

IF YOU HAVEN'T
LOOKED AT

DIVORCE COURT

LATELY, LOOK
AT THIS.

WASHINGTON, DC

WUSA-TV, 11:30 p.m.
HH Share

Oct '86 Divorce Court	17	Oct '87 Divorce Court	25
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HH Share Gain/Loss
+ 47%

HARTFORD

WTHN-TV, 11:00 a.m.
HH Share

Oct '86 Fame, Fortune*	15	Oct '87 Divorce Court	20
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HH Share Gain/Loss
+ 33%

MIAMI

WSVN-TV, 4:00 p.m.
HH Share

Oct '86 Divorce Court	19	Oct '87 Divorce Court	21
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HH Share Gain/Loss
+ 11%

*Nov '86 4 week average
Source: NIELSEN Oct '86 4 week average vs
Oct '87 4 week average.



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Programming

Deficit programming woes

TV executives examine impact of higher production costs for network programming

Television executives at a New York luncheon sponsored by the International Radio and Television Society last week agreed that higher production costs make it harder for producers to make money on programs for the three major television networks.

"Ten years ago deficit spending was not something you had to plan on," said Merrill Grant, president of Reeves Entertainment. Higher costs, coupled with lower network viewing levels, have lessened the "adversarial" relationship between the networks and independent producers. "It puts all of us in a very difficult position," he said.

In recent years, Grant said, the saving grace has been syndication. But he noted that given lackluster sales of one-hour products in syndication along with the glut of half-hour programs, "that bubble may be bursting."

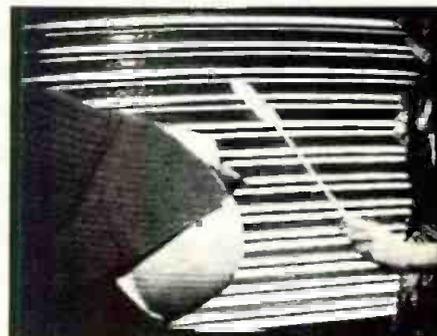
Henry Bushkin, president, Carson Productions, agreed. He said that pro-

No vacancy. NATPE International reports that floor space for 25th annual program conference in Houston (Feb. 25-29) is sold out. Washington Post Co. chairman Katharine Graham is keynote speaker. Other speakers include FCC Chairman Dennis Patrick, Linda Ellerbee and Phil Donahue.

grams the company produced several years ago, generated "significant weekly revenues"—not deficits—from network license fees, and were then sold for additional revenues to syndication. Now, he said, "all of our shows have high deficits."

Sumner Redstone, chairman, Viacom International, said he sees a "changing dynamic marketplace," with cable playing an increasingly important role. Cable, at least in part, is "replacing syndication as an aftermarket," he said. He cited off network programs such as *Riptide*, *Hardcastle & McCormick*, and *Miami Vice* as shows selected by cable networks. "The more shows that end up on cable, the better," he said.

On possible remedy for dealing with



Mad Max Headroom. A video prankster broke into Sunday night programming on two Chicago television stations on Nov. 22. A man wearing a mask of TV character Max Headroom briefly appeared on WGN-TV, which is also a cable superstation, and noncommercial WTTW(TV).

The first interruption—on WGN-TV—occurred during the sports report on the station's 9 p.m. (Central standard time) newscast. The uninvited masked figure appeared on the screen without audio for about 25 seconds, according to Bob Strutzel, WGN-TV director of engineering, "doing typical Max gyrations," in the fashion of the computer generated character, featured on the recently cancelled ABC-TV show.

The signal interruption "took a high level of sophistication," Strutzel said. He speculated that it could have originated from a truck or a high rise-building. "Where they got the equipment, I don't know, whether it was borrowed, stolen or designed by some engineering genius—but certainly it's not the kind of thing you expect from some kids pulling a prank," Strutzel said.

The second incident—on WTTW, started at 11:10 p.m., according to a station spokesman, and lasted about 90 seconds. Toward the end of that span, the masked Headroom impersonator turned profile to the camera, dropped his pants and was spanked with a flyswatter by a person off-camera.

"We are aware of the interruption and we are actively investigating it," said FCC spokeswoman Maureen Peratino. Both stations have provided the FCC with tapes of the break-ins and officials at the commission's Chicago field office have gone over technical details with station engineers to begin the process of searching for suspects.