carved a niche for himself in the business of television—and, despite his flamboyant failures, there's no sign that his star is about to fade. Future deals are already cooking between Schlatter and NBC, according to variety and comedy vice president Saul Ilson. A detective series based on Fearless Fosdick is high on the list.

"George believes there's nothing in the world he can't handle," says his younger brother Jack. "Twenty-five years ago his goal was to have a million dollars. He did it, more than once. The word 'impossible' has no meaning for him."

"We love George," says Saul Ilson. "He's the P. T. Barnum and the Cecil B. De Mille of television." ■

SPORTS

Here are a few suggestions that could make the Super Bowl pre-game show . . .

A Really Big Event

By JOHN SCHULIAN

Selling the game is a pushover, Murray. You could dress two herds of yaks in football uniforms, call them the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Dallas Cowboys, and the dumbos watching on television wouldn't know the difference. You say it's the Super Bowl and they'll believe you. Pavlov woulda loved 'em, right, Murray?

Now that you've hyped yourself into the job of TV consultant for the Super Bowl, you've gotta show the network big boys you do more than good lunch. We're talking career here, OK, Murray? *Your* career.

I'm here to help and you're not making it any easier. Why do you keep on worrying about the game? It can be a sweetheart or it can be a canine. It doesn't matter. The people will watch, the people will watch. What you don't want to screw up is the pre-game show. And, Murray, if I know you, screw it up is exactly what you're gonna do.

The show's gonna bomb if you give me Joe Namath on Bourbon Street and Jayne Kennedy fluttering her eyelashes. The only thing that's gonna save it is a fresh, exciting host—somebody charming and witty, handsome and dashing.

We're talking Gary Coleman here, OK, Murray?

All right, so maybe the kid needs a bimbo to hold his hand. In that case, Marilyn Chambers is the first name I think of. Don't frown, Murray. Having Gary Coleman and Marilyn Chambers as co-hosts of your pre-game show would help this great Nation of ours understand exactly what the Super Bowl is—surreal.

Give the folks at home a taste of what it's like at the Super Bowl, way down yonder in New Orleans, in the land of those dreamy dreams. Don't worry, it'll be weird. It always is.

Listen, last year I'm in L.A. for Super Bowl XIV—hey, blame the Roman numerals on the National Football League—and I'm waiting to talk to Terry Bradshaw with six million other reporters and . . . whaddayou mean, who's Terry Bradshaw? Murray, you're in real trouble if you don't know he's the Steelers' quarterback. No, I'm not gonna tell you what a quarterback is. I'm gonna finish my story.

So we're waiting to talk to Bradshaw and as soon as he shows up, this TV guy from Texas announces that he wants to talk to Terry about the Lord. Well, no offense, but reporters are grumbling and dropping their pencils and tape recorders. And Bradshaw is just sitting there with a smile that shows off every one of his store-bought teeth.

"God'll getcha for that," he tells us.

Hey, God already had.

Don't you understand, Murray?

You've gotta pick up the metaphor and run with it. You don't have to use the pre-game show to tell us which pulling guards are psychotic and how many cornerbacks are playing strictly because of the miracles of modern chemistry. But you gotta put things in perspective. You gotta let the public know that, contrary to the NFL's baloney, these are not necessarily a bunch of saints we're dealing with.

Relax, you can still have the Muppets on the show. Yeah, the Dallas Cowboys' cheerleaders, too. And in the background, you can have the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing "Drop-kick Me Through the Goal Posts of Life."

You love it, Murray. Admit it. And I'm just getting warmed up. Send a camera crew out to capture all the quirks of Super Bowl week. Don't worry, there are plenty of 'em. I've seen defensive tackles say they like sex when they've been asked about sacks. Sacks, Murray. That's football lingo for mugging a quarterback legally. Whaddayou do on Sunday afternoons, anyway—watch public television?

Lemme finish, will you? I've seen linebackers threaten to beat the Bo Diddley out of reporters. That's what the Super Bowl does. It warps everybody's mind. Don't argue with me, Murray. I've got the proof. I've got a story full of fans in three-piece suits and the ladies of the night, and you can have it for your pre-game show.

No, Gary Coleman wouldn't have to touch it.

We're talking Marilyn Chambers here, OK, Murray? ■

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CLASH OF CULTURES *continued from page 63*

times a worker may receive permission to stay home from his job to 'attend' this university. There are presently 46,000 enrolled in this university. . . .

"You see," Mr. Han explains, "we use a TV station as a tool to educate people, to make them special. . . ."

He moves smoothly on to statistics, concrete evidence of improvement. "At this time, there are only 300,000 television sets in private homes. Not so much as a third of our people watch television. But during the past six months, 100,000 TV sets have been produced. And by the end of this year there will be 600,000 sets. Tibet is building a TV station. . . . We want a satellite from America. . . ."

A last question from the land of Merv Griffin. Does Chinese television, I ask, have any celebrities? Not necessarily a great actor or singer, but a person with a following, a person you'd like to watch, a person that, if you knew he was on, you'd turn on the set?

After what seems to be an eternity of weird vibrations—of two increasingly damp and crazed Americans trying to explain the essence, in English, of a Johnny Carson or a Paul Lynde, with scattered conversations trailing back and forth from interpreter to interpreter, and then to Mr. Han—it finally comes to pass that this isn't going to be like the situation-comedy fiasco; that yes, they do have a celebrity, and a very popular program. Mr. Han smiles, then laughs. Mrs. Chang and Ms. Chou laugh and shrug. They are either embarrassed or delighted to be asked, maybe a little of both. Mr. Han leans back, lays an arm across the top of the couch and bursts out with a brusque paragraph.

"Yes," Ms. Chou translates. "We have, what you call, a *Folk Concert*? Music and . . . from different provinces? We have a man . . . a man who is . . . he is fun, *funny*?"

Mr. Han goes on; Ms. Chou continues. "His name is Ho Bao Lin. He is a comedian. He is really quite deep. He—that program—is the most popular. We have exported the *Folk Concert* to other lands . . . to Yugoslavia, Romania, Japan. . . ."

The interview is about to end. Our five minutes have turned out to be two hours. Mr. Han gazes at us thoughtfully. "In the time of the Gang of Four, it was considered that there were many, many enemies. And, perhaps, in some places, the thinking of the Gang of Four still has influence. But we feel . . . we feel that the actual situation of our country has very much improved." It is an oblique remark on the opening up of a country.

Will American TV shows eventually find a place on Chinese television? At this point, it doesn't seem likely. The prime motivation of Chinese television, as well as of Chinese everything, would seem to be to . . . get on with it: to get on with the Four Modernizations—Agriculture, Industry, Science and National Defense; to make China "a modern socialist country by the year 2000."

Perhaps it is only luck that the Chinese seem sometimes to have avoided our problems by having, up front, avoided our solutions. And perhaps it is part of our American-ness that it's hard for some of us to understand what they are about. "The Chinese have tried hard," a visiting executive from Ford remarks to me, "but they still have a long way to go." He makes this remark on a balcony of the Hotel Peking. A few shiny cars are parked beneath us. Some buses pass, packed with tourists or people on their way to work. But the vast, vast, *vast* population of the city is busy navigating this rush hour on bikes. A zillion bikes. The Ford executive will be returning soon to Dearborn, Mich., and more unsold cars than a sane man might like to think about. The Chinese may have a long way to go, but—all the way to the Pinto? All the way to *Starsky & Hutch*?

That night, in the international elegance of the Hotel Peking, I watch the national network news. The news from Peking is good, naturally. Nary a killing, burglary, rape, flood or fire. Then come snippets—wait! They're from America, from ABC News!

And there's the first dead body in three weeks—an unfortunate from El Salvador—but he's gone in a flash. The Chinese announcer explains, the pictures form and are gone; a ghostly American whisper trails along, the sound of English way underneath.

And there's President Carter! His cheeks are pinker than usual; he's smiling. It looks as if nothing bad is going to happen to him! He's appearing in a Great Hall of the People. They're lined up for rows and rows, waving flags in an orderly fashion. The ghostly whisper identifies this place as Los Angeles, and the flag-waving folks as members of the National Education Association, but I can't believe it. Those flags? Those smiles? That—however fleeting—sense of order and calm? If I didn't know better, I'd say they were all Chinese. ■

VIDEODISCS

continued from page 86

percent of color-television homes will be equipped with videodisc players within the next 10 years.

Well, maybe. The videodisc business is still unproven, a billion-dollar risk enterprise. The new medium will rise or collapse on its ability to offer the viewing public still another choice of programs. If it survives its early days, we will likely see the growth of completely new types of programming, designed especially for the videodisc, which can further broaden the horizons of home entertainment, information and education. If it flops—well, nobody's thinking about that right now. ■

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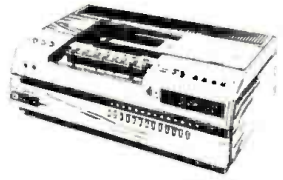

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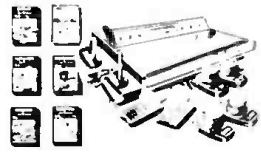

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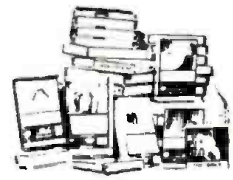

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It's unbelievable how TV uses some words to death

The Incredible Peccadillo

By HARRY STEIN

The word "incredible," according to my copy of the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged Edition, is an adjective used to denote something "so extraordinary as to seem impossible."

It is a nice word, this "incredible." It seems like centuries now that it's been performing yeomanlike service for us, characterizing titanic human achievements and stunning acts of God. One would think that we owe it something.

But no, not us. We have murdered "incredible." It is, for all intents and purposes, a dead word: defunct. Our method of doing in "incredible" was not a merciful one. Indeed, we were tortuously slow about our ugly work, not unlike all those old ladies who are said to spend years killing their husbands by daily slipping a trace of arsenic into their tea.

The origins of this outrage were undoubtedly innocent enough. One day, probably in the early Fifties, perhaps in the course of one of those schlock ads that used to run all the time in the afternoon for miracle kitchen implements, some announcer must have started screaming his head off about "incredible savings."

From this innocuous beginning, the downhill slide was shockingly rapid. Suddenly *anything*—a wristwatch, a can of tomato soup, a pole-vaulter, a comfortable sofa—was liable to turn up on television as "incredible."

Eventually, inexorably, all of that led to the campaign for "the incredible edible egg." Now, an egg is many things, and edible is unarguably one of them. But incredible? More incredible than an egg is the trick performed by my cousin Howie's dog Bert with his ears, and that isn't even *diverting*.

But it is only within the past couple of years that the doom of "incredible" has been sealed. *The Incredible Hulk* came lumbering into our lives, and then, as the *coup de grâce*, came *That's Incredible!* That's the way they do things out on the Coast: now that the word has been stripped of its dignity, it gets its own show.

The additional abuse that "incredible" has been obliged to suffer at the hands of this single program is beyond description. On a recent episode, amidst segments on a trick water-skier, a yogi who bends metal with his eyeball, and a haunted hotel, was one featuring an embalmed human cadaver that was presented on-stage, in a tuxedo. "The only thing that's incredible about this," noted the woman with whom I viewed the spectacle, "is that they had the temerity to put it on the air."

But, as I say, the time is long past to grieve for "incredible." At this point, we should be far more concerned with the living. Which brings us to "peccadillo."

"Peccadillo" has always been a quiet, unprepossessing sort of word, a word that goes very nicely with its meaning: "a petty sin or offense; a trifling fault." Few people used it because few people knew of its existence, and those who did use it did so subtly, judiciously. That is surely how "peccadillo" wanted it.

Enter Johnny Carson.

Johnny has, in general, been a pal of words, using them adroitly and with apparent love. That is why it was so alarming to discover Johnny overusing "peccadillo." There he was, once, sometimes twice, a week, pausing in the midst of an account of some erring celebrity, grinning his grin and observing wryly, "I guess we all have our peccadillos."

The fourth time I heard this, I was moved to address the comedian in a letter:

Dear Mr. Carson:

I must ask you, in all good conscience, to desist from so cavalierly throwing about the word "peccadillo" on your nationally televised broadcast. The peccadillo has done you no harm and this abuse is wholly unwarranted.

Sincerely,
Harry Stein
Committee to Save
the Peccadillo.

I received no reply to this, but over the next several weeks I did not hear Carson use the word once. What a pleasure doing business with a reasonable man!

For days after the realization that the word was safe, I was in high spirits, finding myself laughing at silly jokes, whistling in elevators, even occasionally adding a little skip to my jaunty walk.

It was after one of these, on a crowded mid-Manhattan street, that I noticed an unfortunate soul sprawled in a doorway take a swig from a bottle. He looked up at me as I skipped by and mumbled, "Well, I guess we all got our peccadillos." ■

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