IN FOCUS: Decision Time for Independent TV

CHANNELS

JANUARY THE BUSINESS OF COMMUNICATIONS 1989

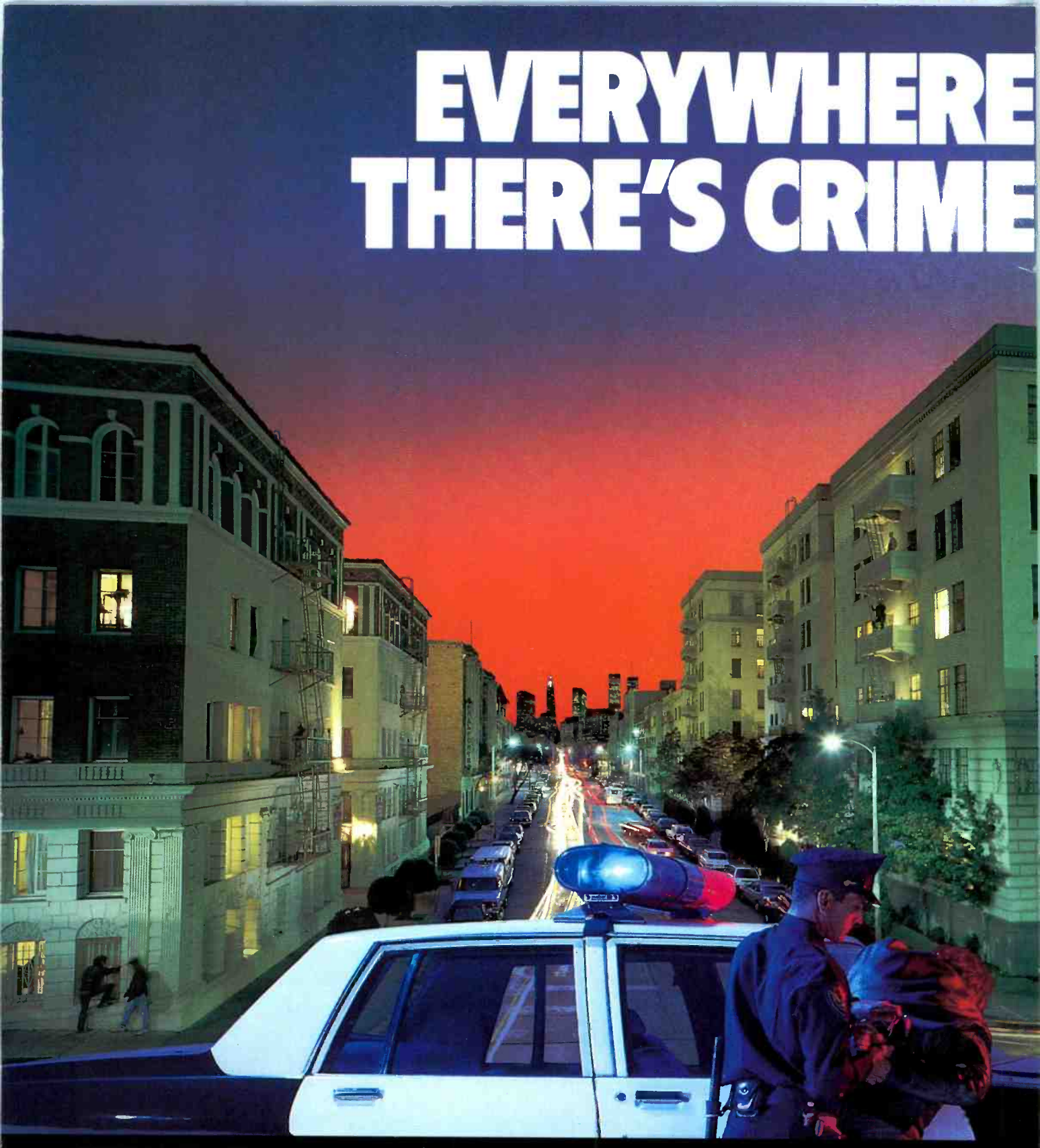
TOUGH TALK

Sick and tired of broadcasters' free ride, Congress is determined to rein in the FCC. A classic D.C. showdown looms in 1989.

REPS. EDWARD MARKEY AND JOHN DINGELL

5-DIGIT 91604
71C 00281379 41 01 APR89
SUSAN BURCHFIELD
SR RSRCH ANALYST
MTM DISTRIBUTION
12001 VENTURA PL STE 600
STUDIO CITY CA 91604
DIR

EVERYWHERE THERE'S CRIME



WE'RE TURNING AMERICA INTO A NATION OF CRIMEWATCHERS.

Actually, it's already happened. And here's the proof:

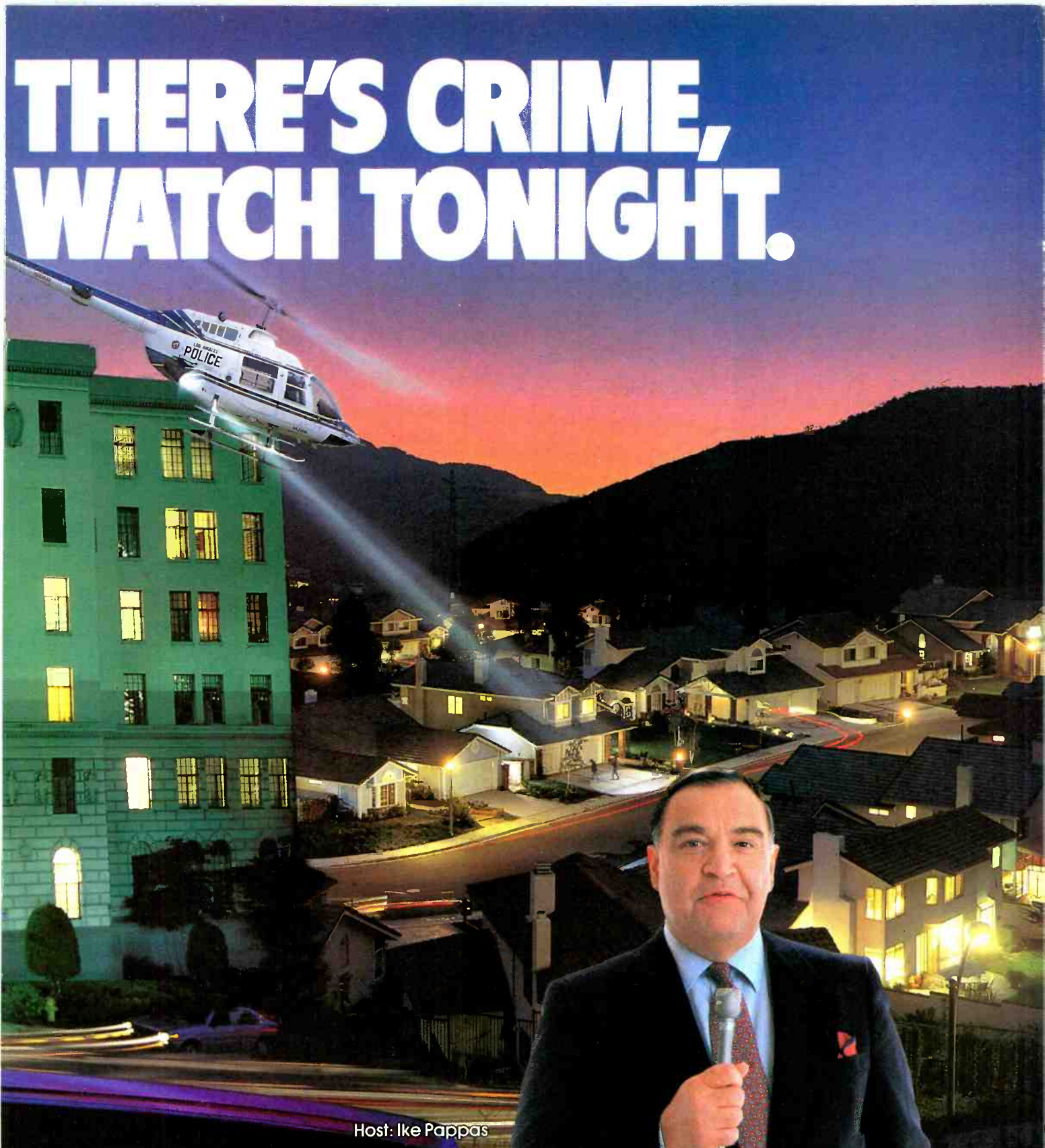
Week after week, rating period after rating period, the series and specials that consistently score phenomenal ratings on network and in syndication are crime related.

CRIMEWATCH TONIGHT is the new network quality 1/2 hour strip featuring the stories America wants to know more about.

From white-collar crime to terrorism; from espionage to the mob, from gang related street violence to government corruption; CRIMEWATCH TONIGHT delivers the drama, the scandal and the human interest only this type of coverage CAN deliver... ACCESS, EARLY FRINGE OR LATE NIGHT.

CRIMEWATCH TONIGHT is written and produced by a seasoned staff of field reporters led by Executive Producer, Reese Schonfeld, founding President of CNN. Our in-studio anchor is veteran CBS newsman, Ike Pappas.

THERE'S CRIME, WATCH TONIGHT.



Host: Ike Pappas

JOIN OUR PARTNERS:

MCA BROADCASTING, INC.
- WWOR . . . New York

GAYLORD BROADCASTING CO.
- KTVT . . . . . Dallas-Ft. Worth
- KHTV. . . . . Houston
- WUAB . . . . Cleveland
- KSTW. . . . . Seattle-Tacoma
- WVTV . . . . Milwaukee

CRIMEWATCH TONIGHT

TODAY'S OPPORTUNITY. TOMORROW'S HIT.
THE EVIDENCE IS OVERWHELMING!

AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 1989

Distributed by
ORION®
TELEVISION SYNDICATION

©1988 CTP, Inc. All rights reserved.

CHANNELS

THE BUSINESS OF COMMUNICATIONS

VOL. 9, NO. 1 JANUARY 1989

Wrestling rips into the TV mainstream **38**

NEWS

REPORTS **16**

Video Juke Box's appeal . . . South Africa outtakes . . . *Excellence* revelers.

NEWS CHANNELS

CAMCORDER ASSAULT **30**

The first installment of a new monthly department on TV news examines the thorny issues raised when viewers shoot the news. BY J. MAX ROBINS

PRODUCTION

WRESTLING TO THE TOP **38**

Vince McMahon's hammerlock on TV wrestling. BY HARVEY D. SHAPIRO

CABLE

WILL A NEW BRAVO BE TOO BASIC? **42**

Cable's cultural pay channel sheds a tier. BY CECILIA CAPUZZI

COMPANIES

BETTING ON REPUBLIC'S BONANZA **48**

Republic Pictures is back in action, to pretty much everyone's amazement. BY ALEX BEN BLOCK

THE YEAR IN REVIEW **52**

Look back in humor. BY JOE QUEENAN

IN FOCUS: INDEPENDENT TELEVISION

Making the Tough Calls **63**

■ **COVER STORY:** Hill Showdown:
A Year of Decision, BY DAN SPRINGER **64**
Learning to Play in Sweet Harmony, BY FRANK LOVECE **68**
Indie Angst in Teetering Texas, BY DENNIS HOLDER **71**
Can Indies Afford to Have Children? BY MICHAEL BURGI **74**
Shifting Windows: An Indie Dilemma, BY ROBERT MARICH **76**
Finding Gold in Your Own Hometown, BY JOE MANDESE **79**
Indie Insights **83**

PUBLISHER'S NOTE **6**

LETTERS **12**

WHAT'S ON **20**
A MONTHLY CALENDAR

MARKETING/ PROMOTION **22**
MUTUAL AID SOCIETY
Cable/indie courting in Little Rock
BY ADAM SNYDER

AUDIENCE **26**
WANT A LOCAL METER?
BY MICHAEL COUZENS

ADVERTISING **28**
TOOLS OF THE TRADE
BY CHUCK REECE

THE BUSINESS SIDE **34**
THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY
To cast narrowly or broadly?
BY MERRILL BROWN

MARKET EYE **84**
NEW MEXICO SHOOT-OUT
BY RICHARD MAHLER

TALK SHOW **86**

HOLLYWOOD EYE **88**
GRAY SUITS IN OZ
B-schoolers spark a fight for Tinseltown's soul
BY NEAL KOCH

MEDIA DEALS **89**
INSIDE THE MARKET
The transactions market is strong
BY FREDERIC M. SEEGAL

DATABASE **90**

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT **93**
A FIBER-OPTICS FUTURE?
BY TIM WETMORE

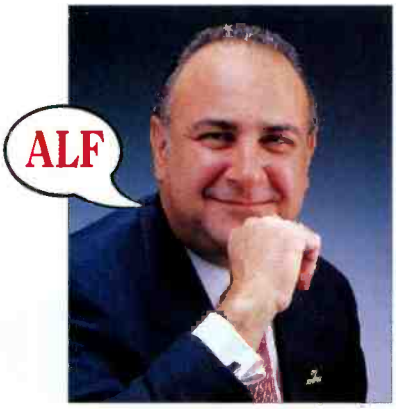
SOUND BITES **94**
An interview with Warner Bros. network TV chief Harvey Shepherd.

RUNNING THE NUMBERS **96**

Cover photograph: Rhoda Baer

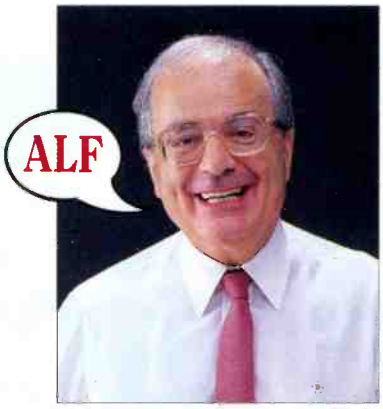
How do you pick your next hit sitcom?

Read m



Harry Pappas
President
Pappas Telecasting Companies

"ALF has the strong male demos which attract the kind of ad dollars that independents find the hardest to capture."

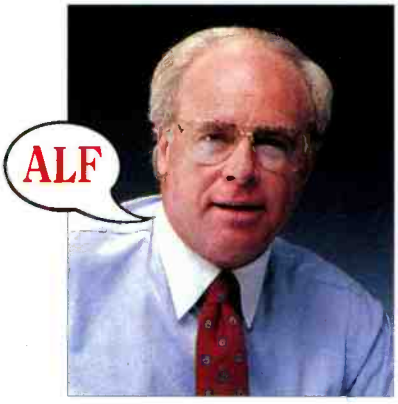


Gene D'Angelo
President & General Manager
WBNS-TV, Columbus

"ALF's adult demos, especially with men, create an ideal track for a potential news lead-in."

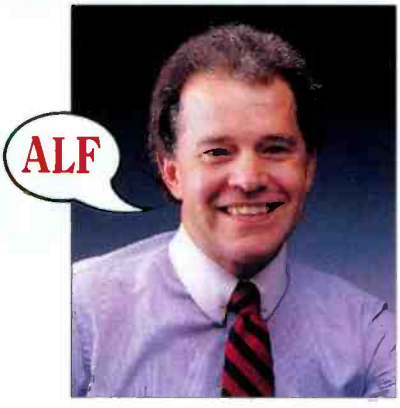
Gail L. Brekke
General Manager
KITN-TV, Minneapolis

"ALF is warm, funny, well written and an American original."



Tony Kiernan
Vice President & General Manager
WLWT-TV, Cincinnati

"ALF delivers the perfect mix of adult men and women that we need for our early news program."



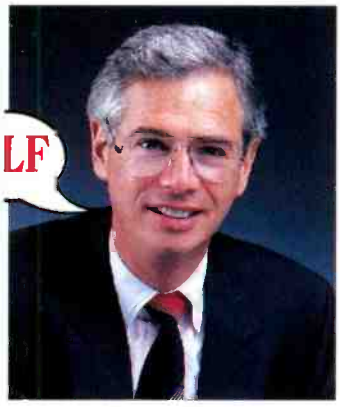
Joe Young
Vice President & General Manager
WXIN-TV, Indianapolis

"ALF compliments the image of our station and continues our commitment to high quality programming."

Steve Scollard
Vice President & General Manager
KLRT-TV, Little Rock

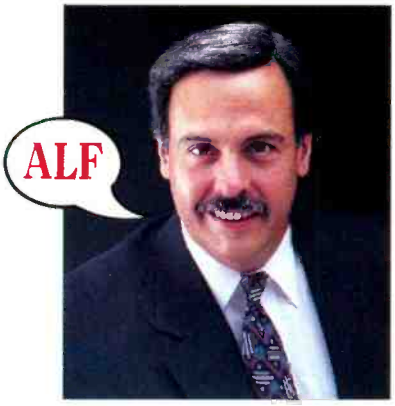
"ALF transcends all usual demographic breaks to appeal to a wide cross-section of the audience."

y lips...



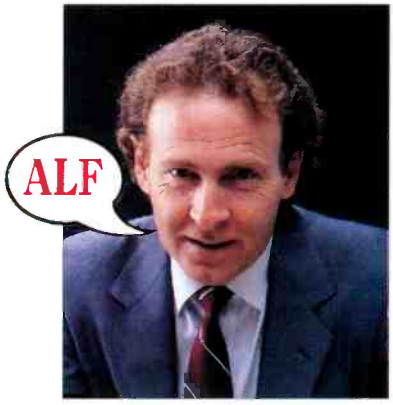
Harvey Mars
President & General Manager
WXIA-TV, Atlanta

"ALF can generate its own audience without the benefit of a strong lead-in. That makes it perfect to run before our news."



Stuart Powell
Vice President & General Manager
KNXV-TV, Phoenix

"ALF's demographic success formula works for NBC now, and will work for us in '90."

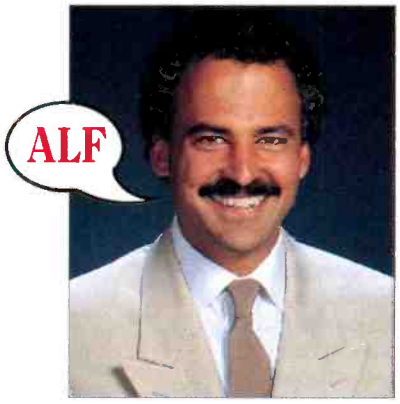


Rusty Durante
Vice President & General Manager
KVVU-TV, Las Vegas

"ALF's broad appeal makes it an independent's ideal early fringe or access sitcom strip."

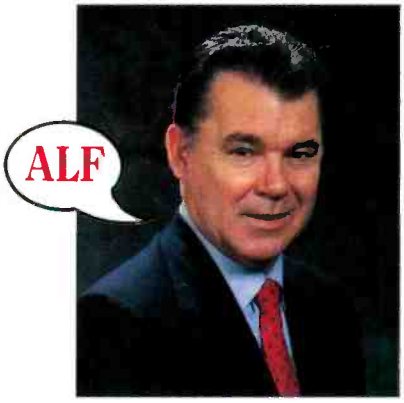
Hal Protter
Vice President & General Manager
WVTV, Gaylord Broadcasting, Milwaukee

"ALF has the kind of dependable performance that we need in a five-day-a-week strip."



Doug Johnson
President & General Manager
WXON-TV, Detroit

"ALF's ideal demographics on NBC once a week will make it an ideal independent's strip when it hits syndication."



Bill Viands
Vice President & General Manager
KDNL-TV, St. Louis

"ALF has an advantage most other sitcoms don't offer – a high male comp!"

ALF®

alien productions

LORIMAR SYNDICATION

100 Half-Hours Available Fall '90

ALF is a Registered Trademark of Alien Productions ® ©1987 Alien Productions. All Rights Reserved.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The New Age of Marketing

In 1988, marketing became the battle cry for television-advertising salespeople. From local to network to cable, professionals around the country came to the stark realization that their world was changing. No longer was it simply a matter of taking orders, jockeying spots and heading for the golf course by late afternoon.

Instead, in the face of an onslaught from other television competitors—from more aggressive print-media efforts, from non-media advertising sources and from the direct marketing field—many sales managers in all parts of TV began a new era. New categories had to be developed and new approaches taken as television sales prepared to move into the '90s. Constant through all the change was the theme of marketing, an emphasis on the need to define, explain and market the virtues of the television medium.

Here at *Channels*, we too confront a hotly competitive, changing environment. In earlier times, it may have been sufficient to simply publish a magazine that was among the best in its field. Those days are long gone. In publishing, as in television, we're also facing a new era of marketing. We do not view our clients as just advertisers, we view them as marketing partners. We work closely with them to identify how, as a publishing concern, we can help them meet their marketing and sales objectives. For example, during 1989 *Channels* will distribute nearly 50,000 copies of the magazine at 21 major industry events, helping our clients achieve a high level of visibility for their messages when buyer interest and sales activity is peaking. Furthermore, *Channels* conducts ongoing research projects that assist our clients in staying on top of new trends and developments in the marketplace.

To those skeptics who believe that marketing is a lot of hot air, we respond with proof positive that this kind of approach can and does work, as evidenced by *Channels*' 65 percent increase in ad pages and revenue for 1988. Our advertising pages increased from 317 in 1987 to 525 in 1988. While there is no question that the magazine's editorial strengths have made a major contribution to its acceptance in the marketplace, we firmly believe that the marketing partnership approach with our clients helped us to achieve this tremendous growth, especially at a time when the growth of our marketplace has slowed.

We look forward to continuing to develop innovative and value-added client marketing programs in 1989, and we urge our readers to utilize the new world of marketing to help give their clients and themselves a unique competitive edge.

Joel A. Berger

CHANNELS
THE BUSINESS OF COMMUNICATIONS

Editor
MERRILL BROWN
Executive Editor
PETER AINSLIE
Managing Editor
JOHN FLINN
Senior Editors
KIRSTEN BECK, J. MAX ROBINS
CHUCK REECE
West Coast Editor
NEAL KOCH
Assistant Editors
MICHAEL BURGI, RICHARD KATZ
Contributing Editors
JOHN F. BERRY, ALEX BEN BLOCK, DAVID BOLLIER
CECILIA CAPUZZI, L.J. DAVIS, MERYL GORDON
JEAN BERGANTINI GRILLO, WILLIAM A. HENRY III
DAVID LACHENBRUCH,
PAUL NOGLOWS, MICHAEL POLLAN, JAY ROSEN,
HARVEY D. SHAPIRO, ADAM SNYDER, JAMES TRAUB
Interns
RICHARD AMEDEE, JAMES BAMFORD, BARBARA ELLIS
AGNETTE LUNDVIK, SALLIE OGG, BETH SHERMAN

Art Director
SUE NG
Assistant Art Director
AMY JAFFE
Photo Research
LAURIE WINFREY/CAROUSEL, INC.

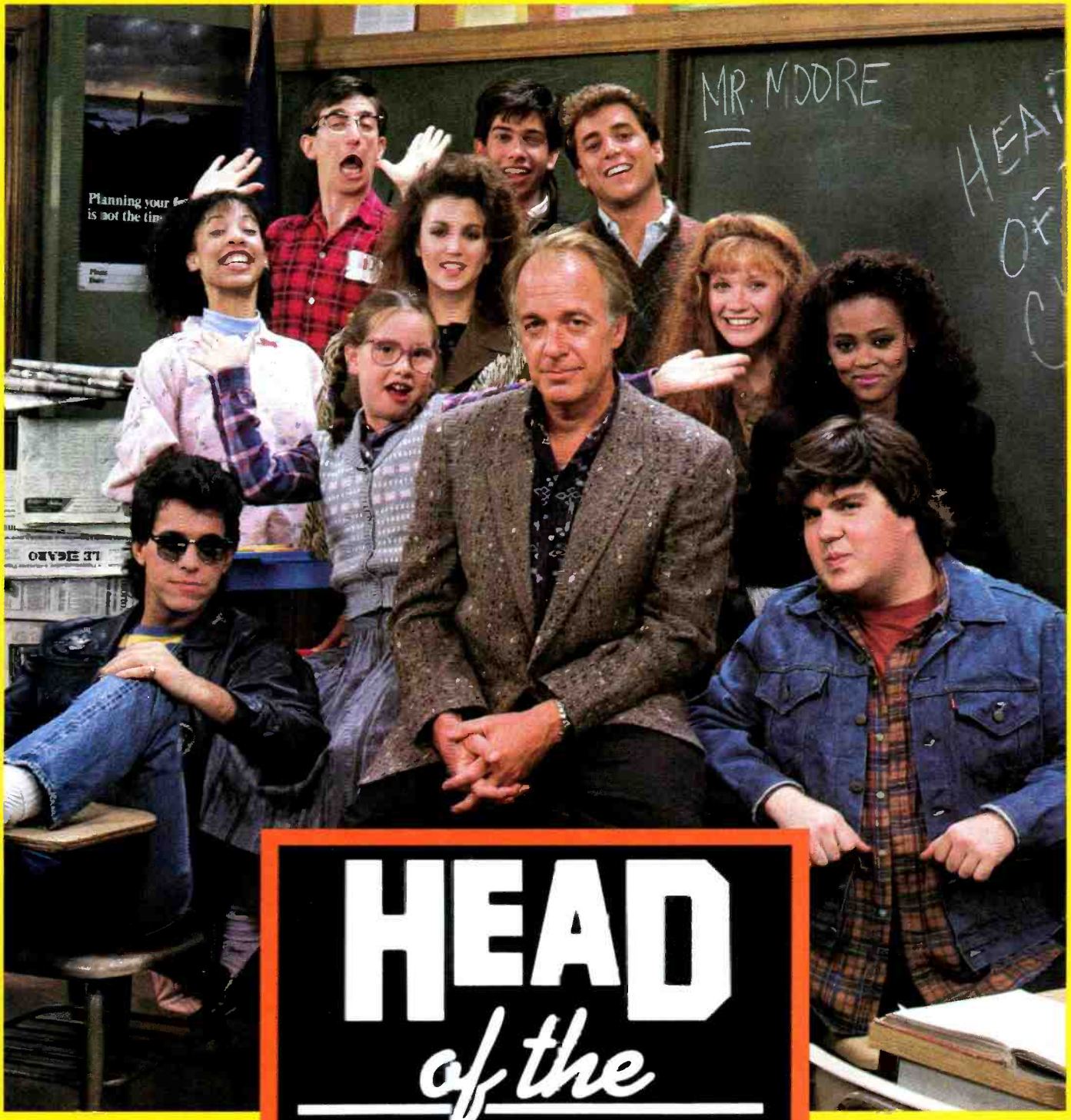
Publisher
JOEL A. BERGER
Advertising Sales Director
SARA DAVIS GREENWOOD
Advertising Sales Managers
NELDA H. CHAMBERS, MICHELLE C. McGUIRK
Assistant to the Publisher
SEAN ROONEY
Advertising Sales Coordinator
MARK MATEROWSKI
Advertising Sales Assistants
HONEY BUTLER, DONNA GIBSON
Director of Marketing & Communications
JENNIFER WARE
Promotion Manager
SANDI EZELL
Circulation Manager
JOE SCHILLMOELLER

Production Manager
RACHEL COHEN
Controller
CATHERINE PAONE
Assistant Controller
BARBARA VAUGHN
Office Manager
DEBORAH GERMAN

Advertising Sales Offices
New York: 19 West 44th St., New York, NY 10036, 212-302-2680; Fax 212-575-2965 **West Coast:** 1800 Century Park East, Suite 200 Los Angeles, CA 90067 213-556-1174; Fax 213-553-3928

C.C. Publishing Inc.
President
PAUL DAVID SCHAEFFER
Senior Vice President, Editorial Development
LES BROWN
Senior Vice President,
Corporate Development and Planning
MARTHA LORINI

CHANNELS The Business of Communications (ISSN 0895-643X) is published monthly except in August by C. C. Publishing Inc., 19 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036. Second class postage paid New York, NY and additional mailing offices. Volume 9, Number 1, January 1989. Copyright © 1989 by C.C. Publishing Inc. All rights reserved. Subscriptions: $65 per year; all foreign countries add $18. **Please address all subscription mail to CHANNELS The Business of Communications, Subscription Service Dept., P.O. Box 6438, Duluth, MN 55806, or call 218-723-9202. Postmaster:** Send address changes to CHANNELS, The Business of Communications, Subscription Services Dept., P.O. Box 6438, Duluth, MN 55806. **Editorial and business offices:** 19 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036; 212-302-2680. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be considered or returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelop. **No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form without written consent.**



HEAD of the CLASS

WARNER BROS. TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION
A Warner Communications Company