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FEBRUARY 15, 1988

Syndication: The Next Generation?



Gene Roddenberry and Mel Harris on the "Star Trek" set.

'Star Trek' points first-run toward bold new world

By WILLIAM MAHONEY
Staff reporter

LOS ANGELES—Behind the scenes of first-run's most successful new series lies a story that may provide a glimpse of syndication's future.

"Star Trek: The Next Generation," Paramount's hit revival of its classic 1960s series, boasts a

network-size production budget, slick special effects and an intricate marketing campaign.

If the show continues to soar, as it's doing now in a soft market for hour-long shows, this big-budget level of production could become the new standard for first-run television, a business once dismissed as stepchild programming.

(Continued on Page 18)

Photo by Tim Petros

Electronic Media

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Crain Communications

AT PRESS TIME

Fox stations laying off

LOS ANGELES—A spokesman for Fox Inc. said on Friday that layoffs will be taking place at three Fox-owned television stations: WTTG-TV in Washington, KTTV-TV in Los Angeles and WNYW-TV in New York. About 20 staffers have already been let go from KTTV through "consolidation of operations," the spokesman said. Layoffs also began at WTTG-TV last week, where about nine to 14 positions are expected to get cut over the next few months.

Another Tisch at CBS?

NEW YORK—Sources say CBS President Laurence Tisch likely will nominate his younger brother, Preston Robert Tisch, to the CBS board. The nomination could be discussed at the board's March 9 meeting. The brothers are longtime business partners whose Loews Corp. owns 24.9 percent of CBS Inc. Preston Tisch steps down as U.S. (Continued on Page 126)

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FEBRUARY 15, 1988

Creation of 2 superstations sparks uproar

By RICHARD TEDESCO
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Two more independent television stations are being turned into cable superstations this week in a move that has infuriated the independent TV community, as well as Major League Baseball.

Eastern Microwave, a Syracuse, N.Y.-based satellite company, is offering cable operators feeds of KTLA-TV, Tribune Broadcasting's Los Angeles station, and WSBK-TV, a Gillett Broadcasting station in Boston.

Neither station has chosen to be broadcast beyond its local market, and executives at each have expressed frustration over laws that enable satellite carriers to retransmit their signals.

In Washington, Preston Padden, president of the Association of Independent Television Stations, said, "The fact that Eastern Microwave can just walk into two stations and announce it's going to take their programming and sell it is pretty outrageous."

Major League Baseball also is upset about the move, which will broaden distribution of KTLA's California Angels telecasts and WSBK's Boston Red Sox games.

"It just makes you wonder about the value of anybody's copyright," said a baseball official, who asked not to be identified. "If they're going under the Copyright Act, it's unbelievable."

(Continued on Page 126)

King World forms station-buying unit

By MARIANNE PASKOWSKI
New York bureau chief

NEW YORK—King World Productions will announce this week that it has formed a broadcast division to buy TV and radio stations, company officials said.

The executive who will run that division has already been hired and will come on board shortly, though his name hasn't been announced.

(Continued on Page 126)

Hollywood vs. Cable



Illustration by Clifford Jackson

Industries seek a thaw in cold war as congressional hearings draw near

By DOUG HALONEN
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—Over the past couple of years, Hollywood and the cable TV industry have been bashing each other so furiously that some entertainment industry officials are worried the government will come to believe what each has been saying.

Each industry has accused the other of anti-competitive tendencies—the type of

charges that government regulators don't take lightly.

But recently, officials for the cable and motion picture industries have begun peace talks in hopes of instituting a thaw in their cold war.

Yet it might be too late. Congress is about to bring the issues surrounding the feud to their most public airing to date. In both the House and the Senate, hearings will be held (Continued on Page 123)

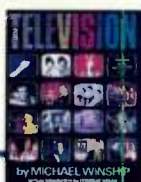
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Covering the primaries

With the aid of satellite technology, more national and local TV reporters than ever are covering the presidential race.

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Book excerpt: 'Television'

Selections from the companion to the PBS series.

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NATPE agenda

A guide to the events at the upcoming National Association of Television Program Executives convention in Houston.

NEWS SUMMARY

In a move that has infuriated the independent television community and Major League Baseball, two more independent TV stations are being turned into cable superstations. Eastern Microwave is offering cable operators feeds of KTLA-TV in Los Angeles and WSBK-TV in Boston. (Page 1)

Officials of King World Productions said they will announce this week that the company has formed a broadcast division to buy TV and radio stations. The person who will run that unit has already been hired and will come on board shortly. (Page 1)

The San Antonio City Council is considering charging Rogers Cablesystems a flat payment or an annual fee instead of taking over the local cable system. (Page 3)

Scrambled baseball games may be marketed directly to home satellite dish owners under a plan being considered by Major League Baseball. (Page 3)

NBC's prototype for a prime-time magazine show is on hold and may never see the light of day, according to NBC President Robert Wright. (Page 3)

Last week's Iowa caucuses ushered in a new era of TV election coverage, with more industry participants than ever before. (Page 3)

"Elvis and Me" was the highest-rated miniseries so far this season, giving ABC a strong start in the February sweeps last week. (Page 2)

A Denver TV news helicopter aided police in the apprehension of a fleeing robbery suspect last week. (Page 2)

Pre-registration for the upcoming NATPE convention in Houston has caught up with 1987 levels. (Page 2)

Telephone companies will be providing competitive cable service in the near future, according to a recent survey of broadcasters and cable industry leaders. (Page 4)

"EastEnders," Great Britain's most popular show, is gaining attention on several public television stations. (Page 4)

A deal to sell 13 EZ Communications radio stations to Noble Broadcast Group was canceled when EZ's board rejected Noble's \$100 million offer for the company. (Page 4)

The first adverse impact of people meters became apparent last week as analysts said the CBS Television Network suffered a decline in earnings due to advertiser make-goods related to declining ratings. (Page 4)

A federal appeals court has affirmed a lower court ruling that threw out a Washington state law aimed at prohibiting broadcasters from conducting exit polls. (Page 6)

Rupert Murdoch is continuing his legal challenge of the broadcast-newspaper cross-ownership rules, even though he appears to have found a buyer for the New York Post. (Page 6)

ABC Radio Networks says Casey Kasem is on the way out as host of "American Top 40" now that negotiations between the two parties have broken down. (Page 8)

Jack Sander, longtime president of Taft Broadcasting's TV station group, is leaving the new company, now known as Great American Broadcasting Co. (Page 8)

The Advertising Research Foundation has formed a committee of radio research executives to examine ratings and advertising issues in radio. (Page 28)

HBO has completed negotiations for a Mike Tyson-Michael Spinks heavyweight title fight. The \$40 million fight, set for June, will be the biggest boxing event ever handled by the pay-cable service. (Page 97)

Cap Cities/ABC reported \$116.9 million in net income for 1987's fourth quarter, a 46 percent gain over the same period a year earlier. (Page 97)

National Public Radio has approved a plan to allow member stations to purchase individual programs instead of the current system of paying for a package of all network services. (Page 110)

NATPE registration back up to 1987 level

By **RICHARD MAHLER**
Los Angeles bureau chief

After a pronounced slump, pre-registration for the upcoming Houston convention of the National Association of Television Program Executives has caught up with 1987 levels.

NATPE officials are now expecting about 7,800 participants at the annual conference and exhibition.

"I don't know what caused the slowdown," says Phil Corvo, NATPE's executive director, "but we're right where we were last year at this time."

About 4,700 persons had pre-registered for the event late last week, with another 3,100 expected to sign in at the George R. Brown Convention Center between Feb. 25 and 29, yielding a final total identical to last year's New Orleans meeting.

Conference Director Nick Orfanopoulos says exhibition space has been sold out to 220 program producers and distributors. That's about 10 percent below the 257 exhibiting last year in New Orleans.

Mr. Orfanopoulos says rooms in the 18 hotels initially set aside for NATPE visitors have also been filled, but the Houston Housing Bureau has secured additional hotels to handle the overflow.

Responding to complaints from some of its 1,700 members about the relative lateness of the 1988 NATPE meeting, Mr. Corvo explained that this year's dates were partly a response to a member survey of a few years ago, which found Feb. 15 to 29 were the dates most preferred by attendees.

"But first-run was not as important then as it is now, and we are now looking at January whenever

possible," he says.

Since convention sites must be booked years in advance, there is a limit as to how flexible NATPE can be, Mr. Corvo adds.

"We hope to be able to announce the exact dates for 1989 through 1992 by the end of this year's convention," he says.

Mr. Corvo is pleased that at least one major syndicator, Viacom Enterprises, has waited until the convention to unveil a new show, and he expects others to do the same.

Among other firsts at the 1988 gathering will be a session on "television opportunities available in Canada," to be held at 3 p.m. Feb. 25, and a home video panel, set for 9:40 a.m. Feb. 28.

NATPE will mark its 25th anniversary by distributing a short history of the organization in each registration packet. #

News copter aids in capture

By **WILLIAM MAHONEY**
Staff reporter

The Federal Aviation Administration last week declined to take action against a Denver TV news helicopter pilot that aided police in the apprehension of a fleeing robbery suspect.

The dramatic incident, involving a high-speed chase that ended in a volley of gunfire that killed the suspect, was captured on videotape by a KCNC-TV news photographer aboard the chopper.

But the news helicopter's pursuit, at the hands of pilot Mike Silva, also raised the attention of the FAA, which investigated what one agency official termed "a rather

unusual aviation occurrence."

After investigating the scene, reviewing the videotape and interviewing the pilot, the FAA issued the following statement: "We have concluded that there does not appear to have been a violation of any of the federal aviation standards."

FAA rules specify that a helicopter may not endanger citizens on the ground. The agency was trying to determine whether KCNC, an NBC-owned station, had overstepped those bounds.

The incident occurred as the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board are scrutinizing the use of news helicopters and considering restrictions on their

(Continued on Page 126)

ABC gets strong start in sweeps

By **WILLIAM MAHONEY**
Staff reporter

LOS ANGELES—ABC's fate in the February sweeps still rests on its Olympics coverage, but the network got off to a strong start last week by airing this season's highest-rated miniseries so far.

The two-part "Elvis and Me" on ABC averaged a 24.4 rating (percentage of TV homes) and a 36 share (percentage of sets in use), with a 23.9/35 on Feb. 7 and a 24.9/36 on Feb. 8, according to A.C. Nielsen Co.

In the first real sweeps face-off on Feb. 7, the program beat the first segment of CBS's two-part "Sidney Sheldon's Windmills of the Gods," which earned a 19/28, and NBC's theatrical film, "Rambo: First Blood Part II," which trailed with a 15.5/23. Combined, the three networks attracted a strong 86 share on that Sunday evening.

CBS's "Windmills of the Gods" earned a 17.3/27 for its conclusion on Feb. 9, for an overall 18.2/28 average.

But in the most current results available at press time, NBC was on its way to winning its 12th consecutive sweeps period. As of Feb. 10, NBC was ahead with a 16.7/26. ABC was in second with a 15.6/24, and CBS was in last with a 14/22 in the Nielsen sweeps period, which began Feb. 4.

In Arbitron Ratings Co. rankings, NBC was leading with a 16.4/26, ahead of ABC's 15.7/24 and CBS's 13.7/21. That sweeps period began Feb. 3.

The outcome of the sweeps hinges on the success of ABC's 16 days and 53 hours of prime-time coverage of the 1988 Winter Olympics in Cal-

gary, Alberta, and that event will determine whether the network is able to end NBC's long winning streak.

Later this month, NBC hopes to get a boost from its upcoming four-part miniseries, "James Clavell's Noble House," which runs Feb. 21-

24.

CBS is betting that its other four-hour miniseries, "Bluegrass" starring Cheryl Ladd, will help it wind up the sweeps on Feb. 28-29.

Arbitron's sweeps period ends March 1 and Nielsen's ends March 2. #

EM again to provide 'NATPE News' video

For the fourth consecutive year, ELECTRONIC MEDIA is providing video coverage of the Feb. 25-29 National Association of Television Program Executives convention in Houston.

The EM news magazine, "NATPE News," will be available to any television station in the country by the Westar 4 satellite.

The one-hour daily program will be fed from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. (ET) Friday, Feb. 26, to Sunday, Feb. 28, on transponder 7-X, with an audio subcarrier of 6.2 and 6.8.

The advertising-supported program will be closed-circuited to rooms in the major convention hotels.

"NATPE News" will cover news of the convention live as well as providing interviews and features on the people and issues affecting NATPE attendees.

Members of the EM editorial staff will provide the news and feature coverage.



LORI KILDGORE
Anchor for "NATPE News"

The program will be anchored by Lori Kildgore, 31, an anchor/reporter for WVUE-TV in New Orleans for almost four years. Ms. Kildgore is now WVUE's medical reporter.

Prior to that, she worked at WBIR-TV, Knoxville, Tenn. #

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Baseball scrambling plans irk stations

By RICHARD TEDESCO

Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Major League Baseball is considering marketing its scrambled feeds of games directly to home satellite dish owners.

"We are taking a look at that," said Bryan Burns, executive vice president of Major League Baseball. "We are trying to create a scenario that will work in terms of our long-range planning."

This season, the leagues will begin scrambling satellite backhaul feeds of every game. That move, designed to stop signal piracy, is

upsetting many stations, which will be charged \$250 per month for use of the feeds in addition to the cost of receiving equipment they may need.

Meanwhile, the National Basketball Association and National Hockey League are closely watching the situation and considering scrambling plans of their own.

As for baseball, the idea of marketing games for home dishes was part of the plan when the MLB embarked on the scrambling initiative for this season, according to Mr. Burns.

He said baseball is already involved in a direct broadcast satellite project in Japan,

where NHK Television bought 100 MLB games last season and transmitted them to home-dish users equipped with compact Ku-band dishes.

Mr. Burns said the MLB's plans would have to be set up so they would not upset baseball's relationship with NBC or ABC, the networks that currently hold the sport's national broadcast rights, or cable networks that air games.

But he does not anticipate any snags in current "blackout" rules that could throw its prospects off track.

"Those are all things that, done right, would not pose a problem," he said.

But current MLB scrambling plans are causing conflicts with television stations irked at having to pay for use of the backhaul game feeds this season.

The cost of feeds from other scrambled sports would only compound the dilemma many stations could face. The upshot could be fewer sports highlights on many stations, broadcasters contend.

KTTV-TV in Los Angeles will definitely be showing fewer baseball highlights on its sportscasts, according to Robert Guerrero, the station's executive sports producer.

(Continued on Page 125)



The Iowa caucuses, the first major event of the 1988 campaign, attracted reporters from across the country.

Iowa caucuses usher in new era of television campaign coverage

By DIANE MERMIGAS

Senior reporter

The Iowa caucuses last week ushered in a new, expanded role for TV's election coverage, with more industry participants than ever before.

Those on the campaign trail as it winds toward tomorrow's New Hampshire primary include at least the three commercial networks, two cable TV services, several satellite-news outfits and a number of local stations.

That's a marked difference from the 1984 presidential campaign.

At that time, satellite news services, such as Conus Communications, had barely broken ground, most individual stations were still pondering the wonders of uplinking and cable services, including C-SPAN, had only limited resources to cover politics outside of Washington.

But last week in Iowa, those players huddled alongside the old standbys—CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, public television, Group W's Newsfeed Network and others—to cover the caucuses that officially kicked off election '88.

However, money for coverage of this year's presidential campaign is at issue for even the largest TV news organi-

zation. Industry sources estimate that ABC, CBS and NBC collectively will spend between \$2 million and \$3 million just covering the Iowa and New Hampshire races.

Other news services will spend a fraction of that, cutting corners by exchanging and sharing equipment and staff primarily with individual stations that want to be on the scene.

For instance, affiliates that contributed their mobile news trucks to Iowa coverage received hefty discounts or total waivers of their per diem fees from the networks' satellite news services for stations.

Those network services, virtually nonexistent four years ago, are running full force this time around to compete with the likes of Newsfeed and Conus.

Conus is expected to spend about \$25,000 on its station services for the Iowa and New Hampshire primaries.

The three commercial networks continue to staff such events as the Iowa caucuses with 100 or more personnel, compared to 65 for CNN and less than 10 for Conus and Newsfeed. ABC News was said to have as many as 250 people on location in Iowa.

"The number of candidates in the running this time

(Continued on Page 125)

Cable outlet facing extra fees to city

By RICHARD TEDESCO

Staff reporter

The city of San Antonio may seek a flat payment or annual fee from Rogers Cablesystems as an alternative to buying the local cable system.

The proposal is one of several options outlined by Lou Fox, city manager of San Antonio, at a city council meeting late last week.

An outright buyout of the 225,000-subscriber system—with a likely resale to another cable company or the city's participation in the system as an equity partner with Rogers—are the other choices stressed by Mr. Fox.

Under the terms of the city's franchise agreement with Rogers, San Antonio can buy the system at a 5 percent discount off market value after the franchise passes its 10th anniversary in the fall. The city has been contemplating ways of taking advantage of that clause (EM, Jan. 18, Page 1).

Ideally, Mr. Fox said he would like Rogers to make San Antonio a flat payment in recognition of the value the city has helped create in the system.

"We would offer them something for that. This isn't 'green-mail,'" he said.

But what San Antonio would give Rogers is something the company would appear to have already: the right to own and operate the system through the full 15 years of its contract with the cable company. "We still have a franchise to offer them," he said.

That franchise covers the nation's fourth largest system, valued at approximately \$400 million by Rogers executives, who estimate the city could realize a profit of approximately \$25 million in resale.

Mr. Fox said last week he had explained the city's position to Phil Lind, Rogers senior vice president of programming and planning, in a recent meeting.

He expects to confer with Rogers executives at the end of March to get their response to the options the city has in mind.

Mr. Lind declined to discuss his meeting with Mr. Fox, and would not confirm plans for any future meeting.

"Anything discussed has to be done within the law of the land," he stated.

He also said that he expected the system to get good marks from the city in a 10-year franchise review slated for the fall.

"My impressions are that we operate a good cable system and we have good relations with the city," he said.

But one high-ranking Rogers executive recently suggested that San Antonio was misinterpreting the spirit of the franchise agreement.

(Continued on Page 126)

NBC drops latest plans for magazine show

By DIANE MERMIGAS

Senior reporter

NBC's much ballyhooed prototype for a prime-time magazine show is on hold and might never see the light of day.

The show, a joint project of NBC's entertainment, sports and news operations originally called "90 Minutes," is "not going to happen," according to NBC President Robert Wright.

"It's too complicated. There are too many component parts, and we're just not going to

do it now. So the concept, at least, is deferred for the time being," Mr. Wright said in an interview last week.

The proposed 90-minute program, coordinated by NBC Entertainment President Brandon Tartikoff, was designed as a mix of entertainment, news and sports and was to air Sundays at 7 p.m. (ET).

When asked about Mr. Wright's comments, Mr. Tartikoff issued a brief statement: "The show is postponed until summer."

He declined to take telephone calls about the matter.

The show was to have been hosted by "Today Show" anchor Bryant Gumbel. A pilot had been scheduled for taping on April 10.

Along the way, the show lost its working title. NBC recently changed the name from "90 Minutes" to "Talk of the Town" after it received protests from CBS saying the initial title sounded too much like its own Sunday night magazine, "60 Minutes."

Mr. Wright said a pilot for the new series would have had to have been taped by early April before the talent involved took off to meet various presidential election, Olympics

and other news-related obligations.

He said the network would attempt to address the concept for the information-based series again in October, after the conclusion of NBC's coverage of the Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea.

However, he said he did not know whether Mr. Gumbel or any of the other talent would be available at that time to resume production.

Mr. Wright also said deferral of the project was unrelated to Mr. Gumbel's upcoming contract negotiations with the network. #

Survey finds phone competition looming

By DOUG HALONEN
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—Broadcast and cable TV industry leaders believe the telephone companies will be providing competitive cable service in the near future.

At least that's what a National Association of Broadcasters survey of about 50 industry leaders reveals.

"It seems to be moving that way," said Wally Jorgenson, NAB joint board chairman, of the survey results at a news conference here last week.

The telephone companies are prohibited by law from offering cable TV service in their telephone service areas, but recently have been making it known they want in.

The cable industry has been fighting the effort, fearing that many cable operators won't be able to survive telephone competition.

NAB officials were declining to release the survey on the grounds that it wasn't "scientific" and had been meant more as a springboard for discussion on what the technological landscape will look like in the future.

Among the other questions on the survey was what those leaders expected to happen to the shares of the TV networks by 1995.

Eddie Fritts, NAB president, declined to reveal what that response showed.

However, said Mr. Fritts, "It was not a doomsday scenario for the networks."#

Bid rejected for sale of EZ radio stations

By ADAM BUCKMAN
Staff reporter

A deal to sell 13 EZ Communications radio stations to Noble Broadcast Group was canceled last week when EZ's board rejected Noble's \$100 million offer for the company.

The "no" vote means Fairfax, Va.-based EZ Communications, which owns 15 radio stations, will be staying in the radio business after all, EZ President Alan Box said last week.

On Feb. 5, EZ announced it had reached a verbal agreement to sell 13 of its 15 radio stations to Noble, a San Diego-based group station owner.

Separate deals to sell the two other EZ radio properties are already awaiting approval by the Federal Communications Commission.

The Noble deal would have meant EZ would leave the radio business.

If EZ's board approved the Noble deal, an official

sales agreement would have been signed by executives of both companies last week.

Instead, the 10-member EZ board turned down the \$100 million offer in a unanimous vote on Feb. 8, Mr. Box said.

He noted that 21-year-old EZ Communications had not been put up for sale when Noble "came out of nowhere" with an offer to buy the company.

Nevertheless, Noble's offer "was seriously considered," Mr. Box said.

He added, however, that "there is really little interest here in selling."

He emphasized that EZ Communications has decided to stay in the radio business.

EZ Communications won't be considering other offers to buy the company, he added.

EZ Communications more than doubled its size in 1986 when it purchased nine radio stations from Boston-based Affiliated Publications. The price was \$65.5 million.#

CBS Network earnings hurt by make-goods

By DIANE MERMIGAS
Senior reporter

The first grim impact of people meters on CBS Television Network earnings became evident last week.

Although CBS Inc. declined to break out performance statistics for its divisions, Wall Street analysts estimate that the CBS TV Network lost at least \$20 million, and possibly as much as \$40 million, in the fourth quarter of 1987, even though ad sales for the period were bullish.

The analysts' estimates underscored the extensive make-goods CBS has had to provide advertisers this season to offset the ratings shortfalls generated by A.C. Nielsen Co.'s new people meters.

David Londoner, vice president of Wertheim Schroder, echoed other analysts when he said he was surprised by the apparent adverse impact of make-goods on network earnings in the fourth quarter.

Although the network was profitable for the full year, the company announced last week that the network's earnings fell below 1986 levels, but declined to provide specific figures.

The network was believed to have posted a \$40 million loss in 1986. But after special accounting measures, analysts speculated the network posted \$75 million in earnings for the year.

The company said that its television stations and radio divisions achieved record profits and improved operating margins in 1987.

The broadcast group's fourth-quarter pre-tax profits were \$19.8 million, an 85 percent decline from the \$132.5 million in earnings the group posted in the fourth quarter of 1984. A year ago, the broadcast group posted an \$11.8 million loss due to \$28 million in one-time charges because of personnel cuts and other expenses.

Some analysts said they expect the CBS TV Network to break even or post another loss in the current quarter.

For the year, CBS/Broadcast Group profits rose 2 percent to \$232.8 million, from \$228.6 million in 1986. Revenues for the year declined 2 percent to \$2.76 billion, from \$2.8 billion.

Many analysts have revised their 1988 CBS earnings estimates downward to about \$10 per share, based on the apparent adverse effect of people meters on the company's ratings and the absence of records, books and magazine operations to offset the broadcast group's cyclical downturns.

The recent sale of CBS Records to Sony Corp., completed in January, will be favorably reflected throughout 1988 as interest expense which could account for as much as 40 percent of the company's earnings, analysts said.

Interest income that CBS has earned from the investment of asset sale proceeds added \$11.4 million to the company's fourth-quarter net income, which rose to \$251.6 million, or \$9.73 per share, from \$223 million, or \$9.35 per share, a year earlier. That came on a 3 percent decline in net sales, which were \$773 million, down from \$795 million in the same quarter of 1986.

For the full year, CBS's net income was up 21 percent to \$452.5 million, or \$17.74 per share, from \$375.1 million in 1986, or \$15.42 per share.#



The BBC's "EastEnders," the most popular show in Britain, has attracted attention in its U.S. debut.

Jolly good show

America giving 'EastEnders' a warm reception

By RICHARD MAHLER
Los Angeles bureau chief

LOS ANGELES—"EastEnders," the most popular program in England, has made a solid landing in the United States.

The half-hour serial appears to be on its way to becoming one of public television's most successful imports ever from the BBC.

The show, which had soared to the top of the British ratings charts shortly after its premiere there in 1984, launched in the United States on about 20 non-commercial stations the week of Jan. 11.

Since then, it has been lauded by heavy press attention and it has gotten off to a respectable ratings start for a public TV show.

"We've never had this much publicity concurrent with the launch of a new show," declares Frank Miller, president and chief executive officer of Lionheart Television International, the BBC's fully owned U.S. syndication subsidiary.

On his desk, Mr. Miller keeps a two-finger-thick stack of newspaper and magazine articles about the gritty soap opera that portrays life in London's lower-class East End neighbor-

hood.

His collection includes front-page stories from USA Today and The Wall Street Journal, plus major features from Soap Opera Digest and Newsweek magazines. Two network programs, ABC's "Good Morning America" and "CBS Morning News," have also profiled the show.

Why so much media interest in the British serial?

"'EastEnders' is a program that is built around the everyday lives of a lower-than-middle-class community," explains Mr. Miller. "It is not like an American soap opera, which has a lot of glitz and glamour."

"It deals instead with the type of people most Americans can identify with. It is not escape entertainment; it is reality programming, which has a growing appeal in America. And I think many in the media have felt that this is a cutting-edge type of program."

In New York, WNYC-TV has averaged a 1 rating (or 68,000 households) in the overnight report, and in Miami WPBT-TV estimates it's picking up a 4 percent to 5 percent share of the available audience.

While those numbers are low by commercial TV standards, (Continued on Page 124)

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Murdoch fights rule despite Post sale plan

By **ROBERT HOMAN**
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—Media mogul Rupert Murdoch is continuing his legal challenge of the broadcast-newspaper cross-ownership rules, even though he appears to have found a buyer for the beleaguered New York Post.

Last Thursday, lawyers for Mr. Murdoch argued in federal appeals court against the constitutionality of legislation barring the Federal

Communications Commission from extending waivers to the cross-ownership rules.

The court hearing took place shortly after Mr. Murdoch announced that New York real estate developer Peter Kalikow has agreed in principle to purchase the Post for \$37 million.

Recently, the court gave Mr. Murdoch a temporary reprieve from having to sell his communications properties in New York and Boston, where he owns the New York Post

and WNYW-TV, and the Boston Herald and WFXT-TV, respectively.

Specifically, the court gave Mr. Murdoch an additional 45 days after it reaches a decision on whether the FCC properly denied his request for a further waiver of the rules, which bar common ownership of a newspaper and broadcast outlet in the same market.

Without the court's intervention, those waivers were due to expire for the New York Post on March 6 and for the Boston Herald on June 30.

Mr. Murdoch's attack on the FCC rules was prompted by language slipped into a federal budget bill last December by Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Ernest Hollings, D-S.C. That language blocked the FCC from altering the cross-ownership rules.

In a statement, Mr. Murdoch said advertising revenue at the Post has dropped 25 percent since the Kennedy-Hollings amendment was passed in December, in comparison to the same period last year. He

added that annual losses at the Post have been running at \$15 million.

Although legislation has been introduced in Congress that would overturn the cross-ownership amendment, Mr. Murdoch said last week that "congressional action is unlikely to succeed in time, and our court case could drag on for many months."

Mr. Murdoch still faces a deadline to resolve his cross-ownership conflict in Boston.

He has said that, if forced, he will keep the Boston Herald and sell WFXT.

Mr. Murdoch said the sale of the Post hinges upon whether the newspaper unions agree by Feb. 19 to \$24 million worth of wage cuts over the next three years.

He said this could be achieved by eliminating 77 full-time employees and by implementing a 12 percent across-the-board wage reduction.

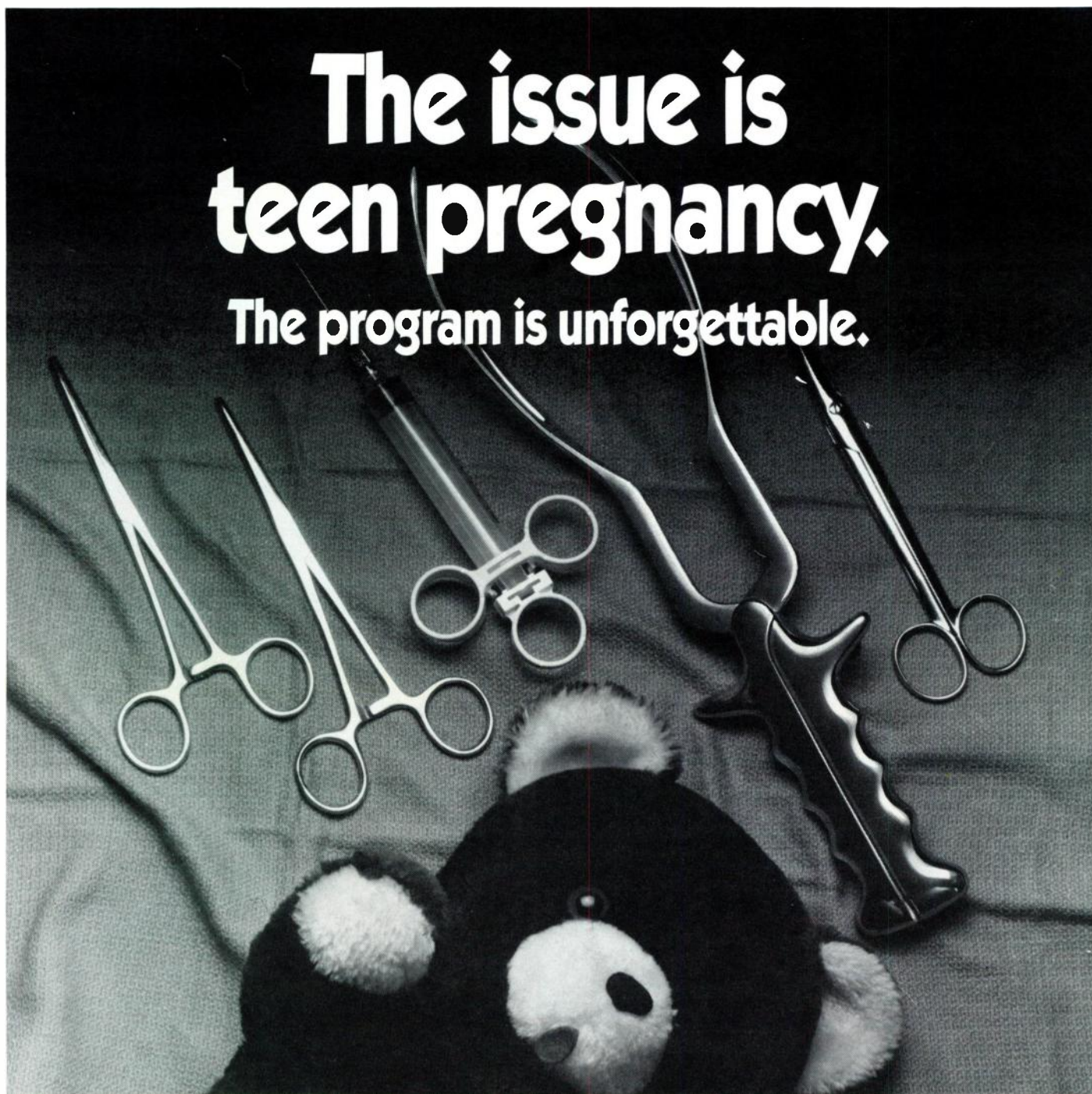
If the union doesn't agree to the concessions by 2 p.m. on Feb. 19, the Post will be shut down, he said.

"At this point, whether or not the Post survives is entirely up to cooperation from our unions," Mr. Murdoch said.

But George McDonald, president of the Allied Printing Trades Council of New York, said that his union last Wednesday filed unfair labor practice charges against Mr. Murdoch with the National Labor Relations Board.

"Mr. Murdoch has not been bargaining in good faith," Mr. McDonald told ELECTRONIC MEDIA. #

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SPR
NEWS SOURCE, INC.

State's exit-poll ban axed

By **DOUG HALONEN**
Staff reporter

A federal appeals court in San Francisco has thrown out a Washington state law that prohibited broadcasters from conducting exit polls near voting booths.

The law at issue prohibited polling voters within 300 feet of a polling place.

"It is content-based, overbroad, and not the least restrictive means of advancing the state's legitimate interest of keeping peace, order and decorum at the polls," said the court in an opinion written by Judge Warren Ferguson.

"Assuming that at least one purpose of the statute was to prevent broadcasting early returns, the statute is unconstitutional because this purpose is impermissible."

Even some of the law's supporters concede that it had been intended to make projections "difficult, if not impossible," according to Jim Johnson, Washington senior assistant attorney general. However, he said the state is considering an appeal.

The major broadcast networks, which use exit polls to project national election winners, challenged the law on constitutional grounds and are said to be considering challenges to similar laws in Florida and Georgia.

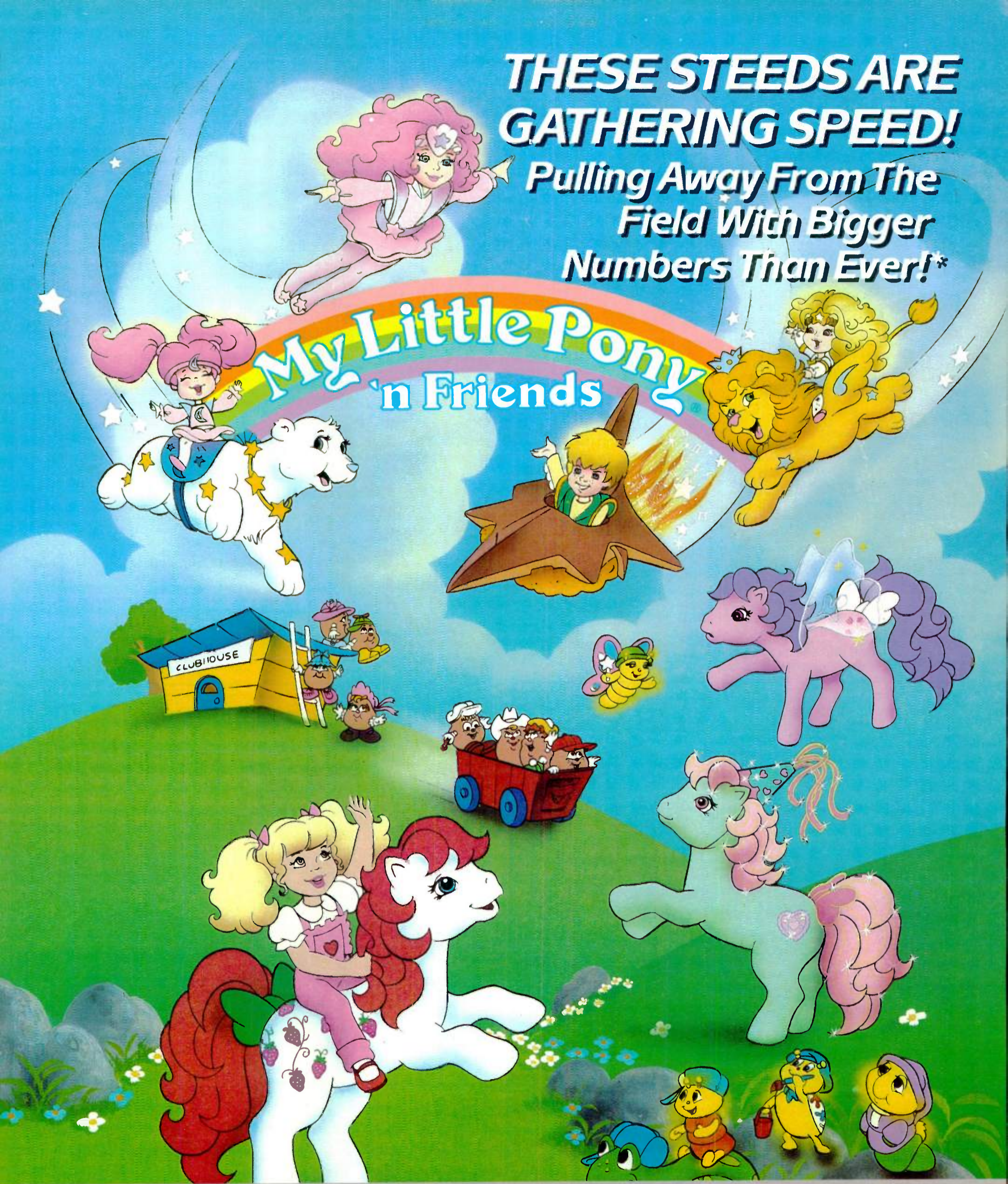
Over the past several years, some political leaders have expressed concerns that early projections of election results could deter late voting.

Congress reviewed the issue after the 1980 and 1984 presidential elections, then the major networks agreed not to project a winner until polls have closed. #

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*Source: NSI Overnights, Nov. '86 and '87

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Multimedia forming new barter unit

GTG Marketing will soon finalize a deal with Multimedia's in-house barter division to form a new barter sales unit, yet unnamed, to sell the one minute of national barter time available in GTG's "USA Today," The Insider has learned. The new entity, in addition to selling the national barter spots in Multimedia's shows, including "Sally Jessy Raphael" and "Donahue," will be looking for other shows to represent.

* * *

In the meantime, another national barter ad sales company, New York-based **International Advertising Sales**, is in discussions with three ad-supported cable networks to sell all or part of their commercial inventories. IAS is a joint venture of Orbis Communications, Paramount Television and Coca-Cola Television, formed last year to sell the national barter units in those three companies' programs. But those involved are keeping the matter close to the vest and won't reveal which three cable services are involved in the deal.

* * *

The major motivator behind the upcoming **Senate antitrust hearings** regarding the cable industry is not Hollywood spokesman Jack Valenti but rather Jim Theroux, president of Metropolitan Cablevision, a Cleveland-based "wireless cable" service. Mr. Theroux and others attempting to offer multichannel, over-the-air competition to cable are alleging that cable operators and satellite programmers have been acting illegally to deny them fair access to HBO, The Disney Channel and other services. The hearings, tentatively planned in Cincinnati sometime the week of March 7 and in Washington on March 17, will be chaired by Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio. Responds an NCTA spokeswoman: "We have seen no evidence of wrongdoing."

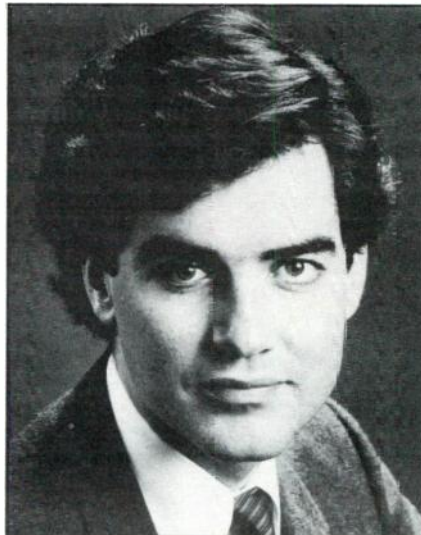
* * *

Don't expect a final decision on a second season of "The Wil Shriner Show" until after this month's NATPE convention. Sources at Group W Productions say the syndicator is withholding its verdict pending a big sales push in Houston, where Group W will be talking up the strip's recent ratings improvements in several key markets.

THE INSIDER



WIL SHRINER
Decision on fate after NATPE



BOB PITTMAN
His new show slated by WWOR-TV

How does CBS News like having its new "48 Hours" moved from Tuesday nights to be pitted against "The Cosby Show" on Thursdays? "I don't think it will hurt our momentum," responds Andrew Heyward, the show's executive producer. "We're going from one tough time period to another." The move, part of a CBS prime-time overhaul, takes place March 17. Mr. Heyward says, "I'm a producer, not a programmer. I have confidence in the people who made the decision. This network has assured me time to find an audience no matter what night we're on."

* * *

NBC has been quietly continuing its **staff reductions**, largely through attrition. So far, about 100 NABET-related positions have been eliminated, according to NBC President Robert Wright. About another 400 jobs could go by year's

end, many of them coming out of NBC's owned TV stations, news and general engineering operations. News cuts would not occur until after the elections and mostly would be related to additional staff that were brought on just for the events, he said.

* * *

Charles McGregor, president of worldwide distribution for Warner Bros. Television Distribution, tells The Insider nobody should be surprised by his company's decision to bypass the 1988 NATPE convention. "We have never exhibited on a floor in any convention, domestic or foreign," he points out. While still supportive of the NATPE organization, Mr. McGregor says Warner Bros. will not be in Houston solely because "we discovered it was not possible to have a hospitality suite in a hotel this year."

* * *

Secaucus, N.J.-based WWOR-TV will begin airing "The Street" on March 28. The station, owned by MCA, will be the first to air the new cops-and-robbers program produced by Quantum Media, the company former MTV head Bob Pittman formed last summer with MCA's financial backing.

* * *

The debt that Miami's WZTA-FM owes Miami attorney Jack Thompson continues to mount—according to Mr. Thompson, that is. The attorney sued the station last year after allegedly being harassed on-air by WZTA jock Neil Rogers. Then he reached a settlement in which Mr. Rogers vowed to cease his offending remarks or pay Mr. Thompson \$5,000 for each incident. The attorney says he's tallied violations every day since then. In about two months, Mr. Thompson said, a panel of arbitrators will decide if the station actually has to pay him.

* * *

And finally, **Robert King**, one-time president of television distribution at Columbia Pictures Television and brother of Roger and Michael King, has hung up a real estate shingle in Summit, N.J. He and another King sibling, sister Diana, have joined forces to open a commercial real estate business named "D&R."#

—Written by Marianne Paskowski from bureau reports

ABC says 'American Top 40' host Casey Kasem on way out

By ADAM BUCKMAN
Staff reporter

Negotiations between ABC Radio Networks and "American Top 40" host Casey Kasem have broken down, and ABC officials say there's little chance that the discussions will be revived.

That means Mr. Kasem likely will end up leaving the weekly countdown show that he originated nearly 19 years ago.

Mr. Kasem's name is almost synonymous with "American Top 40," which premiered in July 1970.

Sources say his leaving could do irreparable harm to the program, which is heard on about 500 U.S. radio stations and throughout the world on Armed Forces Radio Network and other international radio services.

ABC Radio Network and Mr. Kasem had been discussing a new contract since last summer, said Tom Cuddy, ABC Radio Network's vice president of entertainment programming.

Mr. Cuddy said the negotiations broke down during the last few weeks. "What it got down to was compensation," he said.

Mr. Kasem is said to be working under a five-year contract currently worth \$10 million to \$15 million, but the salary could not be confirmed.

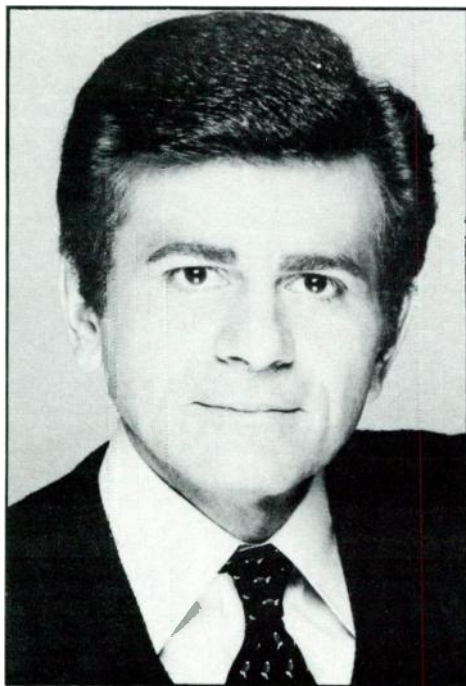
Mr. Cuddy insisted that Mr. Kasem will stay with "American Top 40" until his current contract expires on Jan. 31, 1989.

Mr. Kasem wasn't available for comment last week.

But one of his attorneys, Mark Armbruster of Los Angeles, wasn't sure if negotiations with ABC were really closed.

"As far as we're concerned, the door is not closed to further negotiations," Mr. Armbruster said.

Commenting on the chances that negotia-



CASEY KASEM
Contract talks hit impasse

tions could be reopened with Mr. Kasem, ABC Radio's Tom Cuddy said, "Anything is possible, but it's doubtful."

In the meantime, Mr. Cuddy said he hopes to name a new host as early as next month, although the new host won't start work on the program until Mr. Kasem leaves.

The new host is being named far in advance so that ABC Radio's sales staff can have ample time to reassure advertisers that

"American Top 40" will be essentially the same without Mr. Kasem, Mr. Cuddy said.

He emphasized that the show's name and its various features are owned by ABC. He added that the show's producers and writers will also stay with the program.

"I really think that with all the elements of the show remaining and the staff staying in place, the quality of the show will stay there," Mr. Cuddy said.

But Norm Pattiz, chairman of Los Angeles-based Westwood One, ABC's biggest competitor in the radio network business, disagreed. "Anyone who thinks 'American Top 40' can survive without Casey Kasem is really defying logic," he said.

"Casey Kasem is an institution, and if they're not going to sign him, that makes us real happy."

Mr. Pattiz insisted that Westwood has not yet approached Mr. Kasem about signing with his company.

But he admitted that it's very likely he'll contact Mr. Kasem to see what the radio personality wants to do with his future.

Although Westwood already distributes a successful countdown show—"Scott Shannon's Rockin' America"—Mr. Pattiz said he'd be happy to market another countdown show at the same time. "Why not?" he asked rhetorically.

Besides Paul Harvey, Mr. Kasem is ABC Radio's best-known personality.

The four-hour "American Top 40" is the highest-rated long-form program on network radio.

According to the most recent RADAR report, issued last summer, "American Top 40" attracted an average weekly radio audience of nearly 2.4 million listeners.

Network radio sources estimate that "American Top 40" is worth \$7 million to \$8 million a year in ad billings for ABC.#

TV chief to leave in Taft revamp

By DIANE MERMIGAS
Senior reporter

Great American Broadcasting Co., formerly Taft Broadcasting, last week continued its reorganizational streamlining under new owner Carl Lindner by consolidating its TV and radio operations.

Jack Sander, longtime president of Taft's TV station group, will be leaving the company. In a statement regarding the changes, Great American said the company and Mr. Sander were negotiating his departure, but it didn't elaborate further.

Sources say Mr. Sander, who did not return telephone calls, has a contract that runs through 1989.

Carl Wagner, who has been president of Taft's radio operations since 1974, will head the newly combined broadcast group of 16 radio stations and five network-affiliated TV stations. Mr. Wagner could not be reached for comment.

Officials of the recently purchased company declined further comment about what other moves are afoot.

Mr. Lindner, a Cincinnati entrepreneur, has put a tight clamp on public discussion of Great American Broadcasting's affairs since buying the company last year from the Taft family.

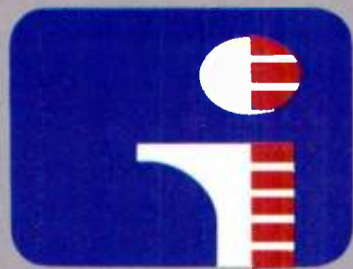
He also has declined to discuss his business matters with the press.

Several months ago, Great American announced the streamlining and consolidation of its entertainment operations, in addition to other new management appointments.#



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'Star Trek' on right track

That "Star Trek: The Next Generation" breaks new territory in first-run syndication, at least in terms of its budget and scope, seems unarguable. But whether others will follow remains a question.

As our cover story this week explores, what Paramount has done is produce a first-run action series with a very large, network-level budget—and a correspondingly large network-level deficit.

That's clearly good news for stations, especially independents, who have waited many years for a syndicated series of this caliber and popularity. The show's demographics, researchers say, are phenomenal. Its average rating almost doubles what stations used to get in the same time slots.

But there's a big risk, too. In four years, Paramount will have spent \$133 million on production costs. Even if the show's success continues, there won't be any significant net profits until as late as 1993 (though at that point those profits could be very significant indeed).

Thus the question: Will others follow? Some will, we think, but only the biggest players with the deepest pockets. No one else is going to have the cash to

play at this table.

Even before "Star Trek," Fox Broadcasting had backed some fine first-run series for its new network, including Stephen Cannell's "21 Jump Street," though none of these approaches "Trek" in terms of budget or hype.

The point is that for first-run to grow and prosper—and independent stations with it—this is one of the primary directions it must grow in. Not all companies can participate, but certainly the major studios ought to be moving this way.

And look at it this way: This means a big-budget show can finally be produced without facing constant feedback from network officials. Though sometimes that feedback is helpful, other times it springs from network rating and scheduling concerns that only impede a show's development.

At the same time, the studio has to allow the show's creative team to do its work. Paramount has given Gene Roddenberry much latitude so far, and the results are apparent.

Now let's see who next chooses to boldly go where no one has gone before. #

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

One-man-band reporters of the future will be better rounded

I read, with interest, the article on "one-man bands" in reporting (Feb. 1, cover).

I enjoyed the comments, since the business is going back to a practice we never had the opportunity to leave. My staff of seven all do their own shooting, writing and editing... and ultimately anchoring the material.

Larry Grossman of NBC indeed has a valid point in the need to reconsider sending a whole crew to shoot a correspondent... but that can be the exception more than the rule.

I guess what bothered me the most was the opening sentence to the piece...

"A television correspondent of the 1990s

will never become a star the way David Brinkley did."

Is that why I got into this business? I was under the belief the news comes first... and the reporter is just the messenger. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for advancement in this business, but over the years I've seen some fine reporters and anchors turned out of this shop. These are well-rounded people who know the value of time, of selective shooting, editing under the gun and tightening their writing to the story. These same people then have the pleasure of delivering, or having someone else deliver, their work.

Who cares if Harry Reasoner will never have to pick up a camera... The Harry Reasoner of tomorrow will know how when he/she has to.

Mike Michalak
news director/anchor
WJFW-TV
Wausau, Wis.

Clear-channel radio offers alternatives

Please allow one more viewpoint in your "Local vs. Distant AM Radio" (Jan. 18, Page 12) letters series.

Let's begin by examining what we are protecting by eliminating clear channels. Local programming? Not around here. The "one-lung" stations in this area (and other areas too) do no local programming at night, when the clear channels begin to appear. Most small AM stations have gone satellite. Some of them have live local announcers during morning drive, some may go a step further with local live jocks during afternoon drive, but evening brings satellite-delivered music or network programs.

I enjoy Larry King and Talknet, but need they appear at a dozen different locations on my dial?

On the other hand, I can tune in the clear channels and listen to ball games from Dallas and Detroit, classic radio drama from Chicago and Philadelphia, non-network talk from Atlanta and Pittsburgh and regional news from Denver and Boston. When the temperature is below zero here, I can tune in New Orleans and hear weather reports to dream about. And we've all heard stories of the guy in Montana who

every Saturday drives his pickup truck a hundred miles to a mountaintop where he can pick up WHO from Des Moines to listen to late-night replays of the Iowa football games.

Please don't replace this rich diversity of programming with "local" radio that, although broadcast by a nearby transmitter, actually originates in a studio in New York, by a jock who can't tell you the local temperature or even the local time ("27 minutes past the hour," whatever the hour may be in your time zone).

Finally, the average American moves every five years. Many of my colleagues are from other parts of the country, and their only link with home is a late-night clear-channel radio broadcast.

Dan Hughes
general manager
WPCD-FM
Parkland College
Champaign, Ill.

P.S. As for the suggestion that I buy a shortwave radio: Radio Moscow is fun sometimes, but it's not the Cleveland Indians or the Grand Ole Opry.

Write to us

ELECTRONIC MEDIA welcomes letters to the editor. If you want to speak out, write to Viewpoint, ELECTRONIC MEDIA, 740 Rush St., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

All letters are subject to publication provided they are signed and neither defame nor libel individuals or organizations.

Letters may be shortened and grammatical errors corrected.

As a matter of policy, writers' names are published. #

QUICK TAKES

What do you think of CBS News' new "48 Hours" prime-time series?



Tom Newberry
news director
KXTV-TV
(CBS)
Sacramento,
Calif.

"I think the show is well done, with some interesting elements. But moving it up against 'The Cosby Show' will be interesting. It's entertainment vs. news, and I hope '48 Hours' does well. But it might be real tough."



Donald Feldman
news director
WCSC-TV
(CBS)
Charleston,
S.C.

"I think it's very good. It's instantaneous, topical. It can rapidly respond to issues, quickly confront issues on the minds of viewers. The news media take heat for skirting issues, and '48 Hours' is a way to dig deep. And I'm not just saying this because we're a CBS affiliate."



Lee Giles
news director
WISH-TV
(CBS)
Indianapolis

"I think it has emotional impact and intensity the way it's put together. I'm concerned that the show might start passing judgment on issues. I'm concerned about that type of treatment. But it is innovative. '48 Hours' has tremendous potential."

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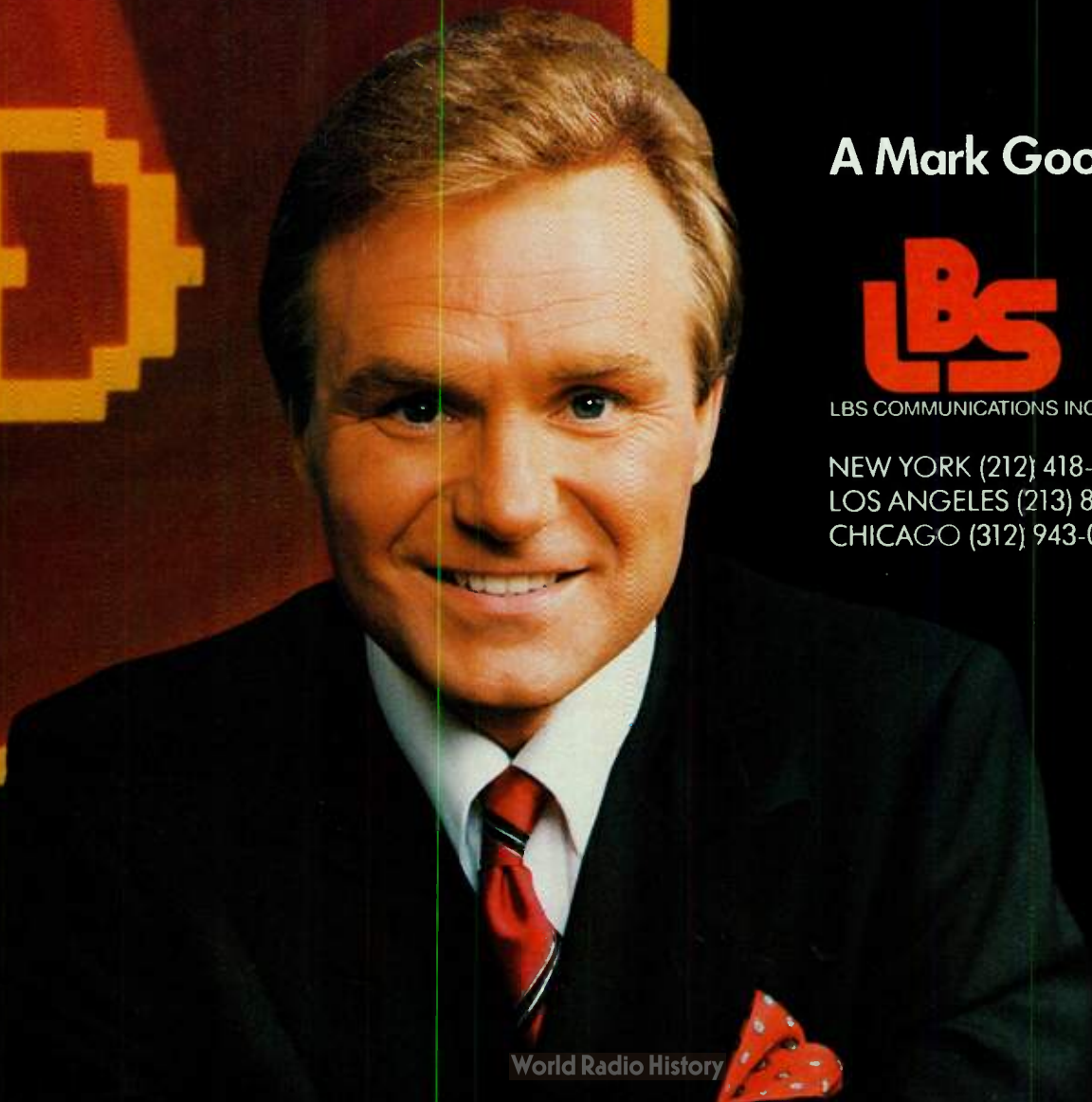
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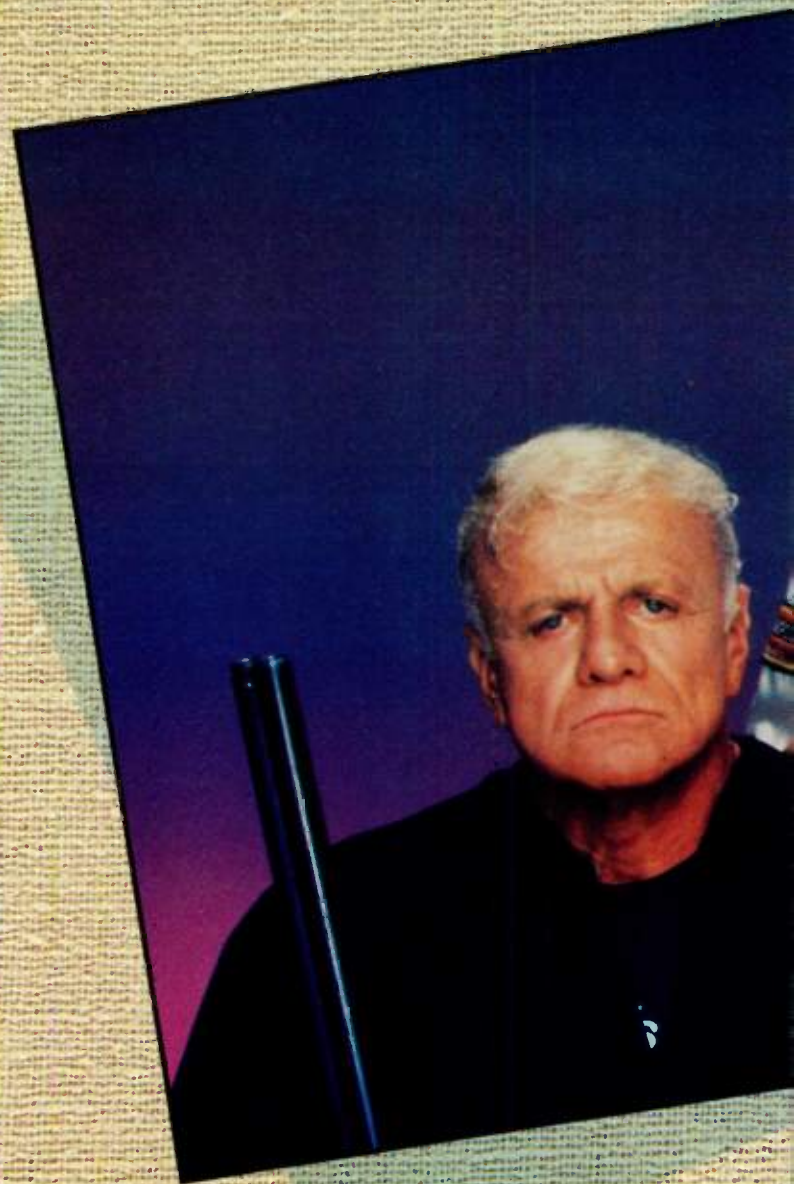
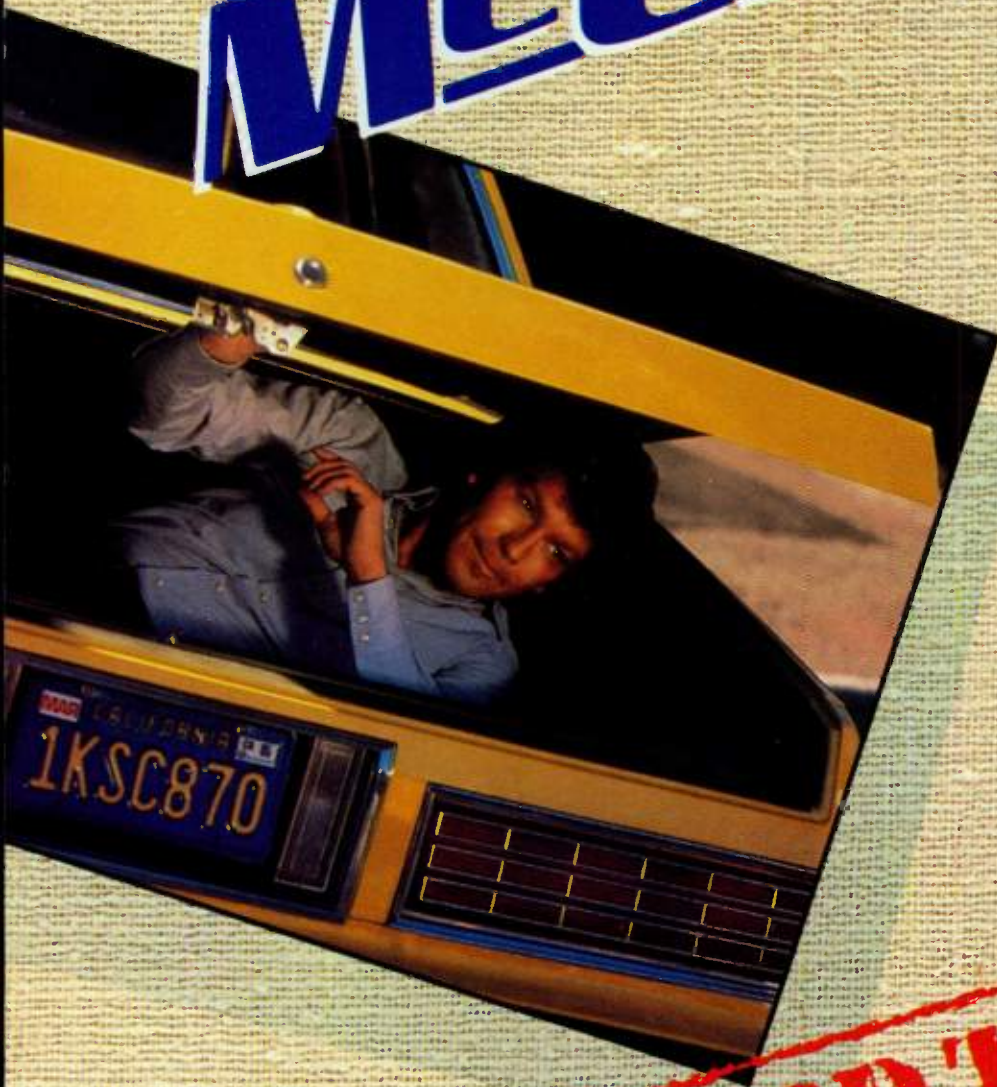
World Radio History

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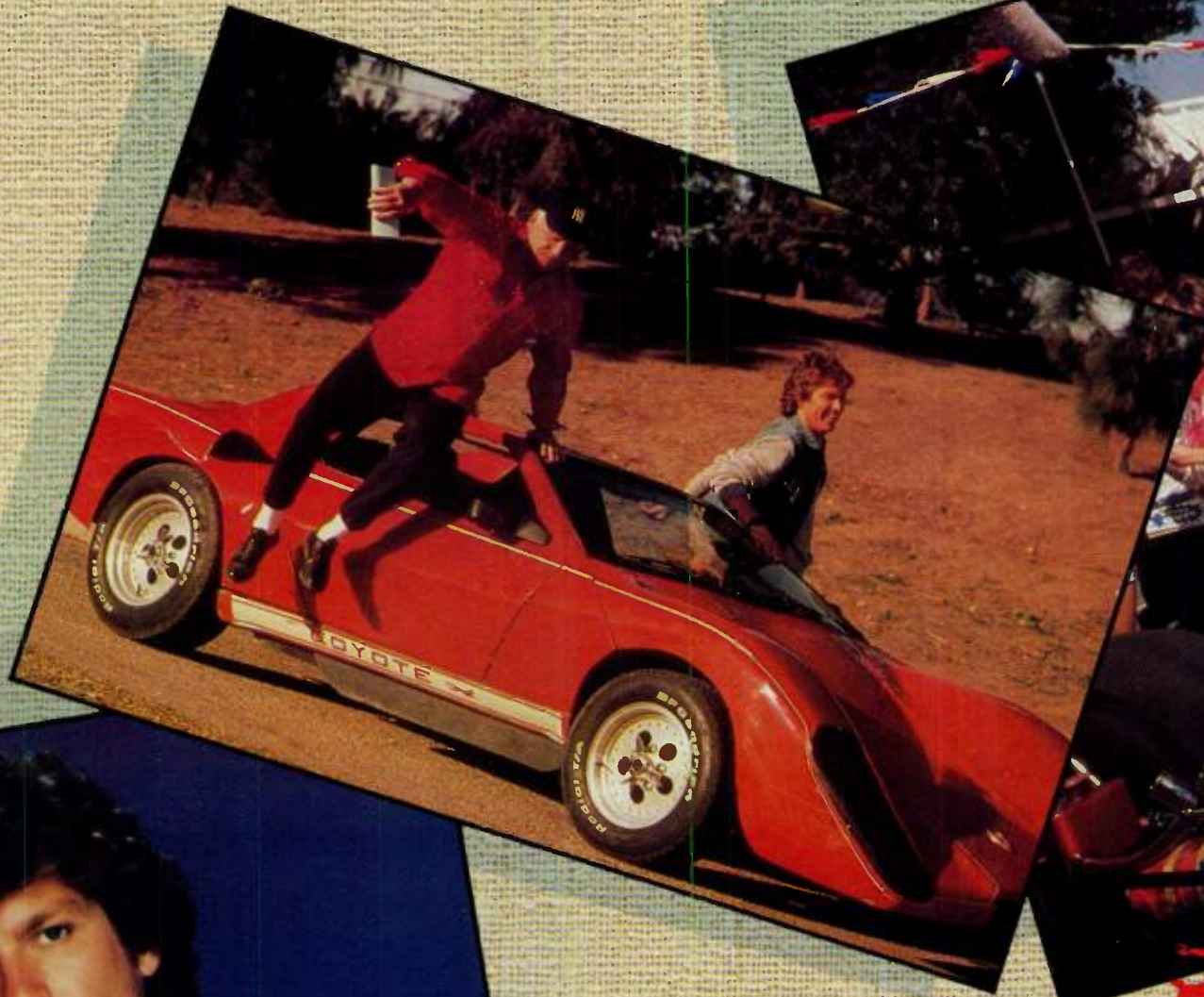
Los Angeles/KHJ	+ 43%
San Francisco/KRON	+ 58%
Seattle/KOMO	+ 27%
Hartford/WTIC	+ 100%
Nashville/WSMV	+ 36%
New Orleans/WDSU	+ 140%

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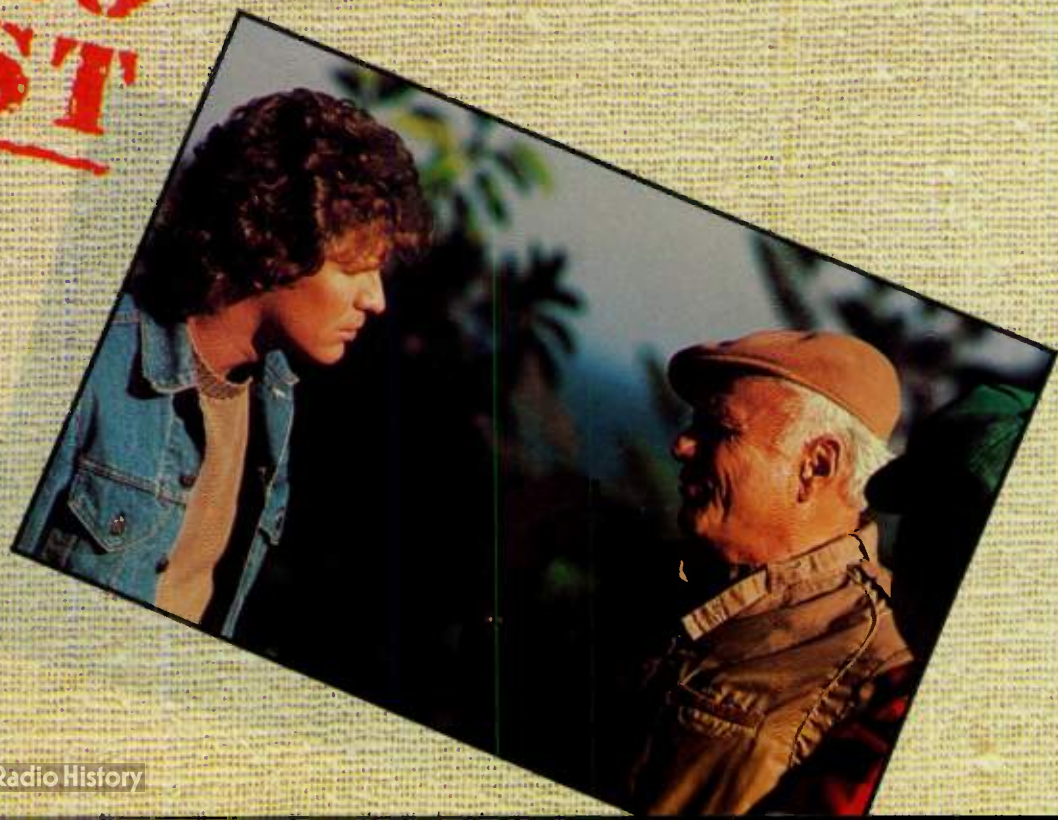
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'Star Trek' explores new first-run worlds

(Continued from front cover)

Analysts use the words "phenomenon," "magic" and "unbelievable" in describing the demographic and household TV ratings stacked up by "Star Trek: The Next Generation" during its first sweeps period last November.

Judging by its current showing, the series, which is barely 5 months old, is on a course that could take it into syndication's stratosphere, even though Paramount won't get a return on its heavy investment until 1992 or 1993.

Mel Harris, president of the Paramount Television Group, calls the "Star Trek" concept the studio's "family jewel."

The creator, Gene Roddenberry, says the idea, including the syndicated original TV show, the movies and other merchandise, has spawned \$1 billion in revenues.

So Paramount has decided to bet in a big way that the success will spill over to first-run syndication.

"However, it is not going to be a profitable venture until such time as we start through our second cycle of syndication—stripping," Mr. Harris admits.

To reach that point, Paramount ideally needs about 100 completed episodes. At a cost of at least \$1.3 million each, plus \$5.5 million for last October's two-hour pilot, the studio will shell out at least \$133 million on production in the first four years.

That's apart from promotion, marketing and distribution costs, which Mr. Harris concedes are "substantial."

Therefore, Paramount has to keep the starship Enterprise back in space for several years to recoup its investment from reruns in a cycle that's shorter, yet similar, to the one that network shows go through.

To keep luring viewers to the syndicated effort, the company is employing some of the most advanced digital editing techniques available in order to match the quality of the four "Star Trek" theatrical films.

The studio spends \$75,000 per episode on special effects (NBC budgeted \$186,000 for each original segment during the network run), and it uses an elaborate set that occupies three of its sound stages to produce each installment.

It takes about 88 hours of taping and five weeks of production to create the 43 minutes needed for each episode. Shooting on tape instead of film allows the series' producers much more technical flexibility, while the use of digital electronics enables them to do effects for TV that were once limited to big-budget feature films.

Paramount relied on George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic for some special effects in the pilot, but it's now doing most of the work in-house. The editing staff uses an editing unit composed of 17 Beta video decks to create the finished episodes.

"For a television show, what we are doing has not really been done on this scale before," says Rob Legato, the series' visual effects supervisor. "We're able to do techniques that if you had to do it in film would take many weeks, but we can do them in several hours."

The new show averages about 60 or 70 special effects per episode. The original series, which ran for 79 episodes on NBC from 1966 to 1969, averaged 20 or 25 special effects.

"One of the 'Star Trek' features has about 110 effects, and we had in one hour show about 100. And in the pilot we had over 210," Mr. Legato says.

The "Star Trek" special effects crew is also able to adapt some scenes from the theatrical films to the TV series as a cost-effective way to achieve some effects.

With resources such as that available, coupled with the cult status and success of the original syndicated series, Paramount has been able to line up 215 stations covering 99 percent of the country for the new series.

Paramount sold the new series to most stations together with the 79 episodes of the original series, a 105-hour package it calls the "Complete Star Trek."



'They said, "Do it the way you think it should be done." That was a pretty heady experience. You don't hear that too often in television. . . . I only know of one way to make a show like this and to start a new show - my way.'

—Gene Roddenberry
executive producer
'Star Trek: The Next Generation'

As early as this fall, most of those stations will be in a position to include the 26 new hours in rotation with the old episodes, thereby creating fewer repeat episodes.

Initial ratings results have been positive. In A.C. Nielsen Co. figures, "Star Trek" boosted the stations' time slots in the top 100 markets from an average 4 rating (percentage of TV homes) and an 8 share (percentage of sets in use) in November 1986 to a 7/14 in November 1987.

"It's magic," says Janeen Bjork, vice president and director of programming at the Seltel rep firm. "Stations are getting demographics that they've never gotten before."

"The audience composition is incredible," adds Debbie Myers, vice president and associate network director at the Saatchi & Saatchi DFS Compton ad agency in New York. "The demographics are so attractive that it probably isn't real hard for (Paramount) to price (the barter spots) attractively."

But Ms. Myers doesn't believe that "Star Trek" is really setting any new standards in syndication; she says it's more the exception than the rule.

"I think this was unique in the sense that it was a show that had a presold concept, a loyal audience and had done very well in theatrical releases in the last couple of years," she explains.

"Paramount did a first-class job," says Bob Igiel, senior vice president and executive media director at the N W Ayer

ad agency in New York. "If other syndicators want to produce that kind of quality, I would encourage it, but I don't know if it's practical."

While the show is costing advertisers more than many syndicated shows, it is delivering lucrative young audiences other offerings have been unable to reach, Mr. Igiel says.

"I hate to use an old bromide, but you get what you pay for," he adds.

To continue to build interest, the studio is moving into Phase II of its effort—an extensive merchandising campaign. By fall, Paramount executives say they'll have locked down about 40 licensing agreements for products related to the new syndicated series.

Series-related products on the market include Frisbees, launchers, ship models, dolls, hand phasers, cups, play sets, T-shirts, lunch boxes, computer games, sleeping bags and comic books.

Plans also have been drawn for a line of clothes, bed linens, school supplies and possibly even a Visa credit card with a "Star Trek" logo.

Top that off with the major marketing effort at the series' launch—a promotion on 24 million boxes of Cheerios and Honey-Nut Cheerios cereals, and the sales of nearly 2 million "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" videocassettes that included a 60-second commercial for the TV series, and it adds up to an unprecedented push for a syndicated series.

But before Paramount could worry

about making hand phasers and toys emblazoned with the "Star Trek" logo, it had to put all of its faith in "Star Trek" creator Mr. Roddenberry to establish the new series and get it on track.

When Paramount came to Mr. Roddenberry two years ago with the idea of the syndicated series, he was told he would have complete creative control. There would be no interference from a network censor, the 66-year-old producer was told.

"They said, 'Do it the way you think it should be done.' That was a pretty heady experience," Mr. Roddenberry admits. "You don't hear that too often in television."

To establish the concept of the "next generation" of the original series, Mr. Roddenberry did exactly what Paramount had given him the power to do and kept an extremely tight hold on the creative reins.

Until just recently, he worked seven days a week, 10 or 11 hours a day, writing and rewriting each script of the first 15 episodes while still fulfilling his other responsibilities as executive producer.

"I only know of one way to make a show like this and to start a new show—my way," he says emphatically. "I'm sorry, it is goddamn well going to be my way, with the way I draw the characters and the way I say the story should go."

Mr. Roddenberry is defensive apparently because his dominance disturbed some writers, who reportedly have filed grievances with the Writers Guild of America against him. It is against WGA policy to confirm such actions, and Paramount won't comment.

"In doing it my way, what I have drawn and have on the screen now are . . . characters that are fully realized. You can look up and see them," says Mr. Roddenberry.

He developed the new series' nine regular characters.

"Now writers can write them having seen them, where they could not have written them from a format," he says. "I remember the first time. Who could I have explained Mr. Spock to?"

Today, Mr. Roddenberry says he has pulled back and relinquished some creative control of the series. Still, he remains the only major creative force on the regular staff of the new series that also worked on the original "Star Trek."

When the series premiered in September, there were four other employees who had worked on the original series, but they have since left the staff: D.C. Fontana, who wrote the pilot; former writer David Gerrold; former supervising producer Ed Milkis; and former supervising producer Robert Justman, who is now a consulting producer.

The new series' two original co-producers and writers, Herbert Wright and Bob Lewin, have also been replaced.

While sources in the Hollywood production community have long said that several staffers left because of Mr. Roddenberry's unusual amount of control over the show, the show's principals deny turnover on the series has been unusual.

Paramount apparently supports Mr. Roddenberry 100 percent.

Meanwhile, Mr. Roddenberry feels he's getting almost instant recognition for the successful syndicated series, something he didn't get for the original network show.

"I never made a profit on (the original 'Star Trek') for 16 years," Mr. Roddenberry claims.

"The first couple of years after it was off the air it was considered an expensive error, and no one wanted the guy who had committed such nonsense upon the public."

After NBC canceled the first "Star Trek" in 1969 after a three-year run, "we had a little difficulty holding the homestead together," he recalls. "For a couple of years, our only income was lecture fees I got from colleges where kids still loved 'Star Trek,' even though it was not a commercial success."

(Continued on Page 36)

The Mystery • The Danger • The Children

The Adventure • The Housework

The Intrigue



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SUPERIOR

<u>MARKET</u>	<u>STATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>NOVEMBER '86 PROGRAMMING</u>	<u>SUPERIOR'S HH SHARE INCREASE</u>
NEW YORK	WCBS	4:00PM	Divorce Court	+13%
CHICAGO	WBBM	3:30PM	Donahue	+13%
DETROIT	WJBK	9:30AM	Fantasy Island	+70%
DALLAS	KXAS	3:30PM	Falcon Crest	+100%
WASHINGTON D.C.*	WJLA	10:00AM	Superior Court	+53%
ATLANTA	WSB	10:30AM	Superior Court	+30%
MIAMI	WSVN	12:30PM	Superior Court	+20%
SEATTLE	KSTW	11:30AM	Divorce Court	+45%
PHOENIX*	KNXV	11:30AM	Maude	+133%
BALTIMORE*	WBAL	9:00AM	Divorce Court	+33%
HARTFORD*	WTNH	10:30AM	Superior Court	+62%
MILWAUKEE*	WITI	4:00PM	Superior Court	+10%
NASHVILLE	WTVF	4:30PM	Superior Court	+22%
RALEIGH	WTVD	5:00PM	Superior Court	+81%
OKLAHOMA CITY	KOCO	4:00PM	One Day/Time	+63%
SAN ANTONIO	KENS	4:00PM	Superior Court	+16%
HARRISBURG	WHP	5:00PM	People's Court	+38%
GREENSBORO	WXII	5:00PM	Superior Court	+30%
TULSA*	KTUL	3:30PM	Superior Court	+19%
RICHMOND	WTVR	9:00AM	Superior Court	+47%
SHREVEPORT	KTBS	10:00AM	Fame/Romance	+129%

SUPERIOR

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GROWTH.

<u>MARKET</u>	<u>STATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>NOVEMBER '86 PROGRAMMING</u>	<u>SUPERIOR'S HH SHARE INCREASE</u>
KNOXVILLE *	WATE	4:30PM	Magnum P.I.	+94%
CHATTANOOGA *	WDEF	9:30AM	CBS News	+81%
SOUTH BEND	WSJV	5:00PM	Love Connection	+46%
JOHNSTOWN	WTAJ	5:00PM	Superior Court	+27%
EL PASO	KTSM	4:30PM	Superior Court	+11%
FORT WAYNE *	WKJG	5:00PM	Card Sharks	+13%
MADISON *	WISC	8:30AM	The Jeffersons	+90%
FARGO *	KTHI	4:00PM	Superior Court	+17%
CHARLESTON, SC	WCIV	5:00PM	Superior Court	+30%
MONTGOMERY *	WAKA	8:00AM	Superior Court	+75%
LAFAYETTE, LA *	KATC	10:30AM	Jeopardy	+75%
JOPLIN	KOAM	4:00PM	Superior Court	+36%
TERRE HAUTE	WTWO	5:00PM	Happy Days	+53%
CORPUS CHRISTI *	KZTV	4:30PM	People's Court	+43%
DULUTH	KDLH	4:30PM	Superior Court	+24%
MACON *	WGXA	10:30AM	Love Connection	+89%
BECKLEY	WVVA	5:00PM	Superior Court	+16%
MASON CITY	KIMT	9:30AM	Oprah Winfrey	+14%
LUBBOCK	KAMC	4:30PM	Superior Court	+33%
MEDFORD *	KTVL	3:30PM	Young & Restless	+25%
BANGOR	WVII	5:00PM	Superior Court	+29%

SOURCE: NSI Cassandra 11/87, *ARB Apollo 11/87

RENEWALS.

PORTLAND	BIRMINGHAM
KANSAS CITY	NORFOLK
CINCINNATI	HARRISBURG
MILWAUKEE	GREENSBORO
NEW ORLEANS	LITTLE ROCK
GREENVILLE	
BUFFALO	



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NBC's Rogers charting new cable territories

Tom Rogers is a tough negotiator. But then, he has a tough job. The 33-year-old attorney was handpicked by NBC President Robert Wright a year ago to lead the company into cable TV and other new business ventures that would strengthen its core operations and expand its revenue base.

The task, so far, has proven easier said than done. But that isn't for lack of effort on either man's part.

Mr. Rogers, a Columbia Law School graduate, is a well-suited choice to help lead NBC, and perhaps all of commercial network broadcasting, into a new era of expansion that could alter the old ground rules.

He was a senior counsel to the House Telecommunications Subcommittee from 1981 until last year. In that role, he helped to draft the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984.

Prior to that, Mr. Rogers was with the Wall Street law firm of Lord, Day & Lord.

Mr. Wright also has credentials well-suited to changing the face of network television. He formerly headed the successful financial services operations of NBC's corporate parent, General Electric, and served for several years as head of Cox Communications' cable TV unit at a time when GE was contemplating its acquisition.

Combine both men's financial, legal and cable TV savvy, with the \$1 billion or more GE is willing to spend annually on developing new business ventures or re-enforcing existing ones for NBC, and you have a winning formula—if the cable TV industry would only cooperate.

"The cable services have a real problem. They have existed so far on the strength of their growing penetration. But that's starting to level off now," Mr. Wright said in a recent interview with ELECTRONIC MEDIA.

"They are under pressure to spend more for better-quality programming, and we're under pressure to spend less. Neither side wants to do that, so we're pretty much at a standstill on it for now."

Last week, sources said NBC was close to securing a deal with Walt Disney Productions to produce a children's series that would appear on the network after its cable TV run. Mr. Wright said the agreement would be an important first step towards establishing NBC as a program supplier to cable TV—something he concedes will likely be accomplished through small steps.

"I doubt that we will find ourselves producing miniseries or extravagant movies for cable because their cost would be the same as ours," Mr. Wright said. "And right now, cable doesn't appear to want to pay those kinds of prices for programming."

Mr. Rogers admits that a variety of obstacles stand in the way of NBC's goal.

"We have expressed our concern whether the cable industry is offering sufficient incentive to a major league programmer to come in at this point and commit the type of resources necessary to substantially improve the quality of cable programming," he said.

Although NBC continues to make its pitch for supplying programming or taking an equity position in various cable services, it isn't close to any new agreements, Mr. Wright said.

Both men said serious discussions continue with multiple cable system operators, including Tele-Communications Inc., as well as a number of major cable TV services.

Had an equity-program supply deal been worked out with Turner Broadcasting System, NBC would have been prepared to make an initial half-billion dollar investment. That could be matched at any time by another half-billion dollars to buy more TV stations, become more heavily involved in theatrical film production and develop other new business ventures—all bankrolled by General Electric.

Messrs. Wright and Rogers say that while it's possible something still could be worked out with the indefatigable Ted Turner, it is not probable.

"His MSO partners have him locked in," says Mr. Wright. "He owes them \$38 million in note payments and doesn't have the money. The MSOs want him to pay them back in stock options so that they can assume greater control of TBS, and he doesn't want that."

"The MSOs want a greater piece of the company rather than give a piece to us. It isn't likely that kind of situation will come around to us again. I think Time Inc. is the winner on that."

Should Mr. Turner default on his financial payments to the MSOs, Time Inc. would assume operating control of his company.

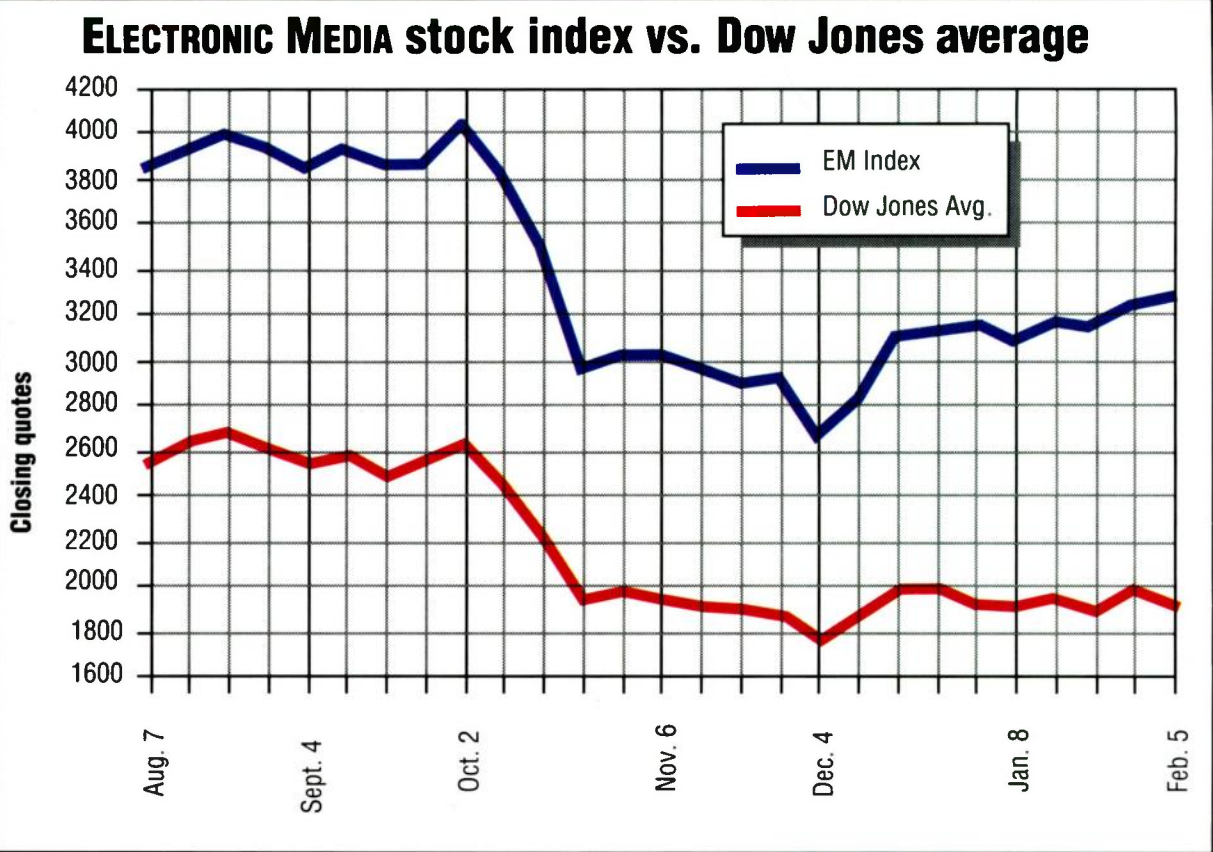
It is also unlikely NBC will seek to launch its own cable program service, Mr. Wright said. "The questions are, would it be carried by the MSOs and would it make money? I can't tell you there is a crying appetite for another cable program service. The

(Continued on Page 110)



BUSINESS BEAT

Diane Mermigas



Company	Jan. 29	Feb. 5	Change
Lorimar Telepictures	\$10.00	\$10.63	6.30%
Jones Intercable	\$10.88	\$11.38	4.60%
Cap Cities/ABC	\$337.75	\$350.75	3.85%
King World	\$18.38	\$19.00	3.37%
United Cable	\$26.88	\$27.75	3.24%
Viacom	\$20.25	\$20.75	2.47%
Multimedia	\$54.00	\$55.00	1.85%
MCA	\$38.63	\$39.25	1.60%
TCI	\$24.50	\$24.88	1.55%
Time Inc.	\$86.50	\$87.75	1.45%
Scripps Howard	\$80.00	\$81.00	1.25%
Comcast	\$24.50	\$24.75	1.02%
A.H. Belo	\$48.13	\$48.25	0.25%
Gulf & Western	\$71.50	\$71.63	0.18%

Cablevision	Jan. 29	Feb. 5	Change
CBS	\$157.75	\$155.88	-1.19%
Tribune Co.	\$36.63	\$36.00	-1.72%
Turner Broadcasting	\$9.13	\$8.75	-4.16%
Disney	\$58.13	\$55.38	-4.73%
Coca-Cola	\$37.63	\$35.50	-5.66%
General Electric	\$45.13	\$42.50	-5.83%
Home Shopping	\$4.25	\$4.00	-5.88%
Gannett	\$37.00	\$34.75	-6.08%

Multimedia reports income boost

Greenville, S.C.-based **Multimedia** reported 1987 net earnings of \$12.5 million, or \$1.03 per share, compared to a net loss of \$4.7 million, or a loss of 42 cents per share, a year earlier. Earnings were aided by a \$3 million after-tax gain from its sale of WWNC-AM, Asheville, N.C., and a 10 percent increase in revenues to \$410.8 million, from \$371.8 million the previous year. Each of Multimedia's four divisions (broadcasting, cablevision, newspaper and entertainment) posted improved operating profits for the year. The company also reported that fourth-quarter operating profit was up 14 percent to \$38.1 million, on an 11 percent increase in revenues to \$111.2 million. Multimedia owns five TV stations, seven radio stations and operates more than 100 cable franchises in four states. Multimedia also syndicates "Donahue" and "Sally Jessy Raphael," among other programs.

Arlington, Va.-based **Gannett Co.** said fourth-quarter profits increased 20

BUSINESS BRIEFS

percent on the strength of its local newspaper and USA Today operations. Fourth-quarter earnings were \$106.6 million, or 66 cents per share, compared to \$88.8 million, or 55 cents per share, for the same period a year earlier. Fourth-quarter revenues increased 7 percent to \$835.4 million from \$781.5 million a year earlier. Gannett posted a 16 percent earnings gain for the year, to \$319.4 million, or \$1.98 per share, from \$276.4 million, or \$1.71 per share in 1986. The company's 1987 revenues rose 10 percent to \$3.1 billion, from \$2.8 billion the previous year. Gannett owns 16 radio stations and 10 TV stations, which cover 11 percent of the United States.

Bilmar Communications has agreed to sell easy-listening KEZL-FM, Fowler, Calif., near Fresno, to **AVI Partners** for \$2.2 million, pending FCC approval.

Chapman Associates brokered the deal.

Miami-based **Knight-Ridder** said its fourth-quarter profits rose 14.5 percent to \$50 million, or 86 cents per share, from \$43.7 million, or 75 cents per share, a year earlier. Fourth-quarter revenues rose 7.8 percent to \$556.8 million. For the year, the company posted a 10.8 percent increase in earnings to \$155.2 million, or \$2.65 per share, from \$140 million, or \$2.41 per share, the previous year. Revenues rose 8 percent to \$2.1 billion, from \$1.9 billion in 1986. The company's operating income from newspaper operations rose 8 percent to \$326.2 million for the year, but operating income fell 35 percent to \$14.5 million in its broadcasting sector.

Phoenix-based Transcolumbia Communications Ltd. has agreed to sell Salt Lake City's KMGR-AM/FM to Seattle-based **Bingham Communications Group** for \$1.9 million, pending FCC approval. #

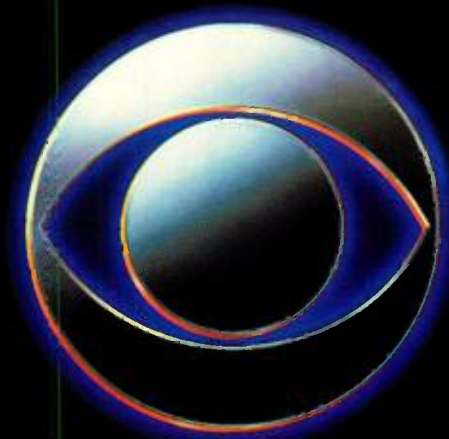
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WBBM-CHICAGO

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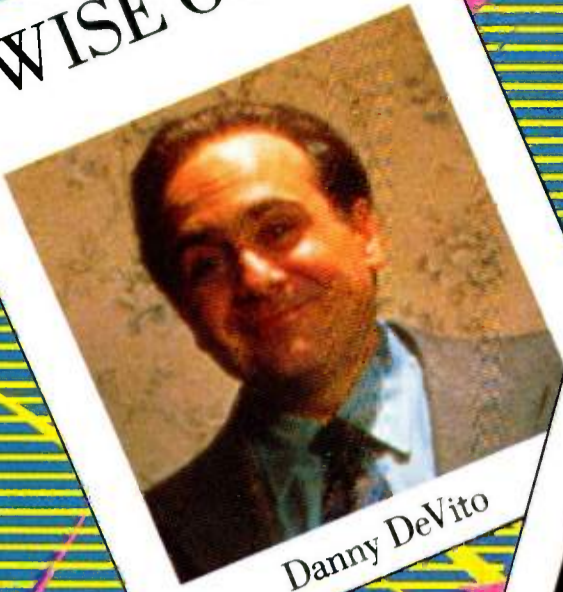
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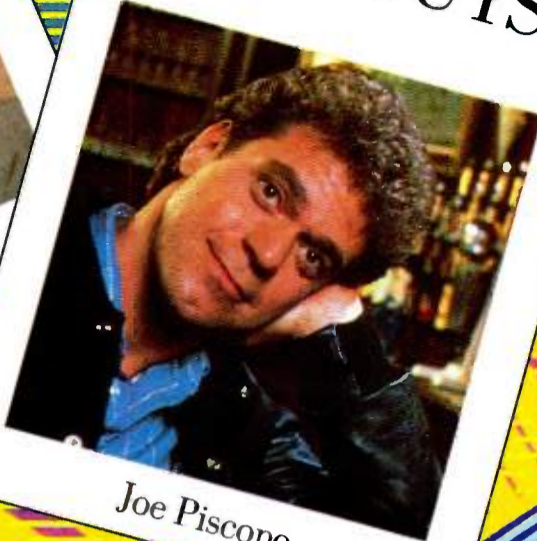
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*Access: 1986-1989 season

WISE GUYS



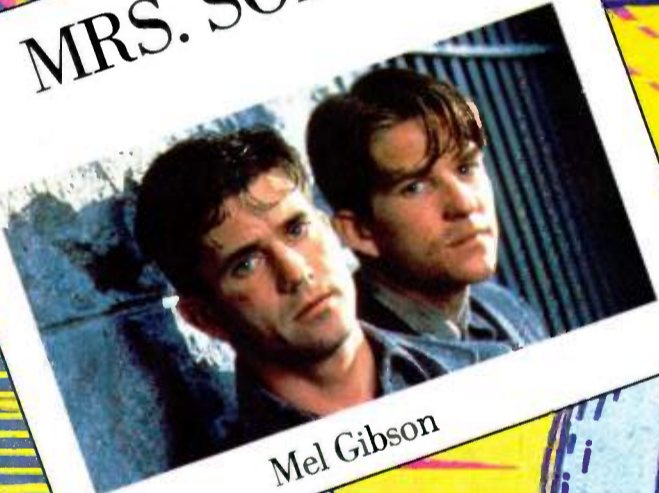
Danny DeVito

WISE GUYS



Joe Piscopo

MRS. SOFFEL



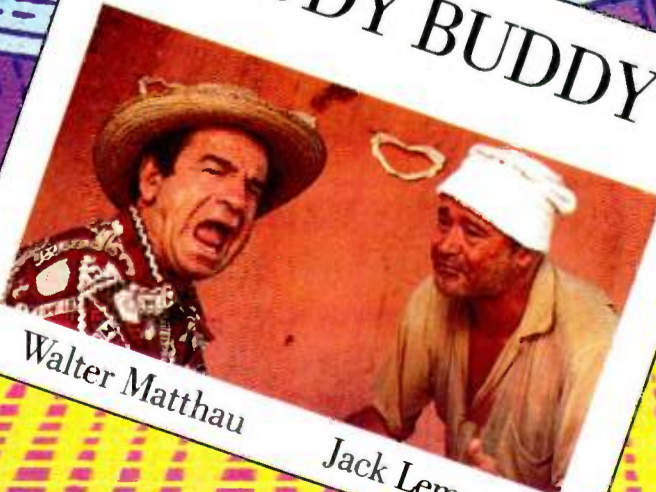
Mel Gibson

MRS. SOFFEL



Diane Keaton

BUDDY BUDDY



Walter Matthau

Jack Lemmon

PREMIERE 4

THE HUNGER



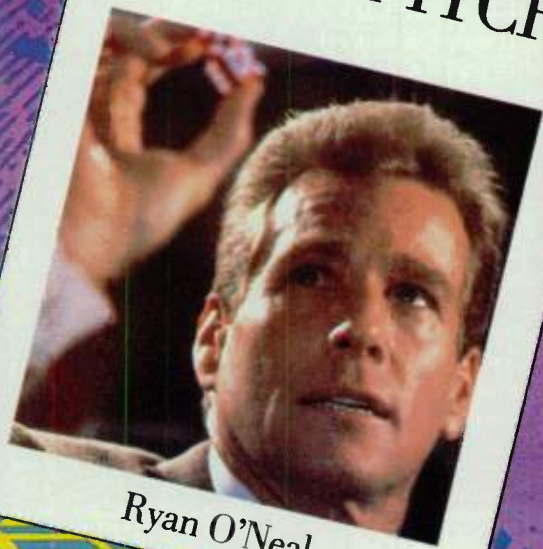
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PREMIERE

Radio group to examine ratings issues

By ADAM BUCKMAN
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—A committee of radio research executives has been formed by the 51-year-old Advertising Research Foundation here to examine ratings and advertising issues in radio.

The ARF's Radio Steering Committee, which began to take shape last year, has 43 members representing ad agencies, radio ratings services, radio stations and radio networks.

The committee has already been split into four subcommittees that will each examine one of four issues in radio research that were identified by the committee last year, according to the committee's chairman, Bruce Goerlich, vice president

and corporate media research director for D'Arcy, Masius, Benton & Bowles, a New York-based ad agency.

The four areas of concern are: the effectiveness of radio advertising; the measurement of audiences for network and syndicated radio programs—especially long-form shows; the need to improve the measurement of black and Hispanic radio audiences; and the relatively low listener response rates from which radio ratings services derive ratings for networks and stations.

Mr. Goerlich said the subcommittee looking into the effectiveness of radio advertising is thinking about conducting a comprehensive study of the medium that would be aimed at learning how well radio commercials sell products to consumers.

Although some information on the effectiveness of radio ad campaigns is available from the Radio Advertising Bureau and other groups, the ARF study would be the first "comprehensive" effort to quantify the effectiveness of radio as an advertising medium, Mr. Goerlich said.

The subcommittee on radio's effectiveness is chaired by Ron Werth, senior vice president of research for United Stations Radio Networks, New York.

The chairman of the subcommittee on measuring audiences for network and syndicated programs is Sylvia Hughes, vice president of CBS Radio Research.

Ms. Hughes' subcommittee is responsible for studying the current methods in use for measuring audiences for long-form radio programs.

The issue is of particular concern to radio networks and buyers of network ad time because such shows are now measured in two different modes that yield different results, according to critics.

Some networks include all of their programs in RADAR, the radio network ratings service provided by Statistical Research Inc. in Westfield, N.J. Other networks develop ratings for long-form programs by creating an average from Arbitron ratings in individual markets where their programs aired.

In the name of consistency, some radio network executives say all network shows should be measured by RADAR, while others—most notably, executives at Westwood One—feel they can get better ratings by developing a market-by-market av-

erage from ratings reports.

The subcommittee looking into the need to improve measurement of black and Hispanic listeners is being led by Chairman Abbott Wool, senior vice president and media director at Cadwell Davis Partners in New York.

In the recent past, the controversy over minority audience measurement has centered on flaws in current survey methodologies, which are either telephone- or diary-based, depending on the service.

Mr. Goerlich said the radio industry's Spanish Radio Advisory Council, an ad hoc group of Hispanic broadcasters and advertising representatives formed about two years ago, will be folded into Mr. Wool's subcommittee.

The ARF's subcommittee on response rates is chaired by Jayne Zenaty, vice president and director of media research for Leo Burnett USA in Chicago.

Mr. Goerlich explained that 10 or 15 years ago, media research surveys were accustomed to listener response rates in the 70 percent range. In the 1980s, however, response rates have dipped for all media research, with radio response rates declining the most, he said.

ARF officials were cautious not to point fingers at specific rating services in talking about these four



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SYLVIA HUGHES
To head subcommittee

issues last week. Instead, they emphasized that the goal of the ARF radio committee is to work with everyone involved in these issues to find ways to improve each situation.

"Our mission is to improve the state of the art through objective and impartial research," said ARF President Michael J. Naples.

To achieve objectivity, the ARF radio committee includes members from competing ratings services such as Arbitron Ratings Co. and Birch/Scarborough Research Corp., the two providers of radio station ratings, Mr. Naples said.

The ARF became interested in studying the radio business simply because the foundation had neglected it in the past, he said. "For 50 years, we spent very little time on one of the four major media, which is radio," Mr. Naples said.

The ARF demonstrates its confidence in new committees by declaring them to be "councils" some time after they're up and running. Mr. Naples said the radio committee would probably be renamed the ARF Radio Research Council.

The radio committee's next meeting is set for March 7.

The ARF, which was founded in 1936 by the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the Association of National Advertisers, today has 400 corporate members, including advertisers and their agencies, broadcasting companies and industry trade organizations. #



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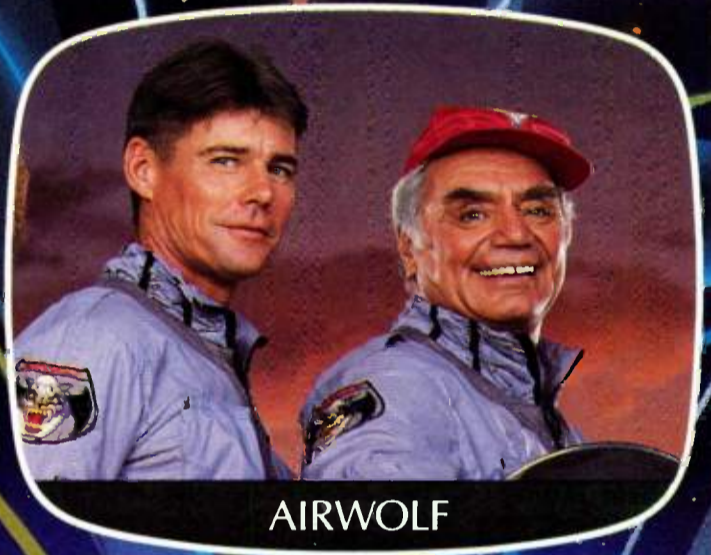
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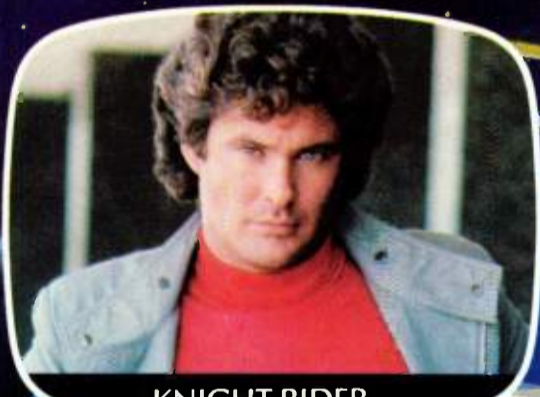
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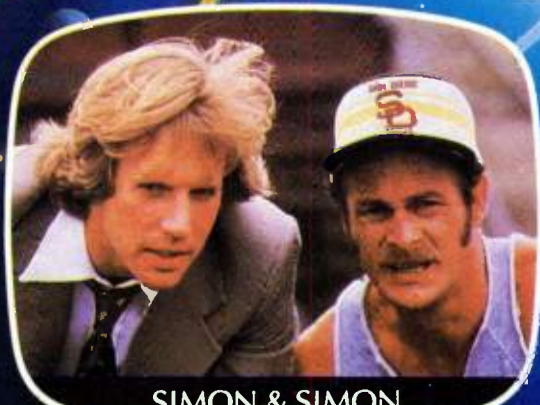
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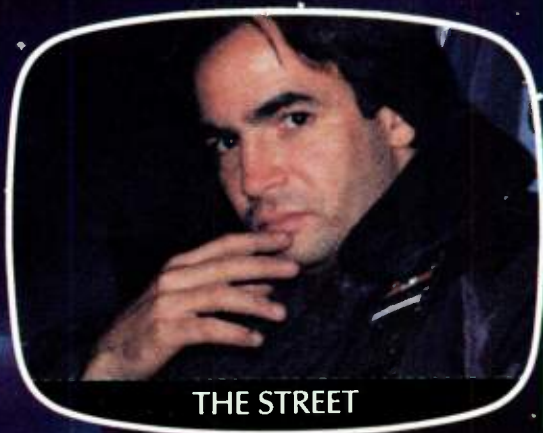


THE A TEAM



SIMON & SIMON





THE STREET



CHARLES IN CHARGE



OUT OF THIS WORLD



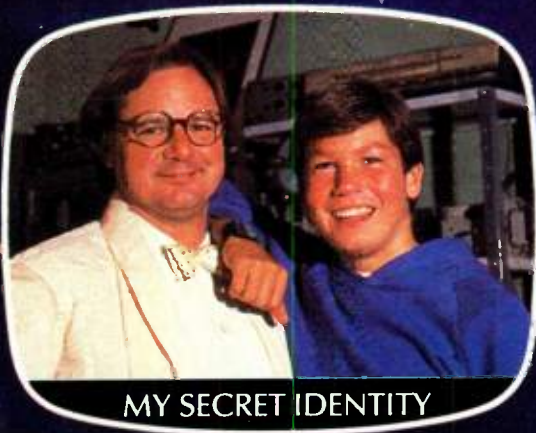
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NATPE Booth 472

Hughes looks to Westar to help its satellite future

By MELINDA GIPSON
Special to ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Hughes Communications wants to be the No. 1 provider of cable and broadcast video by the year 2000, and its chances look good.

Hughes Aircraft Co. earlier this month agreed in principle to buy Western Union's Westar satellite network, which would make its Hughes Communications subsidiary the single-largest operator of C-band satellite capacity in the United States.

Terms of the agreement between the two companies have not been disclosed. The deal still needs to be approved by both boards.

Some industry experts, including Dow Jones, say Hughes couldn't have paid more than \$100 million for the system—a low figure, when Hughes figures that it will cost more than \$400 million to replace the three C-band satellites it currently has.

Under the threat of Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings, Western Union has been reorganizing. In a filing late last year with the Securities and Exchange Commission, it said it intended to continue its efforts to sell its satellite system as part of that restructuring.

The proposed acquisition fits right in with Hughes Communications' plans for the future.

Furthermore, taking advantage of the compatibility of the Westar and Galaxy systems at a markdown will give Hughes marketers breathing room in the short term.

Jerald Farrell, Hughes Communications vice president of video communications and chief marketer for the Galaxy satellite system, said of the purchase: "It looked good to us, first of all because (the Westar satellites) happened to be Hughes-built satellites. We're familiar with them; we know how to operate them and market them . . . it's an easier buy for us than it would have been for someone else."

From Western Union's perspective, the sale would mark the end of an era. The company was

the first to launch a domestic satellite back in 1974.

It also claims to have sold the first transponder in orbit (a Westar 5 channel to Citibank), a claim contested by none other than Hughes.

Westar for years has been the home of radio networks such as Mutual and National Public Radio. It also helped to pioneer the development of state and regional radio networks.

In addition, ABC and CNN depend on the system for occasional video, and PBS bought several transponders in 1984, just as Western Union's financial crisis was emerging.

Meanwhile, Hughes' short-term strategy in buying the Westar satellites, according to Mr. Farrell, is to pick up some more capacity quickly.

"We've got three transponders left (out of a total of 72 on three satellites) for occasional video—that's all we've got left," he says. "So, in the short term, buying Western Union represents the acquisition of some capacity."

Western Union, on the other hand, doesn't have that much extra capacity. It has had to move many customers from its aging Westar 3 to Westars 4 and 5, leaving the system 85 percent full.

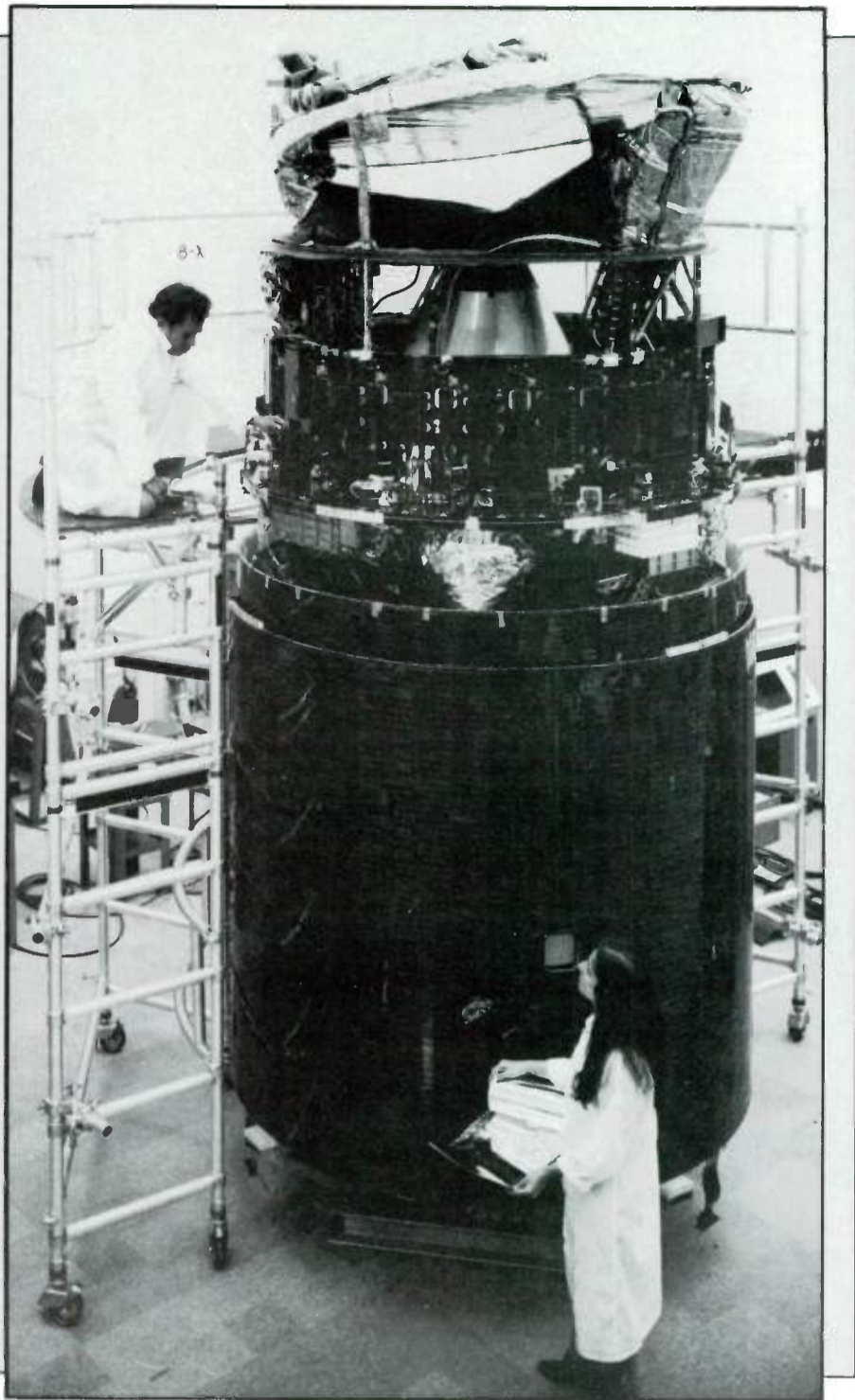
Some 30 of its 59 transponders in orbit have been sold (one for as low as \$3.6 million to National Public Radio at a time when Western Union was drowning in red ink).

Indeed, Western Union's customer base has eroded because of the imminent demise of Westar 3.

Its recent reorganization proxy statement said the company's satellite revenues had declined 6 percent in the first nine months of 1987 com-

(Continued on Page 96)

Galaxy 1, shown here during tests before its launch, is Hughes' satellite dedicated to cable. It has very little turnover among transponder holders.



Montage Group offering new editing system

The Montage Group is offering the new **Montage Picture Processor (System II)**, a non-linear, random-access electronic editing system. The system is suited for editing single-camera projects shot on motion picture film or videotape. The new, enhanced system is fully compatible with existing Montage Picture Processors. Montage Group Ltd., 1 W. 85th St., Suite 3A, New York, N.Y. 10024.

* * *

BTS Broadcast Television Systems is planning to offer the **LDK 900 studio camera**. The LDK 900 is based on CCD sensors and has such features as studio- and field-type heavy lenses, triax cable up to 2,000 meters, 7-inch viewfinder and extended intercom facilities. Including its based plate, the camera weighs 33 pounds. In addition, it will be offered in two standard versions, one for PAL transmission systems and one for NTSC transmission systems. BTS is also adding three new products to its **BetaCam SP** product line. BCB-60-N is a BetaCam SP (NTSC) studio player with built-in TBC, time-code reader and selectable time-code/CTC LED display; the BCB-65-N is a BetaCam SP (NTSC) studio player with dynamic tracking and built-in TBC, plus a built-in time-code reader and selectable time; and the BCB-70-N is a BetaCam SP (NTSC) studio player/recorder/editor with built-in TBC, built-in time-code generator/reader with present switch-on board, editing facility and selectable time-code/CTC LED display. BTS Television Systems, Sales & Service Headquarters, 900 Corporate Drive, Mahwah, N.J. 07430.

* * *

The **Sierra III integrated satellite receiver/descrambler** is now available. The Sierra III, from Chapparral Communications,

PRODUCT UPDATE



Montage Group's Montage Picture Processor (System II)

combines many features found in the company's Cheyenne IR/D and Sierra II Plus models, plus several new features. These include a built-in VideoCipher II descrambler and dish positioner, full stereo audio, dual 1 GHz inputs, programable bandwidth and T.I. filters and programable timer. In addition, it's C-band and Ku-band ready. Chapparral Com-

munications, 2450 N. First St., San Jose, Calif. 95131.

* * *

Scientific-Atlanta is offering the **advanced parallel hybrid trunk amplifier**. The new trunk amplifier offers better distortion performance than either push/pull or power doubling. It delivers 8 dB of distortion improve-

ment, a 2 dB improvement over power doubling amplifiers. In narrow upgrades, the amplifier provides sufficient channel expansion while maintaining picture quality with no significant increase in power consumption. The amplifier modules mount in the standard Scientific-Atlanta slimline housing. It also uses plug-in equalizers and pads. Scientific-Atlanta, 1 Technology Parkway, Box 105600, Atlanta, Ga. 30348.

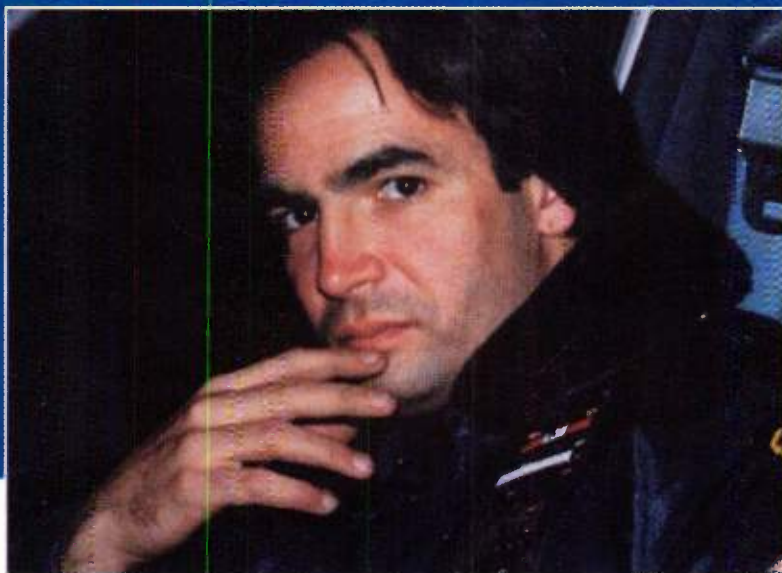
* * *

ChannelMaster has introduced a new line of **10-foot extruded "T-Lock" Plus four-piece mesh antennas**. The dishes are made with expanded and rolled aluminum mesh available in a C-band or Ku-band design. Each of the dish's four panels are pre-made with the mesh already attached to each surface so the panel can easily be bolted together. In addition, each dish has a total of 20 extruded "T-Lock" support ribs made with T-5 aircraft aluminum that maintain the accuracy of the shallow parabolic curve and focal point to diameter ratio of 0.4. Both C and Ku dishes come in button hook and quad feed models. ChannelMaster, P.O. Box 1416, Industrial Park Drive, Smithfield, N.C. 27577.

* * *

Catel Telecommunications is presenting the new **TX-2 quartz synthesized AM/FM tuner** for the cable industry. The product, made in conjunction with Carver Corp., eliminates distortion and noise. It includes the exclusive Carver asymmetrical charge-coupled FM stereo detector, which can provide 10 db to 23 dB improvement in the left-to-right component, reducing noise and distortion caused by multipath interference. Catel Telecommunications, 4050 Technology Place, Fremont, Calif. 94537-5122.#

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FOR A 2nd BIG YEAR!

'Star Trek': Strong ratings, high deficits

(Continued from Page 18)

In that time, Mr. Roddenberry confides, the apparently unsuccessful "Star Trek" concept was up for grabs.

"Anybody who had wanted to, I suspect in those two years after the original, could have probably bought all the rights to 'Star Trek' for about \$250,000," he says. "And apparently, from what I hear, it has made well over \$1 billion so far."

Paramount's Mr. Harris admits the "Star Trek" concept is one of the studio's most valuable assets, and that the effort to get a new syndicated series on the air dates back more than 10 years.

"In 1977, we went so far as to get the sets created and commissioning scripts to bring the program back as a first-run syndication program with the original cast," Mr. Harris says. "That was the stillborn effort to create the Paramount television service, which never came to fruition."

Those sets were then used to make the first theatrical film, "Star Trek: The Motion Picture," which was released in 1979.

Then, two years ago, Paramount decided to try to cash in on the success of the string of theatricals and took the series idea back out on the street, approaching ABC, CBS, NBC and the Fox Broadcasting Co. about the program. However, none of those parties would give Paramount the financial commitment it was looking for.

Paramount wanted a 26-episode commitment with a reasonable license fee that would enable the studio to produce the expensive effort. Regarding that plan, Mr. Harris says, "We had more intensive negotiations with the Fox network than with any of the other three."

In the end, Paramount decided to produce and distribute the series in-house.



'We will not take back from our barter revenue anywhere near what is required to cover the cost of the negatives. We're really looking at a 1992, 1993 scenario before return on investments would be significant.'

—Mel Harris, Paramount TV Group

It announced the project at a press conference in October 1986.

Today, besides carefully guiding the show through the end of its first season

and stepping up merchandising efforts, Paramount is planning an international release on videocassette and may also begin to incorporate popular music into the show, in much the way "Miami Vice" has done.

The series will not be available for international TV until fall 1990. But in the meantime Paramount will pair up two one-hour episodes and release them on home video in more than 50 countries, along with the two-hour pilot.

"From our point of view it means that we'll be able to cover our costs better," Mr. Harris says.

But the real payoff for Paramount is still about four years away, when 100 hours of the series will have been produced and stations will be paying cash for the show. The first run of the show is being offered on a straight barter basis; the second run will be for cash only.

Until then, Paramount will only receive the barter revenue it's earning from retaining seven minutes for national advertising in each episode, while allotting stations five minutes for local ads.

The national barter spots were sold for about \$70,000 per 30 seconds for the first runs, a Paramount source said. At that rate, Paramount will recoup about \$980,000 per episode, leaving a deficit of about \$320,000 per show, without additional promotional and marketing expenses, the source said.

That leaves an estimated deficit of \$8 million in the first season from production costs alone.

Mr. Harris says, "We will not take back from our barter revenue anywhere near what is required to cover the cost of the negatives. We're really looking at a 1992, 1993 scenario before return on

investments would be significant."

In the meantime, Mr. Roddenberry isn't sure how long he'll stay at the helm. The former pilot and Los Angeles police officer who got his start writing scripts for "Dragnet" based on his experiences with the Los Angeles Police Department says: "What we'll do in the second or third year, I don't know. I think I'll always sit at the desk and read a story idea."

Mr. Roddenberry, who is not a great fan of the major broadcast networks because of his experience with the original series, is relishing the success of the syndicated show. He says he's happy that about half of the stations buying the new series are network affiliates, several of which pre-empt network programming to run the syndicated series instead.

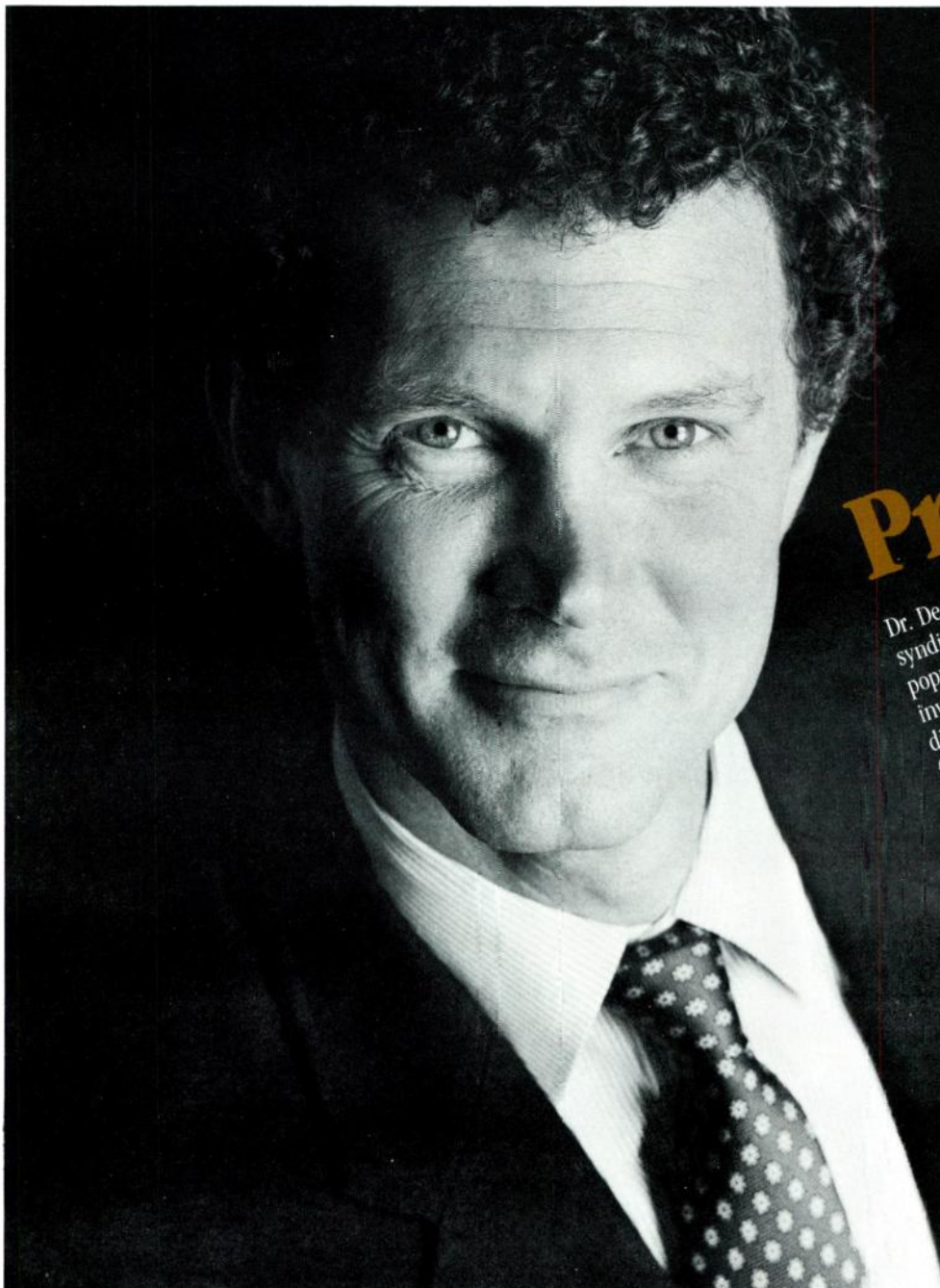
"I must admit to you, I do have a selfish delight," he says. "It's nice to see network stations asking to buy into the new 'Star Trek' after they threw me off the air."

Meanwhile, Paramount's Mr. Harris thinks the merchandising strategy the company is employing for "Star Trek" will become a more common way to make a product stand out in the increasingly competitive TV programming marketplace—whether it's a network, cable or syndicated show.

"In many respects I think this program is sort of a harbinger of things to come across television," he says. Mr. Harris compares the "Star Trek" merchandising to the marketing and promotional campaign NBC deployed to help get another space traveler, "ALF," off the ground.

In the future, TV series will have to be "marketed like little movies or new product introductions," Mr. Harris says.

And that's just what Paramount is doing with "Star Trek: The Next Generation."#



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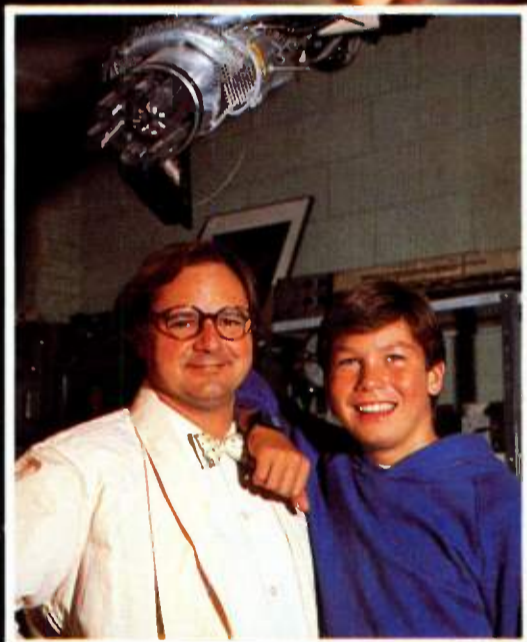
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♦ Good Company. A proven format. A show with a strong relationship between talent and viewers.

It's more than a relationship, it's a marriage.

Good Company

A look at 'Television'

New book spans TV history, from live drama to NATPE

The new book "Television" is both the companion volume to the current PBS series of the same name and a fascinating historical work on its own merits, featuring interviews with dozens of industry luminaries whose careers span all facets of the medium.

In the eight interviews that fol-

low, excerpted exclusively in ELECTRONIC MEDIA, author Michael Winship delves into the live television of the 1950s with John Frankenheimer, talks comedy with Larry Gelbart, drama with Glenn Gordon Caron, game shows with Merv Griffin, variety with George Schlatter, news with Tom Brokaw, sports with Michael

Weisman and the syndication business with Bob Jacquemin.

Mr. Winship is also the writer and co-producer of the PBS TV series "Television" and began his own career in the industry in 1974.

He spent most of his career at public station WNET-TV in New York, writing and producing more

than 50 documentaries and news specials as well as several popular music specials.

Mr. Winship is now a free-lance TV writer.

"Television," published by Random House with a cover price of \$19.95, will be available in bookstores nationwide this month.

The Golden Age: John Frankenheimer

John Frankenheimer is best known today as a director of motion pictures such as "The Manchurian Candidate," "Seven Days in May," and "The Fixer," but he too is an alumnus of the Golden Age. He started out as an assistant and was soon directing plays on "Playhouse 90" and "Studio One," plays such as "The Rainmaker," "The Turn of the Screw," an elaborate two-part production of "For Whom the Bell Tolls," and J.P. Miller's "The Days of Wine and Roses," a particular favorite of Frankenheimer's.

"It was one of the best scripts I've ever had and the producer, Fred Coe, was one of the two best producers with whom I've ever worked," he said. "Fred had been a director—a good one—so he knew how to talk to directors. He was wonderful with writers. He just gave you the feeling that everything was going to be okay. He gave us a climate in which we could function creatively, and that certainly is the role of a producer. He was just a brilliant, wonderful man."

Ironically, he said, "Alcohol killed Fred Coe. I loved working with him and I mourn his death a great deal."

Alcoholism was just one of the side effects that afflicted those involved in the production of live television. The stress and tension were enormous.

I became a director when I was twenty-four years old, and I really didn't know any better. I think if I were to go back and try to do it now, it might be absolutely impossible. I remember that I developed a terrible lower-back problem, and I shared that problem with many of my fellow directors.

I remember during an air show—for instance, a "Playhouse 90"—I would lose four to five pounds in perspiration. I'd have to take my shirt off and just wring it out at the end of one of those things.

The time when the tension was at its highest was between dress rehearsal and air. After the notes were given out to the cast and crew, we had approximately fifty minutes before the air show. That's the time when people were really by themselves, and they get terribly nervous. I remember one show I did with Dennis O'Keefe—his first live television show. It was 1955, and he started walking behind the scenery, and he saw his leading lady there—Mary Sinclair, she was literally the queen of live television at that time. She'd done about three hundred live television shows. Dennis went up to her and said, "Mary, how do you do it?" She said, "Well, Dennis, there's absolutely nothing to it." Whereupon she turned around and vomited.

Sinclair's reaction is all the more understandable when you hear some of the horror stories related by Golden Age veterans like Frankenheimer. He remembered one particular incident in a show that starred Lee Marvin.

I was still, thank goodness, an assistant director. The director was a fellow who had done hundreds of live television shows. He was a gentleman who really thought on his feet rather than planning it all out beforehand. . . . In this particular case, Lee Marvin was playing a private detective, and the director decided that he would end on a shot of Lee Marvin in a phone booth for the next scene. I pointed out to the director that was highly improbable and impractical—Lee Marvin was already on the set. How was he going to get to the phone booth?

I was told to mind my own business. He—the director—would figure it out. Rather than cut to the lady who was playing the scene with Marvin, the director decided that he was going to save face and show me, this upstart, that he was able to do this. . . .

He said to Lee, "All right, what you do here at the end of this scene is put your cigarette out in that ashtray and we'll pan down to the cigarette, and you get out of the set and run over to the phone booth."

Lee said, "I can't make it."

The director said, "Look, we'll fix it. We're gonna put the phone booth on a dolly with wheels on it and we're gonna put it right here next to the set, and you just get up from here, run into the phone booth, and that's that. You see, Frankenheimer? You see how I fix that?"



John Frankenheimer started out as an assistant and was soon directing plays on 'Playhouse 90' and 'Studio One,' plays such as . . . J.P. Miller's 'The Days of Wine and Roses' (above), a particular favorite of Frankenheimer's—'It was one of the best scripts I've ever had'

Well, it was great if you like shots of smoldering cigarettes in ashtrays, because we hung on it for about fifteen to twenty seconds in dress rehearsal until we got Lee in the phone booth.

The director forgot a couple of things: One, he forgot about the adrenaline of live television; and two, he forgot that the studio in which we were doing this show was at a slight incline and we were at the top of it. . . .

On the air, we panned down to the ashtray, the cigarette was sizzling, and Lee—because he was on the air—got this terrific burst of adrenaline and hit that phone booth at about twenty miles an hour. The phone booth proceeded to roll right across the studio very slowly.

It was like a Fellini movie—we panned this phone booth across the studio, past the cameras—we even panned past one actress who was completely naked changing for her next scene! And of course, you couldn't hear anything that Lee was saying because the boom was still where we left it. Lee was talking a mile a minute, we were panning, and it came to an end when the phone booth hit the wall at the end of the studio!

Frankenheimer told another war story that gives an indication of just how deeply into mayhem live TV drama could descend. He was still working as an assistant director.

The assistant director's job in live television in those days was to go in at the end of the rehearsal period and be the director of photography for the director. Only in this particular case, I was called the day beforehand and told that we were doing this with (British character actor) Francis L. Sullivan and Eva Marie Saint. It was Francis L. Sullivan's live television debut. He was playing a British missionary who was flying with his assistant in a plane fifty thousand feet above sea level across the Himalaya Mountains. They were to crash-land and be rescued by a group of Chinese

ski troops. . . .

The studio in which we were doing this show was terribly small and we were doing the commercials from the same studio.

I said to the director, "How are you going to do the Chinese ski troops?"

He said, "That's very easy. You're going down to Chinatown, and you are going to find the Chinese ski troops."

I went down to Chinatown, and I found that all of the Chinese actors I talked to couldn't speak English and couldn't ski. I finally found some who were able to ski but could not speak English. I got them back to the studio and put them in costumes, and I said to the director, "What are you going to do for skis?"

The director said, "Very simple. We're gonna put wheels on the bottom of the skis."

"Where are you going to position them?"

He said, "You tell them that when we come to the commercial man for the first time, they're to get into position." It was a really shaky operation—I don't have to tell you.

The show started, and we're in the cockpit. Two seats, that's all we had as a set up budget. We were going along, and suddenly Francis Sullivan dried up. He just totally forgot his lines.

He looked at Eva Marie Saint, and he said, "Well, my dear, what have you got to say for yourself?"

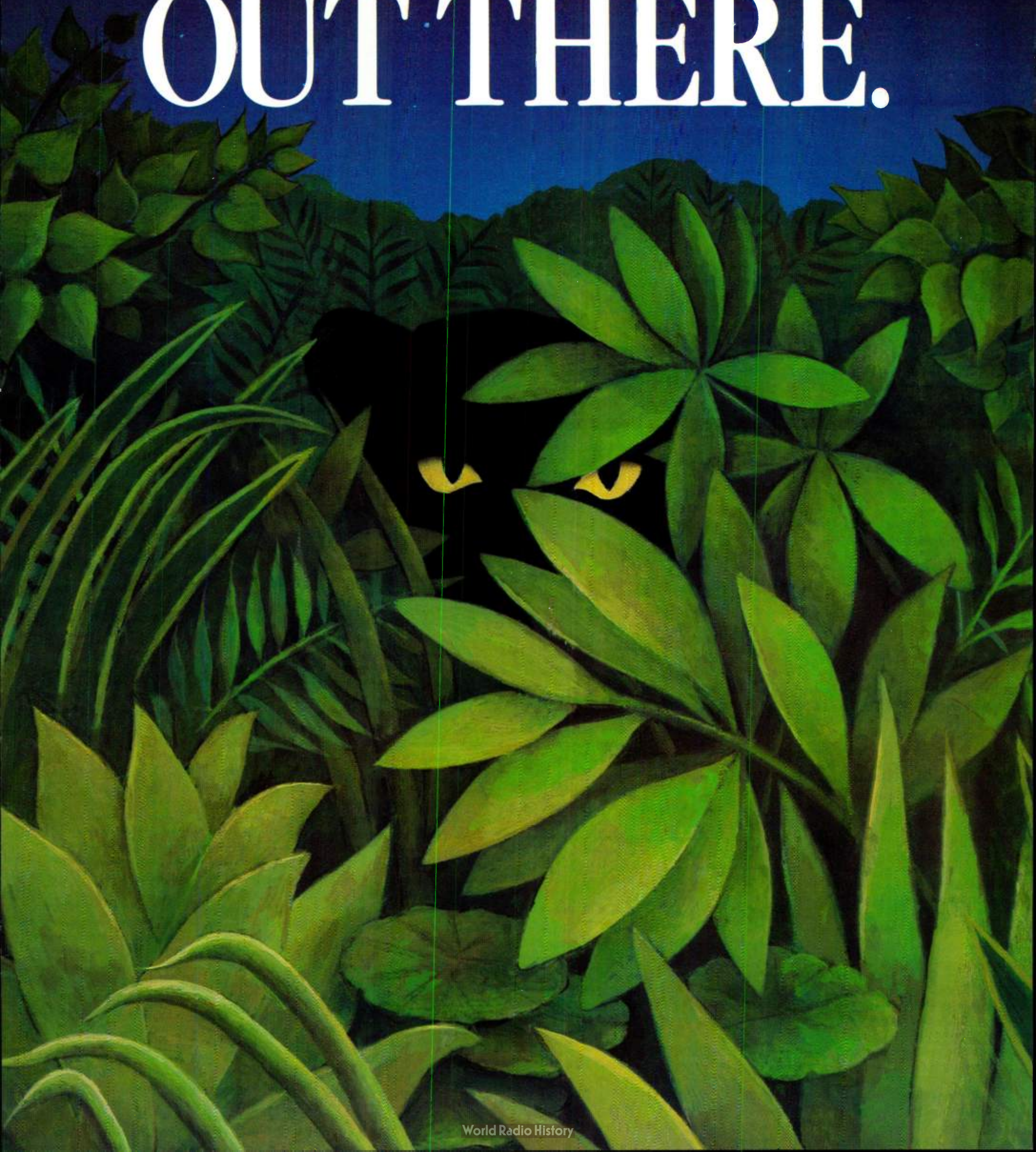
And she looked at him and she said, "I think I'll just go to sleep." Whereupon she did. Whereupon Francis L. Sullivan said, "My stop, I think I'll get off," and he stepped up and walked out of the airplane.

The director panicked—as well he should have—and he

(Continued on Page 46)

Excerpted from the book "Television" by Michael Winship. Copyright 1988 by Educational Broadcasting Corp. and Michael Winship. Used with permission of Random House.

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The genius of Rod Serling, ready to fight—and win—in the thickest syndication jungle against the toughest competition. New once-a-week episodes available for Fall '88; and 90 half-hours available Fall '89.

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The hunt for men is over! A top performer among men 18-49. Which means you just found one of the most efficient ways to reach men among all the top new once-a-week half-hours.

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TM

Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Frankenheimer: 'We're down in flames'

(Continued from Page 40)

screamed, "Take one!"

Well, camera one was on the commercial announcer, who was talking to his agency boss. The camera's on him, and suddenly he starts to say his commercial, except the audio boom was still over Francis L. Sullivan. So over the commercial man's mouth going, you heard 'forty years in this goddamned business . . . ' and so on

Finally, we got Francis L. Sullivan back in his plane. The audience must have been terribly confused, but we got him back, and he was saying his lines, and suddenly that glassy look came into his eyes again and we knew it was all over.

This time, the director wasn't gonna wait for him to walk off the plane. He screamed, "Take one!"

Camera one was on the announcer again, and the commercial announcer is saying to the agency man, "The nerve of that son of a bitch . . ." The light is on, he starts his commercial Suddenly, right across the screen, comes the Chinese ski troop, and the guy is trying to do his commercial

I called master control. I said, 'Look, this thing's totally out of control—just cut us off. We're down in flames!' We were taken off the air.

In spite of all that, Frankenheimer has fond memories of that so-called Golden Age.

"We were not bothered by the pressures of huge budgets and ratings that television in the United States is bothered with today. We also had the best writers available. It just happened to be a time when there was an awful lot of talent collected in one place, and that place was live television. It was the perfect place for that talent to be."

What was lost with the death of live television drama?

All sense of urgency. The directors had control for the simple reason that there was no time for temperamental actors in live television. If anybody started to argue with you or be late or something like that, what you did was just take them aside and say, 'Look, this is not very pleasant. I don't like it, but in the long run it's you who's going to be up there on Thursday night live at

nine-thirty, not me.' That was a bluff that worked quite often.

As soon as we went to tape, in the back of people's minds was the fact that if really got bad, if the scenery fell down, if they forgot their lines, if the whole show went out the window, you could start again.

A lot of things just did not have the same spontaneity, the same urgency on tape as they did live The invention of magnetic tape destroyed live television

Two, television became such a tremendous big business that the ratings took over, and our ratings were not commensurate with the ratings of the shows opposite us

Three, it was a new type of executive who took over, who was just in it for the short run and really just wanted the numbers for the ratings

And so ended the Golden Age. Frankenheimer misses the combination of excitement and agony.

"Someone once compared doing live television to doing summer stock in an iron lung," he said. "I think that about says it."



'America was (Sid Caesar's) room (at right, with Imogene Coca). He felt very free to do whatever occurred to him at the moment. Not that he did a lot of it, because you can't wing it for an hour—although Art Carney (above right) tells stories of Jackie Gleason saying between the second and third act of a "Honeymooners," "Forget the script in the third act. Don't worry about it. Just wing it. Follow me." Ad-libbing for twelve or thirteen minutes, which is really scary.'

—Larry Gelbart



Sitcoms: Larry Gelbart

Larry Gelbart is a very funny man, a writer not only of wit and style, but great intelligence and warmth as well. Television is only one card in his deck: He has written some wonderfully funny movies, including "The Wrong Box," "Oh, God," and "Tootsie," and for Broadway, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" and "Sly Fox."

As a television writer his main achievements are three: He was a writer on "Caesar's Hour"; he was one of the creators (and the writer of ninety-seven episodes) of "M*A*S*H"; and he was the man behind an offbeat situation comedy called "United States," a show that attempted to bring a new sense and reality to the sitcom form, albeit not for long.

Gelbart is a native Californian whose father was Danny Thomas's barber. A few well-placed words between trims got Gelbart the Younger a job writing for Thomas on Fanny Brice's "Maxwell House Coffee Time" radio show. That led to work on "Duffy's Tavern" and gag writing for Eddie Cantor and Bob Hope, among others.

Gelbart made the transition to television with Bob Hope; in fact, it was with Hope that he first saw television. "It was in New York," Gelbart said. "We were doing his first television special. The first thing I saw was Milton Berle, which is an awesome thing to see for the first time"

"Bob Hope's reaction to television was pretty much the same as all of us. He was watching it as a student, thinking how he would adapt himself to it and it to him. Television gave Bob something to do that he had never done before. He had done, of course, the monologues in every medium—and in every war zone. And while he had done stand-up spots with people and certainly song-and-dance variety, I don't think he had ever done sketches—even on Broadway, even in vaudeville. So that was a challenge to him, to all of us.

"Early TV was a good deal like vaudeville—it was the box they buried vaudeville in after it died."

That began to change as television performers began to use the medium, taking advantage of its unique properties. Ernie Kovacs was one of the first.

"He didn't come from vaudeville, he didn't come from radio," Gelbart said. "He treated television as a new entity and tried to work out what would do well in the entity. He was very aware of the camera as an instrument for providing new entertainment rather than photographing the old.

Gelbart worked for Sid Caesar, another of TV's early geniuses, not on the fabled "Your Show of Shows," but on the Sid Caesar-Imogene Coca series that followed it, "Caesar's Hour." "It was a remarkable happening," he said, "a daily happening for those of us who were lucky enough to be part of it. It was a huge writing staff. There would be seven or eight writers in the room at any time, not counting Sid, who sat with us, and Carl Reiner, who sat with us, and Howie Morris. I suppose most people know who was in that room by now—there was Mel Brooks, of course, Neil Simon, Mel Tolkin, Mike Stewart, who went on to write a lot of musical comedy ('Bye, Bye, Birdie,' 'Hello, Dolly!')."

"It was a mad environment in the best sense of the word. I mean, it was cooking. We often compared it to jazz, because it really had that kind of improvisational back-and-forth rhythm. It was exciting. It was wonderful—even then, not just in retrospect It could also be harrowing.

It was a live program. We did go on every seven days, which meant that every time we finished one we had to start from scratch again. It made you feel you were working and living without a net most of the time, but it was fun. We always got on the air; we always got off the air.

Some of the shows were disasters, creatively. The nice thing about 'Caesar's Hour' was that in any given hour there would be probably half a dozen memorable moments. If we didn't bat a thousand every week, we were able to come back the next week and redeem ourselves and top ourselves. It had that virtue. We did thirty-nine shows a year then.

(Continued on Page 52)



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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'



Minor-key comedy, like 'M*A*S*H,' is the kind that 'suddenly catches you feeling something other than the fun in any given line or situation or character. You feel a little more; it's bittersweet. It doesn't make you stop laughing, but it's a warmer kind of laugh'

—Larry Gelbart

Gelbart offers behind-scenes glimpse at 'M*A*S*H'

(Continued from Page 46)

It enriched my life in several ways. We all felt we were part of a very good team. We liked each other. We socialized with one another, which is a rare thing for people who usually can't wait until it's six o'clock to say goodbye, no matter how much fun they've had all day long. 'Caesar's Hour' also reflected a certain part of everyone's private life, in that I think at least five sixths—I don't know why I pick that particular fraction—of the people involved in the show creatively were or had been in analysis. So they were bringing a lot of their personal reflections and reactions to the show. I know Sid's mostly remembered for the professor and the movie takeoffs, but we did a lot of I guess what today would be called sitcom. We did a lot of domestic comedy, but I think on a very high level.

Caesar was known for his ability to think on his feet. In one famous incident, he was playing a Pagliacci-like clown,

sitting in front of a mirror with a mascara stick. He had to draw a teardrop, and the pencil broke. This was not prepared. He just continued, drew a line, then another one, two this way, and started playing tic-tac-toe on his face. It was really inspired. You didn't laugh so much as you admired the courage and faith in himself—the confidence and the abandon. When you think of improvising on a large show in front of thirty to forty million people, you can only admire the matador in him.

America was his room. He felt very free to do whatever occurred to him at the moment. Not that he did a lot of it, because you can't wing it for an hour—although Art Carney tells stories of Jackie Gleason saying between the second and third act of a Honeymooners, 'Forget the script in the third act. Don't worry about it. Just wing it. Follow me.' Ad-libbing for twelve or thirteen minutes, which is really scary.

Variety shows like Caesar's no longer exist on American television. "To everyone's great loss," Gelbart said. "The linchpin of variety used to be the comic, surrounded of course, by other elements—dance, song"

"Variety took a strange turn a number of years ago. Suddenly the Captain and Tennille had their own variety show. Sonny and Cher. Cher without Sonny. I don't think we ever had Sonny without Cher, though The comic suddenly was sort of written out. I don't know why. I think Carol Burnett was the last successful performer to have a variety show. But this is a very cyclical business. I expect it will come back one day."

When his Broadway musical, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," co-authored with Burt Shevelove, starring Zero Mostel, and with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, was a hit, Gelbart decided to move his family to England—"to escape religious tolerance. I lived there almost nine years. The Swinging Sixties, as they were called, although it must have been happening somewhere other than where I was in London."

He watched a lot of British television, and it had a decided impact on his ideas about television writing. "British television has its share of garbage—rubbish, to use the British word. But the best of it is very fine indeed, as we know from the samples we see here. I think what I learned mostly was that you could use language—not in the new

sense: four-letter words—I mean *language*. I mean English. They're much more playful with words. They have a much better time with words than we do; their ideas are bolder. There are very few Don'ts."

Gelbart's sojourn in England ended with a phone call from producer-director Gene Reynolds. CBS had agreed to bankroll a pilot script for a series based on the movie "M*A*S*H." All his British TV watching had an effect. "The British influence in 'M*A*S*H' is evident in the nature of the themes, the dialogue, and the departure from what was then conventional for half-hour shows," he said.

Gelbart divides television comedy into shows written in major and minor keys. "If we were looking for a major, I would think about Bob Hope, I would think about comics without any shading, where fun is fun, and you laugh but you don't feel. I have no quarrel with that. I'm proud to have been the co-author of a show ('A Funny Thing . . .') which is two hours of sliding on a banana skin, so I don't mean to slip into my pretentious mode."

Minor-key comedy, like "M*A*S*H," is the kind that "suddenly catches you feeling something other than the fun in any given line or situation or character. You feel a little more; it's bittersweet. It doesn't make you stop laughing, but it's a warmer kind of laugh"

"Unfortunately, I think it's true that, with most television, the only way you get a feeling out of it is if you touch it while you're wet. People aren't encouraged to go for the feeling. They're encouraged to go for the broader show-business values. . . . By and large I think people are looking for success rather than for quality. If you can combine the two, you're in a very happy situation."

"M*A*S*H" was that happy situation, a show that combined humor with pathos, slapstick hilarity with reality. It came at a time when the United States was still bogged down in the Vietnam War. "By now it's no secret that a lot of the attitudes that 'M*A*S*H' put forth as fifties—Korean War—type attitudes were really based more on what was happening in the seventies and in Vietnam," Gelbart admitted. "There wasn't as great an antiwar feeling in the Korean period, at least on the American side. It was, after all, a UN effort. We weren't quite as exposed as we were in Vietnam. But certain verities prevail in every war."

However, according to Gelbart, CBS never put any pressure on "M*A*S*H" to tone down the message. "I'd like to talk about censorship," he joked, "but I'm really not allowed to."

The best thing about censorship in 'M*A*S*H' is that we didn't have any when it came to political matters. We were allowed to be as anti or pro anything we wanted to be. There was absolutely no interference on that level.

Censorship took the usual form that it takes with a network. Incidentally, they deplore the word *censorship*. There are many euphemisms—*program practices*, *continuity*—they censor the word *censor* very heavily.

We would be told to cut down on the number of *hells*, *damns*, what have you. They always wanted us to be very careful about any nudity. There is one shot of Radar in an episode called "The Sniper" in which, if you look very fast, you can see his bare bum. It goes by in an instant, but we got away

with that.

Not that you *try* to get away with things; except you do find yourselves playing games. When the family hour was initiated, we weren't supposed to talk about anything that the whole family couldn't share before nine o'clock. We had a soldier saying to Radar—a very nervous young GI on guard duty for the first time, he didn't know the password—he apologized by saying he was a virgin—at being a sentry. I mean, we didn't even use virgin in a sexual sense.

They wouldn't let us say virgin, their explanation being that the family hour was meant to protect families from having to discuss things like virginity. The next week we got back by having a wounded soldier say that he was from the Virgin Islands. Virgin's okay if it's a capital V.

It was a running battle. It always is. But the acceptance of what we were doing by the program practices people varied with our success. The more successful we got, the less naughty we seemed. In the first year, we were not able to use the word *circumcision*. By the third year, when we were the first or second show in the ratings, we not only used the word, we did a whole episode based on the fact that a Korean woman and a Jewish GI had had a child and they wanted the baby circumcized.

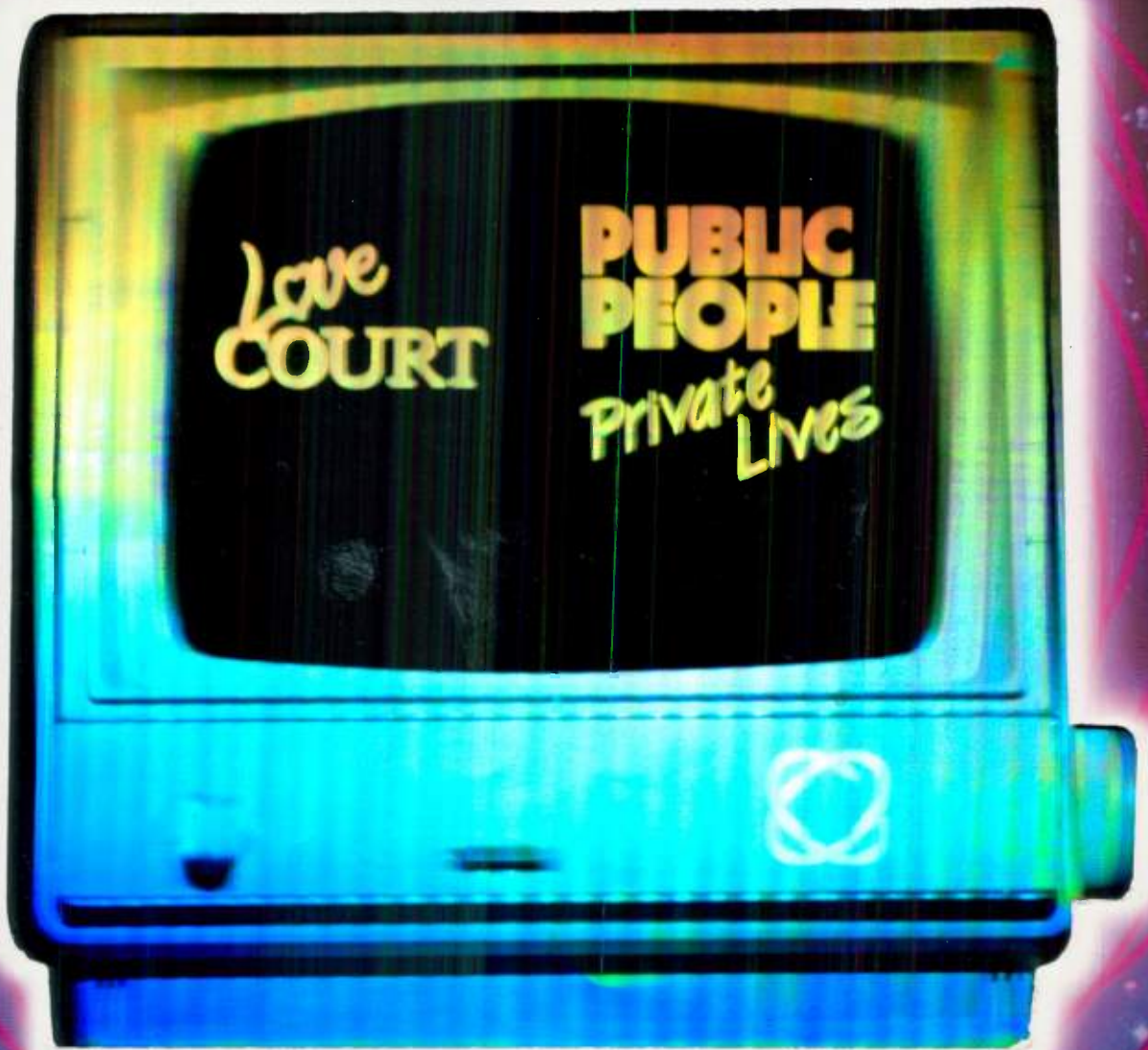
Success allowed "M*A*S*H" to turn the traditional sitcom format upside down. "We did a lot of experimenting, for several reasons," Gelbart said.

One, just a natural kind of restlessness, not wanting to make everything the same every week. Also, recognizing the fact that in any half hour in anyone's life, we are not just pursuing one subject to one conclusion—certainly not in a place as busy as a mobile hospital a few miles from the front lines. So we would do multiple stories. We would do up to seven stories, different tiers, not giving them all equal weight and trying to make as many of them cross one another as possible.

We did a show in black-and-white, which was very unusual, a show in which the actors practically improvised. It was called 'The Interview.' We would do shows in which there was no happy ending, because there are not too many in an army hospital. We would show a popular character, Hawkeye or Trapper John or any of the others, doing very unpopular things. We felt that it was important to show a well-rounded person rather than a predictable sort of character.

Half-hour forms—and hours for that matter—I think are a form of adult fairy tales. Audiences like to hear the same story told over and over and over. That's all right for the audience, but not if you're the teller. Even with my own children, I would tell them about the three bears, then the four bears, or there would be two bears; one would be off on vacation or in a story visiting some other character. I get very easily bored, and I can be very easily boring—as you're learning. So I keep trying to mix things up. It was a wonderful cast and production company and my co-producer Gene Reynolds was very willing to throw the whole thing up in the air every week and see how it came down differently.

The urge to be different even included killing off a favorite character—Lieutenant Colonel Henry Blake, played by McLean Stevenson—an action that shocked a lot of people. (Continued on Page 59)



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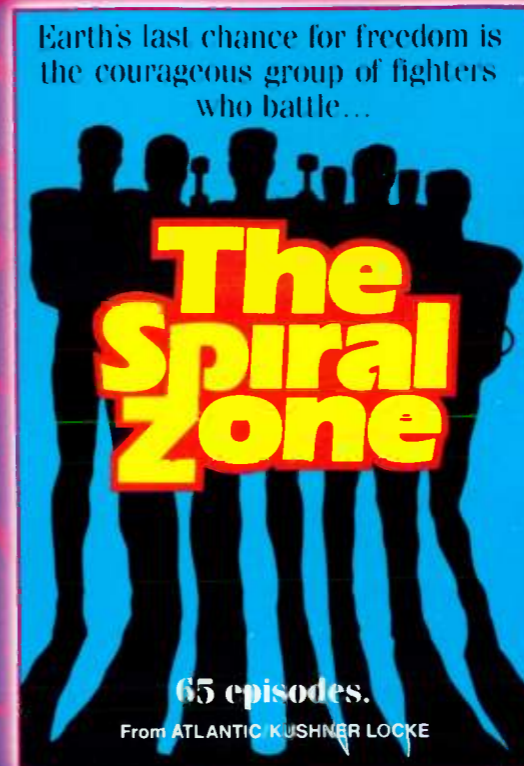


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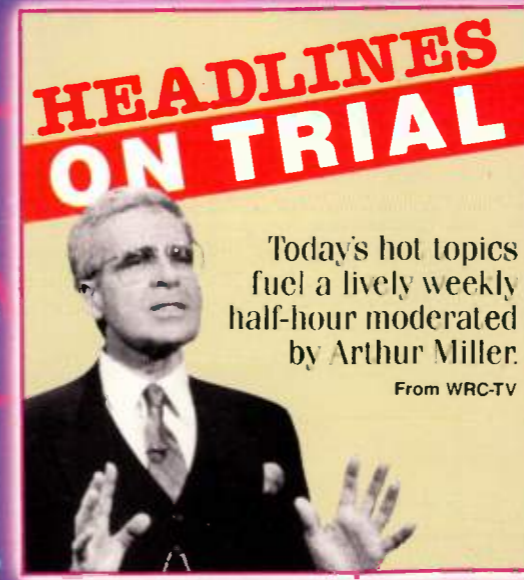
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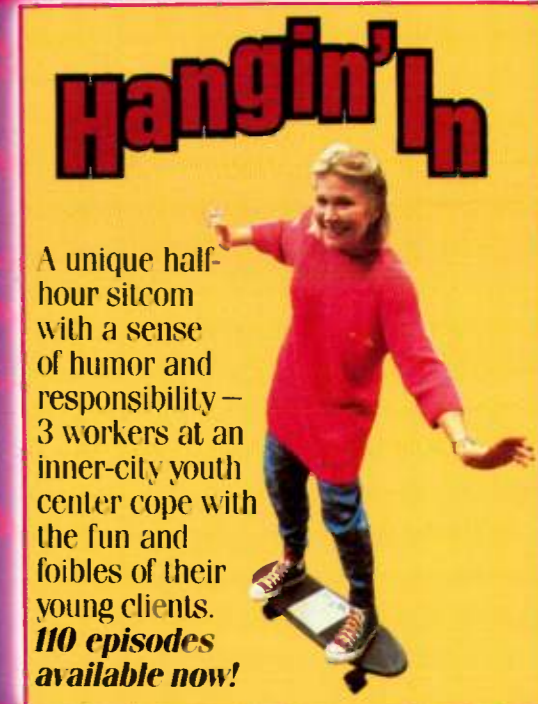
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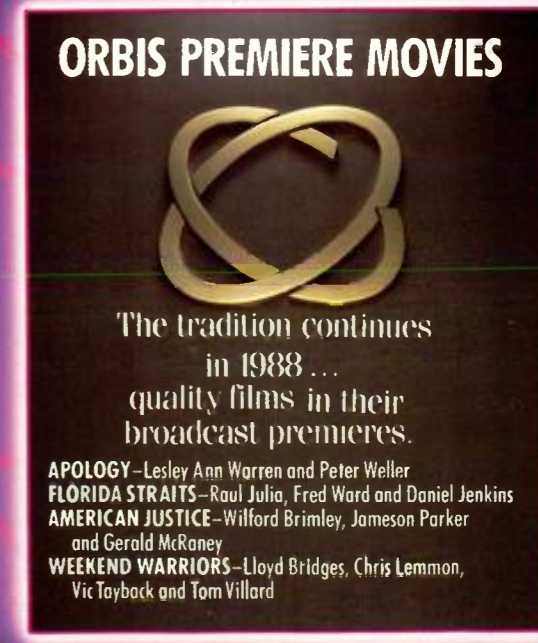
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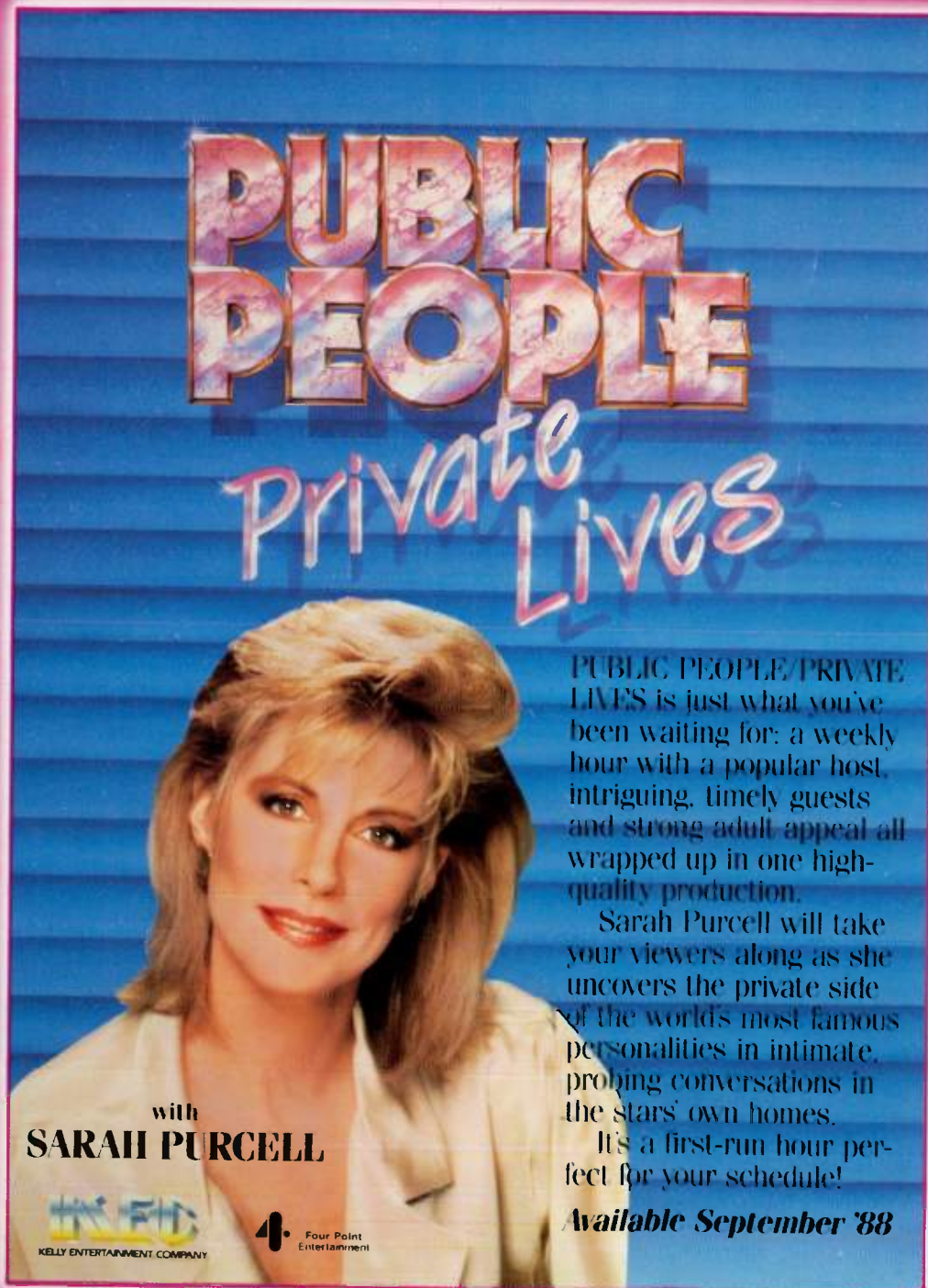


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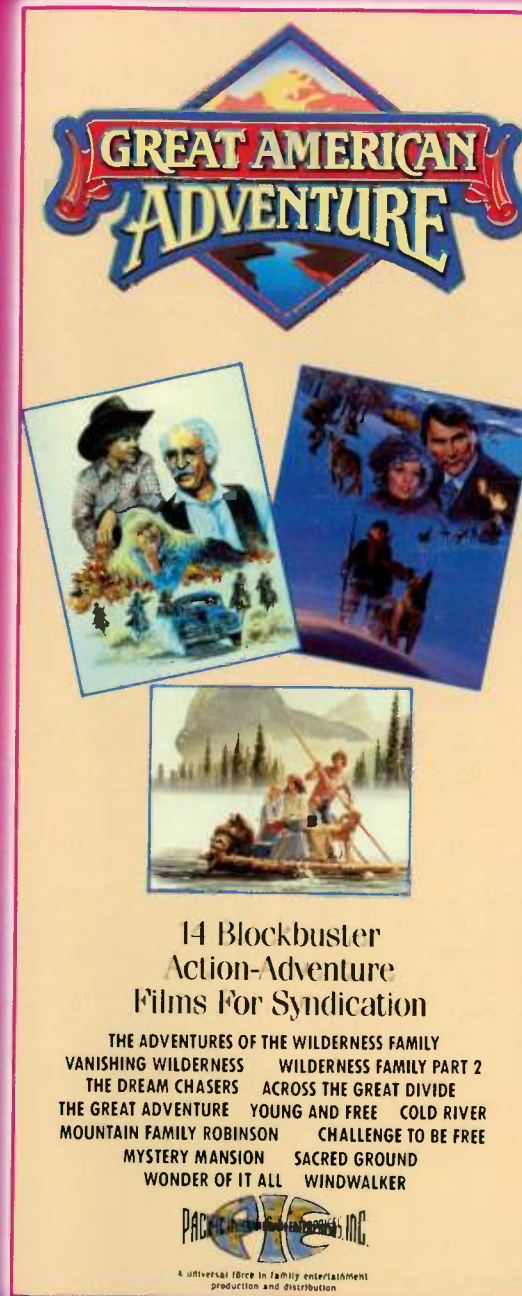
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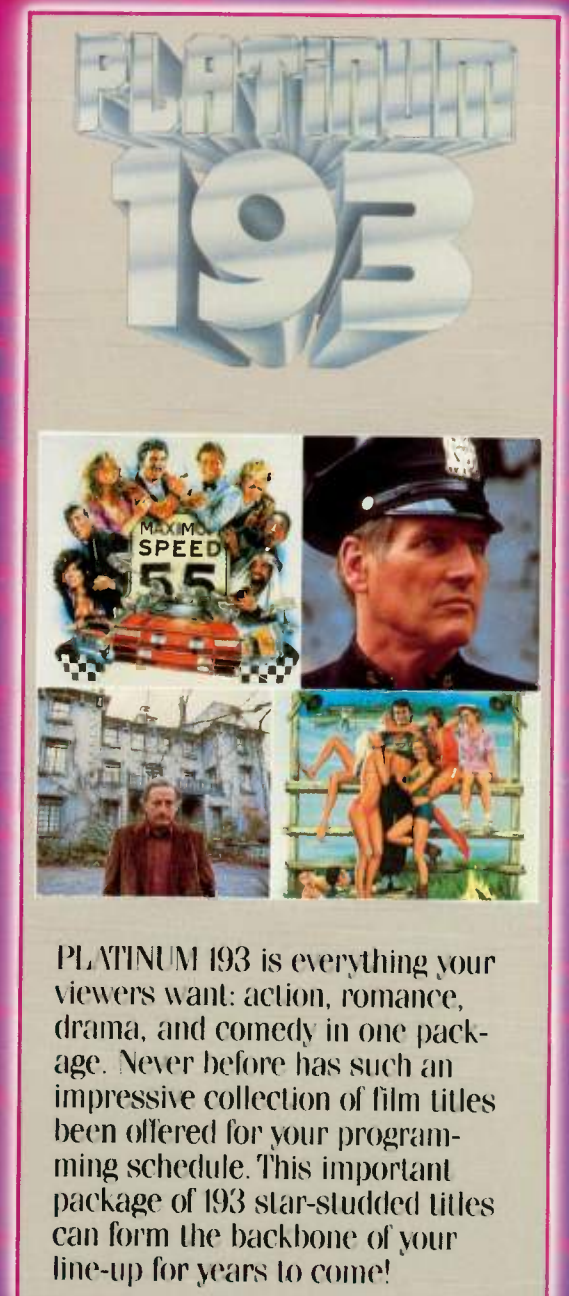


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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Gelbart: Comedy reflects life better than drama

(Continued from Page 52)

"I think the one who shocked the most was McLean Stevenson," Gelbart said, "who really didn't expect it . . . He wanted to leave the series, and we thought that rather than just write him out in a very sort of simple way, we would take advantage of his leaving to make a point: It's not just extras or walk-ons or day players that get killed. Sometimes people you like and love very much are killed . . ."

"The network was not too sure they wanted to do that, nor was Twentieth Century Fox. We shot it as a provisional ending, and when they saw it, to their credit, they went along with it."

Gelbart too departed "M*A*S*H," and in 1980 he produced a series that was even more experimental than some of the things "M*A*S*H" had attempted—"United States."

'United States' referred to the state of being united, to being married. I know a lot of people probably thought it was something the National Geographic Society was putting out. In Europe, it was called "Married," which gave people a better idea.

We tried to do something much more realistic in terms of a family. One out of every two American marriages ends in divorce, and we wanted to show the one that doesn't, not because it was so blessed and happy but because of what the people did to keep the marriage going.

They had two children, and again it wasn't a conventional kind of central-casting kiddies. We gave one of them a problem with dyslexia. We didn't want to just do a hello-honey-I'm-home show.

NBC-TV, which was then run by Fred Silverman, went along with the idea that nothing could be done until we had written twenty-two scripts, which I think was a courageous and a very helpful thing to us. We did write twenty-two. We then shot thirteen.

The results?

We were taken off the air after the eighth episode. Our ratings were pretty dismal. I remember one week, 'M*A*S*H' was number one in the ratings and 'United States' was



'I don't think television should become one great sort of soapbox, but I think there's something wrong about escaping so far into it that we really aren't prepared to deal with reality when we meet it on very serious levels.'

—Larry Gelbart

number six hundred and seventy, or whatever the last was. The following week, in which we put on two episodes of 'United States,' we were then last and next to last, which is probably another record low.

I don't consider the show a failure. I consider it a success in terms of being able to do what we attempted to do. Certainly as a business venture it was not a success. People said it was too tough, too unrelenting, too funny, too unfunny, too brittle, too soft, too sharp . . . At NBC, they said it was too 'visceral.' I guess anything having to do with guts was just a little too tough for them.

We used no laugh track; we used no happy theme music. We came on cold. We went off with a little music at the end. We just tried a lot of things. Some people said we tried too many things.

It had a second life, a little bit of a second life, on cable television, Arts and

Entertainment. Now it's back in the vaults. I guess I'll bring it out every few years like some crazy uncle you keep in a closet.

Gelbart has been quoted as saying that television spoils life for us because we're not as "good" as it is. "It's very hard for us to compete in our everyday lives with television," he said. "We're not as well made-up, we're not as in focus, we're not as glamorous."

"If you ever see a real fistfight in a restaurant, it's shattering. You shake for half an hour—it's so violent, so ugly. We watch people getting knocked around in commercials and cartoons, where violence is a joke or it really doesn't matter. But real violence really matters, and the first time you find yourself in a hospital, and you can't write the doctors' parts, and they tell you you have something serious, and it's not

Alan Alda telling you—that's life. I don't think television should become one great sort of soapbox, but I think there's something wrong about escaping so far into it that we really aren't prepared to deal with reality when we meet it on very serious levels."

Gelbart believes that TV comedy reflects society more accurately than TV drama. "There's very little or no TV drama—there's a lot of TV melodrama. We really can't talk about the nighttime soaps as drama. We really can't talk about cop shows as drama. There are occasional dramas, but they tend to fall into their own sort of clichés—the disease of the month or the triumph of some athlete or performer or whatever over some particular hardship. Sadly, we've come a long way from real drama—'Playhouse 90' and 'Studio One' and people writing directly for television."

But there is much that television does well, he feels, such as news.

It certainly can make us the global village that we're told we are and can be. It can put you in touch with every place in the world, which has its drawbacks, too. The more I know, the more helpless I feel.

I know I can't do much about so many desperate situations in so many places . . . I think, though, that when a subject is dealt with not merely as a headline, I think that when there's a discussion, I can begin to understand a little better what's happening in the world, and feel part of it and not just feel victimized by it.

After all this time, I don't really know what real television is. Real television might have been the early 'Today' show, with Dave Garroway standing in a window doing a show that no one had ever seen before, something that wasn't borrowed from radio or the stage or motion pictures or newspapers. Most of what we see are these kind of bastardized versions of other things. You have to be selective. I think if you watch it all the time, you can't tell the good from the bad . . .

The best thing about television is you can write it and get it on with a minimum of fuss. But that fuss is pretty daunting, too.

Everything is daunting for a writer. It's all uphill.



'Moonlighting' takes episodic-television traditions and throws them out the window. The show scripts are filled with humor, sexual innuendo and innovation: a show done totally in black and white, for example; a big-budget parody of 'The Taming of the Shrew' (above, with Cybill Shepherd and Bruce Willis) . . . Sometimes these experiments fall flat, but 'Moonlighting' takes the chance.

Dramas: Glenn Gordon Caron

The Twentieth Century-Fox movie lot is one of the few left in Los Angeles that really conjures up the glory days of Hollywood moviemaking. Maybe that's because when you get past the security guard you're automatically on a movie set. Gene Kelly turned the exteriors of many of Fox's offices into a replica of turn-of-the-century New York for "Hello Dolly!" in 1968, and Fox made the decision to leave it that way—a movie lover's dream.

Fox is also the home of Glenn Gordon Caron, the young creator and executive producer of the successful and stylish series "Moonlighting."

"Moonlighting," a detective series starring Cybill Shepherd and Bruce Willis, is about the Blue Moon Detective Agency, the only asset model Maddie Hays (Shepherd) had left when her business manager absconded with her career earnings. She runs the agency with wisecracking, good time private eye David Addison (Willis), and their loyal, if perpetually bewildered, office manager, Ms. Dipesto, played by Allyce Beasley.

"Moonlighting" takes episodic-television traditions and throws them out the window. The show scripts are filled with humor, sexual innuendo, and innovation: a show done totally in black-and-white, for example; a big-budget parody of "The Taming of the Shrew"; a dream ballet sequence, choreographed by Stanley Donen; all punctuated by knowing asides to the camera. Sometimes these experiments fall flat, but "Moonlighting" takes the chance.

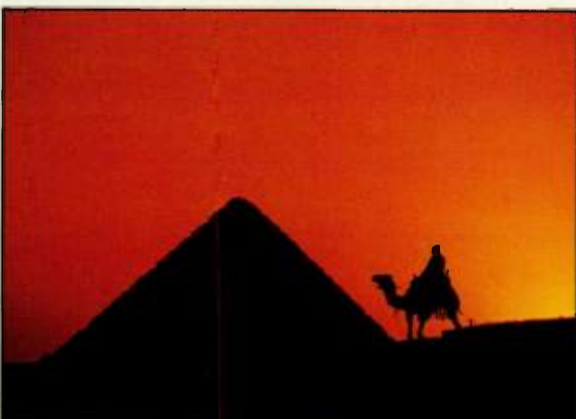
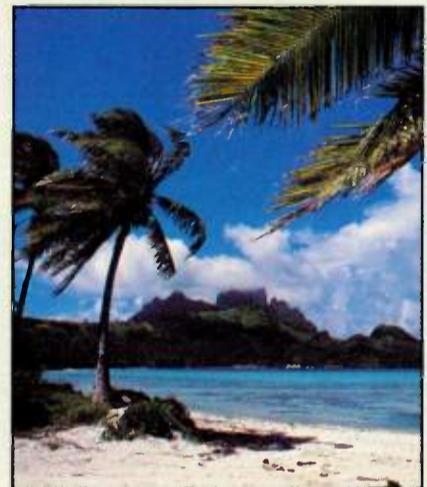
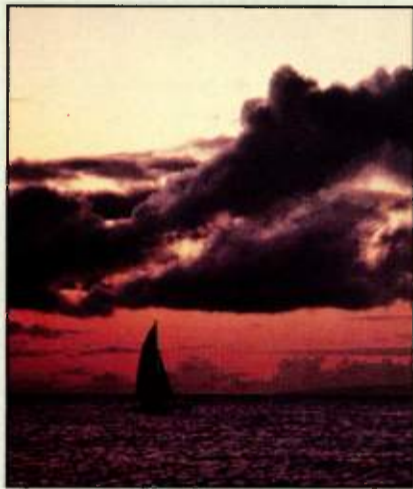
It's appropriate that Caron should have his offices at Fox, for he is, above all, a movie junkie. While he is a fan of television, it's the movies he keeps going back to for inspiration. As a student at the State University of New York at Geneseo, he booked movies for the college film series. "We would steal the sixteen-millimeter print afterward, take it, and run it on a— it wasn't even a moviola, it was just a single scope with two rewinds. We'd look at how the scenes were cut and then scream about them to each other—why this worked, why that didn't work. We would have knock-down, drag-out fights about the way 'Straw Dogs' was cut. It's very hard to work up that kind of head of steam about television."

Graduating from college, Caron knocked around for a while

(Continued on Page 62)

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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Caron started his career with films in mind

(Continued from Page 59)

in New York and Chicago, studying improv in Chicago with Del Close and Second City. Eventually, he moved to Los Angeles, never intending to go into television. "I started writing because I couldn't afford to make a film," Caron said.

Somebody said to me, 'Why don't you write a film? Costs about three bucks, and if you get a good job and they have a Xerox machine, it costs you even less.'

I started to do that, and at one point, my work started to get a little bit of attention, and an agent—he's my agent now—Elliott Webb, signed me. He was with ICM at the time, which is one of the big talent agencies in town.

I don't know if that is standard; I know it was certainly the case with me. I think the way they sign you is they kind of look at you and go, 'Movies, movies, movies . . .'

You go, 'Great!' and you sign.

Once they've got you, they go, 'Television . . .'

You go, 'Huh?'

They go, 'Television, it's a wonderful place to start your career, blah-blah-blah . . .'

I kind of scratched my head and said, 'But I don't want to work in television. I don't watch television.'

They said, 'Why don't you go home and watch some television?' So I went home, and I turned on the TV, and there was a show premiering called 'Taxi,' which I just thought was terrific. I picked up the phone the next day, and I called Elliott up, and I said, 'I'd like to do "Taxi."'

That's really how I started in it. Very strange.

"Taxi," which ran on ABC for four seasons and on NBC for a fifth, was one of those shows—such as "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and "Cheers"—that found real comedy in human relationships, without eschewing the one-liners and sight gags of more traditional sitcoms. Caron compared it to the experience of writing "Moonlighting": "We don't sit down and say, 'Let's write some comedy.' This is going to sound kind of artsy-fartsy and pretentious, but what we try to do is sit down and say, "What's the truth?"

"I bristle a bit at 'This is a comedy, this is a drama.' What we try to do is get to the truth, whatever that is, and if the people are inherently funny, then certainly some humor will emerge. But we don't sit down in a conscious way and say, 'We're comedy, we're drama.'"

Caron has worked in both, piling up an impressive list of credits for a guy who's only in his early thirties. He was the



'I kind of scratched my head and said, "But I don't want to work in television. I don't watch television." They said, "Why don't you go home and watch some television?" So I went home, and I turned on the TV, and there was a show premiering called "Taxi," which I just thought was terrific. I picked up the phone the next day, and I called (agent Elliott Webb) up, and I said, "I'd like to do 'Taxi.'" That's really how I started in it. Very strange.'

—Glenn Gordon Caron

story editor of "Good Time Harry," a short-lived series about a sportswriter that had a cult following among critics and the few viewers who could find it buried in the NBC schedule; a writer and producer on the series "Breaking Away" (based on the movie of the same name); a writer and producer of "Remington Steele"; and the creator of two pilots produced by his own company, Picturemaker Productions. Both pilots, made for ABC, failed to become series, but the network was impressed by Caron's work.

Lew Ehrlich, who was running the network at that time, took me out to lunch. He said, 'Look, what you do is weird. I'm okay with that, and I want to put you on television, but you've got to help me. You've got to write in a conventional genre. Something that I could schedule.'

I said, 'Like what?'

He said, 'Let's do a detective show,' and I just, I mean, my eyes rolled to the top of my head. I think I said something to the effect of, 'That's what America needs, another detective show.'

He said, 'Well, just think about it, and think about a star.' He rattled off a bunch of star names—you know, some of the women who had appeared in 'Charlie's Angels' and some other things. I kind of left the lunch depressed—because I've been very lucky. I've almost never done anything my heart wasn't in.

But I thought about it for a while, and I went back to him. I said, 'Let's get together. Let's have a meeting. I have an idea of what I want to do.'

So we all got together, and it was a twenty-second meeting. I said, 'I'll do your damn detective show—I mean, I think that was my tone—'But what I want to do is a romance.'

Lew said, 'Fine. Go ahead and do it.' He may have said, 'What's the premise?' And I think I might have told him about a model who's lost her fortune and she's left with all these things and one of them's a detective agency and there's this guy and hooda-hooda-hooda. But I mean, maybe forty-five seconds tops . . .

So I went off. In fact, I remember leaving his office, walking down the hall, and suddenly the door opened, he said, 'What's it called?'

And I went, 'Ahhhh—"Moonlighting!"' I don't know where that came from.

The result was a totally unexpected delight. "A lot of what 'Moonlighting' is, is a function of my boredom with the form," Caron said. "Me trying to stay awake. One thing that makes it different is that there's this sense that these people (David and Maddie, the leads) know they're on television.

They watch television. They're bored with the form, too.

"The audience is also obviously TV savvy," Caron maintains. He believes that a show like "Moonlighting" might not have been able to pull off its tongue-in-cheek attitude about TV ten or fifteen years ago. "I'm not sure that the history of the relationship between the viewer and the television set was deep enough at that point to get away with that. But the idea certainly isn't new. You ever watched the old Hope and Crosby pictures? Invariably, once a picture, they turn to the camera and say something like, 'Can you believe we're doing this?' It's certainly not a new idea. I think even Shakespeare fooled around with it—I did a series with him, by the way. He's very overrated . . ."

He does find it hard to pin down all the various popular-culture influences on the series.

There are phonograph records that influenced 'Moonlighting,' music I was listening to at the time. There are movies that I've seen that seem to have nothing to do with 'Moonlighting,' and yet, they are important to me, and so they'll creep in at some point . . .

One thing we did do deliberately—Bob Butler, who was the director of the pilot (and also director of the pilot for 'Hill Street Blues'), suggested that we sit down and watch 'His Girl Friday' (Howard Hawk's reworking of the newspaper comedy classic 'The Front Page' with Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant), because I kept talking about how the dialogue had to go a hundred miles an hour. Bob Butler said, 'Why can't they talk at the same time?' So we watched 'His Girl Friday'; in fact, we showed it to Cybill and Bruce to get a sense of what the limits are, because Hawks did it better than anybody. That's a direct influence.

But there are other things knocking around in there. I'm a huge Frank Capra fan. And, by extension, a huge Joe Walker fan; he was the cinematographer on the Capra pictures. Gerry Firnerman, who's our cinematographer, lights with hard (bright and harsh) light, which tends not to be the rule today in television. Takes a little longer, but I'm a big fan of turning off the lights and playing a scene in the dark.

I'm a big believer that people say things at night that they wouldn't say during the day. They say things when it rains that they wouldn't say when it's sunny. A lot of that comes from watching the Capra pictures.

'Body Heat' sort of got me interested in the whole James M. Cain sort of geometry on a mystery—"Double Indemnity" and all that. Particularly during the first five episodes that we did, early into the first season, we played with that geometry quite a bit.

(Continued on Page 64)



"Remington Steele," with Pierce Brosnan and Stephanie Zimbalist, is one of the series that Glenn Gordon Caron worked on as a writer and producer.

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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Caron enjoys the freedom he has in television

(Continued from Page 62)

Caron enjoys working in television for many reasons:

You get an idea on Monday, you write it down on Tuesday, you shoot it on a Wednesday, and it's on television the following week. Bruce always kids—he calls it Film College. I get a texture in my head, or a color, or someone else will—an idea—and we have the means with which to try it, to reach for something. And some of these things are nuts.

They defy any kind of rational . . . you know, I had this idea in my head, storytelling with dance, which hadn't been done in a long time. I said, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful just to do a seven-, eight-minute thing?' So you call Stanley Donen, thinking he'll hang up on you, because he's the master, and he says yes! How often does that happen?

I remember two years ago, when we had the idea of doing the black-and-white show. I was certain that I'd go to ABC, say I want to do this show in black and white, and the roof would fall in. They weren't concerned.

That's why I work in television, because the palette is certainly as broad as film, and the freedom is there for me, and (knock wood) the audience, for the moment, is there.

That's the other thing—it's the biggest house in the world. You're playing the biggest theater there is, and when you do it well, they sure tell you. When you don't, they tell you. The feedback's pretty immediate. It isn't like a motion picture, where you make it, and for six months everybody sort of sits and ruminates about it, and then you put it in theaters. It's a different experience. That's why I work in television.

The movie addict in Caron is obsessed with the look of "Moonlighting," one of the series' most distinguishing features. "I had always seen the show as a romance," he reminded.

"Sort of harkening back to what my notion of romance in film was—going back to those Capra pictures, in which Barbara Stanwyck would come in and sort of tell the truth to Gary Cooper. Those scenes always seemed to play in the dark, so we were determined, if and when we were allowed to do the series, to get someone who was comfortable with that." They hired Gerald Finnerman, who was trained in the old school of Hollywood camerawork.

All of this, of course, is expensive, and "Moonlighting" has a reputation for being one of the most expensive hour-long shows on TV. Caron doesn't bristle at the suggestion—but he says immediately and unequivocally, "Want me to do my speech?"

The thinking in television, which makes no damn sense to me, is that a half-hour of television costs X, and an hour of television costs Y, no matter what that television is. It strikes me as an insane hypothesis. The parallel is, you're hungry, whether you go to



'I believe we ("Moonlighting") are the cheapest show per ratings point, certainly on ABC, and when you really get down to it, that's what ABC is selling. . . . ABC is getting their money's worth.'

—Glenn Gordon Caron

McDonald's or whether you go to '21,' it should cost the same; they both fill your stomach. It's nonsense.

I once sat down and figured it out. I believe we are the cheapest show per ratings point, certainly on ABC, and when you really get down to it, that's what ABC is selling. There are other shows that are in the same ballpark as us. ABC is getting their money's worth. If they're not, they have the wherewithal to do something about it. I don't apologize for what the show costs at all.

If you want quality, I think you have to expect to pay for it, and I think the viewers have said in a very clear way that they want quality. Not an unreasonable thing to ask, because you have to remember that when the viewer sits down and turns the channel selector, he doesn't differentiate between ABC, NBC, CBS, and HBO. Which means that my show that costs a million something, or Michael Mann's or Steven Bochco's, is more than likely competing

against a movie made by George Lucas that cost thirty-something million. It's still free to the consumer. Sure, he writes a check at the end of the month to HBO, but when he sits down and makes the choice, nobody's asking him for his money . . .

So from where I sit, a show like 'Moonlighting' is cost-effective. Everybody's making a profit. The question is how big a profit. The thinking that needs to change isn't here. I'm not sure it's in Hollywood. I think it's in New York, on Wall Street.

Another facet of "Moonlighting" that has made the show somewhat controversial is its out-and-out, blatant sexiness. Yet Caron claims not to have had the problems with network censors mentioned by other producers and writers. "We have a terrific relationship," he claimed.

Beginning with the pilot, we've had an

agreement with them that if there's something they're uneasy with or uncomfortable with, I film it and show it to them on film, with the understanding that if they continue to have a problem with it, we can offer them some remedy. They very rarely ask us to do that.

My argument to them has always been, see it in context. On a page, you can't take into account all those other elements that are what a film is. They've always been kind of great about that.

I think the one thing that upsets them a little bit is that, unfortunately, they get to see it incredibly late, because we've fallen into a pattern of delivering our shows very late.

It's their air, you know? It's their movie theater.

Ultimately, I'm not responsible. I mean, I'm responsible for the quality and the content of 'Moonlighting.' I'm responsible to the viewers. But they (the network) are responsible at some point to the government and all that kind of thing, so it's very hard to begrudge them that voice.

Why are writers like Caron willing to take on so many responsibilities as a producer?

"Producing in television is a natural outgrowth of wanting to control the work," he said, "since the ideas tend to begin in the writer's mind and also because the writing is probably the most elusive commodity in the whole chain of events that yields a television show. So from a business point of view, there's a natural inclination to say, 'Let's make the woman or man who's doing the writing in charge of the whole darn thing.'"

Television has won over the film student:

It strikes up this kinship, you know? I see it on our show: the relationship that the audience has with the show. It becomes personal in a way that no other media can because of its immediacy—that's what television does best.

I don't think in history any part of the entertainment business has taken on the challenge that TV does, which is to create sixty-six new hours of entertainment a week. Hollywood in its heyday didn't do that. Measured against that yardstick, we're doing okay.

What's wrong with TV? We're asked to make it too fast. We're asked to make it too inexpensively. There's a tremendous temptation to homogenize everything—an overabundance of concern about offending. I think part of the dramatic experience has to do with unsettling you a little.

I mean, even as children—'Lassie Come Home'—if you were alive and the picture worked for you, you cried at the end. That was what it was about.

Steve Bochco says—I'm going to misquote him, but the thrust of what he said was that all art begins with a point of view. And the temptation in television is to deny point of view. We want to be fair to everybody. No good drama, no good art comes out of that.

Talk Shows and Game Shows: Merv Griffin

Merv Griffin has been a key figure in the television business almost from the very beginning, the ubiquitous host of both games shows and talk shows for three decades. He is also a shrewd television businessman. Two game shows he created—"Wheel of Fortune" and "Jeopardy!"—have been the number one and number two rated syndicated TV shows in the United States. In 1986, Griffin sold his company, Merv Griffin Enterprises, to the Coca-Cola Company for a reported \$250 million.

He has his own memories of the early days of television game shows. "There were disasters all the time. I was the emcee on a game show for Goodson and Todman called 'Play Your Hunch.' Everything you could possibly imagine happened on that show, from a stage hand dying in the middle of the show to me doing a demonstration with an orange and cutting right through my hand, blood running into the orange juice. They

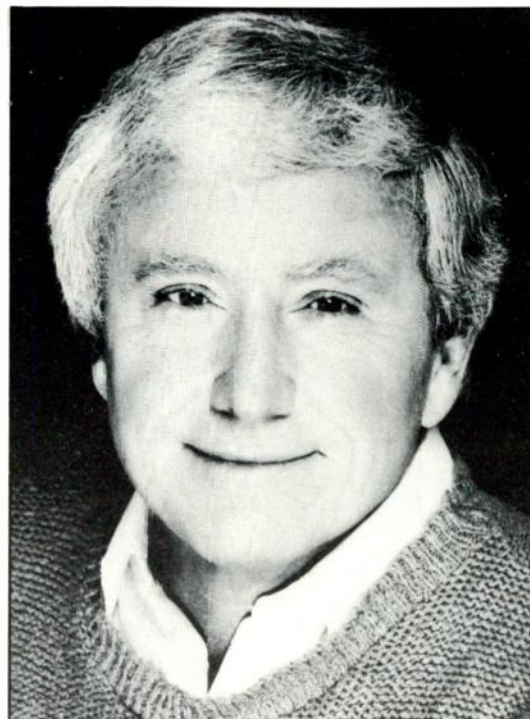
were the most amazing days in the world."

Another of Griffin's early emcee chores was an on-location talk show called "Going Places" in 1957.

'Going Places' came to me through a gentleman named Martin Stone, who was responsible for the 'Howdy Doody' show. He had this show that would tour around all the great tourist spots of Florida. I used to fly to Florida every weekend and emcee the show.

It was live, and it was on late Sunday afternoons, all over the United States, and there were guest stars. The first show was from the Jordan Marsh department store's new dock in Miami. People could come in their yachts and go shopping. We had the Cypress Gardens Water Skiers, so my opening announcement said, 'Let's open this fabulous dock here with the Cypress Gardens Water Skiers, starring Dick Pope Junior.'

I said, 'Dick, are you ready?' And he said, (Continued on Page 68)



'I was the emcee on a game show . . . "Play Your Hunch." Everything you could possibly imagine happened on that show, from a stage hand dying in the middle of the show to me doing a demonstration with an orange and cutting right through my hand They were the most amazing days in the world.'

—Merv Griffin

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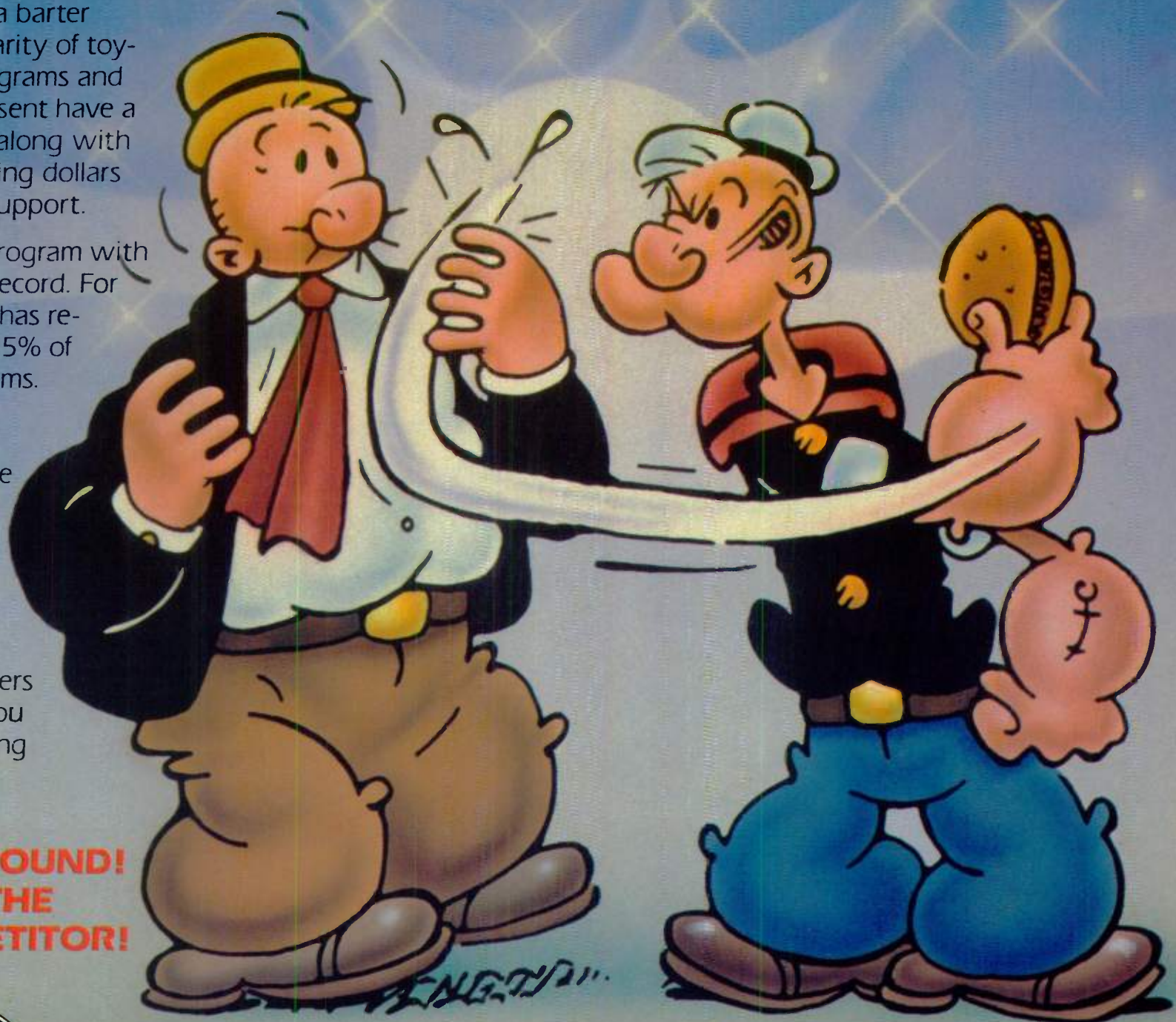
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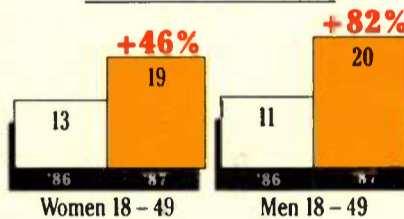
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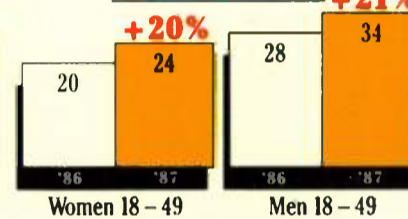


CHEERS VS. NOVEMBER 1986 TIME PERIOD SHARES

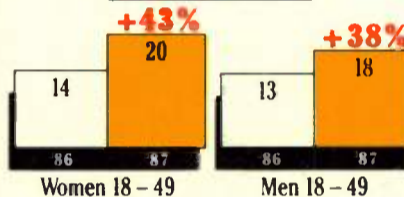
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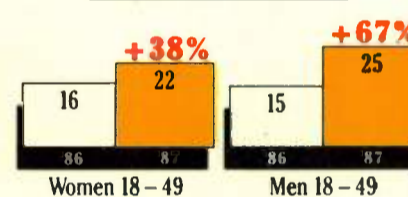
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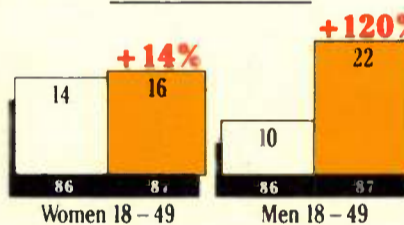
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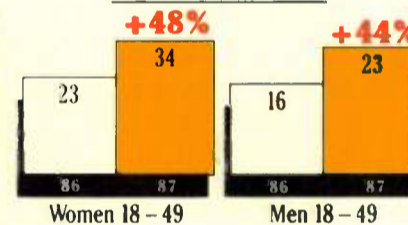
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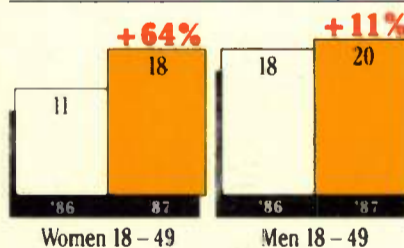
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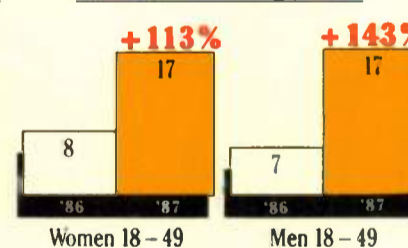
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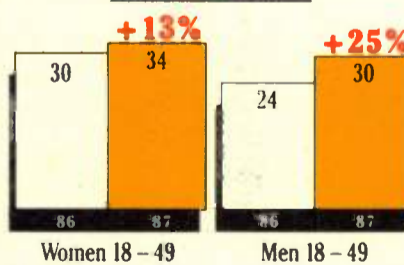
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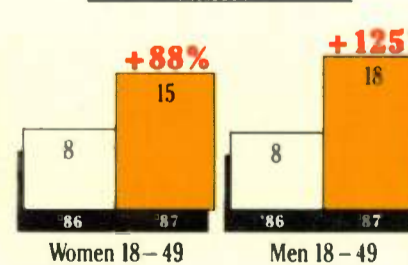
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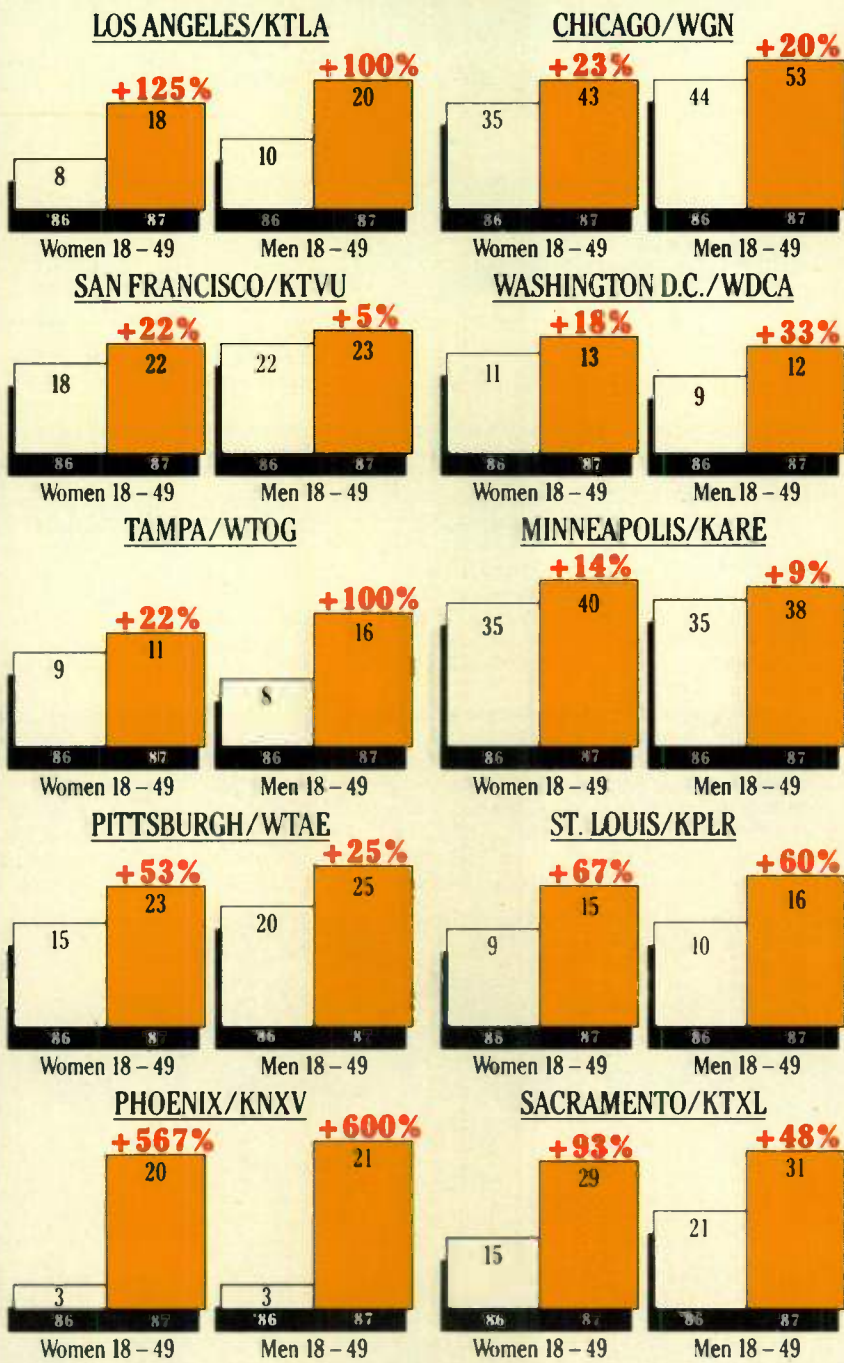


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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Griffin: Live television could be 'humbling'

(Continued from Page 64)

'Ready, Murth.' I thought, 'Murth? I hope my friends didn't hear that.'

After he finished, I said, 'Now, here's the mayor of this great city of Miami to officially open this dock, Mayor Randall Christmas.' And he said, 'Thank you, Herb.'

I was dying inside. The producer was falling against the remote truck, screaming, laughing. And then the orchestra leader called me Mark.

Later, I saw The Miami Herald, and it said, 'Be sure and watch "Going Places" today with Merv Griffin opening the Jordan Marsh dock and its emcee, Mary Griffin.'

You're humbled, always, from the beginning.

"Going Places" featured a lot of animal demonstrations. "We were doing a whole demonstration of these exotic snakes of the Okefenokee Swamp. On the air, they had little children with snakes wrapped around their necks. It really repulsed me—it was a difficult show to emcee.

"This man had hold of a cobra, and while he was talking to me, it struck the side of the camera, and the cameraman thought it was after him. Everyone threw their earphones off and all ran out, leaving me and the cobra and the trainer, who couldn't get control of him."

On another occasion, "Going Places" cameras traveled to the Viscaya estate. "I decided that day that I would sing a song," Griffin said. "They put me in a little boat. The waters were rough in that little channel. I took the guitar player with me. He had worked very late in a jazz place and probably had too much to drink. We got out there, and I was singing, and the guitar player, live, threw up all over me.

"So in the early days, we all learned our lessons well. People say, 'Why are you so calm?' Well, I'm so calm because I have seen everything happen. I never had the experience Dick Cavett had where a man died right in the middle of his interview. But he was probably asking boring questions." Griffin quickly added, "I told Dick that, so he'll understand."

Griffin's career as a talk show host began in 1962, as a Monday night replacement for Jack Paar on "The Tonight Show," which shared a studio with Griffin's daytime game show, "Play Your Hunch." Not realizing that, Paar one day walked into the middle of a "Play Your Hunch" telecast by accident. Griffin handled the impromptu situation well, and Paar was impressed. "Let him take over on a Monday night," Paar suggested, "See what he does. He's

funny."

On Griffin's first night, he said, "I knew the audience didn't know who I was, so I went out and said, 'I know you don't know who I am. Your wife knows who I am because I spend a lot of time with her during the day. I can't stand here and tell you who I am, so I brought my agent, Marty Cumber, with me.'

"I hired Al Kelly, who was the world's greatest double-talker. I said to him, 'Marty, it would be more humble of me to allow you, as my agent, who had all this faith in me, to tell the audience who I am.' Of course, he started out, 'This fine boy is one of the great fratraznats of all time.'

"You actually saw people in the audience sit forward—'What did he say?' He did about three minutes, and as it built, the audience realized it was being put on, and they just screamed."

But at the time, Griffin thought he had bombed. Producer Bob Shanks had to keep him from heading home. "They shoved me back on, and that was it. The ratings for that night went through the ceiling. The next day, the press all said, 'Where'd he come from? I guess the press doesn't watch daytime television.'" Griffin's success on "The Tonight Show" resulted in his own daytime talk show, the first of many forays into the talk show genre.

"I had a few backstage rules," Griffin said. "I never wanted anybody to write any questions for me. I wanted them to write areas of research, which I would take upstairs for two or three hours prior to the show. I like improvisation.

"I never saw a guest star before the show and made a rule, most of the time, never to see them after the show. It's too hard to interview your friends, and there was that spontaneity of the audience actually seeing us meeting for the first time. That always triggers something interesting.

"When Jack Paar quit in 1962, I asked him, 'Why are you leaving, Jack?' And he said, 'There's nobody left to talk to.'

"I thought, 'Oh, that's depressing,' because I was just starting my talk show. But we did find twenty-three years of people to talk to—many newcomers who are now major stars."

Why are talk shows such a television staple? "In the beginning there were just a few of us," Griffin said. "Then, because of the financial gains to be made from such a low-budget show, every local station put on their own local talk show. The number of talk shows that have come and gone is



'When Jack Paar (at left) quit ("The Tonight Show") in 1962, I asked him, "Why are you leaving, Jack?" And he said, "There's nobody left to talk to." I thought, "Oh, that's depressing," because I was just starting my talk show. But we did find twenty-three years of people to talk to—many newcomers who are now major stars.'

—Merv Griffin

immense.

"Isn't it television at its best?" he asked.

For years, we lived with images of the stars that were created by the Hollywood columnists and the great studio press departments. Suddenly, on talk shows, you saw these larger-than-life figures sitting on a show and telling the true stories of their lives. That's probably what killed off the great and famous columnists of Hollywood, the Parsons and the Hoppers; people saw the stars coming on and talking about their lives, and they were far different stories than the pap that the press had been putting out.

Sometimes, you can talk a guest too far back into their past, and it almost becomes a psychiatric interview. I met Doctor Martin Grotjahn, who was probably the dean of American psychiatrists, a great gentleman who had written a book called Beyond Laughter. He said to me, 'Interesting to meet you. I always tell my new young psychiatrists, "If you want to

know the technique of psychiatric interview, you watch Merv.'"

I said, 'Why?' And he said, 'Well, I'm not going to explain it all to you, if you don't know what you're doing, but you go through many doors to find the answer you want.'

In a sense, that's true. The greatest example of that was when we booked Spiro Agnew after he was forced out of the vice presidency. Every day, one of his associates would call and say, 'Now don't ask this, don't ask that, don't ask this.' I had ninety minutes with him, and by the time we got to the day we were going to tape him, I had nothing to say to him beyond hello.

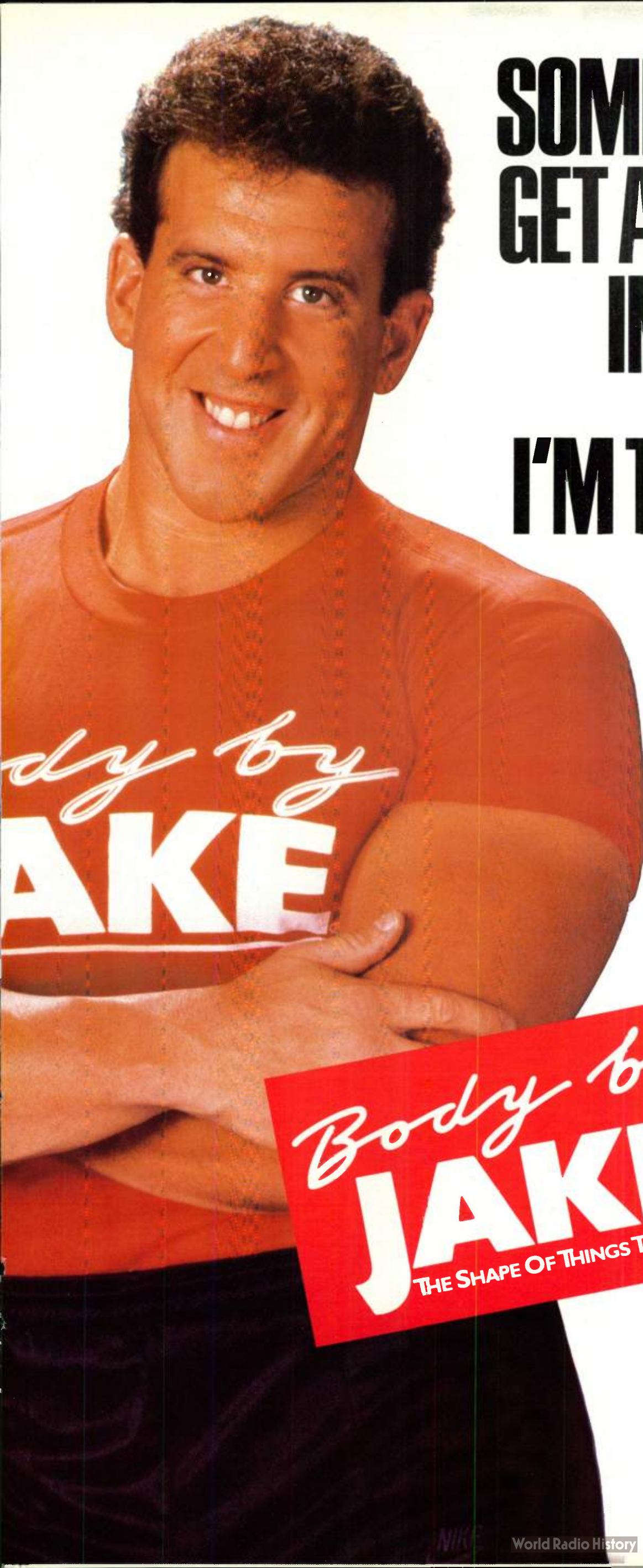
The staff said it's too much of a chance, let's duck out of it. I said, 'No, it might be the best school in the world for me, to see what I can get past him.'

The press was a little rough on me; they said that I was too gentle with him. But they don't stay with it. Once you have a subject in front

(Continued on Page 72)

' "Wheel of Fortune," ' Griffin said, was based on 'games my sister and I used to play in the back of the car on summer vacation . . . We'd ride in the back of the car for days, and we'd sit there and play a rather violent game called hangman . . . You'd put in blank spaces, and guess a letter, and if it wasn't in the puzzles, you'd start hanging a man. I think everything I've drawn on in my career goes back to my youth . . . '





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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Griffin says best game shows involve the 'audience at home'

(Continued from Page 68)

of you, and you snooze and relax and get them so that they're comfortable with you—I asked him every single question I was told not to. And only one did he refuse to answer, because he had some litigation going on in Maryland.

There is a connection, for Griffin, between the talk show and the game show. "Game shows, once again, are improvisational. Paar came out of game shows; Carson came out of game shows; I came out of games. It was the great learning platform for people who had a clock in their head, a sense of timing."

He has successfully devoted much of his career to determining the secret of a hit game show: "The audience at home," he said. "There's nothing more thrilling to somebody at home than getting the answer before the contestant does or before anybody else in the room does. I think that's why, for example, in Chicago, they have these bars that show 'Wheel of Fortune' every night on big screens. Everybody comes in and bets on different people who can get the answers before the contestants.

"It's not enough to watch people on a screen playing games or acting silly when there's no participation."

"Wheel of Fortune," Griffin said, was based on

games my sister and I used to play in the back of the car on summer vacation. Mom and Dad would say, 'We're taking you to Carlsbad Caverns to watch the bats fly out.' We'd ride in the back of the car for days, and we'd sit there and play a rather violent game called hangman. Every kid in America played it. You'd put in blank spaces, and guess a letter, and if it wasn't in the puzzles, you'd start hanging a man. I think everything I've drawn on in my career goes back to my youth . . .

And so, one day, just fooling around in the office here, with the creative staff, I threw out this idea, and we started to work on it. We worked for a year on it. We then made a pilot. I first showed it in my house to Mike Eisner, who is now head of Disney, and Brandon Stoddard, who is head of ABC. They both saw it, and they said, 'Well, it's not a show.' I thought, 'Whoops . . .'

Without changing it at all, I showed it to Lin Bolen at NBC, and she bought it. But she said, 'I want to do a show in a boutique.' So they put us in the middle of this—it looked like a store. That didn't work. It looked frumpy.

The set was redesigned to resemble what it is today. "We then brought in (Edd) 'Kookie' Byrnes (from '77 Sunset Strip'). He did a pilot."

Byrnes was replaced with Chuck Woolery, who had hosted the original pilot and a woman named Susan Stafford. "Then I found Pat Sajak, who was a local weatherman on NBC here, and then came the famous Vanna White, who now is one of the larger-than-life cult figures in America. The cover of Newsweek, People, Esquire, every major paper. It just doesn't stop."

According to Griffin, "Wheel of Fortune" is now seen in forty countries, including six behind the Iron Curtain. Its influence is everywhere: "Sam Donaldson says to the president in a press conference, 'Mr. President, how did you think the first televising of Congress went today?' And he said, 'I thought they did very well. If they do any better, they can get on "Wheel of Fortune." ' Not a bad plug, from the president."

As for "Jeopardy!":

I invented the game sixteen years ago. It's probably the

toughest game that's ever been on television. I went in a year ago and took the test for contestants and failed—and I'm the executive producer.

'Jeopardy!' came from my wife turning to me during the quiz scandals and saying, 'Why don't you do a game?' I had said to her, 'I wish I could do a quiz show. I love questions and answers.'

She said, 'Why don't you do a show where you give the answers?'

I said, 'Well, they just did that, and everybody's in jail.'

She said, 'No, Five thousand two hundred and eight.'

'How many feet in a mile?'

'Good. Seventy-nine Wistful Vista.'

'What's Fibber McGees's address?' I thought, 'Whoa.' Landed in New York, called the staff together at eight o'clock that night, and said, 'Listen to this.' And we started working.

But again, it was a year and a half of structuring. It's not enough to have an idea, because really the idea of 'Jeopardy!' is just answer-question. That's the only thing different. But structuring the game, categories, amounts of money, things that can happen, things that won't happen, was very difficult.

When I first showed it to NBC, I rented a theater in New York. Instead of having Jeopardy, Double Jeopardy, Final Jeopardy, I had Jeopardy and Double Jeopardy together, and the board was so big it came off the stage and went out into the audience. There were fifty categories! NBC said, 'Could you make that a little smaller?'

The "Jeopardy!" experience left Griffin with a real distaste for network research.

When I first put 'Jeopardy!' on the air, two weeks after it was on, the head of NBC research department, Paul Klein, came to me with these huge charts, and he said, 'Merv, look what happens on your show . . . The questions are way too tough. You've got to bring them down to a sophomore-in-high-school kind of questions and answers.'

I said, 'Well, that's not the game.'

He said, 'You have to do it or you won't last thirteen weeks. The testing groups don't know what those answers and questions are. You've got to change it. That's an order from the network.'

I said, 'Okay,' and he left, and I never told anybody that he was ever there. We went right on with the show, and it ran eleven years (on NBC).

Not too long ago, I did a game show pilot, and in the middle of the pilot, as we would complete each segment, the head of daytime said, 'Hold it now,' and he ran into a roomful of people he had hired saying, 'Was that good?'

That's never been entertainment . . . If you make 'Gone With the Wind' you don't ask anybody on the street, 'Is that good?' You put it out there and you take your chances. You will either have done your job well, or you're a disaster.

He'd run out and say, 'They didn't understand.' Finally you just get to the breaking point of saying, 'Listen, I've got a track record. I got you the number one show on your network for twenty-three years. Leave me alone, and let me do it. If it fails, it fails.'

That's not ego speaking, but the confidence of a successful game show entrepreneur. Griffin knows what works and what doesn't. "The game is the thing," he said. "Same as Broadway, where the play's the thing. You can have shows where people can win millions—there's a million-dollar game on right now, but nobody cares, because the play's the thing, the game's the thing. You can never get around that."



Photo by John Kennard

"Jeopardy!" (with host Alex Trebek) came from my wife turning to me during the quiz scandals and saying, "Why don't you do a game" She said, "Why don't you do a show where you give the answers?" I said, "Well, they just did that, and everybody's in jail." She said, "No, Five thousand two hundred and eight." "How many feet in a mile?" "Good. Seventy-nine Wistful Vista." "What's Fibber McGees's address?" I thought, "Whoa." "

—Merv Griffin

Variety shows: George Schlatter

'(George) Schlatter is a bit like the girl with a curl. When he's good, he's very good, and when he's bad, he's terrible.'

—Tony Schwartz writing in The New York Times in 1982 after Mr. Schlatter's NBC series "The Shape of Things" had been canceled

George Schlatter, in many respects, fits the classic image of a Hollywood television producer. He's a wheeler and a dealer, a husky, bearded mass of energy, always looking for a project, always eager to find an angle.

Perhaps the best description of Schlatter and his work was provided by Tony Schwartz, writing in The New York Times in 1982 after Schlatter's NBC series "The Shape of Things" had been canceled. "Like every Schlatter effort, 'The Shape of Things' was a novel idea executed with supercharged energy on a medium generally characterized by neither," Schwartz wrote. "Unfortunately, it was also vulgar, gratuitous and not very funny. Mr. Schlatter is a bit like the girl with a curl. When he's good, he's very good, and when he's bad, he's terrible."

George Schlatter is one of the people who gave us "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In" and "Real People." Whether or not you liked "Real People"—and many critics didn't—it was a huge popular success.

Schlatter also perpetrated a show called

"Speak Up, America"—it lasted ten weeks—and among his other accomplishments, he lists the first program on television in which no one, including the commercial announcer, was over the age of fourteen. He went to work in commercial TV in 1956 at NBC, when Hal Kemp, a network production executive, hired him to book guests for variety shows. He has worked with many of the biggest names in show business, including Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, and Diana Ross.

Born in St. Louis, he sang with the St. Louis Municipal Opera as a youth and began producing shows when he was a student at Pepperdine University. He got a job as an agent with MCA at the age of nineteen.

I booked nightclubs and acts—singers and dancers. Then I got a job at Ciro's, which was a nightclub on the Sunset Strip. I did a TV show called 'Party at Ciro's,' which was on ABC locally. All the stars in Hollywood came on that show.

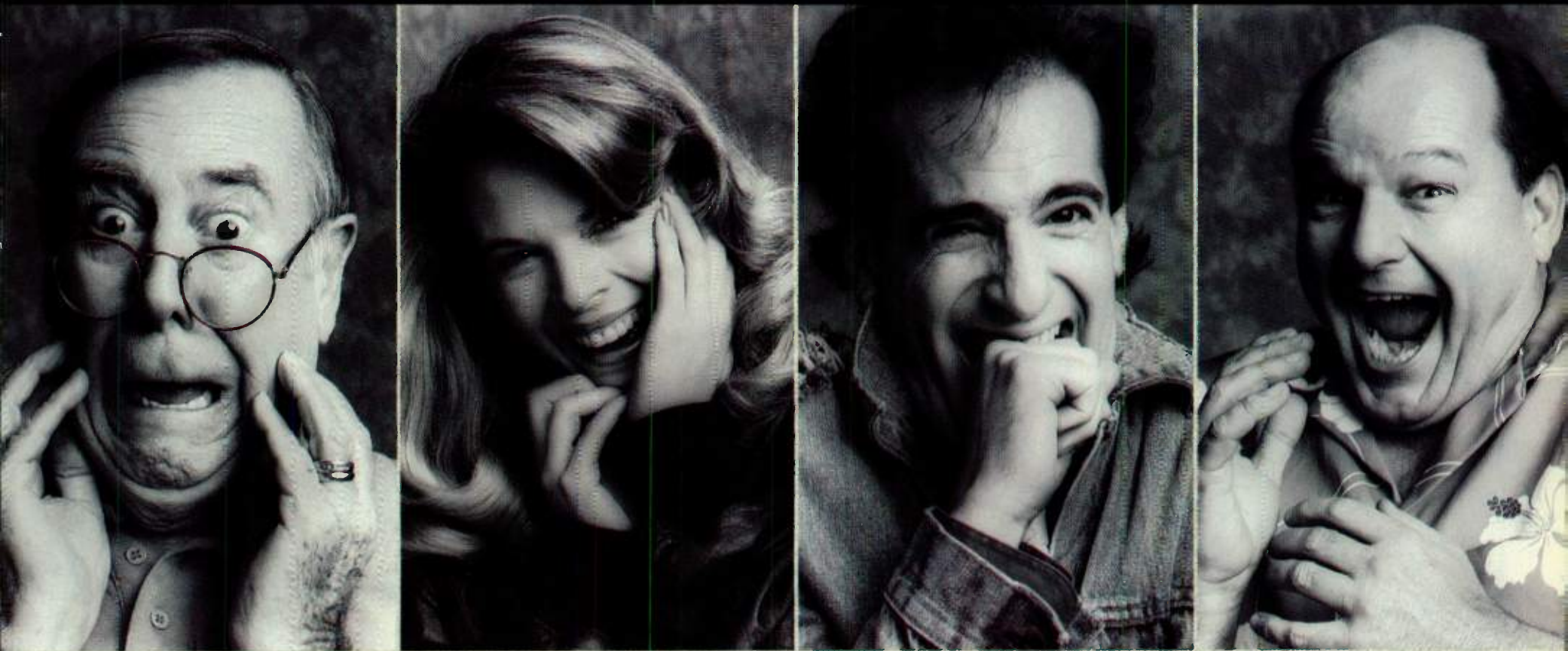
Then I wanted to get married, and my wife said she would marry me only if I got out of saloons. So I went to NBC to book 'The Dinah Shore Show,' which was the first color series, many years ago. It was during the Golden Age of variety shows. As I got into it more and more, I started to come up with shows and ideas, and eventually, they let me produce my own. I was with NBC for a long time. Then I left NBC, and I went to CBS to do 'The Judy Garland Show,' a job for which you got stunt pay.

I loved her. I had a good time with her. It was like living in an avalanche, but I did love her and had a wonderful time, God, she was an exciting woman . . .

Schlatter was replaced as executive producer of "The Judy Garland Show" after five episodes had been taped. The series would last for a full season. But within a short time, Schlatter would be present at the creation of an enormous hit, a hit that many believed changed television in general and TV comedy in particular for good:

(Continued on Page 76)

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Host Roy Firestone (right) with guests Richard Lewis (left) and Billy Crystal

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PRIME ACCESS LEADERS - NOV. '87

PROGRAM	RATING	SHARE
WHEEL OF FORTUNE	19	33
JEOPARDY	16	27
PM MAGAZINE	12	21
WIN, LOSE OR DRAW	11	18
HEE HAW	10	22
BIG SPIN	10	18
HOLLYWOOD SQUARES	10	16
ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT	9	15
FAMILY TIES	9	15
M*A*S*H	9	14

SOURCE: CASSANDRA NSI 11/87 (ACCESS MARKETS ONLY)

WIN, LOSE OR DRAW - #1 AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

GAME SHOW	(% of Total Adult Audience)	
	WOMEN 18-49	MEN 18-49
WIN, LOSE OR DRAW	62%	63%
WHEEL OF FORTUNE	33%	39%
JEOPARDY	36%	43%
NEW NEWLYWED GAME	50%	50%
HOLLYWOOD SQUARES	47%	52%
ALL NEW DATING GAME	60%	59%
\$100,000 PYRAMID	40%	46%
HIGH ROLLERS	46%	47%
TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES	53%	60%

SOURCE: NTI, NSS THROUGH DEC. 13

TOP 10 SYNDICATED SHOWS - NOV. '87

PROGRAM	RATING	SHARE
1 WHEEL OF FORTUNE	19.0	32
2 P.M. MAGAZINE	12.3	21
3 JEOPARDY	12.1	26
4 OPRAH	10.5	31
5 FAMILY TIES	8.0	15
6 PEOPLE'S COURT	7.9	20
7 M*A*S*H	7.5	17
8 DONAHUE	7.4	28
9 WIN, LOSE OR DRAW	7.0	18
10 CHEERS	6.8	15

SOURCE: CASSANDRA NSI NOV. '87 (ALL MARKETS)

So, if WIN, LOSE OR DRAW isn't slotted for access on your fall schedule, NATPE is exactly the right time for you to do it. Just remember, WIN, LOSE OR DRAW may be the new kid on the block, but by Fall '88, it's bound to be king of the mountain!



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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'



The biggest single influence on "Laugh-In," which featured such performers as Ruth Buzzi and Arte Johnson, was Ernie Kovacs, says one of the people who created it, George Schlatter.

Schlatter recalls 'Laugh-In' days

(Continued from Page 72)

"Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In."

At that point, in 1967, television had really kind of settled into a rut. There had been no change. And here this show came that combined radio and theater and burlesque, motion pictures, nightclubs, and revues. It came into a relatively tranquil period, when you had 'Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.' and 'Mayberry, R.F.D.' and 'Leave It to Beaver' and 'My Three Sons' and cowboy shows. It was all rather quiet and nobody talked about any kinds of problems at all, particularly not humorously . . .

Then we came, and we started talking about the pill and the Vietnam War and racial tension. We made it acceptable to make humorous observations about serious issues. After that, it was acceptable to air 'All in the Family' and 'Maude' and 'The Jeffersons.'

'Laugh-In' combined all known forms. The biggest single influence on 'Laugh-In' was Ernie Kovacs. (Jolene Brand), my wife, was the girl on 'The Ernie Kovacs Show,' so Ernie and I had a very close relationship. We used to argue a lot about the necessity of punch lines. Because, if you remember, Ernie was just weird. He did some great things, but you never really knew when they were over. He had a certain disdain for the audience. It gave him individuality, it gave him charm, and it gave him a unique appeal.

On 'Laugh-In,' I took what Ernie did with the medium—the use of the medium as more than a means of transmittal—and we applied the technical advances that had been made in television to humor. So we stepped up the pace, the energy. We took out all of the fat and cut away everything that was unnecessary.

We taped, and then we started editing, editing, and editing. It was a major moment. We had a brilliant group of writers, all of whom later became producers and directors. And we had a brilliant cast. I don't know if you could ever assemble a cast like that today, and if you assembled it, I don't think you could hold onto them, because the whole agent procedure is different. I think you'd lose Goldie Hawn the third or fourth week, but she stayed with us as long as her deal. So did Lily Tomlin and everybody.

No one was really sure that the audience was ready for a show of just funny things without ballads and things to change the pace, or whether or not the audience was ready to accept a show that dealt with serious issues.

Everybody was a little bit shocked and thought it was too fast, and said, 'Well it's okay once, but will it survive with that kind of speed?' I thought, really, we could.

So did the viewing public. Once it became a series, "Laugh-In" was an almost-instant hit. "We didn't really know at the time what impact we were having, because we were locked up in editing rooms and writing rooms," Schlatter said. "I was working seven days a week, so I never got out. And finally, at the end of the first fourteen shows, when we got out of the building and saw what we had done, we were thrilled

and delighted.

"It was a warm, wonderful, exciting, happy time of my life, because we could say anything; we could do anything. We were a big enough hit that we could get away with anything. You know, President Nixon came on and said, 'Sock it to me?' Which we found out later might not have been that bad an idea."

"Laugh-In" managed to offend just about everyone at least once. "Truman Capote got us sued once. He came on and said, 'I would like to apologize for having said that Jacqueline Susann looked like a truck driver in drag.' We said, 'Well it's nice of you to apologize to her.' He said, 'I'm not apologizing to her. I'm apologizing to the truck drivers.' Two days later, we got hit with a lawsuit.

"We did a joke once on one of the early 'Laugh-Ins.' We did a thing on 'News of the Past, Present, and Future.' We said, 'News of the Future, 1988'—this was 1968, twenty years ago—'News of the Future, 1988: With marriage in the church now an accepted practice, the Archbishop and his lovely wife, the former Sister Mary Katherine, both announced, "This time it's for keeps, if only for the sake of the children." ' The switchboard almost exploded."

Obviously "Laugh-Ins" humor created problems with censors. "It was pretty much hand-to-hand combat," Schlatter said.

Occasionally bayonets. You must understand what was going on in 1967. Nobody could say the word *pregnant* on the air, and here I had Joanne Worley standing at a piano singing, 'The Things I Did Last Summer,' and she was obviously about ten months gone. She was pregnant one week, and sang, 'I should have danced all night.'

The censors would come downstairs and say, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'Come on, people have babies. How do you think we got here—by bus? People have been pregnant for centuries and it didn't destroy society.' We would get a pregnant joke on the air, but they were very nervous. And they were very nervous about political jokes.

The way we used to get a lot of jokes on was very interesting. They wanted these jokes, but they also wanted to be safe. They wanted those ratings and that impact and that energy and success, but they also wanted it quiet.

The way we would beat the censors most of the time was with the band. We would do a joke and tell the band, 'Don't laugh.' As long as they didn't hear the band laugh, it was okay. If the band laughed, though, they would say, 'You can't do that.' So we would have the band laugh at straight lines, and they'd say, 'No, no, no—cut that!' We'd say, 'Oh, you caught me.' Then we'd have the band sit there and bite their lips when we did some other outrageous things.

I don't know if a man my age should be proud of having gotten 'Laugh-In' on the air, but it was cat and mouse then, you see. If you can imagine me twenty years younger, like a kid in a toy store, perhaps you can forgive

some of the adolescent overtones of what we did.

Schlatter currently is involved in the production of a special for cable and a syndicated series called "George Schlatter's Comedy Club."

Having been involved in so many series and specials—including variety shows—Schlatter has some theories about why variety has virtually disappeared as a genre on American television:

I think MTV and the music business in general is not conducive to variety shows. Carol Burnett did a show with Robin Williams and Whoopi Goldberg and Carl Reiner. It's marvelous, but it was difficult to generate the kind of excitement that there used to be for performers. The movie stars today don't really want to do guest shots, and the musical performers don't want to. It's difficult to capture the performance of a Bruce Springsteen or a Mick Jagger in a variety show. That form doesn't seem to work as well as it used to. It was lovely, though; it was great. One year, there were twenty-five different variety shows and a lot of specials, and it was fun. It may come back, but in a different form.

MTV changed it by putting so much money into three minutes. And the artists themselves changed a lot. Outrageous music is difficult for everyone to relate to, and to have a successful variety show, you need a very broad audience. It's very expensive: sets, costumes, rehearsals, and so on. Also, musical performers today really don't want to rehearse that much. They just want to do what they do. Part of the fun of variety was changing what they do.

But Schlatter sees a positive side to the move away from variety shows as well, a change that's taking place on cable. "HBO and Showtime have come out with these personality specials, where you see Liza Minnelli on stage, her whole act," Schlatter said.

Robin Williams did a show from the Metropolitan Opera stage. He came out and did two hours of the most brilliant comedy I have ever seen in my life. It was very intimidating, because you sat there and said, 'Is it possible for anyone to ever top what he did?'

That would not be possible on network television because he could not have the build of energy and performance and the accumulated effect that he had with an uninterrupted performance.

Cable is giving people new things to strive for. I think it's also a positive change in the business, because we're introducing more innovation, which we must do. Television must continue to change, if it's going to survive as an intelligent medium.

It eats its young. Television is a cannibalistic kind of show business. No matter how big a hit you are on television, it's temporary. You know that a show will come along that will one day beat you.

The News: Tom Brokaw

On the day Richard Nixon resigned the presidency, August 8, 1974, a network correspondent was standing on a box in Lafayette Park, the White House over his shoulder while he talked.

It was Tom Brokaw, doing his job and doing it very well, telling the nation what was about to happen—just the facts.

Now, Brokaw is one of the Big Three—the anchormen of the commercial networks' evening newcasts, watched by some forty-four million Americans every weeknight. In his position as anchor and managing editor of "The NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw," he finds himself in one of the most visible positions in the country.

Brokaw worked his way up through the ranks of local and national television news and has one of the strongest journalism backgrounds and reputations in network news. He was born and raised in Yankton, South Dakota . . . "I grew up in a part of South Dakota where we didn't get television until—well, I didn't get television until the mid-1950s. I was in high school by the time I saw it on a regular basis."

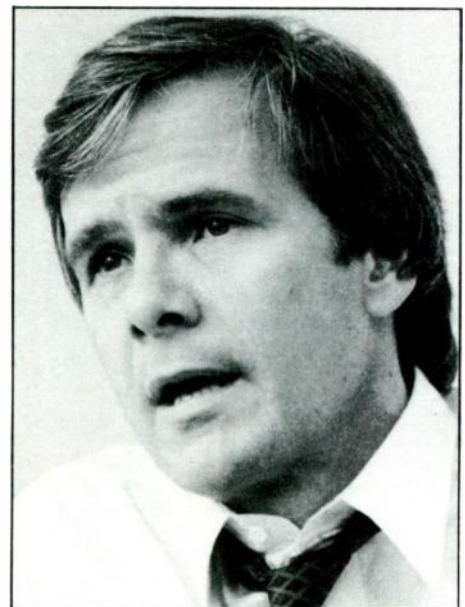
Brokaw began working in broadcasting at a local 250-watt radio station:

The signal reached just about to the end of the street . . . I started when I was fifteen. It was magical to hear the sound of your own voice and a better job than sacking groceries. I learned a lot there. I have given credit for what skills I have as an ad-libber—to that station, because there I was at fifteen, with fuses falling out of the transmitter, things breaking down, having to gab my way through all kinds of experiences.

It was very instructive, and also, I suppose, the beginning of my addiction. I thought more conventionally, and I think my parents did as well. I came from a working-class family. My parents wanted me to go to college. I think they expected—and I expected—that I would grow up to be something conventional, like a lawyer, and have an office and do a nice white-collar kind of job. But it was that early experience with the radio and the news ticker, the chance to share with people in the audience what was really going on . . .

College did not go as smoothly as Brokaw expected. "I had a meteoric high school career. I was a high school star. I went off to college and I found out that you couldn't get along on just a smile and your easy charm.

"I kept drifting back into radio and
(Continued on Page 80)



'I kept drifting back into radio and television because I could always get a job there. That was a problem as well, because it was an easy out.'

—Tom Brokaw

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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Working in television became 'an easy out'

(Continued from Page 76)

television because I could always get a job there. That was a problem as well, because it was an easy out."

Brokaw dropped out of school. "I went to work for a television station full time when I was twenty years old, and I discovered how desperate life would be if I didn't get my ass back in class. So I went back and got squared away, completed my political science requirements for a degree, and worked at the television station in the meantime."

Brokaw got married and graduated from the University of South Dakota. He and his wife, Meredith, headed for Omaha, Nebraska, and a job at station KMTV-TV in 1962. "I landed in one of those rare places in the American television spectrum, where the newsroom was run by a man of old-fashioned news values. He kicked my copy back to me and looked over everything we did. We were wholly competitive with the newspaper in that town in terms of breaking stories and knowing what was going on. It was very exciting."

"I think some of my friends from college would come down there and wonder, 'What the hell is he doing there? He's making no money and is out chasing fire trucks, going to City Hall, staying up half the night, working on stories.' I learned a great deal there. It turned out that the station cranked out a lot of very good people who are in the system around the country now."

The station was small enough that everyone did everything, including run the camera. "I was terrible, awful," Brokaw said. "It was a sixteen-millimeter Bell and Howell. The running gag is that Brokaw got to be an anchorman because he was so rotten with a camera."

From Omaha, Brokaw moved to Atlanta and fifteen months as the anchor of the late evening news at WSB-TV. During Brokaw's brief time there, Julian Bond was denied a seat in the Georgia House of Representatives, the Klan marched in Atlanta, and Martin Luther King Jr. was preaching at his father's church. "It was a real privilege to have lived in Atlanta in those days, because you really saw the best and the brightest of the South coming to grips with this terrible, terrible problem in a courageous fashion."

In 1966, NBC sent Brokaw to KNBC-TV in Los Angeles. He was the anchor of the late evening newscast there, as he had been in Atlanta, but he was also carving out a reputation for himself as a good political reporter. One of his first assignments was Ronald Reagan, then running for governor against incumbent Democrat Pat Brown. "I used to ride around on the bus with Lyn Nofziger and Reagan out in Orange County, which is a sanctuary of conservative thought. He'd speak at coffees and teas and so on . . ."

"They kept him carefully sealed off from the press, by and large. You couldn't get very close to him. He was not at ease as a candidate in those days. He had a real mean streak about him. He really felt that he was on a crusade. The fact of the matter is, in fairness to him, I think the press in



Wide World Photo

'I think it's the best job in the world. It's better than being the anchorman in the booth, I think. It's jungle rules, you live by your wits, and it's physical. I think if there is one job for which I am suited, it is that job.'

—Tom Brokaw

on covering the 1972 Democratic national convention

California was pretty much loaded against him. Pat Brown was very popular, particularly with reporters. And Ronald Reagan, actor—he got no respect, as they say. He really didn't, and I think that it irritated him. Moreover, he had come from an environment in which he had been pretty well protected by studio press agents . . .

"All that happened in the sixties came to rest in California," Brokaw said, explaining why it was an exciting place for a TV newsman starting to hit it big. Brokaw covered everything from the free-speech movement at Berkeley to the assassination of Bobby Kennedy after the California primary in 1968. His politically savvy coverage of the California delegations at both the 1968 and 1972 Democratic National Conventions helped him win attention from the network news bosses. He enjoyed working the floor at the conventions. "I think it's the best job in the world," he said. "It's better than being the anchorman in the booth, I think. It's jungle rules, you live by your wits, and it's physical. I think if there is one job for which I am suited, it is that job."

It was Brokaw's work at the 1972

Democratic convention that led him into the national big time.

I really had the California delegation wired. I was feeding stuff up to the booth all the time, and we were getting one beat after another on CBS and ABC. I just kept cranking this stuff out for them, having a lot of fun. At the end of the week, we had this big party, and John Chancellor took me aside and said, 'You know, you're going to have to decide one of these days whether you want to keep that good life in California or be a grown-up and come back and be a network correspondent.'

(NBC News President) Dick Wald came out at one point. We had a long lunch, and he said, 'What do you think about the White House?'

I said, 'I think that's very fast water to jump into.' I felt confident I could do it, but, you know, Dan Rather was a .400 hitter there.

Wald said, 'Well, why don't we send you to London for a year and then bring you to the White House? That will get you some credentials as a network correspondent.'

I said, 'That makes a lot of sense. Besides, Meredith will move real easily to London from the beach. I'm not sure she'll move so easily from the beach to Washington.'

Sports: Michael Weisman

Michael Weisman is very young to have done all that he has. Thirty-seven, he has risen through the ranks of NBC Sports more rapidly than a Sid Fernandez fastball. He was NBC Sports' youngest producer at the age of twenty-seven and was named executive producer at the age of thirty-three. He is a child of television, not afraid to use the latest techniques to tell a story.

His first memory of television sports is "running home after school at three o'clock, all the way downhill" to get home to watch the World Series. Usually, he made it in time for the fifth inning.

Directing those games was Harry Coyle, who twenty years later would become his colleague.

Sports was always an interest. "Like most young kids, I was a ball player," Weisman said. "I played Little League and enjoyed sports, like most of the kids in the neighborhood." But television was an even bigger interest, especially because Weisman's father had started out as a reporter with Reuters news agency and then moved to ABC-TV as a show publicist. "He

had shows in the early sixties like "The Untouchables," "The Pat Boone Show," and "Naked City." I remember in the fifth and sixth grades, bringing in eight-by-ten glossies. It made me a little bit of a celebrity in my neighborhood. So it was glamorous for me growing up to be somehow associated with television."

Weisman's first job at NBC Sports was in a newly created position, assistant to the producer; the year was 1972. "At the time, we had Saturday baseball, Sunday football, and Monday night baseball. Each of those shows had a separate producer. But there was only one assistant. So what would happen was that I'd be assigned to the Saturday baseball game; after the game, the producer of the show would go home. But I would go from the Saturday game to the Sunday football game. The producer of that would go home, and then I would go to the Monday night baseball games." It was the kind of grueling schedule you can only keep up when you're young. "It was great."

(Continued on Page 84)

Michael Weisman's first memory of television sports is 'running home after school at three o'clock, all the way downhill' to get home to watch the World Series. Usually, he made it in time for the fifth inning.

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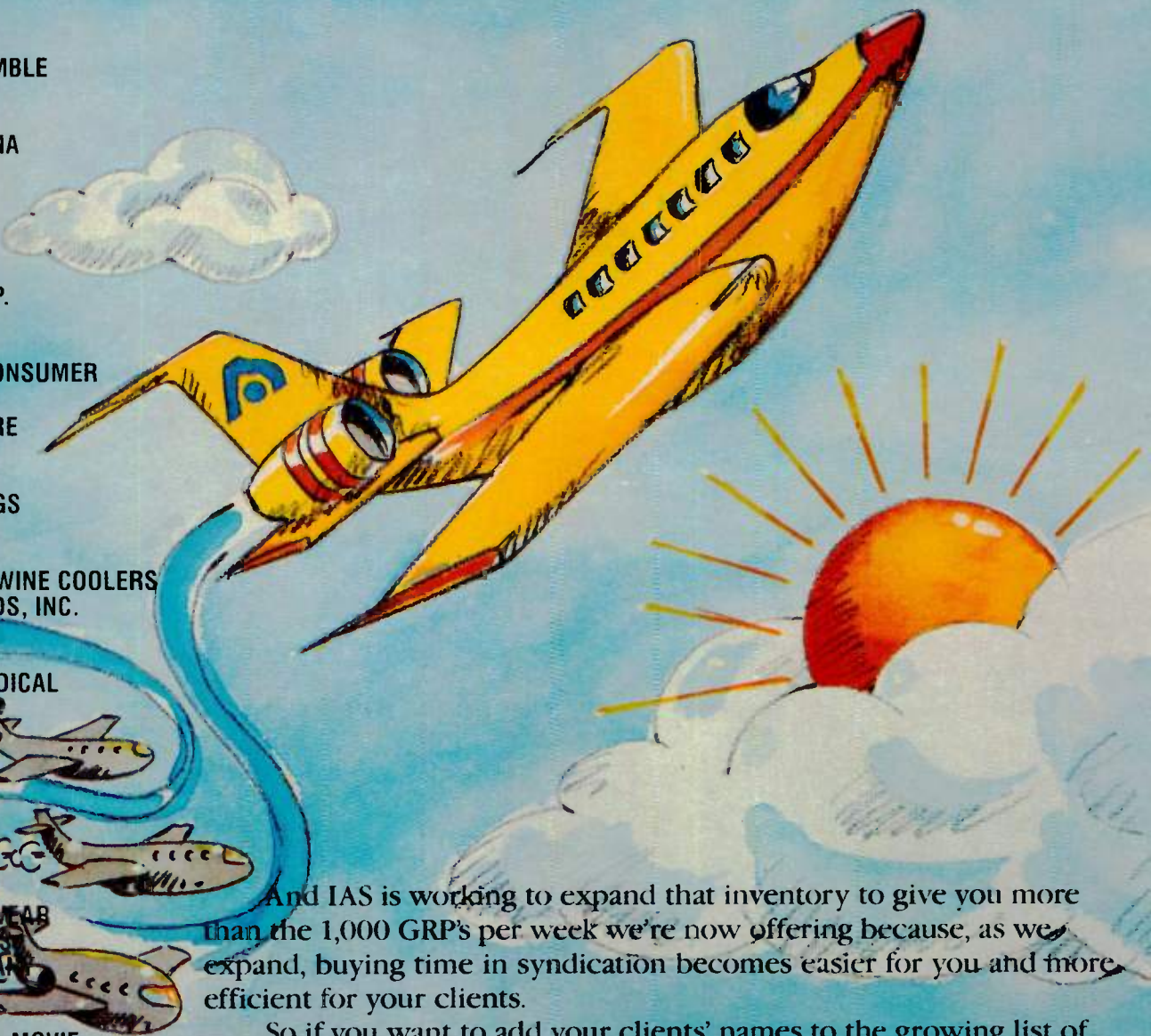
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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Innovation and enthusiasm keys to sports on TV

(Continued from Page 80)

Weisman said. "I was twenty-two years old, traveling from city to city, going to all these games, and loving it." His energy and skill led to a series of rapid series of promotions: associate producer, producer, coordinating producer of baseball, and finally, executive producer of NBC Sports under NBC Sports President Arthur Watson.

Being a sports aficionado is an enormous plus for Weisman, in more ways than one. "Enthusiasm is a key element of what we do," he said. "We even tell the announcers sometimes: If the announcers don't seem to care, why should the viewers at home care? If they're sitting there on the fifty-yard line and the feeling is conveyed to the viewer that they'd rather be someplace else, the viewer is going to think, 'This couldn't be a very important game. Why should I watch this?'"

"I also think that when you're a fan, you're curious about things. A lot of the so-called innovations that I've brought to our telecasts were largely because of the fact that I'm a fan and I'm curious. We know that that there are assistant coaches up at the top of a football stadium sending plays down to the field. We know they exist; we've seen a million shots of them. But what goes on up there? I said, 'I'd love to put a microphone and a camera and see what goes on up there.' Sure enough, we did."

Another key to success: "I care about the sports. If there's a sports journalism story to do, if there's something that's a little upsetting to the viewer, it's going to be upsetting to me as a fan. So we're going to do a story about the lack of black coaches, or the fact that franchises are moving too easily, or that a player is unhappy and perhaps not performing well."

You also need a touch of the showman.

Basically, what we do is entertainment. It's relaxation, escapism. When we're doing a Saturday afternoon baseball game in the middle of July or August, people are watching it because they're fans. Very often, it's on as background noise. I picture these people sitting in mid-America: It's ninety degrees wherever they are, and they're watching the game of the week, half-snoozing on the sofa, maybe a can of beer in front of them, reading the newspaper as the game's going on. Or maybe it's the Sunday afternoon football game: It's bitter, bitter cold, and the game is on. People are huddled up in their houses, looking at the game, cheering and eating lunch.

So it's mostly entertainment. I don't kid myself. That's the primary reason people watch it. But I do have a sense of responsibility that there are certain stories—no matter how unseemly, boring or negative—we have to address. We have an obligation to address issues. There are people at home who would rather just see the highlights of the week, the great catches and the errors and the funny things that happen in baseball. But we have an obligation to do what we think is right.

I asked Weisman about his reputation for innovation. "The best type of innovation is one where everybody wins," he said.

People recognize that it's something different, and they also recognize that it makes the telecast better, and the production people recognize that it makes their jobs easier.

An example is the ten-minute ticker. We started that in football. For as long as I can remember, the big complaint from our football audience—as at all the networks—was that there were not enough other game scores. We would tell our producers every year: more scores, more scores, more scores. It used to frustrate me that you'd see a score, 10-3, in the second quarter, and the next time you'd see that score it might be 48-47. What happened?

In the truck, the producers would be turning around to the production assistant and saying, 'Have you done the scores? Give me the scores.'

So I came up with the system called the ten-minute ticker. As close to every ten minutes as possible, the guys in the truck know to update the scores—made their lives easier, and it made it better for the viewers, because they know that every ten minutes they will get all the scores.

A simple solution, and one that has caught on. Another innovation of Weisman's got him more publicity than he bargained for. Weisman announced that during the network's coverage of Super Bowl XX there would be one minute of silence during the pregame show.

There's such a lot of hype about the Super Bowl. It's such a long sports day. We had a two-hour basketball game, a two-hour pregame show, the three-and-a-half-hour game, and then a half-hour postgame. I said, 'God, that's a lot of sports in one afternoon. It would be kind of nice after all this selling and all the hype coming up to the game, if we could kind of take an intermission. Relax and let everybody catch their breath.' So I



Wide World Photos

Another innovation of Weisman's got him more publicity than he bargained for. Weisman announced that during the network's coverage of Super Bowl XX, there would be one minute of silence during the pre-game show I said, 'God, that's a lot of sports in one afternoon. It would be kind of nice after all this selling and all the hype coming up to the game, if we could kind of take an intermission. Relax and let everybody catch their breath.'

said, 'I'm going to do that. One minute of just nothing.'

We didn't even put out a press release, but it made front page news. They called it 'the bathroom break' or 'the run for the toilet.' Then people got outraged: 'Nobody's telling me when to go to the bathroom.' It's kind of upsetting to me that after fifteen years in the business and all the Emmys and stuff, when my career's finally written up, I will be known as the Minute Man.

I think the reason it got played up so big was probably a combination of factors. One, it was the Super Bowl, and anything associated with the Super Bowl was going to be played up very big. Two, some people thought it meant one less commercial. Anything to do with commercials gets people excited; they have strong feelings about them. Three, there was probably some bathroom humor there. Those things combined to make it a much bigger story than we imagined.

Is there a thin line between innovation and gimmickry?

We did a show last year on our football pregame show called 'Surprise Saturday.' We said, 'We don't want the producers or anybody to know who the guests will be on the show. The four announcers will bring in their own surprise guests.' You can call that gimmickry, but I call it fun, interesting. Sure enough, a lot of people tuned in.

We prefer the word *innovation*. I find that usually the people who call it gimmickry—particularly at the other networks—are the jealous ones who just do the same thing week in and week out. They think that's the only way you do television. One of my mandates as executive producer is to challenge people to look at how to do things differently. Don't accept the status quo.

In boxing, for example, we started a gimmick or an innovation that I think is a public service: It struck me that whenever you do a fight, you're constantly concerned with how much time is left in the ring, particularly if your guy is getting beat. The way the networks handled fights for years was to put the clock in to start the round, and then take it out. I said, let's leave the clock very small in the lower right-hand corner and just let it count all three minutes. People said, 'You can't do that. It's too distracting.' But it worked.

We started something called 'Due up Next' in baseball. We thought, hey, who's coming up next inning? Put it up as you go into the commercial. Now, every local station, every network does it. When we first did it, it was a gimmick. But television is very much a copycat business.

Not all of his ideas work. Something dubbed 'instant preplay,' for example, that was tried during an Orange Bowl game.

I said, 'Hey, let's tell the viewer before the play—thus, "preplay"—who the isolated camera is going to be on.' If we told

them the isolated was going to be on the linebacker number fifty, they can choose to watch or not watch the linebacker in the wide shot, as they wish, knowing they're going to see a replay of him afterward. So in the wide shot, the actual play, you could kind of keep one eye on number fifty and see him get knocked down. It makes the viewer more involved in the broadcast—I can't wait to see this replay.' They're curious now on the close-up to see how blocking techniques took the guy out of the play.

It was misunderstood by the press, because after the Orange Bowl they said, 'NBC guessed right on only thirty-three percent of their instant replays.' That wasn't the object of it: to guess who was going to be involved in the play. It was to let the viewer in. But we never did it again.

Weisman wants his viewer to see and hear everything. "We sometimes feel frustrated, because the technology is there to let us mike people and to get cameras everywhere, but obviously, the leagues, to protect their sports, put limitations on us. We approached Major League Baseball about miking the umpire and putting a camera on the umpire's mask—small cameras here and small cameras there. The leagues stop us, maybe correctly so. I think if they would allow us to do some of these things, it would remove some of the mystique, which may or may not be advantageous. It depends on how you look at it."

I try to remind people that doing a sports telecast is not unlike writing a story: the tease being the headline, the opening camera shot as the opening paragraph, and then you close it in the end; you finish the story. I tell our people, whatever you started with at the beginning, make sure you go back and conclude it.

I'll give you an example. CBS did the first fight with convict James Scott from Rahway Prison in New Jersey, a maximum-security prison. He was an undefeated light-heavyweight. He won; CBS closed the show by saying, 'So James Scott is now 17-0, the fight was in the prison, he's that much closer to winning the championship.'

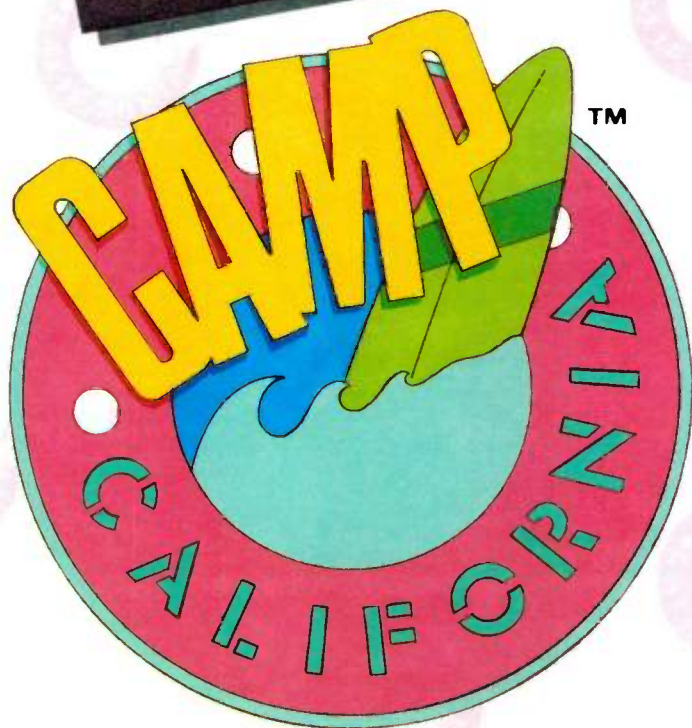
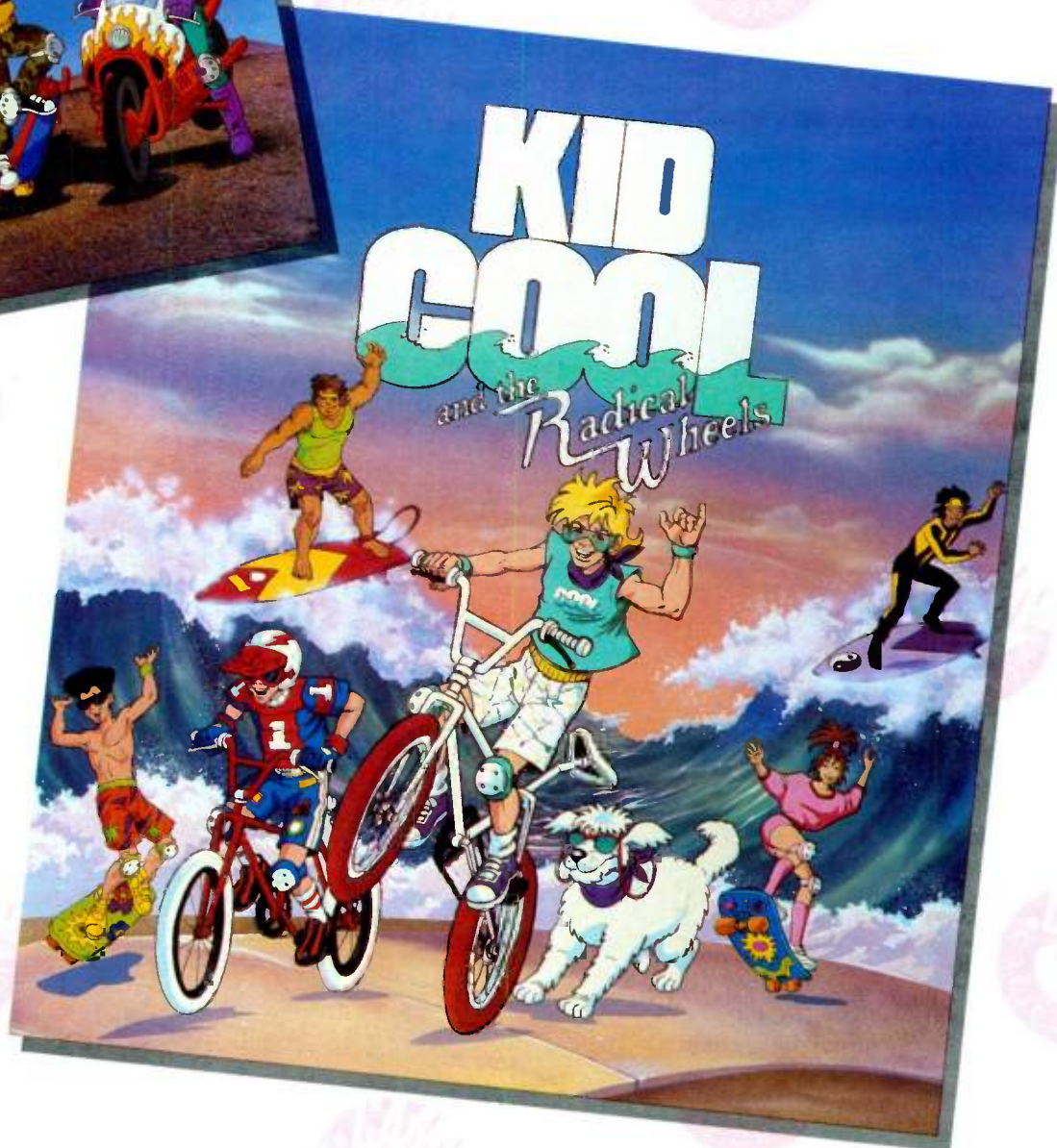
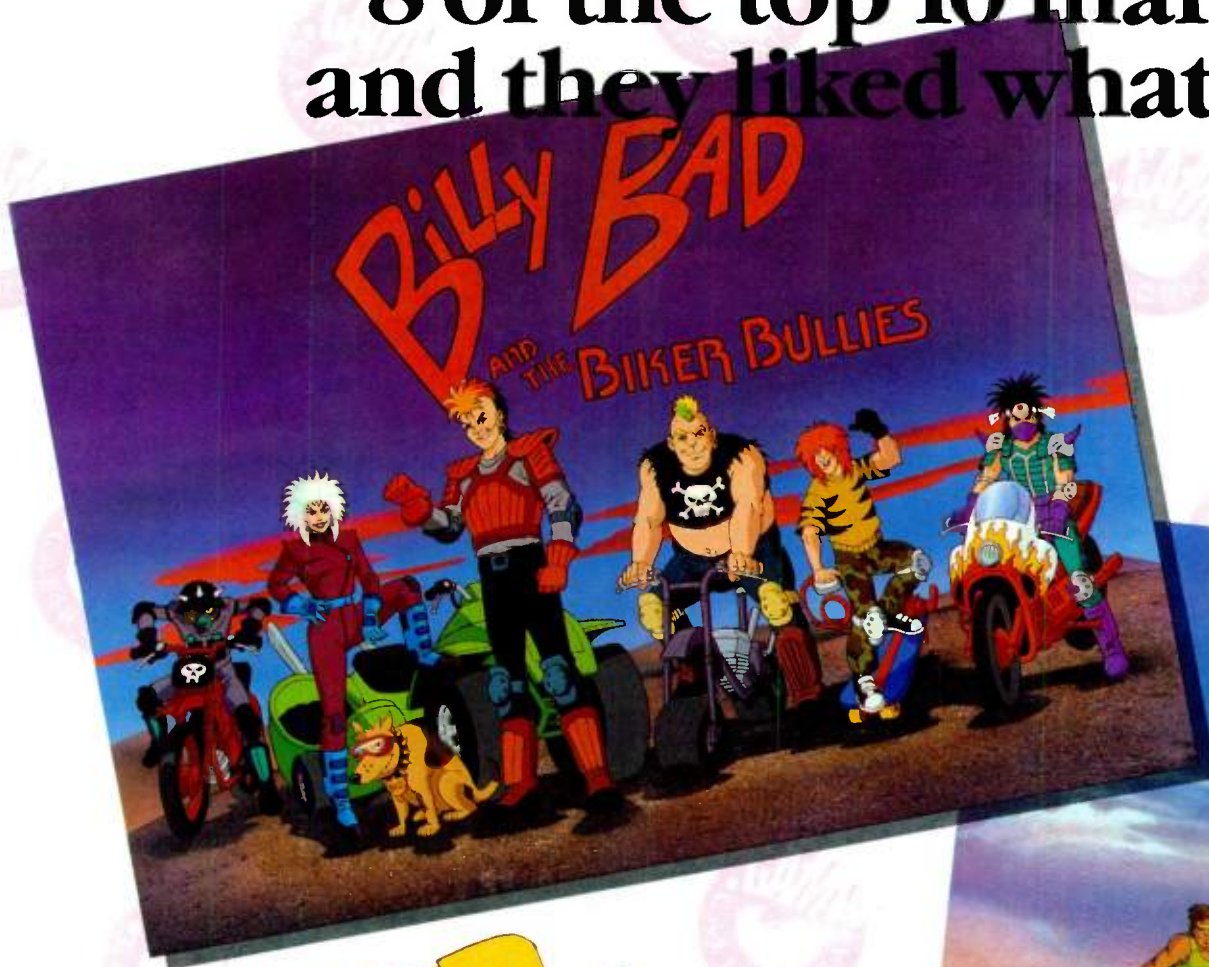
I produced a James Scott fight. The day before, we went to the prison. I asked James to put on the robe he would be wearing and the shorts. He threw the hood of the robe up on his head. We taped him walking through the corridors of the prison and into his cell and slammed the door. So we had that piece of tape.

When the fight ended, (NBC Sports commentator) Marv Albert said, 'James Scott is now 18-0, but for inmate number 642-849—we're showing the barbed wire, the police and guns, and the walls—it's back to cellblock D, building three.' Here's James slow motion in the corridors of the prison, music, back to his cell, cell door slams. We went off the air.

(Continued on Page 88)

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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'



WideWorldPhotos

Michael Weisman doesn't think there's a glut of sports on television: 'You go through cycles. The NBA is a great example. Eight or ten years ago, people said the NBA is dead . . . It wasn't getting good ratings, so you didn't see the NBA. Four years ago or thereabouts, CBS started producing the NBA games again. It's a huge success, terrific ratings, terrific profits.'

NBC's Weisman 'losing sleep' over '88 Olympic preparations

(Continued from Page 84)

That was the essence of the story: This is not just another fighter who won at Madison Square Garden or Sunnyside or wherever. He won; that's great; he's on network TV, but now he's back to that cell, and that's where he'll be.

Among his other duties, Weisman is looking down the road at a major assignment: executive producer for NBC coverage of the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. "I've assigned a coordinating producer for the Olympics, because it's a year-round job day in and day out. I could not, in effect, oversee the sports division and the Olympics for two years. I will make all the on-the-spot decisions, in addition to the key decisions leading up to the games as to who the hosts will be, the talent we use, and the key production assignments. But I've assigned Terry Ewart as coordinating producer, and we're going to have a huge production and technical staff, something like six hundred people. It's a major undertaking for just two weeks of broadcast. Day after day, they're preparing for the Olympics. I'm losing sleep over it, but they're preparing for it."

The price for the Seoul games was lower than expected, and that's a good sign, according to Weisman:

particularly when you compare it to the winter games, which ABC bought. The Calgary (Alberta, Canada) games went for \$309 million, and they will have approximately seventy-five hours of programming. We paid \$300 million or less for the summer games and we will have 179 hours of programming. So there it is. We paid relatively the same, but we'll have at least twice as many commercials and opportunities for commercials. Plus, most people would say that the sports that you have in the summer games, by and large, are more attractive to the American audience than the winter sports and get higher ratings. The other benefit, of course, is that it's a springboard, a opportunity to highlight your new fall programming and personalities. That's a tremendous advantage.

The projection is that NBC, although not making a fortune, will make a profit on the '88 Games. So it was a good acquisition.

Why were they able to get it so inexpensively?

The market has changed. Historically, I think the summer games every four years have tripled in rights. That wasn't the case with this one. It was closer to double or less than double. I think it was just a matter of all three networks recognizing that it had gotten so expensive not only to produce, but with the rights, it was strictly the economic law of supply and demand. It's carefully planned what you can take in from commercial revenues and sales of miscellaneous properties relating to the Olympics.

It's still a lot of money! We're talking like it's chump change. It's \$300 million just for the rights. It's another \$100 million or more for us to produce it. When you make that kind of bid, you're gambling on the strength of the dollar, gambling on the American economy. NBC has economists and money people who make those kind of projections: what the dollar will be worth, how much sales people project, how much per commercial they can sell, what kinds of ratings you will have.

He doesn't think there's a glut of sports on television.

You go through cycles. The NBA is a great example. Eight or ten years ago, people said the NBA is dead. The NBA didn't have a contract with any of the networks. It wasn't getting good ratings, so you didn't see the NBA. Four years ago or thereabouts, CBS started producing the NBA games again. It's a huge success, terrific ratings, terrific profits.

College basketball has now gone through a period where most people feel there's too much on. All three networks and cable are doing it. Ratings are going down. What's going to happen with NBC is we'll do less college basketball. What happens when you do less college basketball is that eventually people want to see more.

You try to stay a step ahead. But really, the marketplace and the public determine how much sports there is, and if there's too much. For me, there's never enough.

Weisman does not believe that professional sports would collapse without television. "What would happen is that the players would certainly have to make a helluva lot less money. But professional sports existed before television. Instead of making two million dollars, players would have to make thirty thousand. And they would get by just on people coming to the games.

"Newspapers are a major source of interest. In some ways, more so than television, because you read in your daily newspapers about the Yankees and Mets. If there wasn't television, as long as the newspapers and magazines were still around, you'd still go to a Yankee or Met game. I don't think sports would fold. They were there before television and they'll be there after television."

But without television, Mike Weisman would be very unhappy. For him, the attraction of televised sports is that "it's live and unpredictable, with real elements of human drama and emotion that you don't necessarily get in scripted, preplanned shows. We go into every telecast as if it won't be like anything we've ever done before. We're always on the edge of our seats, getting ready to react to whatever happens live. I'm obviously a fan."

Obviously.

The Business: Bob Jacquemin

It's really true—when you drive onto the lot of The Walt Disney Company, the security guard tells you to drive down Mickey Boulevard and take a right on Dopey Drive. Office corridors are lined with Disney memorabilia, storyboards, and glass cases filled with toys. A memo announcing the Washington's Birthday/President's Day holiday features a cartoon of Mickey Mouse chopping down a cherry tree.

Disney has always been into television in a big way, ever since the days when Disneyland, The Mickey Mouse Club, and the Mouseketeers filled the air with relentless cheer and energy.

But there's serious business going on now. Disney has its own cable outlet—The Disney Channel—"The Disney Sunday Movie" on ABC, "Golden Girls" on NBC, and it had become heavily involved in syndication through its Buena Vista Television division. Buena Vista is selling from the vast library of past Disney product for movies and TV and creating new programs unlike anything Disney has ever been involved with before: "Siskel & Ebert & the Movies," for example, and a game show produced by Bert Convy and Burt Reynolds, "Win, Lose or Draw."

The senior vice president of Buena Vista is a man named Bob Jacquemin, an expert in the mysterious ways of television syndication. He came to the Disney organization from Paramount, part of the exodus that occurred when Michael Eisner left Paramount to become the chairman and chief executive officer of Disney.

Jacquemin is a shrewd businessman and a man who's thought of in the syndication business as an innovator. While he was at Paramount, as executive vice president of

sales and marketing for domestic television and video programming, he was involved with several new ideas that had a strong effect on syndication.

One of them was Paramount's "guaranteed production" plan. Local stations are jittery about buying a series that is still in its first years on the networks. They are afraid that if the network were to cancel the series prematurely, the local stations would be left with an insufficient number of episodes to air five days a week for several months.

Under the plan created by Jacquemin and his colleagues, Paramount guaranteed the stations that they would produce a sufficient number of shows, even if a series was canceled by one of the big three.

"Entertainment Tonight" is another example, the first syndicated show to be produced and aired on the same day—"day and date," is what people in the business call it—and distributed to stations by satellite. At the time, many stations didn't possess the proper equipment. Paramount helped provide it. "I referred to our group as the Tupperware group," Jacquemin said, "because we were out selling dishes."

If you want to understand television as a marketplace, how it fits into the scheme of the real-life business world and how syndication works, Bob Jacquemin is the man to talk to.

"It was about 1960 that I got into the business," he said.

I went to work for an advertising agency in St. Louis and got into media buying: buying television time for Anheuser-Busch and Ralston Purina. Then I jumped the fence and
(Continued on Page 92)



But there's serious business going on now. Disney has its own cable outlet—The Disney Channel—"The Disney Sunday Movie" on ABC, 'Golden Girls' (above) on NBC, and it had become heavily involved in syndication through its Buena Vista Television division.

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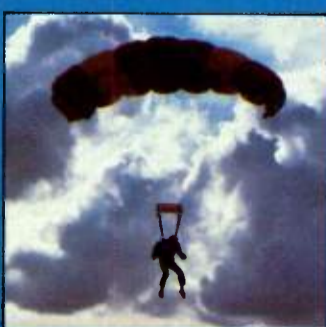
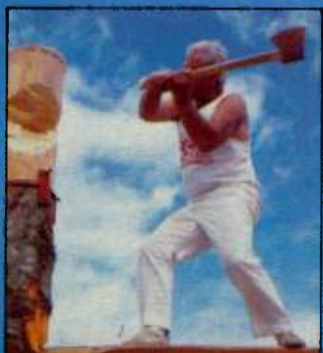
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PHILADELPHIA	KYW	SAT.	5:30 PM	+ 9%
SAN FRANCISCO	KGO	SAT.	4:00 PM	+ 18%
DETROIT	WDIV	SAT.	1:30 PM	+ 11%
DALLAS	KDFW	SAT.	6:30 PM	+ 40%
MIAMI	WPLG	SAT.	1:30 PM	+ 50%
PITTSBURGH	WPXI	SAT.	5:30 PM	+ 80%
SACRAMENTO	KOVR	SUN.	1:00 PM	+150%
INDIANAPOLIS	WTHR	SAT.	1:30 PM	+200%
PORTLAND, OR	KPDX	SAT.	10:00 AM	+ 25%
MILWAUKEE	WTMJ	SAT.	NOON	+ 36%
NORFOLK	WAVY	SAT.	5:00 PM	+ 57%
ROANOKE	WSLS	SAT.	1:30 PM	+ 25%
OMAHA	KETV	SAT.	1:00 PM	+140%
SPRINGFIELD, MO	KOLR	SAT.	6:30 PM	+ 36%
COLORADO SPRINGS	KKTU	SAT.	5:00 PM	+ 20%
LANSING	WSYM	SUN.	7:00 PM	+ 50%
MACON, GA	WGXA	SUN.	5:30 PM	+ 67%
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Book Excerpt: 'TELEVISION'

Healthy economy boosted syndication in 1970s

(Continued from Page 88)

became a sell for a national sales rep firm called Peters, Griffin, Woodward.

I went from PGW to TeleRep, was with them for eight years, and left to go into business for myself. I did all the TV marketing for the Dallas Cowboys and put together preseason packages and worked with Tom Landry on a coach's show that was syndicated in some 20 markets in five states. I handled University of Texas football, too

Syndication started in the fifties. Basically it consisted of stations buying either off-network series or buying feature films.

A company called Ziv Television Productions was one of the forerunners of the syndication business. They would go into local markets and find sponsors. They'd go to the banks and savings & loans and car dealers, sell the program to a company, and then they would find an outlet in the marketplace. The advertisers were very much involved on a local level in syndication.

Then there was a long period of time when it was basically just licensing off-network series for cash—series that had been on the networks for three or four or five years

In the mid-seventies, syndication really started to come into its own. Previously, the networks were in almost total control of the industry. Cable was not a factor. But there was such a healthy broadcast economy in the seventies, it allowed the growth of stations to occur, and that growth was primarily in the independent station community. Couple that with the growth of cable and networks 'stunting'—putting in a miniseries or a one-time-only special against an ongoing series—the cumulative effect was a breakdown of viewing patterns.

That's why local television has been able to grow. There were no longer just three viewing alternatives. The prime-time-access rule was another major development. That allowed for the growth of new programs that did not have the networks as their point of origination.

I don't think we're challenging the entire livelihood of the networks. It's another competitor. The more competition, the better you have to be. The winner should be the viewers, by giving them alternatives.

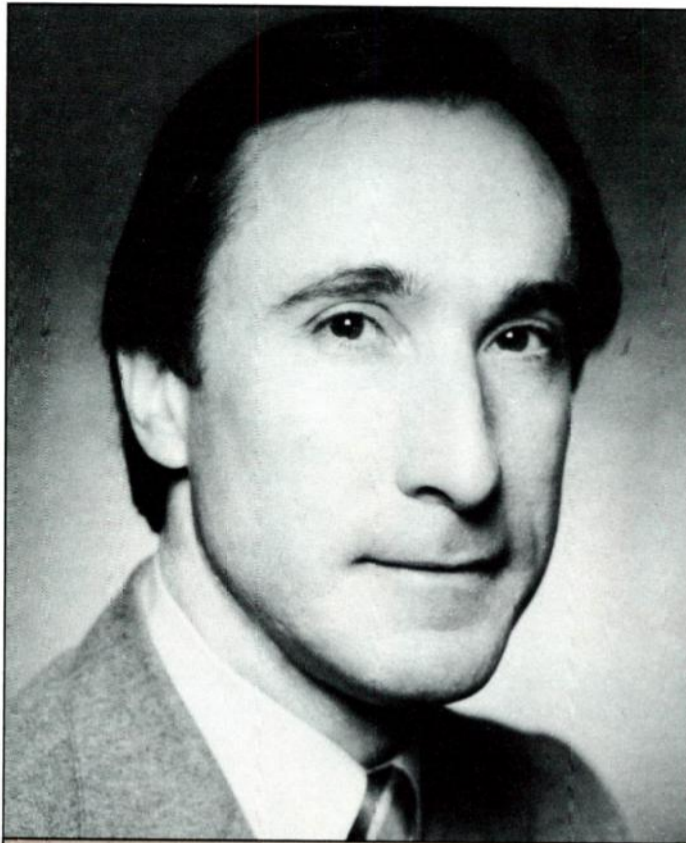
There are certain fundamental forms of programming that work in syndication: your off-network product, your feature film product, reality-based programs, Phil Donahue or Oprah Winfrey, talk shows, animation, game shows.

It's surprising that Disney, which had been active for so long in the TV business, had waited such a long time to get into the lucrative syndication business. "From what I can gather, in the sixties and seventies, management did not want to jeopardize the relationship with the networks," Jacquemin replied. "Make the network sale and keep the relationship strong and healthy. But when Michael Eisner and Frank Wells (Disney's president and chief operating officer) came in, the decision was made, yes, you can get into syndication, provided syndication and The Disney Channel work very closely during the transition period."

There was no conflict, Jacquemin said, because there was so much Disney product from which to choose.

Michael Eisner recognized that syndication is a viable business to be in. It's a very profitable business.

You pick up a trade paper and you read about Chapter



'We're producing better product. You look at the stuff that was produced ten years ago and we have made greater strides forward than the networks have in ten years. The definitive line between network-quality programming and syndication is blurring.'

—Bob Jacquemin

Elevens and the problems in the business. In reality, I think it's a small sector of the broadcast community, and I think it's cyclical. I draw an analogy between our business and a bull market in the stock market. Growth has been meteoric. It has attracted a lot of outside investment capital. There has to be some settling in that process. It's a correction and I think we will be stronger for it.

We—Buena Vista—are part of the process of launching new shows. We're not in the process of renewing successful shows

because we haven't been in business long enough. I hear a lot of people in the industry say it's real tough getting new shows on the air.

When you think about it, there's a positive reason for that. A lot of the shows that are on the air are working! Why would anybody want to throw a 'Wheel of Fortune' or an 'Entertainment Tonight' or an 'Oprah Winfrey' off the air if they're working?

We're producing better product. You look at the stuff that was produced ten years ago and we have made greater strides forward than the networks have in ten years. The definitive line between network-quality programming and syndication is blurring.

Costs are going up at a very high pace. But that too will settle out. We are a classic supply-and-demand business. When there is an oversupply of product, prices go down. When there is a scarcity of quality programming, prices go up.

The projections on 'Cosby' for syndication are something like \$3 million an episode. That's where the business really is now. The cost of doing business at a television station for programming is so high that you're not afforded the luxury of making mistakes.

Ten years ago, you could buy a program, make a mistake, and correct it.

Here, you buy a program in today's marketplace and if you make a mistake the consequences are staggering.

This was a business where the profit margins were forty percent. Then it became thirty. Then, independent stations were perfectly willing to make five or ten percent. Then it became, 'Well, I'll break even for the first couple of years.' Now you're seeing, because the cost of doing business has gotten so much higher, the stations that have just started up are the ones that are in the greatest jeopardy, unless they are well enough financed to weather any storms that come along the way.

In spite of the risks, Jacquemin is excited about the continued potential for expansion, including the current production of situation comedies exclusively for syndication. "It's a high-risk, but high-reward potential. Five years ago that wouldn't even have been considered.

"We're always going to look for new franchises in programming. That's the hardest part of our job. And it's also the riskiest part of the business. For anyone to come up with the next new show is always real, real tough."

You never know where the next hit is going to come from. "All you have to do is go back three or four years ago when ABC was talking about getting out of situation comedies, that they would never produce another one. And along comes Bill Cosby and you have twenty-eight comedies on the air.

"Sitcoms are now alive and well on network television, which then flows comedy product into syndication and keeps this marketplace healthy.

"The common denominator of our entire business is the software, not the technology or the hardware. What's driving this business is not the new technology as much as the programming. The VCR and cable and direct broadcast by satellite will have an impact on us, but not as great as the impact of what you put on the air or in the cassette or on the cable.

"I feel I'm now at the essence of television, and that's the program."#



Buena Vista is selling from the vast library of past Disney product for movies and TV and creating new programs unlike anything Disney has ever been involved with before: 'Siskel & Ebert & the Movies' (far left), for example, and a game show (near left) produced by Bert Convy (l.) and Burt Reynolds, 'Win, Lose or Draw.'

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World Radio History

QUESTION:

Who dominates his time period in 80% of the top 50 markets?

Hughes set to buy Westar satellites

(Continued from Page 32)
pared with the same period in 1986, partly due to an exodus from Westar 3.

Some of those customers may be gone for good. Associated Press, which has used two transponders, is abandoning Westar 3 for a new home on a GTE satellite.

Western Union has been holding its own by building up its business data market base. Its customers are companies such as Equatorial (now part of Contel-ASC), which owns 15 transponders on Westar satellites and has hundreds of small data terminals pointed at the system.

Despite the lack of Westar space, Hughes, with its Galaxy system almost completely sold and 95 percent full, is looking for any means possible to keep its customers happy.

The market Hughes hopes to keep happiest is cable. Already 60 cable channels or superstations make their homes on the Galaxy system.

Galaxy 1—the satellite that went to cable in 1982—has very little

replacement satellites for Galaxy 1, 2 and 3.

On the FCC's OK, the company will invest \$412 million for Galaxy 1R, 2R and 3R—a total that includes launches, hefty insurance premiums that are the legacy of recent rocket losses and the cost of building the satellites.

Despite the sum, Hughes expects to recoup \$400 million in revenue in the year before it launches the satellites and in the three years after.

On Galaxy 1, for example, Hughes plans to sell as many transponders to current tenants as possible.

That shouldn't be too difficult a feat. As Hughes said in its application for replacement satellites, all 24 of Galaxy 1's transponders are occupied by cable TV distributors, with tens of thousands of cable headends and more than 2 million home dishes receiving programming from the satellite.

That means all those dishes are pointing toward Galaxy 1's orbital slot already and would be expensive to redirect.

Not that Galaxy takes its cable and broadcast customers for granted. Hughes has enhanced its signal by about 2½ decibel watts with more powerful, 16-watt transmitters.

Mr. Farrell said the satellites' higher power may allow cable customers to buy smaller, less expensive receive antennas.

And, he says, by the time the satellites are launched in the early 1990s, "if we get to the point of high-definition television, HDTV could be transmitted from the same transponders into roughly the same sized dishes.

"Commonly speaking, it would take quite a bit more power," to transmit high-definition images, but the combination of higher power and larger dishes already in place may provide many customers with enhanced pictures sooner than they anticipated, Mr. Farrell says.

With the increases in satellite costs, industry experts have been saying that video distributors should be willing to pay double what they are currently paying.

Walter Morgan, a satellite consultant with the Communications Center of Clarksburg, Md., said, "Absolutely, transponder prices will double over the next three or four years," in part because of the expense of launching new satellites.

Because of the economics involved in launching such costly systems, there will be fewer orbital systems launched, and the consolidation of services in the hands of a few will be the biggest factor in any price rise, Mr. Morgan adds.

Mr. Farrell said he couldn't predict what Galaxy's future services would cost, "in part because I don't know what it will cost to launch a satellite in 1993."

He added, "I would hope prices go up a little bit, speaking from the supply side, but . . . it's much the same as paying more for a Chevrolet than you did 10 years ago."

Mr. Farrell says Hughes is doing its part to keep prices down by buying an already-built Westar satellite on the ground—sort of an '86 Chevy it built for Western Union and has kept parked in its garage in El Segundo, Calif.

Western Union says it paid \$26 million for Westar 6S; a new satellite today would generally sell in the \$35 million-to-\$50 million range.

In addition, Hughes' future satellites incorporate improvements that should keep them in operation longer—another cost saver. #

The market Hughes hopes to keep happiest is cable. Already 60 cable channels or superstations make their homes on the Galaxy system.

turnover, even though two of its channels are leased.

In the Westar system, Hughes would buy three satellites in orbit, but Westar 3 is nearing the end of its useful life for video.

Hughes also wants Westar's business data customers. By buying into the system now, three or four years before Westars 4 and 5 burn out, Hughes hopes to garner good will with Western Union's business clients and convert them to its own customer base.

Says Mr. Farrell, "Western Union has more diverse customers. We see (the acquisition) as a way of expanding our business base."

Fred Knipp, a top Western Union satellite marketer, agrees with Mr. Farrell's assessment: "They've done better with the video market generally, but we've got the edge on business.

"It's a good marriage because for a long time, we've seen eye to eye on C-band," Mr. Knipp added. Hughes has the resources to convince Westar's current customers that they'll "keep getting the same good service they always have."

Western Union's three C-band satellites, with Galaxy's three, would bring to six the number of satellites from which Hughes could dispense a range of video and data services. (Hughes has six C-band satellites already, but that includes the three it leases to the Navy for defense communications.)

Not surprisingly, Hughes only last month asked the Federal Communications Commission to clarify its policy on replacement satellites. It's been the commission's practice to award replacement slots for satellites to their successors almost as a matter of course, but Hughes wants a guarantee.

Even more recently, Hughes Communications filed a request with the FCC asking to be allowed to launch

Cap Cities/ABC posts income rise

By DIANE MERMIGAS
Senior reporter

Capital Cities/ABC reported \$116.9 million in net income for the fourth quarter of 1987, a 46 percent gain over the same period a year earlier.

Revenues for the fourth quarter rose almost 17 percent to \$1.4 billion, from \$1.2 billion a year earlier.

Broadcast sales for the fourth quarter were up 22 percent, compared to a rise of only 4 percent the same period a year earlier.

In year-end figures, factoring out extraordinary gains in 1986, Cap Cities saw its profits jump 53 percent in 1987.

The company acknowledged that its network returned to profitability in 1987, but it declined to reveal specific figures. After losing \$70 million in 1986, most analysts expected the ABC TV Network to post between \$40 million and \$60 million in profits last year.

However, the company noted in a press release that it continues to experience major problems with its television network, including "disappointing" prime-time ratings.

The company also said that earnings from ESPN cable sports network and its owned television

stations were ahead of 1986.

The company's broadcasting segment's operating income rose to \$249 million in the fourth quarter, from \$185 million for the previous year.

Its publishing operations posted a decline in operating income to \$48.9 million, from \$52.9 million the previous year, due mostly to sluggish ad sales.

Cap Cities/ABC's fourth-quarter earnings also were aided by lower depreciation and higher interest income.

Program write-downs, which have enhanced the company's profit performance nearly every quarter since its 1986 merger, added about \$65.5 million.

A 51 percent tax rate in 1987, compared to a 57 percent rate in 1986, added an estimated \$30 million to earnings.

For the fiscal year ended Jan. 3, Cap Cities/ABC's net earnings totaled \$279.1 million, compared to \$447.1 million in 1986. However, the 1986 figure was bolstered by a one-time gain of \$265.7 million from the sale of four TV and eight radio stations. Excluding the station sales, the company's 1986 earnings were \$181.9 million.

The company's 1987 revenues were up 7.6 percent to \$4.4 billion, from \$4.1 billion the previous year. #

HBO gets big-bucks Tyson-Spinks battle

By RICHARD TEDESCO
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—The protracted negotiations to create a Mike Tyson-Michael Spinks heavyweight title showdown finally produced a match of megabuck proportions.

The \$40 million fight, set for June, will be the biggest boxing event yet handled by HBO.

The cable network will produce the fight live for closed circuit and pay-per-view and will own tape-delay rights for the bout.

Under terms of the verbal agreement reached recently, challenger Mr. Spinks is guaranteed between \$12.5 million and \$13.5 million.

Mr. Tyson, the champion, will do his night's work on a percentage basis, with a likely payday of \$17 million if the fight nets the \$35 million generated by last year's Marvin Hagler-Ray Leonard contest.

"Right now we've verbally agreed," said Butch Lewis, Mr. Spink's promoter, describing the financial terms as "the biggest guarantee ever" for a single bout.

Mr. Lewis said he will play a role in promoting the fight.

Mr. Tyson's managers had objected to that before, and HBO still has a \$10 million suit pending against Mr. Lewis because his fighter dropped out of last year's heavyweight unification series on HBO.

Seth Abraham, HBO senior vice president of original programming and sports, said, "We have not dropped the suit, and we've not been asked to drop the suit."

Even if this particular deal falls through, HBO will have the rights to produce the fight and carry the tape-delay whenever it happens, ac-



MIKE TYSON
Looking at \$17 million payday

cording to Mr. Abraham.

Some doubt remains about the date even if the oral agreement sticks because of HBO's commitment for coverage of the Wimbledon tennis tournament in late June. A source at the pay network said HBO had already requested that the promoters pick a date in early June for the bout. #

ANSWER:



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 MINNEAPOLIS
 MIAMI
 DENVER
 HARTFORD
 INDIANAPOLIS
 CINCINNATI
 CHARLOTTE
 NASHVILLE
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NATPE preview: CONVENTION AGENDA

Schedule of convention events

All events in the Brown Convention Center unless otherwise noted.

Tuesday, Feb. 23

- 9 a.m.** **Executive committee meeting**
Hyatt Regency Redbud Room
- 1 p.m.** **Conference committee meeting**
Hyatt Regency
Cottonwood Room
- 4 p.m.** **Educational Foundation meeting**
Hyatt Regency
Pecan Room

Wednesday, Feb. 24

- 9 a.m.** **Board of Directors meeting**
Hyatt Regency
Cottonwood Room
- 7 p.m.** **Cocktails**
- 8 p.m.** **Board of Directors dinner**

Thursday, Feb. 25

- 8 a.m.** **Station representatives and groups**
- 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** **Educational Foundation seminar**
Lew Klein, president, Gateway Communications, Cherry Hills, N.J.
Room 301AF
- Educational Foundation luncheon**
Room 301BE
- 10 a.m.** **Publications Committee meeting**
Room 309
- 2 p.m.** **Community Broadcasters Association Meeting**
Room 308
- 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** **Concurrent seminars**
- International**
- Producers:** Bruce Johansen, Multimedia; Michael Jay Solomon, Lorimar Telepictures, New York.
Moderator: Michael Jay Solomon.
- Global finance:** Peter Clark, Telso Communications Ltd., England; Michael Grade, Channel 4, England; Pierre Lescure, Canal Plus, France; Jan Mojto, Beta Film GmbH, West Germany; and Riccardo Tozzi, Berlusconi, Italy.
Room 306
- Doing business with Canadians**
- Producer:** Lorraine B. Good,

Telefilm Canada, Los Angeles.
Moderator: Sam Wendel, Telefilm Canada, Los Angeles.
Panelists: Tony Allard, Allacom Production; John Brunton, Insight Production Co. Ltd.; Pat Ferns, Primedia Productions; Michael Hirsh, Nelvana Ltd.; Robert Lantos, Alliance Entertainment; David Patterson, Cineplex Odeon Television; Paul Saltzman, Sunrise Films Ltd.; Jon Slan, Paragon Motion Pictures; Bill Stevens, Crawleys International; Peter Sussman, Atlantis; and Sheldon Wiseman, Evergreen Raccoons TV Ltd.
Room 302.

4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. **International reception hosted by NATPE International and Devellier-Donagan Enterprises, Washington.**
pre-function area, level 3

Friday, Feb. 26

- 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.** **General session opening breakfast: A NATPE 25th Anniversary Celebration**
- Producer:** Rick Reeves, WCPO-TV, Cincinnati.
Host: Deb McDermott, WKRN-TV, Nashville, NATPE president.
President's Award: Deb McDermott
- 25 past presidents—Coordinator:** George Black, All American TV, New York.
Keynote speaker: Katharine Graham, Washington Post Co. Ballroom, level 3.
- 10:10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** **Concurrent seminars**
- 1. Washington Update**
- Producer:** Mickey Gardner, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, Washington.
Address: Dennis Patrick, FCC chairman.
- Panel discussion**
- Moderator:** Mickey Gardner
Panelists: Patricia Diaz Dennis, FCC commissioner; James Quello, FCC commissioner; Mark McCarthy, counsel, House Energy and Power Committee.
Room 301
- 2. Will It Play In Peoria: Evaluating Programing From Overseas**
- Producer:** Robert Simone, WFLD-TV, Chicago.
Moderator: Bruce Gordon, Paramount TV International

Services Limited.
Panelists: Bette Alofsin, GTG, New York; Phil Arnone, KGMB-TV, Honolulu; Dolores Danska, WCBS-TV, New York; Chuck Larsen, Republic Pictures, Los Angeles; and Jerry McGrath, WTMJ-TV, Milwaukee.
Room 302.

3. The Changing Role of the Advertiser in Program Decisions/Client Involvement in Program Content and Programing

Producer: Dick Block, DBA Enterprises, Los Angeles.
Moderator: Jim Rosenfield, John Blair & Co., New York.
Panelists: Marvin Koslow, Bristol-Myers, New York; Jerry Solomon, Busch Media, New York; and Robert Wehling, Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati.
Room 306

Saturday, Feb. 27

- 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.** **General session/breakfast The Next 25 Years for Society and TV**
- Producer:** Pat Patton, KMBC-TV, Kansas City, Mo.
Host: Lon Lee, KCNC-TV, Denver, NATPE second vice president.
- NATPE Educational Foundation update:** Lew Klein, president, Gateway Communications, Cherry Hills, N.J.
Moderator: Linda Ellerbee, Lucky Duck Productions, New York.
Panelists: Robert Coen, McCann-Erickson, New York; Daniel Gold, Knight-Ridder, Miami; Martin Horn, DDB Needham Worldwide, Chicago; Kay Koplovitz, USA Network, New York; and Paul Lenburg, ASI Market Research, Los Angeles.
Ballroom, level 3
- 10:10 a.m. to 11:30** **Concurrent seminars**
- 1. Research Beyond the Book: How to Make It Pay Without Overpaying**
- Producer/moderator:** Jack Fentress, Petry, New York.
Panelists: Gary Corbitt, WJXT-TV, Jacksonville, Fla.; Willis Duff, Audience Research and Development, Dallas; Lois Friedman, WTVJ-TV, Miami; and Don Micallef, MCA TV, New York.
Room 301

(Continued on Page 104)